



2nd MINDANAO AREA CONFERENCE

*By Squirette Janhea Mae Guinto,
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Cinderella once uttered, “Have courage and be kind.”

In our daily lives, many of us struggle to practice the virtues of courage and kindness and employ them as often as possible. There are moments when we tend to disregard the gratuity of kindness and the true worth of building a strong connection with others. While many might find it an arduous task communicating and creating genuine connection with people they meet, this did not prevent a group of young women to develop the spirit of camaraderie emboldened by the love for Mama Mary.

The occasion was the 2nd SMI Mindanao Area Conference held last October 27-28, 2018 at the Balanghai Hotel and Convention Center in Butuan City. The conference team was “The Young as Active Agents in the Parish Supporting the Priests in the Year of the Clergy and Consecrated Persons”. The conference was attended by 77 Squirettes of Mary from SMI circlettes in Zamboanga, Bukidnon, San Francisco, Agusan del Norte, Cagayan de Oro City, Tandag, Surigao del Sur, Bunawan, Agusan del Sur, Nasipit, Agusan del Norte, Davao and Butuan City.

The conference program started with a Eucharistic celebration followed by a brief orientation by the conference facilitators. The girls were grouped into five teams. Each team was distinguished by the color of the

bandannas that team members wore. A team-building session followed with a DMI *tita* acting as facilitator. The exercise made them aware that each one was eager to work with other members of the team to achieve a common goal. The spirit of sisterhood was very evident as members of the team pursued each activity with determination and perseverance, and at the same time, just savored every delightful moment of being with their sister Squirettes.

The fellowship night was a showcase of talents with the conference participants wearing their respective ethnic costumes that cast an iridescent sheen against the hall’s lighting. The evening’s program, dubbed “Wow Mindanao!” featured cultural and ethnic dances by the participating dioceses. The Conference host, the Diocese of Butuan, welcomed the conference delegates with an ethnic dance presentation. The event opened new acquaintances leading to a lasting bond of friendship for most. A search for Miss Squirettes of Mary Immaculate 2018 was also held. Each diocese named a candidate to vie for the title. The contest was supervised by a team of DMI sisters. Winner was Squirette Janhea Mae Guinto of the Queen of Peace Circlette. Diocese of Butuan who received the award as Miss SMI 2018. Nonetheless, all the SMIs who vied for the title did a good job in representing their respective dioceses with

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The conference opening ceremony



The conference delegates in a group photo

17th SMI BIENNIAL CONVENTION SLATED MAY 17-19, 2019

The 17th National Biennial Convention of the Squirettes of Mary Immaculate is scheduled to be held on May 17-19, 2019 at the Anne Raquel's Hillside Resort in Olongapo City.

SMI circlettes from all over the country are expected to send their circlette delegations chaperoned by their respective Lady Counselors and other Tita DMIs.

The theme of this year's convention is "SMI Being Beloved, Gifted and Empowered in the Year of the Youth" with the sub-theme "Celebrating Our Different Ethnic Cultures through Dances".

According to Sis. Biannah Villanueva, international chairperson for Youth Welfare-SMI, a delegate's fee of P3,000 covers 3 days and 2 nights accommodation, food (2 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 2 dinners and 2 am and pm snacks), an SMI T-shirt and conference kit. Each circlette will be assessed a circlette fee of P500.

Pre-registration is required Deadline of registration is on April 1, 2019.

The program of activities for the 2 days includes a keynote address by Most Rev. Bartolome Santos, bishop of the Diocese of Iba (Zambales), an inspirational message from International Regent Sis. Ruby Macario and the election of the SMI National Officers. Fun activities are also lined up: the youth camp, outdoor team-building exercises, a regional costume and dance contest and a gala night (dinner and fellowship) on May 18. The Mass on May 19 (Sunday) will be officiated by DMI International Chaplain Fr. Jerome Cruz.

This major SMI event, held every two years, is eagerly looked forward to by our Squirettes who come away at the end of each biennial convention with various learnings gained, spiritually, emotionally and physically uplifting with several new-found friends, their fellow Squirettes, to boot.

A circular with the convention details had been distributed to the circlettes as early as January to give the Squirettes and their Tita DMIs ample time to prepare for this exciting event.



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Mother Mary as their model and guide. Even without wearing a sash, they looked like princesses looking up to the same Queen, our Blessed Mother Mary.

A Eucharistic celebration was again held on the last day of the conference. The image of the Blessed Mother being processioned down the aisle ended the 2-day conference program, with the delegates waving

blue and white banners as she passed by. The Squirettes, wearing a smile on their faces, came away filled with new learnings and experiences to share with the outside world. And new friends to make future Squirettes conferences events to look forward to – to once again communicate and to re-connect - "emboldened by their love for Mama Mary".