

## Verbum Dei Missionary Married Couples in Philippines



Last March 15, 2016, the 5 Missionary Couples in the Philippines came to visit Archbishop Antonio Ledesma of the Archdiocese of Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines to present themselves as the Missionary Couple's Branch in the Philippines.

It was a wonderful moment to discuss particularly the following: Introduction of each missionary couples, number of children, address and place of origin; Presentation of apostolates of every couple and the whole Verbum Dei Community in Cagayan de Oro, Musuan, and Bukidnon.

The couples received a positive response from Bishop Ledesma assuring us and the whole community of his support and help especially in the Mission. To realize it is to have an Inter-religious link with the archdiocese of Cagayan de Oro. The meeting finalized with the blessing of the Archbishop for the couples and for the members of the community praying to the Lord that each one may 'continue to be light for many families'. A big and great reminder for all of us when we profess our bonds last 18th July 2015.

## Word of God to the work place



Last March 23, 2016 we gave a one day lenten recollection to the employees of Speed Drill Company. The theme "Mercy Poured out for You."

This was held at the Lestonnac Retreat Center in CDO. Some of the participants came with their spouse since married employees were encouraged to bring with them their husband or wife. For those who joined, it was for them a very good way to prepare for the upcoming Triduum celebration since the recollection was on Holy Wednesday.

The general fruit in the people was a fresh experience of the merciful love of God our Father. Having experienced the mercy of God in their life, they wanted to share the mercy they received to others. To be merciful just as our God the Father is merciful. The couple that were the owners of the company expressed their gratefulness to the Verbum Dei Missionary Family for conducting the retreat and expressed their desire to have it as an annual activity for their company to be able to respond not only to the financial needs but also to take care of the spiritual growth of their people.



## WORD OF GOD FOR KIDS

One of the newest apostolates opened in the last quarter of 2015 is in a school. Little Me Academy, is a school owned and run by one of the couples in the discernment course from CDO.

On February 16 & 17, 2016 we gave a pre-graduation overnight retreat to their 6th graders who were candidates for graduation, with the theme "Be Still and Know that I am God" held at Betania House of Prayer.

One of the highlights of the retreat that the students enjoyed and have touched them was the dynamic of writing down their sins then burning it as a sign that God is always ready to forgive us, then they approached the classmate or teacher to whom they would like express their gratitude and as well as those persons they would like to be reconciled with or say sorry to.

We are Regner and Mae. we started studying Theology on November 9, 2015 barely 3 weeks after I gave birth to our 4th child and at least four months after our 1st Bonds last July 18,2015 . We enrolled 2 subjects in particular 1. Sacramental theology and 2. The Synoptic Gospels.

We have classes at least 4 times weekly for at least 2 hours daily and we were privilege to study with more than 20 seminarians. The opportunity was challenging for us as a normal married couple, we have many things to integrate – Marriage, Family Life, Economy, Work, Apostolate, etc. We need to balance our time. Another challenge was that we have been long away from formal school so it meant we needed extra effort to read, study, assimilate and live out what we understood from the classes. Our studies now are not just for the sake of passing grades but for the growth of the faith as well for those whom we are accompanying.

Challenges were many but what we understood was that to study Theology was a moment of big grace for our Marriage and our Family. It was a moment to believe that there is something more that we can do and Commercial Building in our City.



## THEOLOGY

The four missionary couples are studying theology as part of their formation.

The life of my husband was really a testimony for me. Our business is to Design and Build Residential. My husband oversees more the project execution while I handle the Design and Finances. He used to have difficulty in delegating his many works but through our option, he learned how to trust our key persons in the office and the at the jobsite.

The generosity of my husband to share his personal thoughts and what he has understood has touched me and has helped me a lot to make up for the study time I lost for taking care of our children especially our new little boy Francis.

Sharing and helping each other as a couple is really a big help for us during our studies. I find it also amazing the passion and dedication of my husband in trying to be faithful with every allotted time that he has for his prayer, our dialogue, our kids, our studies, our work and etc. knowing that we need to have quality time on each schedule. The closest moment of encounter with God my husband had during our study was when he understood that God's total self-revelation happened in Christ because in Jesus was the total obedience and total acceptance of God. My husband's desire for the Eucharist grew more each day. The Eucharist have been a daily bread for us.

For my part, as a man, I also realized how God answered my longing to know Him more because I remember when I was younger, I longed to study about Him but never imagined studying in a seminary. The closest encounter I have with God during our study was when I learned that the total disparity of being between God and Man did not become a hindrance to God's total self revelation.



Instead, it was for that reason that God always is the first one to initiate the dialogue with us. I learned also that God reveals himself in all moments in the daily events of our lives, with all the people that we met and the situations. We face and that grace abounds us all the time. This made me more sensitive and more aware of God's presence. Another strong moment for me is when I realized how big the Seminary is but sadly it has many empty classrooms. Theology must be made more accessible and more friendly to the Lay members of the Church. If only each Parish would send at least one Lay to study what a difference would it make.

For us, to study Theology was a confirmation of God's promise in one of my prayers in the passage when the Lord told me in Proverbs 9:11 "Then I will multiply your days and increase your years of life." God is really able to multiply our lives and our capacities. Whenever we make Him the priority in our lives, our capacities and potentials are unleashed and the transcendence of our lives is beyond what we can imagine. God increases the mission and He increases the capacity of our heart to love and accommodate more people. This is we believe as multiplication. He does not divide our time but multiplies it so that we can never imagine its effects in us, in our children and our spiritual children.

Theology is really necessary for us couples and especially as Verbum Dei because we are forming apostles in our children and spiritual children. Because of the tremendous grace poured to us, we are ready for the next.





"I might pass through the heavens because of this over-praying," I murmured jokingly as I was invited to Little Me Academy's Silent Retreat for her teachers and staff. Of course I was glad to know that I would be having another encounter with Jesus, yet I initially thought it was just an opportunity for leisure, somewhere far from the city. I was even hesitant because it was actually my first time to attend a silent retreat, and I recently joined the four-day retreat in the Verbum Dei's Easter encounter. I admit, I'm neither a religious nor godly person. Nevertheless, I took part in it, as the facilitators from LMA and VDMF told me that God would speak to me, instead of me ranting to Him about my concerns. Excitedly, I packed my bags that April 1st, and took off to the Betania Retreat House. And after the tsecond of April, my soul was never the same.

As I stepped into the retreat house, I glanced at the theme on the board: "Stay With Us." It must be something frightening, I thought, but then started to change my perspective when I was told that it was from Luke 24:29. Once we began, I was asked to give my expectations and couldn't think of anything else but strength - especially in decision making.

There was a series of dynamics and long hours for prayer after the talks and testimonies of the speakers. It was one-of-a-kind since I spent that lengthy amount of time listening to Him, which I've never ever done in my whole life.

The verse which touched me the most is from Hebrew 11:1 - it talks about faith. Oftentimes, I fear to take risks because I fear of ending up with failure. But God answered me in my prayers, telling me that "taking risks" simply shows "having faith". Faith is a belief in something which is unseen. Indeed, the greatest fruit of my prayers was really FAITH - in everything I do, I should be faithful. No matter where my decision takes me, no matter the outcome of the situation, I will be delighted because I have faith that there is still something good to come.

At the end of that retreat, all of us, teachers and staff, went home with smiles on our faces and our souls filled with graces. Everyone is looking forward to the next retreat because of that unparalleled experience.

I am so grateful to God for sending us the Verbum Dei Community to experience His presence. I pray that many more people will experience the same. Teacher Jov Cobrador

Often times, I  
fear to take risk  
because I fear of  
ending up with  
failure. But God  
answered me in  
my prayers,  
telling me that  
"taking risk"  
simply shows  
"having faith"



## VD FAMILY CDO

EASTER ENCOUNTER FOR  
THE WHOLE FAMILY: KIDS,  
TEENAGERS, YOUTH,  
SINGLES AND COUPLES



Last March 24 (Maunday Thursday) to 27 (Easter Sunday), 2016 the Verbum Dei Missionary Family in Cagayan de Oro organized its annual celebration of the Holy Week thru a retreat called "Easter Encounter" with this years them "Mercy poured out for you" (1Tim 1:14) which is in line with Pope Francis' declaration of the year of special Jubilee on Mercy. It was held in Capitol University campus in Corrales avenue in Cagayan de Oro City. More than 150 people attended the retreat, which is composed of Couples, Singles, Youth, teens and kids. Each of these realities had their separate sessions (Youth, Teens and kids) except for the Couples and Singles.

After the encounter, an abundant fruit was received by those who participated such as Faithfulness and commitment to attend to the Spiritual activities offered by Verbum Dei, Joy and Enthusiasm in sharing the Love of God to more people, Generosity and Responsibility in extending this overflowing graces to many and a proof of this was the opening of a new apostolate which is a regular School of the Word for teachers and other school workers in Capitol University and more to come. As early as now the organizers are already considering a much bigger number of people to attend next years "Easter Encounter, count yourself in and see you next year.



