



Living the Word

December 2008
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“To us, a Child is born”

Isaiah 9:1



Merry

Christmas



**Bukas Loob sa Diyos Covenant Community
Global Districts**

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Even in Advent Season, we can already greet one another Merry Christmas, Malipayon nga Paskwa, Maligayang Pasko. Indeed we are not preparing for the arrival of God in our world; we are in fact celebrating the anniversary of his birth into our world more than two thousand years ago. Since then Jesus Christ has been with us, he has never left us. The present Advent and Christmas are indeed a continuation of our celebration.

The arrival of Jesus Christ into our world is called Advent, or coming. And so Advent is Christmas and Christmas is Advent.

Christmas is an invitation for us to experience what is untouchable, whereby you can hear what cannot be heard, see what cannot be seen and know what cannot be known. That is the presence of God, of Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit, is like salt in the water. If you put salt in the water today, tomorrow morning it's gone and dissolved. Taste the water at the top, it tastes like salt. Taste the water at the middle, it tastes like salt. Taste the water at the bottom, it also tastes like salt. The salt remains in the water even though you do not see it, and though you do not see the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, they are fully present in you and everyone else, everywhere.

That is the essence of what Jesus Christ has said: *"Whatever you do, good or bad, to one another, you do unto me."* Everyone becomes Christ! Everyone is the face of God!

It took Jesus Christ to be born more than 2000 years ago to make us realize and live that essential truth.

Advent-Christmas comes around to remind us that eternal truth.

+ Angel N. Lagdameo

+ ANGEL N. LAGDAMEO
Archbishop of Jaro &
BLD Spiritual Director
December 1, 2008



Message

In the Philippines, it is a common tradition to sing Christmas carols as soon as the month turns to September.

This signals the season to be jolly. Malls and stores dress Christmassy to lure buyers "to shop till you drop." The name of the game is commercialism wherein almost everybody in the world are so enthusiastic to say Merry Christmas! Is it so? Well, the liturgical calendar says that it is still 4weeks before Christmas day. Liturgically speaking, the Church celebrates the season of Advent.

Advent from the Latin word *adventus* means arrival or coming in plain language. Who is arriving or coming? It is The Lord, our Savior, the Emmanuel. Hence the coming of Jesus is the reason for the Christmas season. As the saying goes: Jesus is the reason for the season. This implies preparation. Christ comes in three ways. As a new born babe on Dec. 25, Christmas Day, as Judge and Lord of creation (His second coming, the Parousia) and as in every sacrament that we Christians celebrate and receive like the Eucharist (the Mass), Baptism, Penance etc. Therefore, the weeks before Christmas are days of preparation to receive graces from God.

The prophet Isaiah tells us that when the Messiah comes, there will be change in the world. There will be hope for the people living in "darkness." The new life that the Savior gives is full of peace and Joy. His coming is an expression of unconditional Love of God for His people. His life is characterized by his compassion, preaching, and healing of

the "lost sheep." St. John the Baptist exhorts all men to prepare for the coming of the Lord. Make straight his paths. Let justice and peace be again.

I can now understand why my Carmelite friends-cloistered nuns do not call nor entertain visitors or book for an appointment with any outsider during Advent. Their time is devoted to sit at the foot of the Divine Master. To stop, look and listen to Him as they live and do His divine will. Their ears, hearts and will are focused on the Lord's coming.

Rightfully then does the Church sing Advent songs during the season. Songs like O Come Emmanuel, Let Heaven Rejoice, The King of Glory Comes, O Come Divine Messiah, On Jordan's Bank, People Look East etc. that do not sound "Christmassy" at all are the appropriate prayer-songs of the season.

Once the Advent season ends, everybody who has prepared inwardly and outwardly for the Lord's coming and are spiritually enriched can look towards a meaningful, peaceful and grace-filled Christmas.

Silent Night, Adeste Fideles, Joy to the World and Halleluia (George Handel) and Christmas carols will usher in expectedly God's presence, blessings, love, peace and joy as this "troubled" world looks towards the New Year.

Marana Tha! Veni, Jesu Christe! Come, Lord Jesus! Halina Hesus!

Fr. Manuel L. Serranilla, Jr.

Spiritual Director
BLD St. Catharines DIP



BUKÁS LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY

The Executive Council of Servant Leaders

ADVENT - CHRISTMAS MESSAGE



Dear Brothers and Sisters in the BLD Global Community,

"Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Like our Blessed Mother, may all of us have the total trust and obedience to God's plan for each of us and for our Community. As we acknowledge our Father's love in sending His Son Jesus to be born on earth, may we always share His love with our family and with all our brothers and sisters in Christ. A blessed Christmas to all!

Bogie & Margie Lorenzo

During this season of hope and joy, may our faith and our genuine desire to follow Jesus build up everyday as Jesus, the Word of God, reveals himself more deeply and more clearly to us, to our family and to our Community. May the message of the angels "Glory to God in high heaven, peace on earth to those on whom his favor rests" come upon our hearts and be the guiding light of unity, peace and reconciliation in our family, our Community, and the world. A peaceful Christmas to all!

Lito & Jasmin Abastillas

The birth of the child Jesus in a humble Bethlehem cave is truly unexpected, that God should come to us as a helpless child of poor parents, born away from the limelight and riches of the world. It is in this utmost simplicity that we find peace, love and happiness. "Exult in the Lord, lift up your hearts in spiritual joy, for the day of redemption is being renewed, the day of age long expectation of the announcement of happiness that has no end" May the love and peace of Christmas be upon us, for God is born in the stable of our hearts. Maligayang Pasko at Mapayapang Bagong Taon po sa inyong lahat!!!

Dan & Ludy Andres

"Sing to the Lord a new song...the Lord has made his salvation known; in the sight of the nations he has revealed his justice." This is truly a season of rejoicing and thanksgiving in remembering that Jesus is God's love for us. Through and In him, we are gifted with fullness of life. God loved, he gave, we receive, and we live. Well-wishes for a blessed Christmas and New Year to all!

Alfred S. Kudemus

This Christmas 2008, let us make ourselves a true gift to God, and we can do it by becoming true servant to the members of our own family, brother or sister to the poor, the hungry, the sick, the lonely, the widow, the prisoners and the homeless! In doing so we have our Lord Jesus' everlasting assurance for all seasons, "What you do to these least brothers of mine, you do unto Me" Maligayang Pasko at Manigong Bagong Taon sa inyo, sa inyong mga mahal sa buhay at sa inyong BLD District.

Jun & Baby Delarmente

As we celebrate the humble birth of Jesus, may we be faithful to our Covenant with Jesus; may we witness the Peace of Jesus in our lives and to others; may we look with favor on the poor who is in Jesus — May you, your family, and your district have A Blessed, Peaceful, and Joyful Christmas!

Eliang & Leah Sison
Presiding Servant Leaders



Greetings from Toronto

“Proclaim His glory among the nations, His marvelous deeds to all the peoples; great is the Lord and worthy of all praise” Psalm 96

Greetings of peace & joy!

We rejoice with you as you celebrate the birth of Christ Jesus, Our Lord and Saviour!

We are truly blessed to be able to freely proclaim His marvelous love for all mankind and to receive His precious gift of peace! And it is with gladness and thanksgiving that we recall how you, our brothers and sisters of St. Catharines BLD community, have dutifully and generously been giving of yourselves to be God's channels of His Good News and witnesses of His transforming love.

Though busyness, deadlines, rush and stress have crept into the world's celebration of the Season, may we not miss out on the moments that Our Prince of Peace will gently knock at our hearts this Christmas. *“Happy are all who long for the coming of the Lord” - Psalm 147*

A Blessed and Holy Christmas to you and your families!

The District Council of Stewards Toronto District



Pat & Rose
CANLAS
District Servant
Leader



Manny & Bessie
GOROSPE
Mission



Robert & Cely
KITANE
Evangelization



Jimmy & Nora
VALERA
Formation



Ed & Lu
DUMLAO
Pastoral



Frank & Rose
CUARESMA
Management



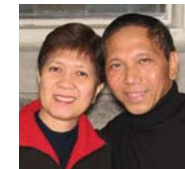
Poch & Avic
ROBLES
Management



Roy & Carmen
MITRA
Formation



Romy & Minda
PANDAY
Evangelization



Cip & Emmy
TABIOS
Pastoral

Greetings from your DES!



“Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God... and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed” Isaiah 40:2 and 5

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Community,

It is the Season of Advent! It is the season that gives us an opportunity to slow down and to spend some time in quiet preparation. Slow down? With all of the Christmas shopping, parties to go to, visits to make, cards to mail, cookies to bake? In the midst of all the hustle and bustle of preparing for Christmas, can we hear the voice of him who cries out? Are we getting a room ready in our hearts for that special guest that's coming?

As Christians we understand Advent to be a season of preparation during which we examine our lives and prepare our hearts for the birth of Jesus on Christmas. What a special time to get ready by rejoicing that our God is not far away, that HE is here right now among us, that HIS kingdom has begun and that HE will come again at the end of the age.

Let us press forward in capturing His glory, as a small voice rises up within us declaring: Prepare ye the way! The Messiah is coming! May HE live forever in our hearts with the light of HIS glory shining in our hearts to burst forth to all those around us. May every home and family in our BLD community of St. Catharines be filled with the joy HIS loving presence brings.

A Blessed Christmas and a Spirit-Filled New Year to all of you and your loved ones! Emmanuel! God with us!

Love in Christ,

District Council of Stewards