



A Day in the Company of the Montfortian Collaborators

BULACAN, Philippines – In the spirit of the continental mission year of Asia and Oceania, the Montfortian Missionary priests hosted a Planning and Retreat on August 19 and 20, 2022 at the Montfort House of Prayer in San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan with their collaborators and lay associates. The purpose of the event was to summarize and reiterate the Continental Mission Year Conference that the SMM priests had attended in Indonesia as well as to strengthen the bond to spread the spirituality together with the lay collaborators.

The two-day Planning and Retreat with the lay collaborators organized by the Montfortian Missionary priests to cap and reecho the Continental Mission Year Conference they attended in Indonesia yielded abundant, promising fruits. Significantly, it also brought together delegates from Bulacan, Cebu, Kinatarran, Dagupan, Makati, and Quezon City. They comprised the core group who, for the first time with the SMM priests and brothers, will convene as one family and community (*fammunity*) to fulfill the overall mission of propagating the reign of Jesus through Mary. The Montfort fathers were visibly energized when they shared their Indonesian experience and wanted to continue the journey with their lay counterparts.

The first day began with the delegates from Quezon City, who are members of the Association of Mary, Queen of All Hearts (AMQAH) and Totus Tuus Journey (TTJ), sitting with Rev. Fr. Federick Yumang, SMM, national director of the Association of Mary, Queen of All Hearts (AMQAH), with their report of activities from 2019 to 2021 and plans for what remains of 2022 and the following year.

Mary's Place spearheaded the reporting with Sis. Elizabeth Infante and Sis. Ofelia Cadiz taking turns. The team will continue to oversee the maintenance and upkeep of the Montfort Center of Spirituality (MCS), as well as budget allocation and record keeping, as the Core Group's custodian.

To supplement the Center's current funds is a plan to consign/sell Marian/Montfortian books/articles to the Legion House, St. Vincent de Paul, and other possible outlets.

Fr. Federick Yumang, SMM, filled in for the Spirituality Team and outlined the TTJ relaunch in areas where the pandemic aborted the plan, as well as a renewal arrangement with Fr. Hugh Gillespe, deepening sessions with Sis Ana Marie, and other pipeline projects, most notably the review of the Facilitators Training Program. This aims to reawaken TTJers who, after a consecration pause, seem lukewarm and need a point (tutok) person's attention.

Bro. Ham Dela Torre wrote a short report on a yellow pad, with help from Sis. Maricar Lansang, Sis. Veronica Lu, and Sis. Marivic Sayco. The one-pager outlined their pilgrimages and recollections' pros and cons. Sis Jackie Foster rendered the Mission Team's report on behalf of Sis. Relly Cruz, who was caring for Bro. Arnel Cruz, with Sis Angel Sampang and Sis Irene Magbanua's help. The feeding program, dental/medical/optical mission were all successful except for one setback, which they analyzed with the other teams and learned from using the SWOT quadrant.

After completing the task, the teams took a break and resumed praying the rosary with the other delegates. Then the Blessed Sacrament was exposed inviting everyone to spend time for prayer. After Holy Hour, the larger group enjoyed a dinner and games.

The Scholastics facilitated recreation. Evidently, they ensured no participant was left empty-handed as tokens were given to each lucky winner. Bro. Harold Montoya, SMM, served as emcee and game marshal. Bros. Glenn Bongcas and Christopher Mejia, SMM, helped him.

The second day dawned on the delegates with morning prayer at the chapel, containing specifically the CMY Prayer, followed by a hearty breakfast. Afterward, everyone trekked to the fourth floor for the plenary.

The delegation superior, Rev. Fr. Norwyn Baydo, SMM, started the input. Reflection on lay associates confirmed the congregation's sentiment. Their goal is to strengthen fraternal union and cooperation. As part of "Rise and Shine," they aim to intensify collaboration with as many laities as possible to make them reliable Gospel witnesses, which CMY in Indonesia recognized. It's not enough to be a Montfortian spiritual if one doesn't participate in the mission; we may be missionaries but not spiritual; we are spiritual if we live the spirituality and participate in the mission by being a reliable witness. As mission partners, lay associates are a blessing from God and a chance to grow. As Montfortians, they celebrate together. In fact, Together, Everyone, Achieves More. Journeying with others deepens Montfort's identity. The Montfortians must love Mary. The Montfortian charism is utter dependence on God. Spirituality in SMM engages our founder's writings. Mission, the spirit that drives us, shows in our work. The mission requires an open mind and heart. Spirituality must be alive in following the ways of St. Louis Marie de Montfort.

To help the lay associates in addressing the question, Fr. Federick Yumang, SMM, presented a re-echo of their Indonesian experience.

It's the first time we formally gathered together as one SMM family – both lay and SMM members. In fact, the superior general, Fr. Luiz Stefani, SMM, discussed why the Continental Mission Year (CMY) was founded, which helps us know who we are and why we do what we do. We are missionaries. First, we are called and sent, especially in Asia and Oceania (Montfortians). It requires our availability to make lay associates participate and collaborate in the founder's dream

of creating a confraternity of consecrated men and women whose role is much broader than being set aside for holiness due to Montfortian statutes. Thus, AMQAH becomes the congregation's extension because of Mary's company (not just the Company of Mary), and the Blessed Virgin gains more children and servants to make Jesus more known and loved. Having formed a missionary spiritual community, we can join hands and proclaim our readiness to "Rise and Shine"

Working together highlights teamwork. When we travel with others, we deepen our Montfortian identity. We're doing the re-echo to re-energize you to do the mission as we did in Indonesia. So you can love God alone. CMY's desire to intensify Mary's mission, our witness to it, and the Incarnation will be realized through our charism, identity, and spirituality. Our Montfortian missionary zeal will rise and shine to, with, in, and for Mary.

Fr. Sherwin Nuñez, SMM addressed yesterday's priorities. To put them in context, he cited the CMY conference priorities for lay associates in the Philippines.

The groups presented their reports. Sis. Gelly Fernandez's "timely" tardiness was grace, per Sis. Liza Infante. She said that keepers of modern-day Nazareth must become Jesus, Mary, and Joseph because a deeper understanding of Mary and her family can lead to spiritual growth. Team Evangelization's former leader was unhappy because of his perceived inadequacy, but with their director's guidance, he wants to return as a better follower and agrees that evangelization is a mission, so obedience to God must be observed. Growth occurs over time, especially when one is out of his comfort zone. Meanwhile, the groups coming from Sta. Teresita Parish, TTJers in Bulacan, Dagupan, and Cebu, and SMM priests and brothers shared to everyone their plans and aspirations.

Rev. Fr. Santiago Casing, SMM, synthesized the reports funnily, effectively, and energetically. Concluding the event was the celebration of the holy eucharist. It was presided over by Rev. Fr. Norwyn V. Baydo, SMM. Meanwhile, Frs. Federick Yumang, SMM, Sherwin Nuñez, SMM, Reynaldo Bullas, Jr. SMM, and Santiago Casing, SMM is also present as concelebrants. After, a subdued snack followed. Frs. Arnel Pagaduan, SMM, and Francis Tacio, SMM, offered their homegrown, sweet rambutan to the departing lay collaborators.

It was indeed a unique and memorable experience. With the grace of God under the prayers of Mother Mary, may we Rise and Shine in fraternal communion for the reign of God!

We extend our inmost gratitude to all who partake in this event: Brenda Gadiano, Grace Sarcon, Gemma Oftana of AMQAH and TTJ Cebu. Myrna Capa, Annie Capili, Fr. Francis Tacio, SMM, Fr. Arnel Pagaduan, SMM of TTJ Bulacan and Montfort House of Prayer Community. Edith Sta. Maria, Imelda Lamsen, Fr. Rene Bustillo, SMM of TTJ Dagupan and St. Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort Parish in Dagupan, Pangasinan. Michael Bucad, Lara Mae Rosaldo, Jackielou Foster, Fr. Santiago Casing, SMM of AMQAH, TTJ in Makati and Sta. Teresita Parish Community. Elizabeth Infante, Irene Magbanua, Abraham dela Torre, Maricar Lansang, Angel Sampang, Gelly Fernandez of AMQAH Manila. Bros. Harold Anthony Montoya, SMM, Glenn Bongcas, SMM, Christopher Mejia, SMM of Montfort Missionaries Scholasticate Community. Fr. Reynaldo Bullas, Jr., SMM, Bro. Reynaldo Silverio, SMM, Fr. Gener Pito, SMM, Fr. Angel Pusikit, SMM of Montfort Missionaries Delegation Community. Fr. Norwyn Baydo, SMM, Fr. Federick Yumang, SMM, Fr. Sherwin Nuñez, SMM of the Philippine Delegation Council.