

The Filipino people seduced Sr Diane Thibodeau

Diane Thibodeau came back under the charm of this "immersion in a bath of human warmth" and with these little things "that tickle your heart". As she went there to animate the annual retreat with "my sisters, it is rather they who, through their witness, spoke to me of the power of prayer to create unity and of their commitment body and soul to and with the people they meet."

This month-long trip was an opportunity to experience a total change of scenery. "I returned home enriched by this contact with a most welcoming and gracious people. The easy smile and the Mabuhay (Welcome - Bienvenue) really express the feeling of kindness they have. »

Sr Diane enjoyed every minute she spent in this country where the Filipinos' taste for life shines through, despite the very unequal living conditions. She was particularly touched by their ingenuity and pride in standing up for themselves.



Warm welcome upon arrival at La Sagesse Rehabilitation & Development Centre



Free hugs are always appreciated even at 7:30 am.



St Valentine's Day activity in Cebu where parents & young ones exchanged valentines.



The retreatants: front l.to r.: Lyn, Gina (leader of the Asia-Oceania Delegation), Hélène, Rely (FOW), back: Diane, Liane, Belen, Nancy, Malou & Jean.

Diversified commitments

Upon her arrival, her integration into the centre's usual opening ceremony set the tone, while at the same time illustrating the Filipino welcome. During her exchanges and visits, Sr Diane was able to take full measure of the work carried out by the Daughters of Wisdom in Manila and Cebu. "The extent of their insertions is astonishing given their small number," she says.

The Daughters of Wisdom assume a presence in Manila at the La Sagesse Rehabilitation and Development Centre. They make regular visits to the women's prison to meet their medical and material needs not met by the government. In Cebu, they work in a kindergarten and health clinic and make home visits. In both cities, the sisters sponsor students with the moral and financial support of benefactors.



Short period of song & expression in music with group of sponsored students in Cebu.



The Cebu community in their colourful yard. From left to right beside Diane: Avi, Malou, H  l  ne, & Belen.



Groupe of senior students of La Sagesse... after their brilliant performance.



Before the evening meal a meeting with the Novices. They are from Malawi and Indonesia.

Energizing encounters

The week-long retreat at Bulacan, in an enchanting site belonging to the Montfort Fathers, was a stimulating mutual enrichment. It was the same during her intervention with a group of Friends of Wisdom in Cebu where she shared a small glimpse of the book "Listen to Wisdom".

Other meetings also took place with groups of sponsored students in Cebu and Manila who impressed her with their talent for music & song, with the Staff and employees of the Wisdom Centre for a talk on Lent and Lectio Divina. There were also shared meals with the sisters both in the international novitiate and the pre-novitiate.

Her stay in the Philippines made her discover a certain reality of the country and the great popular piety. She also had a good insight into the close relationship between the Fathers, Brothers and Sisters of the Montfortian Family.

Returning home just before the closing of borders imposed by the global pandemic, Sr Diane takes solace in the fact that she has returned home. "I will continue to cherish the memory of this trip, especially as here at the Centre numerous Staff members are Filipino women who came to Canada but whose hearts still beat for their beloved country."

Profond merci du c  ur! Thank you so much! Maraming salamat po!