



WE THE ALUMNI

The official newsletter of the CHS Alumni Foundation, Inc.



CHS Alumni Gather for Talk on Cognitive Health

By Dr. Lonabel Ancheta-Encarnacion (HS-75) and Victoria Torres-del Rosario (HS-77)

Group photo of speaker Dr. Socorro Martinez with the attendees of the talk.

Questions like “Where did I leave my keys?” and “Why can’t I recall that name?” were at the center of an insightful discussion hosted by the CHS Alumni Foundation Inc. during a talk titled *“Navigating through the Spectrum of Cognitive Health.”*

Held on June 28, 2025 at the Multi-Purpose Hall of the Convent of the Holy Spirit in Quezon City—and attended both in person and via Zoom—the event featured guest speaker Dr. Ma. Socorro “Corrie” Martinez (HS-70), a neurologist and CHS alumna. The forum was moderated by Dr. Lonabel Ancheta-Encarnacion (HS-75) and drew participants from various CHS batches, many eager to learn how to support loved ones and care for their own brain health as they age.

Brain Health and Aging

Dr. Martinez, a distinguished neurologist, delivered a presentation on brain health and cognitive decline. She described normal aging-related changes in the brain, such as a decline in multitasking ability and slower processing speed, while emphasizing that cognitive reserve can mitigate these effects.

She highlighted the importance of stress reduction

and healthy lifestyle choices, citing the example of Maria, the 124-year-old Filipina, who attributed her longevity to a peaceful life and judicious food choices.

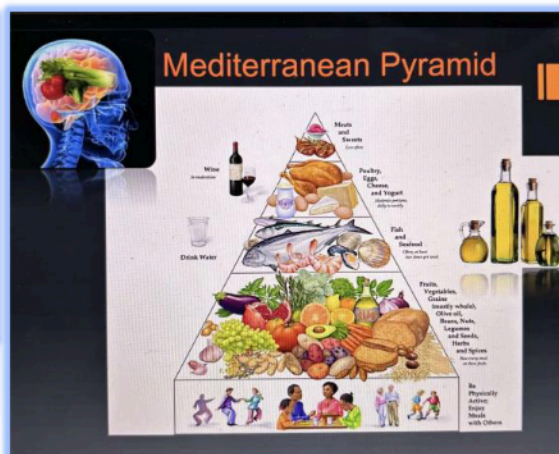
Dr. Martinez discussed gender differences in brain function, noting that women generally excel in verbal skills, memory, and fine motor skills, while men tend to perform better in spatial perception and mental rotation. She encouraged the audience to maintain brain health through education, mental exercises, and a balanced lifestyle.

Cognitive Changes in Older Adults

Dr. Martinez explained that while 60% of people over 85 have normal cognition, common complaints include memory loss and executive function difficulties. She noted that depression and certain medications can affect cognition, while mild cognitive impairment (MCI) is an early stage that can progress to dementia. Alzheimer’s disease is the most common form of dementia, accounting for 65%-80% of cases. Dr. Martinez also addressed its growing global impact, noting that someone develops dementia every three seconds. She underscored the importance of early intervention and prevention.



Alumni (left photo) focus on the points emphasized by Dr. Corrie Martinez (middle), about the suggested diet (right photo).



Alzheimer's Disease: Symptoms and Treatments

Dr. Martinez outlined the stages of Alzheimer's disease, including mild cognitive impairment, and explained the importance of early diagnosis and management. She noted the high cost of caregiving in the Philippines and the need for supportive measures such as memory training and social engagement. She also mentioned new drugs aimed at modifying disease progression and reiterated the role of a healthy lifestyle in slowing cognitive decline.

Support Strategies for Alzheimer's Caregivers

Dr. Martinez offered practical advice for caregivers of individuals with Alzheimer's disease. She discussed effective communication techniques—emphasizing reassurance, repetition, and avoiding arguments—and stressed the value of maintaining daily routines and creating a safe environment. She also underscored the importance of regular medical check-ups, including vision and hearing assessments, and shared strategies to help prevent dementia, such as mental stimulation and physical activity. She mentioned information resources like www.alz.org and www.alzphilippines.org, which offer information on music therapy and organized activities. She concluded by encouraging caregivers to take breaks and prioritize self-care.

Tips to Prevent Cognitive Decline

Dr. Martinez emphasized proactive brain care, outlining everyday habits that can help preserve cognitive health. Among her recommendations:

- **Nutrition:** Choose foods that fight inflammation and support brain function. Avoid processed foods, saturated fats, and artificial sweeteners. Include omega-3 fatty acids, fruits, vegetables, and nuts—specifically chickpeas, flaxseed, and pistachios. Drink

alcohol in moderation, particularly red wine, and consider brewed coffee to support cognitive function. Eat low-glycemic fruits such as avocado, dragon fruit, and papaya. Limit meat and sweets to once a week, and opt for goat's milk instead of regular dairy.

- **Exercise:** Regular movement matters. Walking outdoors for 30 minutes, dancing, tai chi, or Zumba can improve balance, flexibility, and strength. Both meditation and tai chi help relax the brain.

- **Mindset:** Practice positive, future-focused thinking until it becomes your default outlook.

- **Social engagement:** Stay connected. Maintaining a strong social network is linked to lower dementia risk and longer life expectancy.

- **Sleep:** Prioritize quality rest. Get at least five hours of sleep each night, and take short power naps (no more than 20-30 minutes). Seek treatment for sleep disorders—loud snoring may indicate sleep apnea, a risk factor for stroke and cognitive decline. The lymphatic system has a role in removing toxins during sleep.

- **Know your numbers:** What's good for the heart is good for the brain. Monitor your HDL, LDL, blood pressure, and blood chemistry regularly.

The event concluded with an open forum, where attendees asked questions ranging from lifestyle habits to medical interventions. Many expressed appreciation for Dr. Martinez's clear and compassionate approach to a complex, often sensitive subject.

The CHSAF thanked all participants and reaffirmed its commitment to presenting timely and relevant health discussions for the CHS community.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

GUILLERMINA M. ONG (HS-68/BSC-72)
President, CHSAF

Warmest greetings to all our dear alumni and friends of the College of the Holy Spirit!

As we reach the midpoint of 2025, I find myself reflecting on how much we have already accomplished—and how blessed we are to be part of such a vibrant and mission-driven community. It's in moments like these that I am reminded of how truly alive the Spirit remains in all of us, even beyond the walls of our beloved CHSM.

Through your generosity, dedication, and unwavering faith, the first half of this year has been filled with meaningful programs and acts of service that reflect our shared commitment to *veritas in caritate*. I am grateful to share just some of the highlights from our journey so far:

The well-attended, highly successful, Grand Alumni Homecoming, led by HS-75 Golden Jubilarians in February 2025, with the theme, "Celebrate Happiness: One Spirit, Our Home, Our Happy Place"—a heartwarming celebration of legacy, unity, and enduring sisterhood

The 2025 Outstanding Alumni Awarding Ceremony, which recognized 17 CHSM alumni for their significant contributions and service in their respective fields

The productive and insightful Annual General Members Meeting—a gathering that reflected our collective commitment to transparency and collaboration, where important updates and plans were meaningfully discussed and affirmed by the community, and where new Trustees were elected

The CHSAF Board Organizational Meeting, where the officers were elected and committee chairmanships were discerned

The CHSAF Board and Members Gratitude Dinner and Despedida—a night of fellowship, where bonds among board members and supporters were strengthened over meaningful conversations and shared purpose, and warm goodbyes were shared with Deanna GoBio before her return to New York City

The 2025 Class Representative Awarding Ceremony, where we recognized individuals and alumni batches whose dedication, generosity, and outstanding contributions have carried the foundation's mission forward—a celebration of quiet heroism and heartfelt service

Ongoing scholarships and support for students and graduates of Holy Spirit schools, made possible by your steadfast giving and advocacy

Continuous social action efforts to complete the water project in Yangka, Capas, Tarlac—bringing hope and dignity to our brothers and sisters

An insightful and informative talk by Dr. Ma. Socorro Martinez, "*Navigating through Spectrum of Cognitive Health*," which helped many of us better understand how to care for ourselves and our loved ones as we experience changes in memory and cognition

These accomplishments are a testament to what we can achieve when we come together with open hearts and a shared purpose. I am filled with gratitude for all who gave their time, talent, and resources to make these activities possible.

Looking ahead, I am hopeful and excited for the opportunities that await us in the coming months. It is my prayer that the Holy Spirit continues to guide and inspire us to live with intention, compassion, and courage as we press on in our shared mission of being God's love and hope to many.

Let us continue building on the momentum we've created, entrusting every plan to our good God. May we remain grounded in our faith, generous in our service, and joyful in our action.

Thank you once again for your support and hard work.

Now and forever, the Spirit lives on!

CHSAF HELPS KEEP KIDS NOURISHED

By Social Action Committee 2025-2026

In September 2022, CHSAF partnered with Nela Almario-Zeta (HS-68) to support the BES Friends Feeding Program (BESFFP), an initiative that provides daily nutritious meals to selected children at the Bagumbayan Elementary School (BES) in Quezon City.

The program addresses malnutrition and its impact on academic performance and attendance. By supporting the students' physical and mental well-being, BESFFP aims to improve classroom participation and overall learning. The feeding activities are implemented in coordination with BES teachers, administrators, and staff.

CHSAF initially supported 30 students in 2022. For school year 2025-2026, the Foundation now sponsors 50 of the 511 children receiving meals daily across participating public schools.

The program's impact is reflected in the feedback from the school community. Here's a recent update from Nela Almario-Zeta:

Dear BES FRIENDS,

We are so excited because starting tomorrow, 511 children will receive daily rice meals—every school day for the rest of the year—thanks to your support!

A message from one of our school principals:

"... Maraming salamat din po sa patuloy na pagtulong po sa aming mga mag-aaral, ang inyong walang sawang pagmamahal na pinararamdam niyo po sa kanila. Malaking bagay po na sila ay makakain ng mga pagkain na di nila matikman sa kanilang mga tahanan.

"Yung tipong araw-araw nagtatanong sila, 'Ate, anong ulam po bukas?' Kasi excited lagi po silang kumain sa school."

Dear Sponsors, God bless you!

*Sincerely,
Nela*



BES kids from Kinder, Grades 4 and 5 happily dig into the day's meal—*Tinolang Manok* with rice. Big thanks to Nela Almario-Zeta and BES Friends for making this possible!



Cora Guidote of CHSAF turns over a check for the feeding program to Ms. Merlin Villegas, Principal of Balara Elementary School, on June 27, 2025.

Capas Mayor Reaffirms Commitment to Yangka Water Project

By Cora Guidote (HS-78)
CHSAF Social Action Head

On June 23, 2025, I joined the CHSAF Social Action Committee in a visit to re-elected Capas Mayor Roseller 'Boots' Rodriguez.

Mayor Boots, as he is fondly called, had committed last year to pave a road leading to Sitio Yangka to facilitate the delivery of construction materials for the community's water system project. Sitio Yangka sits on a 400-meter-high plateau with no existing road access from the lowlands.

During the post-election meeting, Mayor Boots reaffirmed his support for the project. He instructed his team from the Education Department to liaise with Sr. Ana Benauro, SSpS, and CHSAF Assistant Coordinator Daisy Vasquez—both based in Paidyanan—to ensure the road paving begins as soon as possible.

The team also met with Ms. Jocelyn Anastacio, representative of the National Commission for Indigenous Peoples (NCIP). The NCIP's role is to validate the project and ensure it gains full acceptance from the Aeta community in Yangka. Once this is accomplished, CHSAF will be issued a Certificate of Precondition, which is required before

project implementation can begin.

CHSAF's next step is to obtain permits from the Philippine Air Force, as materials for the project must pass through the gate of Col Emilio Rabina Airforce Base (CERAB), a protected area where Sitio Yangka is located.

Once all permits are secured, CHSAF aims to begin construction by August.

CHSAF has contracted the services of Engr. Petronio Muring to oversee the project from start to completion. He will also provide community training to ensure the proper management and sustainability of the water system once it is formally turned over to the Aeta community.

This CHSAF project, undertaken in coordination with the SSpS sisters, will provide a level-two water system benefitting over 70 Aeta families. It will spare them the daily hardship of fetching water from tap stands located 500 meters away from their village.



From left, Eric Perez+ (Coordinator, Education Office, Capas Municipal Hall), Daisy Mae Vasquez (Assistant Coordinator, Paidyanan), Dolly Gabriel (CHSAF Secretariat), Angie Madrid (CHSAF Finance), Capas Mayor Boots Rodriguez, Cora Guidote (CHSAF Social Action Head), Sr. Ana Maria Verona Benauro, SSpS (Mission Head), and Jocelyn Anastacio (NCIP Tarlac Representative).
+Deceased.

MY MANGYAN ENCOUNTER

By Corazon Guidote (HS-78)

Brother Sun lit up a big heart in the sky on our way back from Mindoro — a sort of affirmation about our path to learn and to give.

Through the kind accommodation of the SSps missionary sisters, I was there on an exposure trip to the Culasisi and Calamansian communities of the Mangyans, Mindoro's indigenous people. The simplicity of their lifestyle is humbling. Their peaceful existence is inspiring, and perhaps it is what grounds the frequency of love in our country amidst all the commercialization, corruption and conflict from a macro perspective. Being there left many questions in my mind with regard to the true desires of their hearts.

I saw the spartan lifestyle of the Alangan tribe in Calamansian. It may appear primitive to most of us. But one wonders why they choose to live in seemingly dire conditions where parents support families with an average of eight to nine children. A large family might live in a nipa hut with hardly any walls or furniture save for one or two hammocks. Food stocks and a few clothes are stored in a loft above the ceiling. No toilets. No electricity. Water is shared from a few tap stands, where they bathe openly and do their laundry. Little boys go about their ways naked. Some elderly men still wear G-strings, like 70-year-old Barok, who seems to be quite a popular guy in the village. At his age, he has a less-than-one-year-old baby—the youngest among a brood of nine. His youngest is younger than his grandchild. Barok married a much younger wife when he was 40. Asked if he could still father children, he said, "Pwede pa."

Mangyans live by the day. They plant and raise some poultry. When food becomes scarce due to drought, they don't resort to stealing. They are naturally honest and self-sacrificing. They dig whatever they can from Mother Earth, often eating root crops called "nami" that lack nutritional value. They bear the hunger in solidarity until others offer them food —as our alumni foundation did during the heat wave last year.



Brother Sun lit up a big heart in the sky



The SSps sisters with Barok and his kin

Many children are given free education by the local government, yet many choose to go back to their tribe to serve their communities. Others migrate temporarily to find work. But rarely do we encounter them in the cities. The Mangyans prefer the privacy of their villages. They are naturally shy and soft-spoken people; hence, they tend to be abused and cheated out of their ancestral land.

Are they not capable of dreaming, of aiming higher, I asked myself? Or are their pursuits simply way different from ours? They do believe in a supreme being, and they have traditional ways of healing and bearing children — the latter done solely by husband and wife. They don't have midwives.

(Continued from p.6 My....)

So, who are we to impose upon them our dreams and our ways of life, when their kind have lived and survived much longer than we have — mainly under circumstances that would be very difficult, even impossible, for most of us who live in concrete homes?

Indeed, we have much to learn.

God bless the Mangyans. God bless the SSpS missionary sisters. God bless the Philippines.

* Note: The Alangan tribe of Mangyan in Mindoro, Philippines, use nami as an alternative to rice. Because the spiny tuber is toxic when fresh due to the presence of saponins and calcium oxalate raphides, it is soaked for 3 days, then washed in running streams, dried for 2 days, and soaked again for 2 hours before cooking it like rice.

Source: www.purdue.edu



A young Mangyan woman



Daughter Cristine cuddles Barok's granddaughter.



Typical Mangyan houses



(L-R) Barok sits with son; in the second, he carries his youngest daughter.



The author (left) takes a selfie with the SSpS sisters, Barok and his kin—with a Mangyan house in the background



Threads of Grace: The Liturgical Art of Sr. Martilde Meyer, SSpS

By Veronica Fenix-Villavicencio (HS-72)

Bathed in the warm morning sunlight, a woman skillfully guides a needle threaded with delicate lilac strand over a pristine white altar cloth. Beside her, a petite nun nods in approval, her smile reflecting satisfaction at the embroidered grapes and gilded chalice. The woman turns to the nun, inquiring if further enhancements are needed.

On a long work table in the middle of the room, another young woman has laid out an altar cloth adorned with butterflies, birds, and flowers sketched in dark gray outline. At its center are figures of St. Francis and St. Clare. Still in its early stages, the cloth is the beginning of a liturgical piece that celebrates the beauty of the Lord's creation.

The Holy Spirit nun, renowned for her artistry in crafting liturgical vestments and paraments, is Sr. Martilde Meyer, SSpS. Affectionately known as Sr. Marty, she celebrated her diamond jubilee — marking 60 years of religious life — on December 8, 2024. That same year, she also embraced the momentous occasion of her 90th birthday on September 2. Reflecting on her journey, Sr. Marty reminisces about her life in the SSpS community shaped by practicality, serendipity, and quiet tenacity.



Sr. Martilde Meyer, SSpS, renowned for her liturgical artistry, marked her diamond jubilee on December 8, 2024, and celebrated her 90th birthday a few months earlier on September 2.

A Teenager Finds Her Spiritual Family

"My baptismal name is Nikoletta Elisabeth Meyer. I was born in 1934, when Germany was preparing for war," she begins. "It was a very hard time. We were seven children... I was one of three girls by my mother, following four children from my father's first marriage. I was born in Veen-Winnenthal, in the Lower Rhine region near the Dutch border."

She continues, "After elementary school, and with the end of World War II, there was nothing left to study except home duties — cooking and all these things that we had to learn as girls — which our parents insisted we learn to prepare for family life. At that time, women did not study; education was only for men and for the rich. Most German families were poor because of the war."

When her older sister got married, Sr. Marty was called upon to help. "She needed somebody to attend to her and also to learn from her," she explains. "I was 16 then. We had more free time — as we had no cell phones to distract us — so I also took care of my sister's little boy."

She pauses, then smiles slightly as she recounts a turning point. "One day while I was cooking — I was not much interested in cooking — I began to reflect: What am I doing here?" she recalls. "I was in the parish choir singing with other young people. It came to my mind that I can enter the convent, because I had a classmate, only six months ahead of me, who entered the SSpS congregation in Steyl, Netherlands."

A young Sr. Marty at the start of her religious life



Nikoletta Elisabeth Meyer was only 16 when she was accompanied by her parish priest to Steyl. She was accepted into the congregation. "Since I was still too young, my postulancy period was longer than others," she says. "When I turned 20 years old in 1954, I entered *Herz Jesu Kloster Steyl* in Holland of the SSpS for my formation as a Missionary Sister. There was another girl my age from East Germany, who later became Mother General."

(Continued on p. 9)

Mission: Philippines

Sr. Marty continues her story: “I first came to the Philippines in 1968, to the convent in Quezon City. In my second year, I moved to Mendiola where I studied and finished a Bachelor of Fine Arts, major in Advertising, and minor in Art Education.

“Before coming here, I had already finished my training in sewing and embroidering paraments by hand and machine, and had practiced at the motherhouse in Steyl. I also finished my MA in Liturgical Arts in Germany,” she proudly relates.

(Author’s note: Paraments are decorative cloths or hangings that adorn the sanctuary, altar, lectern, other church furnishings, and are changed according to liturgical seasons.)

“I also studied Religion with the SVD in Germany, so I could teach. When I was in Manila, I studied MA in Religious Education at the University of Santo Tomas. In the morning, I was teaching religion at Holy Ghost College; in the afternoon, I went to UST,” she says.



Sr. Martilde Meyer, SSps, holds a Master of Arts in Religious Education from the University of Santo Tomas in Manila.

After 12 years in Mendiola, she was assigned to Tarlac. “I liked Tarlac very much. The parents were very nice and supportive. My only problem was that I could not speak Tagalog,” Sr. Marty admits. Without formal lessons in English speaking and writing, she relied on her friend, Sr. Giovanna Ferriols, who spoke basic German and often invited Sr. Marty to her home for dinner and conversation.

Paramentics: A Ministry in Fabric and Faith

Sr. Marty’s workshop, aptly named *Paramentics by the Servants of the Holy Spirit*, is a simple yet perpetually busy space. Tucked behind the multipurpose hall on the ground floor of the Convent of the Holy Spirit on Poinsettia Street, the workshop has work tables, three sewing machines, and wooden cabinets brimming with materials and finished products.

The team includes two dedicated laywomen:

Retzi Tabor Dimaranan, who specializes in machine embroidery, and Virginia (Virgie) Viray Tabigue, who takes the orders, deals with customers, and sews. These two women are like daughters to Sr. Marty. They began their training under her guidance nearly three decades ago, shortly after finishing high school. Retzi, from Lubang Island in Mindoro, worked her way through college. Though both still appear youthful, they are each now mothers to a teenage son.



Sr. Marty with her faithful “girls,” Virgie Tabigue (left) and Retzi Dimaranan (right).

Sr. Trinidad (Trining) Buenconsejo, SSps, recently joined the team and assists Virgie with sewing cassocks—finishing armholes, sleeves, buttonholes, and other details.

Sr. Marty and her team plan their work based on orders, which come in regularly and by referral from religious orders and benefactors. Vestments are made to order usually for ordination of new priests.

Steps in creating liturgical art

Sr. Marty explains the steps involved in creating a parament or vestment.

Step 1: Sketch the design and render on white paper.

“When I see something nice, I try to sketch it right away because I might forget it. Even if the idea comes in the middle of the night, I get up and sketch.”

“Designs depend on what the customers want,” Sr. Marty explains. “Some priests prefer complex symbols with many elements, but there is often not enough space—it also becomes very expensive. Others want stylized images, sometimes to the point where the symbols are no longer recognizable.

“When faces are involved, I ask for a reference — like pictures of St. Arnold Janssen and St. Joseph Freinademetz (of the SVD order).”

Sr. Marty then draws the final design on white paper with neat and clear outlines and details.



A stole embroidered with an image of Blessed Mother Maria, co-founder of the SSpS Congregation

Step 2: Cut and sew the cloth for the parament or vestment.

Virgie, one of Sr. Marty's "girls," sews the cloth according to the measurements specified in the order. Sr. Trining helps with the sewing and adds the finishing touches.

Step 3: Transfer the design onto the cloth.

"After I complete the final design, we trace it on tracing paper and perforate the outlines with a needle. Then, using powdered charcoal, we stamp the design onto the cloth through the perforated paper. If there's a part of the transferred design we don't like, we can erase it with water."



Stamped onto the altar cloth with powdered charcoal are outlines of flora, fauna, and figures of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Clare.

Step 4: Embroider by machine or hand.

"Retzi does the machine embroidery. She begins by sewing the outlines of the design, then fills in the colors," says Sr. Marty. "I sometimes watch to see which colors fit and can be combined."



Sr. Marty guides Retzi as she adds color using machine embroidery.

As Retzi works, Sr. Marty studies the embroidered design closely, pointing out areas—like the grapes or chalice—that could use lighter shades for highlights. After years of learning under Sr. Marty's guidance, Retzi has become proficient at blending threads, her stitches resembling delicate brushstrokes. Occasionally, she still consults her mentor on color choices.

"For facial details like the eyes and mouth, I embroider by hand," says Sr. Marty. But now, I have only one good eye. If there is not enough light, I cannot see well. Still, when I can, I embroider. It's delicate work, and they're patient with me—as I am with them."

Step 5: Finishing, packing, pricing and delivery.

The paper beneath the embroidery—which prevents the cloth from wrinkling—is removed. The finished piece is then carefully washed, ironed and packed.

Pricing begins as soon as an order is placed. This is Virgie's job. When a customer inquires, she starts by asking, "What's your budget?" From there, Sr. Marty and the team work within that amount, often suggesting simpler designs with fewer colors and minimal hand embroidery to meet the client's needs.

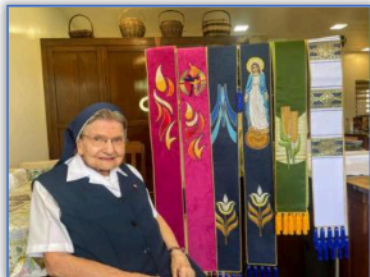


Sets of chalice covers Sr. Marty gives as gifts, including cross-stitched pieces she makes herself.

Then it goes to Virgie who computes the price. She has to know how much time is spent on the embroidery, and how much the cloth and materials cost. "She is the one who goes out to buy these, because she's the one who accepts the orders and knows what materials are needed within the customer's budget," Sr. Marty explains. "There are materials that aren't too expensive but still of good quality. For example, the gold thread and the gold cord we use to border the stole can range from less to more expensive... Virgie knows what to buy within the budget given."

(Continued from p.10, *Threads*)

Sr. Marty says emphatically, “When I say it has to be finished, it should be finished on the date we agreed on with the customer. But then the President schedules a holiday and nobody comes to work — so I am the only one here... I always make sure we finish the order on time.”



Beautiful stoles
by Sr. Marty

Gratitude and Gifts

On December 8, 2022, Sr. Martilde Meyer, SSpS, celebrated her Diamond Jubilee—marking 60 years of vocation as a Holy Spirit Missionary Sister. This year, in 2025, she is turning 91, still smiling warmly, and eloquently sharing her life stories, her gifts and blessings.

“Actually, I live from one day to the next, because every day is different. If I wake up and I can see well, I’m happy—at least I know where I’m going. And when I go to the chapel and I can hear something, even if not everything... then I’m very happy. And I can still walk! Because when I had my fracture here,” she says, rubbing her left side just above the hip, “it was the therapist who taught me how to exercise, and I still do those exercises today so I can keep walking. I can still clean my own room. It takes me time, but I can still do it. And as long as I can, I will do it.”



Sr. Marty poses
with a chasuble
adorned with an
intricate design of
the Risen Lord

For CHS alumnae, Sr. Marty has this message:

“I would like you to stay as you are—good, faithful, always ready to help, and willing to go beyond your duty. I truly appreciate that. Remember that Christmas party when I won the prize for the paper hat I made? I was so embarrassed... imagine, I received P2,000 for that little thing!”

Instead of using the prize for herself, Sr. Marty purchased a stole from their shop and sent it to Mother General Miriam—her former Provincial Superior in Germany and a dear friend.

To her fellow SSpS sisters around the world, she says:

“I pray that you may persevere as long as God wills, and that none of you will suffer a violent death—especially with the wars happening now, like in Ukraine. I thank you all with all my heart. I hope you live long, happy, and peaceful lives... and not experience too much suffering. We must lift all of it to God.”

Sr. Marty Meyer, SSpS, continues to create liturgical art on vestments and paraments—a path lovingly stitched into the fabric of her religious life, embroidered with vibrant hues of love and service, as the Triune God has willed.



Sr. Marty Meyer and the
author, after a morning
of stories and stitches

Photo Credits:
CHSAF by CJ Manuel

Sr. Marty Meyer: Fellow Artist and Spiritual Mother

By Fr. Anselm Manalastas, OSB

Sr. Martilde Meyer, SSpS—Sr. Marty to friends and loved ones—is a familiar and friendly presence at the SSpS Vestments Store on Poinsettia Street, Quezon City. I still remember the first time I saw her. I was a newly ordained priest then, looking for a stole. I had heard and read about the beautiful liturgical vestments the SSpS are known for—fine embroidery, elegant design, and excellent craftsmanship—and I wanted to see them for myself. As a bonus, I was told I might meet the last remaining German Sister who still crafted these exquisite liturgical pieces.

That’s how I crossed paths with Sr. Marty. I chanced upon her quietly working on a design, holding a thimble, thread, and needle. I greeted her and remarked on how beautiful her work was. She smiled briefly, then returned to her stitching. I felt rejected! Was the sister being snobbish? I kept my composure and turned to her assistant.

(Continued on p.12)

(Continued from p.11, Sr.)

What I did not notice was that Sr. Marty had followed me. As I admired the vestments in the display cabinet, she whispered, “You know, I enjoy creating designs. I am a Fine Arts major from the College of the Holy Spirit, after all.”

I responded, “Tell me, Sister, which one here is your own design?”

She handed me a stole and said simply, “I did this.”

“I will get this one, Sister, because you designed it,” I told her.

And that was the start of our friendship. From then on, we enjoyed each other’s company. We would talk about what she was working on, and I would share my ideas for a vestment. She would offer her insights; I would give mine in return. In time, we would arrive at a shared vision — one that resulted in vestments so beautiful and dignified, they felt worthy of the liturgy.

One unforgettable moment for me was when Sr. Marty celebrated her Diamond Jubilee in religious life. I felt deeply honored to be the only non-SVD priest among the concelebrants! I thanked God for allowing me to be among those who rejoiced in her vocation. I also thanked Him for the gift of religious perseverance.

A year earlier, I had celebrated my Silver Jubilee of Monastic Profession. I had invited Sr. Marty to join me in the Eucharistic celebration as we gave thanks to God for the gift of the Benedictine vocation. I was so grateful to have reached even a third of Sr. Marty’s years in religious life! She gave me a gift I now treasure deeply — a stole embroidered with the image of the Virgin Mary, which Sr. Marty had designed. I remember thinking, “Only a mother in religious life can think of such a thoughtful and meaningful gift.”

Years after that first meeting, Sr. Marty continues to create vestments of such beauty and grace. I thank God for blessing me with a spiritual mother, fellow artist, and friend. Every visit to her sewing room is a joy—not only because I see the beautiful work she’s creating, but also because I get to see her and marvel at the beauty that flows from her creative hands.



A vestment of flames, beautifully designed and crafted by Sr. Marty Meyer, SSpS, for Fr. Anselm Manalastas, OSB



A treasured stole bearing the image of the Blessed Mother—gifted by Sr. Marty to Fr. Anselm on his Silver Jubilee as a Benedictine priest



Fr. Anselm proudly wears a vestment designed by Sr. Marty—simple in form, yet striking in beauty.

Photos from Fr. Anselm Manalastas, OSB

Fr. Anselm Manalastas, OSB is a historian and the Archivist of the Benedictine Abbey in Mendiola, Manila. He teaches Theology, Spirituality, and Church and Monastic History. He is a friend of CHS alumni who helps in their spiritual formation, celebrating their annual Advent Simbang Gabi and Lenten Recollections.

A Birthday Twice Blessed

By Gloria "Dodit" Ocampo Reyes (HS-64)

For some inexplicable reason, a celebration, for me, is never truly meaningful sans a spiritual component.

This year—while totally unplanned—my birthday celebration turned out to be a twofold blessing, much to my joy and delight—and hopefully even more so for the attendees.

Sometime during Lent, my Bible group received word that our moderator, Cardinal Ambo David, would be a keynote speaker in a Lenten recollection—a fundraising project for the San Jose Seminary on April 5 (my birthday)—at the Church of the Gesu in Ateneo de Manila University. Without wasting time, I asked my dear friend from Grade 1, Esther Dehesa-Javier, (we often celebrate our birthdays together, as they're a week apart), if she was game to join me this year, provided the good Cardinal allowed us to "piggyback" on his event. He graciously did.

This year, I thought my turn to treat the group for my April birthday would be forgotten, as I was busy preparing for a European pilgrimage and reunions with old friends and colleagues. No way! When I returned, everyone was eagerly waiting to hear my plans for a belated celebration in June. I was at a loss until Menchu Dayrit-Padilla, during Antoinetta "Toni" Villaraza-Palenzuela's (HS-65) birthday lunch in May, casually mentioned that she and some friends had visited the Ephesus House in Alfonso, Cavite—a replica of the one in Ephesus, Turkey.



Author Dodit Reyes (seated, left) with Cardinal Pablo Virgilio David (seated, center), together with HS-64 classmates



Dodit (L-R) with current and past CHSAF Trustees – Viqui del Rosario, Kalyn Manzano, Menchu Que

And so, we had our celebration alongside the spiritual recollection, followed by a simple feast at the San Jose Seminary function room, catered by Fr. Manoling Francisco's "Iggy's (short for St. Ignatius) Kitchen." Present were some of our HS-64 classmates and my Bible study mates. I'm attaching some pictures of the event.

Belated Birthday Celebration

As if that weren't enough—

You see, I belong to this one-of-a-kind CHSAF group whose bond has weathered the tests of time and pressure. When our term to serve the alumnae foundation under the leadership of Carmen "Menchu" Dayrit-Padilla (HS-60) ended in 2006 ... one door closed, another opened.

Not wanting to disband or drift apart, this group of ladies—from various alumnae batches—found excuses to get together periodically. To this day, we manage to meet once a month—11 now, from the original 13 (we sadly lost two)—to celebrate birthdays and Christmas. We don't just meet socially; more meaningfully, we pool resources to support outreach projects connected with the convent.

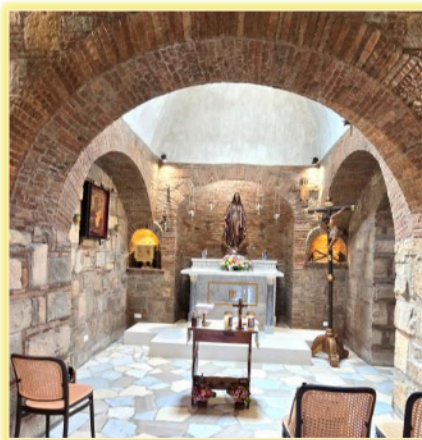
Replica of the House of Mary

Having visited the original site in Ephesus—where tradition holds that Mama Mary spent her final years—with my late husband, Caloy, after one of his medical conferences in Turkey, I welcomed the chance to celebrate my birthday at the replica of this sacred place. And it's right next to Sonya's Garden! What more could I ask for?

Everyone at Toni's birthday lunch shared my enthusiasm, and so it was a go! Victoria "Viqui" Torresdel Rosario (HS-77) volunteered to contact Fr. Anselm Manalastas, OSB; Marilen Nolasco-Espiritu (AB-59) called up her friend Sonya to book the venue; a roll call was made, and everyone confirmed attendance! From start to finish, everything fell into place. The chosen date, Friday the 13th (my husband's and my lucky day), was well received despite forecasts of heavy traffic (it being payday Friday) and possible rain. Thank God, we were blessed with clear skies, light traffic (thanks to our early start) and only a few wrinkles—like one car briefly losing its way before eventually finding the group. Even Fr. Anselm, who graciously accepted our invitation to celebrate Mass at the chapel, arrived early.

13

(Continued on p.14)



The altar of the Ephesus House in Alfonso, Cavite

It was a beautiful Eucharistic celebration, highlighted by an unexpected and thought-provoking reflection on the real and scriptural meaning of “beloved” in relation to the Blessed Mother and to us.

We were supposed to be complete, but at the last minute, Charrie Lim called in with a medical emergency and couldn’t make it, much to our disappointment. The beauty of it, though, was that while she was absent in body, she was very much present in spirit. Our Mass intentions embraced her well-being, and she was included in the blessing Fr. Manalastas gave at the end of the celebration. The interactive intercessory prayers were so touching and personal, inviting each of us to share our personal and family intentions.

Sacred Space

A brief tour of Ephesus House, still a work in progress, gave us a feel of the sacred space. This is a very meaningful project initiated by the children of the late Mila Dayrit (of Miladay Jewels), in collaboration with Fr. Dennis Paez, SDB. From what I understand, the vision is to establish a retreat house, a church, and a center to help women and children.

De la Misa a la mesa—from spiritual nourishment to a feast for the senses at nearby Sonya’s Garden. A sumptuous buffet, supplemented by a delicious *cochinillo* from a supplier in Alfonso, Cavite, satisfied our hearty appetites. Sonya even invited us to visit her well-appointed home afterward.

Everyone went home with stomachs and hearts filled with joy, peace, love, and gratitude—for the blessings of friendship, camaraderie, and spiritual togetherness that gatherings like this bring in our senior years.



Souvenir photo at Sonya’s Garden (L-R) Marilen Nolasco-Espiritu (Coll-63), Antoinetta Villaraza-Palenzuela (HS-65), Carmen Dayrit-Padilla (HS-60), Sonya Garcia, Thelma Exconde-Gana (HS-57), Cynthia Lorenzo-Picazo (HS-61), Carmencita Martinez-Que (HS-75), Ma. Carolina Manzano (HS-79), Ma. Cynthia Martinez (HS-76), Victoria Torres-del Rosario (HS-77)

EPHESUS HOUSE: THEN AND NOW

Origins in Ephesus, Turkey (1st Century)

After the ascension of Jesus, tradition holds that St. John the Apostle brought the Blessed Mother to Ephesus—to protect her from persecution. It is believed that they later moved to a quiet hillside area called the “Mountain of the Nightingales,” where St. John built a simple stone house for her.

This sacred tradition is supported by the mystical visions of Blessed Catherine Emmerich, an Augustinian nun in 19th century Germany. Though not historically verified, her detailed accounts inspired the discovery of a centuries-old house in 1891 that matched her descriptions.

The site became a place of deep prayer and pilgrimage. It is said that early Christians drew strength from this refuge, and many believe that St. Mary spent her final years there. While the Church has made no official declaration on its authenticity, several popes have visited the site—among them Popes Paul VI, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI—affirming its spiritual and devotional importance.

Today, the House of Mary in Ephesus continues to draw the faithful, not for historical certainty, but for the peace, comfort, and motherly presence they experience in this holy place.

Reimagined in Alfonso, Cavite (2022–Present)

Inspired by camps for depressed and suicidal youth, this apostolate envisions a refuge for individuals, couples, and especially young people in distress. Modeled closely after the original Marian house in Ephesus, the sanctuary will offer hope, healing, and comfort through the Blessed Mother’s guidance.

Intended as the third such replica worldwide—and the most authentic in the Philippines—the Ephesus House will mirror the original in size, materials, and features, and house centuries-old icons and relics of Marian saints.

A contemplative community, with volunteers, will welcome visitors as “Jesus in distressing disguise,” offering prayer and hospitality. The entire sanctuary will stand as a *panata* (vow) of gratitude for favors sought and received through Mama Mary’s intercession.

(Information sourced from <https://wwbmn.ph>)

CHS Alumna Makes Travel History



President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. (5th from left) joins Filipina travel legends Kach Medina Umandap, CHS alumna Odette Aquitania Ricasa (HS-61), and Luisa Yu (3rd, 4th, and 6th from left, respectively) during their courtesy visit to Malacañang Palace. Photo credit: YUMMIE DINGDING, Inquirer.net

Three trailblazing Filipina travelers—each having visited all 193 United Nations member countries—paid a courtesy call on President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. at Malacañang Palace on April 24, 2025, to mark the second anniversary of the Filipino World Travelers (FWT) community.

Among them was **CHS alumna Lourdes “Odette” Aquitania Ricasa (HS-61)**, recognized as the first Filipino to complete this rare milestone. She completed her global journey in 2022 at age 77, with Kurdistan in Iraq as her final destination.

Ricasa, who is from Quiapo, Manila, finished grade school and high school at Holy Ghost College. She later attended Assumption College in Makati for her college education. A member of the Travelers’ Century Club—an exclusive group of individuals who have visited 100 or more countries—she is also an author, artist, and pianist.

Joining her were Luisa Yu, the oldest Filipino to complete the journey at 79, and Kach Medina Umandap, the youngest at 36 and the first to do so using only a Philippine passport.

FWT founder Dondon Bales presented President Marcos with his book *Galà: Adventures of the Most Well-Traveled Filipinos*, which features their stories and celebrates Filipinos who have explored the world.

Calling all 2026 Jubilarians and Alumni!

Mark your calendars for the next CHSM Grand Alumni Homecoming
on February 1, 2026



CHSM HOMECOMING 2026

February 1, 2026

Venue: School of the Holy Spirit
BF Homes, Quezon City

Once again, it's time to gather,
reconnect, and relive the fun
and carefree years that shaped us.

Next year, **Homecoming 2026** will have -
HS-76 as our Golden Jubilee Host,
joined by our fellow Jubilarians:

**Sapphire (HS-81),
Emerald (HS-71),
Diamond (HS-66),
Platinum (HS-61),
Titanium (HS-51),
Chromium (HS-46)
Graphene (HS-41) and
College Gold (76).**

Let's celebrate the memories,
the friendships, and the spirit
that will always bring us home.

Gallery



CHSM HS-72 January to March birthday celebrants jointly treated their batchmates to a sumptuous lunch and a smashing get-together at Maricopa Restaurant, Valenzuela, Metro Manila (owned by batchmate, Liz Santiago-Villarica)



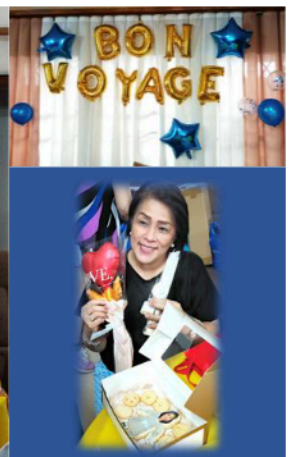
The photo was taken at Maricopa Restaurant (of Liz Santiago-Villarica HS-72) in the celebration of our friend, Viring's birthday. Seated left to right Viring and my sister Christina Amorsolo, Standing from left to right my sister Rosy Amorsolo Cheng, Liz and Sylvia Amorsolo-Lazo.



HS-72 January to March birthday celebrants with their fellow batchmates and guests



On June 21, 2025, CHS HS-74 celebrated the 2nd Quarter Birthday Dinner @ CharlieZ' Cafe & Events Place last night despite the traffic and major street floods caused by the heavy rain.



HS-77 got together to celebrate the first semester birthday celebrants last May 3, 2025. They took the opportunity to bid their classmate, Thelma Mendoza-Valdepenas (left photo), the best on her move to the US with her family.

HS-70 hands over donation



On April 30, 2025, HS-70, Emerald Jubilarians of Homecoming 2025, handed over to the SSps Sisters at the Poinsettia convent their legacy gift- a donation to build a dormitory for Mangyan students. In photo, (L-R) front, Dolores Miraflor-Gonzales, Sr. Victricia Pascasio, Sr. Rosario Tayson. At back are Sr. Eden Panganiban, Edith Alikpala, Evangelina Qua, Ma. Luisa Dadia and Sr. Carmelita Victoria.



Make plans for the CHSNAF Grand Reunion 2025!

Join an unforgettable celebration of friendship and memories at the CHSNAF Grand Reunion 2025. Reconnect with fellow alumnae, relive cherished moments, and make new memories in sunny San Diego. Save the date and be part of this exciting event!

Date: October 24-26, 2025

Location: Bahia Resort Hotel, San Diego, CA



Get READY to ZumBINGO!

Calling all CHS Alumni, family and friends!! Get set for an exciting day of fun, prizes and reconnecting with old classmates! Join us for a Bingo, Raffle and Zumba event for the benefit of CHSAF's holistic outreach and assistance to SSps schools scholarship program; SSps Mission Centers Community projects for Aetas, Mangyans and Higaonan; and Alumni Care Assistance program.

Mark your calendars : July 26, 2025 from 9:00 AM to 12 NN . This is a hybrid event!

Ready to jump in? Grab your tickets now by copying this link to your browser:

<https://forms.gle/ruf1bjds2RYyvKep9>

or scanning the QR code on the poster.

Let's go! Let's Zumbingo!



Photo Credit: Canva

A Prayer for Healing By Agnes Quimel. Villaruz (HS-66)

Jesus, my Savior,
You see mist clouding my eyes.
You feel beats roaring in my heart.
You hear thoughts raving in my mind.

You see me.
You move me.
You fill me,
With the flame of the Spirit.

Whisper to me the word,
Even if the sun sets fast,
Even if the cloud roars wild,
Even if the tears run dry.

Just your word,
Jesus, my Lord.

SSpS Unveils New Congregational Logo



On June 8, 2025, the Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit (SSpS) officially launched their new congregational logo during the 6th International Assembly of Provincial and Regional Leaders, held from June 8 to 29 in São Paulo, Brazil. The new design reflects the congregation's missionary charism and spirituality while embracing a contemporary visual identity.

The journey toward a new logo began in 2014 with a vision to create a symbol that would honor both the congregation's rich heritage and its evolving mission in today's world. For nearly a century, the original logo served as a cherished emblem of identity. Recognizing the call for renewal, the 15th General Chapter in 2022 recommended the formation of a commission—led by the Congregational Communication Team—to complete the design process within three years.

The new logo, approved by the Congregational Leadership Team, marks a significant step forward. It is the fruit of deep reflection, dialogue, and creative collaboration between SSpS Sisters and lay partners. More than a visual mark, the logo embodies the congregation's mission, spirituality, and commitment to serving the Church and the world with faith, hope, and love.

As the SSpS continue their missionary journey, the new logo stands as a symbol of unity and inspiration—honoring who they are, and who they are becoming, guided always by the Spirit.

Learn more about the new logo in this video:

https://worldssps.org/?fbclid=IwY2xjawLZR4ZleHRuA2FlbQI_xMABicmlkETF4UkNHZ2NyS1J5a0RKNVZQAR7qfY_xOy88l4_oKjZdyugHz0tMQrSTzB43z3E_BVqKSd_OWRRBazdlwP-e4OA_aem_lb1P4xUOhtksztE0LLhWA

PRAYER CORNER

Through our “Alumni Prayer Community,” let all of us pause for a minute and storm heaven with prayers: Lord, we pray . . .

- For the spiritual, physical and emotional healing of our alumni, classmates, and their loved ones;
- For our deliverance against natural calamities and natural disasters – typhoons, earthquakes, droughts, shortages, and other destructive phenomena – Lord cover our homes with your mantle of protection and keep us and our loved ones safe at all times;
- For an end to wars and armed conflicts in our country and around the world;
- For the stability and unity of our families – young or old, may our family members be bound by selfless love and commitment that transcends all boundaries and survive the test of time and the trials of life; may they always be safe from all harm.

Contributions to the WE, the Alumni

The **WE, the Alumni** is a newspaper *for, of, and by* HGC/CHS alumni.

Thus, we welcome your contributions to the different sections of the **WE**,
Be a part of the **WE** ...
let it truly be “your” newspaper.

Email your contributions to:
we.thealumnae@gmail.com

WE, the Alumni Editorial Board JANUARY 2025

Victoria Torres-del Rosario (HS-77)
Ma. Guillermina M. Ong (HS-68)
Evangelina Y. Qua (HS-70/AB-BSC-74)
Ma. Corazon P. Guidote (HS-78)
Ma. Luz E. Gabriel (HS-72)
Christian Manuel
Sr. Eden Panganiban, SSps

CHSAF Membership/ Renewal Form

I would like to activate/ renew my membership to the CHS Alumni Foundation.

P500.00/US\$12.00 (One-year membership) _____
P1,000.00/US\$24.00 (Two-year membership) _____
Sent by: _____
Address: _____
Contact No: _____

Please send your payments to your Class Reps or kindly deposit your payments to:

RCBC account no: 7590573589

Account Name: CHS Alumnae Foundation, Inc.

Please send a copy of your deposit/transfer advise to the CHSAF Secretariat c/o Ms. Dolly Gabriel by email to: chsafsecretariat2@yahoo.com or viber: 09175034608

If you have already renewed your membership for the current year, please ignore this message.



Into ETERNAL *life*

Father of all,
we pray to you for our family,
classmates and friends,
for all those whom we love but no longer see.
Grant them eternal rest and
let perpetual light shine upon them.
May the souls of all the faithful departed,
through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

2025

Feb 19	Maria Concepcion Leong-Diaz (HS-67/AB-71) , sister of Ma Wivina Leong-Bautista (HS-67)	Buhay-Javier (HS-72)
Mar 13	Leo Angelo Quimson , son of Lucia Bacani-Quimson (HS-63/AB-67/BSC-68)	May 23 Stanley Richard , husband of Elizabeth Vijungco-Richard (HS-66)
Mar 21	Carlo Labrador , son of Carmen Contreras-Labrador (HS-57/BSC-61)	May 25 Ma. Estelle Garcia-Ortiz , mother of Ma. Estelle Epifania Ortiz (HS77/BSC-81)
Apr 01	Alberto Vertido , husband of Estelita Luna-Vertido (HS-61), brother of Lydia Vertido -Savellano (BSCChem-60), Susan Vertido-Garganera (HS-69/BSMath-73), Lourdes Vertido-Gatdula (HS-70/BSFN-74), Ma. Socorro Vertido-Mendiola (BSFN-80)	May 27 Rebecca Victoria Soqueno (HS-60/BSCChem-64) , sister of Cecilia Soqueno-Vargas (HS-63/BSE-67), Cynthia Soqueno-Diaz (HS-68/BSC-72), Raquel Soqueno-Peterson (HS-74/BSC-78), Ma. Corazon Soqueno-Metwalli (HS-75/AB-80), Cristina Soqueno (HS-76), Consuelo Soqueno (HS-79/AB-83)
Apr 03	Lourdes Amy Gustilo-Lopez (AM-65)	May 28 Teresa Tigno , mother of Maria Teresa Tigno-Estrin (HS-63), Marlene Tigno-Magsaysay (HS-65/BSC-69), Ana Maria Tigno-Vilkins (HS-70), Cynthia Tigno-Delabahan (HS-75/BSND-79), Ma. Carla Tigno-Datanagan (HS-80)
Apr 22	Teresa Villanueva , mother of Milagros Maria Villanueva-McKay (HS-69) and Ma. Eugenia Villanueva-Pimentel (HS-67)	Jun 01 Alice Lorenzo-Kawachi (HS-55)
Apr 23	Rita Santiago , mother of Ma. Ida Santiago-Malapitan (HS-77/BSC-81)	Jun 03 Sr Ancille Elveña, SSsP (former CHSM President)
May 05	Edgar Tamayo , husband of Jocelyn Evangelista-Tamayo (HS-78)	Jun 10 Marlene Rebullida , sister of Luz Gracia Rebullida (HS-65)
May 06	Henrietta Claudia Bolinao , sister of Mary Rose Ann Bolinao-Valenzuela (HS-78) and Margaret Bolinao-Jose (HS-80)	Jun 11 Danilo Molina , husband of Violeta Arce-Molina (HS-62/AB-66/BSC-67)
May 08	Josephine Labrador-Hermano (BSC-58)	Jun 11 Celia Solomon-Sarthou (HS-73)
May 09	Rosario Carrion-Di Ricco (HS-59/AB-63)	Jun 18 Ana Isabel Barrenechea-Gimenez (HS-65) , sister of Pilar Barrenechea (HS-72)
May 11	Emmanuel Perez , brother of Evelyn Perez-Dumdum (HS-66/BSC-70)	Jun 22 Josefina Nera-Dimaano (HS-67/BSC-71) , sister of Evelyn Nera (HS-66/AB/BSC-71)
May 21	Wilfredo Buhay , brother of Winifred Buhay-Samson (HS-69) and Wivinne	