WIHW 2016 Celebration in Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines

The Interfaith Forum for Peace, Harmony, and Solidarity is a loose group whose members come from different sectors and are Muslims and Christians based in Cagayan de Oro City and the prime purpose of the group is to foster better understanding and relations among Muslims, Christians and people of other living faiths. This year 2016, the group initiated the celebration of the World Interfaith Harmony Week.

There were three activities initiated:

On February 3, 2016, there was an Ecumenical Prayer hosted by the United Church of Christ in the Philippines and there were different prayers delivered by representatives from the Catholics, Evangelicals, UCCP, and Iglesia Filipina Independiente with the following prayers for: Mercy for the Poor, the 2016 Philippine Presidential Elections, reconciliation and restoration, and just-peace for God’s Creation. The ecumenical prayer ended with the lighting of the candle of peace and a solidarity message delivered by a Muslim representative.

On February 5, the Christians joined in solidarity the Friday Muslim Congregational Prayer at the Oro Jamaah Mosque in Cagayan de Oro city. The khutba(sermon) delivered was focused on interfaith understanding and solidarity as well as appreciating the beauty and uniqueness of each other’s faiths rather than criticizing and debating about faiths. The Archbishop of Cagayan de Oro city, Archbishop Antonio Ledesma delivered his message of solidarity at the end of the congregational prayer.

On February 6, there was a Forum on Climate Change held at Xavier University, Cagayan de Oro city. There were 3 speakers invited: a Lumad, Muslim and Christian and each one of them shared the perspective of their respective faiths on the pressing issue these days which is on Climate Change and this affects everybody on earth. After the three speakers, there was a workshop for the 200 participants on their action plan to address the issue on Climate Change. Representatives from each group shared their simple yet doable action plans. The forum ends with the singing of the Harmony Prayer.

This is our simple yet meaningful celebration of the World Interfaith Harmony Week.