

## **GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY OF THE LAURA VICUÑA CENTER**

The Laura Vicuña Foundation in its coming 25<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary looks forward to the blessing of a new 5-storey Laura Vicuña Center in Cubao next year. The Groundbreaking Ceremony was held last September 4, 2014 at around 9:30 in the morning. Fr. Aris Sison, the parish priest of the Immaculate Conception Cathedral in Cubao officiated the blessing.

LVF Officers and Board of Trustees were present during the ceremony: Sr. Sarah Garcia, Ms. Corazon dela Paz-Bernardo and her daughter Cristina, Ms. Marissa Concepcion, Ms. Marilen Espiritu, Atty. Regis Puno and Mr. Francisco Dizon, Sr. Marivic Sta. Ana, Sr. Catherine Urgello and Sr. Mabel Pilar. Some Sisters from the different communities also graced the occasion. They were: Sr. Felicidad Boado, Sr. Celia Tacujan, Sr. Raquel Melissa Flor and Sr. Maricor Ortanez, Sr. Mel David, Sr. Angie Quirante, Sr. Aleth Evangelista and Sr. Candy Carmen Balverde. LVF girls represented by Tricia Nadine Velasquez and Catherine Velasquez were also present to witness the momentous event.

The ceremony started with Ms. Bernardo giving a beautiful brief introduction of the center. *“In the early 90s, the Salesian Sisters embarked on a new challenging mission concretely answering to the proliferation of street children in the metropolis. When the girls are brought to us they are depressed, fearful, hostile, broken, aggressive and angry with the world. For more than two decades, LVC has been giving HOPE a HOME to each resident girl. The center has been their haven of peace and solace as they undergo psycho-social and spiritual interventions for their healing and recovery from their traumatic past. Hundreds of girls have risen from the horror of their harrowing experience of abuse and are now empowered women who have their own careers and some of them their own families.”*

Then, Fr. Aris continued with the prayers and reading of the Word of God. Through this simple ceremony we heed to God’s word: *“You are God’s building. For we are God’s co-workers; you are God’s field, God’s building. According to the grace of God given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But each one must be careful how he builds upon it, for no one can lay a foundation other than the one that is there, namely, Jesus Christ.”*

To begin and bless the work of God in this project, Fr. Aris proceeded and sprinkled the construction site and the cornerstone with holy water. The laying of the cornerstone then took place, followed by the shoveling of soil on the cornerstone while hard hats were placed on their heads. The Officers and the Board were the first ones who did this followed by the Sisters, the staff, and the other guests. The two Vicuñans also signified their longing for a home as they joined the rest in shoveling soil around the cornerstone. It is also worth noting that one of the first Vicuñan that resided in the house, Ms. Charina Tolibas, is present and participated in the groundbreaking. She is now a regular employee in a nearby publishing office.

Lastly, Sr. Sarah Garcia, the president of LVFI addressed the assembly with her short message: *“This place will be a home for these girls in the future. It is not only a home but a place where they can achieve their dreams. Because this place will give them hope to realize their dreams.”*

**Indeed, at LVC, we GIVE HOPE a HOME!**