



# **2017 WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK CELEBRATION**

1-7 February 2017

***UniHarmony Partners Manila***

*Theme: Celebrating Life in the Spirit of  
Mercy and Compassion*



UniHarmony Partners Manila

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**Theme: Celebrating Life in the Spirit of Mercy and Compassion**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

UniHarmony Partners Manila established in 2011 brings together under one umbrella a network of faith based organizations which aims, through a series of activities, to spread the message of interfaith harmony, dialogue and cooperation as key elements towards nation building.

This year, 2016, UniHarmony Partners Manila celebrated the World Interfaith Harmony Week with a daily dose of activities every day for the whole week from February 1-7. In cooperation with partners from government and non-government organizations, and the media, a series of activities brought about the spirit of harmony and peace to people in the community and society.

#### ***Rationale:***

The UN General Assembly proclaimed World Interfaith Harmony Week as an annual event to be observed during the first week of February starting 2011 in resolution [A/RES/65/5](#) adopted on 20 October 2010. In the resolution, the General Assembly, points out that mutual understanding and interreligious dialogue constitute important dimensions of a culture of peace and establishes World Interfaith Harmony Week as a way to promote harmony between all people regardless of their faith.

Responding to this global call for harmony and solidarity, the **UniHarmony Partners Manila** was established in 2011 to implement programs and activities during the World Interfaith Harmony Week. The main goal of the celebration is to strengthen unity and cooperation between and among religions and faith-based organizations, and to advocate peace and harmony in society.

In April 2013, Republic Act 10525 was enacted declaring the First Week of February of every year as “World Interfaith Harmony Week” in the Philippines. Section 1 states that “All government agencies and instrumentalities, including government-owned and -controlled corporations as well as local government units, are hereby mandated to carry out the observance of activities designed to advance the message of interfaith harmony and goodwill in accordance with religious traditions and practices.”

### ***Objectives:***

To organize activities in solidarity with the global celebration of the World Interfaith Harmony Week;  
To foster friendship and advance common action between and among the interfaith communities;  
To promote awareness of the challenges and aspirations of the World Interfaith Harmony Week; and,  
To witness to love, mercy and compassion as wellsprings of harmony and mechanisms of dialogue.

### ***Member Organizations:***

1. Episcopal Commission on Inter-religious Dialogue, Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP)
2. Ministry of Ecumenical and Interfaith Affairs, Archdiocese of Manila
3. University of Santo Tomas-Institute of Religion
4. Religions for Peace Philippines
5. University of the Philippines-Institute of Islamic Studies
6. Silsilah Dialogue Movement
7. Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO)
8. SM Group of Companies
9. Imam Council of the Philippines
10. Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches
11. Miriam College-Center for Peace Education
12. Peacemakers' Circle
13. Focolare Movement
14. United Religions Initiative Philippines (URI)
15. Pacific Dialogue Foundation
16. Interfaith Council of Leaders-Quiapo

17. PNP Chaplain Services
18. Fo Guang Shan Mabuhay Temple
19. Aksiyon para sa Kapayapaan at Katarungan-
20. Center for Active Nonviolence for Phil., Inc. AKKAPKA-CANV
21. Teodora: In Defense of the Authentic Woman
22. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints-Philippines Public Affairs Department



## **II. Digest Summary**

### **2017 World Interfaith Harmony Week**

#### **1-7 February 2017**

#### **Metro Manila, Philippines**

**Video: Day1-7 Recap:**  
**TV Feature:**



### **DAY 1**

#### **Launch Meeting of UPM**

CBCP-ECID, RCAM MEIFA

7:30-9:30 am, Day 1, Villa San Miguel, Mandaluyong

A breakfast dialogue meeting commenced the celebration of the World Interfaith Harmony Week for the year 2017. Leaders from faith based organizations attended the event. This year's theme was "*Celebrating Life in the Spirit of Love and Compassion.*" Rev. Fr. Carlos Reyes, the executive secretary of Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) Episcopal Commission on Interreligious Dialogue, gave the Welcoming address.

#### **World Hijab Day**

University of the Philippines

12:30-5:00 pm, Day 1, UP Balay Kalinaw

Non-Muslims were given the opportunity to wear a hijab in solidarity with Muslim women worldwide. The goal was to create a more peaceful world where global citizens respect each other. Muslim women displayed their artistry in folding the scarves.

#### **Interfaith Dinner**

Pacific Dialogue Foundation

6:30-8:00 pm, Day 1, ICAD Headquarters, Wilson St., San Juan City

**Video: Day 1:** <https://vimeo.com/206216649>



### **DAY 2**

#### **Coffee Talk**

UniHarmony Partners Manila

8:30-11:30 am, Day 2, PNCO Clubhouse, Camp Crame

The PNP Chaplaincy Services, Imam Council of the Philippines and United Religions Initiatives joined the nation in celebrating the World Interfaith Harmony Week by holding a symposium on February 5, 2017 at Camp Crame, PNP Headquarters.

## **Conference on Religion and the Millennials**

1:30-5:00 pm, Day 2, University of Santo Tomas Alumni Building.

A seminar on interreligious dialogue titled: “Love Mercy, and Compassion across the Faith Traditions: Religion and the Millennials. Welcoming Remarks were given by Dr. Lilian Sison, PhD. Secretary General, Religions for Peace, Philippines and Director, UST Office of International Relations and Programs.

**Video: Day 2:** <https://vimeo.com/206216668>



## **DAY 3**

### **Canvas Mandala and Verse Reading**

FGS Mabuhay Temple

8:30-4:00 pm, Day 3, FGS Mabuhay Temple, 656 Ocampo St., Malate, Manila

A Canvas Mandala was made by different youth from different religions with the theme: *Celebrating Life in the Spirit of Love and Compassion*. Inspiring verses were quoted from the Bible, the Quran, Bhagavad Gita and many other sources.

**Video: Day 3:** <https://vimeo.com/206216717>



## **DAY 4**

### **2017 Youth Peace Camp**

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

7:00 am-8:00 pm, Day 4, Phillip’s Sanctuary, Antipolo, Rizal

Young single adult (aged 18-25 years old) Catholics, Muslims, Buddhists and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints learned to understand, appreciate and respect each faith’s uniqueness and shared attributes, and established good rapport with each other for peace-building and future partnerships

### **Interfaith Dialogue Circle**

Peacemakers’ Circle

3:00 pm-6:00 pm, Day 4, Ugnayan Hall Phildrra Partnership Center, Loyola Heights, Quezon City  
Conflict Transformation in my Faith Tradition.

### **Child Protection Seminar**

Focolare Movement

1:30 pm-5:00 pm, Day 4, Focolare Center, 4800 Valenzuela St., Sta. Mesa Manila

Unharmy Partners (UPM) values the participation of young people in its activities and is committed to upholding good practices in the Church’s ministry with children and young people. As UPM commits to create a safe and welcoming environment for the children and the young people, it would like to promote and uphold at all times the dignity and rights of

all children and young people committed to its pastoral care. UPM accepts its responsibility and obligation to safeguard the protection and welfare of children in its care, it undertakes to ensure a best practice response to child protection issues by having a clear child protection policy and procedures.

**Video: Day 4:**



## **DAY 5**

### **Forum on the 2017 WIHW Youth Peacebuilding Workshop**

Miriam College

9:00 am-4:00 pm, Day 5, Miriam College

Muslims, Christians, and other faith groups marched to the places of worship in the Quiapo area to express solidarity and harmony among religions. Participants visited both the house of worships of the Catholics and Muslims.

### **Peace Forum**

Teodora: Celebrating Life Across Faiths

7:30 am-10:30 am, Day 5, Camp Benjamin, Alfonso-Maragondon Rd., Alfonso, 4123 Cavite

Young single adult (aged 18-25 years old) Catholics, Muslims, Buddhists and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints learned to understand, appreciate and respect each faith's uniqueness and shared attributes, and established good rapport with each other for peace-building and future partnerships

### **Tapatan: Media Forum on Interfaith Dialogue in the Philippines**

AKKAPKA-CANV

2:00-5:00 pm, Day 5, Sulyap ng Pag-asa, Bagong Silangan, Quezon City

An interreligious afternoon with about 100 children in Bagong Silangan.

**Video: Day 5:** <https://vimeo.com/206216802>

To view photos and videos of the 2016 World Interfaith Harmony Week-Philippines, please visit:



**UniHarmony Partners Manila**

## **Launch Meeting of UPM**

CBCP\_ECID, RCAM MEIFA

Opening Ceremony of 2017 World Harmony Week Celebration

Villa San Miguel, Mandaluyong City

A breakfast dialogue meeting commenced the celebration of the World Interfaith Harmony Week for the year 2017. This was held at the Villa San Miguel, Mandaluyong City, on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of February 2017.

Leaders from faith based organizations attended the event. This year's theme was "*Celebrating Life in the Spirit of Love and Compassion.*"

After singing the Philippine national anthem, a silent prayer was offered. Prof. Pablito A. Baybado from the University of Santo Tomas then recognized all the guests.

Rev. Fr. Carlos Reyes, the executive secretary of Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) Episcopal Commission on Interreligious Dialogue, gave the Welcoming address and highlighted the Philippines' rich diversity of cultures and faiths. Regarding the \$15,000 2<sup>nd</sup> prize money from last year's Interfaith Week, Father Reyes said "We are going to promote the dialogue of faith and harmony throughout the year by producing 13-episode television series to be shown on Catholic station TV Maria. The target audience in the Millennials and two young women will be hosts of the show. Topics will be common areas of interest such as courtship, fashion and food. "Extremists," he said, "would like to portray the other as a non-human entity. They seek to dehumanize 'the other.' By showing our common humanity we defeat their purpose."

Rev. Fr. Richard James M. Babao, Assistant Minister, Ministry for Ecumenical and Inter Faith Affairs of the Archdiocese of Manila gave a recap of World Interfaith Harmony Week 2016. Increased respect and appreciation were the outcome of the many activities. Particularly the young people had a great experience associating with people of different faiths. Four children of different faiths spoke at the closing ceremony and they expressed our highest aspirations for world interfaith harmony. The words of a young girl from war-torn Mindanao were especially touching.

The message of peace was also expressed through music by vocalist, Angel Castillo.



## World Hijab Day

University of the Philippines Institute of Islamic Studies

An Interfaith Forum, “Celebrating Women’s Rights in the Light of Islam,” was held at Balay Kalinaw, UP Diliman on February 1, 2017, 2017 World Hijab Day. Sponsors included the University of the Philippines Institute of Islamic Studies, Wahdatul Asabiyyah, Muslim Student Association in cooperation with Manila Human Development, Inc. and the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF). Non-Muslims were given the opportunity to wear a hijab in solidarity with Muslim women worldwide. The goal was to create a more peaceful world where global citizens respect each other. Muslim women displayed their artistry in folding the scarves. Some of the non-Muslim women remarked that the scarves were lovely and they really felt more beautiful while wearing a hijab.

Printed in the program was a quote by Nobel Peace Prize Winner, Tawakkul Karman:

“Man in early times was almost naked, and as his intellect evolved he started wearing clothes. What I am today and what I’m wearing represents the highest level of thought and civilization that man has achieved, and is not regressive. It’s the removal of clothes again that is a regression back to the ancient times.”

The Opening Doa was given by Mr. Ahmed Salidin. Opening and Welcome Remarks were given by Prof. Macrina A. Morados, Dean, UP-IIS. Introduction of the Speaker was by the Emcee, Mr. Abdulhakeem Lomondot.

Keynote topic was “The Rights of Women in the Light of Islam,” by Sheikh Nadher Oquendo. Welcoming the audience, he said “Cooperation must come from everything. There is a diverse community who came here to learn. There are those who think that diversity is a threat, but humanity is all about diversity.” Sheikh Oquendo enumerated and praised the rights of Muslim women:

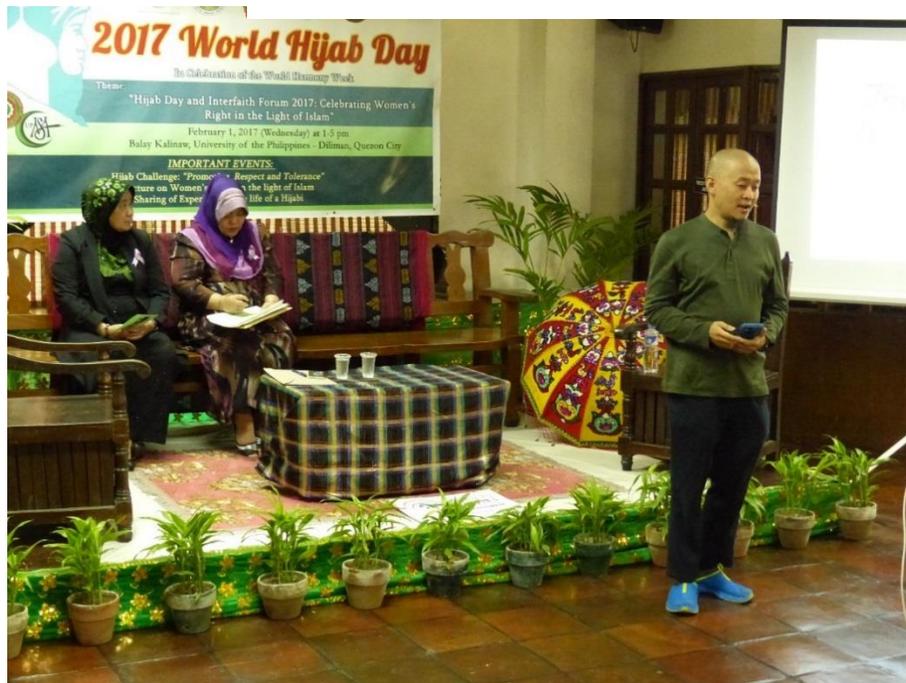
- Right to advice and to express.
- Right to enjoin good and forbid evil.
- Right to own properties.
- Right to buy and sell.
- Right to inherit.
- Right to give to charity.
- Right to live a decent life.
- Right to be educated.

A talk show, “Sharing Women’s Experience: The Life of the Hijabi” was hosted by Dean Macrina Morados and Commissioner Aisha Flores Malayang. Panelists included Ms. Bai Rohanisa Sumbad, Ms. Marjan Nur Saladan, Ms. Darlene Baltazar, a Student from GS 197, Sheikh Nadher Oquendo and Ms. Joy Wadi.

Closing Remarks were by Commissioner Aisha Flores Malayang, NCMF.



*Day1- World Hijab Day*



## Interfaith Dinner

Pacific Dialogue Foundation  
ICAD Headquarters  
Wilson St., San Juan City



## **Coffee Talk**

Imam Council of the Philippines

United Religions Initiative

PNCO Clubhouse, Camp Crame

PNP Chaplaincy Services

8:30-5:00 am, Day 2, February 2, 2017

PNP Headquarters

The PNP Chaplaincy Services, Imam Council of the Philippines and United Religions Initiatives joined the nation in celebrating the World Interfaith Harmony Week by holding a symposium on February 5, 2017 at Camp Crame, PNP Headquarters. Recital of the Holy Qur'an was given by Imam Abi Hamidin. Welcoming Remarks were given by Imam (Psupt) Ebra M Moxsir, DPA, President, ICPI. Speakers included Imam Akmad Wahab, MPA, National Coordinator, ICPI/Executive Director, FILMUS, Father Carlos Reyes, Colonel Ani Oni, Police Chaplain, Kim Edris, Regional Director NCMF, Elder Rual Villanueva, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Datu Yusoph Uacalangcong, Miao Jing, Atty. Harolan Ali, Armina Monira, Sultan Rasullah, Shiek Ahmad Breshier, Chairwoman Bri Sahira Mandia, DOH Maribeth Chick, Aleen Hajiko Tahin, Aladeris Ahmad Sayed.

Father Reyes made the suggestion that instead of calling the gathering "Coffee Talk, the name should be changed to "Coffee, Chocolate and Tea Talk" to acknowledge difference beliefs of members of the group. Camaraderie, mutual understanding and cooperation are the ways to achieve peace in a pluralistic society.

Many other speakers mentioned the "Coffee, Chocolate and Tea" idea as a useful reminder that we should show respect for one another and accommodate differences in belief. It should be an interfaith perspective. We have to sit and blend effectively.

In his closing remarks, Commissioner Aisha flores-Malayang, NCMF, said "The general concern of all religion is peace and for Islam in particular. For love and harmony to be a continuous reality it must be found living in the heart and mind of every individual. God created this life and all human beings. We must remember that we are brothers."

Interfaith – Day 2  
Gathering of Imams



## Conference on Religion and the Millennials

Religions for Peace Philippines

University of Santo Tomas Institute of Religion

Silsilah Peace Club Quiapo

On Thursday, February 2, 2017 there was a seminar/workshop on interreligious dialogue titled: “Love, Mercy and Compassion across the Faith Traditions: Religion and the Millennials. The students in attendance were encourage to appraise the relevancy of religion in their own context as youth. Their opinions were based on their perception of their own religion, and also based on their perception of other religions. Welcoming Remarks were given by Dr. Lilian Sison, PhD. Secretary General, Religions for Peace, Philippines and Director, UST Office of International Relations and Programs. Four guest panelists each gave a presentation followed by a question and answer period: Rev, Fr. Carlos V. Reyes, S.T.L. Executive Secretary, CBCP-Episcopal Commission on Interreligious Dialogue; Venerable Master Miao Jing, Head Abbess. Fo Guang Shan, Philippines; Dr. Potre D. Diampuan, Regional Coordinator, United Religious Initiative, Southeast Asia-Pacific (URI-SEAP); and Dr. Shakuntala “Shakun” Moorjani-Vaswani, Vice President & OIC, The Peacedmaker’s Circle Foundation, Inc., President, Indian Ladies Club. Fr. Reyes described Millennials as being born between 1977 and 1995. People born prior to 1945 are Traditionalists. Those born between 1945 and 1965 are called baby boomers. Those belonging to Gen X were born 1966 to 1976. After Millennials came the more recent Gen Z or Centennials born 1996 or later. Fr. Reyes pointed out that older people still attend mass, but the younger generations are largely missing. “The real threat in my religion,” he said, “is fossilization. Irrelevance.” His question to the audience of millennials is how to make religion more relevant for them.

Venerable Maio Jing described her life in Canada and the reason that she embraced Buddhism. She found in Buddhism a way to practice goodness. She advised the audience to focus on good things. “Don’t talk about bad things,” she said. “Participate. Be part of a community. Focus on society, home life, relationships, living environment, international relations, education, religion or spiritual growth and development. Make a new Year’s resolution of how you can. Ask what you can do your faith.”

Dr. Potre spoke of her upbringing in a diverse community in Mindanao. She had many neighbors that belonged to other faiths and learned early in her life to be respectful of others with different beliefs. She counseled the audience, “Our religions can work together. We can be a positive moral force. Religious faith is a cornerstone of the Filipino identity.” She spoke with concern about “Islamaphobia” which is fostered by the mass media. “Islam is love, compassion and forgiveness. A rotten fruit does not make the whole tree bad.”

Dr. Shakun asked the audience to greet each other with a Hindu greeting, “Namaste” meaning I bow to the divine in you. In Hinduism, she explained, there is one God with many names: Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva or Generating Power, Maintaining Power and Destructive Power. Dr. Shakun grew up in Kenya, an Indian in a diverse community. “I enjoyed the festivals of other religions,” she exclaimed. She encouraged everyone to bring two communities together and share dialogue. “We have a common goal: drawing closer to God.”

Closing Remarks and Speech of Gratitude was given by Rev. Msgr. Hernando Coronel, Rector and Marish Priest, Minor Basilica of the Black Nazarene.



## Canvas Mandala and Verse Reading

Fo Guang Shan Mabuhay Temple

Celebrating a Colorful Life Through the Three Acts of Goodness.

In her opening remarks, Ven. Miao Jing said that we have many universal concerns. “We want to build happiness and goodness together. We have the same goals: harmony, peace and goodness.” The Mabuhay Temple took 8 years to construct and was finished 12 years ago. It is a platform for exchange of culture and thoughts.

Inspiring verses were quoted from the Bible, the Quran, Bhagavad Gita and many other sources. The Guang Ming College offered inspiration through dance.

Following the unveiling of the Mandala, closing remarks were offered by Erwin Choo, President, BLIA Philippines.





## Youth Peace Camp

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints  
Phillip's Sanctuary

Peace Camp is a day-long team-building experience for the youth of different religions sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in coordination with UniHarmony Partners Manila. It was held at Philip's Sanctuary, Antipolo.

The purpose of this activity was to help the young people understand, appreciate and respect each faith's uniqueness and shared attributes, and to establish good rapport among the participants for peace-building and future partnerships.

In this year's Peace Camp, there were 85 participants representing the Muslim, Buddhist and two Christian faiths. The attendees were from the Fo Guang Shan Mabuhay Temple, Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Ina ng Laging Saklolo (Mother of Perpetual Help) Parish, Asian Conference for Religions for Peace, Islam, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Named after colors, the red, green, yellow and white teams competed against each other with points given for their efforts. First, there was a group chant contest where the loudest and longest chant was awarded the most points.

For other team building activities, the group moved from a tent to an outdoor sports area. There were relay races that required teamwork, good balance and ingenuity. The water contests required everyone to do their best individual effort for the good of the team. They were cheered and coached by the other team members. The obstacle course required team members to crawl through the mud. They posed with pride dripping with mud for a group photo.

Each religious group gave a presentation describing their religious beliefs. Later they were asked to write down their perception about other religions as well as the commonalities between them. It was a chance for each organization to correct any misconceptions others have on their beliefs. Each group picked out one of items for explanation to the rest of the group.





## Forum on the 2017 WIHW – Miriam College

Welcoming Address by Loretta Castro, President of Center for Peace Education.  
Two student speakers spoke about their experiences advocating for peace.



## **Peace Forum**

Tapatan: Media Forum on Interfaith Dialogue in the Philippines

AKKAPKA-CANV

Teodora

Celebrating Life Across Faiths

Interfaith Festival: WIHW

Peace Forum (Teodora) – Assumption College

The Peace Forum was sponsored by the Teodora organization, a women's advocacy group with community-based programs for mothers and women in general, the Theology Department of Assumption College and Assumptionists for Christ.

Five women gave presentations: President/Director Dr. Tess Villapando-Ramiro, PhD of Aksiyon para sa Kapayapaan at Katarungan (Action for Peace and Justice) Center for Active Non-Violence for Phil., Inc. (AKKAPKA-CANV for Phils., Inc), Venerable Master Miao Jing, Head Abbess. Fo Guang Shan, Philippines; Dr. Potre D. Diampuan, Regional Coordinator, United Religious Initiative, Southeast Asia-Pacific (URI-SEAP); and Dr. Shakuntala “Shakun” Moorjani-Vaswani, Vice President & OIC, The Peacedmaker’s Circle Foundation, Inc., President, Indian Ladies Club, Johanna Borella, Public Affairs representative and Sister Linda Soderquist, Public Affairs Senior Missionary, both of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Following the presentations, the panalists responded to questions from the audience of students.





END OF REPORT



Note: Please click on the links included in the report for videos and photos. Videos contained herein will also be uploaded separately on the site.