



## A Celebration of God's Gift of Vocation

**TAGAYTAY CITY, Philippines** - The Delegation of the Montfort Missionaries in the Philippines had their Annual Retreat from November 18 to 22, 2019 at the Bethlehem House of Prayer of the Franciscan Missionaries of the Infant Jesus in Tagaytay. The theme of this year's retreat is "*Mystery of Incarnation: The Ground of Our Being and Ministry as Montfortians*". The retreat facilitator personally chose this theme since the first two Filipino Montfort Missionaries, namely Rev. Fr. Richard J. Magararu, SMM and Rev. Fr. Ariel E. Aquino, SMM were celebrating their 25<sup>th</sup> Sacerdotal Ordination Anniversary during the time of the retreat on November 20.

The delegation is blessed with the presence of the Superior of the SMM Italian Province, Rev. Fr. Mario Belotti, SMM as the retreat facilitator who himself celebrated his 45<sup>th</sup> Sacerdotal Ordination Anniversary last March 9, 2019. It was a week spent in silence, prayer, reflection, recreation, self-reassessment and encounter with the Divine and with one another. In this retreat, Fr. Mario led us to a deeper appreciation of our Montfortian vocation as Ministers of God's loving presence in the world. We were challenged to become more effective Montfortians in our ministry. There is a need to always be in the state of wonderment of God who is a God of tenderness and to be deeply in love with solitude in order to incarnate the compassion of God as we serve the church and the world as prophets of today. With weak but powerful hands, we are called to foster spiritual growth and renewal in the life of the people. This will only be realized if we remain humble before God and to have the same humility of Mary who said, "*I am the handmaid of the Lord*". It is so, because the Mystery of the Incarnation is the ground of our being and ministry as Montfortians, and this mystery is a mystery of humility.

It was a joyful and grace-filled retreat for the delegation. Aside from Fr. Richard, Fr. Ariel and Fr. Mario's sacerdotal anniversary during the retreat period, Fr. Gener Pito, SMM and Fr. Federick Yumang, SMM marked also their 4<sup>th</sup> perpetual profession anniversary on November 21, and Fr. Paul Arnel Lucero, SMM and Fr. Angelo Pusikit, SMM marked their 21<sup>st</sup> sacerdotal ordination anniversary as well on November 22.

It was indeed a celebration of God's loving mercy and gift of vocations. As we continue our journey as a delegation currently animated by Rev. Fr. Norwyn Baydo, SMM and his councilors Rev. Fr. Santiago Casing, SMM and Rev. Fr. Paul Arnel Lucero, SMM, it is the desire of everyone to be humble like Mary so that we will become effective ministers of God's love and compassion as Montfortians in this part of the world. May the missionary zeal of St. Louis-Marie de Montfort be upon us so that like him, the motto of our lives would be *"GLORY TO GOD ALONE!"*.

*Fr. Federick Yumang, SMM*