

# Oldest Philippine Catholic Youth Org turns 80, launches new programs

By Frence Boiser, Photos by Jero Contreras

**M**anila, Philippines – 280 students, alumni, animators/advisers, chaplains of the Student Catholic Action of the Philippines including the national secretariat and its board trooped to De La Salle University in Taft to witness the opening program of the movement's 80<sup>th</sup> year anniversary.

A press conference was held at the university's Learning Commons highlighting SCAP's Manifesto on its 80<sup>th</sup> year of foundation. It contains the movement's commitment to practice good governance, to embrace exemplary student leadership, to promote solidarity and collaboration and to care for the environment. Steven Nelson Segura, SCAP's National Coordination College Council Chairperson, read the manifesto. Questions raised from student groups coming



from NCR, the International Movement of Catholic Students-Pax Romana and some student publications were answered by the panel comprising the SCAP Board, namely, its chair, Sonia Roco and Executive Director, Atty. Alma "Kins" Aparece. Kleine Abrugena from DLSU and Mr. Segura from the University of Negros Occidental-Recoletos represented the students for the panel while two SCA alumni, namely Archbishop Antonio Ledesma, SJ, DD of Cagayan de Oro and Dr. Ma. Noelyn Dano, of FABC Climate Change Desk joined.



Archbishop Ledesma presided the Holy Mass and was concelebrated by the Columbans and SCA Chaplains at the Most Blessed Sacrament Chapel. SCA members and alumni received SCAP pins for their renewal of commitment. The rest of the program was held at the packed Verdure Hall wherein a talk show dubbed as, "*Kuwentuhan: Bunga ng 80* (Storytelling: Fruit of 80)" was staged live with Sonia Roco as the host. It featured notable alumni guests, an animator and a student leader.

## Transformative and Emotional Sharing of SCA Stories

Former Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban, one of the guests, went emotional in narrating his humble beginnings as a student and his SCA formation in FEU. He shared also the prayer he composed while he

was still serving as the chief justice. It expressed a sure hope of heaven's warm welcome after a life-long service and mission.

Steven Nelson Segura quoted Pope Francis' message on his first visit to the Philippines, "God is full of surprises." It became a reality in SCA since joining in high school until college. He meant these "surprises" as opportunities to lead in various student organizations not only in SCA.

Dr. Noelyn "Weng" Dano highlighted her lows as a Catholic but remained steadfast in not giving up her faith despite the powerful influences of secularism while she was studying outside of the country. Later, her doctoral research and advocacy on environmental led her to work anew with the Federation of Asian Bishops Conference (FABC)-Climate Change Desk and credits her decision to work for the Church back from her SCA formation.

Evangeline Fortades, an animator from Laurel High School, recounts her long journey with public high school students serving as SCA Adviser for almost 20 years while Archbishop Ledesma shared his moments in SCA while studying in Ateneo and also the fruits of his religious life especially on inter-religious dialogue.



### Launching a Year-long Celebration

The SCA National Secretariat launched a year-long 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary program and activities. This includes the new vision and mission of the organization, refreshed formation programs, the First SCA Mobile Cine Short Film Festival and the anniversary theme song, "*Lipad (Kaya natin 'to)*," composed and interpreted by Jregette Dr Normandia, SCA Coordinator of Novaliches and arranged by song-writer Marlon Barnuevo, finalist for Himig Handog Pop Songs this year.

De La Salle University in collaboration with the La Sallian Pastoral Office and DLSU SCA hosted the event. Joseph Kleine Abrugena, DLSU SCA President together with another SCA leader, Lea Sy facilitated the opening activities. The entire event was aired online at SCA account's Facebook Live powered by Globe Telecom wherein participants can also freely access internet to post fresh updates.

The 80<sup>th</sup> foundation anniversary of SCAP bears the theme, **“Bunga ng Otsenta: SCA at 80, Our Story to Sustainability.”** This reflects the organization's thanksgiving for the fruits it produced for the past 80 years while working on the challenges to sustain its program for social and spiritual transformation. SCAP has been a seedbed of leaders who are now working in the church, education, environment, government and in other public service sectors.

SCAP started as a scholastic philosophy club on April 12, 1936 in UP Manila by Columban priest, Fr. Edward McCarthy. It spread quickly in 1950s to merely all provinces in the Philippines through the guidance of the Society of St. Columban (now Mission Society of St. Columban) Chaplains. The national coordination however suffered the effects of Martial Law because of its strong involvement in human rights advocacy and active leadership against corruption. It silenced for years until it was revived in 1997 through the efforts of the late Teresita E. Nitorreda, former Dean of the East Asian Pastoral Institute (EAPI) and Bishop, now Archbishop Rolando J. Tria Tirona who was then the Commission on Youth Chair of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP)

SCAP is currently existing in over 200 secondary and tertiary schools in 20 arch/dioceses clustered in NCR, Northern Luzon, Central Luzon, Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. It established its National Secretariat in 2007 to continue the coordination among its member-schools around the country. SCAP is known for its leadership formation program, Inquiry Method of Reflection and Cell Technique.

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