

FOREWORD

As the fifth centenary of “Philippine Christianity” unfolds, the local Church looks back with gratitude for the gift of the Christian faith that came to our shores in 1521. Likewise, we focus with gladness on 2021 which the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) has designated as the “Year of *missio ad gentes*: Gifted to Give.” These events invite us to respond with generosity to the grace of the present moment, not allowing the COVID-19 pandemic to tempt us to be more self-referential and less mission-oriented. By God’s grace, we pray that this unprecedented international crisis in our lifetime will be a real wake-up call towards reaching out more to one another and to others as one family in our common home. Then, we will truly be, as many have greeted their friends, “more safe” and “more sane.”

It is a fact that we need not only “stay home” and “stay safe” as we face the COVID-19 pandemic, we also need to “stay sane”; this means not being overwhelmed by fear and despair. As Pope Francis reminds us, “Challenges exist to be overcome! Let us be realists, but without losing our joy, our boldness and our hope-filled commitment. Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of missionary vigor” (*Evangelii Gaudium* 109). Our Christian faith provides the needed anchor to “stay sane,” walking in deep faith with our crucified-risen Lord.

This book, with the title *Go, Teach, Make Disciples*, contains a wide panorama of teachings, insights, and reflections about mission and evangelization. It is our heartfelt desire that this material may not just remain bits and pieces of information for our heads. May these well-crafted modules be a great help towards the formation and transformation of our minds and hearts and flow over into the works of our hands in the service of others through dedicated missionary evangelization.

You are most probably well aware that the Pontifical Mission Societies, a union of four organizations that serve mission promotion, has its central administration in Rome, but has national offices in more than 120 countries; it also has local offices within 1,120 dioceses around the entire world under the care of Diocesan Mission Directors. Their main purpose is “to promote a universal missionary spirit, a spirit of prayer and sacrifice among all baptized Catholics, and to gather support for the worldwide mission of the Church.” Certainly, one pivotal way in which these tasks are fulfilled is through education and formation for missionary involvement. Here one finds a central motive for the preparation and dissemination of the materials contained in this attractive volume.

The National Office of Pontifical Mission Societies-Philippines is both pleased and grateful to co-publish this book in cooperation with the CBCP Episcopal Commission on Mission (ECM). Together with His Excellency Most Reverend Socrates Mesiona, MSP, Vicar Apostolic of Puerto Princesa and ECM Chairman, and the rest of the Church in the Philippines, I wish to thank Father James H. Kroeger, MM, for his gracious kindness in meticulously preparing and sharing with us these rich materials. We truly need such resources as we celebrate 2021 more meaningfully and respond more generously to the call of *missio ad gentes* in the coming years, as the Philippines begins its “second” 500 years of living and spreading the Christian faith. Join in the Church’s mission; you are most welcome! Experience the joy of being witnesses of God’s abundant love and mercy!

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