



Philippine Delegation Protecting Children and Vulnerable adults

New Manila - "I Commit!". These are the words written on the stone we received during the closing liturgy of our workshop last May 24, 2015 as a symbol of our commitment for the protection of children and of vulnerable adults. This stone will be a constant reminder of the decision we took both as individuals and as a Delegation of the Montfort Missionaries in the Philippines. It will also remind us of the "grace-filled" days we experienced as we listened, shared, worked, reflected and prayed together as one family.

At the beginning of the four-day workshop on May 21, 2015 Fr. Paul Arnel Lucero, SMM, the Delegation Superior, welcomed and thanked the perpetually professed members, the scholastics and the novices. He also expressed the Delegation's gratitude to the workshop animators and in a particular way the US Province for their assistance and support.

The workshop was animated by Dr. Monica Applewhite, PhD together with Fr. Luigi Gritti, SMM, General Assistant and Fr. Tom Poth, SMM. We reflected on the gravity of the problem of child sexual abuse, its effect on the victims and on the church. We looked into the sad reality of sexual offenders, especially the clergy, and discussed about means of care and prevention. A final session of the workshop dwelt on intimacy, relationships and the need for accountability in community living. On the third day Fr.

Luigi presented to us the *Minimum Standards* of the Congregation and afterwards we worked on some parts of the delegation's policy.

The last day was a day of recollection and of prayer. It started with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist presided over by Fr. Luigi, with Fr. Tom delivering the homily. Among other things Fr. Tom emphasised the need for each one of us to be always rooted in Christ and so be able to challenge every culture by promoting the "*culture of the Gospel*".

The workshop culminated with an individual and collective commitment. Following the example of Jesus who showed his concern and love for the children and said "*let the children come to me*" (Lk 18:16) and accepting the challenge of Pope Francis during his visit to the Philippines last January when he said "*We need to see each child as a gift to be welcomed, cherished and protected*", our response should be one of a serious and constant commitment towards protecting the children and all vulnerable adults.

May Mary our Mother continue to intercede for us and may our founder St. Louis-Marie de Montfort continue to inspire us to be zealous in bringing the reign of Jesus through Mary for the glory of GOD ALONE!

Bro. Federick B. Yumang, SMM

Scholastic