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Back-to-Back Montfortian Consecrations in Cebu City

CEBU CITY, Philippines - After nine months of waiting due to Covid-19 pandemic, nine lay persons from the Totus Tuus Journey Batch 23 who finished the 33-day sessions finally made their Montfortian Consecration at the Montfort Mission House covered court in Cebu on December 8, 2020, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. The Eucharistic celebration started at 2:00 in the afternoon and was presided by Fr. Paul Arnel Lucero, SMM with Fr. Roy Millano, SMM as concelebrant. Bro. Ronald Baruela, SMM served as the Master of Ceremonies in the four-part liturgical celebration. A day prior to the solemn celebration, the nine participants attended a recollection facilitated by Fr. Paul Arnel that included the Sacrament of Confession and the Holy Eucharist held at the Mission House chapel.

As part of the health protocol during this pandemic, everybody was wearing facemasks and observed proper distancing during the entire event. A good number from the Association of Mary Queen of All Hearts also attended the simple yet very meaningful occasion.

On December 12, Fr. Paul Arnel, Fr. Roy, Bro. Ronald, together with the two sisters from the Daughters of Wisdom and six AMQAH members left at 4:00 in the morning from the Mission House in Minglanilla and headed toward the Mission Area in the high mountains of Tuburan Cebu. After a 3-hour journey by car, then an hour by motorcycle climbing up the very high mountains in a motocross manner, we finally reached the area and were welcomed by Fr. Rene Bustillo, SMM, Bro. Harold Montoya, SMM and scores of people. The motorcycle ride was so dangerous, horrifying and difficult which prompted Fr. Paul to say: *"In my entire life, this was the most difficult and risky motorcycle ride ever. One mistake of the driver could have caused our death."*

At exactly 10 in the morning, the celebration of the Holy Eucharist with Consecration commenced at the covered court of Barangay Camansi in Tuburan town, northwest of Cebu City. Twenty-one Totus Tuus Journeyers (TTJers) made their total consecration to Jesus through Mary during the celebration presided by Fr. Paul Arnel and concelebrated by Fr. Rene and Fr. Roy. The first two parts, namely: the Allegiance to the Word of God and the Renewal of Baptismal Promises, were held at the covered court. Then, we had a procession towards the chapel on the hill where the Montfortian consecration and the Liturgy of the Eucharist were held. After the very solemn and meaningful celebration, lunch was served to everyone with the *"lechor"* (roasted pig) as the main menu. Sisters Helen and Malou of the Daughters of Wisdom also took the opportunity to promote vocations to the young girls in the area.

Having these religious events during this time of pandemic is truly a very risky missionary activity. However, as St. Louis-Marie de Montfort said to Blessed Marie-Louise Trichet, *"If you don't take risks for God, you will not do anything worthwhile for Him"* (L 27).

Bro. Ronald Baruela, SMM