

# Magis

*Formation for Mission*

*Stewardship*

*Simplicity*

*Sharing*

*Service*

Official Publication of the  
Magis Deo Community  
December 2021 Issue

## **A Joyful and Grace-Filled Christmas to All**

This season calls us to be simple, to obey and serve Him—the reason for all of this

## **Arrivals: An Advent Recollection**

Members of the youth share experiences of how He brought them back home

## **Psychopathologies in Marriage and Family**

Our mission is to understand and care for psychological issues affecting our sheep

## **Cancer Warrior in the Palm of His Hand**

Despite the pain, this warrior's journey was full of prayer and meditation

## **Crossing from Advent to Christmas**

Teachings and reflections to help transport us to a different place next year





# About the Cover



All the unfortunate events surrounding the pandemic required us to become even more tiringly resilient than ever—other than the reason that we were left on our own again—because of the onslaught of the most recent typhoon that swept away loved ones and wrecked our beloved environment. At the same time, it was a rigorous year of social distancing, wearing face masks/shields, and following other health protocols most Filipinos were stringent enough to obey. But it seems that there’s something different in the air this time around.

We can only hope that we are nearing a light at the end of this overlong tunnel. As humans, we aren’t built to handle such hardships smoothly—it’s only right and realistic that we reap the simple reward of living life again. The only way to achieve it is through faith, prayer, and actually getting vaccinated, or in most cases, getting your booster shots in the year ahead. If anything, this pandemic showed the true colors of people in authority with how their greed obliterates a nation’s progress.

Like the visitors who travelled to see baby Jesus in a manger, be wise. Get vaxxed, and vote wisely. It’s high time we have leaders who care about the people and the environment, if we truly want to continue being sheperds of this once (and still is) beautiful world. We can make it beautiful again, and this time everlasting.

# Editorial Board

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## Calendar of Activities: January 2021

January  
9 Community Celebration

# Crossing from Advent to Christmas

**The time from the start of Advent to Christmas is only four weeks but the internal journey of waiting, of “setting our house in order,” of hoping, and finally seeing the Messiah enter our world, which is the fulfillment of God’s promise, seems to take much longer.** Each year, the quality of waiting is different. Last year, it seemed the invitation was to persevere because the end of COVID is in sight though still uncertain.

But this year, we are in a different place. We have been vaccinated; some have even received their booster shots. We are a year older and wiser. Perhaps we are beginning to accept that things will never get back to normal. We continue to be cautious and practice all the protocols to protect ourselves and others. But we also know that we cannot continue to put our life on hold.

As we struggle with this dilemma, we step into unmapped territory where there are no landmarks or signposts. It reminds me of the journey of Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem. While they traveled on rough roads, maybe they also had to deal with their own anxieties, fears, and longing. Similarly, we journey inward, wrestling with our own emotions evoked by our own respective contexts. We simply cannot do this alone without God’s help. And thankfully, there are teachings about the meaning of Advent and Christmas to help us find, what Margaret Silf calls, our “inner compass” in this time of uncertainty. Here are some of the teachings and reflections that I’ve found helpful in my own crossing from Advent to Christmas:

**1. Advent as Transitions and Invitation to Newness.** Fr. Jett Villarin, SJ, in our Maryknoll Class ’70 recollection, talked about Advent as transitions, from endings to beginnings,

from oldness to newness. Quoting C.S. Lewis, a renowned spiritual writer, he says, “The great thing, if one can, is to stop regarding all the unpleasant things as interruptions of one’s ‘own’ or ‘real’ life. The truth is of course that what one calls the interruptions are precisely one’s life, the life that God is sending one day by day.” Life is THE great interruption, a great gift.

Fr. Jett goes on to say that we are invited to shift in how we see life: ourselves, God, others. We need to let go of the old clutter of our lives, our securities, and open ourselves to new ways of relating with ourselves, with others and with God. Maybe we are invited to be more attentive to our spouses who may be ailing. Maybe our prayer has become simpler and our petitions for normalcy to return is transformed into an offering or surrender to what life brings. There are also bearings to light our way: sparks of hope and joy, moments of grace, persons who help us in the journey; stories, images and songs that have eased our anxiety.

**2. Advent as Waiting with Trust, Coming Home, and Newness.** Fr. Ro Atilano, SJ, in another recollection I attended, continues this theme of waiting, the invitation to newness, as well as acknowledging the companions that helped us along the way. He says Advent is waiting, but a waiting that is full of trust that what God promised will be fulfilled. The process of waiting is also a homecoming, “pagbabalik sa piling ng Diyos, ang ating Tahanan.” He made us look at the Holy Family in the first Belen. “Wala silang bahay, pero meron silang tahanan, at may mga tao na dumalaw sa kanila.” So he asked, “If we are to draw our own Belen, sinu-sino ang mga taong nakasama natin?” He also asks, “Ano ang nagbago sa iyo?” “Paano ka binago?” “Paano mo gustong pasalamatan and mga taong tumulong sa iyo? (na naging kasama sa Belen ninyo?)”



**3. Christmas as the Triumph of Good Over Evil.** As we approach Christmas, Fr. Ro reminds us of this important fact, that Christ has entered our world and has conquered evil. As Maria Ressa said in her speech accepting the Nobel Peace Prize, there are many bad people in the world, but there are also many good people in the world. But the battle (yes, it is a battle) continues. To paraphrase what Fr. Jett said, in the same recollection, “It takes a lot of love to stave off the ‘nothingness’” which I take to mean the chaos before God put order into the world and inserted the second person of the Trinity into history. So we are in the midst of the nine-day Simbang Gabi. Christmas is almost upon us. Reflecting on some of the points I cited, we may ask ourselves, “Ano ang nagbago sa aking sarili? Sa aking pananaw? Sa pagtingin ko sa aking minamahal? Sa Diyos? Sa bayan? Sa pagpili ng mamumuno sa atin? If all we

can say is, “Wala naman, ok lang, business as usual,” then perhaps we have missed opportunities to really see our life and our world with new eyes.

But if we can say any of these: “This pandemic has given me greater trust in God because I know now with conviction that I belong to Him and He takes care of His own.” “Now I can see that I need to take better care of my spouse!” “People say I am kinder!” “I can live simply pala!” “I shall continue the good I am doing.” And if we are able to acknowledge the “people, the graced moments, the sparks of joy” that helped us in our journey to Bethlehem, then perhaps we can have our homecoming with God on Christmas Day, ready to show Him our Belen, our Tahanan filled with love, peace, and joy. Happy Christmas everyone!



# Magis Deo at Work in the Year of the Metal Ox

Rico and Terry Lim, Pastoral Council / Easter BCGG

**2021 is the year of the Metal Ox.** Throughout history the ox has been used in many fields of industry such as farming, transportation, and many others. Oxen are the backbone of society. They represent hard work and diligence. They can endure many hardships. 2021 and the Magis Deo Community were no exception to hardships. We all endured lockdowns due to the Covid pandemic. Many people got sick and hospitalized; many were isolated and were lonely; some lost their jobs. Worst, some lost their lives or a loved one. Despite all that happened in 2021, Magis Deo, like the ox, had to tighten its belt, gather all its energy and be strong, continue with its service, and endure hardships as it serves its beloved community.

The hardworking Magis Deo Pastoral Council is led by our vibrant, energetic, and reliable chair couple Benz and Vina Dimanalata, who also oversee the ME Ministry, and our vice chair couple and incoming chair couple, Cesar and Delsa Sangalang, who oversee Praxis, Cesar and Marivic Pareja – Formation Ministry, Rico and Terry Lim – Community Service Ministry, Noel and Nherie Gascon – Outreach Ministry, Miles and Evelyn San Pedro - Finance Ministry, Rainier and Pinky Rosas – in charge of the very busy and active Youth Ministry.

Kudos for a job well done to the 2021 Ministry Heads who have worked hard and made the 2021 Magis Deo Calendar full of activities despite no face-to-face interaction:

- Marriage Encounter Ministry: Mimi Santos, Josie Llamas

- Formation Ministry: Ted and Susan Concepcion, Philip and Malu Panlilio
- Community Service Ministry: Ojay and Yang Reantaso
- Outreach Ministry: Jojo and Rhea Gaddi
- Praxis Ministry: Levy and Roxanne Espiritu
- Youth Ministry: Mark and Cathy Maulit
- Finance Ministry: Kit and Nancy Palmario

The thrust and mission of the 2021 Magis Deo Community Pastoral Council are based on the theme “A Thriving Magis Family.” This is the backbone of all our activities; this gave us the direction in our decision making. Under this theme are three directions:

1. Deepen our Ignatian Family Formation
2. Strengthen Membership
3. Organize Proactive Outreach

Let us look back at the many different activities and projects this 2021, put together by the dedicated Ministry heads, officers, and team members who worked like an ox, serving the community.

- January 10, 2021: Community Celebration. Commissioning of officers and workers, and the State of Magis Deo Address (SOMA) by Fr. James Gascon. Sharing on God’s covenant and commitment to us that we will always be His children no matter what we become. Sponsor: Pastoral Council.



- February 7, 2021: Community Celebration. Speaker: Fr. Allan Abuan. Topic: “Parental Love.” Sponsor: ME Ministry.
- February 14, 2021: LOVE: LIVE, Fund-raising concert initiated by Community Service Ministry.
- March 7, 2021: Lenten Recollection by Fr. Jun G. Bergayo, SJ. Sponsor: Formation Ministry
- March 20, 2021: Short Story telling “The Giving Tree” by Tita Zarah Gagatiga. Sponsor: Youth Ministry
- April 11, 2021: Community Celebration. Speaker: Fr. Manoling Francisco, SJ. Topic: “Volunteerism and Service during the Pandemic.” The role of Family and the community.
- May 2, 2021: Community Celebration. Speaker: Fr. Mon J. Bautista, SJ. Topic: Seeking Holiness through Mary.
- June 6, 2021: Community Celebration. Speaker: Fr. Ro Atilano, SJ. Topic: A Body Broken for Broken People. Sponsor: Youth Ministry.
- June 12, 2021: Youth Ministry: “Collage Art and Music” by Tita Zarah Gagatiga and Kuya Val Gagatiga.
- June 26, 2021: Youth Ministry: “Magis Deo Teens: Community Building” by Tito Dong and Ate Ria.
- July 4, 2021: Community Celebration. Speaker: Fr. James Gascon, SJ. Topic: A Second look at Ignatius: The cost of companioning.
- July 17, 2021: Magis Deo Youth Ministry: “Singles Assembly.”
- July 24, 2021: Youth Ministry: Speaker: Fr. Nono Levosada, SJ. Topic: St. Ignatius of Loyola: The Saint who was twice canonized.
- August 8, 2021: Community Celebration. Speaker: Ms. Leilani C. Lopez, MA, R Pm. Topic: Nurturing Family Relationships during the Pandemic.
- August 21, 2021: Magis Youth Ministry: “Audacious Ignatius” Storytelling by Tita Karen Madrid.
- September 5, 2021: Community Celebration. Speaker: Fr. Bert Alejo, SJ. Topic: “Political Charity and Electoral Ministry” - Insight from Pope Francis’ Fratelli Tutti.
- September 25, 2021: Marriage Booster. Speaker:

- Ms. Lissy Puno, MA, SRp. Topic: “Don’t Stop Growing.” Goal setting as a couple. Discovering what are our worthwhile couple goals to prepare us now and post pandemic future.
- September 26, 2021: A Birthday Tribute to Fr. James, our Spiritual Director. Sponsor: CSM.
  - October 3, 2021: Pastoral Council Election.
  - October 30, 2021: Magis Youth Ministry: “God Works in Mysterious Ways.”
  - November 7, 2021: Advent Recollection. Speaker: Fr. Manol Montesclaros, SJ. Topic: St. Joseph’s Tumultuous Journey of Love and Belief.
  - November 13, 2021: Marriage Booster Session 2. Fr. James Gascon, SJ. Topic: The Sins of the Parents -- An examen on Parenting.
  - November 28, 2021: Magis Youth Ministry: Advent Recollection by Fr. Ro Atilano, SJ. Topic: In Search of God.
  - December 5, 2021: Magis Deo Family Day - an event filled with laughter, fun, games, and lots of love.
- We also had a monthly Accompanying the Shepherd workshop series designed to assist current and prospective shepherds in caring for and leading their lambs.

The Outreach Ministry had many reach in activities and outreach programs. Through project Tulong sa Edukasyon the Ministry assisted our fellow members in the educational needs of their children by providing internet service, gadgets for remote learning, and paying tuition. The Ministry assisted and donated funds for the Tanging Yaman projects and other communities.

It was a busy and good year for our Magis Deo Community despite the hardship and chaos around us. We were able to be productive and develop and manage activities to serve the community. God is really good and is always with us and in our community. So please keep supporting the Community.

Thank you, Magis Deo.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



## Magis Deo Family Day – Our Second Virtual Community Celebration

Yang Reantaso, CSM Head / Samaritans BCGG

**T**hough we were hoping for a face to face Family Day this year, the pandemic still did not allow our community to do so. But thank God for the beauty and power of Zoom parties, we all still felt the warmth and camaraderie of our Magis Deo family last December 3. About 140 Zoom accounts joined. We started with a spirit-filled Holy Eucharist officiated by our dear Spiritual Director, Fr James Gascon, SJ, followed by the Family Day proper.

We are grateful to Jane Aldeguer for being our gracious emcee throughout the program and to Rico and Terry Lim, our CSM Overseers, for welcoming all the attendees with a short message. We started with the turnover ceremony which, for me, was quite emotional as Benz and Vina Dimanalata gave their farewell message and welcomed Cesar and Delsa Sangalang as the new Chair Couple. We thank God for the selfless leadership and service that the Dimanalatas gave to our community and we look forward to the guidance and direction the Sangalangs will give in 2022. After the turnover, the Magis Youth shared their talent with their beautiful rendition of ‘Umagang Kay Ganda’ which made the audience feel more hopeful and positive despite these trying times.

This is my second time to organize a Family Day and I can truly say that the Magis family is one of the most generous we have met. Why? Because every time we solicited raffle prizes, wow, palaging sobra-sobra!!!! Since there was an overflowing of prizes, the 2 games prepared had to be cut down to 1 but we all did not mind because the raffle was just too exciting! Thanks, Mennen, for preparing the Trivia Game where many of us were able to enjoy and learn some fun facts like ... “Did you know that Mariah Carey’s ‘All I Want for Christmas’ only became a hit after 25 years?” Cool, right?

A total of 36 prizes were raffled off where the major prize was a 55” Hisense Smart TV which was won by Anne Naldo who was participating while on a family vacation in L.A.! What a blessing! Congratulations, Anne! Thank you also to Lito and Mona Ramos for hosting this part of the program while Ojay spun the wheel virtually.

As one of the organizers of this event, what struck me most was when I was collecting, following-up and receiving the video presentation of the BCGGs for our Christmas Carol/ Message Video contest. Since we announced the contest little late, I thought only a few would participate. To my amazement, 16 BCGGs prepared something for this special occasion. While watching each one, I saw the teamwork and love they put in to come up with a 1-minute entry. Actually, some overlooked the 1-minute. Still, each entry was filled with so much Christmas spirit so we did not cut any of the videos because we thought all were worth watching. Congratulations to the 3rd prize winners - Tala, Francis and Matthew, 2nd prize winner – Samaritan and the 1st prize winner – Cana. Fr Ro Atilano, SJ, who willingly accepted our invitation to judge our entries, had a challenging time in choosing the winners so he insisted on having 3 winners for the 3rd prize! He was also so touched with the authenticity of the members of Sirach in their video entry so he asked permission from us if we can give them a special mention and a prize too!

Celebrating Family Day together is indeed the best way to end this year because despite the many challenges the pandemic brought to each one of us, we are assured of the love and support that everyone gives in this community. Have a Blessed Christmas and a Prosperous and Spirit-filled New Year!

## Cancer Warrior in the Palm of His Hand

Ian Serranilla, Matthew BCGG



### I t all started with Typhoon Ulysses...

After cleaning the house, I had a severe case of amoebiasis. I really felt awful. I had to deal with stomach pain and multiple trips to the bathroom while making sure the house is clean and put back into order.

I had a teleconsultation on 1 December 2020 and was immediately treated for my amoebiasis. But the pain and bloody stool persisted so I went to a gastroenterologist on 29 December 2020. I had a CT scan, an MRI, and a colonoscopy. On 29 January 2021, I was finally diagnosed with sigmoid colon cancer Stage 3B. I had surgery on 2 February 2021 to remove the fist-sized tumor and started chemotherapy on 24 March 2021.

Initially, I was in shock. I never expected that this could happen to me. I had this feeling that I was immortal. I thought to myself that I was too young and strong to have cancer. After the shock, the next emotion I felt was fear. If I died, what would happen to my family? My kids are still young; how would they continue their studies? And if I survive, how much would my medical bills be? I felt depressed afterwards. Parang ang pakiramdam ko nuon, kakatapos lang ng isang matinding krus (baha), may panibago na naman. But you know, this was really the time that God spoke to me. After praying the Jesus prayer over and over (Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me, a sinner), I was given the consolation that God will take care of

everything. Parang God said “Ako ang bahala.” On top of that, a lot of people were praying for me and praying WITH me. My family and friends were there to support me, and, surprisingly, even people I did not know. I did not expect to receive financial support which greatly helped us with our medical expenses. We were very touched when Magis Deo included us as one of the beneficiaries of the Valentine online concert.

Despite what I was going through, with the pain and side effects of chemotherapy, this was the time I was closest to God. I felt I was in the palm of His hand. My days were filled with prayer and meditation, which helped me mentally and emotionally in dealing with this difficult situation. Alam niyo, nakatulong talaga sa akin yung mga prayer meetings with Matthew BCGG. I did not feel alone in this journey. Ramdam na ramdam ko ang pagmamahal at aruga; that there were people in my corner, rooting for me to get well.

After 10 months of rigorous treatment which included two surgeries, twelve cycles of chemotherapy, and countless other medical procedures, I am looking forward to having a PET scan and colonoscopy to determine my current state, including another surgery before the year ends.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all who have been with me during this journey. I have felt God's love through all of you.

# Missing

Leo Soliman, Corinthians BCGG



**It has been almost 2 years since the first lockdown.**

And what have we gained? What did we lose? What have we missed?

Businesswise, it was downhill for goods and services, but the pharma, digital, and IT guys never had it so good. Social gatherings, events, travel, leisure, got hit hard. But Zoom and the internet boomed. And the list goes on.

What have I gained personally? Aside from the fluctuating 20 to 30 pounds of flesh, I had limited gains which aren't even worth mentioning. With limited exposure comes limited opportunities.

Sadly, I lost a number of dear friends and relatives along the way. Worse, I couldn't even say a formal goodbye.

And what have I missed? Plenty. I miss so much my family. My kids and my apos. I miss our frequent bonding during eat outs, travels, golfing together, and more. I miss my relatives and friends, our community celebrations, face-to-face BCGG meetings. I miss the fresh air, the sea, the greens. And many, many more.

But amidst all these gains, losses, and missings, is thanks giving. Yes, despite the atmosphere of fear and uncertainty, there are still a lot of blessings and graces to be thankful for.

For one, I'm still standing, and my family is still complete, all in the pink (pun intended) of health. I'm thankful for God's graces on my kids' careers. Our BCGG family and our own families have survived despite some close calls. Although we know of some who were felled by Covid - God bless their souls - by and large, we have weathered the storm.

Now, I ask: Is there any sense to all of these? The whole world was in a quandary, every day on the edge. We forgot to count the births because we were preoccupied counting the sick and the dead. I wish Covid didn't happen in this generation. Bummer, huh?

One thing I can accept, though, is that God allowed this to happen. For a reason only God knows. And if He permitted this, then I'm sure the outcome will be for the general good.

And for that reason alone, I stand firm on my faith. I shall remain steadfast in my trust that in Him alone, we will be saved.

# Ungrateful Lepers

Kar Tariman, Samaritans BCGG



**The Gospel today made me wonder: Why did the nine lepers not come back?** Kung ako yun I would definitely be grateful and go back and thank the Lord!

So, I Googled and researched... And here are the hypothetical answers I got:

1. One man waited to see if the cure was real.  
- Me: My faith was always lacking, even when I received countless miracles from the Lord. Oftentimes I fail to recognize this.
2. One waited to see if it would last.  
- Me: I am always anxious about my future; I fail to trust that He will provide
3. One said he would see Jesus later.  
- Me: Lazy. I have the entire day with nothing to do here in Cavinti and nakatanga lang ako kasi wala namang magawa sa lakas ng ulan. Pero di ko naisip na gawin ang reflection ko o gawin ang bible lessons ko. I have ample time to reflect pero mas ginawa ko pang kulitin si Dorge sa text.
4. One decided that he never really had leprosy.  
- Me: I deny that I need Him even in the smallest details of what is going on in my life.
5. One said he would have gotten well anyway.  
- Me: I always take the credit... I often fail to recognize that

I can never do anything without Him. I am boastful and self-righteous.

6. One gave the glory to the priests.  
- Me: I put my faith in others.
7. One said, "Oh, well, Jesus didn't really do anything."  
- Me: I denied and betrayed Him at the times I thought my prayers were not heard.
8. One said, "Any rabbi could have done it."  
- Me: I believe in superstitions.
9. One said, "I was already much improved."  
- Me: I am self-entitled. Doing good and being good does not mean I am saved.

I was not just one of the lepers, I was the nine lepers but did not realize it.

So here is my prayer:  
Heavenly Father, during the times that we cry out to You in times of need, You were with us, though the answers are not what we want or expect. During those times, we are assured of a compassionate and powerful God. You are great and powerful, yet You care for us. Help us to believe in Your power and love. Through Your great sacrifice for us, we find forgiveness, healing, and hope.

Thank You that we live today and forever in Your love. Amen



Accompanying the Shepherds Series

# Understanding Psychological Issues Affecting the Sheep III – Other Psychopathologies in Marriage and Family

Yoling Sevilla, John BCGG

In addition to mood disorders, personality, character style and other disorders, shepherds may encounter other psychopathologies in the marriage and family life of their lambs that would affect the latter’s psychospiritual state of being. These were discussed in the last session of the three-part series: “Understanding Psychological Issues Affecting the Sheep” on November 6, 2021, by Fr. James Gascon, SJ. One hundred five members from 22 BCGGs attended the session.

The objective of learning about psychological issues affecting our sheep is to enable us to understand and share ways of caring for sheep who have mental or psychological illnesses. Our mission to care for our lambs cannot be overemphasized. It is critical to remember that it is not the person but the mental or psychological illness that is our foe.

To summarize, these psychological issues would include:

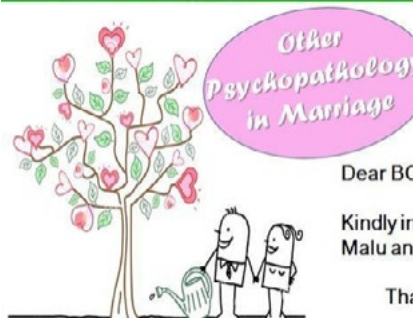
Developmental/Social Disorders resulting from insufficient or improper development especially in childhood that could be due to genetics or environmental influences, among many other causes.

Examples:

- 1. ADHD or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder characterized by difficulty paying attention or controlling impulsive behaviors (acting without thinking of the consequences) or being overly active.
- 2. ADS or Autism Spectrum Disorder which refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech, and non-verbal communication.
- 3. Cerebral Palsy, a group of disorders that affect a person’s ability to move and maintain balance as well as posture.
- 4. Asperger’s Syndrome, a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by significant difficulties in social interaction and nonverbal communication, along with restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior and interests.

5. Intellectual Disability.

**“Understanding Psychological Issues Affecting the Sheep III”**



Other Psychopathology in Marriage

on November 6, 2021 via zoom at 2:00-4:00pm by Fr. James U. Gascon, SJ

Dear BCGG Shepherds,

Kindly inform your members and advise Malu and/or Susan who are attending.

Thank you.

Formation Ministry

Accompanying the Shepherd Series

6. Learning Disability.

Cognitive Disorder. A deficiency in one’s capacity to use intellectual acumen like thinking, listening, learning, understanding, justifying, questioning, and paying close attention.

- 1. Alzheimer’s Disease, a progressive neurological condition in which the death of brain cells causes memory loss and cognitive decline.
- 2. Frontotemporal Dementia, a variant of brain degeneration characterized by progressive atrophy (cell loss) in frontal and anterior temporal regions of the brain leading to alterations in complex thinking, personality, and behavior.
- 3. Corticobasal Degeneration, another variant that can cause gradually worsening problems with movement, speech, memory, and swallowing.
- 4. Huntington’s Disease, an inherited condition that stops parts of the brain from working properly over time.
- 5. Lewy Body Dementia, the second most common type of progressive dementia after Alzheimer’s Disease. Protein deposits called Lewy bodies develop in nerve cells in the brain regions involved in thinking, memory, and movement or motor control.
- 6. Mild Cognitive Impairment, an early stage of memory loss or other cognitive ability loss such as lingual or visual/spatial perception in individuals who nonetheless maintain the ability to independently perform most activities of daily living.
- 7. Primary Progressive Aphasia, a neurological syndrome in which language capabilities are slowly and progressively impaired.
- 8. Progressive Supranuclear Palsy, an uncommon brain disorder that causes serious problems with walking, balance, and eye movements, and eventually with swallowing. This disorder results from the deterioration of cells in the areas of the brain that control body movement, coordination, thinking, and other essential functions.

Continued on page 14





## Other Psychopathologies in Marriage and Family, Continued from page 12

Sleep Disorders characterized by difficulty in sleeping, experiencing either over or lack of sleep.

Examples:

1. RLS or Restless Leg Syndrome, a condition that causes one's legs to move or shake because of an unpleasant sensation.
2. RBD or REM Sleep Behavior Disorder or Dream-Enacting Behavior in which one physically acts out vivid, often unpleasant dreams with vocal sounds and sudden, often violent arm and leg movements during REM sleep.
3. Sleep Apnea, a potentially serious disorder characterized by one's breathing repeatedly stopping and restarting.
4. Narcolepsy, a chronic sleep disorder characterized by overwhelming daytime drowsiness and sudden attacks of sleep, difficulty staying awake for long periods of time regardless of the circumstances. This can cause serious disruption of one's daily routine.

Substance Use Disorder, a disease that affects a person's brain and behavior, leading to an inability to control the use of legal or illegal drugs or medications.

Examples:

1. Nicotine Use Disorder
2. Stimulant Use Disorder
3. Sedative Use Disorder
4. Hallucinogen Use Disorder
5. Alcohol Use Disorder

Schizophrenia and Psychosis, the disengagement from reality commonly referred to as "baliw." While symptoms vary dramatically in pattern and severity from person to person, these include hallucinations, disorganized speech and behavior, the so-called "negative" symptoms like lack of social interaction, communication, or motivations.

Somatization or Somatoform, a psychological illness experienced as physical symptoms. When mental factors such as stress cause physical symptoms, the condition is known as somatization. A severe form of somatization where physical symptoms cause great, often long-term distress is called a somatoform disorder.

Examples:

1. Hypochondriasis

2. Body Dysmorphic Disorder
3. Body Pains
4. Conversion Disorder or unexplained blindness, paralysis, and other neurologic symptoms

Sexuality Related Disorders or Behaviors that affect psycho-emotional health.

Examples:

1. Desire Disorder, the lack of sexual desire or interest in sex
2. Arousal Disorder, the inability to become physically aroused or excited during sexual activity
3. Orgasm Disorder, the delay or absence of orgasm or climax in sexual activity
4. Pain Disorder or pain during intercourse
5. Penile Related Disorders such as premature ejaculation

### What to do?

As soon as something "different" is observed, consult a competent professional like a psychologist/psychiatrist who can evaluate the condition and introduce interventions. Included in the treatment would be the entire family who would be educated on how to care for, deal or cope with the member of the family with a disorder.

It is critical to get treatment as soon as possible to avoid unnecessary suffering and the condition worsening.

Psychopathologies usually do not occur alone. Other disorders are either the cause or an effect of a major disorder. It is important to take medication when prescribed while taking care to minimize its side effects by discussing them thoroughly with one's physician.

Many of these are degenerative, meaning there is really no cure. The objective is to delay the process of degeneration particularly of co-morbidities like diabetes and hypertension.

It is important to remind our lambs that the entire family system is responsible for ensuring treatment of psychopathologies and their co-morbidities.

Since the BCGG is a community, it is important for not just the shepherd but also the other members to be aware of and understand the psychopathologies or disorders that are affecting either the couple's marriage or family, to be able not just to pray with and for them, but also to lend emotional support.

## Christmas Cheer for Olandes Suyuan

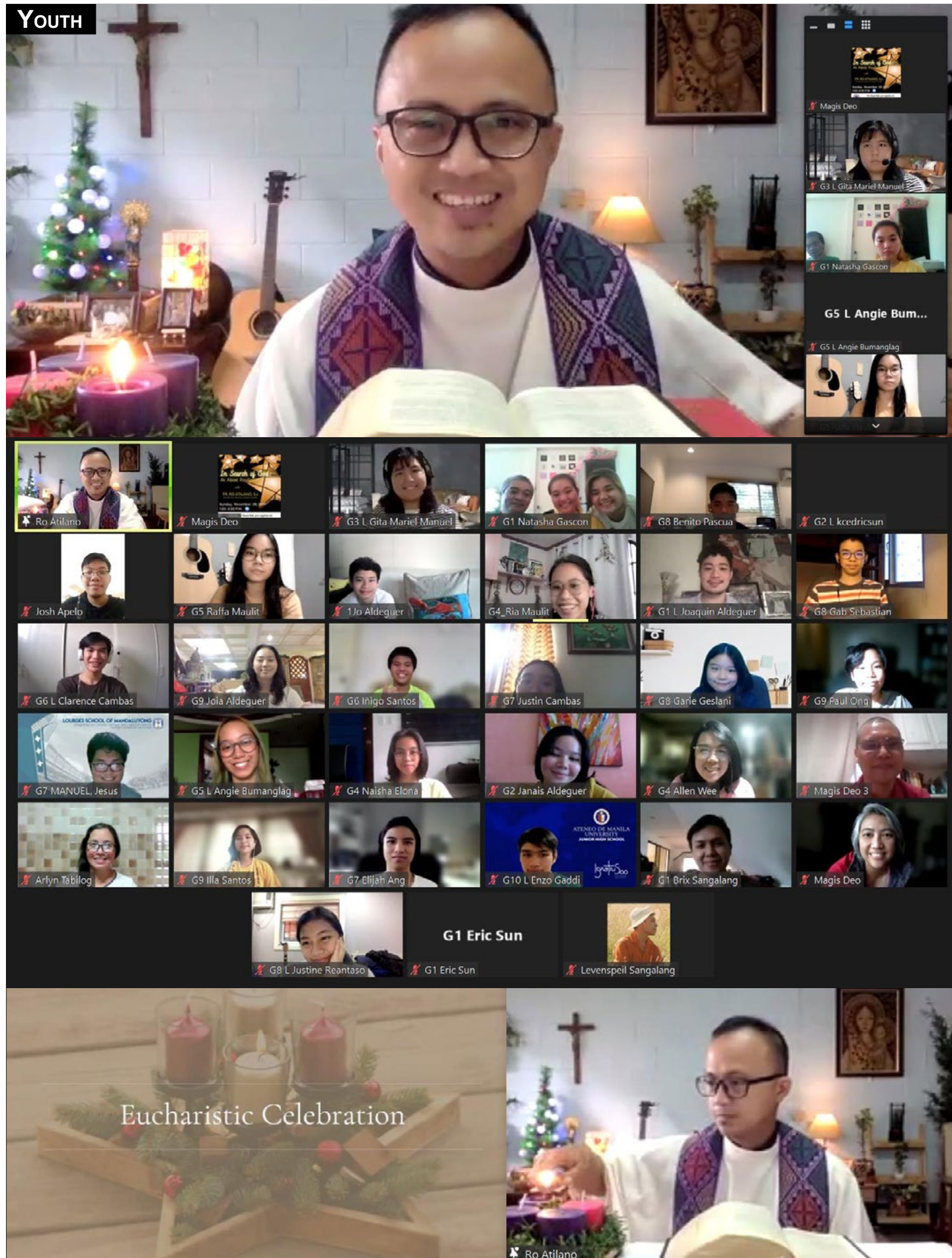
Philip & Malu Panlilio, Mustard Seed BCGG

**M**agis Deo brought Christmas cheer to Suyuan graduates from Olandes, Marikina last 7 December 2021. After joining the novena and mass on the eve of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, patron of Olandes, sixty-six families received Christmas bags containing six pieces melamine plates, spaghetti set, luncheon meat, corned beef, cookies, coffee, creamer, sugar, sardines, rice, chips, shampoo, and dishwashing liquid. Suyuan leaders received thermos as additional gift. They were all happy and thankful to Magis Deo. Even without the Kasalan Bayan in 2021 and 2020, as well as new Suyuan seminars due to the pandemic, the Christmas gift-giving has remained and continues to share Magis Deo's generous spirit with Olandes Suyuan.

Magis Deo outreach funding for the Christmas gift-giving was augmented by donations from Mustard Seed BCGG, Chronicles BCGG, Rafa & Cynthia Rodriguez of ME 129, and San Miguel Foods through Mon & Nina Vinluan of Matthew BCGG.







## Arrivals: An Advent Recollection

Compiled by Ria Maulit, Magis Youth

**T**he Magis Deo Teens and Young Single Adults spent an afternoon with Fr. Roseller Atilano, SJ, last November 28, 2021, in an Advent recollection entitled “Arrivals.” Fr. Ro’s invitation to the thirty-nine attendees was to make Advent a time to prepare, to let Christ come and make our hearts His home, and to also ready ourselves to come back home to God. After the talk, 10 Young Single Adults facilitated breakout rooms wherein the youth shared their answers to the guide questions Fr. Ro provided:

1. In your many journeys and coming home experiences, what person have you become?
2. How did God bring you back home to Him?

Fr. Ro culminated the recollection with a Eucharistic celebration.

The following are reflections of some of the attendees:

“After many months of being in the pandemic and of online classes, I have become someone who is kinder and compassionate to those around me. I have learned to be more understanding of other people’s situation, be they my friends or those I work with. I think what’s also important is that I become kinder to myself during this year wherein I often felt burnt out from work or academics. I’ve learned to appreciate the small wins I have and pat myself on the back after a long and stressful day. God found me back home to Him through the people around me who always supported and accepted me especially during the weakest times in my life. God wants me to remember through these people that there will always be a sunrise after a long night, a rainbow after the rain, and a home I can go to after a long journey.”

— Gita, daughter of Bobet and Gina Manuel, Chronicles BCGG

“God loves us and welcomes us whenever we sin because God is a loving God, and we are His children.” — Angie Bumanlag

“God always welcomes.” — Gian Manuel, son of Bobet and Gina Manuel, Chronicles BCGG

“That we should come back to God and prepare for His arrival.” — Iñigo, son of Giovanni and Beth Santos, ME Class

“Being a student and teenager attending online classes during the pandemic is not easy but there are also good things that happened. I honestly still prefer face-to-face classes and miss the physical interactions with my classmates and friends like riding the school bus to school, walking around the campus after class, and hanging out or playing basketball with classmates. These are the memories that made my high school life exciting and fun. But the pandemic changed so many things and I know I must adapt to my new and changing environment now.

There is news that the pandemic might continue in 2022 and life will still be tough. I have seen and heard stories about students who struggled coping with school and personal life during the pandemic. I also struggled with my online classes but with the help of my parents and teachers, I continue to be okay. During the recollection I learned that when students or people lose hope and lose their way because of the tough times during the pandemic, it is important to disconnect from everything and reconnect to the person who has been with all of us since birth: God. He has seen me grow as a person and reconnecting or going back to Him for help is not wrong at all. I cannot do things by myself, so asking for help from God will help me stay on track and achieve the goals I have set.

I believe that prayer and recollections will help me remain connected to God through my family, friends, school, and community both in the good and difficult times. AMDG.”

— Enzo, son of Jojo and Rhea Gaddi, Prodigal 102 BCGG

Aldeguer siblings, children of Jojo and Jane Aldeguer, BCGG Chronicles:

“Unlike Spider-Man there is always home to God.” — Joaquin

“I should never be ashamed to face God as I am.”

— Janais

“Advent is time to come home to God. He will always be happy to see our homecoming.” — Joia

“The pandemic made us realize things that God wanted us to realize but did not earlier on.” — Juanjo

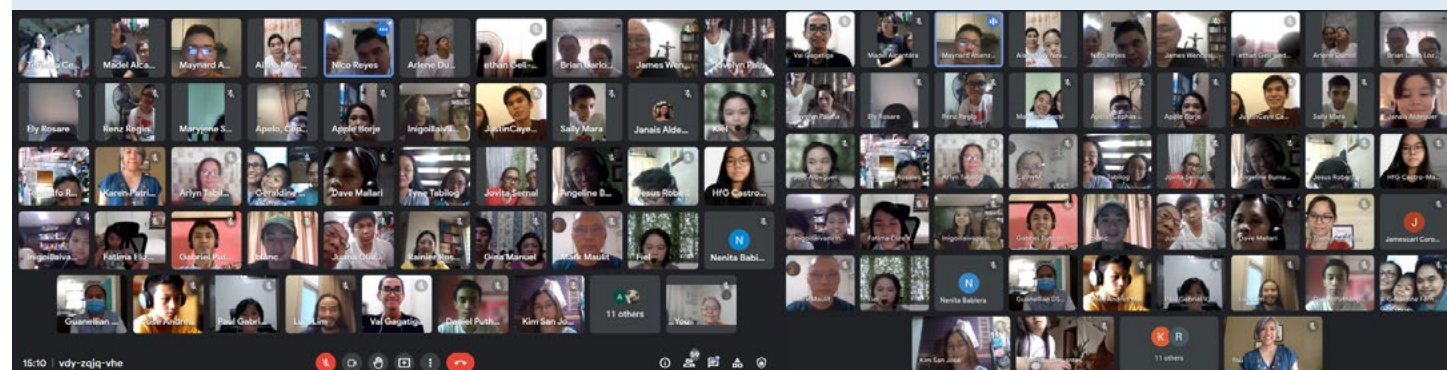




## MAGIS DEO YOUTH OUTREACH

*continues despite the pandemic!*

some members preparing the gift packs



A total of 83 Magis Deo youth and students of the Sacred Heart Center, a day program for persons with special needs participated. Sr. Rose Taneo of the Daughters of Mary Providence welcomed the Magis Deo youth and explained the work of the Center. Fr. James Gascon, S.J. gave a short message and blessing after the rosary. The Magis Deo Youth Choir shared a music video and the Sacred Heart Center students gave a live musical performance. Thank you to the Magis Deo Young Single Adults for all the generous hard work in preparation for the activity.

## PROSE AND POETRY

### A Joyful and Grace-Filled Christmas to All!

Chacho Angeles, Thessalonians BCGG

“This is a God who is our Savior and who reaches out for our friendship! He is the most precious gift in the world who needs each of us to keep his love alive. We – like Mary and Joseph – are not going to be defined by power, possessions, position, or prestige. We are human because of the way we live, love, and serve one another. As bearers of the Christ-child, we learn compassion, forgiveness, kindness, and the sheer recklessness of God’s love.” – John Cullen

Christmas is now a worldwide holiday observed by Christians and non-Christians, by the religious and secular alike. It has become a happy holiday especially for children, with Santa Claus touring the world in his sled pulled by reindeer, distributing gifts to kids. But inside these holiday trappings, it is also a holy day that is full of spiritual significance, meaning and relevance, of joy and grace. These days, the level of celebration is subdued because of this pandemic and the virus’ new variants. But the depth of its meaning for me remains as before, even deeper these days. No amount of toning down will reduce the luster, the glory, the joy, and the wonder of the mystery that we commemorate this day. My own celebration can be a very simple one, like the very first Christmas.

The first belen is a very simple and homey scene, as I imagine Joseph taking care of baby Jesus, crying, or stretching, and Mary sleeping on the makeshift bed out of tiredness after giving birth. God keeps His promise of sending a Messiah, a savior, in the person of His son, under these humble circumstances. With these beginnings, God identifies with the ordinary folks and outsiders. The characters are not royalty, neither religious teachers nor priests, neither wealthy landlords nor merchants – all are simple folks (well, the wise men from the east may be learned men, but they are considered by the Jews as outsiders or gentiles). Joseph is a tradesman and Mary a young country girl. She gives birth in a stable because there is no room at the inn. They are so much like millions of people who are below the elite and powerful in the social, economic, and political totem pole, and they give hope to them and all others who accept Jesus. Christmas demonstrates how much God understands and loves all of us, and makes us worthy to be His children, as we are and where we’re at. Like Mary and Joseph, all I have to do is to humbly obey, surrender, and serve.



Mula sa isang maliit na bayan, isang simpleng dalaga Ang napiling magbuntis at magsilang sa Tagapagligtas. Sa kanyang pagsagot ng oo ay itinaya niya ang kanyang Buhay at iniasa ito sa kamay ng Ama ng tunay na Kristo.

Tiniis niya biyahe mula Nazareth tungo Bethlehem sa Dulo ng kanyang pagbuntis, naglalakad o nakasakay sa Buriko, dala-dala ang mabigat na sinapupunan; ang Kanyang anak isinilang sa sabsaban, walang maayos na

Higaan, malilinis na gamit, o komadrona; at hindi pa Naglaon, ay kinailangang lumikas tungo sa Ehypto Sapagka’t nais patayin ng hari ang sanggol sa akalang Karibal ito, malayo-layong biyahe, dala ang sanggol; At nakabalik lamang sa Nazareth nang namatay ang Haring takot. Sa kabila ng lahat na mga kahirapang Ito, inalagaan at inaruga ng ina ang sanggol, katuwang Asawang matapat, at pinalaki ang sanggol sa mga Pamamaraang tapat sa Diyos; lumaking marunong, Malakas at banal. Sila ay isang kakaibang pamilya, Matapat na ama at katangi-tanging ina ng Mesiyas.

Sa hrap ng buhay na dinadanas ng marami ngayon, Kakaiba ang pagdaos ng kapaskuhan sa taong ito. Nguni’t ang diwa ay hindi nagbabago noon, ngayon: Ang pagmamahal ng Diyos, ang aking pagtitiyaga’t Pagsunod ng kusa, at ang magmahal ng tapat at Wagas sa Diyos, sa kapwa at sa sarili. Ano man Darating sa bagong taon ay sasalubungin ko ng Buo at matahimik ang puso, nakakapit ng mahigpit Sa kamay ng Amang hindi nakakalimot mag-alaga, Magmalasakit at magkalinga sa akin at sa ating lahat.



A lot of terribly bad things has happened resulting in the loss of thousands of lives, livelihood, and property, and it appears we have not yet seen the end of it with the new mutations. Yet despite all these, there are always good things that happen to individuals and to groups, and there is hope for

With the pandemic, typhoons, volcanos,  
floods, come changes in celebrating Christmas.  
Mandated by authorities, no more caroling,  
Shopping binges, parties, and get-togethers,  
Going around ninongs, ninangs for gifts –  
Peace to men of goodwill. I am the object of  
The Father's love, and my heart is a vessel  
For this love. If my heart is full of hurts,

Like Mary who is obedient to God, bears His son, and loves Him even when this love will cause her pain. How can I imagine God's love being more than any mother's love for a child? Maybe they are in the same plane or league, and if I only see that from divinity, Jesus crossed over and became a limited man, and sacrificed by suffering and dying on the cross to teach



Loving Father,  
It is the first day of the new year as I write this,  
And the first thing that I would like to say here is:  
Thank You very much Father for the year just past.

The past year is like a river rushing down the slopes  
Tumbling over rocks, boulders, swirling, overflowing  
Its banks and flooding the lowlands. Destroying, killing.  
One terribly dangerous year, which has mercifully ended.

Though the dangers remain, the star of hope forever  
Shines over the dark path I face during this different  
Time, under these exceedingly difficult  
circumstances, at my  
Age. Not roses all the time, with the bad comes some  
Comfort and good like companionship, fulfillment, and

better times. Vaccines are already rolling out. The economy is perking up and more people are getting jobs. The holiday rush is giving small businesses a shot in the arm. And for the world, Christmas is coming, and a new year is aborning.

Disappointment, pride, and the self, it does  
Not have space anymore for this love –  
There is no room at the inn. I must learn to  
Empty my heart of these extraneous worldly,  
Selfish desires, lay my heart in the manger of  
His embrace, wrapped in the swaddling cloth of  
His love, like the baby Jesus, my savior and Christ.

us how much God loves us. I am loved by a loving Father who some say is also Mother Earth, and others say is Mother Wisdom, or even Mother God. But Mary is someone I can identify with because she is human like me, frail like me, yet is a kind, faithful, and loving person. "Mary did you know that... when you kiss your little baby, you kiss the face of God..."

Some success. And most of all, there are new learnings  
And realizations on what really matters in my life.  
It is not only work – it's an economic tool. It is not  
Status – a relational tool used by others. It is not just  
Friends - they are social companions. All important.

But a significant realization comes from Genesis.  
Creation is when You the Father, Jesus Your son,  
The Holy Spirit are immanent in me and in all things,  
And yet You transcend us all. I pray to know You  
More and live the values that Your son teaches me,  
You are love and I share this love by serving others.  
The cares and difficulties of these times will not go  
Away and changes inevitably will come. I need your  
Strength and wisdom in facing them, discerning  
Your will for me in all these. You are watching  
Over all of us, caring for us, wanting only the good  
For all of us. Yet evil abounds inside me, in others,  
And the devil he is waiting in the wings. Without  
You I am nothing, and I am who I am with You  
In my heart, serving You faithfully and lovingly.

These are my prayers for this new year, that I  
May live Your love every day, everywhere I am.  
Amen.

A BLESSED AND HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL!