

Magis

Formation for Mission

Stewardship

Simplicity

Sharing

Service

Official Publication of the Magis Deo Community
December 2020 Issue



Surviving 2020

Three thrusts to focus on, to thrive in the upcoming year

Tuloy na tuloy pa rin ang Pasko

Virtual Family Day celebration:
United in prayer, games and *Tiktok*

What have I become during this pandemic?

An introspection on one's self,
and their impact on others

Contemplations with nature

Much-needed moments of
peace with God's creations

A gift that God wrapped for me this 2020

Upkeep your faith and resilience

About the Cover



The year 2020 is infamous for the genesis of the COVID-19 pandemic—a year of resilience beyond our grasp, of reflection and enlightenment, and for some, loss. Weeks and months of working and studying under the four walls of quarantine made it seem as if time was a construct. Fatigue took a toll on our mental health and yet we still rummaged for the smallest ounce of hope, because it’s embedded in us and in the stories of plagues’ past.

Recovery is still on the horizon and we might not know when all of this will end, but at least we’ve reached the end of this year. And here you are: so give gratitude towards yourself and others for making something good out of the turbulence. Remind yourself why you have your passions, and fuel them again this upcoming year. Continue to bloom, to pray, and to keep safe. It’s not just for you, it’s for others too.

Editorial Board

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Calendar of Activities: January

January
10 Community Celebration

Purple and pink and purity: The colors of Advent

Reprinted from December 2015 Issue

The Advent season has finally arrived, marking the start of a new Liturgical year. “Advent” comes from the Latin word “Advenio” – “to come to” the greatest love intervention of all time – when God became human, and thus made it possible for us to become divine¹.

Advent is a time for remembering, celebrating and believing. We remember the first coming of Christ – His human birth in Bethlehem fulfilling the hopes and dreams for a long awaited Savior. We celebrate His continuing presence each day of our lives, as we grow in grace and love through the Sacrament of the Eucharist and serve together in community. And we believe in full faith that He is risen, has returned to the Father, and will come again at the end of time. Then truly all will be ONE.

Our Catholic Church uses symbols and liturgy to help us enter into the spirit of the season. The Advent Wreath is one such beautiful symbol. Made from the branches of evergreen trees, trees that do not lose their leaves in the dead cold of winter, and woven into a circle, the wreath symbolizes LIFE ETERNAL, now made possible because the Savior is born.

Four candles, 3 purple and 1 pink, are arranged on its branches, and a white candle is placed at its center. One candle is lit on each Sunday of Advent and each represents an aspect of the spiritual preparation for the coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Purple is the color of Advent and reminds us the Son of God is coming and we must “make way for the coming of the Lord.” It is the time to PURIFY ourselves, to remove all the negative attachments we cling to and keep us from opening our hearts to Him. Like Lent, the priests wear purple vestments and “Glory to God” is omitted during mass. On the third Sunday, known as Gaudete Sunday, priests wear pink or rose-colored vestments, evoking feelings of lightness and joy, encouraging us to continue our prayers and good deeds and reminding us that Christmas is near.

The first purple candle has been called the “Prophecy candle” in remembrance of the prophets, especially Isaiah, who foretold the coming and life of Christ. This candle symbolizes man’s EARNEST HOPE for the coming of Emmanuel.

¹(Oh, that sneaky serpent in the Garden – he was telling the truth when he tempted Adam and Eve. A half-truth but still a truth – yes, they (and all of us) could be like God – BUT – by following God’s will, not our own, or the evil one’s!)



The second purple candle is called the “Bethlehem candle” and symbolizes Christ’s manger. This second candle represents LOVE – the love God the Father has for us that He sent His only begotten Son to be with us and to suffer for us in order that our sins may be forgiven.

The third candle, a pink one, is called the “Shepherds’ candle” and is lighted on Gaudete Sunday. It symbolizes JOY, our rejoicing as the coming of Emmanuel is near.

The last purple candle, known as the “Angels candle” symbolizes PEACE, the peace that emanates from the light of Christ. The lighting of this candle declares that our preparation is over and that we are ready to welcome Christ.

Lastly, the white candle at the center of the wreath is lit on Christmas Eve and is called the “Christ candle.” White symbolizes CHRIST’S PURITY AND SINLESSNESS and those who receive Christ as their Savior are washed of their sins and are likewise “made whiter than snow.”

The Church invites families to light the Advent wreath so that we can teach our children the truer, deeper meaning of this beautiful season. It is an opportunity to place Christ back at the center of Christmas for that is what this is all about. A family, after all, is a domestic church – “isang munting simbahan” – and its role in the sacred task of making its members be like God can never be overemphasized.

On December 6, Magis Deo will come together as a community to celebrate Family Day. Let us all inspire one another in preparing ourselves during this season. May this Advent season point not only to the memory of the babe lying in a manger – that is history, that is past – but to Christ with us NOW, in the Eucharist, in community, in our mission to continue Christ’s interrupted mission. So that when He comes again in the third and final coming, we can say “Lord, we give you back all you have entrusted to us, and look, Lord, through You and with You and in You, all is holy.”

*Stir up our hearts, o Lord,
To prepare the paths of Thine only begotten son:
That we may worthily serve Thee
With hearts purified by His coming:
Who livest and reignest with God the Father
In the unity of the Holy Spirit,
Ever one God, world without end.
Amen.*

Surviving 2020; Thriving in 2021

Benz & Vina Dimanalata, Francis BCGG

The year 2020 robbed the whole world like a thief in the night. It literally locked us down, isolating, distancing us from our support systems.

The Covid-19 virus crept into our health, financial, emotional and spiritual well-being; shook us to our core, and tested our strength and resolve. Was there someone who was not affected? We all were. Was there someone who survived? We all did. Praise God!

We overcame the infectious desolation through our deeply-rooted values of sharing and service. God meets us where we are: in our living room, dining area, bedroom, kitchen; in Messenger, Viber, Zoom. In our own sacred spaces. Prayer meetings pushed through days after the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) announcement. Our first virtual ComCel with Holy Mass went live on May 2. Do you still remember Fr. James Gascon’s teaching aptly titled: Transitions, Living the Easter Grace in a New and Abnormal World? Indeed, 2020 marks a different world out there. Magis adapts but remains intact.

And so we asked the first question in Examen: What were you grateful for this 2020? Overwhelmingly, Magis members acknowledged the community’s relentless efforts in converting the regular in-person spiritual programs (Prayer Meeting, BCGG Interface, SDR, and AIR) to online sessions, despite and in spite of the most trying circumstances. The M.E. Ministry even got to introduce a whole new program, the Marriage Boosters, reaching in and out of Magis, in and out of the country, for five consecutive months. God moved us into new directions, to change, to grow, and to embrace one another, even virtually.

What has Magis become then to most of us through these years, and through this most unprecedented 2020? Magis Deo, to many, has become more than our spiritual community. Magis Deo has become our Family – where we feel blessed and loved, where we find our sanctuary amidst the chaos.

2020 is the year we survived the pandemic. 2021 is the year we will thrive as one Magis family. Together, we will fulfill our mission of helping build God’s community here on earth by focusing on three thrusts: (1) Deepen the Ignatian Family Formation; (2) Strengthen our Membership; (3) Organize Pro-active Outreach.

The first thrust aims to continually grow our marriages and family life following the teachings and spirituality espoused by St. Ignatius, albeit this time there will be a conscious effort to involve all ages of family members including the young adults, with the hope that they will imbibe the Magis formation well into their maturity.

The second thrust enriches our community by attracting more married couples and former M.E graduates to follow God and live our core values of stewardship, simplicity, sharing, and service.

Finally, the third thrust intends to put structure and mechanisms in order to have a more organized and pro-active approach to Magis outreach programs. When we put God at the center of our lives, there will always be room for others.

With prayers and good works, let our Magis family thrive in 2021 and serve our Heavenly Father with gladness!





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2021 PASTORAL
COUNCIL



SWEETEST GREETINGS!




























Merry Christmas !!



Merry Christmas!




Seasons Greetings From the Reantasos



Merry Christmas





Merry Christmas from PARADA family



Merry Christmas From The Lim Dynasty



Merry Christmas



Transfiguration BCCB





REV. FR. JAMES GASCON, SJ
President
Lord Jesus, thank you for all the






Year 2020











Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Family Day

Tuloy na tuloy pa rin ang Pasko

Leo Soliman, Corinthians BCGG

Hosting a BCGG or interface via Zoom is peanuts. But a major community celebration complete with games, TikTok presentations, raffles with an expected 200 logins is definitely no picnic. Sensing the gargantuan task ahead, the CSM peeps buckled down in preparation for a virtual Family Day celebration. And so, after a series of Zoom meetings, a program was finalized.

The targets were modest at the start: a simple game, about 6 TikTok performances, and 6 raffle prizes were lined up. And CSM was already happy with that. But lo and behold, two trivia games with 10 winners, over a dozen TikTokers joined, and 34 raffle prizes were on hand by the time the program started. Once again, God blessed Magis.

Prior to Fr. James' mass, a nostalgic video presentation compiled by Milo Parada was shown that made a lot of members shed tears of joy from Magis past. Not a few sighed when they saw the pictures of our brothers and sisters we rubbed elbows with then, but have gone ahead of us.

Ethel Araullo rendered an inspiring and timely song, carrying the message that there will always be a rainbow after the rains; that despite all that are happening now, this is still a wonderful world.

Emcees Winston Cruz and Jun Gacias got the ball rolling with cheerful greetings from the North, South, and Central sector members. Rico and Terry Lim acknowledged the efforts exerted by CSM to provide happiness to the community using extraordinary means.

The ceremonial turnover between outgoing chair couple Ted and Susan Concepcion and incoming Benz and Vina Dimanalata was very well coordinated. And their messages well received. The introduction of the council roster, sector and ministry heads assured the members that the community is in good hands.

And when the games started, the fun began. Magis trivia revealed that a lot of members need refresher courses. The



Christmas trivia made us realize that we know so little about the season's characters. Can't win 'em all, right?

Among the TikTokers emerged the Most Hilarious, Most Creative and Best Performance. All the other TikTokers received tokens too. If this segment were performed live, the crowd would surely be laughing out loud.

All were on their toes (or should I say fingers) when the raffle started, wishing their names would show up on their screens once the roulette stopped spinning. 34 jumped for joy screaming "I won! I won!" While the rest could only grudgingly say, "Drat!" Ha, ha, ha.

As if on cue, the Family Day was over by 12:00 noon.

Again, CSM delivered. Their hard work and sacrifices in bringing happiness to the community despite the daunting challenges paid off.

Hats off to the CSM squad: Leony & Mia Parada, Ojay & Yang Reantaso, Mennen & Elyn Aracid, Rico & Terry Lim, Cesar & Delsa Sangalang, Leo & Marilyn Soliman, and Jane & Jojo Aldeguer.

- Congratulations, winners:
- Game 1: Magis Deo Trivia: Kaye Sangalang, Ricky Sun, Mimi Santos, Vina Dimanalata, and Ted Concepcion.
- Game 2: Christmas Trivia:
- Alex Caramat, Ebarido Family, Roel Claros, Yang Reantaso, Vic and Bebot Hurna.
- Game 3: TikTok Performance
- Best Performance: San Jose Family, Most Creative: Reantaso Family, Most Hilarious: Rico & Terry Lim.

Continued on page 8

Congratulations, Carlo!

Leo Soliman, Corinthians BCGG

Iremember Claro and Linda Santos toting their son Carlo in Magis Deo Community celebrations and activities of yesteryears. Carlo practically grew up under Magis wings. As he finished his tour of duty as a student, he focused on his chosen profession as a dentist. Must be in the genes, as mom Linda and uncle Larry are renowned dentists themselves.

Along the way, he married his lovely wife Andrea (likewise a dentist) and, not surprisingly, joined the Magis Deo Community. They are with Matthew BCGG.

In his chosen field, Carlo exemplified true professionalism as a dentist attested by his successful practice, evidenced by his many satisfied patients. With his partner-in- life Andrea by his side, the blessings in their life continue to pour.

On December 10, 2020, at Las Vegas, Nevada, USA, Dr. Carlo Luis Mallari Santos was inducted to the prestigious Doctor-To-Doctor World's Top 100 Class of 2021.

The plaques, certificates, recognitions, citations say it all. With the thousands, nay, millions practicing the medical profession, our very own Carlo is among the top 100 – globally.

Tuloy na tuloy pa rin ang Pasko, continued from page 7

Other TikTok participants include: Mon and daughter Diday Yupangco, Rudy Ebarido and family, Allan and Ali Pestaño, Denise Tubongbanue and family, Lanie Sia and family, Leony Parada and family, Mustard Seed BCGG, Ed and Sol Macalalad and family, and Jonnie and Arlyn Tabilog.

For the raffle prizes, Six Axa Life Insurance with 50k coverage donated by Transfiguration were won by Vicky Babaran, Pachot Abapo, Monchito Mossesgeld, Yella Castillo, Noel Gascon, and Ethel Araullo. Six boxes of face masks donated by Samaritans went to Corazon Gaza, Sonny Gavila, Alex Reyes, Joy Rago, Vivienne Pascual, and Benjie Santiago.

Nina Yuson won the Christmas Essentials while Aprilyn Jane won the gas burner stove, and Rachel Ebarido took home the rice cooker. All prizes were from the generous hearts of John BCGG.

The three sets of emergency lights donated by Samaritans BCGG went to Suni Rodriguez, Djarn Pestaño, and Erlinda



We're so proud of the boy who once upon a time was part of our Magis youth. We're proud of what this kid has become. Prouder must be parents Claro and Linda. Their hearts must be bursting with gratitude, thanksgiving and praises to the Lord.

Equally proud is our community. We have in our roster a distinguished member of the World's Top 100 Doctors, Class of 2021. Heads up, we can say to all and sundry: Dr. Carlo Luis Mallari Santos is a member of Magis Deo. He is one of us.

Hurna. Tita Josie Llamas took home the Nu Skin cosmetics, also from Samaritans BCGG, while Lydia Castillo got the Sanitizing box from Transfiguration BCGG.

Chronicles BCGG donated 4 Sodexo Gift Checks won by Tony Narciso, Ruby Pizzaro, Aida Del Rosario, and Ali Reyes. The 4 sets of Work From Home kits donated by Transfiguration BCGG were won by Jun Gacias, Eugene Bañez, Ria San Jose, and Mennen Aracid.

Corinthians BCGG donated the major raffle prizes that included the Air Fryer won by Mimi Santos, Slow Cooker won by Rommel Lat, and Air Purifier won by Virgie Abella. Staycations at Splendido, courtesy of Cesar & Delsa Sangalang of Samaritans BCGG, also await the 3 winners: Agnes Tumaneng, Anchit Chua Chiacio, and Francis Abella.

Thank you very much, donors!
A Merry Christmas to all, and a prosperous New Year!!!

What have I become during this pandemic? What have others become because of me?

Ojay Reantaso, Samaritans BCGG

If I were to scroll through the photos in my phone this 2020, I can't really believe what we have been through. We started the year with a grand vacation in Balesin with our closest friends, but this was immediately followed by various calls and I found myself together with my family and friends responding to the call to help our kababayans in Tanauan, Batangas who were affected by the Taal Volcano eruption.

Then the Covid-19 pandemic was felt by middle of March and I found myself rushing to get basic necessities in the grocery because of the imminent lockdown, being with my family 24/7 daily for 9 months, and assembling bikes for people going to work because there was no transportation available. My wife sung via FB Live to raise funds for hot meals for the front liners and for typhoon victims. We even cook and prepare hot meals at home for the hardworking and selfless front liners. We learned to cut, trim and style each others' hair at home; cook and deliver food regularly to our family and friends who could not go out; and be in LBC almost everyday to ship out product orders so we can continue our business and help our partners nationwide to earn.

If there's one good thing that this pandemic brought, it has deepened our relationship with the Lord as we're able to hear mass almost everyday via FB Live and YouTube. I love the idea that we can even listen to 3 homilies daily and this has allowed me to know and to love God more and more each day. Praying the rosary virtually every 8 pm with the family and bonding with them after, has also become a regular practice for us.

I learned more on the use of the Zoom app, and this enabled me to host and facilitate online masses for our community as well as lead prayer meetings and even business meetings and virtual parties. On the lighter side, I also learned to do online shopping, specifically how to add to cart in SHOPEE. Wearing a simple shirt and a pair shorts all the time anywhere I go has become my new normal.

During this pandemic, I also realized how truly important our health is after coming in close contact with someone who was Covid positive and having family members get sick. Some were even rushed to the ER and were hospitalized.

Celebrating our 20th Wedding Anniversary and thanking the Lord for our blissful marriage is one of the most memorable experiences I have this year. I also realized that there are indeed so many people with generous hearts. People are inherently good.



I saw life becoming so much simpler, and yet it has become more meaningful.

Even though 2020 has disrupted the world's normalcy, for me this year is one of the best because of the many learnings and realizations I experienced – that the things or people we often take for granted are the most important things in life: family, shelter, food, health, fellowmen and God. I am so confident that we can all come out of this pandemic better, more generous, loving and kinder people. We just have to make that decision. I pray that you all come out victoriously after all these.

Today, on Christmas day, I encourage you to reflect on these questions:

What have I become during this pandemic? And, more importantly, what have others become because of me?

A gift that God wrapped for me this 2020

Roxanne P. Espiritu, Transfiguration BCGG



“We are more than halfway there!”

This was the first line of this week's theme in Sacred Space and I cannot help recalling how this Covid journey has been for us, for me!

Well, it's the 9th month and it is similar to carrying out a pregnancy.

The first 3 months were filled with fear, anxiety, confusion, and uncertainty. I was trying to make sense of what was going on, what new reality we are facing and how I am supposed to handle such situation. Everyone was having difficulty adjusting, adapting to this new retracted environment we all found ourselves in. And as a leader in our organization, I have to put up a brave front amidst all the confusion.

I tried to build a protective shell for our household, to shield us from an invisible enemy.

Everyday, everyone, everything was a suspect.

I have to re-learn, re-orient myself, and adapt to the basics of living, from observing proper hygiene to sifting through what truly are essential for me in all aspects of my life. There were a lot of doubts, concerns, and disappointments that somehow affected my outlook, my confidence, my relationship and even my faith with my God.

Like the three kings, I was desperately seeking for answers, yearning to find God in the usual places. Only to realize that God was inside me, waiting to be acknowledged and to be recognized how He was and has been much a part of my every day and my every breath. I was just too distracted with the worldly offerings that I found myself lost, helpless, and easily disoriented.

Thank God for our weekly prayer meetings, which immediately provided signposts to steer me into the right direction.

Realizing and finally accepting that the end of this crisis is nowhere in sight, for the sake of my family and people who depend on me for guidance and leadership, I now allow myself to surrender to God's will, just trust His ways, and continue to believe that He is true to His promise that He will be there for us. Very much like being in the second trimester wherein we become more at ease, reassured and got accustomed to the kind of routine I now see myself in.

Through an established regular prayer time, daily masses, weekly prayer meetings, I re-discovered my strengths and my gifts, appreciate every blessing that come my way, and try at best to focus my energy and resources to what only matters to me – health, family and community, and faith!

As I continue to carry the burden of living in this state of uncertainty, my reliance on God has never been so apparent. Though at times I cannot help but entertain doubts about my capability, I find myself allowing insecurities and fear to dampen my motivation to see this through. My impatience with how life has been progressing at such a slow and undetermined pace would always pull me back. But with prayer, I will immediately snap out of that negative state and again focus on God's provisions.

The last trimester of a pregnancy is usually filled with anticipation and excitement despite the physical strain and restrictions. Like everyone else, I cannot wait for this year to come to a close, along with all the unpleasant things associated with 2020. But as what a priest said in his homily, do not allow 2020 to end without being blessed by it.

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Contemplations with nature

Flor Pison, John BCGG

Last Sunday I went out to the garden at 5:40 am, just as the sun was beginning to emerge. There was a slight breeze – the air was cool and crisp, very refreshing. It had rained earlier that morning and the brick pathways were washed clean and the wetness brought out their deep red color. The grass and leaves of the plants in the garden were still damp, and the breeze brought to my nose a faint familiar fragrance from the blooming Rangoon Creeper (Chinese honeysuckle) nearby. I looked at the sky and saw the gray clouds beginning to glow gold from the rising sun.

Gardens love rain, especially after a warm day. The plants flourish from the refreshment of healthy rain showers. On such days the riot of colors presented by my flowers is a feast for the eyes: bluish forget-me-not climbers, pink and red bonsai bougainvilleas and adeniums, orange santan, magenta gumamelas, white angel plants, blue ternate, and the orchids! Yellow oncidiums dancing ladies, white and pink dendrobiums!

I sat in Tony's favorite swinging yantok chair and silently thanked God for this beautiful quiet time of the day with my plants, the only sounds that of birdsong, music to my ears.

I closed my eyes to begin my quieting down but can still hear the birds chirping and whistling. In my mind I can see the statue of St. Francis with the birds perched on his shoulders and hands on one side of the garden, as they do also on the statue of the Garden Angel that stands on the other side. This scene always brings me back to when Tony would regularly feed the birds – as soon as he came out to the garden in the



morning, one by one the birds would come to perch on the gutter of the roof and wait for him to leave; then one by one they would swoop down on the table for the bird seeds Tony scattered for them, their treats for the day.

It's a little enough thing – a few moments of peace and communion with God and I felt so much at peace, it is a short relief from our many problems now due to current pandemic crisis.

And much later, eyes still closed, I began to feel the warm sun on my face. I thank the Lord once more for His blessing, for being with me this time, and slowly opened my eyes as I rise to begin my day.

A gift that God wrapped for me this 2020, continued from page 10

Despite the events that have derailed our plans and our goals, 2020 has been punctuated with a lot of blessings. Looking back at the past nine months, I allow myself to take pride in what I have acquired for myself, how I changed for the better (I hope), how my relationship with my family, my community, and my God have changed for the better.

Truly, the nine months of this Covid pandemic which started in Lent and now culminating in Advent, can never discount God's perfect timing in everything. He indeed knows how to make His presence inevitable and conspicuous. He surely knows how to get my attention, the world's attention for that matter. Thank God for the gift of faith and resilience, I think I am now able to see the world in a more discerning stance. Thank God for this BCGG,

whose energy and spirit that has been built, nurtured and generously shared through all the many prayer meetings, has been a constant source of inspiration, strength and grace. Thank God for the love of my family, especially my husband Levy, who never fails to provide me the unconditional love and support that I needed to be composed and at ease during troubled times.

I know that as I reflect on my 2020, I will continue to be overwhelmed with the learnings and the new discoveries. I will be able to make the most of the opportunities that were manifested during the crisis, and, most of all, I will always be grateful for the blessings that continue to overflow knowing that God's plan for me includes being of service to others, to our community, to my family!

Now that we pray without ceasing The Benediction

Anthony de Mello, S.J.

Today I choose to pray for others. But how shall I impart to them the gift of peace and love if my own heart is still unloving and I have no peace of mind myself?

So I start with my heart: I hold before the Lord each feeling of resentment, anger, bitterness that may still be lurking there, asking that his grace will make it yield to love someday if not right now.

Then I seek peace: I list the worries that disturb my peace of mind and imagine that I place them in God's hands in the hope that this will bring me respite from anxiety at least during this time of prayer.

Then I seek the depth that silence brings, for prayer that springs from silence is powerful and effective. So I listen to the sounds around me or become aware of the feelings and sensations in my body or my breathing in and out.

First I pray for people whom I love. Over each of them I say a blessing: "May you be safe from harm and evil," imagining that my words create a protective shield of grace around them.

Then I move on to people I dislike and people who dislike me. Over each of them I say this prayer: "May you and I be friends some day," imagining some future scene where this comes to pass.

I think of anxious people whom I know, people who are depressed. To each of them I say: "May you find peace and joy,"



imagining that my wish for them becomes reality.

I think of people who are handicapped, people who are in pain, and say: "May you find strength and courage," imagining that my words unleash resources within each of them.

I think of lonely people, people lacking love or separated from their loved ones, and to each of them I say: "May God's abiding company be yours.

I think of older people who with the passing of each day, must face the reality of approaching death, and to each of them I say: "May you find the grace to joyfully let go of life."

I think of the young and recite this prayer: "May the promise of your youth be met and your life be fruitful."

Finally I say to each of my friends gathered today: "May my contact with you be a grace for both of us."

I come back to my heart now to rest awhile in the silence that I find there and in the loving feeling that has come alive in me as a consequence of my prayer for others.

The bright side

Eli Ang, Magis Youth



From the news I've been hearing, it seems like the world is ending.

Taal Volcano erupted, its sulfuric ashes blowing in the wind, causing devastating earthquakes, withering life, and turning the landscape into a barren desert. Covid-19 froze the world under its icy grip, making businesses close, the economy to drop, and people to lose jobs, while scientists desperately try to give people protection in the form of vaccines. There are a few more things that I'm not going to mention, but you get the gist.

The reflection we had made me calmer about this year. It made me think of the pros rather than the cons. Though

volcanic dust is rough and dangerous, it is rich in potassium, iron, magnesium, sodium, and calcium that can be used as fertilizer for plants when mixed with soil. Covid-19 might seem like a monster, roaming the streets, hunting for its next victim, but it forced people out of their rushed lifestyle. Now, people have more time; some are spending their time with their family; others are improving themselves through exercise; some are learning new skills, and some are just having fun :).

The point is, your perspective changes how you act, and when you look at your desert as a garden waiting to be decorated, you can change yourself for the better and, in turn, change the world.

Sa Kabila ng Lahat, Tuloy ang Pasko!

Chacho Angeles, Thessalonians BCGG

(1)

Sumisipol ang hangin, at pagsingit sa mga kawang
Ng dingding, humuhuni na parang iyak ng aswang.
Sabay sa taib ng dagat, naipon ang dalubyo. Baha!
Lubog ang bahay, lubog na ang lahat. Bahala na
Ang mga gamit sa bahay, ang damit, ang pagkain.
Sa bubong na muna hanggang tulong ay dumating.

Diyos na mahabagin, me pandemya na, dalubyo pa
At mga mapinsalang bagyo ang sunod-sunod na
Sumisira sa aming buhay ng walang kapararakan.
Ganoon po ba karami at katindi aming kasalanan,
Na ganoon din katindi ang Inyong galit at poot?
O ito kaya'y alburoto ng kalikasan dahil sa gusot
Na ang sanhi ay mga abuso ng tao, gaya ng bulok
Na basurang tinatambak sa karagatan, mga usok
Na sinusuka ng mga planta at sasakyan, dumudumi
Ang ang himpapawid at umiinit ang kalangitan?

Dasal ko po ay pawiin Niyo ang aking pangamba,
Ang aking takot ay pahupain, ang aking pagkagalit,
Ibsan, aking pagkabalisa, ipanatag, at sa Iyo umasa.
Alam kong dama Mo ang aking mga hrap at pasakit
Sapagka't ang anak Mong mahal, si Hesus, naging
Tao gaya namin dito sa mundo'y pinahirapan, pinatay
Upang ako'y mailigtas sa kasalanan. Dama Mo rin
Ang mga pasakit na ito, na aking mga naramdaman.
Pasanin Mo ako ngayon sa Iyong balikat, gaya ng
Ginawa Mo nang nahihirapan ako noong nakalipas
Na mga taon. Ako'y magsusumamo na patibayin
Mo ang aking pananampalataya gaya ng ketongin,
At punuin mo ng galak na kay Zacchaeus ay kagaya,
Upang buhay ko'y mapuno ng Iyong buhay na banal.
Ikaw Nawa.

(2)

I have done a lot of walking in my life
Up to four-hour hikes, or more, over
Flat land and over hills, and inside
Dark and slippery caves too. When
Playing golf I would rather walk as
Long as I can before the cramps set in.
Walking was fun, but the reward comes



At the end of the trek, rewarded by
Jumping into natural pools not knowing
There were leeches there, or soaking in a
Small pool in the middle of a rice farm
Together with carabaos. The view from
The road is panoramic, and up on a hill,
It is expansive, seeing not only mountains
Near and far, seeing details of the flat lands,
Lower hills, rivers, cultivated lands and
Forests. While resting and soaking in the
View, there is serenity, peace and joy,
Feeling puny in the face of the magnitude
Before me, and yet feeling oneness with a
Beautiful world. It is like the pilgrimage of
My life, a difficult but rewarding journey
Towards a oneness with a community that
Shares a faith in a savior who redeems and
Saves from the darkness of death by giving
The means to live in peace, joy and love
Under a kingship in the heart. Feeling this
Union to be like praying, like Heaven!

(3)

Kuyang Hesus,
Ang Iyong kaharian ay kabaliktaran ng mga umiiral
Dito sa mundo. Ang mga kalakaran dito ay saliwa
Sa Iyong mga turo, at nakatuon sa pansariling mga
Pagnanasa, samantala ang kasapi sa Iyong kaharian,
Iyong mga disipulo at tagasunod, ay hangad ang
Kaginhawahan ng kapwa, maski na ito'y magdudulot
Ng kapapahamakan. Turo Mo'y mahalin ang kaaway,
Akitin ang makasalanan, mahalin ang Diyos ng lubos.

Kuya, napakahirap sundan mga aral na ito ng isang
Pangkaraniwang tao na gaya ko, sa kabila ng aking
Mga karanasan at napagdaanan sa buhay. Dasal ko'y
Sa aking puso ilukluk ang Iyong kaharian ng pag-ibig,
Na magbibigay sa akin ng karunungan at pag-unawa,
Ng katatagan at pagtitiyaga, upang tahakin ang landas
Na Iyong itinakda para sa akin, isang payak at
Mapagmahal na buhay ayon sa Iyong mga aral.
Ikaw nawa.

(4)

The star of Bethlehem forever shines bright
Amidst the darkness of a forgetful world that
Envelops the hearts of every one, made worse
By a pandemic that has afflicted millions and
Killed hundreds of thousands, a virus for which
There is yet no cure. This is worsened by many
Destructive typhoons, hurricane winds, biblical
Floods that killed many and destroyed property.
I and many others are harassed by category five
Winds, flooded by millions of cubic meters of
Fear and anxiety, my self-respect destroyed by
My helplessness, locked up in my own home.

This star represents my hope that despite all
Recent and great tragedies, a savior born to
Flesh, is with me; incarnation is salvation;
It guides my gentile heart to that tiny child,
Vulnerable and humble; the baby is the Christ.

O bright star, O Holy Spirit, guide of my faith
And my heart, give me the strength and the
Wisdom to live my faith in a very challenging
World that values things which take me away
From God and the love that He showers on me;
Be my shelter from the many storms of this life;
Give me hope and strength to greet the new year;
Be forever with me, with the ones I love, and
With all who perform all kinds of roles in Your
Divine, mysterious and wondrous plan. Amen.

(5)

Mahal na Ama,
Paggunita sa pagsilang ng Iyong anak ay nag-umpisa na
At inihahanda ko aking puso sa pagsalubong sa Kanya.

Hangad ko po magbahagi ng kabutihan at pagmamahal
Sa lahat ng aking makasalamuha, gaya ng pag-ulan mo
Ng malasakit, kalinga't biyaya sa lahat naming nilalang.
Hangad ko pong manatili sa agos na matuwid, na ang
Dike sa magkabilang gilid ay mga turo ng Iyong anak.
Bagama't ako'y tuliro dahil sa malalakas na hanging
Humampas sa aking puso – pandemya, bagyo, Taal,

Hangad kong kumapit mahigpit sa Iyong mga kamay,
Hangad kong laging matanaw maaliwalas mong ngiti,
Hangad kong masilayan ang sanggol mong anak na
Nagkatawang tao upang kami'y matubos mo mula sa
Pagkalugmok sa putik ng kasalanan at kamunduhan.

Ako po ay nagsusumamo, nagdarasal ng mataimtim,
Na ipagkaloob Mo hangarin kong malapit sa Iyo, at
Madampian ang aking pisngi ng liwanag ng bituin
Ng sanggol sa sabsaban, pag-iisa ng Diyos at tao,
Dahil Siya ay ang aming katubusan at kaligtasan.
Ikaw Nawa.

(6)

Ang mapag-arugang ina ay uliran ng pagmamahal.
Isang maliit na bunga ng Espiritu, ay unti-unting
Lumalaki, at nabuuu, kasama ang samu't saring mga
Sakit katawan sa kaniya'y dumapo. Bagama't balisa't
Naghihirap, pinangangalagaan ang ga-pakwang pabigat
Na kanyang kinakarga hanggang isilang ang sanggol.

Gaya ng pag-usbong ng isang buhay sa loob ng mainit
At madilim ng sinapupunan ng pagmamahal, ang puso
Ko'y nag-iisang nakahiwalay sa lahat, bulag, manhid
Sa mundo at dama lamang ang pagmamahal ng Diyos.
Mula sa isang maliit na butong nag-iisa, sa pag-aalaga
Ng grasya ng Diyos ito'y tumubo ng tumubo hanggang
Biniyak ang lupang nakatakip sa liwanag. Sa tubig
Na galing sa kalangitan, sustansya na laman ng lupa,
Sikat ng araw sa dahon ay bumibilad, puso ko'y lalaki,
Mamumulaklak, mamumunga, pagkain para sa marami,
Mga sanga't dahon niya'y tahanan ng mga ibon, hayop.

Ang kaparaanang ito ay paulit-ulit habang ako'y nasa
Mundong ito. Tanging patnubay ko'y tala ng mga salita
Ng Diyos, sustansya ng Kanyang grasya't pagmamahal.
Nguni't habang lumalaon, dasal ko'y mas marami ang
Aking bulaklak na magsasaboy ng halimuyak ng aking
Pananampalataya; hitik sa bunga ng aking pagsisilbi sa
Kapwa; maningning, mapayapa, malugod, mapang-akit
Na buhay sa piling at yakap ng mapagmahal na puso ng
Diyos. Siya nawa.

Maligayang Pasko at Manigong Bagong Taon!

Liwanag ng Pasko para sa Olandes Suyuan

Philip and Malu Panlilio, Mustard Seed BCGG



Tunay ang pangako ni Hesus sa Kanyang
pagkakatawang-tao – merong pag-asa na
binibigay ang Pasko.

Sunod-sunod ang pagsubok sa mga Olandes Suyuan dala
ng panahon ng Covid-19 pandemya. Marami ang nawalan
ng trabaho at mga nabawasan ang kita sa hanapbuhay.
Karamihan sa Olandes Suyuan ay mga factory worker,
messenger, karpintero, pedicab driver, at labandera. Ngunit
bakas ang pananalig nila sa Diyos. Walang nawalan ng pag-
asa. Patuloy sila sa pagdarasal at paminsan-minsan online
household prayer meetings. Meron pagkalungkot pero lahat ay
patuloy na niyakap ang paghihirap. Malakas ang pag-asa nila
sa tulong ng Diyos.

Hindi pa naging sapat ang epekto ng pandemya. Naging
biktima rin sila ng matinding pagbaha dulot ng typhoon
Ulysses noong Nobyembre. Kahit naghanda sila dahil sa
mga balita, naging biglaan ang pagtaas ng tubig sa madaling
araw. Nawalan sila ng mga gamit. Ngunit kaya pa nilang
magpasalamat sa Diyos dahil sa pagliligtas ng buhay nila mula
sa baha.

Kahit walang Kasalang Bayan at Christmas party
ngayong 2020, minarapat ng Mustard Seed BCGG, sa tulong
ng Chronicles BCGG at suporta ng Magis Deo Community,
na ituloy ang yearly Christmas gift-giving sa Olandes Suyuan
para magdulot ng konting liwanag at kasiyahan ngayong
Pasko. Ginawa ang pamimigay ng Christmas bags noong
Disyembre 13, mula 1:00 - 2:00 pm na merong physical
distancing, paggamit ng stubs para maayos ang distribution,
at maikling paliwanag lang sa kahalagahan ng pagpapatuloy
ng 'Suyuan Spirit' kahit lock down. Ang Christmas bags
ay merong laman na ibat-ibang bagay pang noche buena
at ipinamahagi sa 80 families na active Olandes
Suyuan members.

Malaking pasasalamat ng Olandes Suyuan sa
pagpapatuloy ng annual Christmas gift-giving from Magis Deo
Community.

O Panginoon, maramaing salamat po, sa liwanag mong
binigay sa kadiliman ng panahon para sa Olandes Suyuan!

OUTREACH



Olandes Suyuan Christmas Gift-giving

December 13, 2020