

They are all but Children of God

“There are a lot of children waiting for the permanent love and care of a parent. As according to our family code ‘the family is foundation of our nation that is why we need to strengthen it. And the reason why we are celebrating this Adoption Consciousness Week is to have more families who will open their hearts and doors to our children,” said Dir. Gemma Gabuya, during the Adoption Consciousness Week held last February 15, 2016 at WalterMart, City of San Fernando, Pampanga.

Currently there are 78 children in the Reception Center for Children and a total number of 65 Non-Government Organizations who are caring for neglected and abandoned children, in Region III.

The theme of the celebration was “Legal na Ampon Ako, Anak na Totoo.”

“We are not after the genes anymore. Our heart beats for the child, the same way it beats for God,” shared Mr. Michael Dennis Sucgang, an Adoptive Parent, during his testimonial.

As per Presidential Proclamation No. 72, series of 1999, the celebration of Adoption Consciousness Day is every first Saturday of the month of February. However, for the year 2016, it was observed from February 15 to 21.

The celebration was intended to advance and deepen the public awareness with regards to legal adoption of the abandoned, surrendered, and neglected children to move away potential foster and adoptive parents in submitting to the temptation of illegal adoption.

The process of legal adoption is defined by many as lengthy; it actually has 12 steps (see RA 8552 for complete details).

The most common stigma or misconceptions about adoption, discussed by Ms. Michelle Gormley, are: it is only for those who are rich and have enough money to complete the adoption process; children of the foster/adoptive parents will suffer; and, orphans, abandoned and foster children are damaged goods who will eventually cause problems for it is in their blood. But, as Ms. Gormley emphasized, orphans and abandoned children are no different from other children, their path of life can be driven by external factors like the environment but they still have their free will just like any other human beings, just like Mark Rafael Arceo, an Adoptive Child; "I still wanted to meet my birth parents for that would make a more complete human being," he said, during his testimonial.

At the end of the day, what other people can do to help them is to choose to love and take care of them rather than judge them. "Adoption should not be the least option to have a child," said Mr. Sucgang. ### (Andyleen C. Feje)