



Seen Through the Eyes of a Pilgrim

RIZAL, Philippines - On the 19th of October 2019, the Montfort Missionaries, in close collaboration with the Association of Mary Queen of All Hearts (AMQAH) organized the 29th Montfortian Pilgrimage with the theme *"A Pilgrimage with Mary"* wherein they visited five beautiful churches and shrines, old and new in the Diocese of Antipolo in Rizal. The itinerary included visits to the following churches - St. Jerome Parish in Morong; St. Joseph Parish in Baras; San Ildefonso de Toledo in Tanay; the Diocesan Shrine of St. Mary Magdalene in Pililla and Regina Rica in Tanay. The pilgrims were quite a mixed group of young and old - students, young professionals, members of other religious congregations, AMQAH members, invited guests, seminarians and priests from the Montfort Missionaries.

It was a spiritually enriching and uplifting pilgrimage which gave greater emphasis on prayer and personal encounter with the Lord through silence even as they travel in their respective coaches. There was an instrumental music played interspersed with the meditation and recitation of the Holy Rosary. It created an opportunity for personal reflection and prayer. In fact, one novice shared his thoughts and said, *"I took this pilgrimage as a thanksgiving for having been called and pursued by the Lord after all these years of personal struggles and uncertainties. I am grateful for His abounding love and for allowing me to answer His invitation. It brought me to recall and reflect God's goodness as manifested by all the answered prayers and His bountiful blessings to me and in my vocation, hence, my heart swells with so much gratitude!"*

The pilgrimage started with a concelebrated Mass at St. Jerome Parish to put into perspective the reason of doing a pilgrimage. Fr. Federick Yumang, SMM, the main celebrant and homilist, reminded the participants to be thankful for the faith they have received, handed down by their parents and those who came before them and to take care and nurture it. The churches they have visited truly are testaments of the faith of the people. The pilgrimage culminated at Regina Rica where they managed to join the Marian procession at 6:00 pm. Buses were not allowed to enter because of the ongoing activity for the month of the Holy Rosary. They were then asked to go inside the Regina Rica by foot and they were invited to join the procession inside the compound which ended at the colossal image of Mary on top of the hill. It turned out to be a pleasant surprise in culminating this pilgrimage.

Truly, it was a pilgrimage with Mary that she paved the way for them to visit this beautiful shrine dedicated in her honor as *Regina Rosarii*. The general feedback from the pilgrims is that they felt so blessed and spiritually energized despite of their late arrival back to Quezon City at 9:30 pm. The beautiful experiences that the pilgrims had during this pilgrimage will surely be kept in their hearts and will remind them always to be conscious of God's presence in their lives with the maternal guidance of our Blessed Mother.

Bro. Oliver Abasolo, SMM