

## Fr. Heinz Kulueke, SVD conferred a prestigious award

**F**r. Heinz Kulueke, SVD, the provincial superior of the Philippine Southern Province (PHS) was conferred a Federal Cross of Merit Award by the Federal government of Germany last January 17, 2012 in Cebu City. The prestigious award is given by the German government to any of its citizens who have contributed so much for the development of humanity. The award was personally given to him by His Excellency Ambassador Joachim Heidorn, Germany's ambassador to the Philippines, who came to the city of Cebu for the glorious event.

Fr. Heinz, a German citizen, who has been a missionary to the southern islands of the Philippines for the past 25 years, did exactly what the award demands. Ever since he arrived to the Philippines he has been committed to the works for the poorest of the poor in many parts of Cebu. Aside from serving in different

capacities as a missionary priest, he devoted much of his time reaching out the needs of the marginalized of society. Fr. Heinz is currently the Provincial superior and at the same time Philosophy professor at the University of San Carlos, nevertheless, he always finds time to visit the children living at the dumpsites, the trafficked women at red light districts, the homeless and numerous informal settlers that can be found every corner of the city.



Ambassador Heidorn in his speech, explained to those present the meaning of the award and proceeded to recognize and praised the efforts of Fr. Heinz to lift the people out of poverty. The ambassador, being new to the Philippines from his former post in Jordan, confessed that he does not know Fr. Heinz that much but, what he heard about him makes him a proud German.

Fr. Heinz, in his acceptance speech, so humbly shared the honor of the award to those he works with. He said, "I could never do it alone", referring to the numerous partner organizations and individuals he intimately allies with. One of them is the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation – Integrated Development Centre, Incorporated or JPIC-IDC, an organization he very closely works with. JPIC-IDC, which Fr. Heinz helped to establish, is a large non-government organization currently implementing close to 30 developmental projects in the areas of Cebu and Mindanao.

The awarding ceremony, to the insistence of Fr. Heinz was deliberately made very simple. It was held in a small room in a less known hotel where only 12 guests were invited who were later served decent snacks after the rites.