

## WIHW 2017: Another Breakthrough in Dialogue!

Silsilah Forum Davao in partnership with the Theology department of the Ateneo de Davao University and the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia sponsored the opening program of the World Interfaith Harmony Week (WIHW) 2017 last February 1 at the Finster Auditorium of Ateneo de Davao University between 1:30 - 6:00 PM.

The event titled World Interfaith Harmony Week an Atmosphere to Dialogue has this year's theme: "Celebrating Harmony in the spirit of Mercy and Compassion ". The program was formally opened with Interfaith Prayer followed by the singing of the national anthem of the Philippines and that of Indonesia. The welcome address was delivered by Fr. Archimedes Lachica, SJ in behalf of the Ateneo de Davao University President, Fr. Joel Tabora, SJ.

For introduction, Silsilah Forum Davao Christian Coordinator Fr. Hermes "Larry" B. Sabud, SM with Muslim Coordinator Ms. Nor Asiah Madale Adilao gave the rationale for the WIHW, an explanation to the video presentation of the WIHW proposal to the UN General assembly.

The Consul General of the Republic of Indonesia, Berlian Napitupulu gave the inspirational message. Representatives of 4 religious groups comprised the Panel of Discussants: Alencio Yap, representative of Rev. Neng Zhen of Buddhism; Abp Emeritus Fernando R. Capalla of the Bishops-Ulama Conference for Christianity; Jigtar Singh, Indian priest of the Sikh/Hinduism in Davao City; and Ustadz Mustofa Mardjuki, Islamic scholar from Indonesia.

Mr. Lunar T. Fayloga of the Ateneo de Davao University, the master of Ceremony, arranged the discussion in a cosy face to face conversation setting called *pakighinabi* in Visayan term. Co-discussants Ms. Lou Q. Solijon, BUC Executive Secretary and Ms. Mercy Tabuclin, College faculty of AdDU led the audience to the Open Forum.

To contribute to the atmosphere of dialogue, cultural presentations were given by the consulate general of Indonesia through Indonesian students who exhibited a graceful Peacock Dance and by the PEGSABEKA, an intertribal cultural group of students from the University of South Eastern Philippines (USEP), Mintal campus who presented a tribal ritual dance depicting the stages of agricultural productions: land preparation, planting, harvesting, hunting game and feasting.

The activity of Personal Commitment to Peace and Harmony was conducted towards the end of the session. Participants pasted their leaf with inscriptions of their commitment to the multi-colored canvas where the WIHW slogan was printed. As a finale, the Universal Prayer for Harmony was prayed in different languages: English, Bahasa Indonesia, Arabic and Visayan. *Merienda Cena* was served with Filipino and Indonesian delicacies.

The whole program of activities created an atmosphere of dialogue with its informal interactions and photo options. Nature sounds were played as the participants came in to participate in the activities. Silsilah Forum Davao displayed photo gallery of WIHW initiatives in Davao City in cooperation with the Harmony Links from 2013 until 2016. 210 participants attended the celebration with more than a hundred mainstays while students were arriving and departing at different periods.

WIHW 2017 is another breakthrough of dialogue in Davao City. Even with short time duration for planning and with only three short meetings for the partners, the activity was a success. Without aiming for a prize like that which we have garnered earlier in 2013, the preparatory committee is thankful for the participation of our peace partners and individuals open to such a celebration. We are encouraged that as a part of Asia our voices and actions are considered significant in the world today. May we continue to create spaces and events with others for dialogue and harmony. As inspired by our Silsilah founder Fr. Sebastiano D' Ambra, we say Padayon..!