



## LAST WEEK...

### **30<sup>th</sup> NATIONAL/15<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL SPC EDUCATORS' CONGRESS** **THEME: SPCEM@115: Journeying in Intentional Discipleship** **May 16-18, 2019**

Delegates from SPC schools all over the country gathered in St. Paul College Pasig for the 30<sup>th</sup> National and 15<sup>th</sup> International SPC Educators' Congress, with the theme, "Journeying in Intentional Discipleship," on 16-18 May 2019.

The Opening Mass was celebrated by Bishop Mylo Vergara of the Diocese of Pasig. This was immediately followed by the Opening Ceremonies, which included the Welcome Remarks of Sr. Dedicacion Rosario, SPC, Directress of St. Paul College Pasig; Introduction of Delegates by Sr. Teresita Agana, SPC, High School Principal and Local Superior of SPC Pasig; Perspective Setting by Sr. Ma. Evangeline Anastacio, SPC, President of SPU Manila; and the Message of the Provincial Superior, Sr. Lilia Tolentino. SPC.



**Sr. Lilia delivering her message...**

We quote salient parts of Sr. Lilia's message:

*Good-afternoon, dear fellow Paulinian educators and fellow disciples in Christ. This year marks the 30<sup>th</sup> year of the SPC Education Ministry's Educators' Congress, which is an offshoot of the first SPC Educators' Forum held on September 6-9, 1988. This year we are not only celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> year of the SPC Educators' Congress. We are also celebrating the 115<sup>th</sup> year of the SPC Congregation in the Philippines. Since the first mission foundation of the Congregation was a school, we can rightly say that it is also the 115<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our educational mission in the Philippines (1904-2019), hence the theme—SPCEM@115: Journeying in Intentional Discipleship. The response of our Congregation to the invitation of Bishop Frederick Z. Rooker to preserve the faith in the Philippines gave birth to our first school in Dumaguete, followed by the foundation of many other schools and colleges thereafter.*

*I am sure that our educational leaders then had not envisioned the yearly assembly of Paulinian educators to grow this big and to include our Paulinian brothers and sisters from other parts of Asia, and once in a while, from other parts of the world as well. The growth in attendance shows that the mission of education and formation is not only for the leaders and administrators but likewise for all involved in the different levels and structural units of the educational system, particularly the teachers. With the continuing growth and impact of globalization, there comes the realization that we cannot remain parochial and self-sufficient but rather, we need to share and learn from one another and grow together as brothers and sisters, united by a common vision and mission as Paulinian Catholic educators.*

*The yearly Educators' Congress is a venue to deepen and clarify the *raison d'être* of Catholic Education, particularly of Paulinian Education. As we look into the reason of our existence as Catholic schools, we look as well at the people who make up the school community, particularly the school leaders, administrators, teachers, and employees. To them is entrusted the task to build, develop, and continuously nurture the Catholic character, identity, spirituality, and appropriate cultures that would lead to the integrated formation of the whole person. This is the goal of the Paulinian Formation Program. The Paulinian Formation Program is a formation for "Discipleship, Excellence, and Mission." In my message, I would like to zero in on "discipleship" since it is the theme of this year's Congress. I quote St. Pope Paul VI in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975): "The purpose of all educational ministry is to foster intentional faith-based communities in and through which individuals are supported and encouraged to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ."*

*We are using here a word which many of us, including me, have not encountered in religious literature nor heard in homilies and conferences until recently, when I saw the word in the theme of this year's Congress. That word is INTENTIONAL.*

*What is an intentional disciple? Simply put, a disciple is one who listens and learns from a teacher. An intentional disciple, therefore, is someone who not only listens and learns, but also **chooses to follow** the teacher and apply what he teaches. The key word is TO CHOOSE. He or she intends to practice what is taught. This is intentional discipleship. A Christian disciple, therefore, is one who knows Christ, grows in Christ, serves Christ, and shares Christ.*

*The first step toward intentional discipleship is to ENCOUNTER Jesus. Pope Francis said it beautifully in the third paragraph of *Evangelii Gaudium*, The Joy of the Gospel: "I invite all Christians everywhere at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting Him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfaithfully each day."*

*This year we are celebrating the "Year of the Youth." How do we form our young students to be intentional disciples? A research done in the United States on discipleship formation of youth showed the importance of religious experience or encounter as well as the development of skills needed to participate in the communal practices of our Christian faith.*

*There are four experiences that prominently come out from research studies on young adults, conversations with young people, and experiences in youth ministry. These experiences have been found to help young disciples grow as witnesses and as people in mission.*

*One is the experience of encounter. Young people long to encounter Christ and they want to have someone walk with them in their questions. They long for a first-hand experience of God and they want that experience to be connected to their everyday life. As a Cardinal in Argentina before his election as Pope, Pope Francis wanted his bishops to be part of this culture of encounter. What he meant was encountering Christ and, therefore, encountering those whom Christ loves. He said that ideas will make sense only when relationship is in place. What Pope Francis is telling us is to retool our ministries with the youth by providing them opportunities for encounters that lead them to reflect on their experiences.*

*Another experience is the experience of relationship, referring to relationships that respond to young people's hunger to belong and to have a community that cares about and accepts them. Like all of us, young people feel insecure and wonder if they are worthy of love and friendship. They experience God's presence in a community when they experience being welcomed, accepted, affirmed, and challenged. Relationships deepen their experience of God and the experience of encounter, especially in the context of community gathered as the Body of Christ in the Eucharist. Kathleen Engebretson says, "The Eucharist is at the pivotal center of the Church's continued existence because it is the sacrament that both celebrates communion with Christ and calls believers into the community of the People of God." It is important for us to know that young people today are not so much looking for something to believe in as much as something to belong to. So we need to learn how to bring about encounter in community and develop more of an accompanying approach. The challenge for us here, therefore, is knowing how to retool or redirect our ministries to take on an accompaniment model for ministry and build the relationships that will help young disciples grow.*

*The third experience is creating the experience of hunger in the young to lead them to the understanding of what friendship in Christ really means. Young people want to know the gospels. They want to understand the teachings of the Christian faith. They grow in faith when they experience faith in action. They are formed by the practices of discipleship which consist of praying, Bible reading, witnessing, belonging to community, participating in Mass and the sacraments, engaging in outreach programs for the poor, and experiencing reconciliation and forgiveness.*

*The fourth experience is the experience of mission that fulfills their desire to make a difference and to be able to contribute and share their gifts. They learn about their gifts through relationships and through the community. Someone trusts them and gives them a chance to do something that matters, something that makes a difference for someone. So, what do we need to do? We need to look at some things in new ways. Some youth and their families are looking to go deeper and become more engaged in formation and service. Others need evangelization and invitation. Some may be anxious to come to weekly gatherings and join communities. Others resist this kind of participation but are longing to have someone to talk to about their faith. We need to have a variety of approaches that respond to different needs and yearnings of young people.*

*And finally, the last challenge for us educators is the building of an INTENTIONAL school faith community where all stakeholders DELIBERATELY, CONSCIOUSLY, and PURPOSEFULLY strive to create a Catholic environment where true discipleship is formed and nurtured. Dr. Edward Sri tells us to turn to the four pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church which he calls the four key habits of a disciple—the four practices that marked the earliest disciples of Jesus. According to Acts 2:42, the disciples in the early Christian Church devoted themselves (1) to the teaching of the apostles, (2) to fellowship, (3) to the breaking of bread, and (4) to prayer. This is the biblical model. When the Church has summed up the Catholic Faith, it often turns to these four points in Acts 2:42 to help categorize what it means to follow Jesus and be His disciples. They are the four pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church which every Catholic should know by heart. The first is the CREED which we profess; the second is the SACRAMENTS through which we experience God’s grace; the third is MORALITY, which is living the moral life through the Ten Commandments and the Social Teachings of the Church; and the fourth is PRAYER, through which we encounter God and build a vital relationship with Him.*

*As I end, I congratulate and thank Sister Ma. Nilda Masirag, the Congress Steering Committee, and the various task forces who prepared and organized this great event—the celebration of 30 years of gathering Paulinian schools in the country and other Paulinian schools in Asia and other parts of the world, for an experience of unity in vision, mission, spirituality, identity, and direction-setting. Paulinians all we truly are, disciples of Christ, sons and daughters of Paul, our Patron, and our founder, Father Louis Chauvet. Happy 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!*

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The keynote address was given by Fr. Dennis Lim, LC, who has been a sought-after speaker of many SPC Communities. (Fr. Lim was proud to say that his mother, Natalia Feliciano-Lim, was a Paulinian from Kinder to High School.)

Highlight of the second day of the Congress was a panel discussion on “Discipleship in the Era of the 4IR (Fourth Industrial Revolution)”

with the following panelists: Atty. Pilar Nenuca Almira (Paulinian from St. Paul Manila and President of Cardinal Santos Medical Center) for Leadership and Management; Fr. Lorenz Moises J. Festin (Assistant Director of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Manila Educational System—RCAM ES) for Basic Education; and Bro. Dennis Magbanua (President of De La Salle University College of St. Benilde) for Higher Education. Moderator was Mrs. Nikki Briones-Carsi Cruz (Paulinian from St. Paul Quezon City and Assistant Professor in the Ateneo de Manila University).

Other activities were concurrent sessions on different topics, "Wish Ko Lang: Listening to the Vices of the Youth," and a talk on "Psychological First Aid Skills in Accompanying the Young" by Fr. Dennis Paez, SDB.

The Congress ended with evaluation, synthesis, and Closing Remarks by Sr. Nilda Masirag, SPC, Assistant Provincial for Education, and the Closing Mass, celebrated by Bishop Bartolome Santos of the Diocese of Iba, Zambales.

**Sr. Nilda giving the Closing Remarks...**



**The SPU Manila delegates...**



**Sr. Evangeline and Dr. Dychangco with some "Wish Ko Lang" participants**

## **THIS WEEK...**

### **CAREER FAIR IN SPU MANILA**



The Guidance Services, in partnership with JOBS180, will be having a Career Fair on May 24 in the Founders Hall from 1:00-4:30 P.M.

All graduating students are required to attend the said event.

The students are reminded to bring their resumes to the fair.

Explore employment options and achieve your career goals!