



SMM Philippine Delegation Convenes to Set Priorities for 2024

QUEZON CITY, Philippines – In a harmonious gathering from February 19 to 21, 2024, the Montfort Missionaries Philippine Delegation gathered at their delegation house in Mariana, Quezon City. The purpose of this gathering primarily revolved around two pivotal agendas: firstly, a comprehensive assessment of priorities for the year 2024, along with a review of those established in 2023; and secondly, the planning of specific programs for the next 6 to 7 years in response to the General Chapter of 2023. These programs are based on three themes: *identity, evangelization, transmission of charism, ongoing formation, and a culture of planning*.

The inaugural day, February 19, commenced with a reverent Holy Mass at 7 AM, during which members of the *mission communities* comprising Cebu, Dagupan, Bulacan, and Makati were assigned various roles in the liturgy. Rev. Fr. Santiago CASING, SMM presided over the celebration, accompanied by Rev. Fr. Rene BUSTILLO, SMM, who delivered a heartfelt homily. Following the Mass, the day progressed with a nourishing meal. The first session commenced at 9 AM with a brief prayer, welcoming participants, and the presentation of the timetable by Rev. Fr. Sherwin NUNEZ, SMM. This was followed by a group sharing session at 9:30 AM, aimed at revisiting the priorities set in 2023, followed by lunch. The second session in the afternoon commenced at 3 PM, during which each group reported and synthesized the discussions from the morning's group sharing. Additionally, sports activities and a prayerful contemplation of the Holy Rosary in Montfort's way, fostering both spiritual reflection and communal bonding.

Day two, February 20, commenced with a tranquil start, featuring a meditative body prayer (shibashe) led by the novices, setting a serene tone for the day's proceedings. Following this contemplative exercise, a solemn Eucharistic celebration took place, during which members of the *formation communities* - pre-postulancy, postulancy, novitiate, and scholasticate were assigned various roles in the liturgy. The main presider was Rev. Fr. Paul Arnel LUCERO, SMM, accompanied by Rev. Fr. Lester BONETE, SMM, who delivered an enlightening homily. The third session began after breakfast, initiated with a short prayer and furthered by the Presentation of the Acts of the Chapter of 2023, facilitated by Rev. Fr. Norwyn BAYDO, SMM. A brief interlude followed before proceeding to a solemn adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, succeeded by lunch and a siesta. In the afternoon, sessions continued, culminating in a joyful social gathering (Agape), fostering fraternity and solidarity among the attendees.

On the final day, February 21, the assembly commenced with devotion, praying the Little Crown of the Blessed Virgin Mary at 6:45 A.M. led by Bro. Reynaldo SILVERIO, SMM. Following breakfast, the morning sessions at 8:30 A.M. scabbled around into the delegation's future endeavors, with presentations moderated by Rev. Fr. Sherwin NUNEZ, SMM, and a focus on collating and setting priorities for 2024. A Eucharistic celebration led by Rev. Fr. Federick YUMANG, SMM, and graced with Rev. Fr. Norwyn BAYDO, SMM's inspiring homily. Expressing gratitude for their commitment, Fr. BAYDO, SMM emphasized the call to "*dare to take risks for God and for humanity, our creative fidelity*". With blessings invoked and plans set, the assembly concluded with a shared mean and warm farewells, carrying with them the spirit of dedication and service as they return to their respective missions.

In this gathering, the SMM Philippine Delegation fortified their commitment to the mission and embarks on their diverse goals and plans with renewed zeal, guided by unwavering faith and a collective resolve to heed the call to serve creatively.

God Alone!

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Philippines*