



SPECIAL REPORT

St. Paul University Manila celebrates Christian Formation Week

Contributed by Elvie Manalansan



*Fr. Enrico Gonzales, O.P.
Presider during the Opening Mass*

First Day—Mary’s Nativity, Social Awareness, and Involvement

Inspired by the Philippine Church’s Pastoral Priority on Communion of Communities, St. Paul University Manila celebrated Christian Formation Week from September 8 to 14, 2017 with the theme, “Pamilyang Paulino: Nagbubuklod at Namamalasakit sa Pamayanang Pilipino.”

The week-long event started with a Mass in honor of the Nativity of Mary, whom Paulinians fondly address as their “Mother and Model.”

During the Eucharistic celebration, Fr. Enrico Gonzales, O.P. underscored that each person’s destiny is written not in the stars but in the womb, right from the moment that the person is conceived by his/her mother. Like Mary, who never doubted God’s plan for her when she was chosen to give birth to Jesus, each and every one is encouraged to be faithful as well to God’s destined plan for all.

Before the final blessing, Sr. Jesusa Taccad, SPC, Vice President for Christian Formation, officially opened the Christian Formation Week festivities.

Right after the Mass, SPU Manila formally expressed its support for the Catholic Church’s campaign, “Huwag Kang Magnakaw.” This campaign aims not only to raise awareness on matters related to social issues but also to uproot the culture of stealing, within the person, family, classroom, and society in general.



The campaign started in 2014 and will end in 2021, which coincides with the celebration of 500th year of Catholicism in the Philippine Church. In addition, a “Huwag Kang Magnakaw” tarpaulin was displayed in the Pedro Gil lobby, together with the freedom board that contains pledges of the SPU Manila Community to start putting an end to stealing in any form. A number of students, faculty members, and non-academic personnel wore the “Huwag Kang Magnakaw” statement shirt.

To make the event more engaging, various activities for the students, employees, and partner communities were organized.



Senior High School students
in the Poster Making Contest and Catequiz Plus

Catequiz Plus. Thirty six Senior High School students from 12 sections (with three student-representatives per section), participated in the Catequiz Plus, a quiz bee competition, where questions were derived from the basic Catechism of the Church. The winners were from the following sections: St. Andrew (1st place), St. Dominic (2nd place) and St. Benedict (3rd place).

Film Viewing. The indie film, *Diyos-Diyosan*, is about all the ills (political system, individual and collective sins) of Philippine society, which contribute to a government marked by all sort of moral evils¹ that can be pinned on a single

problem, the lack of religiosity. Despite all the Church’s efforts to effect change in the society, everything becomes useless because many people are self-centered, as they have stronger faith in themselves than in God.

Through the Religious Education (RED) subject, all college students were required to attend the film screening. They were asked to submit a reaction paper after the viewing and had it discussed in their respective classes.

Poster Making Contest. Themed as “Buklod at Malasakit,” the on-the-spot poster-making contest was participated in by 11 Senior High School students. Illustration board, pencil, and crayons were the only art materials used by the contestants. Josh Stanley Mateo of St. Andrew got the 3rd place while Kristia Kate Dato-on of St. Blaise bagged the 2nd place. The 1st place was won by Ian Carlo Garin of St. Jude.

Second Day-Reaching Out

Catechesis for partner community. One way to enliven this year’s CF week celebration theme was to reach out and engage partner communities in applicable school activities. A total of 15 mothers from Kaisahan ng mga Anak at Magulang na may Kapansanan (KAISAKA), a Malate

¹ Opening remarks, Sr. Jesusa Taccad, SPC

parish-based organization that caters to children with special needs, attended a catechetical session in the Campus Ministry Office. The activity was facilitated by Sr. Joannie Bolusay, SPC, Pastoral Minister of SPU Manila.

This was immediately followed by **"Paularo,"** a series of local games facilitated by the Academic Non-Teaching Staff (ANTS). To cap the in-campus activity, a boodle feast was shared by the mothers, CF Team, ANTS, non-teaching personnel, and selected Senior High School students.

Simultaneous with this activity was the **Campus Ministry Outreach Seminar** with the Navotas National High School. There were 25 4th year high school students from said school who were given basic orientation on youth ministry. The orientation was held in the San Jose de Navotas Parish. The activity's objective was to know the basics on how to organize a campus ministry office in a public school. Five Paulinian Liturgical Animators, together with Mr. Carlos Evangelista, Assistant Campus Minister, facilitated the activity.

Third Day-Catechetical Session

Spiritual Warfare and the Moral Life of Christians. This session was a continuation of the first spiritual warfare session held on March 6, 2017. It was again facilitated by Fr. Michell Joe Zerrudo, the official exorcist of the Diocese of Cubao. The second session was attended by 41 lay administrators, faculty members, academic non-teaching staff, selected students, and a few non-academic personnel.

During the session, Fr. Zerrudo presented the four works of evil: 1) Demonic infestation, such as the use of unblessed sacramental objects like rosary, medallion, etc. These should be properly and rightfully blessed using the Church's prayer and blessings. 2) Vexation, where demons afflict the physical body of a person. A person may experience prolonged illness, but the cause remains undetermined after so many medical procedures conducted on him/her. 3) Obsession, which pertains to mental disturbances being experienced by a person. Drug addicts who experience hallucinations are truly encountering demons. 4) Possession, which means that the devil or other spiritual entities are internally occupying one's body and mind.

Fr. Zerrudo shared that intuition makes a person become more sensitive, and sensitive people are more likely to easily get possessed. Between a child and an adult, it is the child who is more sensitive; between a man and a woman, it is the woman. Further, he told the participants that when someone is becoming sensitive of the presence of such entities, he/she should not be afraid and should not entertain the idea; instead, he should pray hard, live the Christian life, and never use unblessed sacramental objects.



*Fr. Michell Joe Zerrudo w/ Sr. Jesusa Taccad, SPC
& Dr. Ma. Encarnacion Dychangco*

Fourth Day-Vocation Promotion

To shed light on the curiosity of many youngsters about **Vocation**—religious life, single-blessedness, or family life, the CF Team also organized a series of events about this.



There was a three-day **Vocation Exhibit** in the conference lobby, which was participated in by five religious congregations namely, St. Scholastica's Priory, Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice, Little Sisters of Jesus, Daughters of St. Paul, and St. Paul of Chartres.

"Usapang Bokasyon" was also held in four sessions, where various speakers representing different vocations shared their experiences as they journey with their chosen vocation. Fr. Marlon Noel Bayaras and Sr. Mari Jonna Rosales, SPC as religious; Ms. Madonna Dalit as single; Mr. & Mrs. Cabuello and Mr. & Mrs. Keyser as couples. One speaker shared that vocation is forever. It is not freedom from any responsibility; rather, it is freedom for others.

Each session was attended by selected Religious Education classes and a group of Non-Academic Personnel. There was a total of 203 participants (67 non-academic personnel and 136 RED students) in this activity.

There was also a **"Haranang Bokasyon"** during the noon Mass in the Chapel of the Crucified Christ on the fourth day of the celebration. Performers were from the College of Music and the Performing Arts.

Fifth Day–Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

The last three days of the week-long celebration were allotted for a Triduum Mass. The Triduum is a preparation for the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, which is celebrated every 14th of September.

"This celebration recalls three historical events: the finding of the True Cross by Saint Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine; the dedication of churches built by Constantine on the site of the Holy Sepulchre and Mount Calvary; and the restoration of the True Cross to



SPU Manila President, Sr. Ma. Evangelina Anastacio, SPC during the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Jerusalem by the emperor Heraclius II. But in a deeper sense, the feast also celebrates the Holy Cross as the instrument of our salvation.

This instrument of torture, designed to degrade the worst of criminals, became the life-giving tree that reversed Adam's Original Sin when he ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Garden of Eden." (www.thoughtco.com)

The 2017 Christian Formation Week culminated with a Mass in commemoration of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Fr. Dominic Nolan, a Columban priest, celebrated the Mass.

More 2017 Christian Formation Week Photos



Sr. Jesusa Taccad, SPC, formally opened the 2017 Christian Formation Week



SPU Manila Community during the launching of Huwag Kang Magnakaw Campaign



Outreach with KAISSAKA mothers, ANTS, NAP & CF Team