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Perpetual Profession of Bros. Armel and Samuel, SMM "My soul glorifies the Lord"

QUEZON CITY, Philippines - In celebration of the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, Scholastics Armel R. COLLANTES, SMM and Samuel M. GONZALES, SMM made their perpetual profession of the religious vows in the Congregation of the Company of Mary, in the chapel of Mary, Queen of All Hearts at Montfort Center for Spirituality in Sct. Madriñan, West Triangle, Diliman, Quezon City.

At five o'clock in the afternoon, the solemn celebration started. The delegation superior in the Philippines, Reverend Fr. Norwyn V. BAYDO, SMM, presided over the celebration. Montfortians from the Philippines served as concelebrants. Members of the Daughters of Wisdom, Brothers of St. Gabriel, Zelatrix Sisters of the Sacred Heart, Association of Mary Queen of All Hearts, Totus Tuus Journeymen from Manila and Cebu, as well as their parents, relatives, friends, and benefactors, witnessed their final profession.

Rev. Fr. Roy S. MILLANO, SMM was the homilist during the Eucharistic celebration. In his sermon, the missionary to Papua New Guinea emphasized the truth of a God-given sense of inexpressible joy. He declared that the reality of forever exists because God is always faithful to His promises - yesterday, today, and in the future. He also mentioned that the actuality of forever is sculpted for the one who truly and unwaveringly cares. In addition to these encouraging thoughts, he also urged them to confront the reality of mediocrity, pride, and arrogance within themselves that will prevent them from freely living the evangelical counsels. He concluded by offering prayers for

them and urging them to remain poor, obedient, and chaste for the sake of God's Kingdom. For by doing so will transform them into being a genuine follower of Christ.

After saying the post-communion prayer, Brothers Armel and Samuel expressed their gratitude to everyone who had supported them throughout their seminary formation. After they expressed their appreciation, Rev. Fr. Norwyn V. BAYDO, SMM, announced their appointments as perpetual members of the Montfort Missionaries in the Philippines. A sumptuous meal concluded the celebration.

Indeed, we were convinced they encountered the depths of God's eternal and infinite love in Christ, the source of their very being. We can't help but give freely, gratefully, and ultimately ourselves to Him who gave Himself when seized by such love and overshadowed by the Holy Spirit.

Like Mary, we experienced God's grace. We saw how God had been gracious to us and given us the grace to persevere. St. Thomas Aquinas said, "grace builds our nature." One can't defy nature; only God can. It is always our desire to be closer to God by following Jesus Christ, incarnate, crucified, and glorious Wisdom. We saw religious vows' growing edges. We realistically assessed our weaknesses and strengths to allow God's grace to perfect them.

Through the perpetual profession of vows, may we zealously and freely echo Mary's Magnificat. May it create in us a "vacare Deo" – to make space for God, reserving a choicest portion for the anawim of God. As we further reflect on the goodness of God in our lives, may we truly understand what it is like to be looked at favorably by God despite our numerous lowliness. God has demonstrated his generosity to us. May the longing of our hearts solely be for God Alone, to make Him known and loved.

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

Rev. Samuel M. GONZALES, SMM