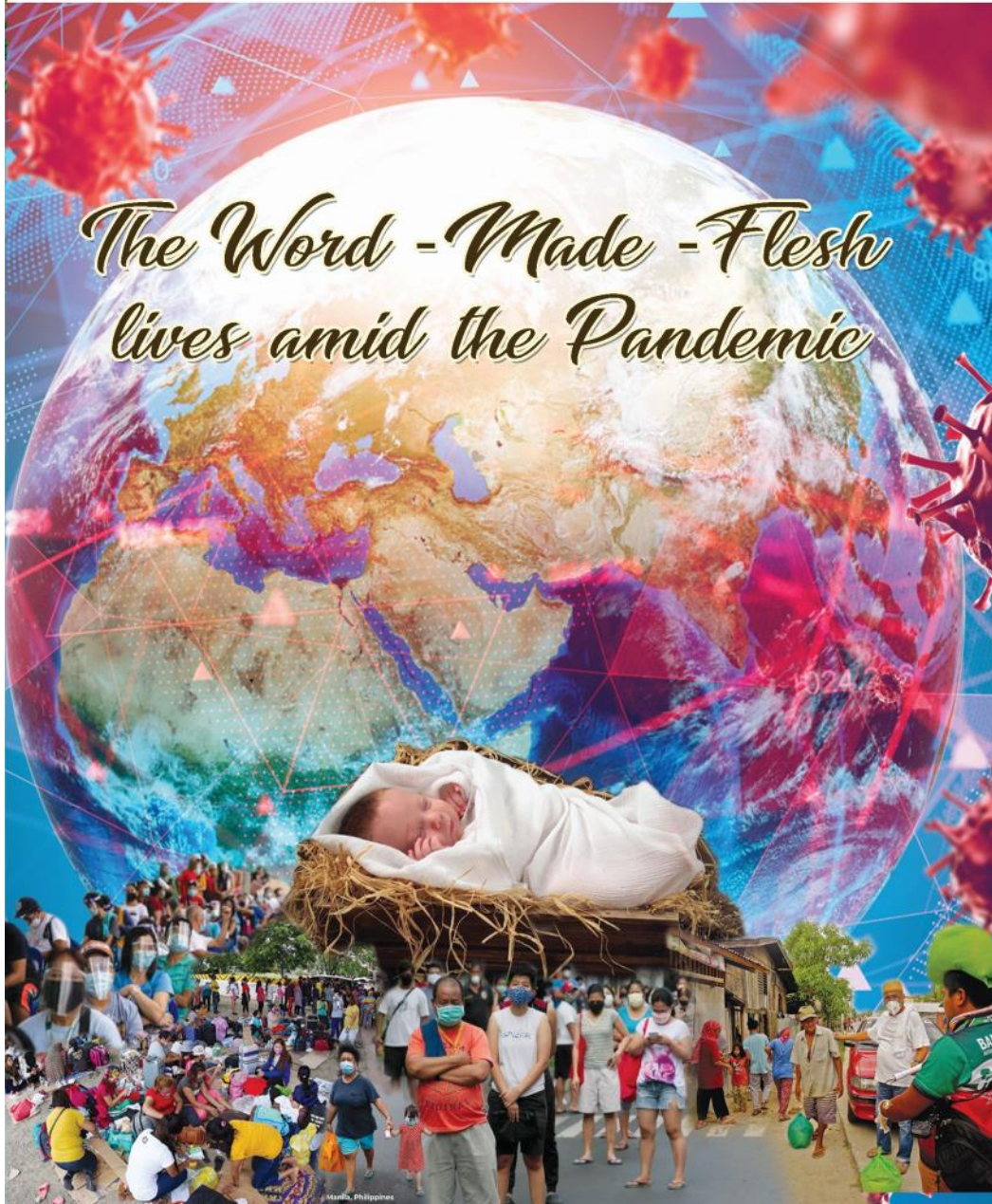




# UGNAYAN CANOSSIANA

NEWSLETTER OF THE CANOSSIAN SISTERS OF THE PHILIPPINES-PAPUA NEW GUINEA December 2020







## *From the Provincial Leader*

Dear Sisters, partners/collaborators and friends,

Why do we have lanterns, Christmas trees and angels decorating our homes during these seasons of Advent and Christmas? They are symbols which convey inner meanings and Christian messages and if properly understood, they can be means for catechesis. Pope Francis in his apostolic letter in 2019, 'Admirabile Signum', explained the meaning of the Christmas crèche. Setting up the Nativity scene in our homes and work places helps us relive the history of what took place in Bethlehem. It was St. Francis of Assisi who initiated the first Christmas scene and with the help of a friend, they created the greatest Christmas symbol which makes alive Christ's birth in Bethlehem. The original manger was full of hay, an ox and a donkey. The people present on that special night experienced a renewed joy seeing the poignant representation before them. Then, there were no statues; it was enacted by real people present and someone at the Mass had a vision of the Infant Jesus Himself lying down in the manger.

In our contemporary time, we place the statue of the Infant Jesus in the manger at Christmas time and the nativity scene comes alive. God appears as a child for us to take HIM into our arms. In the seeming weakness and frailty, God conceals His power that transforms all things.

In our frenzied life, contemplating the Child before us, we are drawn in silent prayer before the Son of God, born in a humble stable as we touch the poverty that God's Son assumed in the Incarnation. If we are focused enough, we somehow get connected with the Divine and feel the 'Emmanuel', God-with-us. All the characters in the scene, from the shepherds to the women carrying pitchers of water, to the musician and children at play, articulate ordinary holiness, the joy of doing mundane things in an extraordinary way, (Admirabile Signum, 2019) because Jesus is with us.

As we look back at our lives, we recognize the many blessings God has lavished upon us and to our loved ones. With grateful hearts, let us strive to be His presence in the world and allow others to experience that God really dwells among us by our words and actions gleaming with respectful, gratuitous, tender love in all our encounters especially towards the poor, reaching out to them with much compassion and care, (Fratelli Tutti, 2020). If this is so, then truly the 'Emmanuel' has come!

With Sisters Amy, Chato and Magda, we wish you a blessed 'Merry Christmas to all!'

*Lilia Nuesca, fccc*  
Sr. Lilia Nuesca, fccc  
Provincial Leader



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### TEAM UGNAYAN CANOSSIANA DECEMBER 2020

Ugnayan Community /Ministry  
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Sr. Vessie Ninobla, FdCC  
Sr. Rochelle Mariano, FdCC  
Sr. Lilia Austria, FdCC  
Sr. Priscilla Jaurigue, FdCC  
Sr. Violeta San Miguel, FdCC

**Provincial Councilor-n-charge:**  
Sr. Charito Balancin, FdCC

## THE WORD-MADE-FLESH AMIDST THE PANDEMIC

### **DO YOU BELIEVE THAT THE WORD-MADE-FLESH TRULY LIVES AMIDST THE**

**PANDEMIC?** This is indeed a pressing question which one must be able to honestly answer if she/he desires to survive in peace during this time of uncertainty and confusion. It is in reality a question which calls for minds and hearts which are immersed in deep faith and hope rooted in Jesus Himself. It is a query which could be answered authentically by revisiting not only the earthly life of Jesus, but more importantly, His Resurrection and His appearances to the apostles.

Jesus rose from the dead. **HE IS FULLY ALIVE.** Let us remember and **BELIEVE** in His unchanging assurance and promise. He declares: **“I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS TO THE END OF THE AGE”.** (Mt.28:20)

“Jesus is eternally alive. If we hold fast to Him, we will have life”. (Christus Vivit, no. 127) Do you see Jesus’ unseen yet deeply-felt presence in our midst? Do you ever wonder why those street-dwellers who, night and day, are exposed to the virus, continue to move about hopeful and seemingly contented despite the mushrooming presence of hardships and trials that surround them?

Do you notice those informal settlers in the depressed areas who don’t have the luxury of observing social distancing, and deprived of safe shelter and regular sustenance, but continue to spend each day with smiles on their lips? Have you ever been touched by people who have been unfairly beaten by a series of calamities, and yet, have emerged victorious and willing to start anew?

Hope continues to reign among believers who, with



their simple but unwavering faith journey through life, clinging to the LORD, and drawing strength from the power of the Scriptures and the EUCHARIST THROUGH WHICH THEY RECEIVE THE FOOD THAT GIVES ETERNAL LIFE?

This pandemic may stay on or vanish, but as long as believers continue to deepen their relationship with the Living Lord through ways which **HE HIMSELF GRATUITOUSLY OFFERS**, they will truly live since **JESUS CAME TO BRING LIFE, NOT DEATH!**

“The whole of John’s Gospel witnesses to his belief that Jesus, Whose death we have witnessed, is now alive and is continuing His mission in the world, no longer through His physical presence, but through His SPIRIT THROUGH Whose action, He draws us into the intimate communion of LOVE which He has with His Father. As He said at the Last Supper: BECAUSE I LIVE, YOU ALSO WILL LIVE”. (Jn 14:19) ( An Introductory Commentary by Michael Fallon, MSC, p.24)

*-Sr Lilia Austria, FdCC-*





# PROVINCIAL NEWS



*Good news from heaven the angels bring,  
Glad tidings to the earth they sing:  
To us this day a child is given,  
To crown us with the joy of heaven.*

*- Martin Luther*

*Have a blessed*  
**CHRISTMAS**

MESSAGES.365GREETINGS.COM

**SANTA ROSA CANONICAL VISIT 2020: “Embodied CHARITY and VITALITY”**

As a community, our hearts beat love and joy towards the recent Canonical Visit we had. Drawing on its acronym CV, this ecclesial event which took place last 07-11 October 2020 can be dubbed as an experience of an embodied Charity and Vitality. The gift of persons and encounters during these days have strikingly revealed the “tall order” of Christ Crucified’s **charity** and were truly moments of grace. Likewise, it has highlighted the **vitality** of our charism as we have been challenged to live our consecrated life with the “**more**” that St. Magdalene is asking us. For these, we are grateful to God for Sr. Charito Balancin, FdCC who had journeyed with us for 5 days, sharing the gift of her person with each member of the community. On 6<sup>th</sup> of October, she was warmly welcomed by the Sisters present. After settling down & taking snacks, she then met the community for the Opening Liturgy

and Conference. Subsequently, Sr. Chato began her individual dialogue with the Sisters.

At six in the morning of the next day, 8<sup>th</sup> of October, we had the Votive Mass of the Holy Spirit with Rev. Fr. Eftren Montoya, Jr., the Youth Director of the Diocese of San Pablo. After breakfast, Sr. Chato, accompanied by two Junior Sisters, had been toured around the Campus and had an informal encounter with some of our teaching and non-teaching personnel working “on-site”, since majority of the teachers are on a “work-from-home” set-up this school year.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> day of the Canonical Visit, October 8 – 9, she had conferences (mostly online via Zoom) with some of our lay partners – “*non-teaching staff, maintenance personnel, lay administrators and Lay Canossians*”. In between these encounters, she continued her individual dialogue with the Sisters.

We had a Holy Mass on the last day for Sr. Ma. Rizza Danao’s renewal of vows. Sr. Chato then had a conference with the Juniors Sisters in the morning. Later, in the afternoon, we had the Canonical Visit’s closing conference wherein sharing of insights, resolves and hopes took place.

The following are some of the impressions and musings of the Sisters of the community on the Canonical Visit:

- *I found the encounter to be meaningful & significant. It brought a feeling of awe at how the Spirit has led the Community from the*





*moment of preparing for this event until its actualization.*

- *I felt enlightened, challenged & grateful. It has helped me recapture the spirit of the Institute in the context of our current ministerial situation and made things clearer to us.*
- *My heart has been filled with gratitude for God's abiding presence especially during those days of communal preparation. In hindsight, I was able to revisit our community's journey in this time of pandemic. This process, in turn, challenged us to follow where the Spirit is leading us.*
- *I find the whole experience as cordial and warm. The sisterly affection and candidness made us share the truth of our person, of our current predicament in the ministry and of our hopes and resolves as a community. I also found it so nice to be able to laugh to my heart's content with my sisters.*



Sr Chato's online encounter with the Lay partners

- *It was life-giving & brought about timely renewal and affirmation as the community is still adapting with the challenges of the "new normal".*
- *I felt inspired and challenged all the more to live our calling creatively and courageously.*
- *"Lockdowns and quarantines" may have brought significant constraints to our physical movements but our sharing during this Canonical Visit generated some additional musings on how to carry on with our ministries of charity without jeopardizing our health in the process, especially in terms of being "cyber-missionaries."*
- *It was good & enlightening. What I particularly liked was her emphasis that our true mission is the mission of Christ Crucified which hopefully will continue to lead us to a more mature and deeper form of prayer & union with God.*
- *I like Sr. Chato's recommendation on doing Vocation Promotion. She urged us to explore new and dynamic ways of sharing our Canossian Spirituality to the young. There is a need for us to interiorize & deepen on this. We don't need to be confined with the usual ideas or means. Hopefully, as we grow or journey onwards, we exude the face of Christ & not our faces.*
- *It affirmed very much my being an FdCC. I felt renewed within & also challenged to look once more into my own life with, for & in Jesus Christ. It gave me so much hope in the way I look at my "being and doing" now – whatever task I'll do will have to be seen in terms of fulfilling God's mission in the Church & the Institute through the charisma of our Mother Foundress.*

- *It was an enriching experience & there is a need to reflect on the points Sr. Chato suggested particularly, that of “building a culture of dialogue” among us – Sisters and with our lay partners especially those seeking for accompaniment. Also, as a school community, we need to look at the future with much hope and openness to what God wants. We need to ask this question: “What MORE is still being asked of us?”*
- *I felt positive about this visit. It was timely for our “journeying to Holiness in the new normal”. This Canonical Visit is a sort of assess-*

*ment ,either guiding / affirming us if we are on the right track,or redirecting us if we aren't. Sr. Chato's presence encourages us to continue with what was started and animates us to be more open, creative and available to respond to what is being asked of us at this time.*

- *I felt very animated & came to appreciate more the gift of my vocation as a Canossian with the challenges that come with it, i.e., how “more” we can live with creative fidelity our vocation in the present time.*

**-Sr. Jovy Benavidez, FdCC-**

## A JOURNEY TOWARDS THE GOLDEN JUBILEE



If a 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary is always a distinct and credible landmark in one's life.... a measureless sign of Providence, both of grace and other blessings from the ever-generous heart and hand of God, more so, for a Golden Jubilee of the founding of a parish such as San Pablo Apostol parish – Tondo. Indeed, completing 5 decades of existence and active ministry amidst countless challenges calls for the most solemn and joyful celebration of the Eucha-





rist!.... the highest form of worship through which we, people of God, can express our hearts' gratitude to the Almighty God.

Have a backward glance with me, and re-read the signs of the times in the fruitful life traversed by the San Pablo Apostol parish.

This parish is situated near the North Harbor or pier in the densely populated area of Tondo, in the periphery of Manila. It belongs to the first district of Manila and has more than 100,000 parishioners concentrated in about 30,000 square meters with 16 barangays divided into sorts of "colonies": Blocks of barangays, Happy Land, Temporary Housing, Helping Complex, Aroma, Tambakan, Lovers' Compound, Nepo, etc.

It has been for many years that the area across Road 10 has become a source of income for many scavengers, as well as for the children and adults who resided right at the foot of a mountain of garbage. At the beginning, the Sisters were also ministering to the people of Smoky Mountain.

There were the 2 small churches of Magville and Nepo and 4 smaller chapels that oftentimes were under water during the rainy season. A night of heavy rainfall then and now, can still cause muddy water to reach the foot of the slightly elevated altar of Magville. That time, narrow paths outside the church and all around the village were very muddy and full of holes during the rainy season. The poor dwellers attached their piece of shelter to the wall of the church in Magville. Another sect also built close to the wall beside it. The loud sounds from their microphone during worship was almost unbearable.

Although small with limited space, both churches in Magville and Nepo along Velasquez Street were filled to overflowing with people on Sundays, with many even

staying on the roads just to be able to attend Mass.

It was in the year 1973-1974 when I first came to Tondo. Our pastoral community was composed of 4 sisters. M. Maria Fracasso was the Superior, with the three of us, me, Sr. Julia Untalan and Sr. Corazon Racelis. We were temporarily renting a small apartment owned by the Sembrano family. Our ministry was the clinic, assistance to the parish, especially in catechesis, and liturgical celebrations during feasts, solemnities and special occasions. We likewise contributed to the formation of various groups: parents and children preparing for the reception of the sacraments: Baptism, First Holy Communion, Confirmation, Pre-Cana seminar, couples before their wedding. The sick were prepared to receive the last anointing. We joined the priest who celebrates the evening Mass thrice a week as scheduled in different blocks.

After a year, I was transferred to another community, but in 1998, I was sent back to Tondo and stayed until 2003. Aside from the pastoral apostolate in San Pablo Apostol Parish with the other sisters, that time, I was also to serve as Catechetical Coordinator in the Catechetical Ministry of the Archdiocese of Manila during the time of Cardinal Sin, DD. I was sent and assigned by Msgr. Gerry Santos as Coordinator for the formation of the catechists in the catechetical district of Kalookan. It was also at this time that I met **Mateo Suarez**, a volunteer catechist. He is another  **blessing to the Canossian Fathers' family**. **He is now a Canossian priest, assigned in New Manila as the Superior of the community there.**

*-Sr. Priscilla M. Jaurigue, FdCC-Bulihan*

### Virtual Christmas Celebration 2020

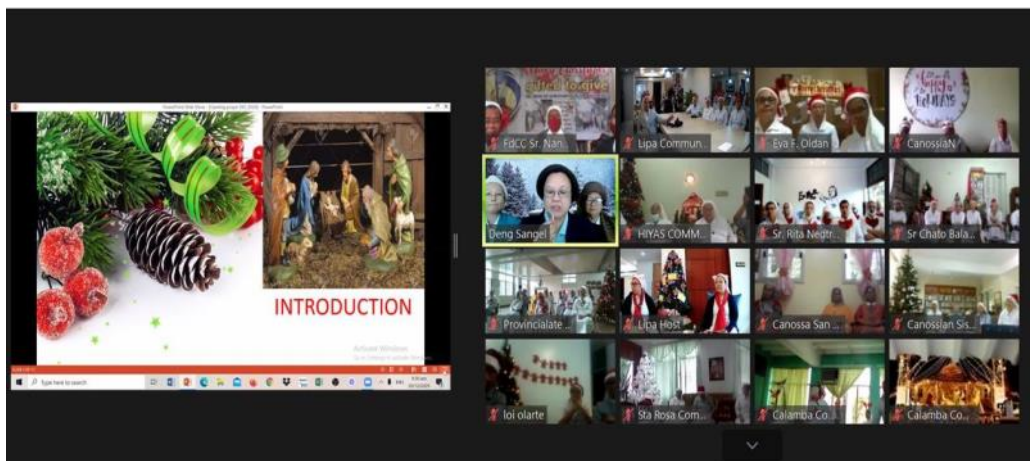
Virtual Christmas Celebration?!!! OMG! That is not so exciting! How long will this virus prolong and disrupt our plans, activities and so on. When will things become normal? This was my first impression and these were the questions which were running in my mind when the Virtual Christmas Party was announced.

The Provincial team of the Philippines – PNG scheduled the Christmas Celebration via Zoom on December 20, 2020. It started at 9:00 a.m. with an opening prayer led by Malaybalay Community. Our Provincial leader Sr. Lilia Nuesca, FdCC, gave an inspiring opening speech. To make the program more remarkable and interesting, there were a number of presentations performed by various communi-



ties. We, the novices, and the sisters in the Novitiate Community presented two songs and a dance. The program also included games organized by Gumaca, Sta. Rosa, and Tagaytay communities. In addition, the communities of Tondo, Bulihan, Lipa, and Provinciate organized raffles for the sisters. The program ended with a closing prayer from the Papua New Guinea community at 12 noon with a joyful spirit. It was a memorable celebration.

Through this event, I realized that this pandemic may stop us from conducting





face-to-face gatherings, but it will never stop us from celebrating the Birth of Jesus because He is the light amidst all the darkness. When a door is closed, the Lord will never fail to open a window for us. I was really very excited to meet a larger family whom I have never met before. It gave me an opportunity to meet the Sisters both in the Philippines and Papua New Guinea via Zoom, the first time in the history of the Province that we celebrated Christmas together. It is a tremendous experience knowing that there are many Sisters who are praying for us in Formation and that it

enriched our relationship with one another. This experience had opened my eyes to see and accept the reality of global changes today. I feel very blessed and grateful to have the biggest support, a loving and joyful family in the Philippines – PNG Province.

Together, we are united in Christ and strengthened by the graces of the Holy Spirit to live God's love, joy, peace and hope to all we encounter in 2021.

*-Novice Evelyn Elyas-*

## Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship

On December 6, 2020, our sisters from different communities in the Philippines, as well as Sr. Eugenia Umaclap, FdCC from Italy, Sr. Catherine, FdCC from Hongkong, members of the General Council, Sr. Elma Escalante, FdCC and Sr. Sandra, FdCC, and some lay partners gathered on-line through the Zoom platform for a session facilitated by Fr. Carlo Bitante, FdCC on the third encyclical of Pope Francis entitled "Fratelli Tutti".

The session started with a prayer facilitated by Sr. Elizabeth Asuncion, FdCC using the video clip "The Good Samaritan" which also served as an introduction. Right after the prayer, Sr. Elma introduced the facilitator.

Fr. Carlo started the session with the definition and significance of the dream and connected it to the humble beginning of the Institute which he defined as St. Magdalene's dream. The discussion did not only focus on the message of the encyclical letter, the facilitator also pointed out that the mes-

sage of the Pope is befitting to us as Canossians. By emphasizing some significant points of the letter, Fr. Carlo was able to explain the relevance of the message to the Canossians especially in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic.

After the discussion, questions were raised by the participants which were keenly answered by the facilitator. The session was ended with a thanksgiving message by Sr. Magdalena Larcia, FdCC.

While listening to the in-depth discussion of Fr. Carlo, I realized that "*love is an action word*". Only love can heal suffering humanity. As a young Canossian, I was awakened by the phrases "*we Canossians see this Political Love in Saint Magdalene*" and "*maybe we need to dare to venture into something new*". It is not enough that our love is expressed in concrete actions, what matters most is the love behind the action. "Fratelli Tutti", discussed side by side with our charism as Canossians, made me realize that it is always important to find active energy in our love. With all that is happening around us, compassion must come hand in hand with courage as we stand for the common good.

*-Novice Marjorie Laurio-*

**#ConnectAndShare:**  
**The First-Ever Zoom Meeting of the**  
**Canossian Juniors of the CCTAO Region**



In the afternoon of December 5, 2020, the Canossian Collaborative Team of Asia and Oceania (CCTAO) led by Sr. Margarette Sta Maria, FdCC, Provincial Leader of Indonesia, initiated for the first time an on-line gathering via Zoom of the Canossian Junior Sisters from the Delegation of Australia and Provinces of Japan, Indonesia, Philippines-Papua New Guinea, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore-Myanmar, and East Timor. More than forty Junior Sisters from the CCTAO Region attended the said event that was facilitated by the Delegation Leader of Australia, Sr. Melissa Dwyer, FdCC.

After the opening prayer, Sr. Melissa gave a short introduction and explained the Zoom guidelines and reminders. The Junior sisters were divided four times into small groups via Breakout Rooms for the general introduction and sharing on their respective ministries, communities and provinces, for a small group sharing on some of the beautiful gifts of Canossian religious life they have discov-

ered, and for a sharing on how they hope to grow in the year ahead personally, as a province and as an Institute. It was a meaningful encounter which showed the sisters the beauty of the Canossian Spirituality and Charism translated in different cultures, means and ways, and the common factor that binds them, that is, their dream to be true spouses of the Crucified Lord, to be true Canossian Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Poor who breathe charity in humility and humility in charity.

I was so happy and grateful to meet the other Canossian Junior Sisters from the other Provinces and Delegation. It was for me an encounter of togetherness and family bonding. I realized that most of us are so close in terms of our struggles, desires, hopes and dreams as well as where we get our strength to persevere in following Christ with Mary, our constant companion in this journey towards holiness.

*Sr. Joan H. Sierra, FdCC-*





# COMMUNITY NEWS



*Celebrating*  
THE BIRTH OF  
*Christ*





THE WORD -MADE -FLESH,  
THE EMMANUEL,  
ALIVE AMONG US  
AT CANOSSA VILLE-PALO, LEYTE

-Sr. Benita Esguerra, FdCC-

Covid 19 has created lots difficulties in many aspects of our life. We cannot deny the fears and uncertainties glooming within and around us. Yet in our struggles, we have become resourceful and creative to make life more beautiful and to look forward for more things to happen. Our hope comes from the God -made flesh, dwelling within and among and us.

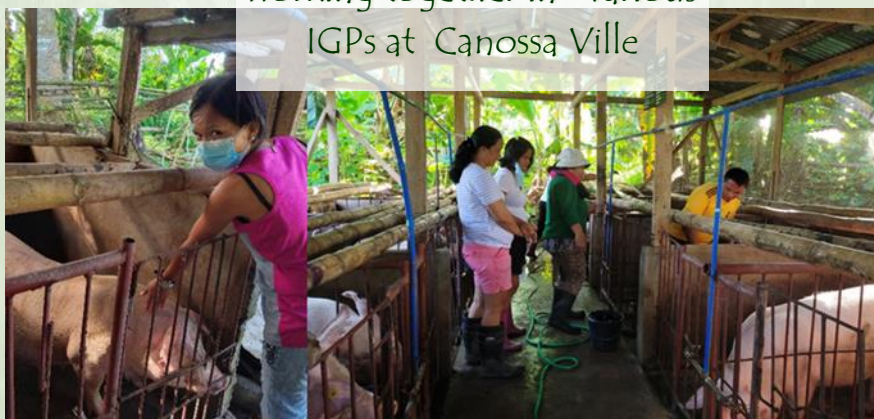


BAKERY



POULTRY

We dream of a more dignified life through our working together in various IGPs at Canossa Ville







Sr. Leonor Dijan, FdCC with the IGP members work hard towards the development of small scale livelihood projects in cooperation with the Provincial Government through MIC (More Income in the Country Side) Project.

### TOWARDS A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR THE CHILDREN



Sr. Juanita Norombaba, FdCC and some Youth Volunteers hold tutorial lessons and Catechism lessons on Saturdays with members of the Holy Childhood.

### TOWARDS A SEARCH FOR THE TRUE MEANING OF LIFE WITH THE YOUTH



Sr. Benita Esguerra, FdCC meets YOUCAT core group which facilitates respective YOUCAT Study Groups

### Celebrate Christmas amidst Covid-19? But how?

Surely this Christmas is different from all other Christmases we had in terms of decoration, parties, even in our Christmas Novena Masses. But can we hinder the celebration, can we stop Jesus from giving Himself to the heartbroken and to the faithful?

As the song says, "*kahit hindi Pasko ay magbigayan.*" For even before the theme 'Gifted to Give' of the 500 years of Christianity in the Philippines, even before the Covid-19 crisis, Christmas is giving. It is our Father in heaven who was the first giver - He gave His only Son, the God-with-us on that first Christmas night... Silent night, Holy night... all is calm, all is bright!

The Canossian Sisters of Gumaca dream of becoming women of the Word, valuing prayer and collaboration with the local church through their Ministries of Charity as they

journey towards holiness together with Mary...

In simplicity and charity they endeavor to connect with the Lord through prayer and by connecting with the least of His brothers and sisters. The little acts of love like listening, walking with those who had been adversely affected by calamities, and breaking the Word with the youth and families are simple gestures of the Sisters to give hope and brighten the life of those who are downtrodden because of the pandemic and the calamities.

**May JESUS be reborn in us to give life anew and Christmas amidst pandemic may continue to be true.**

*-Sr Nancy Tagle - Gumaca-*

# CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS!

PEACE  
JOY  
LOVE  
HOPE



Sr Lerma, Sr Nancy T. and Sr Gina







Home visit of Sr. Lerma to some of their beneficiaries



Sr. Nancy with the Youth

One single missionary spirit animates our communities and our apostolic service. It renders our practice of charity boundless and impels us to proclaim the Gospel to the utmost ends of the earth.  
Rule of Life  
Constitution no. 4

San Jose Nueva Ecija  
Community



As Servant of the Poor, we spare no effort in serving our needy sisters and brothers, offering them the same love with which the Lord loves us. Our care, efforts and thoughts are, above all, for those most in need.

St Magdalene of Canossa





Lipa Community

“Difficulties should not let us lose heart but rather give us more enthusiasm in the way we serve the Lord.”

St. Magdalene



CANOSSIANA



Santa Rosa Community

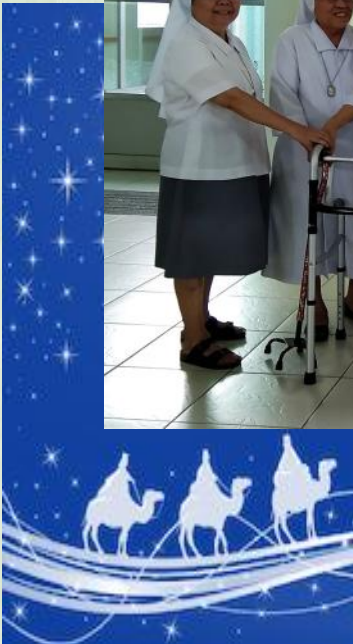


Calamba Community





Hiyas Community



**"Console Mary with the Holiness of your life."  
St. Magdalene of Canossa**



### Don Carlos Community



"Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into the places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish. Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears. Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless with the powerless. Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human.

----- Henri Nouwen

May God give to all of you  
His blessings.  
May God make all of you saints  
and may the Holy Child fill you  
with His Holy love.

- St. Magdalene of Canossa-

## Merry Christmas!



Sr. Eva, Sr. Virgie, Sr. Jo



Sr. Virgie with Lay partners celebrating their Christmas party





**VISION, MISSION REMAIN;  
WAYS MAY VARY...**

**Kiangan Community**

COVID-19 cannot hinder us from *Making Jesus Known and Loved* to the children. The Sisters clustered the 14 barangays of Kiangan into five. They went to particular barangays to meet the children and parents for formation. This pandemic pushed the Sisters to be more creative in reaching out to their beneficiaries and, at the same time, practiced caution by following physical distancing and wearing masks etc. and shortening their time for their gathering. Everything was limited indeed but when you see the smiles of the parents and hear the laughters of the children, all fears and anxiety vanished.



Sr. France, Sr. Rose, Sr Nancy E.

The love of God  
consecrates us,  
unites us  
and sends us  
forth.

Rule of Life #9



OUR WAYS OF  
ADAPTING TO THE  
NEW NORMAL



Sr. Fely , Sr Cecil, Sr Deng



Sr. Deng during virtual formation  
to the SIC students



Sr. Fely facilitating the Lay  
Canossians' Advent Recollection



Diocesan youth offers doing stress relieving  
activity like recycling materials as flower  
pots before one of the meetings





“SAPAGKAT, KAHIT HINDI PASKO AY NAGBIGAYAN...”

Bohol Community



Sr. Leizyl , Sr Jeana, Sr Juaning



This pandemic revealed to us that every moment is ' CHRISTMAS'. Poor and rich alike were given an opportunity to share love and kindness to others. As we contemplate the Holy Family, we believe that despite the many hardships, deprivations and uncertainties , we remain hopeful with faith and trust in God's loving mercy and compassion. We reflected also on the missionary spirit of Mary , her zeal and fortitude (to go in haste), were her silent but joyful contemplation proclaimed the Good News of the birth of the Savior. In the same manner in the midst of pandemic we touched lives with our joyful presence .We continuously proclaimed and evangelized the youth through on-line programs

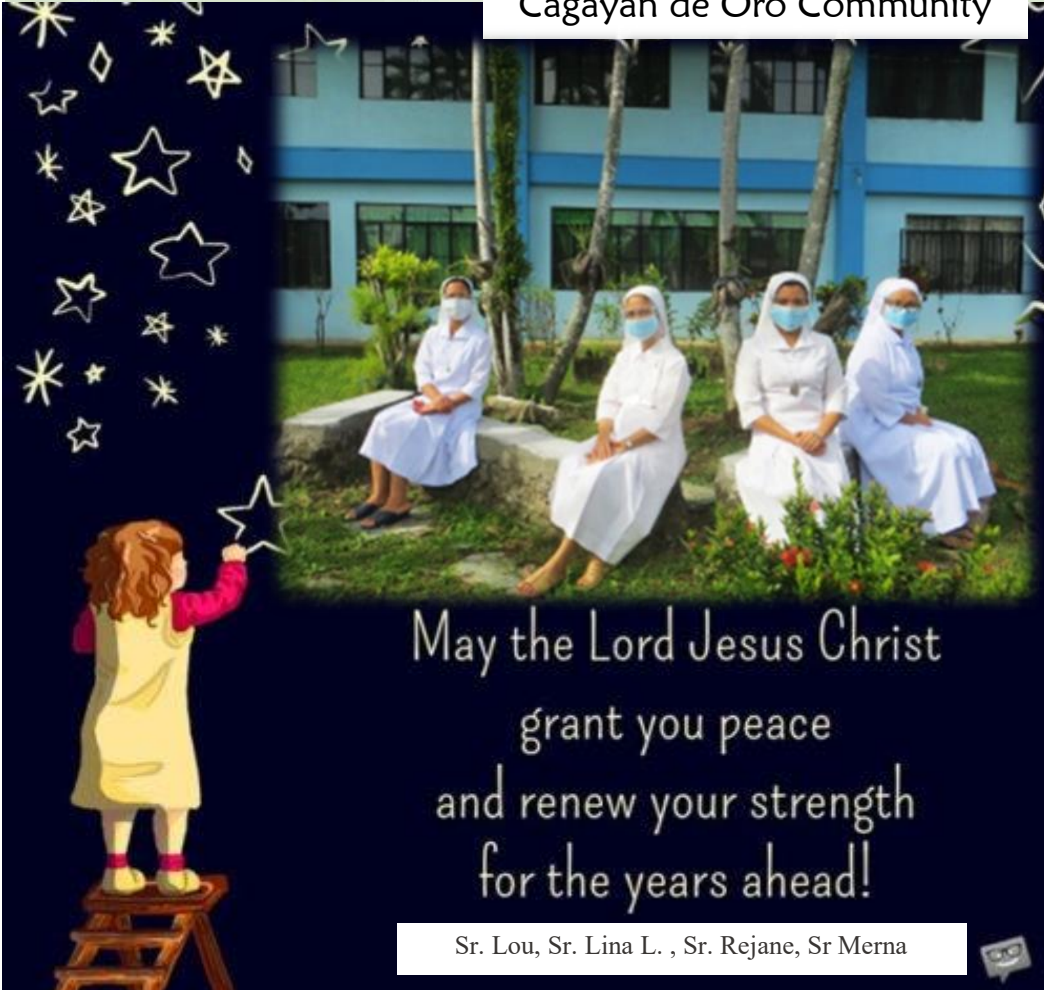


with an acronym **S.h.o.u t** (*Sanyaw, hudyaka on line uban ta*), Catholic Family and Life Apostolate meetings, formation of parents with health protocols, and Scholar's home based modular catechism . The pandemic taught us to be more patient in waiting, generous in giving and being more charitable at all times.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all.

-Sr. Jeana E. Connigo, FdCC-

Cagayan de Oro Community



May the Lord Jesus Christ  
grant you peace  
and renew your strength  
for the years ahead!

Sr. Lou, Sr. Lina L. , Sr. Rejane, Sr Merna







....Charity does not exclude any category of persons...

-St. Magdalene of Canossa -

**SISTERS AND CHILDREN IN PANDEMIC TIME**

## San Pablo Community

“Finding out what you can still make with what you have left.”



Srs. Maris, Lina, Lydia, Cynthia, Edith, Fely, Arlen, Che, Annie, Rita, Dol

Itzhak Perlman's story which I heard years ago made a greater impact to me now at this time of crisis. He was a well-applauded violinist and his story proves that something beautiful is in store for those who recognize and appreciate whatever one has.

In one of his concerts held at Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center in New York City in 1995, after starting to play the first few bars, one of the strings on his violin broke. Instead of asking for another violin or simply apologizing then getting out of the stage, "he waited a moment, closed his eyes and then signaled the conductor to begin again. The orchestra began, and he played from where he had left off. And he played with such passion and such power and such purity as they had never heard before." After such an

outstanding performance, he smiled, wiped the sweat from his brow, raised his bow to quiet us, and then he said, not boastfully, but in a quiet, pensive, reverent tone, "You know, sometimes it is the artist's task to find out how much music you can still make with what you have left." So, perhaps our task in this shaky, fast-changing, bewildering world in which we live is to make music, at first with all that we have, and then, when that is no longer possible, to make music with what we have left. (excerpt from his story)

This time of pandemic coupled with the many manmade and natural calamities is indeed a call to open our hearts, eyes and ears to the realities before us, to become creative, to make use of what is left for us and share.... We have witnessed our brothers' and sisters' magnanimity especially in times of crisis- not

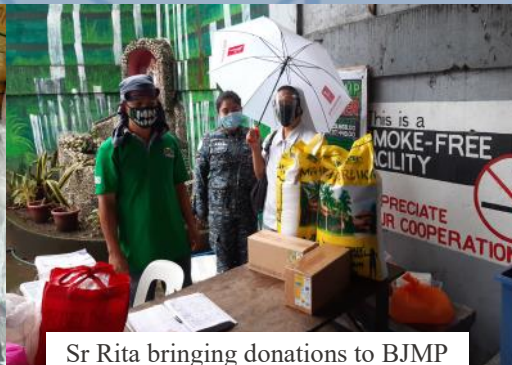




## Care to Share, Share to Care: A Canossian Relief Drive



**Donations delivered to the typhoon victims in Daet, Camarines Sur in Bicol.**



**Sr Rita bringing donations to BJMP**

just the material things given but the many gestures of love and solidarity through prayers, encouraging words, even sharing their place for the night or so and the like. The faith and trust of those who are adversely affected are shining examples and inspiration for us to find meaning in life.

On our part, we tried to continue to be channels of God's graciousness as

we called on our parents, students, the whole educative community, alumni and friends to share their love. The use of technology has been very useful in communicating with them and extending help to the various Dioceses of Isabela, Gumaca, Legaspi and Tuguegarao. Other simple helps were extended to out of school youth, the BJMP and gasoline boys, and people on the

streets. Buying food and stuff from the vendors near the Church and other local products have been more meaningful: not just to satisfy our taste but a way of helping them earn a living.

As a school community, there is so much loss, and here's to mention a few: the opportunity to meet the educative community face to face; the usual, "having gotten used to means" of imparting the lessons to the students, and the like. But we've got to make use of what remains! There are treasures that have been unearthed to continue on with the mission: the use of technology in a wider sense which really challenged especially the non-tech savvy or computer illiterates (can you imagine our 80-year old Sr. Lydia taking time to meet her students on-line?); the assistance of the lay people; the participation of the parents and guardians of the students and a lot more.

In all of these, the greater part of what always remains is the grace of God at work with those who trust and rely on Him, believing that He provides and completes what is lacking....



Sr Lydia Colmenar during her on-line class

With heartfelt desire to make the most of what we can and have, we continue to hope and share thus finding the real essence of giving, of loving, of incarnating the Word among us....

*-Sr. Cynthia, FdCC-*



Ms Lajara teaching PE





## NOVITIATE Kitchen Sink Chronicles: Giving COLORS during the Pandemic

*During this pandemic, maybe the challenge of the Gospel and how we live our consecration is about 'seeing colors'. Be awake to the beauty around us, the preciousness of family, communities, our vocation and ministries, our health-before all these are taken away from us. Don't be blind to miracle, especially to the miracle of your own life. ... begin to see colors!' (cfr. PP2021-2021).*

Our community has witnessed the daily miracles being unfolded before our very eyes during this entire lockdown. Many generous individuals and institutions have shared with us their blessings (cash and in kind) so we can continue with our weekly feeding of more or less 100 families in the streets who are mostly scavengers, some are forced to ask food due to this pandemic .... tricycle drivers, laid-off construction workers to name a few. Our Kitchen sink has witnessed the "multiplication of the loaves" and so unanimously, we commit to cook hot meals for our brothers and sisters in the streets so that they too can experi-



ence God's graciousness and not just the seven colors in the spectrum come to life. Our kitchen sink is loaded not just of grease but of love, hope and faith too, also extended to some people in Brgy. Barangka, Marikina City. Indeed, God's grace abounds.

Another miracle was having reached out to 200 families greatly affected by the recent typhoons in a far-flung area in Brgy. Ibang Uni, Mulanay, Quezon with much eagerness and hope, it would not be possible without the assistance of many angels without wings. Many of our dreams came into realities in adding colors to the life of our suffering brothers and sisters.



UGNAYAN  
CANOSSIANA



We love  
because  
he first loved  
us!

1 JOHN 4:19



“Inspice et Fac secundum Exemplar”: it means animating all our actions and work with the Spirit of Jesus Christ: a spirit of charity, gentleness, meekness and humility, a spirit of zeal and fortitude, a most amiable, most generous and most patient spirit”..... *St. Magdalene of Canossa*





## Paco Community



Srs. Erna, Criz, Emma Ruth, Amy, Bing, Ana, Betty, Tina and Beth

Our call to a life of holiness is a continuous journey. In the daily routine of our life, each Sister strives to be true to our identity as Canossian Daughters of Charity Servants of the Poor. In the spirit of Jesus Crucified, we, as a community, have our hearts' desire to be a choral witness of holiness by deepening our relationship with God and with each other in joy, humility, fidelity, simplicity and charity. With God's grace, such community desire is nourished by our fidelity to prayer and our prayer life. Surely there are failures due to our limitations but acknowledging these limitations lead us to go on and start again and again. Our striving to be true to our identity is not only lived within the walls of our convent but it is extended outside to our brothers and sisters in our ministries of charity. Each Sister tries to strengthen our commitment to serve as Daughters of Charity Servants of the Poor.

During this time of pandemic, we continue to be 'on the go'. Our present situation is not a hindrance but a challenge for us to live the "more" of our Foundress in order to make Jesus known

and loved. As we make ourselves available in the ministry, we keep in our hearts what our Foundress said, "***God alone in the end, in the work and in the rewards***" with charity as the motivating force.

Putting who we are in action, together with our staff, we distribute food (meals and bread) three times a week for the street dwellers. We do our part in cooking, packing and distributing with a joyful disposition knowing that whom we serve is God in the person of the "beloved poor" recommended to us by St. Magdalene, our Mother Foundress. It is in our ministries of charity that we seek God desiring nothing except His glory and service to the poor.

We are one with the church as we respond to the message of Pope Francis during the World Mission Day 2020, "In this year marked by suffering and challenges created by the COVID 19 pandemic, the missionary journey of the whole church continues..."

***-Sr. Alberta D. Ramiso, FdCC-***

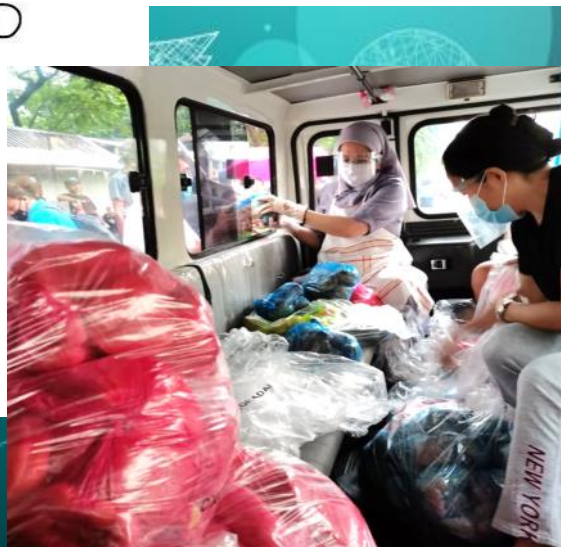


Packing bread and meals for our beloved poor

ROOTED  
AND  
ESTABLISHED  
*in love*

“The Sisters must not only understand, but must also carry out the command of Jesus Christ.”  
*-St. Magdalene of Canossa-*

EPHESIANS 3:17



Sr Criz and Tess distributing food





## GOD-IS-WITH-US AMIDST THE PANDEMIC

309 families were able to receive a parcel of food each: commodities prepared through the joint-effort of the Parish Council, the Sisters of the Oblates of Notre Dame, the Canossian Sisters, spear-headed by the Parish Priest of the Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Bomana, National Capital District, PNG. This was a way of letting them experience that God-is-with-us amidst difficult times brought about by the pandemic protocols. Some of the families who would intend to bring their garden produce for sale to the central market were barred at certain check points and were not allowed to enter the city districts nor delivery of dry goods to the villages were hardly possible sometimes. The parish has 12 community chapels, 7 of which benefited from the food provisions. The reality check survey of the

Holy Name of Jesus Community Association revealed that many of the parishioners were poor and in subsistence living conditions. The people had little money and did not know how to keep it for their future. People have not yet learned the value of readiness and preparation.

The Sisters attended to the distribution of the goods. The gathering was organized by the community leader of each designated chapel. The Parish Priest gave a short animation on the reason for sharing. We hope that we have allowed them to experience that God sees and provides our needs and will never abandon us.

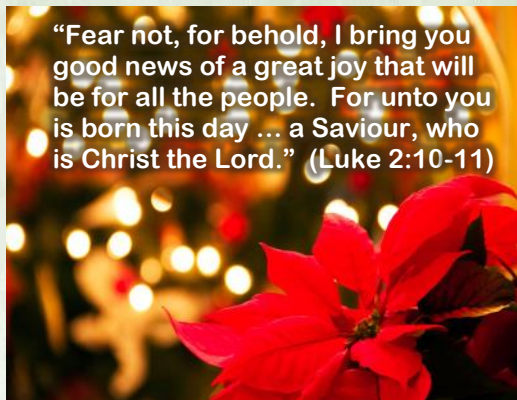
*-Sr. Susan Imperio, FdCC-*



*SENSE OF BEING,  
WAY OF MINISTERING:  
how are these shaped by  
the challenges of 2020?*

Although grappling with some emotional crises of fear, anxiety, sadness, sense of uncertainty, being confused and somehow shattered by news of calamities and disasters here and there, real effects, catastrophe and conspiracy related to the pandemic led us to attend to the interiority of the self that longs to hold on to SOMEONE strong, secure, serene, sincere, stable. Allowing HIM to dwell within each one's inner self, anchored to the constancy of HIS presence, we become creative and enabled to adjust with ease to planned activities in health and education ministries that were altered, modified, deferred, cancelled and postponed. The Sisters are able to cope with the challenges with adherence, calmness, direction, and an open heart in solidarity with the poor. With these, we are able to celebrate Christmas with JOY because the Savior has come and made His dwelling with us.

- *Sr. Susan Imperio, FdCC-*



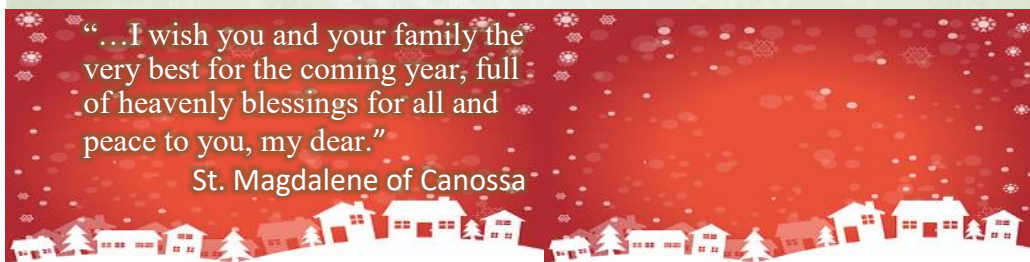
“Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day ... a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:10-11)



Srs. Ding, Evelyn, Hermie and Susan

“...I wish you and your family the very best for the coming year, full of heavenly blessings for all and peace to you, my dear.”

St. Magdalene of Canossa





## MIRACLES HAPPEN EVERYDAY

Bulihan Community

### Maligayang Pasko ng Pagsilang ni Hesus!

Dalangin namin na manatili  
si Hesus sa ating mga piling!

*Ang inyong mga kapatid mula sa  
Bulihan Community.*

Sr. Vholel, Sr. Eline, Sr. Pretz,  
Sr. Luz, Sr. Denise



We never stop believing in hope because miracles happen every day. Truly, the Lord can never be outdone in generosity. For half of this year 2020, the community applauded God's tender mercy and compassion as many challenges transpired/ emerged in our country, like the Taal eruption and the resulting crises due to the Pandemic since March till the present time. In spite of all these challenging situations, we were inspired by the faith-filled attitude of our people, especially our front liners- our doctors, nurses and health workers who offered their lives to attend to the needs of the sick and suffering. We were grateful also for our friends and benefactors/ mission partners for continuously sharing their blessings to our ministries of charity

here in our CHSC Bulihan, Silang, Cavite . Here is the “new normal” of our Services and Programs in CANOSSA HEALTH AND SOCIAL CENTER FOUNDATION INC.

- From OPD- out patients departments... Tele-medicine four times a week;
- For OPLAN Mahal: (Hypertension) - There are 13 Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) who were trained to monitor the blood pressure of the patients per barangay;
- CBR- Community Based Rehabilitation and CHSC Hospice Palliative Care... we have now Tele-monitoring- consultation once a month;
- TB DOTS- we have monthly distribution of medicine by health workers per area and distribution of 5kilos of rice;



*Sr Eline talking to a patient through their Tele medicine*



*A scholar doing research*

- CHSC-Community Family Medicine of San Beda Junior interns- we have Telemedicine with the doctors and patients;
- Mental Health Program- we have monthly injection for the patients and provision of free medicines for those who cannot afford to buy as well as distribution of 5 kilos of rice;
- Scholarship Program: CEAP- (SIKAP, ANCOP, St. Mary's College, SMSP) – We provided internet connection for their online classes in the in the Skills Center for the high school and college scholars who can't afford internet access at home for their on-line classes and researches since Oct. 2020. A sister and Lay staff monitor and help the parents with difficulty in reading and writing. There is distribution of 5 kilos of rice monthly for the 91 scholars.

Eleven new Android phones, 5 old phones and 1 tablet were given to the scholars most in need of the gadgets ( donated by Phi Lambda Delta Sorority of UPCM) ; 5 desk top computer sets donated by San Beda College of Medicine. Additional 5 kilos of rice and school supplies for the 91 scholars during the Christmas gift-giving. On-line retreat and recollection are given to those who asked for it.

This year's crisis has made us experience the Incarnation once again. The Incarnation, so dear to the heart of our Foundress is not a thing of the past but a continuing event-- right before our very eyes, this year, in our time and place. Jesus, the Emanuel, is in our midst, walking with each one of us, present in others especially in the poor that we serve.





Jesus, the Emmanuel, inspires in us unbounded CREATIVITY in responding charitably and compassionately to those in need  
Thanks for the grace of God for sustaining us...

While fear and the virus separate us physically and socially,  
Jesus, the Emmanuel CONNECTS us with each other, with our patients, collaborators, mission partners, families friends  
in a spiritual and emotional way-



*Sr Luz talking to some of the parents of children included in the feeding program*



*Sr . Denise giving allowance and food package for the scholars and families*



*Lay partners after receiving their gift package from generous sponsors*

“May Pandemic o Wala Tuloy Pa Rin Ang Pasko”



A significant number of families here in Calamba are living in poverty. The COVID 19 crisis and the series of typhoons in our country made the situation worse. How can we help the poor around us when what we can offer won't make a difference in their lives? The situation can be overwhelming but it should not keep us from doing what we can to help the poor. It should spur us into greater action. (Father Marcel Taillon)

The total lockdown because of the global Pandemic due to COVID 19 made us so helpless on how to reach out to the

poor to whom we are directly ministering in our apostolate. We have the families of our scholars living in different barangays and the community of Canossa Galva Ville. COVID 19 closes the door of our spontaneous generosity but God opens the window of mercy and compassion to the least and most vulnerable and this gives birth to active creativity.

Distribution of rice, groceries, dairy products and meat were given to the most affected poor families in the vicinity. On a regular basis, we gave hot pandesal to





different barangays. We named the project: **#2pisomopandesalko**. The school guard and maintenance, LGU's and barangay tanod, community driver, parents of our scholars and some good neighbors helped us distribute the pandesal. Financed by generous benefactors here and abroad, this project lasted for 3 months.

The many typhoons that hit the country recently forced the poor families living near the river banks to be relocated in public schools and barangay covered courts. Houses were underwater. They said it would last 3 months before the water would subside. More than 250 families were recipients of our modified "Bigay-Puso" this year. The distribution of goods was done in a very subdued manner observing protocol and physical distancing.

Recently, we visited the community of Canossa Galva Ville. The encounter was very casual but it gave us an opportunity to see the face of God in

them and to celebrate Jesus' birth with simple people. What made the encounter more significant is that, the gift they received did not come from us. It was the fruit of their labor in managing and patronizing their little store donated by Denso Autoparts 2 years ago.

The statistics of poverty in our country is heart-breaking as if the little we can do would never make a difference. But let us never underestimate whatever we are able to give, no matter how insignificant it may seem. We hope that our act of charity inspired by our Mo. Foundress, showing them our respect and expressing to them the assurance of our prayers, can help our poor brothers and sisters lift themselves up from their misery and help acknowledge their dignity as children of God.

*- Sr Cecile Pajo, FdCC-*



## Tondo Community

“What came to be through Him was life and this life was the light of the human race: the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.”

Celebrating the gift of the Emmanuel this year has indeed been a challenging and faith-filled experience. Given the global pandemic, the experience has compelled me to think of what really matters in my life, where my anchor is as I deal day by day with life's limits in the midst of death, isolation, hunger, fear, vulnerabilities etc. Yet, the coming of the “Emmanuel” is truly the light that overcomes such darkness for the human family for even at the top of such dimness, the light of compassion, solidarity and survival as brothers and sisters has become more important than the superficialities, individualism and selfishness to material things as we realized how fragile we all are and how we need one another.

Families find time to care for one another, opportunities in quiet and isolation become an experience of focusing one's life in God, the self and others. For us Filipinos, our true heroism comes out among the front liners, those in different lines of service where people risk of one's life for others. Our beautiful Filipino traits of pakikipagkapwa, pagmamalasakit and bayanihan have once more been rekindled in the hearts of our people. With isolation and physical distancing comes an awakening that we can become closer to one another, and that combating this virus calls us towards a greater spirit of compassion, generosity, love and respect. Offered is the energy of love, the Incarnate love of the Word-who-became-flesh and dwelt amongst us, the true light that gives life.

*(Insights collated by Sr. Gie Barcelon, FdCC)*



Sr Lilia A, Sr Sharon, Sr Remy, Sr Gie, Sr Aning, Sr Volet







Unstoppable by the pandemic: the Renewal of Promises by the Lay Canossians



Daily Rosary @ 5pm : Sisters & Stay in Staff; October - culminated with a Floral Offering



For the Staff and Regular Volunteers: Food Supply; 3 times spiritual meetings during these 9 months: Mass and Renewal of Promises for the Lay Canossians; Formation with Sisters, and a simple but warm Mass and Christmas Wishes time. Surely Observed: Social distancing, masks, clean hands, and hearts eager to meet colleagues now and then and updating news about each other.



New weekly food preparation: meals for PGH Doctors, PGH Frontliners and street people.



Every ten days : For Day Care : Module, rice, viand, milk, clothing  
For Patients: Medicine, rice, viand, clothing for TB Dots patients and ex-patients  
Open everyday: Pharmacy, Walk-in poor  
Regular Food Supplement for Mission Parish and clinic  
Telemed by a PGH Doctor  
PAGPAPADALOY—Keeping staff and volunteers motivated to sort, pack and distribute continuously. The avalanche of material assistance from perennial and new benefactors  
Skills Training Center: sewing PPE garments and cloth masks  
Marathon prayer, intentions for Masses, benefactors and beneficiaries

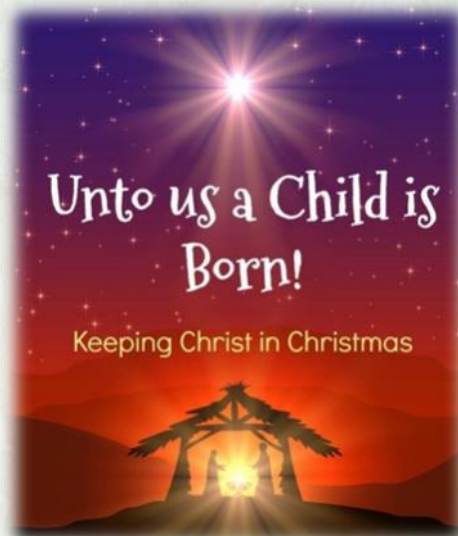




When the sailing gets rough,  
our God is there  
for us!

*My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken. Psalm 62: 1*

This psalm clearly describes the cry and longing of our hearts as we experienced the Taal Volcano eruption and now, the Corona Virus Pandemic. In this period of uncertainty, we are faced with our personal and communal challenges. We are invited: **Duc in Altum** – *Put out into the deep in order to find meaning, newness and hope.* So that as we struggle, we are also mindful of the scuffle of others especially our staff



and maintenance who have been with us for many years. Together, we tread the path, confident that when the sailing gets rough and we have no one to turn to, Our God is there for us. He alone is our rock, our fortress, our salvation. Indeed, there is reason to Rejoice...

Jesus is  
born!



# MINISTRY NEWS



MAY THE  
*birth of*  
*Christ*  
RENEW YOU  
IN  
*God's*  
*love*  
and may you,  
your families &  
your loved ones

WALK ALWAYS IN THE  
*light*  
OF THE *Lord.*



Archdiocese  
of Kuala Lumpur

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## “Wish Granted for our Beloved Poor on the Feast of Our Mother Mary”

One of our mission partners named Manuela Tungala is living in extreme poverty. Her husband is the sole breadwinner of the family who works as occasional construction worker earning Php300 a day, an amount which cannot suffice for their daily needs. Thus, most of the time they suffer from hunger. When they have money it goes directly for the payment of their debts. With this situation, it follows that other basic needs, such as educational supplies of the children, are not met. Even though they are studying in public schools, there are still

expenses to be paid. Both parents had limited education; thus they cannot help their children with the modules. Malnourished, the children find it hard to cope with their studies. Despite the limitations that they have, the children are really trying their best, and with the grace of God, little by little their studies improved.

The family is living in a house that is too small for a family of eight. Due to the limited space everyone suffers the inconveniences. The children usually have cough, colds and fever. Their condition



**THE HABITS**  
**PASKO ng**  
*Pag-asa*  
The Habits Christmas Special Episode  
**Premieres Christmas Day,  
December 25, 2020, 8:00 PM**  
via AMRSP's Social Media, and co-presenters' and crossposting partners' pages with telecast in TV Maria on Sundays at 8:30 pm, and Thursdays at 6 am & 10 pm

AMRSP Media | facebook.com/amrsp.org | www.amrsp.org

was aggravated by the COVID19 pandemic and the typhoons that badly hit our country. Their shanty which is already dilapidated, was badly affected. It is a blessing that the father knows how to fix it with the limited materials available.

Knowing the situation of the family really breaks my heart. It has been my prayer that one day their life might be improved. Thus, when Sr. Chato asked me to join the AMRSP Special Christmas activity entitled “Pasko ng Pag-asa” which would be granting the wishes of three consecrated persons for their chosen beneficiaries, I responded. I wrote a brief description of the case of Manuela together with a brief family profile.

As I sent to Sr.Chato the brief background of the family, I entrusted them to the maternal heart of Our Blessed Mother, asking her intercession that our wish for Manuela might be granted.

On the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, I felt great joy when I received the good news from Sr. Chato that our wish for Manuela to start a small business/carinderia was granted by the AMRSP. Indeed, I considered it a wonder-

ful gift obtained through the intercession of Our Blessed Mother who truly cares for the needs of her children especially the most in need.

I cannot explain the happiness that I felt, seeing them in tears as they received the gift of Jesus for them this coming Christmas.

Like our Blessed Mother, I proclaim the greatness of the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.

This event also reminded me of my identity as Daughter of God and Servant of the Poor. It is my prayer that I will spend my life for the greater Glory of God and for the good of our brothers and sisters especially the beloved poor of our Mo. Foundress, St. Magdalene of Canossa.

*-Sr. Aurea de Vera IV, FdCC-*





## Teaching our Christian Faith Today - Challenging yet Consoling!

Our Education Ministry is an important venue for Evangelization. We continue to provide the students with a carefully-planned Religious Education Program in the Teachings and Traditions of the Catholic Faith. On the onset of this New Normal brought about by the COVID 19 pandemic, there were changes in the delivery of our Religious Instructions.

Teaching the Christian Faith this year is truly challenging but at the same time consoling. “Less is more” has become a “mantra” for many of us who are handling CLE and CS Classes starting from the preparation of Modules until the actual delivery of the lessons, we tried our best to be always guided by this principle “less is more” in addition to Department of Education’s – Most Essential Learning Competencies or (MELC) which we also applied to CLE as the Most Essential – Doctrine – Morals and Worship.

The tasks of Online Distance Learning demands from the sisters especially those who belong to the generation of Baby Boomers to exert much effort in acquiring new skills in the use of various digital and social media platforms. However, on-line and modular modes of teaching are still offering us opportunities to continue teaching the faith. Despite this pandemic, we were also given the chance for a more personal communication between and among teachers and students

Furthermore, this year’s community service activities on immersion and exposures program are to be done by the students from grades 4 to 12 with their

## Committee on Religious Education

families at home prepared by the Committee Reach Out Program (CROP) will be initiated by the CLE teachers as part of the students’ Performance task in their Christian Life Education subject, also in partnership with the Canossian Spirituality Sisters. Sr. Aurea De Vera , who is presently the chairperson of CROP, mentioned that *since the outreach activities are realigned with the course description of the CLE per grade level, we are confident that the CLE teachers will be the ones to take care of the orientation/preparation phase, evaluation and processing as part of their lesson.*

The Spiritual Enrichment Activities this year are limited to Monthly First Friday On-line Mass, on-line Recollections for Students from Grade 6 to Grade 12 and the Daily Prayer Assembly which is done either by class or by department. Special assembly prayers like: Mission/Rosary last October, Advent and Christmas (November – December) were also organized and facilitated by the CLE Teachers in collaboration with the Student Leader Council and the class advisers.

Our Confraternity for Christian Doctrine or Catechism Classes in Public Schools, considered as one of our direct contributions to the local Church’s evangelizing activity, were temporarily stopped. First Communion and Confirmation rites of our students and the pupils whom we catechize were also suspended.

Moreover, part of our ministry of presence, the monthly BEC sessions that we used to have with our lay mission part-

# UGNAYAN

## CANOSSIANA

ners, is also done on-line by Zoom. We continue to build and encourage friendly interactions and interpersonal relationship with our teachers, staff and maintenance personnel. All these are aimed at helping them to respond to the inspiration of a lively personal reflection and prayer.

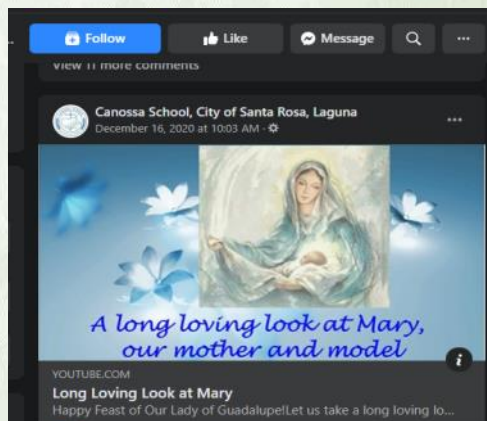
Most of the Sisters are teaching Canossian Spirituality at all levels in the school. Some of them are engaged in the Catechetical activities of the local church such as formation of Catechists, collaboration in various programs, direct Catechetical instruction in some public schools.

However, some of us doing administrative functions, can only supervise limited activities concerning the teaching min-

istry in our school due to our present situation. Mass gathering, and face to face encounters are not yet permitted.

At this point in time, with maximized efforts for what we can possibly do to accomplish the tasks we were given for this year, we keep in our hearts the burning zeal and commitment of making Jesus known and loved especially to our clientele.

*- Sr. Annie M. Gonzales , FdCC-*





## New Wine Skins for New Wine

St. Magdalene of Canossa,  
Foundress of the Canossian Sisters  
had these insights about schools:

“the school is one of the apostolic  
services that demands the most  
sacrifice,  
but it is also the apostolate that brings  
about the most fruit”....  
”Let Jesus be known and loved”...

Prepared, accustomed and steeped in the  
significance and relevance of Education  
for the integral Christian formation of our  
people, in particular, the children and the  
youth, the Sisters could not just close the  
gates and wait until the pandemic disap-  
pears, and safety comes back.

Yes, the Covid-19 pandemic stopped the  
normal rhythm of the educative commu-  
nity of Calamba. As a health protocol,  
mobility became very limited for the Sis-  
ters. They had to learn a new habit: pre-  
caution to avoid contracting/spreading  
the virus. Since March 2020, no students  
came to school for classes. Even lay  
teachers and Staff limited their coming to  
school. The lull from busy-ness, the res-  
trictions in going out and gathering peo-  
ple, both the dangers and the uncertainty  
of the time made the Sisters focus on the  
primacy of God in their lives. They wel-  
comed longer time for prayer and reflec-  
tion where they cast their anchor in the  
Lord’s love and presence. As they sav-  
ored the Lord’s closeness, the zeal for  
souls remain undiminished... even in-  
creased. There is deeper recognition  
about what’s really essential in our life.  
And there is an acute awareness of many  
people negatively affected by the pan-  
demic.



Canossa Academy– Calamba

From limited resources, sharing was done  
for those around them. Although the regular  
face-to-encounters even with our beneficiar-  
ies in GalvaVille community was cancelled  
temporarily. Just 3 months after the Lock-  
down, the Sisters of Calamba were already  
cooperating with the 3 other Canossian  
schools in planning and formulating new  
means to make the teaching–learning inter-  
actions in Canossa Academy-Calamba con-  
tinue effectively albeit new media platforms  
to be learned and mastered in so short a  
time.



The Ideal is high. Even the pandemic cannot diminish the Sisters' desire to search for ways and means to accomplish them together with a lot of prayer and trust in the Rabbi of Nazareth:

*Our Mission: Guided by the spirit of Jesus Crucified (together with Mary, Mother of Love at the foot of the Cross), and inspired by St. Magdalene of Canossa, we commit ourselves to nurture learners through an education centered on the formation of the heart that listens, thinks and shares.*



Thus, with joyful enthusiasm, we have been marching on since August 24, 2020, reaching out to our students and their families on-line together with our motivated teachers and Staff. The Academic and non-academic objectives are kept in mind by the Sisters and Lay teachers. Religious activities are not neglected, but also carried-out regularly on-line. Christmas came as a welcome occasion to thank the Emmanuel, Who deigned to be born human.

As the Incarnate Word “grew up in grace and wisdom” as a Child in Nazareth showing humanity how to be human, and how to live, we all try to remember the Child-Christ in the person of the children and youth who braved the difficulties of the consequences of the pandemic to continue their schooling with us. Together with our lay mission partners, we also thank the parents who accompany their children on-line.





## Family Catechesis: A Gift from God

Palo, Leyte

*As a response to Covid 19, the Archdiocese of Palo, Leyte, with about 500 Volunteer Catechists, encourages Catechists to do Family Catechesis in respective families. We hope to reach families through our Catechists in their homes, which have become the center of all activities during this pandemic. Nothing can stop us in proclaiming and sharing the goodness and love of God amidst this great time of uncertainties. A Catechetical guide based on Sunday Gospel Reading is now available at the official website, ARCHDIOCESEOFPALO.ORG - Sr Benita Esguerra, FdCC-*



At the home of Maria Violeta Daylo, with her sisters, Jolina and Jelina and nieces Jaica and Jillian, attentively engaged in doing Family Catechesis. Violeta (center) is a member of the staff of Our Lady of the Assumption Parish, Tanauan, Leyte and the Catechists' Vicariate Coordinator of Palo.

Family catechesis is a gift from God to the Archdiocese of Palo Catechetical Ministry as a way of responding to Covid 19. It has answered my question if I can still do something as a Catechist during this time of pandemic. For 20 years of sharing God's Word in school, I realized that I had failed doing it in my own family. But now, ARADO's Family is joining in my journey as a catechist. May Alcala Arado is my niece who married a seaman, Jacinto "Jun-jun" Arado, Jr. from Southern Leyte. Because of Covid 19, Junjun is at home with his wife and 4 children namely Josh, Jam, Venice, Jathalie ( a 2- week old baby) and Princess LJ Alcala (May's niece). Princess and Josh are High school students while Jam & Venice are elementary students. Their home is just few meters away from my home.

The module provided is new to me so it took some time before I started. At first, it was really difficult since the family members are of different age levels unlike in a classroom. I strongly believe that this is God's work and I'm just His instrument. So, in my prayer I surrender everything to God and ask for guidance through the Holy Spirit.

God was with us since after the first module the children became excited as to when will be the next schedule. It is done on weekdays but since blended learning classes started we do it on weekends. Family members are interactive since they keep on asking questions and respond quickly to questions about the Gospel read.

After a month, Josh & Princess already knew how to open the Bible and

look for the Gospel reading. Princess became interested to know how to pray the rosary and asked if she can go with me to church for Misa de Gallo. Josh, being the eldest, learned to be responsible when his mama left home due to giving birth to the youngest child last Nov 24. My niece, May, realized the advantage and need of offering their financial crises and challenges to God through prayers.

*-Josephine C. Rivera-  
Mahaplag, Leyte*



## Pusong Canossian, Connected through Hearts and Faith in the New Normal

This year has been a tough one for many of us. The manner of delivery of instruction may look different than the past years, nevertheless, we must not set aside formation given the unique circumstance that we are all in now. *Canossian Education will not be complete without the formation of the heart. The new normal has challenged the Canossian educators to become more creative and active in order to give the best possible education to our students.* The Lord provides many blessings through His grace and because of this, we will continue to be true to our school thrust this year: "Pusong Canossian, Connected through Hearts and Faith in the New Normal."



### Canossa College- San Pablo City

In the curriculum delivery, we have utilized the Frontlearners Learning Management System for online distance learning (ODL) and printed materials for modular distance learning (MDL) where lessons, tests, activity sheets, videos are made available to our students. The use of zoom by the teachers during the lesson/daily discussions and the availability of IT personnel for assistance and the warm accommodation of teachers to students' needs are guaranteed to ensure learning. Regular communications are observed between the student and his/her adviser, subject teachers, guidance counselor through class group chats, emails, video and phone calls. We continue to strengthen our partnership with parents in educating and forming their children in this new mode of learning.

When it comes to extracurricular activity, **Canossa-San Pablo** continues to hone the potential of its students. Out of more than 100 applicants, **Jedric Romero** was chosen as one of the 20 ambassadors from around the country for the project **SWAP (Sustainable Waste Action Program)**, a National Geographic young explorer's flagship project aiming to beat plastic pollution through upcycling. Tru-





**Jedryc Romero**  
 Founder and Executive Director  
 of KalikaSan Pablo



ly, the difficult situation doesn't hinder us to care for Mother Earth and to inspire young people to excel in this area. The Canossian Sisters who are involved in the ministry are very much part of the daily grind of the New

Normal. Some are in administrative positions where much of their decisions are realized because of coordination and support to one another. But what is worth mentioning is that, when it comes to the new normal thing, age does not matter as long as the sisters reach out to their class through zoom meetings. Sr. Lydia Colmenar, octagenarian, handles grade 8 class teaching Canossian Spirituality. Her passion to make Jesus known and loved has never diminished. It is in this difficult times that we have seen ourselves still immersed in the apostolate. We need to en-

sure that every opportunity is provided to the students and teachers in meeting and encountering the Lord. Virtual recollection, parent-child encounter, live stream mass, and CLE as core of the curriculum are opportunities to help our students find meaning in life in this pandemic time to be formed as Canossians with a heart. St. Magdalene of Canossa must be smiling for seeing every Canossian sister in school hopeful and joyful because the Lord our God has done great things for us, and we cannot keep it to ourselves; we will continue to share and be grateful for what we are!

Not only the Faculty members and the Administrators and the pupils and students have discovered the efficacy and effectiveness of digital technology and of on-line encounters to continue with the educational activities despite the pandemic.

Students like **Jedryc Romero** even found out and utilized this medium to reach-out to others in his extra-curricular activities and **Ecology advocacy**. His world and involvement widened as his creativity came to be honed for service..

Sr. Lina and some other Sisters followed a series of 4 speakers who gave talks during the Season of Creation last October 2020. In the fourth day, what a pleasant surprise! Talented and committed Jedryc was the fourth invited speaker!!!

The Foundress animatedly wrote: **"You cannot imagine how much consoled I felt when I heard of the union of hearts, and peace abiding among you."**

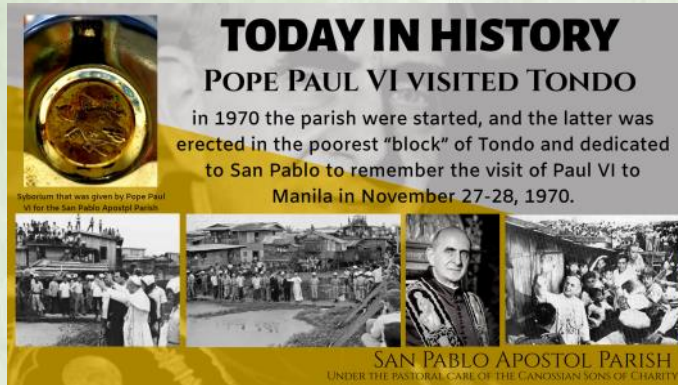
What do you think she would say when she sees Sisters of different ages and backgrounds helping each other to be proficient with the new media for their educative plans this year?

*Contributed by  
 Sr. Arlen Aragonas, FdCC*



DOON PO SA AMIN...

ONLY IN SAN PABLO APOSTOL PARISH-TONDO



On Dec. 17, 2016, I arrived in Tondo, my first pastoral community, accompanied by Sr. Glecya Manuyag, who commented that the time of Christmas festivities was a good time for adjusting to a new community. Indeed, that morning, there were many children and their parents ... It must be the Christmas party of the Day-care and Kinder pupils with their parents. There were other similar parties that followed: party for the T.B. patients, that of the complete Staff with volunteer health workers, then the Sisters and the stay-in Staff. But, Christmas Lunch was **most memorable**: it was held in the small parish hall in Magville where the Canossian Fathers resided. Present were Sisters Susan, Gie, Au, Dinnah and me; Frs. Carlo, Zaldy, Allan, Jordao and Rey; and almost 20 other Fathers and seminarians from New Manila and Marikina. What was unforgettable was not the special dishes prepared by the Fathers; not the 3 gallons of ice-cream brought by the sisters with a special dish. No! What was

striking for me was the presence of a **family of scavengers**. I have never been to a party like that! During the meal, only the mother and the 2 pre-teen daughters were seated on the one main table with some priests and sisters. The husband stayed on the street to guard their

cart. Mid-way lunch, the bigger daughter went down to exchange places with her father. It was that way for Easter, and the next Christmas and Easter when Fr. Carlo was parish priest.

Where else outside Sisters' chapels is the prayer to St. Magdalene and Mother Bakhita said? Yes, in the parish of San Pablo Apostol! Later, when September came, there was the Settenario and the reflections on the 7 Sorrows of Mary! On 2 parish Council meetings, there were suggestions to "deepen our knowledge about St. Magdalene of Canossa"! My first Feb. 8 Solemn Mass in Happy Land in honor of Bakhita made me feel proud to be a Canossian. About 15 small girls and boys, the choir, were singing and dancing with gusto, wearing white T-shirts screened with Bakhita's words:

*"The best thing for us is not what we consider best, but what the Lord wants of us".*

Going out after Mass, a procession was already promptly started by about 100 youth with blue T-shirts with the same words of Bakhita. Four young men had





the 80 cm. statue of Bakhita on their shoulders. I was teary-eyed with joy as I followed the procession.

If the Core Curriculum in the 4 schools is Religious Education/Formation, ask Fr. Allan what ministry is the core in SPA parish: he'll pinpoint the Oratorio. For Fr. Rey? Charity and Sustainability. In June 2019, the community of the Canossian Fathers declared a "No arancel policy", when at that time, only one other parish in Makati does the same. Ask Fr. Rey what his encouragement of the people is: "Thank God for your blessings, and share!" During the first month of the Pandemic, there had been 2 fires : in Happy Land victimizing thousands, and after about 3 weeks after, the fire with about a dozen families in Pritil. That time, the DSW gave breakfasts to all victims; the Fathers with the SSDM ministry, prepared lunch; the sisters, supper for 650 people during the first week and 450 people for 3 weeks thereafter, with Fr. Jonas and volunteers distributing for the Sisters and Staff who needed to cook the whole day for that 1 meal in the evening.

Before the March 15, 2020 Lockdown, there were Masses in the Sisters' convent on Fridays, Sept. 15 and Feb 8 with the patients. Then, they resorted to Masses online when from Mid-April to mid-May, when the Fathers and youth volunteers went door-to-door distributing Gift Certificates of P1,000. from a donor of Caritas-Manila. Then, there were distributions of packages in the depressed areas for the following months, together with sick calls and blessings . Dangerous! The Frs risked themselves as they did not just lock themselves in their new convent/church. The sisters asked them to resume rotation in going to the Sisters' weekday Masses only about this October. Six days a week, you

hear interspersed in the homily... "for us Canossians"... "living our charism asks of us"... "the poor entrusted to us by our Foundress"... I am still in awe with the resonance from the sharing of brothers who look up to Magdalene as mother also.



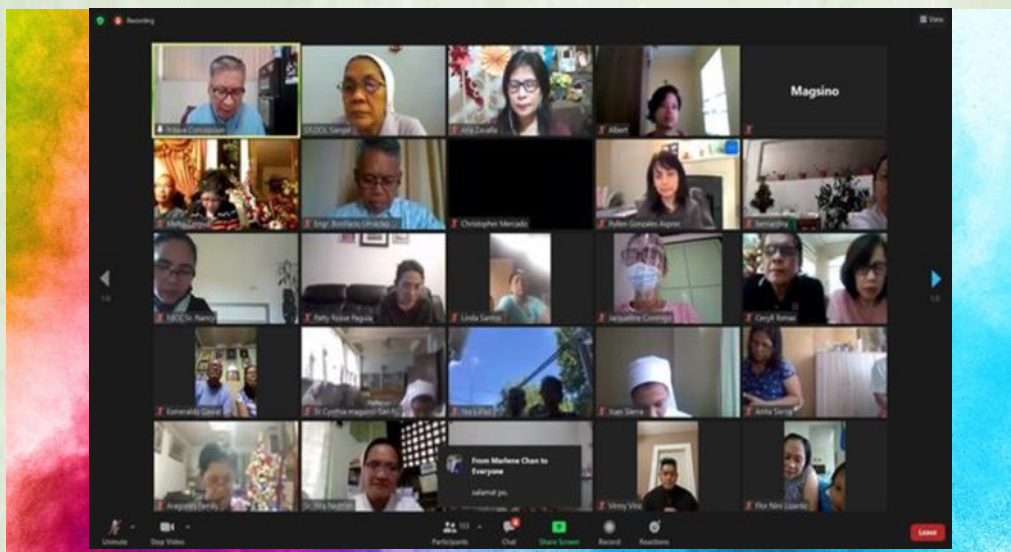
The Dec. 14, 2020 "SPAP@50 Pasasalamat, Pag-ibig, Misyon Virtual Concert" is a substantial summary of 5 decades of slow but sure growth of the parish, born in 1970 with the visit of Pope Paul VI. The opening song of the mixed lay and religious choir was all praise and thanks to a loving God. The dialogue among a group of former youth in the 80's recalled the way Tondo area was, the first PIME and Columban Fathers, the coming of the Canossians, the activities and ministries they did as young people. The 2 Emcees, alumni of the oratorio, also made the audience recall how the parish was in their time. Chosen young FdCC Sisters sang a vocation song. Three Canossian Fathers sang an OPM song which implied their life with and for God. The Seminarians sang beautifully their praises. Other gifted singers among the youth also sang beautifully of goodness, life, love and hope made meaningful by the background of actual photos of parish activities of helping the poor in different occasions!

*-Sr. Violeta.E.San Miguel, FdCC-*

“Staying Strong in Faith Amidst Pandemic”

Commission on Spiritual Exercises- 5<sup>th</sup> Ministry

*Online Family Advent recollection*



These were the challenging questions of our recollection master- Rev. Fr. David Tamos Concepcion to our family .

1. What if this pandemic is just a painful breaking to be a beautiful remaking ? Ano ang itinuturo ng Diyos?
2. What if God is telling you to dance under the rain rather than praying the storm to pass away?

Amidst the Pandemic, the 5<sup>th</sup> Ministry, The Commission on Spiritual Exercises made the first-time attempt to hold on-line Family Advent Recollection last Dec. 5, 2020. The theme of the said on-line Advent Recollection was “*Staying Strong in Faith as a Family amidst Pandemic.*” We cannot deny that the corona virus pandemic, which has plunged humanity into crises of uncertainties, insecurities, losses of job and worsening situation of our people, especially the poor, takes an important part of our Advent journey this year. Our own family members and the people in our ministries are not spared from facing the crises as they, too,





like the rest, are unexpectedly called to embrace this present phenomenon, hopefully, in the light of faith so that all of these challenges will turn into opportunities for growth in many aspects.

The Recollection Master's very meaningful, active and profound faith in God, with his gift of humor and practical wisdom, served as guide in our journey of faith. Fr. Dave led us to focus in seeing the essence of this pandemic, and to appreciate the meaning of our experiences, thus allowing us to see and realize what is truly important in our present realities and, most significantly, in our Christian Faith and that is, not to forget God, the source of all life and blessings. This will in turn lead us to intensify our prayer and sacramental lives and to strengthen our relationships with our respective families, even with virtual means. YES! This Sacred Space that we experienced with our family members was so special because there was a manifestation of genuine and strong unity despite the physical distancing observed. There were 138 families and 58 sisters who graced with their loving presence this first- ever Zoom Sisters' Family recollection.

We were reminded to be always grateful and to make the mission alive - to live in the joy and mercy of God, to always give what is best in us, remembering that all come from the goodness of God, therefore, making us "Better today than yesterday"...Fr. Dave's punch line. Sincerest thanks for each member of our Canossian families, for Sr. Lilia and her council and for the members of the 5<sup>th</sup> ministry. Thank you for responding to the -'new normal'' way of fulfilling the MORE of Magdalene in these trying times.

At the end of his talk, Fr. Dave reminded us again that we need to have the right attitude..."Do not allow this pandemic to kill us". "We are in a mission...we keep the joy that God has given us." "**How to stay strong?** ...have the right attitude. To change our life is to change our attitude... Our attitude is the librarian of our past, speaker of our present and prophet of our future."

After the talk of Fr. Dave, he gave his blessing for each member of the families.



We believe that a big grace was received by our families in this opportunity to have a joyful and deep reflection, and sharing. Thanks for the passion of the sisters that they were able to accompany their families in their video chat online. Indeed, relationships were deepened and lives became more purposeful and meaningful. To God be all the glory!

**-Sr. Violeta Calingasan, FdCC-  
Ministra, 5th Ministry**

## TAGPUAN:1.0

**Tagpuan is coming together with a purpose.** On November 27, 2020, the members of the Canossa Educative Community-Calamba City had attended Tagpuan:1.0 “Preserving Our Mental Health While Balancing Our Work-Home Responsibilities”. Tagpuan:1.0 was the first ever Webinar organized by the newly elected officers of the Catholic Education Association of the Philippines (CEAP), Region IV-A CALABARZON in 2020. Indeed, it was timely since the whole world was in chaos due to the Pandemic that shook the whole world. Thus, mental well-being is a need in order to move on and cope with the situation. By and large, we became uncertain about the future, of fear, of sickness, of death, of isolation and of loneliness. We were all affected by this pandemic to a certain extent and in various manner. Thus, aside from keeping alive our faith, we need infor-

mation where we are helped to maintain our well-being/sanity in the midst of this seemingly dark period of humanity.

The program started at 8:30 AM, with the following activities;

Pambansang Awit  
CEAP Theme Song

Opening Prayer by the Glee Club of Canossa Academy, Lipa City, headed by Miss Laila Villostas

Welcome Remarks and Message by Sr. Luzviminda G. Mojica, FdCC, currently the directress of Canossa Academy, Calamba City and the newly elected Chairperson of CEAP, REGION IV-A CALABARZON

Introduction of the Resource Speaker by Rev. Fr. Eugene Dominic Hechanova of Minor Seminary of St. Frances De Sales, Calle Arsobispado, Lipa City

Session with our Resource Speaker Dr. Gia Grace Sison wherein she presented to us the model called: **PERMA MODEL OF WELL-BEING** by Martin Seligman, 2015

**P - Positive Emotions**

are essential part of our well-being. Happy people look back on the past with gladness, look into the future with hope and enjoy, thus they cherish the present.

**E -Engagement**

when we focus on doing the things we truly enjoy and care about, we begin to engage completely with the present moment and enter the state of being known as “flow”.

**R Relationships**

No man is an island. Every





one needs someone, we enhance our well-being and share it with others by building strong relationships with the people around us, our families, friends, co-workers and neighbours

**M Meaning**

We are at our best when we dedicate time to something greater than ourselves. This might be religious faith, community work, family, politics, a charity, a professional creative goal

**A Accomplishment**

Everyone needs to win some times. To achieve a well-being and happiness, we must be able to look back on our lives with a sense of accomplishment, and say “I did it and I did it well”.

After presenting the PERMA MODEL for Well-Being, Dr. Gia Grace Sison had

a couple of suggestions to the participants which she herself is practicing; in order to become resilient during Pandemic Time:

- Take Vitamins, at least once a day
- Make a Gratitude Visit to someone
- Pray the Serenity Prayer
- Practice Self-Compassion and Self-Kindness
- Maintain Social Connections
- Build and Create your Space
- Celebrate Life!

Open Forum was part of the activities after the session, wherein some questions were raised. The activity ended with Closing Remarks from Mr. Don Timothy Buhain of REX BOOKSTORE, Partner Company of CEAP.

As a whole, the participants were happy about our TAGPUAN:1.0 and are looking forward to the next Tagpuan.

KUDOS and thank you to the organizers.

*-Sr. Noemi T. Mendoza, FdCC-*

**PUSONG  
CANOSSIAN  
C.A.R.E.S.**

In response the needs of our brothers and sisters who were badly affected by the typhoons that hit our country, the Educative Community of Canossa School, Sta. Rosa initiated a donation drive called “*PUSONG CANOSSIAN C.A.R.E.S.*”



After posting the donation drive, most of the students as well as their parents showed their willingness to reach-out to our affected brothers and sisters. They brought in-kind donations such as mineral water, canned goods, used clothes, rice, toiletries, face masks, used towels, blankets, coffee, and noodles, as well as sent cash donations.



On November 27, 2020, the relief goods were distributed to the families residing in Sitio Pantay, Brgy. Tala, San Andres, Quezon.

“Life must go on!” This is what we realized after the residents shared their personal reflections on their experiences due to the typhoons. Their simple living led them to be contented with what they have. The joy that we saw in their eyes told us that they really feel the presence of Jesus in their lives. And that is the mission of each one of us: *To Make Jesus known and Loved.*



**Brgy. Caingin**

Another set of relief operation was scheduled on December 15, 2020 in Pulong Candy, Brgy. Caingin, Sta. Rosa City, Laguna. There are 130 families residing in the place that is still affected by the flood. They went to the evacuation center during the typhoon and temporarily stayed there for a week. Even if the place is not yet safe to live in they do not have a choice but to go back to their respective homes.

**-Amielle Joy Saniel-Fontanilla, LPT - Bakhita Staff**

Our “Pondong Pusong Canossian,” from the savings of our students, and yearly “Bigay Pusong”, a project of PTA, will be given to the victims of the typhoons in Brgy. Balaba and Mendez, Polangui in Albay, Bicol.





## Children's Dreams... Amidst the Pandemic

“The Son of Man has come to search out and save what was lost.” Luke 19:10

Tiktok dance, she loves it! Making moves to the left and to the right, she is graceful. Moving her hands from side to side, she looks nice. Shaking her head slowly, she stuns. Curling her lips, she has a remarkable smile. This girl is so sweet for a thirteen-year-old, she is also simple and innocent.

News came that the children in the community where she belongs to are complaining about her. She was getting the food of other children which they all received from their visitors. She hit one child with her long arms and another with her hands. Worst of all is when she pointed a knife to one of her companions and nearly wounded the latter's neck. Another incident was when she got angry with another companion; she pushed the table and turned it down, injuring two children. Almost all children were complaining about her and the harm she inflicted on them.

How can a very sweet girl do that?

She is a wounded soul because as an infant she was given by her own mother to a friend since she did not know who her father was. The adopted mother was kind to her but the rest of her relatives living in the house made her a helper in the house. She said she would do all the household chores from washing the dishes to sweeping the floor to cleaning the bathroom and comfort room to feeding the dogs and whatever they wanted her to do. When she did not do what they asked from her, they physically punished her from spanking her feet to banging her head on the wall. Worst still was when one of them



put a hot iron on her left hand and it left a mark. Remembering that sad and painful day, she said a small towel was put on her mouth so that no one can hear her cry. She underwent a heavier ordeal when she was sexually assaulted by a man for many days who got her drunk first before molesting her. She was nine years old then. Just recently, she experienced again the same ordeal from another man who is the partner of her biological mother. She moved in with her biological mother two months ago because her adoptive mother died. After the incident, she escaped and hid in the house of her friends.

It was the saddest story so far from all the children I encountered for the past five months. One is a ten-year old boy who was a victim of deceit by a father who murdered his mother. The father made the child believe that his mother died because she slipped on a banana peel while carrying a bucket of water seven days after giving birth to him. The other is a nine-year old boy who was a victim of physical and sexual abuse, engaged in smoking and drinking, and was exposed to drugs. Another one is a six-year old girl who was into begging and was caught by the DSWD people and brought to Manila Reception Youth Center. And the last is a six-year old boy who was beaten by

his own father and a concerned citizen saw and reported the incident to the policemen.

These children are now in temporary shelter in three different agencies amidst the difficulty of placing them there because of restrictions imposed by the government and private agencies due to the pandemic. They are provided with a safe shelter and a good environment, are now clothed properly and have healthy food in every meal. Their psychosocial needs are being attended to as well as their spiritual needs. They are also personally guided and assisted and protected particularly when they have a case to be filed in court.

So I am inspired to compose this prayer: *Thank you Lord God, for the love you give to the children living in the streets. Thank you for letting your Son come, search and save them through this group of people whom you made as your in-*

*struments amidst the danger of the pandemic. Thank you for making me part of the team so that these children may be found and now placed in appropriate residences. Thank you also for giving me my Sisters in the Community who listened well and prayed much and even offered what they have like some financial help and goods in their desire to reach out to those children. I hope and pray for what is best for each of these children who have their own dreams: for the thirteen year-old girl who wishes to become a nurse to help the sick; for the ten-year old boy who wants to own a building with a restaurant, a chapel, a library and his own house; for the nine-year old boy who wants to become a soldier to help the people; for the six-year old girl who dream of becoming a police woman to help the people in DSWD; and the six-year old boy who simply wants to be become a bulldozer driver so that he can buy things for his mother and siblings. Most of all, thank You for allowing me to experience Your love*

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***Embracing the “New Normal”  
St. Magdalene of Canossa  
Community Service Center –  
Lipa***

One thing that is certain in this time of Pandemic, we know that adjusting to change can be challenging but the mission to “*Make Christ Known and Loved*” will continue!

The changes have been taking place so quickly that most of us have been caught off guard. We are all trying to adapt to this new reality in the hope that the Pandemic will end soon, although it is impossible to predict how long it will last

and what consequences it will have for all. In these days of crisis and home confinement, together with the sisters and parents of our Sancta Infanzia, IGP and Mabuhay Scholars, we discussed and discerned the ways on how are we going to cope with the challenges posed by the Pandemic and continue their faith formation. Through the grace of the Holy Spirit, we were inspired to try the possibility of having Family Gospel Sharing which will be done in their homes together with the whole family. The sisters will provide the simplified Sunday Gospel reflection and guide questions for sharing (BEC Style) through Facebook Page. Sr. Angelita Dimaculangan, FdCC





availed herself to give a short Parents' formation on the apostolic exhortation by Pope Francis entitled "*Amoris Laetitia*" addressing the pastoral care of families every First Saturday of the month before they receive the allowance of the scholars. We also tried the possibility of having Online Formation and Catechism with the Scholars every third Saturday of month.

We continue to urge parents and scholars to find other ways to learn more about and deepen their faith as well as their devotion to our Blessed Mother Mary through praying the Rosary together with the whole family.

*Sr. Erica Noreen U. Tinio, FdCC*



## To Be a Blessing to Others

The Filipino people had their eyes and hearts fixed on those areas affected by the super typhoon Rolly, the preceding cyclones in October, and another strong typhoon named Ulysses in November 2020. These typhoons left thousands of damaged or destroyed homes, farms, businesses, schools and health facilities. Millions of people are living in severely affected areas, less than a hundred people died due to the typhoons, and thousands were displaced by the calamities.

In light of the extensive destruction and damage left by the typhoons, the Filipino people readily extended their help to those who are in need of assistance and the people of Lipa were some of those who have shown eagerness to reach out to our brothers and sisters in need. Inspired by the call to bless others, Canossa Academy Lipa launched its Donation Campaign entitled

## Lipa Community

"Canossians: Called to Bless Others" on November 16. The Canossian students, parents, alumni, friends, and family members of the educative community readily gave their in-kind and cash donations in an effort to put together what they can and share them to our needy brothers and sisters.

As a result, on November 28, the educative community personally gave to the residents of Brgy. BusokBusokan in San Narciso, Quezon 312 bags of relief goods and turned over cash amounting to



P200,000.00 to the Canossian sisters working at the Diocese of Gumaca in collaboration with the Diocesan Social Action Center to assist our brothers and sisters displaced by typhoon Rolly in rebuilding their houses. The educative community was represented by the Canossian sisters, parents, lay administrators, teachers, staff and maintenance.

Prior to the distribution of these relief goods, the educative community represented by the Canossian sisters, parents, lay administrators, coaches, staff and maintenance also participated in the Marikina Clean Up Drive on November 20. The amount of P30,000.00 was also entrusted to the Canossian fathers for the families of Tondo affected by typhoon Ulysses.

Our Mother Foundress, St. Magdalene, have taught us that *“there is no greater act of Charity than that of working together so that all may love God and one of the greatest means of making Him loved is making Him known”*. The

sharing of blessings by the Lipeños and the family and friends of the educative community have shown us that they are making our God loved by making Him known through the act of charity, generosity and kindness they have demonstrated in the aftermath of the calamities.

Thank you, Canossians, Canossa educative community, our dear friends, alumni and relatives. May our gracious Lord be pleased by your effort to reach out to our brothers and sisters by granting you the graces you are most in need of! Thank you for being a blessing to others!



Third Ministry

The Swiss Cheese Concept

Lately, in the ongoing conversation about how to defeat the coronavirus, experts have made reference to the “Swiss cheese model” of pandemic defense.

The metaphor is easy enough to grasp: Multiple layers of protection, imagined as cheese slices, block the spread of the new coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, the virus that





causes Covid-19. No one layer is perfect; each has holes, and when the holes align, the risk of infection increases. But several layers combined — social distancing, plus masks, plus hand-washing, plus testing and tracing, plus ventilation, plus government messaging — significantly reduce the overall risk. Vaccination will add one more protective layer.

“Pretty soon you’ve created an impenetrable barrier, and you really can quench the transmission of the virus,” said Dr. Julie Gerberding.

“But it requires all of those things, not just one of those things,” she added. “I think that’s what our population is having trouble getting their head around. We want to believe that there is going to come this magic day when suddenly 300 million doses of vaccine will be available and we can go back to work and things will return to normal. That is absolutely not going to happen fast.”

Rather, Dr. Gerberding said to expect to see “a gradual improvement in protection, first among the highest need groups, and then more gradually among the rest of us.” Until vaccines are widely available and taken, she said, “we will need to continue masks and other common-sense measures to protect ourselves and others.”

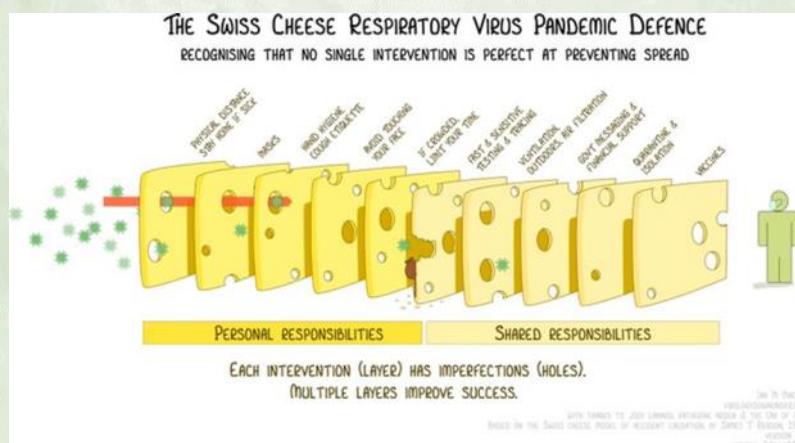
Bill Hanage, an epidemiologist at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, retweeted an infographic rendering of the Swiss cheese model, noting that it included

“things that are personal \*and\* collective responsibility — note the ‘misinformation mouse’ busy eating new holes for the virus to pass through.”

“One of the first principles of pandemic response is, or ought to be, clear and consistent messaging from trusted sources,” Dr. Hanage said in an email. “Unfortunately the independence of established authorities has been called into question, and trust needs to be rebuilt as a matter of urgency.” A catchy infographic is a powerful message, he said, but ultimately requires higher-level support.

The Swiss cheese concept originated with James T. Reason, a cognitive psychologist, now a professor emeritus at the University of Manchester, England, in his 1990 book, “Human Error.” A succession of disasters — including the Challenger shuttle explosion, Bhopal and Chernobyl — motivated the concept, and it became known as the “Swiss cheese model of accidents,” with the holes in the cheese slices representing errors that accumulate and lead to adverse events.

**Sr. Mila Reyes, FdCC**



Life goes on and we  
make the best of what  
God makes available for  
us!

#### LAY CANOSSIAN Updates

Life goes on and we make the best of what God makes available for us! We were able to organize and push through with an on-line Lay Canossians' Recollection and Renewal of Promise last September 12, 2020 which lasted for three hours with 69 attendees.

The Recollection was facilitated by Fr. Mateo L. Suarez with the theme: "Ecce Mater Tua" ("Behold your Mother"). He said that Mary, the icon of discipleship, participated in the plan of God to save humankind. In the Paschal Mystery of Christ, she was the first faithful disciple of Jesus with the apostles in the birth of the church. Fr. Matt also mentioned the three basic costs of discipleship in her life such as self-denial, the cross and suffering, and the following of Jesus. For Lay Canossians, the cross is not suffering only but a symbol of the greatest love of Jesus, and we are called to share this experience, the Greatest Love, through simple acts of love especially during this time of pandemic.

Personal reflection and sharing followed, after which the Mass which was presided by Rev. Fr. Ralph Santos FdCC and Rev. Fr. Mateo Suarez, FdCC, was celebrated. In his homily, Fr. Ralph stressed on God as the fountain of mercy and that Mary is a real mother who listens to and accompanies us. Before the Final Blessing, the Re-

#### LAY CANOSSIAN ASSOCIATION SONS and DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY – PNG

newal of Promise was done simultaneously by the sixty-nine (69) members.

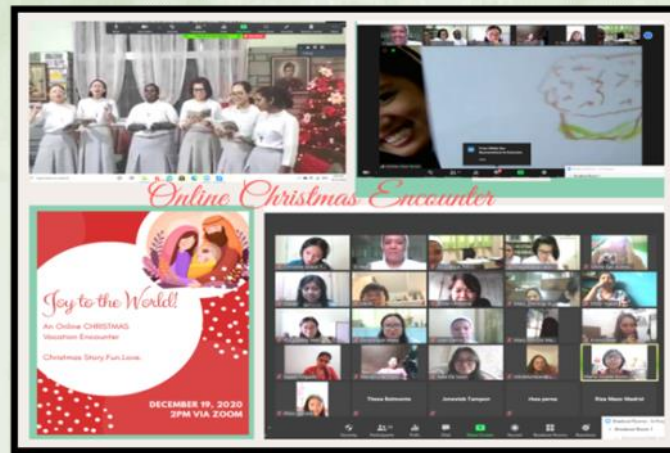
There were eighty-four (84) members who were not able to renew on this date due to poor internet connection and had their Renewal on different dates as arranged by the local units- some face to face and some, thru Messenger. The membership as of this date totals one hundred fifty-three (153) from Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao and Papua New Guinea. It is worth mentioning that the Lay Canossians handled by the Canossian Fathers come from Bataan, Marikina and Tondo.

May the Greatest Love continue to grow in each of us throughout the year. Greetings for a hopeful, peaceful, blessed and joyful Christmas to all!

*-Elvira Ocampo-  
Lay Canossians National Coordinator*







At the start of this apostolic year, we were motivated by the Interim Provincial Project to see colors in our present “new normal” situations. In the emergence of enormous ways of connecting with people, we remain steadfast in building relationships with authentic care and love for others especially those we meet virtually. We value people and their journey, praying for our brothers and sisters who are marginalized, depressed, unfortunate and helpless. We celebrate every miracle of daily life with the awareness of God’s presence in our midst, in our struggles and successes.

My heart is filled with gratitude for God Who is kind and gracious. He allowed us to meet ladies who desire to know their purpose in life and vocation. Every month since July 2020, we meet ladies via zoom to share to them about God and His love for them. The ladies were very responsive in sharing their experiences of how God has been guiding them in their desire to know, deepen and live their voca-

tion in life. Each on-line vocation encounter was filled with memories of hope, faith and love.

Last December 19, 2020, we gathered via Zoom to celebrate the joy of Christ’s Birth. Our young sisters- Sr. Joan Sierra, Postulant Betty Wah, Novices Marjorie Laurio, Theresa Zhang, Evelyn Elyas, Anita Vallence, Magdalena Nway Lay and Jessica Trieu made the event fun-filled and meaningful. Postulant Betty made the ladies thrilled with her on-line Christmas quiz and Christmas drawing charade, while Sr. Joan shared the vocation story of Mary as wife of St. Joseph and mother of Jesus. The Novices shared their music video, covering the song “Do You Hear What I Hear?” a song originally sung by Jose Marie Chan. They also facilitated the closing prayer. The On-line Christmas Encounter was not only games and songs, the participants were able to pray as we facilitated the Imaginative

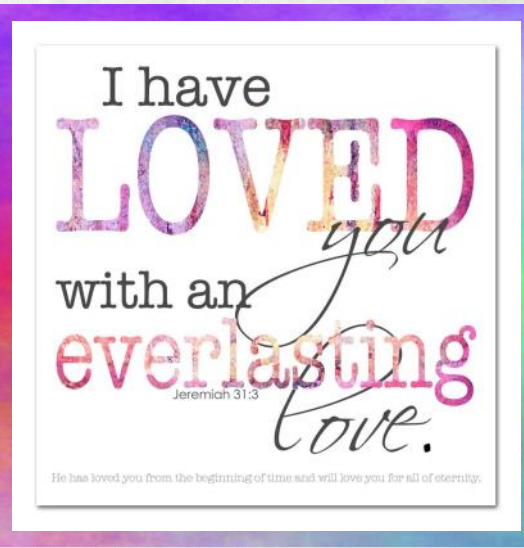
Prayer using the Gospel story of the Birth of Jesus. The participants were divided into breakout rooms where they shared their prayer experiences. Most of the ladies were able to pray using their imagination. Many of them shared that they felt rejection and sadness as they see Mary and Joseph with nowhere to stay in Bethlehem but in the stable. But as they themselves enter the stable, seeing the Babe, they felt peace and the assurance that God is truly and always with us. These reflections gave the ladies the joy that despite the challenges they are experiencing, they will continue to rely on the love and guidance of God in their daily life. It was truly a Joy-to-the-World experience!

Another opportunity was provided to ladies who regularly attended the monthly online vocation encounter. Last December 26-28, 2020, eventhough the Sisters are in Christmas Home Visit, they

generously gave themselves for the Vocation Enrichment Camp- An On-line Event. This Camp aims to equip the 10 ladies with knowledge and skills in different ways of praying. The ladies enthusiastically participated in the sessions: Centering Prayer, Prayer over Life Experiences and Journalling, Examination of Consciousness, Praying over the Scriptures and Imaginative Prayer.

I see colors everywhere...I see colors of green and yellow in the openness of ladies we have encountered during these on-line activities. I see colors of red and blue in the joy and generosity of the Sisters who facilitated the sessions and shared their vocation story. I see colors of pink, orange, and lavender in the abundance of God's graces and guidance. I see colors everywhere!

*-Sr. Elizabeth Asuncion, FdCC-*





## CVP@30: Patuloy na Tutugon sa Tawag ng Misyon



Year 2020 is an extra-ordinary year. First, Taal Volcano erupted. Batanguenos were shaken, for a while. Unfamiliar word became familiar: lockdown!! Then, after two months, Covid-19 shook the whole world. Lockdown from one country to another...one province to another... one home to another...Social distancing, face masks, face shields, alcohol, disinfectants become the important necessities for every household; Zoom and Google Meet were introduced and is now used to communicate virtually. But, despite the sudden changes because of this pandemic, CVP (Canossian Volunteers – Philippines) members remained true to their identity. The passion and zeal to serve and care for their brothers and sisters who are in need is always in their hearts; they used the social media to reach out to their fellow young people – to inspire one another, to encourage one another, to pray for one another and to reach out as much as they could to those who are in need.

The following are the initiatives made this year 2020...



January 26, 2020 : CVP in Action! Oplan Tulong Batangas # reliefoperations

### DURING PANDEMIC TIME:

No face- to- face gathering!  
We use our FB CVP page to keep the “fire burning to serve.” We think of different initiatives so that the CVP will always be involved...



## Throwback Photo Challenge



1. Magpost ng picture mo with any of the CVP initiated activities
2. Photo description
  - a. Start with: **Challenge Accepted Canossian Volunteers Philippines - CVP**
  - b. Kelan at san ang picture (Batch if possible)?
  - c. Anung activity o ginagawa mo?
  - d. Learnings, realization o reflection (relate to our current situation if possible)
3. Tag/mention at least 2 and maximum of 5 volunteers to do the same by accepting the challenge.
4. Use hashtags: **#CVPcares #CVPhotoThrowbackChallenge #iamCVP #iamVolunteer**

3. Winners will receive ₱1000.00 (convertible to cash or load) on May 1, 2020.  
1 winner for most number of likes  
7 winners on social media based on learning, realization o reflection





CVPs significant photos and their realizations posted..

September 8-14: SETTENARIO  
 Different batches from different communities participated in praying the 7 Sorrows and selected CVP were asked to share their reflections about each particular Sorrow of Mary.



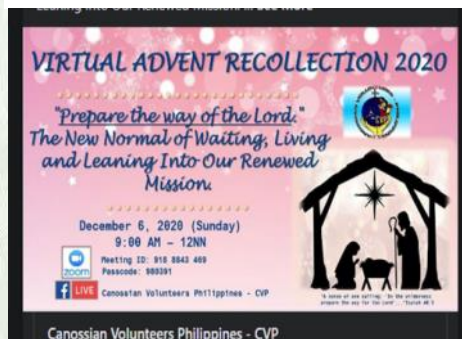
October 4, 2020: Knowing the Unknown: facilitated by Nathan Erfe (Psychologist)  
 The webinar was about prioritizing social connection during the crises and connect at an emotional level



October 31, 2020: Virtual Grand Rosary  
 Leading of praying the Rosary, reflections from different batches of CVP (including Canossian Sisters and Fr. Jeephy, FdCC)



December 6, 2020 : Advent Recollection  
 facilitated by Bro Mark Macaraeg



Year 2021, CVP is already 30 years.... Their theme: CVP@30: PATULOY NA TUTUGON SA TAWAG NG MISION is a continues invitation to keep alive their Christ-inspired spirit of volunteerism.





# REFLECTIONS



"And she shall bring forth a son,  
and thou shalt call his name JESUS:  
for he shall save his people from their sins."

Matthew (1:21)



May the miracle of Christmas touch your life!

## My Personal Panuluyan Experience (PPE)

*“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on our own understanding”  
(Proverbs 3:5)*

This is the passage and prayer that became a guide and reminder for me to be strong, calm, and most of all, to trust the Father Almighty amid the struggle and difficulty that I have experienced when I gave birth last September 2020. I am still coping with it until now.

If I were to relive my experience of giving birth, I can say that it was like what happened to Mary and Joseph when they were looking for a place for the Savior Who was about to be born. Like Mary and Joseph, we experienced pleading, begging, and hoping that there would be a hospital that would accept us.

Unfortunately, even the hospital where my Doctor is affiliated has turned down our request for admission. We were recommended to other hospitals, but due to their lack of incubators, we were also denied for the same reason. We have gone through more or less ten hospitals and had spent 4 hours searching before we could be finally admitted. This last hospital had also reservations before taking any patients in but they saw my urgent condition that the baby was about to come out. They had pity and immediately, I was ushered to the delivery room.

I can vividly recall that in that difficult agonizing moment, I really did not know where I drew out my strength. I



felt so discriminated while profusely bleeding. It was then when I remembered that many people were praying for me and that the grace of God was pouring on us..

If all the front-liners have their Personal Protective Equipment (PPE's) to protect themselves from the virus, I could say that for me, my protection was prayer... the prayer whispered by my co-workers, my friends and families. Above all, my most effective shield was the gift of faith and grace from above..

I still could not fathom the meaning of the suffering and pain I have undergone. But I was strongly reminded by the words of the prophet Isaiah 55:8-9 "...For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither your ways my ways says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the Earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."!

At times the ways and designs of the Lord are quite difficult to comprehend. At





times , there is an experience of pain. But holding on to Him, I had the solid assurance that He will never forsake us.

I also became convinced that entrusting myself and my family in God is essential, important and recommendable. To accept and believe in God's timing for everything does not depend on what I would like it to be. It has not easy to entrust everything to Him, but there's no other way except to let Him be a God and a Father to us and to allow Him to guide us in every step we make.

Lastly, as of now, though still in pain, I have high hope in my heart that all will be well. Thus, I say : "Lord, You are my light and my salvation; whom do I fear? *You are my life's refuge; of whom am I afraid?" (Psalm 27:1 – 2) . "Father, If you will take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."* Luke 22:42.

**-Mrs. Cecilia V. Quijana-  
CLE Teacher, Canossa  
School Santa Rosa**

## THE DIVINE INCARNATE WORD ,GIVES HISTORY ITS MEANING AND VALUE



*"When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a Woman". (Gal.4:4)*

The fullness of time coincides with the mystery of the Incarnation: "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us". The Word who in the beginning was with God, and through whom everything which exist was made; the Word in whom was life, the life which was the light of men (John 1: 3),. The " little light " of Bethlehem, the light that illumines all those who are standing " in the shadow of death, is the first born of all creation" (Col.1:1) .

It is in the fullness of time, that the eternal Word gives the magnificent MEANING and unique VALUE to the momentous event of History which took place in Bethlehem two thousand years ago., by accepting the condition of a creature.

Our faith teaches us that Christianity has its starting point in the Incarnation of the Word. This means that in the very beginning the Creator reveals Himself to a rational and free being as the God of the Covenant, of friendship and of joy. He is a God Who comes in person to speak to man Himself. He came not because man is seeking for God, but because God in his absolute righteousness speaks to man

Himself, and shows him the path by which He may be reached. Thus, the mystery of the Incarnation, according to revelation and to the faith of the Church, has salvific meaning..

St. Pope John Paul II, in his first encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis*, reminded us that by the Incarnation of the Son of God, the Word of God becoming flesh and dwelling among us in the setting of history, has united himself with every human being elevating, human nature to an incomparable dignity.

Eventually, man is also subject to the moral norm which regulates the use of freedom. He is subject to the laws by which the Creator has established, the essential order of the world. Hence, the question: "Will man confirm the fundamental order of creation in his conduct and recognize the truth that he himself is created, - the truth of the dignity that belongs to him as the image of God, but also the truth of his creaturely limitation?"

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil recalls symbolically the



absolute limit which man, as a creature, must recognize and respect. Man depends on the Creator and is subject to the laws which the Creator established in the world, in the order of its existence. (*Ordo Rerum*) Unfortunately, Revelation tells us that through human disobedience, man failed the test.

“The woman saw how beautiful the tree was and how good its fruit would be to eat,

and she thought how good it is to be wise, so she took some of the fruit and ate it:

then she gave some to her husband and he also ate it. “(Gen.3;6)

Sin is the obscure reality diffused in the world created by God. It lies at the root of all the evil in man, and, one can also say, in what is created. It besets and alienates the human person. As a consequence of sin, the whole of creation groans in tears for the divine gift of redemption. The mystery of redemption then, is joined in the reality of man’s sin and within the setting of history. (Catechesis on the creed, Pope John Paul II -JESUS Son and Savior)

The “sad news” of the fallen man however, is set within the context of the truth of redemption. The Psalmist is right to declare that the “Salvation of the just” embraces the riches of the divine life that Christ has brought to humanity...He became man, “for us and for our salvation”

As the image of the invisible God, Christ is the perfect man who has restored to the children of Adam the divine likeness which has been deformed by sin. (2<sup>nd</sup> Vat Council)

By virtue of our baptism, we believe that Christ Jesus, true God and true man, is the Lord of History, He is the “Alpha and the Omega” ( Rev. 1:8; 2-6) the beginning and the end. Jesus is the recapitulation of eve-





rything, (Eph 1:10) the fulfillment of all things in God and of his glory.

What an amazing mystery of grace! , Just as God in Christ speaks to humanity of himself, so in Christ all humanity and the whole creation speak of itself to God.

St. Irenaeus, convinced by the unsurpassable wisdom of God, and the unalterable dignity bestowed on man, freeing him from the bondage of sin exclaimed;” Man fully alive, is the epiphany of God’s glory!

The psalmist too, in great awe before the grandeur of God acclaims: “what is mortal man that you be mindful of him, the son of man that you should care for him? Yet you have made him little less than the angels, you have crowned him with glory and honor.” (Psalm 8)

The mystery of the Incarnation attests that God goes in search of man, to seek him out, because he is His special possession by virtue of a choice made in love. He loves him eternally in the Word and wishes to raise him in Christ to the dignity of an adopted son. (cf.Preparing for the Year 2000)

The three distinct parables of the” Lost Son, the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin ” in the Gospel of Luke touch us to core of our being . In man’s unworthiness, the Incarnate Son, Jesus , made us experience the gentle “ owning”, and hearing His triumphant and merciful words to man “ you are mine” ! You belong to me!”

Thus, In the divine person of the Incarnate Word , man in whom the Father’s merciful plan of salvation was designed and accomplished, obtained his full realization and fulfillment.

In conclusion, we can say then, that the greatest meaning and value given to the history of all humankind, can be traced and seen through the transpar-

ent veil of TRUTH and of LOVE of the holy BABE in the manger, clothed with seeming fragility and uttered helplessness. It is like gazing at the first streaks of dawn shining so brightly upon the whole shadowed earth . God in His gentleness became one with the one loved... that was Incarnation. His coming in human time, is, in fact, eternity, indeed!

May our journey towards the great event of our salvation, excellently planned by the unfathomable love of the Almighty Father through His Son, the Divine Word-made-Flesh ” and the Holy Spirit , be full of hope, of peace , and exuberant joys. May it be a genuine realization, the spring time of our renewed faith marked by undefeated enthusiasm even in this time of extreme helplessness, that is challenged all the more by the grief, anxieties, and unspeakable upheavals of the terrorizing monster of the pandemic, and the almost unbearable successive catastrophes ushered by the natural calamities .

*- Sr. Pretz Jaurigue, FdCC-*



## My Spiritual Journey in the Midst of the Covid-19 Pandemic

My name is Novice Jessika Trieu and I am in the second year of Novitiate formation. I am half-Vietnamese and half Chinese living in Australia. Initially, I thought this Covid-19 was not so serious. I was hopeful that soon, this virus would come to pass and our lives will resume back to normal. One month passed, and another and till now, the dark tunnel is still long though flickers of light can be seen. The active cases continue to escalate rapidly throughout the world. This is really a moment to deepen my faith in view of last year's Provincial Project's theme on *hoping against hope with Mary*. I witnessed how praying in the community and the Eucharistic adoration have helped me to trust in God that He is listening to our prayers despite the increasing rate of infections. The weekly 12-hour Eucharistic adoration for an end to Covid-19 has united us as a community to pray in solidarity with the whole world especially with the family members of the sisters and mission partners who get infected.

As life on the world outside the Novitiate slowed down due to this virus, so did our Novitiate time schedule which enabled me to spend more time in prayers and reflective integration on new self-discoveries. The Lord is always at work in forming me whether it may be intellectually, human development or in our

Canossian spirituality and Charism. Our formator has doubled the Canonical lessons to help us deepen our understanding on the evangelical counsels. As she prepared my companions for their apostolic exposure, she enrolled me to study on-line a modular class on the Psalms. As weeks passed, I really thank God for speaking to me through the psalms; especially when He draws me to meditate on the Sunday's responsorial psalms.

But even before the pandemic, I am already thanking God every day for sending me to the Philippines for my Novitiate formation. It is a blessing and a *new cross* for me to experience living in a multi-cultural community with diverse personalities and temperaments which profoundly helped me discover more my true self. As I wrestle with these growths, I noticed that I was lacking in faith and kept doubting my self-worth of being called to this radical way of life of following the Lord. I began to imitate various personalities which I found attractive because they had characteristics that were lacking in me. Slowly, I began to lose myself. The Scriptures where Jacob wrestled with God in a dream gave me hope to persist in asking Jesus many questions of who am I and what does it mean to be here in Formation. Until the week when I studied Psalm 24, there was a revelation to grow beyond the effects of dependence on others especially in trying to keep the peace, avoiding confrontations, seeking for people's approval, affections and affirmation which I discovered were my strong needs.

Have you ever heard of the kroom bird? This bird is unique in a sense because when the sun rises, it turns into many colors. As I reflected on this psalm in the context of my current life, I realized at times I have become the *kroom*





*bird* by putting on other people's faces to the point that I cannot recognize who I am (my values, characters and ideas) anymore. That time when my intention was to "seek the face of God" in others, I failed to see the image of God and His gifts working within me. These moments are precious "like gold tested in fire" which helped me into an inward wrestling with God alone as I face my authentic self. This spiritual moments of conversion draw me closer to love, and to appreciate the essence and beauty of the psalms as the Lord let me encounter Him in biblical poetry especially when I see my life experiences resonate with the psalms.

Even though being in the Novitiate Formation is so challenging with many episodes of the Paschal mystery, it has helped me to be one with Christ Crucified as I undergo upside down changes in my life. For me, the best thing in the Novitiate is when the Scriptures come alive,

especially when I have done many mistakes in which I learned a lot, and experience God's merciful love through the Scriptures.

*"Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit."* I thank God for the opportunity to discern religious life and to sense the presence of God in my formator. Here, I see patience, love, understanding, forgiveness, courage and the wisdom of God in action. She has given her best to form me according to God's will accompanied by her prayers for me. Truly, a woman who loves without measure. Jesus is truly alive and with me in my Formation journey and the psalms teach me to use them in praising God and trusting in Him every moment of my life. He assures me *"I am with you always, until the end of the age"*.

**-Novice Jessika Trieu-**



## Behind the Mask....

Damages and destruction of every sort, floods, and worst, deaths were seen in the aftermath of the typhoons Quinta, Rolly and Ulysses that created great havocs in different parts of the country particularly in Region V, Region IV, Region III and II in the last quarter of this year. I saw and heard this news in different media platforms and I was moved with much pity for the people who experienced it. Never did I think that I would be given the opportunity to see these realities.

December 18, 2020, I joined the Outreach Program of the sisters and novices of San Juan community in Brgy. Ibabang Yuni, one of the barangays in Mulanay, Quezon ( Diocese of Gumaca) that had been greatly affected by the typhoons. While travelling going to the area, I had this little fear inside me because of the virus. As we went along, I became more scared, no more of the virus but of the broken roads we were passing by with many signposts that say: *Warning: road depression ahead*. It was drizzling when we got there. I cannot imagine the people living near the landslide, or near the shore with high and big waves and floods. I cannot imagine the pain of losing the little



possessions that they have: their houses, their source of living, and worst, the loss of their loved ones because of the typhoon. With these thoughts in my mind, I was expecting to see faces which reveal hardships, devastation and losses for they have all the reasons to feel that way, **but I was wrong** because behind their mask is a face of a person with faith, full of hope and gratitude. For they believe that God never leaves them, that each new morning is a new beginning, and that they are enough reason to be thankful and hopeful. They uttered grateful words to us as we handed them packed goods. Yes, their faces were covered even if there is no infection yet in their place, but their eyes revealed their faith that no matter what happens, there is a “rainbow after the rain”. This short encounter with them filled me with awe and wonder at the ever-present God whose love for us is beyond measure, beyond understanding.

In this life full of uncertainties and broken roads, these people taught me to remain hopeful, grateful and see things in the light of faith. Before the day ended, all I can say was,  
 “Salamat po, Lord!” Thank You, Lord!

-Jena C. Virgo (CVP)-





The Crib of the  
Word Made  
Flesh-  
MERCY,  
POVERTY  
AND  
HUMILITY



Joy springs up spontaneously whenever I see the children of the poor rushing inside the parish church toward the direction of the beautiful and creatively prepared Belen. They are overwhelmed with joy and fascination as they behold the whole scene before them. What could they be saying to Jesus, I wonder!

The origin of the Christmas Crib? It is found in the details of Jesus' birth as related in the Gospel. The crib at the grotto of Bethlehem is the portrayal of the mystery of God's unconditional love revealed in poverty and simplicity. "Mary gave birth to her first-born Son and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there is no place for him in the inn". The nativity scene is like a living Gospel rising up from the pages of the Scripture.

Pope Francis, in his apostolic letter entitled "ADMIRABILI SIGNUM" highlights the importance of displaying a nativity scene in the home as well as in public places during Advent and the Christmas season. This apostolic letter was released during a visit to the site where St Francis created the first nativity scene.

**How did St Francis invent the first Nativity Scene?**

After visiting Bethlehem, Francis wanted to imitate the humble setting of Christ's birth. In 1221, St. Francis had a novel idea. To celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Poverello (the poor one) wanted to recreate the experience of the first Christmas. He did this, not with statues inside the Church, but with the animals in a humble hilltop grove. Francis' inspiration came after travelling to the Holy Land and seeing the exact site of Christ's birth. The sight of it all deeply moved Francis and became his particular focus that he wanted to celebrate on Christmas.

A Franciscan friar, Thomas Celano narrates the story.

..." about 15 days before the Nativity of our Lord, Francis said to a friend in Greccio, *"I would make a memorial of that Child who was born in Bethlehem, and in some way behold with bodily eyes His infant hardship,; how He lay on a manger on the hay with the ox and the ass standing by."* There Simplicity was honored, Poverty exalted, Humility commended ;

...and of Greccio there was made as it were a new Bethlehem. The night was lit up as the day, and was delightful to men and beasts... " Francis stood before the manger, full of sighs, overcome with tenderness and filled with uttered consolation and wondrous joy.

Whenever it is and whatever form it takes, the Christmas Crib always speaks eloquently to us... the Son of the most High humbled Himself and became a "helpless" tender Child so that every family in the world may experience the living presence of the "Emmanuel", God-with-us. Him alone is the giver of hope to the poor, outcast, abandoned and all those who are struggling defensively to face the harsh situations and challenges of life, regardless of their condition. ( Francis 1 Dec. 2019)

Why was it then that the Christmas Crib can arouse not only such wonder and delight but even a sense of curiosity in all who pass by? Obviously, because the whole nativity scene declares the most extraordinary setting in the history of humankind. Indeed, an exemplary revelation of the rigid poverty against the shadow of superfluity, the unconditional image of mercy against a background of inflated inhumanity, and humility against the heightened contrast to pride and arrogance of those who aspire and believe that they themselves are god!

Amidst the noise and clutters of life, the lowly manger calls us to appreciate and value our dignity, who we are, of Whose image we bear, to be honestly grateful for all that we have received, without clamoring to have more that

what is necessary, and to claim stubbornly for "MORE" EVEN OF WHAT BELONGS TO THE POOR.

In reality, the Christmas Crib is precious to us yet it demands a continuous process of passing on faith at every stage of lives to children and even to the coming generations. Our limited imagination can never, ever be able to grasp fully the interior divine message of the mystery of the Child in the stable... the pervading silence, the awesome atmosphere of peace, the tenderness of the holy family radiating the glorious triumph of the Prince of Peace! Darkness is shattered for His Blessed coming can be likened to the first streaks of dawn on Mount Sinai... Like the morning dew resting over every blade of grass, giving abundant life and freshness to the immensity of the whole cosmos, partly covered by the dryness of ignorance, particularly, of those who are weary, and groping in the darkness of uncertainty, of hunger, nakedness' and death!

The word of St Paul... *"though He was rich made Himself poor for us"* (cor.13:9) is a hearty invitation to trust HIM again and again for ... no one is left out from the great love of God"!

At this time of the pandemic, when the virus is still mortally invading the "global village", let us learn to listen attentively and to heed His call and contemplate the depth of the Father's will guided by a ray of light shining from the lowly stable. In prayer, may we hear His voice instructing us intimately to penetrate the meaning of the joyous event we are celebrating. He chose to come and be born amidst the poor in the humble stable clothed with great mercy and humility.

*-Sr Pretz M. Jaurigue, fdcc-*





## *Greetings from Provincial Team*

Dear Sisters, Mission Partners, Relatives, Friends, Alumni and all the members of the Canossian Family,

In the current context of the pandemic, marked by mourning, and economic collapses, perhaps this year more than ever would probably be one in contemporary history when we are encouraged to celebrate the Christmas season in its essence, in its simplicity. The usual Christmas glee and merriment that we have been accustomed to is not possible this year.

And this is where we are reminded of the birth of our Savior. The Christmas story is one of simplicity. Our Lord and Savior was born in a manger with only his mother and father. His guests were a shepherd, a few animals and the three magi. It is a heart-warming reminder of the true reason of the season. This year has been difficult for all of us but we cling to Hope...that amidst all of the confusion and fear that the pandemic has brought, God: the Word made flesh is with us, has always been and will always be with us.

Our celebration of Christmas will never be dampened by Covid because we have faith, joy and hope in our hearts!

May the baby Jesus continue to have room in our hearts. May our lives reflect Christ's presence, and our communities and home radiate God's peace. With abundance of faith, hope and love, we will all get through this crisis together...stronger, firmer and faith-filled!

With love and prayers,



"Thank you Srs. Lil, Amy, Magda and Chato, for your dedicated, loving and generous leadership and shepherding for the last three years. May God be your reward."

*Celebrating with you,*  
**Sisters Lil N., Amy, Chato and Magda**





## *An Open Letter of Thanks*

On March 16, 2021, the Catholics of the Philippines shall remember 500 years of Christianity. There shall be no funfare and mass gatherings to celebrate the event until we are free from the clutches of the virus, but we shall remember when and what we received 500 years ago! Our ancestors learned their catechism very well: "...Ang Pasko ay sumapit; at magbuhat ngayon, kahit hindi Pasko ay magbigayan". "Loved, we love"...or "Loved, we are sent"...Learned too by these wonderful folks we hold dear in our hearts !!!

### **OUR VERY DEAR BENEFACTORS & FRIENDS:**

During the 9-month-long onslaught of Taal Volcano eruptions, Covid-19, even fires and typhoons, our normal school, clinic, Retreat apostolates, etc. were suspended, replaced by intensive distribution of food and material help that YOU generously, and regularly supplied : we bring you the thanks from countless persons for whom Christmas started last March 15 2020. The Babe of the stable of Bethlehem also smiles His appreciation of your big heart for making His birthday celebrated continuously these past 9 months!

### **OUR VERY DEAR STAFF, MISSION PARTNERS:**

Sa pagpapadalo ng mga handog galing sa mga sponsor ng ating kawanggawa, ang mga may edadsainyo ay sumuporta ng panalangin at sakripisyo; sa mga may trabaho ng kaibigan, networking of help/advice/info have been invaluable. In cooking, packing and distributing thousands of meal packs and countless food and bread bags, you endured fatigue with smiles... braved even catching the virus when going out... Maraming Salamat daw, people said... echoed by the appreciation of the Emmanuel ..... and us Sisters!

### **OUR DEAR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF THE SISTERS:**

Everyone has been touched in one way or another by the many calamities that visited us this year 2020. Your help, prayers and moral support boosted the sisters' unmindfulness of the weight of the many uncertainties of our time in order to trust and to cling to God's Word, His abiding presence and His promises to His people, and to continue taking part in Christ's mission here and now. Salamat po!

Sr. Violeta San Miguel, Fdccc