

## MMMP at Two Years Old: A Consolation in the Church

*“The poor you will always have with you...”Mt 26:11; Mk 14:7; Jn 12:8*

*“We must have done something good to deserve this. Whatever it is, we are forever grateful to the MMMP and Fr. Suarez for becoming answers to our prayers.” – Iling People*

### I. MMMP Community and Houses

Two years after its birth at the heart of the Church, the MMMP community proudly says, “we are missionaries **of the Church, in the Church, with and for the Church.**” MMMP is born as **God’s initiative to reach out to His children** and as **His response to their plight.**

The audacity of its founder cannot but arouse its members’ passion for mission. The First General Assembly held for almost a month last summer has helped a lot in defining its identity as a community, setting its direction, clarifying areas of priority and delineating its particular **gift to** and **place in** the Mother Church.

MMMP houses eventually gain stability and order. Common life is given direction through common schedule and particular household norms. Some of the common activities that constructively shape its houses and communities are the following: **40-hour Eucharistic Adoration, regular weekly Bible sharing and reflections on MMMP missions, regular common prayers and devotions, regular monthly recollection, days with the founder, involvement in the Healing Masses with the founder, individual spiritual direction, and to top it all is the fraternal charity of the members.**

#### A. MMMP Student Brothers

Responding to the demands of the times and faithful to the directives on priestly formation, the MMMP community continues to keep itself abreast by sending its members to school. Nine (9) brothers are pursuing their studies for the academic year 2013-2014. They are distributed to various educational institutions and in different levels of academic formation. Five (5) are taking up college degrees with units in Philosophy at Della Salle University, Divine Word College, Claretian School of Studies and Arellano University. Three (3) are doing their theology at St. Vincent School of Theology, Inter-Congregational Theological Institute and University of Santo Tomas. One is taking up Canon Law at the University of Santo Tomas. One is taking up formation courses at Loyola School of Theology.

While doing their studies, the seminarians housed in Manila are involved in various ministries of the community. They are involved as choir and servers in the

regular TV Masses of Fr. Fernando. On Sundays they are involved in the two-hour regular radio program run by the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines dubbed as “Healing Grace with Fr. Fernando Suarez.” Likewise, they help facilitate Fr. Fernando’s Healing Masses and Healing Sessions especially in Luzon area. They are directly involved in the Healing Masses in Glorietta and Monte Maria, each gathering around fifteen thousand faithful every session from all walks of life.

Seminarians studying at Divine Word College are involved in apostolates in Iling through catechism classes, livelihood programs, leading the communion services in the communities, feeding program in the island, and assisting the Bishop Antonio Palang, SVD, DD in his ministries.

#### **B. MMMP Brothers in Iling**

Nine(9) brothers are on missionary immersion in Iling Island, Occidental Mindoro, where the MMMP Main House and the *Santisima Trinidad* chapel is located. These brothers are dynamically leading the apostolates in the island. They lead the communities in the liturgical celebrations. They conduct regular catechism classes in elementary and high school and train volunteer catechists. They take care of the distribution of the LED Solar lights to families in the island in partnership with the Watts of Love foundation. Moreover, they spearhead the implementation of the Feeding program in the island in partnership with Kiwanis Foundation.

#### **C. MMMP in Monte Maria**

Two (2) MMMP seminarians are based at the **Monte Maria Healing Center in Amuyong, Alfonso Cavite**. They take care of the worship services and the liturgico-pastoral programs. Likewise they facilitate the formation of the volunteers in the healing center.

#### **D. MMMP priests-applicants**

Some already- ordained priests from various communities have expressed interest to be part of the MMMP mission. While still regularizing their status of incardination, they supply the needs of priests in the Vicariate.

Fr. Hector Baniel is now assigned in Lubang island.

Fr. Romeo Barcelona is saying Masses in the Cathedral and Iling island.

Fr. Robert Cadid is saying Masses and taking care of the Pag-asa parish in Sablayan Occidental Mindoro

Fr. Dominic Mbah is finishing his higher studies

## **II. MMMP Apostolates/ Initiatives**

## A. Media Ministry

Responding to the Holy Mother Church's thrust to maximize all means of communication at the service of Evangelization<sup>1</sup>, the Missionaries of Mary Mother of the Poor started its media ministry to reach out to the worldwide community. The apostolate is always to provide opportunity for sharing of religious experience for the edification of the homebound audience and the faithful who want to deepen their commitment to the Church and most especially to provide opportunity for viewers and listeners a possible encounter with the Lord by creating an atmosphere of prayer.

- **TV Masses.** Fr. Fernando presides over Masses aired three Sundays every Month.
  1. TV5 Masses are aired every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of the Month. These are originally meant for homebound audience and their caregivers. However, since they are aired at 6:00am, as per observation and feedback from people, the audience has significantly expanded to include even the regular churchgoers.
  2. ABS CBN Masses are aired every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month. As per organizers of the said Mass, they have to open the studio earlier than the regular schedule due to the number of faithful coming to celebrate the Mass. Needless to say, this is a much sought-after celebration with the faithful coming also to be prayed over by Fr. Fernando personally, after the Mass. The response of the faithful has been overwhelmingly positive.

The MMMP seminarians are involved here as choir, acolytes and lectors.

- **Radio Program:** "Healing Grace with Fr. Fernando Suarez" is aired over **Radyo Veritas**, a Catholic radio run by the CBCP Media Ministry, every Sundays from 6:00 to 8:00 in the evening. This consists of healing education, testimonies, reflections and interviews regarding the healing grace and healing experiences, which is also available via live streaming.

This ministry started upon the request of the faithful even before the foundation of the new missionary community (MMMP). From time to time Fr Fernando is flocked by faithful who want to share their experiences over the radio to give glory to God after their conversion experiences or healing experiences.

Currently, MMMP seminarians are directly involved in the program. This consists of sharing reflections on the Sunday readings, education, praying the rosary and the healing prayer by Fr. Fernando.

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<sup>1</sup> Pastoral Instruction on the Means of Social **Communication** *Communio et progressio no. 2, cf Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Nuntiandi 45; see also* Message for the 35th World Communications Day, n. 4; see also Message for the 24<sup>th</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> World Communications Day.

- **Print Media.** MMMP Newsletter is printed and published quarterly here in the Philippines and distributed here and abroad. This medium features mission news, healing stories, testimonies of faith, developments and directions on various apostolates.
- **Social Media:** Healing Masses and talks of Fr. Fernando are also available through YouTube uploaded materials by some friends. News and schedules are also available at [www.montemaria.ph](http://www.montemaria.ph)

## **B. Communion Services in the Island**

Some of our MMMP seminarians are already done with their theological studies. Inspired by the founders' missionary zeal, the seminarians passionately explore the entire island and its basic ecclesial communities to rekindle in them the Christian spirit.

Part of this is the **Celebration of the Word and Communion Service.**

### **1. Iling proper**

The Iling Proper is benefiting a lot from the presence of the MMMP formation house. Since the chapel where we have our Common prayers, Liturgy of the Hours, Eucharistic Adoration, the Holy Rosary and other liturgical celebrations are conducted, is open to the public, people can always join them in the celebration.

Everyday there is a Eucharistic celebration in the main chapel. The faithful are nourished by the availability of these celebrations and sacraments.

### **2. Other 15 communities**

Together with Fr. Jeff Shannon, Fr Fernando's Canadian first disciple, the seminarians are assiduously taking turns in visiting the chapels and small communities in the entire island. The chapels are visited at least once a month.

## **C. Catechetical Program**

Aside from the administration of the sacraments and liturgical celebration, mmmmp seminarians are directly taking care of the catechetical formation of the people. These are done by forming the catechists and as teachers themselves.

### **1. Iling proper**

In Iling Proper, seminarians are teaching the High School students on a regular basis. This fills an enormous lacuna in their religious formation.

The MMMP has also trained volunteer catechists to teach the Elementary pupils. Thus, catechetical formation is being taken care of with volunteer catechist teaching regularly.

**2. The other ten (10) barangays are taught by catechist trained by the mmmp seminarians**

3. Sunday catechism classes are underway to be handled by volunteer catechists

#### **D. Feeding Program in Iling**

Indeed, when man prays, God works! Needless to say, the material poverty of the island inhabitants has led the children to malnutrition and undernutrition. The MMMP, in partnership with *Kiwanis Foundation Incorporated* is feeding the whole island's children twice a week. The parents, barangay officials and teachers are tapped to help facilitate the implementation of the program. The implementation of the program is spearheaded by the MMMP seminarians based in Iling island.

The following communities and barangays are being fed twice a week:

Iling proper  
Ambulong island  
Labangan  
Ansiray  
Catayongan  
Pawican  
Tibago  
Pitogo  
Natandol  
Manga

#### **E. Support to Informal Settlers**

This support to informal settlers' children commenced back in 2010 with the children along West Avenue, Quezon City outside the CBC- run radio station. Fr. Fernando recalled, it started with a handful of kids when he invited them to join his meal in a fast food (Andok's Chicken) after his regular Radio Veritas "Healing Grace with Fr. Fernando Suarez" Program one Sunday evening. The

subsequent Sundays the number of kids grew. *“It was chaotic at first. But I realized it’s a chance for me to gather and organize them. Why not feed them all? At first I paid for all they have consumed. Now, it is done in partnership with Andok’s Litsong Manok”*.

Soon afterwards, the assistance expanded to include their weekly school allowance. To date, the ministry is giving weekly allowance to around hundred of these children in elementary and high school. Furthermore, we also give their family a chance to have outing/bonding and excursion twice a year in Batangas where they enjoy the sea waters and socialize with other informal settlers.

#### **F. Youth Evangelization Services (YES)**

The youth has a particular place in the heart of Fr. Fernando. He firmly believes that they cannot just be set aside if we are sincere about evangelization and mission.

His one-week personal retreat last summer of 2012 finally gave birth to the Youth Evangelization Services. Fr. Fernando believes in the capacity of the youth and their energy. The youth can “evangelize their fellow youth” because they can easily connect with one another given that they speak the same ‘language’. The youth has a enormous energy that has to be tapped lest they will be directed to other things not productive. Ministering to the youth is an investment. It does bear fruit easily but it’s part of the long-range program.

Sometime in May 2012, Fr. Fernando, after having put into writing his vision for the youth, gathered few high school graduates from the remotest mission area of Iling and Sta Teresa in Mindoro. They underwent series of formation sessions and training, aside from immersion into the Church activities in local chapels.

Their training and formation consists of self-awareness sessions, catechism classes, capability building for presentations. After around three months of intensive formation, the group started to have pilot presentations in high school classes of Sta Teresa in Mindoro. After enough and extensive evaluation of their first engagements, the group, headed by two mmp seminarians, decided they are ready to push ahead and expand.

In the span of around twenty (20) months, the YES movement has ministered to almost all public schools of Occidental and Oriental Mindoro, Baybay City in Leyte and Semirara Island in Antique counting approximately 50,000 students. The evangelization services is done through recollection, sharing of religious experience, creative catechism. This is usually a week-long program. With due coordination and courtesy to the Bishops and local church and school authorities,

the YES has created avenues for religious experience and evangelization to these public school students. This attempts to fill the lacuna of religious formation among the public high schools. Most of them have this as their first recollection experience.

Currently, the group is headed by an mmmp seminarian together with a volunteer nun. We have more than 25 members. The group is mobilizing now to create local chapters in schools they have already administered.

### **G. Scholarship Programs**

Forming the youth is an investment. Hand in hand with the formation of community and building of the Church is the formation of its future leaders. MMMP Scholarship program is part of this. To balance their technical and academic formation, the MMMP gives regular formation like Catechism, recollection and pastoral and community exposures.

Presently, the MMMP Scholarship Program is sending **more than fifty (50)** students to different colleges in **San Jose Mindoro and Manila**. In San Jose we are sending them at Divine Word College of San Jose and Occidental Mindoro State College. The MMMP is taking care of their **tuition fees**. In Manila we are sending them to Central Colleges of the Philippines, Cavite State University, and National College of Science and Technology.

In **Batangas** area, we have **12 scholars** in different levels: **two (2)** in High School, **nine (9)** in College, and **one (1)** Seminarian. The MMMP is taking care of their **full tuition** fees.

### **H. Scholars at the National College of Science and Technology (NCST)**

When invited to say Mass at the National College of Science and Technology, Fr. Fernando shared about the plight of the people of Iling. Thence, the institution offered a program to help them get employed.

NCST offered exams to around fifty (50) unemployed high school graduates from Iling with ages ranging between 18 and 24. Thirty five (35) of them passed the preliminary exams, 20 men, 15 women, all of whom are single. (From Iling proper: 24 men and women; From Alfonso, Tagaytay: 6 men; from Labangan island in Iling: 5 women.)

From there they are offered an intensive ladderized vocational/technical program for three months. The NCST connects with companies and ask about available jobs. Then the NCST will be the one to train these candidates. After three months of training, they will already be employed by the company if satisfied by their performance during the training program.

The MMMP is the one helping these applicants financially. We take care of their **clothing expenses, including uniform, dental check ups, medical examinations, transportation expenses, food and lodging expenses. The MMMP takes care of these expenses until such time that their work becomes stable.**

After their contract with the company ends, they can choose to undergo another training. Thus, it is ladderized in this sense. Another option is re-application to the same job depending on their performance.

As initial feedback from the NCST trainers, Iling applicants are excelling and have been exhibiting exemplary performance. One thing is certain, though, the MMMP has not only taught them to earn a living. Rather, we are offering them an opportunity to live, with dignity.

## **I. Livelihood Assistance in Iling**

### **1. Seaweeds Farming**

The shores of Iling and Mabulong are very conducive for seaweeds farming. Much as the inhabitants want to, they have no resources.

The MMMP identified **twenty families as beneficiaries.** In Iling proper, we have lent **twelve thousand pesos (Php12,000)** as initial capital for each of these twenty families as initial capital to start the seaweeds farming. In Ambulong island we have **twelve families** as beneficiaries.

An MMMP seminarian is taking charge of the program.

### **2. Bamboo sticks**

As in other islands, Bamboo trees grow abundantly in Iling island. Inhabitants have benefited from them for their various uses. Houses are generally made up of bamboo trees, furnitures are and other handicrafts.

Bamboo-stick/barbecue-stick making has turned into living when the MMMP through the initiative of Fr. Fernando acted as bridge for their market. MMMP connects the Ilingueños to stores in Manila using these bamboo sticks.

To date, approximately **fifty (50) families** are profiting from this.