

Nonviolence And Earth Education At Holy Cross High School In The Philippines



Planting trees

At Holy Cross High School in Mindanao, Philippines, students learn about nonviolence through education on caring for Earth and peace-building activities. The school's educational workshops support participants in implementing eco-friendly practices, including sustainable gardening. In September and October 2023, everyone at the school celebrated the Season of Creation by sharing daily prayer, preparing a sustainable garden, tending school grounds and surrounding areas, and planting calamansi trees. In addition, a group of students and teachers attended an ecology seminar at the Mercy Ecological Center in Sibaruc and planted trees during a visit to KT's Kabuhatan (a Sisters of Mercy ecological center) in Tonggo, Tudela, Misamis Occidental.

The tree planting was in coordination with the local government, which provided the transportation. Members of the military, who felt the need to help with healing activities for a severely damaged environment, joined them at the tree planting. Their reforestation efforts are restoring the area's natural habitat as they care for Earth together. Due to safety and security concerns, peace building activities planned for December 2023 were delayed, when the community refrained from gathering after a bombing of the gym at Mindanao State University, Marawi City, which killed four and wounded many. This tragedy highlights the urgent need for peace building and nonviolence efforts and education among Christians and Muslims.

This article is part of a series about Mercy Fund for Ministry grant recipients and how their funded work lives out Mercy's Critical Concerns and Works of Mercy. This ministry provides nonviolence and Earth education and training and meets people where they are in a spirit of community. This article was first published in Mercy Now, the newsletter of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. For more information on the work of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, please visit their website at www.sistersofmercy.org.