



Scholastics' Summer Program amidst Pandemic

BULACAN, Philippines - On June 22-July 15, 2020, the Scholastics, headed by their formators, Fr. Benjie A. Notarte, SMM and Fr. Gener C. Pito, SMM had their 3-week Summer Program at the Montfort House of Prayer and Postulancy House, Purok V, Paradise III, San Jose Del Monte City, Bulacan. This year's summer program of the scholastics is certainly one of a kind since it happened during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, it did not hinder them from pursuing pastoral ministry, bearing abundant fruits for the love of God in the community and for the care of the environment.

The first week of the program was intended for a Montfortian Recollection series wherein the Scholastics presented their reflections and works by pair. It was a fruit of the week-long Montfortian Sessions given by Fr. Benjie A. Notarte, SMM, a week prior to their summer program in Bulacan. The recollection themes were inspired by the Four Pillars of the Montfortian Mission. The eight scholastics who gave the recollections from July 23-July 26 were SMM Brothers Armel R. Collantes and Lord Ansel Glenn N. Bongcas for the theme "*Togetherness and Community Life*", Ronald B. Baruela and Harold Anthony T. Montoya for "*Wisdom of the Cross in the Montfortian Way*", Francois Leonard P. Ancheta and Jumamildar S. Sawitan for "*The Montfortian Mission and Evangelization*" and lastly, Lester C. Bonete and Christopher S. Mejia for the theme "*Mary and Incarnation in the Montfortian Spirituality*". The scholastics have designed their recollection for SMM Postulants and Novices and also for the Association of Mary Queen of All Hearts.

The remaining weeks were spent in planting around 100 fruit-bearing trees in our vast garden in Bulacan. With the guidance of our confreres at the Bulacan Community, Fr. Ariel E. Aquino, SMM and Bro. Reynaldo Silverio, SMM, the field work was indeed a fruitful and enjoyable one. It is very

fulfilling to see that one day, all that we have just planted will soon grow and bear fruits as we reminisce the hard times yet enjoyable moments when we were planting together.

On the night before the scholastics go back to New Manila, a simple dinner and a *Social Night* was held as a way to express their gratitude to our confreres in Bulacan, Fr. Ariel and Bro. Rey for the warm welcome and the love and care to the scholastics entrusted to them for the summer program. On the other hand, Fr. Ariel and Bro. Rey also expressed their gratitude to the Scholasticate community for their presence and the service they have shared to the community.

It was indeed a very fruitful though a "*quarantine summer program*" for the scholastics. On July 15, 2020, during the Eucharistic Celebration at 7:00 AM, with the presence of some of our active lay partners, they bid goodbye to them, had breakfast, and then headed for the Scholasticate House in New Manila, Quezon City, bringing with them all the memorable and grace-filled experiences.

Glory to Jesus in Mary! Glory to Mary in Jesus! Glory to God Alone!

*Bro. Armel R. Collantes, SMM
Scholastic*