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## Walking Along the Margins with St. Joseph: A Lenten Recollection with Mary and St. Joseph

**QUEZON CITY, Philippines** - After two years of non-physical activities, the Montfort Spirituality Center, headed by Rev. Fr. Frederick YUMANG, SMM, along with the lay associates of Mary, Queen of All Hearts, opened its doors to the lay faithful on a Lenten Recollection with Mary and St. Joseph last March 19, 2022. The theme was *"Walking Along the Margins with St. Joseph"* with Rev. Fr. Mauricio "Mau" Ulep, CMF as its recollection master.

Fr. Mau is concurrently the Chair of the Commission on Claretian Education which spearheads the Association of Claret Schools in the Philippines. His service in the education ministry is extended with his engagements with the Private Education Assistance Committee (PEAC) and the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (PAASCU).

*"May lakad ka?"* was the very first pondering question Fr. Mau asked the participants. He also asked, *"What is the church inviting us to do?"* It is urging us to walk in the peripheries – to go to far flung places, hard-to-reach areas, and unknown places, just as Pope Francis advised that we *"walk in the margins"*. Our Catholic Church proclaims that we are a church of the poor, and we can only be a church of the poor unless we know how to walk along the margins. He reiterated that when we walk with St. Joseph, *"lahat tayo kayang magbigay ng pagpapatunay (witnessing) kung paano tayo mamuhay"*.

When we are driven by our actions and do the things we do, we ask ourselves: "*Why am I doing this?*" Surely, we are doing it for a particular reason and not without a cause. In the last two years, Jesus has been teaching us a lot in this crisis. As we keep going, it is good to write down our learnings and insights, hoping to move forward better. Then, we examine ourselves: Where are we going? This query is necessary for it speaks about a goal, about our life direction. If our destiny is the Kingdom of God, it is better to journey with someone along the way who has the same goal as we do. The goal is also the reason, and the goal is God. In everything we do, God is the ultimate reason why we are doing what we are doing. If we lose track of this goal, of this way of evangelization, then there is no evangelization at all.

We need to focus on the reason why we do a task. An "*Ah, basta!*" attitude will not be effective for it diverts and distracts us from the alignment of our goal and reason in fulfilling a mission. For us to get to our destination, consistency is the key when we look back to where we walked. We are all missionaries in our identification with Jesus.

A mission is a challenging act, and part of the mission is to serve the people. However, first and foremost, we are doing the mission because it is our service for the Lord. When we do our mission in the peripheries, walking along the margins of life, of societies, that is the only time we can understand their plight, their conditions and their perspectives. We cannot continue to live in a closed world. It is a must to see the world outside, taking risks beyond our comfort zones. By simply our whole being present in that particular moment, we are doing service already. As St. Louis-Marie de Montfort teaches us, it is only in taking risks that we do great things for God.

In the afternoon, the program was resumed with the praying of the Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It was followed by an overview of the Continental Mission Year 2022 to the lay faithful by Rev. Fr. Federick YUMANG, SMM.

Glory to God alone!

*S. Caridad LANSANG, AMM*