



4th SMI Luzon Area Conference

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After years of using virtual technology, the Squirettes of Mary Immaculate finally held its 4th face-to-face Luzon Area Conference last July 22 – 23, 2023 at Ion Hotel, Baguio City with a theme:

SMI: One in Mission Towards a Synodal Church with Mary

Sub-theme: Appreciating our Filipino Culture Amidst Digital / Social Media World as we Strengthen our Faith to Greater Heights

This conference was attended by a total of 385 SMI and DMII delegates from 7 regions of the Luzon Area with a total number of 51 circlettes. The conference officially started with the enthronement as the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary was carried to Her altar by DMII International Chaplain, Rev. Fr. Jerome Cruz and SMI National President, Sq. Elizabeth Urmeneta. The enthronement was followed by the SMI prayer, parade of colors, singing of the National Anthem and Pledge to the Flag which were all done by selected Squirette delegates. The presentation of Circlettes happened right after the enthronement and consecration rites with each circlette’s president carrying her circlette banner.

The opening ceremony was capped with the singing of the **SMI Hymm**.



Rev. Fr. Jerome Cruz and Sq. Elizabeth Urmeneta carrying the statue of Mama Mary during Enthronement Ceremony.

The SMI National President, Sq. Elizabeth Urmeneta welcomed the delegates, followed by the inspirational message of Sis. Merinnisa Ligaya, the International Vice Regent for Luzon and Regional Representative of Region III.



Sq. Elizabeth Urmeneta welcoming the delegates

Sis Merinnisa ended her message with a trending tik tok dance presentation from the popular Backstreet Boys song entitled “As long as you love me” together with the Squirettes of Region III.



Sis. Merinnisa Ligaya, the International Vice Regent for Luzon and Regional Representative of Region III

Sis. Cathy Pineda, International Chairperson for Youth Welfare/SMI then shared her 2022-2023 SMI report and updates. In her report, Sis. Cathy quoted that in the results of the National Consultation on Synod of the CBCP in



Sis. Cathy Pineda discussing 2022-2023 SMI report and updates.

Tagaytay last July 2022 there was mention that the youth are whom we need today. They are the “sleeping giant “ that we need to evangelize. So that if we do our role in fulfilling the objectives of our Youth Welfare Mission, the DMII/SMI become more relevant in our Church.

One way to evangelize and bring the youth to Church is to let them live actively the liturgical calendar of the church (there are the New Year, Lent Season, Mayflower Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, September birth month of Mama Mary, October rosary devotion, Feast of Christ the King - end of the Liturgical year then Advent or Christmas season, and involve them as we can in the Feast Days of our Patron Saints which is all year round.

Let our youth enlist as regular church servers (every Sunday as lectors/commentators, choir, altar servers/sakristans, social communications/IT/mass livestreamers -just to name a few tasks). Being so, brings their sense of commitment to a higher level – a commitment to a commitment of being a regular church server.

As all previous conferences the SMI had before, this conference cannot be completed without the Marian Talk. The SMI Area Coordinator for Luzon, Sis. Chodee Amoranto, introduced the guest speaker for this year’s conference. The Marian Talk was given by Rev. Fr. James Dexter R. Tanguis of the Order of the Augustinian Recoletos (AOR).



Sis. Chodee Amoranto introducing the guest speaker of the conference

He discussed the main theme of the conference: SMI: One in Mission Towards a Synodal Church with Mary as well as the Dogmatic Titles of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Marian Talk was filled with happiness as Fr. Dexter prepared various activities that made the discussion



Rev. Fr. Dexter Tanguis, OAR as the guest speaker for this year’s Area Conference.

enjoyable. The Marian Talk was followed by the Teambuilding Activity which was hosted by Fr. Dexter along with the other SMI Working Committee. The conference was filled with sounds of laughter, yells and applause as these evidently show how much the Squirettes enjoyed the activities. The teambuilding consisted of Kahoot Q and A activity, Tug of War and Balloon Race.

Each game had corresponding points for its winners which was computed at the end of the teambuilding to know who will be the final winner. These games showed the talented yet competitive sides of Squirettes. Finally, the ten groups were awarded according to their final scores, and the DARK BLUE TEAM was hailed as the Overall team building winner. Fr. Dexter emphasized that this year’s teambuilding activity is made not only for the sake of competition but to build camaraderie and socialization among the Squirettes. The activity was ended by the signal song “Girl in the Mirror “ that was enthusiastically danced by all squirettes.



Dark Blue Team wins the Team Building Activity (top), and the whole SMI Delegates of the 4th Luzon Area Conference (bottom).

The Election of National officers was presided by the National President, Sq. Elizabeth Urmeneta along with the other SMI committee and Sis. Chodee Amoranto, the Luzon Area Coordinator as the DMII Comelec. Sq. Joy Ancheta from Theresian Circle, Diocese of San Pablo, Region 6 won the position of National Vice President for the Luzon Area. Two nominees from Luzon with the most votes for the positions of National Secretary, National Treasurer and

National Chancellor will compete with the top 2 nominees for said positions from Visayas and Mindanao during an online elections to be held in August when all the resumes of the candidates shall have been collated.

The Tita DMIs had their own activities simultaneous with the SMI's teambuilding activity. They had flower arrangement lessons and Baguio peanut-brittle making and tasting. The Titas were also given a chance to make friends with one another thru the game Human BINGO that made them go around to get to know who the persons being described in the bingo boxes are.



The Tita DMIs showing off their flower arrangements

HUMAN BINGO				
Tita who brought Net Ago to our Conference	Tita from Region V	Tita from Region II	Tita who is below 50 years old	A DMI for more than 15 years already
Currently a Lady Counselor	Has a letter D in her name	Tita from Region IV	Someone who is left-handed	FREE
Tita from Region I	A Tita who is less than 1 year old as DMI		Tita from Region VI	A Circle Officer (present or past) from another Region
FREE	Tita from Region III	Tita who is more than 60 years old	Born on the same month as you	A Flanista
Tita from Region VII	A pet lover or a Tita who has a pet	Has Maria or Ma. in her first name	Co-delegate from the same Diocese	As old as you are (same age)

Sample of a Human Bingo Card . It contains descriptions to look for in the Titas present in the assembly.

The most anticipated part of the conference was the Regional Dance and Cultural Night with the SMI and DMI delegates wearing their stunning Filipiniana Attire. The Squirettes showcased their talents and grace as they performed their regional dances. The delegates were astonished by the surprise event – the Aura of the Night (Beautiful in Filipiniana) wherein 1 SMI and 1 DMI were picked out from the pack.

The winners of Aura of the Night 2023 were Sis. Tess Labilles, Regional Representative of Region IV and Sq. Win Mariposque from Region VI.



Miss Aura of the Night (Beautiful in Filipiniana) – DMI - Sis. Tess Labilles of Diocese of Malolos ,Region IV



Miss Aura of the Night - SMI Sq. Win Mariposque of Diocese of San Pablo . Region VI

There were a total of 4 entries for the Regional Dance. Region III Squirettes were hailed as the Champion with their unique performance of La Jota Moncandeña. The first runner up was Region VI, followed by 2nd runner up Region V and Region IV was awarded as 3rd Runner up.



1st Runner Up SMI Regional Dance Contest Region VI



2nd Runner Up SMI Regional Dance Contest Region V



3rd Runner Up SMI Regional Dance Contest Region IV
Intermission nos.



Intermission no. – Dance by DMI from Region 7



Intermission no. – SMI Region V



Intermission no. -SMI Region I



Region III as the Champion of the Regional Dance Competition

The next day, July 23 officially started with a Holy Eucharist by Rev. Fr. James Dexter R. Tanquis, OAR and Rev. Fr. Jeronimo Ma. J. Cruz, the DMII International Chaplain. After the mass, Fr. Jerome delivered his warm message to all SMI and DMII delegates as he expressed his gratitude for their participation and endless support to the youth.



Holy Mass Celebration

The closing message was delivered by Sis. Cristina Ballesteros, the Regional Representative of Region 1 followed by the closing prayer led by Sq. Jonalyn Lico, SMI National Secretary.



Thank you message from Rev. Fr. Jerome Cruz.



The Luzon Area Conference ended with the exit of colors and recessional march. It was a memorable and joyous event despite the incoming typhoon. Our Blessed Mother Mary must have protected everyone as everybody leaves the City of Pines.

Sis Christina Ballesteros, gave the closing message for this year's Area Conference.

