



New BEC Animator Roles for PPC Lay Coordinators



In back-to-back dinner meetings, Fr. Bong Tupino announced to the village coordinators last Thursday February 23 and to the mandated organizations and renewal movement heads last Friday February 24 (photo below) that couples Bert and Marie Anne Santos, PPC Lay Coordinator, and couples Henry and Joyce Tañedo, PPC Assistant Lay Coordinator, would henceforth take on the roles of 'animators' for the two groups, respectively.

With focus on Basic Ecclesial Communities, or BECs, he challenged the animators and their constituents who attended the meetings to identify activities and measures that would move their neighborhoods (for the village

Ash Wednesday Falls on March 1; 2017 Lenten Season Begins



March 1, Ash Wednesday, opened the 2017 Lenten Season, a season of fasting, prayer and alms-giving. Ash Wednesday is one of the most popular and important holy days in the liturgical calendar and it takes place 46 days before Easter Sunday (40 days not counting the Sundays). It comes from the ancient Jewish tradition of penance

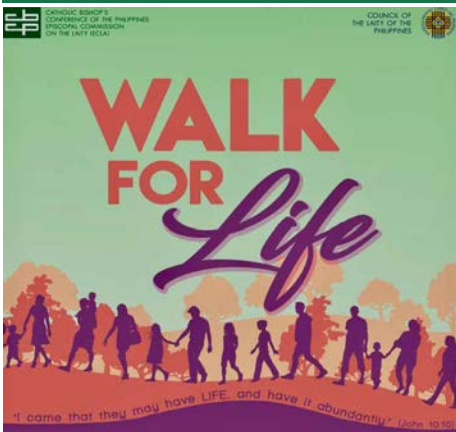
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Fr. Bong Tupino introduces the Tañedos, assistant Lay Coordinator couple, as Animator to the heads of the CTK mandated organizations and renewal movements. February 24

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CTK Parishioners Join CBCP's Walk for Life



Thousands of Catholics, including over 50 parishioners from Christ the King Parish Greenmeadows, joined a three-hour pre-dawn march with church leaders around the Quirino Grandstand parade grounds in Rizal Park, Manila last February 18 in one of the largest shows of opposition to President Rodrigo Duterte's deadly crackdown against illegal drugs and attempts to revive the death penalty. 20 of the 50-strong CTK contingent gathered as early as 3 am and filled up a tour bus from JKL Tours. CTK

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Message From Our Parish Priest

REPENT!

When we received the ashes last Ash Wednesday to mark the beginning of the Lenten Season, the priest and the ministers said, "Repent and believe in the Gospel." As we start our lenten journey, I invite you to reflect on this summons by the Church. To facilitate your reflection I wish to share with you an excerpt from a homily written in the eighties by one of my favorite preachers, Walter J. Burghardt, SJ. Fr Burghardt was a great theologian, writer and a well-known preacher. He died in 2008 at the age of 94. He was a Jesuit for 77 years.



"Repentance has a rich biblical history. At times it means that you regret something; you are sorry for what you have done; you feel remorse and you do penance. David regrets that he has bedded Bathsheba and murdered her husband. The prodigal son confesses that he has lived riotously, wallowed in sex. Peter weeps because he has denied his Lord. All of these repented of something.

But the word carries a still more basic idea; "repent" has a more positive thrust. That idea emerges from the Old Testament prophets. They knew the liturgies of repentance. The people fasted; they wore sackcloth and ashes; they shrieked and sobbed publicly; they cut themselves; they confessed their faults aloud; they recited the sins that scarred Israel's history.

But the prophets were unhappy with this. These were external symbols of repentance; little or nothing was happening inside. The love of repentant Israel, we read in Hosea. "is like the dew that goes early away" (Hosea 6:4). Real repentance is a change of mind and heart; repentance means new attitudes, fresh patterns of behavior. "Rend your hearts," says the Lord. "and not your garments" (Joel 2:13). To repent is to turn, to be converted. The sinner turns from sin to God, the lukewarm heats up. Not merely by sharing in community ritual; a man or woman is totally changed, has a new attitude towards Yahweh, abandons hardened habits. What God wants is not sacrifice but steadfast love, not so much burnt offerings as knowing God in love (cf. Hosea 6:6).

Such profound repentance is powerfully symbolized in Hosea (chap. 2). Israel is like a faithless wife who has gone after all manner of lovers. But she changes. She not only rejects her past life; she returns to her husband, Yahweh. Her life from here on in is to be shaped of fidelity and love.

For Jesus, too, repentance is a total turning. He describes it as becoming like a child (Mt 18:3). You repudiate your past and begin a new life.

This brings us to the Christian stress. It stems, of course, from the biblical background; it involves turning to the Lord but with several urgent emphases. For us, repentance means refusing to live in yesterday. Yesterday is death and sin and fate; today is life and love and freedom.

Yesterday is death. Yesterday is the plaint of the Psalmist: "O Lord . . . in death there is no remembrance of thee; in Sheol [the place of the dead] who can give thee praise?" (Ps 6:4-5). Yesterday is Job begging God: "Let me alone, that I may find a little comfort before I go whence I shall not return, to the land of gloom and deep darkness" (Job 10:20-21).

If yesterday is death, today is life. For today is Christ risen from the

rock, "his shroud a wedding garment, his feet between earth and air in dance." Do you believe that? That Christ is alive, more gloriously alive than when he walked the rugged roads of Palestine, that "he dances still"? Do you believe that, with Christ risen, death no longer has power over you, will hold you captive no more than a swift moment, that you too will dance around death, will rise to a life beyond your wildest dreams? Do you believe that you are already risen with Christ, because his life courses through you like another bloodstream?

Only if you do can Lent be life for you. For what is it to repent in Lent? I turn more and more completely to a living Christ. I adopt "the attitude which Christ Jesus had" (Phil 2:5), the Christ who gave up the glory of his yesterday and chose a cross. I refuse to imprison myself in the past, all the more deadly for being so comforting. I give up not some bauble or trinket, not body fat or the Pub, but that damnable concentration on myself where the days and nights rotate around me, around my delights and my worries, my dreams and my frustrations, my love life or lack of it, my heartburn or my hemorrhoids.

Mark's Gospel is instructive here: not simply "Repent" but "Repent and believe in the Good News" (Mk 1:15). Believe in life - Christ's life and your life, life here and hereafter, life now and for ever. If you want to repent, live! Come alive!

Yesterday is sin. Yesterday is St. Paul's anguished cry: "I am carnal, sold under sin. I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. . . . I know that nothing good dwells within me. . . . I can will what is right, but I cannot do it" (Rom 7:14-18). Yesterday is the frightening figure of Sin you have just seen dancing before Death: "I manure the dreams of the young and wait for a harvest of betrayal."

If yesterday is sin, today is love. For love alone is the solution to sin. Not soap-opera love, not the deadly lust of "Dallas"; but the love that keeps all God's commandments, the love that is not crushed by a cross, the love that dies for the other, the love that is stronger than death. Such was the love of Christ, the crucified love that took away the Sin of the World. Such, increasingly, must be our love, if we are ever to break out of a self that stifles, smothers, suffocates, if we are not to tack without end on some unreal "Love Boat." If you want to repent, love! Love someone else!

Yesterday is fate. Yesterday is your horoscope, the position of the stars when you were born. Yesterday is the Stoic telling you your consolation lies in being swept along with the universe. Yesterday is theologians chirping merrily that some of you are predestined to be damned and there isn't a damn thing you can do about it. Yesterday is the hopeless figure of Fate you have just seen draining men and women "empty of struggle, their faces whitening into resignation."

If yesterday is fate, today is freedom. Not only our power to make choices, the fundamental freedom to construct our human existence. More importantly, Jesus Christ is shaping you and me to the freedom that was supremely his. Not license to do whatever we want. Rather, freedom from a fourfold slavery: the sin that diminishes our humanness and keeps us from realizing ourselves; the thousand and one laws that strangle religion; the self that glues our eyes and hearts to this earth's values; the "night" of death into which (with Dylan Thomas) we do "not gentle." If you want to repent, go free! Open yourself to God in free obedience, open yourself to others in uncompelled love! ■

New BEC Animator Roles for PPC Lay Coordinator and Assistant Lay Coordinator

coordinators) and their prayer cells and work teams (for the movements and organizations) closer to the ideal profile of the Basic Ecclesial Community.

Fr. Bong explained that he really cannot find the time to regularly meet, guide, and advice the village coordinators and the orgs and movements as they plan their activities and projects in this Year of the Parish. Hence, he is 'deputizing' the Santoses and the Tañedos to act as 'animators'. So last February 23, Fr. Bong once again introduced Bert and Marie Anne Santos in their new role to the village coordinators and the next night, February 24, he introduced Henry and Joyce Tañedo in their new role to the mandated organizations and renewal movements.

Represented at the February 23 get-together were: Arcadia by Fe Flores; Acropolis by Anne del Rosario; Corinthian Hills by Paul and Dinah Uy; Corinthian Garden by Fe Pery and Linda Guanzon; Enclave by Joey Sto. Domingo; Greenmeadows 1 by Eileen de Leon and Dulce Barreto; St. Ignatius by Baby Banal and Lulay dela Cruz; and White Plains by Mel Novales and Diana Gozum.

Represented at the February 24 meeting were: Adoracion Nocturna Filipina by Rudy Tecson; Apostleship of Prayer represented by treasurer Armine Tagaysay; Buklod ng Panginoon by new head Mancita Pabillo and Evelyn Sumbillo; Catholic Women's League by Kim Cua; Christian Family Movement by representatives of head couple Leo and May Nitorreda, namely: Julie Morales and couple Michelle and Edwin Bernardo; Knights of Columbus by Boy Angeles; Legion of Mary by Mila del Fonso and Ruby Borja; and Life in the Spirit Prayer Group (LSSPG) by Margie San Juan. Not represented were Couples for Christ (headed by Eddie and Cecille Salonga), Diwanihan Kristiyano (headed by Mon and Loung Cuartero, although since DK was part of the Pagibig sa Diyos prayer community which had the Tañedos as head elders, in effect, the Tañedos stood in for DK) and Ladies of Charity (headed by Fe Pery).

In the February 24 organization heads' meeting, for example, Fr. Bong asked several questions to reflect upon.

- ▶ What do I see as the mission of our organization?
- ▶ How well do I know my organization? For example, when was it founded, at parish,

- ▶ national, and international level; who founded; why was it founded; how many members at the parish, national and international level; what activities are being undertaken at parish, national and international level.
- ▶ How can we concretize in our organization the call of the Church to be a Communion of Communities?



Above, Fr. Bong convenes the village coordinators to announce Bert and Marie Anne Santos as his animator designate, February 23. Below, before the heads of mandated organizations and renewal movements, he announces Henry and Joyce Tañedo as animator for the orgs and movements, February 24.



- ▶ How can we foster in our organization the necessary involvement and participation in the parish?
- ▶ What is my dream for our organization vis-à-vis its relationship with our Parish Community as well as with the Diocese of Cubao?

As a result of these kick-off meetings, the village coordinators and the mandated orgs and renewal movements should expect see much more of Fr. Bong's representatives at their regular monthly meetings as well as being called to 'large group' meetings. ■

Fr. Bong Briefs Parish Pastoral Council on Basic Ecclesial Communities

At the regular monthly Parish Pastoral Council meeting last February 11, Fr. Bong Tupino took center stage to talk about Basic Ecclesial Communities, as his contribution to providing the needed basic BEC orientation and training to CTK's PPC. He talked through two important articles: one by James H. Kroeger of the Maryknoll Missionaries who also teaches at the Loyola School of Theology, on "The Parish as Community of Missionary Disciples" and the other by Amado L. Picardal, a Redemptorist with the Congregation of the Holy Redeemer, on



"BECs as Agents of Communion, Participation and Mission'.

At the end of the discussion on the two papers, Fr. Bong Tupino gave the PPC members an assignment – to think through what BEC-related initiatives might be relevant for the CTK villages, the mandated organizations, and the various ministries. He asked them to consider street masses and bible studies, for example, which had been brought up to him by other parishioners. ■

Summary of James Kroeger's "The Parish: A Community of Missionary Disciples"

We seek to answer the basic questions: How can our parishes embody and concretize Pope Francis' call for the missionary renewal of the entire Church? How does the parish become an agent of missionary evangelization?



First, evangelization requires a comprehensive vision. Christian presence and witness to life, i.e., living in harmony, living lives of integrity, fulfilling community duties, etc., by ordinary parish members is a primal, concrete and practical means of effective evangelization; in this way, the Good News is taken to the highways and byways of daily human activity. Living as good neighbors naturally means a commitment to social development and human liberation, e.g., serving the

most unfortunate, witnessing to justice, peace building, promoting education and good health, advocating good governance, addressing social problems. Aside from living the faith, there is still the traditional role of explicit Gospel proclamation and catechesis. This includes preaching, catechesis on Christian life, teaching the content of the faith – in a nutshell, "telling the Jesus story". The issue is finding out the various groups that are not being reached by the current parish evangelization programs. Finally, evangelization includes a liturgical life of faith, prayer and contemplation. Holy men and women who are on fire with love of Christ is a non-negotiable condition for evangelizers.

There is now a new view of evangelization. Previously when evangelization was linked to explicit Gospel proclamation and sacramental life, laity found it difficult to define how they fit into the mission. Today, Catholic evangelization engages the entire church and all states of life, whether lay, religious, ordained, married, single.

Fr. Kroeger then presents a long list of concrete initiatives that a parish could select from and implement to foster its growth as a 'missionary parish'. He encourages the local parish community to add activities and initiatives that will transform them into a 'missionary parish' and an 'evangelizing community'.

- Develop and sustain continuing programs of "faith formation".
- Train the lay leaders, catechists and dedicated youth on how to evangelize effectively and invest in evangelization resources and materials.
- Promote a culture of "vocations" where, through homilies and ministry formation, parishioners are encouraged to view themselves as missionary disciples called by God to either holy marriage, the priesthood, or religious life.
- Foster a reverent sacramental parish life, with emphasis on the Eucharist and Eucharistic Adoration.
- Encourage regular charitable and social outreach activities so that parishioners, in the role of missionary disciples, can get engaged and serve the needy.
- Consider forming "discipleship circles" where members love one another as brothers and sisters in Christ, whether these be bible study groups, charismatic prayer gatherings, outreach social action teams, etc.
- Encourage the growth of the BEC movement in the parish
- Get as many laity involved, in as many kinds of leadership roles and services, e.g., lay leaders, catechists, youth evangelizers, etc.
- Survey the most pressing needs of the various groups that make up the parish – and don't limit the survey to Christians. Then based on the findings initiate 'reach-out' teams to help address the identified pressing social needs.
- Search for practical ways to foster neighborly relationships with followers of non-Catholic faith communities in the parish and perhaps undertake partnerships for outreach projects.

Actively seek to make the parish a 'joyful, welcoming and friendly community. Joyful evangelizers get their message heard. ■

Summary of Amado Picardal's "BECs: Agents of Communion, Participation and Mission"

The CBCP pastoral exhortation "On the Era of New Evangelization" described the focus this year: "our focus will be the building of a parish that is truly a faith community immersed in the lives of its people." Key to this end is the forming and-or revitalizing of Basic Ecclesial Communities in every parish as agents of communion, participation and mission, with the active participation of other faith communities, lay organizations, movements, and associations, or LOMAs.



Fr. Picardal defines BECs thus: as local communities of Catholic Christians in the neighborhoods and villages within the geographic parish. The members are close to one another, know each other by name, and relate to each other as friends, brothers and sisters in the Lord – kapuso, kapamilya, kaibigan, kapitbahay. They gather regularly to share the Word of God and live it in their daily life, to pray and celebrate their faith. They are united to their pastors but are ministered to regularly by lay leaders. They share their resources, share their material and spiritual concerns, and find ways to help and serve one another and those who are poor and address their problems. They have a strong sense of belongingness and responsibility for one another.

BECs do not have a standard shape or form. They come in various shapes and sizes – chapel-centered; family groups within a chapel-centered community; or family groups without chapel. Whatever their form, BECs are characterized by a genuine expression of communion. The members are united by shared faith and genuine humanity, celebrated in the breaking of bread, concretely expressed in the sharing of material goods. Which is why humble celebrations and table fellowships at BECs with simple common meals are more meaningful than fiesta celebrations – because they truly express the life of communion, unity, friendship, sharing and participation among the members.

The vision of the Church as communion, participation and mission, the Church as priestly, prophetic and kingly people, as a

priestly, prophetic and kingly people, as a Church of the poor, a Church that is renewed, finds expression in Basic Ecclesial Communities.

St. John Paul II described BECs as part of the overall effort to decentralize the parish community. They take root in less privileged and rural areas and become a catalyst of Christian life, of care for the poor and neglected, and of commitment to the transformation of society. Within them, the individual Christian experiences community and therefore senses that he or she is playing an active role and is therefore encouraged to share in the common task.

The ideal BECs first carry out their mission within the parish, starting in their own neighborhood, in the barangay or village, before going to the peripheries in the parish and reach out to those who are baptized but not evangelized, those who are nominal or seasonal Catholics, those who are alienated from the Church.

Many BECs have not yet realized the vision of a renewed Church; hence the task of the clergy and lay faithful to revitalize the BECs so that they truly become 'agents of communion, participation and mission', or, as Pope Francis referred to them, 'communities of missionary disciples'.

Explaining the Year of the Parish Logo



The circles of people whose hands are intertwined symbolize the communion within the BECs. These communities are linked together by the outline of the cross which signifies the parish as communion of communities. It also includes other faith communities and organizations that are in the parish that – although trans-parochial in nature- are called to actively take part in the life of the parish and BECs. The outline of the cross also symbolizes the vertical and horizontal dimension of communion – communion with the Triune God and with each other. The bread and chalice at the center symbolize the Eucharist which is the sacrament and celebration of this communion. The bible which is also at the center symbolizes the Word of God that is shared and proclaimed which is the source of faith and basis of communion and which nourishes and build up communion. The sunrays symbolize the light of Christ that shines in the life of the members of parish and these communities.

The theme: "Forming BECs that are agents of communion, participation and mission" is a call to action for all the members of the parish, the BECs and the trans-parochial faith communities and organizations to work together to build up the BECs where communion is experienced and that actively participate in the prophetic mission of evangelization, in sanctification and liturgical celebration, and in the mission of social transformation and making the kingdom of God – a kingdom of justice, peace, harmony and freedom – a reality.

CTK BEC Team Attends Basic BEC Orientation Seminar at OLHP Vicariate

by Tiny Perfecto, St. Ignatius BEC Coordinator

The Our Lady of Perpetual Help Vicariate, which includes Christ the King Parish, held the BEC Basic Orientation Seminar for the various parish BEC leaders in the vicariate at the Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish last January 28. The CTK delegation

organizing BECs.

As host of the seminar, Our Lady of Perpetual Help parish provided the venue and introduced regular ‘energizers’, under the direction of Sr. Ophelia, the parish’s BEC coordinator,

the CBCP will be rolling out more training modules in line with the BEC theme. In addition, some of the coordinators, including Tiny Perfecto, had been involved in the preparation of 10-minute BEC awareness modules as members of the ‘BEC sa Sampung Minuto’, or BSM team. Soon, the full suite of 10-minute modules will be made available to the parishes and they will be free to pick and choose.

Tiny Perfecto was philosophical when asked if accelerating the BECs in the CTK context was doable. “Journeying with the BEC communities towards a parish that is a true communion of communities cannot be done overnight. There are still skills that need to be learned, especially on how to effectively ‘connect’ with others in the community. We also have the added challenge of the gated communities,” Tiny mused. She continued, “The task of the current leaders is to prepare the field, sow the seeds, and let God do the rest. When everything falls into place, the impossible can become possible.”



Ching Botero, Jo Piyaw, and Tiny Perfecto with the other CTK delegates to the vicariate’s Basic BEC Orientation. Below, Msgr. Jun Bogaoan opens the seminar at their Parish hall.

consisted of four youth leaders from the Libis community and five BEC leaders from Libis that included Ching Botero, Libis BEC Coordinator, Jo Piyaw, Libis assistant BEC coordinator, and Tiny Perfecto, BEC coordinator for St Ignatius Village. Hosting the delegations was Msgr. Jun Bogaoan, BEC priest minister of OLPH vicariate and current parish priest of OLPH.

Aside from imparting BEC concepts, the other objective of the vicariate-level training was to search for high-potential leaders who could be future orientation speakers to handle the basic orientation talks to the various pamayanans, kawans, etc. within the OLPH vicariate or even to other vicariates if the need arose.

The BEC Basic Orientation Seminar had been originally designed for five days but was modified to fit into just one day, consisting of: 1, the whys of BEC, i.e., how BEC came to be a thrust of the Philippine Church; 2, BEC spirituality; 3, BEC leadership; 4, the ABCs of BEC, with emphasis on the four hallmarks of BEC; and 5,

to liven up the training. CTK coordinator Tiny Perfecto enjoyed the original song composition, ‘Mag BEC Tayo’ with its catchy tune and lyrics, composed by an OLPH BEC member. In fact, Tiny liked the song so much that when she was asked to do the closing prayer at the end of the day, she requested that everyone sing the ‘Mag BEC Tayo’. “I hope that the song can catch on at CTK – or alternatively, that CTK comes up with its own catchy BEC song and shares it with other parishes,” said Tiny.

The BEC reps were also informed that



CTK Hosts OLHP Vicariate's First Quarter Assembly for PPCs

The Christ the King Parish Social Hall was the venue last February 6 for the Our Mother of Perpetual Help Vicariate's (CTK is one of the parishes in the vicariate, along with Our Lady of Perpetual Help-Cubao, Our Lady of Miraculous Medal, Transfiguration of our Lord, Nativity of Our Lord, St. John Paul II-Eastwood, and San Roque-Bagumbayan) first general assembly for PPCs.



Welcoming the Parish Pastoral Council members of the seven different parishes was CTK's own Fr. Bong Tupino, who spoke on behalf of the designated in-charge Fr. Arnel Recinto. Fr. Bong was quite pleased that all the parishes were represented, with at least one table per parish. To be expected, Christ the King-Greenmeadows had the largest delegation, completely filling up three tables.

After the dinner, which was complimented on by nearly all the visitors, Fr. Bong introduced the lecturer for the evening, Fr. Omer Prieto, from the Diocese of Cubao and a member of its Pastoral Team. At the same time, he is the parish priest of St. Anthony of Padua Parish. He also specializes in giving Marian talks, conducting cenacles and retreats for both clergy and lay, and has a weekly radio program, "Yes Father" at DWAD and a monthly slot at Radio

Veritas "Alay Kay Inang Maria".

At the outset, Fr. Omer revealed the topics for the four quarterly assemblies. This quarter's talk would be on the parish. The second would be about the servant leaders of Communion; third on the Structures of Participation; and fourth on the vicariate – how to achieve the mission of parish communion.



Fr. Omer proceeded to define the "parish". He said "the parish is a community of Christ's faithful, established in the diocese by the Bishop, whose pastoral care is entrusted to the parish priest as its pastor. It is in the parish that the Church is experienced on a regular basis. He made the critical point that the parish is "territorial", that is, embracing all the faithful within its geographic confines.

To illustrate more clearly, Fr. Omer presented the organization chart with the parish priest atop the three-layer structure of pastoral ministries-groups and the parish communities. The parish priest's mission is abundantly clear – pastoral care as the bishop's representative, ministering to the community. As such, he needs to know the faithful entrusted to his care. But there is a problem: most parishes have a large number of parishioners, numbering in the thousands of families.

It is the parish communities, or the "pamayanans" which legitimizes the "territorial" definition of 'parish'. And thirdly are the pastoral ministries which constitute the pipeline through which pastoral programs flow to the parish communities. These ministries nourish ecclesial life, fulfilling the works of Christ.

Fr. Omer clarified to the vicariate gathering that Church renewal as a mandate was not optional, and that the 'renewed' Church' must be reflected in the parish. If not yet, the parish must become truly a faith community immersed in the lives of its people.

He tossed around a number of points for the PPC members of the different parishes to ponder on:

- ▶ At the parish level: How can the parish PPCs help their parish priests with their immense responsibilities? What renewal programs should the parish adopt?



- ▶ At the community level: Is there a need to review the parish boundaries? For example, did it make sense that one side of the street belongs to one parish and the other side belonged to another? Is there a need to create quasi-parishes out of big parishes? And how do we reach out to the peripheries?

- ▶ At the ministry level: Are the ministries truly nourishing the parish community? And are the organizations aligned with the ministries collaborating in the mission? How can the parishes in the vicariate share strategies and thus help one another?

First General Assembly for CTK Lectors & Commentators

The Christ the King lectors and commentator group were invited to attend the first General Assembly last Saturday, February 25, the first of four scheduled for the calendar year. As a requirement, all of CTK's 150 lectors-commentators are expected to attend at least one assembly.

Fr. Bong had been aware that chapel goers occasionally ask the lectors or commentators what the icons in the Divine Mercy Chapel stand for. So he wanted to make sure the 'lecoms' were ready to answer. The representation at the front of the altar table is called 'Pelican in her Piety'. In ancient Europe, it

Jesus' Incarnation, and so Christ's human nature. Mark the Evangelist, the author of the second gospel account, is symbolized by a winged lion – a figure of courage and monarchy. The lion also represents Jesus' resurrection (because lions were believed to sleep with open eyes, a comparison with Christ in the tomb), and Christ as king. Luke the Evangelist, the author of the third gospel account (and the Acts of the Apostles), is symbolized by a winged ox or bull – a figure of sacrifice, service and strength. Luke's account begins with the duties of Zacharias in the temple; it represents Jesus' sacrifice in His Passion and Crucifixion. The ox signifies that Christians should be prepared to sacrifice themselves in following Christ. John the Evangelist, the author of the fourth gospel account, is symbolized by an eagle – a figure of the sky, and believed by Christian scholars to be able to look straight into the sun. John starts with an eternal overview of Jesus the Logos and goes on to describe many things with a "higher" christology than the other three (synoptic) gospels; it represents Jesus' Ascension, and Christ's divine nature. This symbolizes that Christians should look on eternity without flinching as they journey towards their goal of union with God.

Lastly, Fr. Bong reminded the lecoms that the Mary icon on the left side of the Miraculous Crucifix of Limpias (background story of the crucifix was covered in the previous issue of the Herald) was specifically Our Lady of Perpetual Help. The original Byzantine icon has been in Rome since 1499. In 1865, Pope Pius IX appointed the Redemptorist Priests to be custodians and missionaries of the icon and the image has become very popular. In the



L to R: Lectors-Commentators' Ministry leaders Mel Novales, Trix Deleña, and Ellen Manansala

Mel Novales, head coordinator for the Ministry of Lectors & Commentators within the Worship Ministry, first introduced Trix Deleña, assistant coordinator, who went through the Lent and Easter schedule of activities as articulated to-date by the Worship Ministry head couple Peter and Leila Banico.

Trix was followed Ellen Manansala, Ministry treasurer, who accounted for the funds balance to-date from the P500 requested from each lector late last year. Then it was Mel Novales' turn as he went through the list of comments and observations made by parishioners regarding CTK commentators and lectors. He also gave each of the lectors and commentators a copy of the booklet entitled 'Reading for the Lord', by Msgr. Antero Sarmiento.

Fr. Bong Tupino announced that there would be a nationwide Bible Quiz soon and he wanted a systematic way to identify the most able parishioner that CTK could field. To assist in selection, he gave a 30-point multiple choice quiz on the Gospel according to Matthew – part 5. He confessed that a few of the questions were really difficult since some of the points are also covered in Mark, Luke or John but the text and phraseology differ.

was believed that the pelican would cut its breast open with its beak and feed its young with its own blood if there was not enough food. It represents Jesus' self-sacrifice and charity. The icon had been adopted by early Christians as early as the 2nd century and started using it in religious texts and images.

The four Evangelists' iconography at the Ambo stand for Mark (upper left), Matthew (upper right), Luke (lower left), and John (lower right). Matthew, the author of the first Gospel account, is symbolized as a winged man or angel. Matthew's gospel starts with Joseph's genealogy from Abraham; it represents



Lectors-commentators doing their best to correctly answer the quiz on the gospel of Matthew

Last Round of Commissioning for CTK Lectors and Commentators

January 29 saw the second and final group of lectors and commentators get commissioned at the 6:30 pm Sunday mass by Fr. Bong Tupino. As he did last December 4 when the first group of over a hundred lectors-commentators were being commissioned, Fr. Bong told the congregation that the lecoms had gone through the renewal seminar, attended various formation talks, and were voluntarily recommitting themselves to be proclaimers of God's Word. And as he did last December 4, he asked the congregation to give them a big hand. The second group of lectors-commentators, numbering around 40, had missed the December 4

Everlasting God, when he read in the synagogue at Nazareth, your Son proclaimed the good news of salvation for which he would give up his life. Bless these Lectors and Commentators, as they proclaim your words of life, strengthen their faith that they may read with conviction and boldness, and put into practice what they read. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Just before the end of the mass, there was an appeal from the Missionaries of the Poor, who were selling tickets to 'Messiah', the Jamaican reggae musical of the 'greatest Truth ever told'.



commissioning and this was their last chance to get commissioned for 2017, or else they would have had to sit out 2017.

Fr. Bong then asked the lectors and commentators to go to the front for the formal commissioning and blessing. CTK's parish priest gave the standard prayer of blessing, exclaiming:



First General Assembly . . . cont.

Eastern Orthodox Church, this artistic iconography is known as the Theotokos of the Passion. The Joseph iconography to the right of the crucifix is St. Joseph, Patron of the Universal Church. It was Pope Pius IX, who had a special devotion to St. Joseph, who gave him the title in 1870 because of his dignity, holiness, and glory as spouse of the Blessed Virgin and foster father of Jesus Christ. Nineteen years later, in 1889, Pope Leo XIII issued an encyclical explaining why St. Joseph is the Patron of the Universal Church.



Fr. Bong explaining the symbology of the icons at the Divine Mercy Chapel



Fr. Bong also gave out the two papers that he had first given out at the Parish Pastoral Council meeting. The first was by Fr. James H. Kroeger on 'the parish as a community of missionary disciples' and the second was by Amado L. Picardal on 'BECs as agents of communion, participation and mission'. He asked the lectors and commentators to go through them and ask themselves how they can contribute to the propagation of the parish as communion of communities and to the advancement of BECs in the CTK communities. Fr. Bong explained that the ministry of lectors & commentators is the largest 'BEC community' in the parish with its 150 members.

CTK Parishioners Join CBCP's Walk for Life at Luneta

parish cook Adette prepared sandwiches and water for the bus travellers.

Police estimated that about 10,000 people joined the 'Walk for Life' march and prayer rally Saturday starting at dawn at the Rizal Park, carrying placards that read "Choose life", "No to death penalty", "No to the culture of death", "Thou shalt not kill". Organizers gave a much larger estimate of the crowd, citing 20,000 to as high as 50,000, coming from at least 21 Catholic dioceses in Luzon and from other Christian churches.

It was the latest sign of the Roman Catholic Church's increasing activism against a government crackdown that has left thousands of drug suspects dead and efforts by pro-Duterte legislators to re-impose capital punishment as early as March. In early February, in its most strongly worded attack on the crackdown on drug pushers and users, a CBCP pastoral letter read out at services across the country said killing people was not the answer to trafficking of illegal drugs.

The Walk for Life, which was organized by the Sangguniang Laiko ng Pilipinas, the lay arm of the CBCP's Episcopal Commission on the Laity, was put in motion after the Catholic Church expressed alarm over the killings of more than 7,000 people so far since Duterte assumed office June 30 of last year. More than 2,500 had died in shootouts during raids and sting operations, according to the police.

Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) president and Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Socrates Villegas urged the Filipinos Catholics to never live in terror, even in the face of violence and looming attempts to reinstate the capital punishment. "The sun will soon rise. There will be hope. Never be afraid of darkness. Never live in fear," said Villegas. "This is standing up for the godly tradition that is truly Filipino because a real Filipino is pro-God, pro-

life," Archbishop Villegas said before the crowd. "This is mentioned in our Constitution. This means that if the Filipino people would break away from God and if the Filipino would not



respect life, then he or she would be less of a Filipino because it is inherent in us as Filipinos to be pro-God and pro-life." When asked if he was hoping President Duterte would listen to the prayer rally's message, the Catholic bishops' leader said: "What I believe is that God will listen to our prayers. If God listens to our requests, what is there to fear?"

The archbishop said Walk for Life is not a protest but "a commitment to the sacredness of life given by God. Killing would not resolve the country's problems and would only result in rampant aggression. All sins against God begin with blasphemy, or trying to destroy the honor of God," Archbishop Villegas said. "We cannot teach that killing is wrong by killing those who kill. It also increases the number of killers," he added. "The public should have the courage to fight against violence. Let us face those who threaten us and show our inner strength. They cannot scare us because our faith in God is stronger," he said. "Instead of restoring the death penalty, cleanse the ranks of the police, reform the judiciary and strictly enforce rules in our

penitentiaries," Villegas said. He also called the "Walk for Life" prayer rally a "Walk for God."

Manila Archbishop Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle, who also joined the rally, called for strengthening and promoting the culture of non-violent movements. Echoing Pope Francis' message for this year's World Day of Peace, Cardinal Tagle called for a renewed culture of "active non-violence" in addressing the country's challenges. He said that non-violence is not passive as Jesus was a tireless worker of love in action. "But we believe that we cannot stop violence also by violence," said Tagle. "If the response to violence is also violence, we double the violence." He called on





The CBCP Episcopal Commission on the Laity Chairman and Manila Auxiliary Bishop Broderick Pabillo said that the event was an expression of the public's opposition against the problems in the society that threatens the dignity and sanctity of life including the imposition of death penalty, abortion, the proposed laws on divorce and same-sex unions, and planned distribution of condoms in school. The message, he said, is "that the people are standing up for life and they are against these methods of



death, such as death penalty and extra-judicial killings. So I hope that the government will listen to the people," Pabillo added.

For her part, the Sangguniang Laiko ng Pilipinas National President Zenaida Capistrano said that "Walk for Life" is not a protest rather, it is an expression of the gratitude for the gift of life that is given by God.

The event began at 4:30am with Mrs. Capistrano welcoming the participants. The slow walk then started at 5:00am. The short program after the walk commenced with a Doxology performed by the members of Don Bosco Youth Center in Tondo, Manila, followed by musical presentations from Glee Nette Gaddi and Ooberfuse. Bishop Pabillo gave a short inspirational talk followed by the Panalangin ng Bayan, and Praise and Worship, which was led by the Couples for Christ Global.

The Walk for Life formally ended at around 9:00am, with the CTK parishioners on the chartered bus, led by Benjie and Wins Mirasol, arriving back at CTK by 11 am. Other members of the Parish Pastoral Council noticed in the Luneta crowd included Mustard Seed Ministry head Amelia Alba,

Acropolis Village Coordinator Irene Robles, Greenmeadows Village Coordinator Eileen de Leon, Knights of Columbus head Boy Angeles,



Catechetical Ministry co-head Sheryl Coronel, BEC head Tiny Perfecto, Vocation co-head Louie Laudico, and Youth Ministry Coordinator Althea Geronilla. The Mirasols also took note of PPC assistant Jeffrey Dacleson's contribution, who looked out for everyone in the CTK group, and thanked parishioner Nandy Pacheco for treating the bus group to an Aristocrat's breakfast.

the Filipino people to help save the lives of those who are facing imminent danger. "While we are here, we have to save the lives of those who are at risk. We can save their lives when we show concern and love," Tagle said. And an even greater cause for concern, he said, is the indifference of many to these violence. "It's sad to see, and sometimes tearful, that it's becoming just a normal thing," he said. The Cardinal said the "Walk for Life" rally was intended to "save lives, such as of pregnant women and the unborn child, those who are hungry, and the youth on the street, who must be freed from the influence of illegal drugs, abuse, prostitution, pornography, gambling and other vices."

Bishop Honesto Ongtioco, head of the Diocese of Cubao to which CTK belongs, was also in attendance, together with five other diocese heads.

With the Walk for Life, the Catholic faithful expressed its strong stand for the value and dignity of human life. The march was a powerful advocacy on care, protection and defense of all human life from conception to natural death, as well as due process for law offenders, humane treatment of criminals and adequate rehabilitation for those involved in drugs.

Ash Wednesday at Christ the King Parish Greenmeadows

and fasting. The practice includes the wearing of ashes on the head, symbolizing the dust from which God made us and reminds us that life passes away on Earth. As the priest or Eucharistic Minister applies the ashes to a person's forehead, he speaks the words: "Repent, and believe in the

Gospel." Ashes also symbolize grief, in this case, grief that we have sinned and caused division from God. Writings from the Second-century Church refer to the wearing of ashes as a sign of penance. The ashes are made from blessed palm branches, taken from the previous year's palm Sunday Mass.

The Lenten season is one of penance, reflection, and fasting which prepares us for Christ's Resurrection on Easter Sunday, through which we attain redemption. Officially, Lent runs from Ash Wednesday to Holy Thursday before the Last Supper of the Lord.



It was 'full house' at the CTK main church in all the masses, especially the 12 noon and 7:30 pm masses, with parking areas all filled up, including street side. Fr. Serge Maniba officiated the 12 noon mass and was assisted with ash giving by a full complement of Extraordinary Ministers of the Holy Eucharist.

CTK Parish Pastoral Council Kicks Off Way of the Cross Fridays

For six straight Fridays of Lent and Holy Friday, Christ the King has scheduled the Way of the Cross at the main church, right after the 6:00 pm masses, starting the First Friday of Lent, which is March 3, through March 10, March 17, March 24, March 31, April 7, up to Good Friday on April 14. These Friday Way of the Cross had been assigned to various mandated organizations, renewal movements, and ministries.

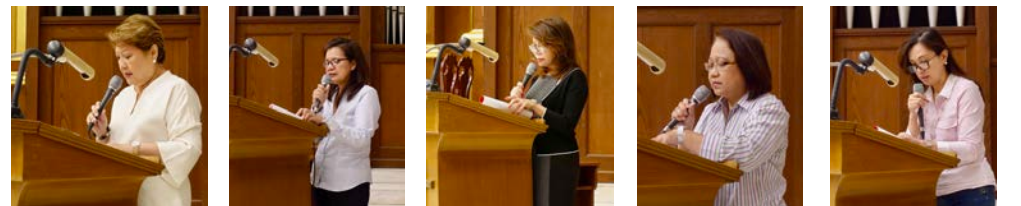
Tuesdays and Thursdays Way of the Cross had also been scheduled for the

villages - March 7 Tuesday at Greenmeadows 1, March 9 Thursday at Acropolis, March 16 Thursday at White Plains, March 21 Tuesday at Corinthian Hills, March 23 Thursday at St. Ignatius, March 28 Tuesday at Corinthian Gardens, March 30 Thursday at Arcadia, April 4 Tuesday for Enclave, Ivory Court and Greenmeadows 3, and April 6 Thursday at Libis.

The March 3 Way of the Cross was led by Fr. Serge Maniba, with PPC officers doing the Scripture and Meditation readings for each of the 14 stations.



Top view during March 3 Way of the Cross; below, PPC readers prepare for the readings.



Some of the PPC members who did the Way of the Cross readings last March 3, clockwise from top left: Anna Lagman, Leila Banico, Fely Ong, Loung Cuartero, Kim Cua, Bert Santos, Marie Anne Santos, Elise del Rosario, Maan del Rosario, and Alma Yeh. Others included Althea Geronilla, Dulce Barretto, Linda Guanzon and Bing del Rosario.



Bible Enthronement Sunday

January 29th was Bible Enthronement Sunday at Christ the King and its satellite chapels in the various villages of Corinthian Garden, White Plains, Corinthian Hills, Saint Ignatius and Acropolis. January 29 was the culmination of the National Bible Week, which began January 23, 2017. A specific family was identified beforehand to lead the enthronement and the accompanying prayer. At the January 29th 6 pm mass officiated by Fr. Bong Tupino, the enthroners were Malou Vinco and family.

Bible Enthronement is a celebration of the Word of God. It's a rite which started in the early part of the Church but was lost through the years. During the Second Vatican Council, the meeting of Bishops from all over the world held in Rome from 1962 to 1965, the Bible was solemnly enthroned every morning at the opening of their sessions. Through this liturgical ceremony the bishops reminded themselves that they could only effectively PREACH the Good News if they first LISTENED to God's Word. Since then, in many Church gatherings like Congresses, Conventions Workshops, meetings, retreats and recollections, the first activity would always be the Enthronement of the Bible.

We enthrone the Bible to remind us of the importance of the Bible in our life as Christians, especially in our life as proclaimers of the Word. The Word of God - Jesus, the Divine Word who became a person like us - is our distinctive mark as workers of a Catholic Church, who speaks to us through his printed word in the Bible.

In all the January 28 (anticipated) and January 29 masses, the officiating priest introduced the ceremony by praying:

Lord, we are gathered here today to enthrone this bible for our use as a family. You are blessed and the source of every blessing. Be with us now and whenever we use this symbol of our faith, the bible.

The family members came forward in front of the bible stand, made the sign of the cross on the bible they were carrying, then the most senior family member opened the bible and placed it on the stand. Another member of the family led the following prayer:



Lord God, we have heard your words. They give us joy and bring light and truth into our lives. Your presence gives us peace in our troubled and divided world. Let your Word create in our hearts a deep desire for you. Be with us in our hearts and homes, in our community and country. Give us your Holy Spirit to help us to understand your Word. We enthrone now this Holy Bible in our midst. Make your Word the center of our lives. Make your Word inspire all that we think and say and do. May your Word bind us together in unity with each other and with you, today and forever.

Then the entire congregation is enjoined to recite the final prayer:

We promise to respect the Word of God in our midst. We shall read and reflect on it as a family of God. May we draw from it inspiration for our decisions, strength for our work, and comfort in suffering. Jesus, help us to be faithful to our promise, you who live forever and ever.

First Monday Mass at the Crypt

Christ the King Parish Greenmeadows regularly conducts a First Monday Mass for the Dead at the CTK Crypt at 4 pm. Last February 6, a first Monday, Fr. Ricky Montanez officiated the mass. In attendance were several parishioners whose loved ones were interred or 'inurned' in the CTK columbarium vaults.

The practice of offering the holy Mass for the repose of the soul of the deceased originates in the early church. The catechism teaches, "From the beginning the church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God".

In light of the saving work of Our Lord Jesus Christ, we believe that when a person dies, he faces his particular judgment and must render an account of his life. If that person has died fundamentally believing in God and in a state of grace, but with venial sins and the hurt caused by sin, then God in His divine love and mercy will first purify the soul. After this purification has been completed, the soul will have the holiness and purity needed to share in the beatific vision in heaven. The faithful here on earth can help those souls undergoing purification. The Vatican Council II affirmed: "Just as we pray for each other and share each other's burdens now, the faithful on earth can offer prayers and sacrifices to help the departed souls undergoing purification, and no better prayer could be offered than that of the holy sacrifice of the Mass."



Christ the King Parish invites everyone with loved ones inurned in the CTK crypt to attend the First Monday Masses and pray for their departed loved ones.

Fr. Larry Tan Conducts Healing Service During World Day of the Sick

In celebration of the World Day of the Sick last February 11, the 7:30 pm anticipated mass was presided by Fr. Larry Tan. After the mass, he conducted the Healing Service. Parishioners had been encouraged since the week before to bring their sick elderly relatives and friends for healing of body, mind and spirit. And indeed, a large than usual percentage of the audience consisted of the elderly.

By 8:15 pm, at the end of the mass, no one was moving, a clear sign that nearly everyone had come for the healing service. The parishioners were instructed to line up in two rows in the center aisle, then those in front were escorted to form a line on the steps leading to the altar. Fr. Larry went up and down the line, praying over each devotee then moving on to the next. When he



reached the left or right side, he made his way back even as the people who received the healing left their place.

Several parishioners fell backward, into the ready supportive hands of the Eucharistic Ministers of the Holy Eucharist volunteers. Technically, they had been 'Slain in the Spirit' or 'Resting in the Spirit'. 'I fell over backwards,' said one such parishioner. 'My knees just decided they didn't want to hold me up and I lay on my back for a minute, fully awake but feeling peaceful and refreshed.' Other comments overheard: 'The healing service was very touching'; 'I felt really empowered by the Holy Spirit after I was prayed with.'; 'I received a tremendous peace of mind.'

The healing service, held annually every February 11 in celebration of the World Day of the Sick, was sponsored by the LSS (Life in the Spirit Seminar) Prayer Group and Healing

Ministry, headed by Bobby and Margie San Juan. Mila del Fonso was in charge of priest and reader arrangements.

Pope John Paul II initiated the World Day of the Sick in 1992 to encourage people to pray for those who suffer from illness and for their caregivers. The Pope himself had been diagnosed with Parkinson's a year before, in 1991, and it is considered that his own illness was impetus for his designation of the day.

World Day of the Sick was first observed on February 11, 1993. February 11 is also the Catholic Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, which a name is given to the Virgin Mary in honor of the apparitions that were seen in and around Lourdes, France, by young Bernadette Soubirous. And did you know that Pope Benedict XVI declared his decision to resign from his post as the Pope on this day in 2013? He cited his failing health as the reason behind his decision.

From the Vatican, Pope Francis announced, 'On this Twenty-fifth World Day of the Sick, I once more offer my prayerful support and encouragement to physicians, nurses, volunteers and all those consecrated men and women committed to serving the sick and those in need. I also embrace the ecclesial and civil institutions working to this end, and the families who take loving care of their sick. I pray that all may be ever joyous signs of the presence of God's love and imitate the luminous testimony of so many friends of God, including Saint John of God and Saint Camillus de' Lellis, the patrons of hospitals and healthcare workers, and Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta, missionary of God's love.' ■



Blessing of Throats on the Feast of Saint Blaise

Saint Blaise was the bishop of Sebaste in Armenia during the fourth century. Very little is known about his life. According to various accounts, he was a physician before becoming a bishop, a 'physician of souls'. His cult spread throughout the entire Church in the Middle Ages because he was reputed to have miraculously cured a little boy who nearly died because of a fishbone in his throat. When Blaise was put in jail in Sebastea, the mother of the child whom Blasé had saved came to him and brought two fine wax candles in an attempt to dispel the gloom of his darkened cell. Which is why Saint Blaise is often depicted holding two crossed candles in his hand. And from the eighth century onward, he has been invoked on behalf of the sick, especially those afflicted with illnesses of the throat.



On the day of his feast on the 3rd of February, the blessing of St. Blaise is given: two candles, blessed the day before on the feast of the Presentation of the Lord ("candlemas"), are held in a crossed position by a priest or the lay minister and the people are touched on the throat with them, one at a time. At the same time the following blessing is given: "Through the intercession of St. Blaise, Bishop and Martyr, may God deliver you from every disease of the throat and from every other illness." Then the priest makes the sign of the cross over the faithful. This annual blessing of throats is a traditional sign of the struggle against illness in the life of the Christian.



Fr. Bong officiated the February 3, Friday 6 pm mass and at the end of the mass led the blessing of throats. Given the large number of parishioners wishing to be blessed, he was assisted in blessing duties by Eucharistic Ministers Boy Angeles and Chito Gomez. ■

Blessing of Candles at the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord

The Christ the King Parish Greenmeadows celebrated the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord last February 2, a Thursday. At 5:50 am before the 6 am mass, at 6:50 am before the 7 am mass, and at 5:50 pm before the well-attended 6 pm mass, all just outside the Divine Mercy Chapel, the congregation gathered for the traditional Blessing of Candles.

In obedience to the Old Law, the Lord Jesus, the first-born, was presented in the Temple by his Blessed Mother and his foster father on the fortieth day after his birth. Joseph and Mary brought the Child Jesus into the temple along with a humble sacrifice of young pigeons as a sign of thanksgiving. Jesus' presentation signified God's entrance to His temple. God-made-man entered His temple, presenting Himself to those who were really searching for Him, which included



Simeon and Anna. God promised Simeon that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah. When Simeon saw Jesus, he took the baby in his arms and blessed the Lord and said: "Lord, now let Your servant go in peace according to Your promise, because my eyes have seen Your salvation which you have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory to your people Israel." Also, in the Temple was Anna the Prophetess. Anna was about eighty-four years old, had been a widow for many years, and spent her time in the Temple worshipping, fasting, and praying. When she saw the Christ Child she praised God and spoke of him to all who were awaiting the Messiah.

The Presentation of the Lord is also known as Candlemas day, since the blessing and procession of candles is included as part of the liturgy. Christ is the light of the nations, the 'light of the world', as well as, in the words of Simeon, 'the light to enlighten the Gentiles', hence the **blessing of candles** on this day. The

faithful take them home and light them when they need Christ' intervention such as in times of illness or bad weather.

Fr. Ricky Montañez was the 6 pm mass officiator and he also blessed the candles. He greeted the congregation as follows:

Forty days have passed since we celebrated the joyful feast of the Nativity of the Lord. Today is the blessed day when Jesus was presented in the Temple by Mary and Joseph. Outwardly, he was fulfilling the Law, but in reality he was coming to meet his believing people. Prompted by the Holy Spirit, Simeon and Anna came to the temple. Enlightened by the same spirit, they recognized the Lord and confessed Him with exultation. So let us also, gathered together by the Holy Spirit, proceed to the house of God to encounter Christ. There we shall find Him and recognize Him in the breaking of the bread, until he comes again, revealed in glory.

Afterwards, Fr. Ricky blessed everyone's candles and said the following prayer:



Oh God, source and origin of all light who on this day showed to the just man Simeon the Light for revelation to the Gentiles, we humble ask that, in answer to your people's prayers, you may be pleased to sanctify with your blessing (+)these candles, which we are eager to carry in praise of your name, so that, treading the path of virtue, we may reach that light which never fails.

Fr. Ricky then sprinkled the candles with holy water, got a lighted candle, and led the procession towards the chapel, announcing, "Let us go forth in peace". ■

Memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes

Last February 11, the Catholic world celebrated the Memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes. We call 'Message of Lourdes' the gestures and words that were exchanged between Virgin Mary and Bernadette Soubirous, at the Grotto of Massabielle, during the time of the eighteen apparitions. This message can be heard as: God is love and he loves us as we are.



In her 16th apparition, when Bernadette asked her name, the Lady answered, "'I am the Immaculate Conception". Bernadette did not immediately understand what those words meant.

Lourdes, France: City of Miraculous Cures



Since the Apparitions, Lourdes had to deal with about 7000 cases of unexplained cures. 69 cases have been recognized as miraculous by the Church at this time. As Lourdes earned the reputation as the city of the miraculous cures, each year, some 80,000 sick or disabled persons from all over the world come to Lourdes to touch the rock of the Grotto. In the very early years, the locals were so moved by the sick patients from all over the world that they spontaneously decided to help. This group, who have become known as the Hospitaliers, have grown in size over the years and can be seen helping in the hostels, at the train station, then at the airport, on the esplanade of the Rosary, at the Grotto, and at the baths. ■

How Do You Pray 2000 Hail Marys

For February and March, the First Saturday 2000 Hail Marys were held on February 4 and March 4, led and coordinated by the Legion of Mary. The devotion started, as is usual, at 7:30 am and ended at the expected 4:00 pm and was held at St. John A and B Hall, its regular venue. The next sessions for the first half of the year will be on April 1, May 6, and June 3.

Praying 2000 Hail Marys is a very

powerful intercessory prayer. The gathering prays this private devotion to Our Lady, asking her for any kind of favors, and trust that God will grant them through our Lady's powerful intercession. Combined with your faith and sincerity of heart, these are graces or intentions which our Mother Mary will intercede for you.

The full-day devotion starts with the prayer to the Holy Spirit. This is followed by the 15 Mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary. There are 20 general petitions, with each petition being read before 100 Hail Marys. Every person in the group gets to lead the prayer of a round of 100 Hail Marys. The expectation is to finish the 2,000 Hail Marys in 7 to 9 hours.

The Legion of Mary is a lay apostolic association



of Catholics who, under the leadership of Mary Immaculate, Mediatrix of All Graces, serve the Church and their neighbors on a voluntary basis in about 170 countries.

In March 1989, the first LoM praesidium was established in Christ the King Parish Greenmeadows with the name 'Mary Queen of Peace'. Just a year later, that praesidium gave birth to a second, the Immaculate Heart of Mary'. The Mary Queen of Peace praesidium is currently headed by Mila del Fonso while the Immaculate Heart of Mary praesidium is headed by Ruby Borja.

A key objective is the spread of Marian Devotion, particularly that of the rosary. So it's natural that the Legion of Mary leads the First Saturday Devotion with 2000 Hail Marys as well as spearhead the activities of October Rosary Month. ■



Spotlight on Mary's Legionnaires at CTK

The first meeting of the Legion of Mary took place in Dublin, Ireland, in September 1921. Drawing its inspiration from the True Devotion to Mary, as taught by St. Louis Marie de Montfort, and which had a profound influence on the Founder of the Legion, the Servant of God, Frank Duff, the Legion is at the disposal of the Bishops and Priests for use in the mission of the Church.

Evangelization, especially the seeking of conversions to the Church, is a priority for the Legion, hence home visitations. Seeing and serving Christ in the sick and marginalised is another vital part of the legionary apostolate, thus projects like feeding programs.

Back in November 2015, Fr. Bong Tupino



took the Legionnaires on an outreach activity to the Servants of Charity, a home for the rejected and abandoned boys with disabilities. The Legionnaires distributed gift bags and lunch packs.

Most recently, last December 29, the Libis BEC headed by Ching Botero and Jo Piyaw teamed up with the Healing Ministry, which counts several members from among the Legionnaires, to bring Fr. Momoy Borromeo to visit and pray over bedridden elderly Libis residents.



More regularly, the legionnaires go on prison visits to Camp Karingal every 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month. Prison inmates always welcome being able to chat and discuss their personal problems with the LOM volunteers.



Fr. Bong Tupino Celebrates 51st Birthday with Parishioners

by Leila Banico



Parishioners and friends of Fr Bong from Christ the King and from his previous parishes joined Fr Bong as he celebrated his 51st birthday last January 26, 2017. His special day commenced with the Eucharistic Celebration at 7am at the Divine Mercy Chapel, his thanksgiving mass, which was also the Memorial of Saints Timothy and Titus, Bishops.

His brother-priests, Bishop Raul Martinez, Msgr Tony Mortillero, Msgr Rig de Guzman, Fr Serge Maniba, Fr Ricky Montanez, Fr. Allan Samonte & Fr Ronald Plomillo, concelebrated the mass with Fr Bong.

He shared during his homily why he was named Jose III. Being the first son, his father, Jose Jr, told him that his grandfather, Jose Sr, wished him to be a soldier too. Though he

never imagine himself a soldier, his grandfather's wish eventually came true - he became a soldier of the Lord. ■



Fr. Herbie Santos Celebrates First Ordination Anniversary

Fr. Herbert 'Herbie' Santos, parochial vicar of Sta. Rita de Cascia Parish, celebrated his first presbyteral ordination anniversary at Sta. Rita de Cascia Parish in Philam Homes last Wednesday, February 22 at 6 pm. Assisting him in the Eucharistic celebration were none other than Bishop Honesto Ongtioco, Msgr. Dan Sta. Maria, Msgr. Tony Montillero (representing Fr. Bong Tupino and the rest of the CTK clergy), Fr. Vic de Jesus, the San Jose Seminary Rector when Fr. Herbie entered the seminary in 2009, Fr. Gelo Parlan, former Parochial Vicar of Christ the King Greenmeadows Parish, and several other clergy from and outside the diocese of Cubao. It will be recalled that Fr. Herbie, a CTK



parishioner, was ordained last February 22, 2016 the Feast of the Chair of St. Peter the Apostle, at the Immaculate Conception Cathedral of Cubao, which was also attended by Archbishop Soc Villegas. Eleven months earlier, in March of 2015, Herbie was ordained to the Sacred Order of Deacons at Christ the King Church. Reverend Herbie was the first-ever diocesan deacon (and a few days ago the first-ever priest) from the parish of Christ the King-Greenmeadows.



The attending congregation was touched when Fr. Herbie mentioned and acknowledged the understanding, support and love from his parents Bert and Marie Anne Santos, the current head Lay Coordinator couple for the CTK Parish Pastoral Council, who also led the offertory procession. Other members of the Santos family were also in attendance.

In the reception that followed, Bishop Ness Ongtioco quipped that the title of the write-up on Fr. Herbie should be 'He left CTK a parishioner, he came back a priest'. The CTK Parish Pastoral Council was ably represented, aside from Bert and Marie Anne Santos, by Assistant Lay Coordinator couple Henry and Joyce Tañedo, Secretary couple David and Fely Ong, Treasurer couple Bing and Elise del Rosario, and Vocation Ministry couple Louie and Nel Laudico. ■

Bishop Raul Celebrates 79th Birthday

Bishop Raul Q. Martirez, former Bishop-Emeritus of San Jose de Antique and now retired guest bishop at Christ the King Parish Greenmeadows, celebrated his 79th birthday last February 9.



In a joyous Eucharistic mass at 7 am at the Divine Mercy Chapel, Bishop Raul celebrated his thanksgiving mass, assisted by Fr. Bong Tupino, Msgr. Tony Mortillero, and Fr. Serge Maniba. The mass was followed by a breakfast salusalalo. He had so many well-wishers,



right out of the chapel door all the way to the entrance of the Formation Center that it took Bishop Raul more than 15 minutes to get to the Formation Center entrance. Then it took him another 25 minutes to make his way to the door of Matthew and Mark rooms where all the tables were occupied, with tables set up even in the hallway. Inside, the parishioners still couldn't get enough of the super-amiable bishop as he was being tugged this way and that by different groups wishing to have their picture taken with him. He even had two female serenaders. He also had to blow the candles from two different birthday cakes. It was clearly a testimony to his popularity that Bishop Raul was only able to sit down and eat at 9 am.



popularity that Bishop Raul was only able to sit down and eat some goto at 9 am.

In 2002, at the age of 65, Bishop Raul took official retirement and spent a year with his parents before joining



CTK as its resident retired bishop – and he's been associated with Christ the King Parish Greenmeadows for the

last 15 years. Despite his 79 years of age, Bishop Raul continues to assist with CTK affairs, celebrating one or two masses every weekend, celebrating the occasional daily



masses, officiating at some weddings, baptisms, confession sessions, etc. Up to 2015, Bishop Raul also regularly acted as Pilgrimage Chaplain for the annual European and Holy Land pilgrimages led by CTK. His unmatched knowledge and deep background into biblical history and pilgrimage geography had made him much sought-after as pilgrimage chaplain.

One thing's for sure – Bishop Raul's many parishioner friends can't wait to celebrate his 80th birthday 325 days from now.



Buklod ng Panginoon Celebrates the Christmas Season at Barangay St. Ignatius

Buklod ng Panginoon, one of the renewal movements in Christ the King Parish but localized to Barangay St. Ignatius, celebrated the 2016 Christmas season with several projects. One was the Share a Toy, Share a Joy program, to benefit the kids at Libis. Buklod leaders put up a large drop box for the toy donations at their parish center. The Libis kids were later picked up and treated to a Jollibee children's

St. Ignatius Village Misa de Gallo



Photos and information provided by Agnes de la Cruz

St. Ignatius barangay leaders were also very proud that a week before, last December 16, their barangay received two awards from the Quezon City government and the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) at the Barangay Seal of Good Housekeeping awarding ceremony. The event was held at the UP Bahay ng Alumni. Barangay St. Ignatius received the awards for 'Good Financial Housekeeping' and for 'Best Practices and Innovations'. Tiny Perfecto was part of the BSI team that received the awards.



party at St. Ignatius.

On December 24th, St. Ignatius, through coordination efforts of Buklod working with the village coordinators, mounted a successful dawn Misa de Gallo, with Fr. Ronald Plomillo as president. This was followed by a 6 am salu-salo breakfast at the barangay center open terrace.



Brgy. St. Ignatius receives 2 Awards from the Quezon City Govt. and DILG

We Meet Sr. Leopolda Ledesma of Fatima

Sister Leopolda, nee Barbara May Ledesma, curator of the Fatima Museum and a member of the Oblate Sisters of the Virgin Mary of Fatima, was on a brief visit to the Philippines. Fr. Bong Tupino of Christ the King Parish Greenmeadows invited Sr. Leopolda to speak to a select group of parishioners last February 13 before she flew back to Fatima, Portugal. The



invitation was most timely considering that the entire Catholic world is celebrating the Fatima Centennial this year.

She began her one and a half hour talk by stating that in the midst of the world's darkness and despair, the light of Fatima is the solid ground where Catholics can find the fundamental truths of faith and which remains a symbol of hope for the future. Sr. Leopolda emphasized that one of the most precious spiritual heritage of Fatima, and the soul of the Fatima message, was 'devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary'.

she argued, to not resign ourselves and be indifferent to the evil and sufferings around us. It's a call to prayer, a call to sacrifice, and a call to penance for the sins of the world.

Sr. Leopolda differentiated Fatima from Lourdes and the other apparitions – a much longer dialogue, almost a century) with humanity; the inclusion of historical and political view as she talked about war and peace as well as Communist Russia; and a strong concern for the future that's not central to the other apparitions.

She explained that the 1917 apparition was in the context of World War I. The war started in mid 1914 and by May 2017 had drawn in 32 countries, with the United States officially declaring war on Germany one month before the apparitions started. And the war would last a full year and half after the first set of apparitions. It's in this historical context that Lucia paraphrases the Virgin Mary to say, 'Let us thrust our gaze in the world and what do we see? War, hatred, ambitions, plunder, theft, vengeance, fraud, homicide, immorality. Men who consider themselves wise and powerful continue to plan other wars, death, misery, disgrace, bloodshed. They are drowning the very people they are obliged to help and save.'

And which is why, Sister Leopolda emphasized, that it was important that Our Lady appeared to the three shepherd children. Through the universal agony of war, She was the light, beauty and joy who would bear witness to the faith. The Virgin Mary was to be the witness to hope in a time of despair, a witness to trust in a time of mistrust and suspicion, and a witness to joy in a time of great



difficulty in life. And the most important admonitions of the Virgin Mary of Fatima to the three children and the hundreds of thousands who heard their words?

1. Pray, pray very much. The most holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary have designs of mercy on you. Offer prayers and sacrifices constantly to the Most High.
2. Make of everything you can a sacrifice and offer it to God as an act of reparation for the sins by which He is offended. And in supplication for the conversion of sinners. You will thus draw down peace upon your country.
3. Above all, accept and bear with submission the suffering which the Lord will send you.

Of the three, Lucia lived the longest and witnessed the most apparitions. In 1925, for example, on December 10, in Pontevedra, Spain, Lucia saw the first apparition of Our Lady with the Child Jesus, later prompting the institution of devotion of the First Five Saturdays. On the 13th of June 1929, in Tuy, Spain, Mary came to Lucia to ask for the consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. 'The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to me, and she will be converted, and a period of peace will be granted to the world.' And this vision was manifested during the perestroika of Mikhail Gorbachev and the symbolic fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Lucia also expressed one of the most profound Trinitarian doxologies: 'O Holy Trinity whom I adore and love and to Whom I will sing eternal praise! In me, You are light, You are Grace, You are love! I immerse myself in You and I dwell in the love of Your presence.' And it's the same Lucia who looked back on the apparitions almost a century later and reflected that 'the aim of the apparitions was to make us grow in faith, hope and charity'.

Sr. Leopolda also reflected on the assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II's life back in 1May 13, 1981. John Paul II credited his survival to the Lady of Fatima, the date of the assassination attempt coinciding with the anniversary of the first Fatima apparition. 'On that tragic 13th day of

May 1981, one hand pulled the trigger and one maternal hand deflected the bullet.' On May 13, 1982, exactly a year after the attempt, Pope John Paul II traveled to Fatima where he met Sr. Lucia for the first time.



At the end of her talk, Sr. Leopolda led the audience in singing the Ave de Fatima:

The thirteenth of May in the Cova da Iria
 Appeared, oh, so brilliant, the Virgin Maria
 Ave, Ave, Ave Maria (x2)
 To three little shepherds Our Lady appeared
 The light of Her grace to her Son's soul endeared
 Ave, Ave, Ave Maria (x2)
 The Virgin Maria encircled with Light
 Our own dearest Mother and Heaven's delight
 Ave, Ave, Ave Maria (x2)

She was asked during the open forum where the adopted name Leopolda came from. She narrated that on a visit to Padua, the Oblate Sisters came across St. Leopold Mandic, or St. Leopold of Castelnuovo, a Croatian Capuchin friar who suffered from disabilities that plagued his speech and stunted his growth. Despite this, he became extremely popular as a confessor and spent most of his adult life in Padua, Italy. He dreamt unceasingly about reuniting the Catholic and the Orthodox churches of Eastern Europe. He became known as an Apostle of Confession and an Apostle of Unity. Her fellow sisters teased her about taking on his name. When the time came for her to nominate a name for herself, she thought back on the encounter with St. Leopold, shrugged, and said to herself 'why not'. After all, he was even shorter than she was, standing at only 4'5".

A Chance Encounter with Sr. Leopolda



Father Lemuel Camacho, a Fil-Am and former nursing supervisor and now a newly-ordained priest in the Diocese of Essex County, New Jersey, USA recounted how he came to the priesthood. During his 2008 pilgrimage to Fatima, RN Lemuel, who had been mulling a late transition to the priesthood, had his hands folded in prayer, looking for a sign - any small signal - from the Blessed Mother about his possible call to a priestly vocation. Down on bended knee in the Chapel of the Apparitions at the Our Lady of Fatima Shrine in Portugal, he asked Mary in an informal way, "What do you want me to do, Mother?" Then nurse Camacho rose up and started walking out of the Chapel of the Apparitions when, at the door, a religious sister, whom he had never met, unknowingly answered his question about vocation by asking him a question - "Are you the priest I've been waiting for?" "No, I am not," nurse Camacho told the religious sister. When he visited, he was just dressed in jeans and a nice shirt but the museum curator thought he was a priest. Later on, before he left Fatima, he asked the religious sister whom he met at the door why she asked me that question. She replied, 'Maybe you got your answer'. The nun was **Sister Leopolda Ledesma**. There in the prayerful majesty of Fatima, Registered Nurse Camacho took that seemingly random incident as the Blessed Mother's sign that he should pursue the priesthood. Shortly after his return from the pilgrimage, the former nursing supervisor applied to the Paterson Diocese and in August 2009, Father Camacho began his priestly studies at Immaculate Conception Seminary at Seton Hall University, South Orange. ■

'A Million Roses for the World' delivered at Fatima

by Sr. Maria Leopolda Ledesma, Oblate of the Virgin Mary of Fatima

On the 15th of December 2012, during the recitation of the Rosary at the Chapel of the Apparitions, at Fatima, Portugal, for the so-called "Reparation Hour", Fr. James Phalan CSC, director of Family Rosary International, offered "to the Holy Trinity, through the intercession of Our Lady of Fatima, prayers for Peace of more than one million people in the Philippines and around the world".

He made an offering, on behalf of the Filipino people: a book of names of more than 200,000 devotees who formally adhered to the 200-day rosary campaign which ran from October 7, 2011 to May 31, 2012.



The campaign was called "A Million Roses for the World": praying the Rosary for peace in the world, one country at a time, praying for its people. Fr. James, who has been director of the association for almost six years now, felt such a great privilege to celebrate the Sacrifice of the Mass at the same Chapel in the morning and in the afternoon, hand over to the Shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary, through one of the chaplains of the Shrine, Fr. Manuel Silva, the names of those who, with great fervour and trust, have offered the much-loved prayer of the Rosary to Our Blessed Mother.

At the end of the Rosary, he proffered words of praise and thanksgiving (in Portuguese) for the good outcome of the campaign which brought to the hearts of many a great desire to start or continue the Rosary devotion, which Our Blessed Mother, here, in Fatima, had recommended to the shepherd children in 1917.

A small group of Filipinos headed by the consul-general of the Philippine Embassy in Lisbon, Ms. Josena Estrada, participated during the Rosary recitation and presented the offering to Our Lady. With much gratitude for the marvelous graces and blessings which our Blessed Mother continues to obtain for Her children, we pray that the devotion of the Rosary be practiced more devoutly and faithfully not just here in Portugal but throughout the whole world. ■

Fatima Shrine Prepares Full-Year Calendar for Centennial

The Shrine of Fatima has a full-year schedule to celebrate the 2017 centennial of the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima. Communication elements include the design of official symbol or logo, a commemorative medal, countdown timer, posters, a centennial video, plus various merchandising.



100 internationally well-known personalities will be invited to record short testimonies about Fatima which will be aired on radio and made available online. Related is an 'online mural' of testimonies, where any and all pilgrims of Fatima can make a short video declaration that will be shared on social networks.

There will be an official centennial hymn, which will be the outcome of a music and lyrics contest. An official itinerary will be prepared for would-be pilgrims, to include alternative paths, and recommended meditations and prayers at each important point in the itinerary. Pilgrims who arrive in time for the First Saturday will be presented with a program to experience the devotion.

Aside from the celebration of the Apparitions of the Lady of Fatima, on schedule also are celebrations of the Apparitions of the Angel, as well celebration of the Day of the Shepherds.

Since late 2015, conferences had been scheduled, with the overarching theme of 'I came that they may have life'. For 2017, two conferences remain - March 12 featuring 'The Maternal Intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary'; and April 9 featuring 'The Marian devotion as evangelizing dynamism'.

Possibly the centennial project that will gather the most attention will be the International Congress of the Centennial of Fatima 2017. The International Congress takes place from June 21 to 24. In that Congress, several dimensions of Fatima will be studied, in an interdisciplinary perspective: Theology, Sociology, Psychology, Culture, History, Art, etc. Related to this is the Mariological Marian International Congress, targeted at academicians of Marian schools around the world, scheduled from September 6 to 11. Then from September 26 to 29 is the European

Marian Network, a symposium for the rectors of European Marian shrines. Other training scheduled throughout this year includes: a course on the Message of Fatima explaining the fundamental elements of the apparitions of Cova da Iria, structuring the thematic contents, and outlining theologically the several aspects of these apparitions; Training for Trainers on the Fatima Story and Message, which offers a historical itinerary of the event and of the century of Fatima, a description of the protagonists of the event, a deepening of the main theological axes of the message, and the most relevant lines of a cultural analysis of

Fatima.

Several videos and films are also in the pipeline - the documentary 'Fatima in the World'; a film on the apparitions of the Angel; a documentary on the link of the popes to Fatima; and a documentary on the lives of the Shepherds of Fatima.

The Message of Fatima will also be manifested in a new 'catechism wall'; a Fatima prayer-a-day; and several planned apps for iPhones and Android devices. Publications will include: an edition of the Memoirs of Sister Lucia; a book on the songs of Fatima; a picture book. A cultural magazine 'Fatima XXI' is also in the works. A second book for children is also being drawn up, to follow the first children's book, 'The Mission of Francisco'.

There are several temporary exhibitions planned for 2017, such as the full Vatican manuscripts of Sister Lucia on the 3rd part of the Secret; the Christ of the Trenches, from the Monastery of Batalha; and Fatima and the Popes.

The organ of the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima has been recently reconstructed and will feature in a series of organ concerts. The opening concert is set for March 20, through a program of different styles, covering nearly 300 years of music, emphasizing on the world premiere of Hu yeshûphekâ rô'sh composed by João Pedro Oliveira, based on the first prophecy of Mary in the book of Genesis, and commissioned by the Shrine of Fatima for the occasion, as well as the final improvisation that will be performed based on the theme Ave Maria de Fátima. On May 8, there will be a concert by organist Antonio Esteireiro, who will explore the German music during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including some of the great organ's classics of this period, and Ave-Maria of Max Reger and Karg-Elert. On June 5, there will be a concert exploring

100 years of contemporary music, by the organist Antonio Mota, including in the program the Suite Mariale of Maleingreau. Filipe Veríssimo will be the organist who will present 100 years of sacred music, on July 10. In addition to two works of Marian themes, there will be a monumental Symphony of the Passion of Marcel Dupré, emblematic work of the early twentieth century. Giampaolo Di Rosa, on August 14, will perform a concert which program will be exclusively based on improvisations on hymns related to Fatima, composed and sung for the last 100 years. João Santos, the official organist of the Shrine of Fatima, will end the cycle by performing a concert on October 9, presenting 100 years of French music of César Franck a Messiaen, and including several excerpts from 15 Versets sur les Vêpres du commun des fêtes de la Sainte Vierge.

Aside from organ and orchestra concerts, 'sacred music' concerts are also on tap. A concert for choir, piano and accordion on fragments of Memoirs of Sister Lucia will be presented on April 3, 2016. On June 23, the Lisboa Cantat and Orquestra Sinfónica Juvenil choir, under the direction of Christopher Bochmann, presents 'Singing Fatima', a concert interpreting works of Fr. Joaquim dos Santos, inspired or dedicated to Fatima. The Concert ends with the interpretation of the Ave de Fatima conducted by Yugo Matsumura. There will also be several children's and youth choirs who will be performing throughout 2017.

Musical fragments, or talks with meditative music, have also been scheduled. Traditions of Baroque Sacred Music: Tânia Ralha, Nélia Gonçalves and Júlio Dias, is on offer on March 12, 2017; and Mary in our time: Coro Anonymus, April 9, 2017. The 2017 Easter concert of the Shrine of Fatima features the Escolania of Montserrat, one of the oldestboys' choirs in Europe. Under the direction of Castelló Llorenc, the choir's prestige is internationally recognized; it is invited to perform all around the world. Its abundant discography proves to the artistic quality of the choir. Through music, these boys are messengers of peace and beauty; with the universal language of music and crossing all kinds of borders, they speak directly to the hearts of those who listen to them. Date: April 23, 2017.

A closing concert has also been planned for October 13, the last day of the 1917 apparitions, featuring the world premiere of the works of composers James Macmillan and Eurico Carrapatoso commissioned by the Shrine of Fatima exclusively for the celebration of the Centennial of the Apparitions, to be performed by the Gulbenkian Orchestra and Choir.

Fatima Image in Cebu



The international pilgrimage image of the Our Lady of Fatima arrived at the Cebu Metropolitan Cathedral as part of its worldwide tour to mark the 100 years of the Marian apparitions in Fatima, Portugal, February 9, 2017. The statue will travel to parishes, schools, and other venues along the tour in Cebu before being brought to Taiwan on Feb. 15.



Note: The diocesan phase of the process for the canonization of Sister Lucia de Jesus (1907-2005), one of the three seers of Fatima, ended recently and the collected material had been handed to the Congregation for the Causes of the

Saints, in Rome. The initial part of the cause for canonization of Sister Lucia began in 2008, three years after her death, after the now emeritus Pope Benedict XVI granted a dispensation regarding the five-year waiting period stipulated by Canon Law.

The Most Holy Virgin in these last times in which we live has given a new efficacy to the recitation of the Rosary to such an extent that there is no problem, no matter how difficult it is, whether temporal or above all spiritual, in the personal life of each one of us, of our families...of the life of peoples and nations that cannot be solved by the Rosary. There is no problem, I tell you, no matter how difficult it is, that we cannot resolve by the prayer of the Holy Rosary.

– Sister Maria Lucía of Fatima

Pope To Go on Pilgrimage to Fatima on the Centennial

Francis will come “in pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima from the 12th to the 13th of May.”

Pope Francis will be in Fatima from the 12th to the 13th of May 2017 “in pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima”. The information was officially communicated to the Shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima by the Vatican, which announced through the Press Room that “on the occasion of the centennial of the Apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Cova da Iria, and acknowledging the invitation of the President of the Republic of Portugal and of the Portuguese bishops, His Holiness Pope Francis will go on pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima from the 12th to the 13th of May 2017”.

For the bishop of Leiria-Fatima, it is a moment of “great joy” because, during the centennial, through the presence of the Holy Father “we are united to the whole universal church”. “Whenever the Pope pilgrims as the universal pastor, it is the whole church that pilgrims with him”, and therefore, “on this occasion I want to express the joy and gladness that the official announcement of this pilgrimage of the Holy Father brings to the Portuguese people and to the whole Church in Portugal”.

“The Pope wants to make himself a pilgrim among the pilgrims of Fatima and this is a cause of great joy”, says bishop António Marto in a message given to the Press Room of the Shrine of Fatima. The prelate underlines also the “responsibility” of the Shrine for “it’s not about receiving the Holy Father only as a pilgrim and pastor but receiving the message that he will be bringing”. “Therefore”, he concludes, “one has to profit from this pilgrimage for the renewal of faith”.

The rector of the Shrine of Fatima also underlined “the great joy” with the confirmation of these two dates of Francis’ visit to Cova da Iria. “It’s a great joy because we know that these days will be of a pilgrimage marked by this festivity that is the centennial, and on the other hand, because it marks the presence of a Pope amongst us and a very loved Pope such as Pope Francis”, states the rector in a declaration to the Press Room of the Shrine. Fr. Carlos Cabecinhas reminds that this satisfaction is accompanied by a sense of “responsibility for us to conveniently prepare ourselves through prayer”. “What is requested from us is the availability to listen to the teachings of the Holy Father” pointed out the Rector underlining that “Francis always has a prophetic word”.

On the 7th of September, last year, during the meeting of the Portuguese bishops with the Pope on the ad limina visit, Francis showed a “deep desire” to visit Fatima, by stating: “tengo ganas de ir a Fátima (I want to go to Fatima)”. And he had already said it as well, in private, to the bishop of the diocese of Leiria-Fatima, in April 2015, that “if God gives [me] life and health” he would be in Cova da Iria to celebrate the centennial of the apparitions of Fatima. Francis will be the fourth chief of the Catholic Church to visit Fatima after Paul VI (1967), John Paul II (1982, 1991 and 2000) and Benedict XVI (2010).

The international trips of the Popes are something new that started from the second half of the twentieth century, with the pontificate of Paul VI (1897-1978), who during the last session of the Vatican II Council announced the intention of offering a Golden Rose to Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima. Since then, Portugal entered in the apostolic visits route right on the fifth trip of this Italian pontiff, on the 13th of May 1967, on the 50th anniversary of the Marian apparitions, recognized by the Catholic Church, in Cova da Iria.



Fatima transforms itself in the main engine of the five pontifical trips, after Pius XII had already consecrated the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, on the 31st of October 1942, in the middle of the Second World War. Paul VI wanted to personally come to Fatima on the 13th of May 1967, having decided that the plane that brought him from Rome would land in Monte Real, and that he would be hosted in the then diocese of Leiria (Leiria-Fatima today).

John Paul II, whom on the 13th of May 1981 had been hit by a bullet in Saint Peter’s Square, on an attempt on his life – came to Cova da Iria a year after, thanking publicly the intercession of Our Lady of Fatima in his recovery. In May 1982, on the anniversary of that first attempt on his life, Karol Wojtyła (1920-2005) arrived at Fatima to “thank the Divine Providence in this place which the mother of God chose in such a particular way”. The Polish Pope came back in Portugal nine years later: on the 10th of May 1991, John Paul II celebrated Mass in the Restelo Stadium and travelled afterwards to Azores and Madeira, before coming in the Shrine of Fatima, on the 12th and 13th of May. During four days, Saint John Paul II delivered 12 interventions and still sent a letter, from Cova da Iria, to the Catholic bishops of Europe, who were preparing a special assembly of the synod of the bishops, dedicated to the Old Continent. On the 12th and 13th of May 2000, already with a fragile health, John Paul II came back to Portugal to preside to the beatification of the little shepherds Francisco and Jacinta Marto. In the same occasion, the announcement of the publication of the third part of the so-called “Secret of Fatima” was made.

Benedict XVI visited Portugal from the 11th to the 14th of May 2010, to mark the tenth anniversary of the beatification of Francisco and Jacinta Marto, passing in Lisbon, Fatima and Porto. In 2017 will be the turn of Francisco. As it was with Paul VI, he will concentrate his visit exclusively in Cova da Iria, where on the 13th of May the then patriarch-cardinal of Lisbon, bishop Jose Policarpo, consecrated the pontificate of the Argentinian pope to the Virgin Mary. ■

The Fatima Prayers



The prayers taught to the children at Fatima are simple in structure and profound in depth. To a world poor and needy in faith and charity, these prayers stress ancient truths of our Holy Catholic Church... especially concerning the Holy Eucharist and Mary, the Immaculate Mother of God.

Pardon Prayer

My God, I believe, I adore, I trust, and I love thee! I beg pardon for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not trust, and do not love thee.

The Angel's Prayer

With the Blessed Sacrament suspended in the air, the angel at Fatima prostrated himself, and recited the prayer:

O most Holy Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—I adore thee profoundly. I offer thee the most Precious Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ—present in all the tabernacles of the world—in reparation for the outrages, sacrileges, and indifference by which He is offended. By the infinite merits of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I beg the conversion of poor sinners.

Eucharistic Prayer

This prayer stresses that most beautiful truth—that the all-powerful, all-loving God is upon the altar at every Catholic Mass.

Most Holy Trinity, I adore You! My God, my God, I love You in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Sacrifice Prayer

Our Lady taught the children a prayer to be said when they would have something to offer up to God... such as some suffering, or an act contrary to what they wanted to do but which was necessary in order to please God.

O my Jesus, it is for love of You, in reparation for the offenses committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and for the conversion of poor sinners.

Decade Prayer

Our Lady asked that the following prayer be inserted after each decade of the Rosary:

O my Jesus, forgive us our sins; save us from the fires of hell; lead all souls into Heaven, especially those who are in most need of thy mercy.

Indulgence Opportunities During the Centennial Anniversary

Pope Francis has granted a plenary indulgence opportunity for the 100th anniversary of the Fatima apparitions throughout the centennial year, from the 27th of November 2016 till the 26th of November 2017. There are three ways to obtain the indulgence, detailed in a statement from the Fatima Shrine in Portugal.

- 1. Make a pilgrimage to the Shrine in Fatima, Portugal.** To the faithful who make a pilgrimage to the Fatima Shrine in Portugal and participate in a celebration of prayer dedicated to the Virgin. In addition, the faithful must pray the Our Father, recite the Creed and invoke the Mother of God.
- 2. Pray before any statue of Our Lady of Fatima.** To the faithful who visit with devotion a statue of Our Lady of Fatima solemnly exposed for public veneration in any church, oratory or proper place during the days of the anniversary of the apparitions, the 13th of each month from May to October 2017, and there devoutly participate in some celebration or prayer in honor of the Virgin Mary. In addition, the faithful must pray the Our Father, recite the Creed and invoke Our Lady of Fatima.
- 3. The elderly and infirm.** To the faithful who, because of age, illness or other serious cause, are unable to get around, may pray in front of a statue of Our Lady of Fatima and must spiritually unite themselves to the jubilee celebrations on the days of the apparitions, the 13th of each month, between May and October 2017. They must also “offer to merciful God with confidence, through Mary, their prayers and sufferings or the sacrifices they make in their own lives.”

To obtain the plenary indulgence, the faithful must also fulfill the ordinary conditions: go to Confession and Communion, be interiorly detached from sin, and pray for the intentions of the Holy Father.

Counting Down to May 13



The Shrine of Fatima just inaugurated the “timer of the centennial”, which counts down to May 13, 2017, 100 years after the first apparition in Cova da Iria. The Timer of the Centennial, located in the north top side of the Prayer Area of the Shrine of Fatima, shows the days, hours, minutes and seconds remaining until the centennial of the first apparition of Our Lady to the shepherds.

PPC Treasurer's Report on the Uses of Funds for 2016

The Parish Pastoral Council spent a total of PHP 5,751,622.14 on its various programs for 2016. Almost 70% of this amount was allocated to Social and Development Service programs which include scholarships, feeding programs, outreach to the elderly and prisoners, medical missions and livelihood programs, and kasambahay recollection activities. The PPC organizations responsible for execution are the: Catholic Women's League, Ladies of Charity, Apostleship of Prayer, Buklod ng Panginoon and Knights of Columbus.

The Worship Ministry which includes the EMHCs, Lectors, Greeters and Collectors, Altar Servers and Choirs accounted for 8% of expenses for the on going training and preparation of the various servers in the holy mass. This is followed by the Formation Ministry, which embarks on programs such as talks, recollections and bible studies. These and other Ministry expenses are shown below:

Social Services & Development Ministry	
▶ Catholic Women's League	790,872.52
▶ Ladies of Charity	2,305,726.80
▶ Apostleship of Prayer	158,115.00
▶ Buklod ng Panginoon	161,090.80
▶ Knights of Columbus	547,200.00
Total SSD Ministry	3,963,005.12
Formation	430,845.81
BEC	59,548.00
Worship	449,122.50
Youth Ministry	260,236.25
Catechetical Ministry	8,410.00
Public Affairs	16,383.00
Vocation	49,730.00
Family & Life	101,828.20
Parish Pastoral Council	209,759.68
Media	33,344.98
Flores de Mayo	169,408.60
Other Ministries	1,788,617.02
Grand Total	5,751,622.14

For 2017, budgeted expenses was 15% higher than 2016 expenses. It will be noted that two new ministries, the one for the Elderly and Mustard Seed had been added. It is hoped that the enthusiasm of the ministries as they plan for their 2017 activities can be matched by the funds raised by the Stewardship Committee this 2017.

Stewardship Committee's 2016 Financial Report

The Stewardship Committee recently released the 2016 financial highlights covering the stewardship offerings and the share turned over to Christ the King's Parish Pastoral Council for its various pastoral projects.

Total Stewardship offerings received in 2016 amounted to P9,490,607.00, compared to P10,820,321 in 2015. Of this, P5,400,000 was turned over to the Parish Pastoral Council in regular tranches as its share. The PPC used their share for the various parish pastoral programs (see separate Herald article on these expenses).

P3,600,000 was turned over to the Diocese of Cubao as its share. This is used to support the catechetical instructions in public elementary and high schools, continuous formation for seminarians and priests, and helping the poorer parishes in the Diocese.

In addition to these two large allotments totaling P9M, there were donations with specified uses, such as the P62,000 intended for San Jose Seminarians. Up to March 2016, the Stewardship Committee still received offerings to cover 'Mission and Gifts', the 2015 program.

P267,222 was spent on the Committee's regular promotional expenses. The Stewardship Committee started the year with a cash balance of P1,579,536 and ended 2016 with a cash balance of P1,432,772.

	2015	2016
Beginning balance, Jan 1	1,779,471.87	1,579,536.91
Offerings Received	10,820,321.00	9,490,607.00
Interest Earned & Receipts	19,168.54	56,350.84
Total Cash	12,618,961.41	11,126,494.75
Disbursements:		
Share CTK Pastoral	5,400,000.00	5,400,000.00
Share Cubao Diocese	3,600,000.00	3,600,000.00
Received for Mission & Gifts	1,650,000.00	364,500.00
Received for Seminarians	11,500.00	62,000.00
Received for Other Purposes	23,000.00	
Promotional Expenses	354,924.50	267,222.15
Total Disbursed	11,039,424.50	9,693,722.15
Ending Balance, Dec 31	1,579,536.91	1,432,772.60

Fr. Lucas on 'Our Parish: Haven of the Wounded Heart'

The CTK Stewardship Committee sponsored its first Spirituality of Stewardship talk series for 2017, with Reverend Father Francis B. Lucas. Last February 4. The talk was entitled "Parish: haven of the wounded Heart. Fr. Francis is currently the President and CEO of the Catholic Media Network and also executive secretary of the Philippines-Episcopal Commission on Social Communications and Mass Media. He was introduced by OLPH Vicariate Stewardship Lead (and former CTK Stewardship Committee

God. We are His stewards, who will take care of everything that He has given us.

Second, trust. Trust allows us to let go of what is seemingly in our control and to let God do what he is already doing for us. Thus the saying "Let go and let God". The end result is peace of mind, brought about by acceptance. At the same time, we must be trustworthy also.

Third, gratitude. This is all about appreciating the gifts we have been given and thanking God for all the



blessings. With gratitude, we say "I am not trying to seek what I don't have. Rather, I appreciate what I already have." With greed and envy on the other hand, we would say "I want more, more, more."

And fourth, love. As God loves us, we love God. It is the most basic requirement of a Christian. Fr. Francis also explained that Charity and love are the same thing; they

head) Ben Famador.

Fr. Francis, a seasoned animated speaker, began by defining spirituality. "It's the sense of connecting to something bigger than ourselves, the sense of being alive and interconnected. And often it involves the continuous struggle to find meaning in our life", said the speaker. To Catholics in particular, spirituality is totally giving oneself to the Creator.

Many parishioners think of stewardship as all about time, talent and treasure. But Fr. Francis clarified that underneath them are the four widely-accepted core stewardship values.

First, identity, that is, man is made by and for God, in His image and likeness. Fr. Francis said that the implication is profound - If I am not my own, then all the things that I "own," and all that I have are not mine either. They are lent to me by God; they are given to me by

are interchangeable. We use them all the time in theological context. But if you're going to move it into a spiritual context, that means if you are going to love, you are going to have to give of yourself.

It was unfortunate that Fr. Francis ran out of time to talk about the generational differences, spirituality as it related to the family, and the parish role as a 'hospital' for the spiritually wounded. Perhaps the Stewardship Committee would consider bringing him back for the continuation of his talk? ■



Leadership Transition: Meet Benjie and Wins Mirasol

Couple Benjie and Wins Mirasol formally took over the reins of the CTK Stewardship Committee as they presided over the February 4 monthly Stewardship Committee meeting, held at the convent conference room.

At the meeting, Benjie and Wins reviewed with the group the major 2017 plans and programs of Stewardship discussed in the PPC planning meeting last year and the status of implementation of these programs. Upon review of results of past programs, priorities were set for continuation of those programs which have yielded positive results and possibly introduce further enhancements to them for

those programs which have yielded positive results and possibly introduce further enhancements to them for increased effectiveness.

These include the quarterly Spirituality of Stewardship talks for parishioners, the Stewardship promoters meetings, Sunday mass promotion of Stewardship through First Fruits Sunday, and stewardship petition in the Prayers of the Faithful. In addition to these programs, new initiatives were discussed and will be reviewed in the next monthly meetings. The aim is to increase awareness of the evangelization components of the stewardship program even beyond CTK's regular mass patrons and offerors.

and community development project for the Cubao diocese parish workers. The couple has also been part of the Stewardship Committee since its founding in 2005. They have also helped the Family and Life Ministry in the conduct of the pre-cana Marriage Vocation Programs (MVP) and the Kasalan ng Bayan.

Benjie and Wins have been active members of Couples for Christ (CFC) since 1998 serving the CTK Chapter in various capacities. Benjie currently serves as one of the founding directors for CFC's "Build My Church" program which assists various parishes construct and rehabilitate chapels throughout the country.



Benjie has long been associated, since Msgr. Mora's time, as the head of CTK's Music Ministry, scheduling the various choirs, musicians and singers for the ten weekend masses and the 17 daily masses (three masses daily Monday to Saturday) on top of novenas and other special celebrations. He is also currently project director for Pabahay ng Diocese, a housing

Benjie continues to teach at the Ateneo School of Management while Wins had just recently retired after 35 years in IBM Philippines and now does volunteer work as a director for the Pasig-Pateros chapter of the Philippine Red



Aside from CFC, GK CTK, Pabahay ng Diocese, Music Ministry, MVP, etc., Benjie and Wins, also do 'apostolic' work with grandkid Kiara

Interviewing the Mirasols re Stewardship in the CTK Parish

Q: First, what is the vision for Stewardship in the parish?

A: The vision is that every CTK parishioner discerns how best he or she can give back to the Lord for the blessings received, whether in parish work, giving of his time, talent and treasure, or beyond the church boundaries and practicing stewardship in the home, family, workplace and in all areas of the steward's influence.

Q: And how do you assess the 'Stewardship As a Way of Life' program in CTK?

A: The Stewardship program in Christ the King has grown steadily during the past 10 years of its existence and has been recognized in the diocese for its decent growth and active contributions to the diocesan plans and programs. At this point, we have to conclude that our work of Stewardship awareness and commitment remains a work-in-progress as we have learned that each parish is quite unique in its response to its call.

Q: What's needed to get to the next level?

A: We need to expand the program offeror base to more parishioners sharing their time, talent and treasure, in the parish and beyond. Also, we are grateful to the many

parishioners who have responded positively to the treasure portion of stewardship but it continues to remain a challenge for us in the committee to get these regular donors to commit their other stewardship portions - their time, their talent - towards the needs of the parish and the community. For those who do wish to give beyond treasure, we will match their interests and talents to the needs and opportunities identified by the CTK ministries and organizations.

Q: How is the Stewardship Committee currently staffed? Are you open to accepting interested parishioners into the Committee?

A: Current staffing of the CTK Stewardship Committee remains small but appropriate for implementation of its current plans and programs. At the moment, we are in the midst of discussing new initiatives apart from the continuation of old programs that have become fixtures in our annual plans. For these new initiatives if we decide to pursue, new talents will be required and therefore necessarily new members will be recruited. On a long-term basis, the recruitment of new members into the core group is a vital component in insuring stewardship program continuity and growth in CTK. The committee is open to all those interested to contribute on a

regular basis their time and talent to promote Stewardship, as a committee member or as a Stewardship promoter. Please contact us if you have the calling.

Q: How do you intend to come up with new Stewardship initiatives for 2017 and beyond?

A: We continually pray for guidance from the Holy Spirit in planning and implementing stewardship programs while getting inspiration also from the work done by many other parishes both here and abroad. We also plan to tap others outside the parish and diocese. For the March monthly meeting, for example, the Committee has invited the executive director of the Socio-Pastoral Institute, Mr. Jose Clemente, to help the team discern new approaches to promoting stewardship in the community.

Q: And lastly, what drives you to take on this new responsibility?

A: We're simply mindful that God has blessed us as a couple with some talents and resources to use in His service and it is but right that we stretch ourselves to be worthy to be given these gifts. As have all the people currently active in the parish's various ministries and organizations.

Meet the Other Members of the Stewardship Committee

Angel Vloria was recruited into the committee by Nick and Mila Pena, who first led the Stewardship Committee.

Angel is the author of the book 'Live to Give', a little handy booklet that is given to promote stewardship in the parish, and 'Mom's a Stewardess - Stories of Stewardship', published by Claretian Publications. Her book won the Best Book in Family Life award at the 2009 Cardinal Sin Catholic Book Awards.

Angel has more than 25 years of work experience in the academe and in credit rating. She is currently connected with PhilRatings as VP and Head, Credit Rating.

Candy Florcruz, Committee Secretary, is an accountant by profession. She is currently retired after more than 25 years in the banking sector.

Alex Quizon, Treasurer, has been with the Stewardship program since its launch in 2005. Alex comes from the banking sector and since retirement, he and his wife Carol, have been active in various organizations in the parish.

Jing & Girlie Alampay have served in different capacities also in the parish and the couple are currently in charge of Public Relations in the PPC. Jing is currently Chairman of Digiscript Philippines, Inc. whose services include High Definition Laser Scanning, Digital Heritage Preservation, Pointcloud Processing Solutions, Creative Digital Media, As-Built Solutions & Consulting.

Jing and Girlie and their children have been active supporters of the CTK PREX and PREX Youth program.

Lino Cortes (not in the picture), Auditor, is the newest member of the Committee, taking over from Fortune Cruz, who had recently "retired" from his role in the stewardship program. Lino and his wife are active parish workers in their village Sunday masses as lay minister and lector-commentator.



Doy & Estrelle Lopez Answer the Call for Ministry to Care for the Elderly

CTK parish priest Father Bong Tupino had always argued that CTK parish does a decent job of ministering to the pre-school children through the Mustard Seed Ministry, to the youth through the Youth Ministry and PREX Youth, to the families and married couples through the Family & Life Ministry, but there continues to be a void as far as ministering to the elderly is concerned. The parish currently has a few activities that involve senior citizens, e.g., EMHC's giving communion at the homes of the bedridden in the villages; Ladies of Charity providing medicines to a couple of dozen super senior ladies in the Libis community; ditto with the occasional healing visits initiated by the Healing Ministry. But the sense is that there is still no concerted effort to address the spiritual, formational, educational, emotional, physical and communal needs of the elderly in Christ the King Parish Greenmeadows, whether they live in the gated villages or in the Libis sitios.

So in late 2016, Fr. Bong appointed Doy and Estrelle Lopez, who had just stepped down as long-running head couple for the Family and Life Ministry, to take on the challenge of formally setting up to minister to the elderly in the community. The Lopezes had taken time off during the first quarter 2017 to take a long-needed vacation and have recently come back to share their first thoughts.

First things first, the Lopez couple



First things first, the Lopez couple proposed a new name, the Sunrise Ministry, the rationale being that senior years are often referred to as sunset or twilight years, a negative term. Hence, they've flipped this on its head and have decided to call their ministry 'Sunrise'.

After discussions with the Ladies of Charity regarding possible physical exercise programs, interviewing resident Bishop Raul Martirez, himself a super senior at 79 years old, checking with potential counselors regarding lectures on the topic of 'after midlife', and making preliminary contact with an art café, Doy and Estrelle have begun to think of the broad brush strokes for the ministry, which would include, but not be limited to: physical activities such as daily 'dancercise', potentially in coordination with the Ladies of Charity; creative endeavors such as painting sessions and Ikebana flower arranging; formation seminars related to the spirituality of after midlife years; and fellowship activities, such as volunteer work to help the youth, youth helping the elderly with technology and apps, and regular home visits to those who can't or won't leave their homes.

But the Lopezes admit that it's early beginnings, for example, they haven't yet talked to the Youth Ministry on their youth-related directions. But what they've clearly put in stone is a planning workshop set for March 11 and 12 that should result in very specific plans and projects for 2017. They've also tapped other seniors to work with them in the new ministry. Specifically, they've tapped Jorge and Baby Banal as associate head couple in charge of external affairs; Manolo and Linda Dayrit also as associate head couple. They also brought on board as core group members several Marriage Vocation Program stalwarts, such as Dan and Vinchu Lapid, Louie and Nell Laudico, Benjie and Wins Mirasol, Spanky and Dolly Perez, Nap and Flor Cabello, and Charito Barredo.

Let's wish the new ministry success as they plan out their directions for 2017.

MUSIC MINISTRY

Editor's note: In previous issues, we featured the Hangad Music Ministry, the AP-LOC Choir, and Coro Amadeo. In this issue, we feature two more outstanding CTK choirs.

Chorus Paulinus was established in February 10, 1992 at the St. Paul Parish, Timog Avenue, Quezon City, from where its original name was derived. ChoPa, as it is fondly called, is well known for its acapella-style, a blending of voices that creates an impeccable sound reflective of its high choral standards. The group was founded by Fr. Arnold Zamora, a singer, composer, arranger, conductor and a resident member of the Philippine Madrigal Singers. He also founded the Singing Priests of Tagbilaran. Today, Fr. Arnold remains the

connected with the Archdiocese of San Francisco, USA.

For more than 24 years, the choir has evolved into a performing music group with a passion for excellence in singing. ChoPa's most notable accomplishments include:

▶ **Album releases** – Blessed be God, A Capella in 1999; Joy of Christmas in 1999, released in the USA, and Chorus Paulinus in San Luis Obispo, 2001, released in the USA,

▶ **Choral competition awards** – Best Mixed Choir at the Concorso Coral de Ateneo in 1999; Grand Prize Winner at the UP Los Banos Choral Competition in 1999, and 1st Runner-up at the 1st Wedding Expo Philippines Choir Competition in 2003,

▶ **Local and international concerts and singing engagements:** ChoPa @ 9, USA Tour; Chorus Paulinus...Ten Years



After, in November 2002 at the Philamlife Theater, Manila; Christmas Carolling at Rockwell, Power Plant; Sperare in October 2015 at the Parish of the Hearts of Jesus & Mary, West Triangle; and St. Therese's Story of the Soul in November 2015 at the Clark County Library Performing Arts Center, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA.

Since its inception, ChoPa regards itself, first and foremost, as a church choir and its mission is simply to spread the word of God through music. Currently headed by the highly experienced and vocally gifted musical director, Fred de Santos, Chopa regularly serves at the Parish of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, West Triangle, Christ the King Parish, Greenmeadows, Corinthian Gardens Clubhouse, Quezon City, and also at the Chapel of the Eucharistic Lord, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong, Metro Manila. ■

Meet the CTK Choirs: Novo Concertante Manila

Novo Concertante Manila is a chamber choir from Quezon City, Philippines. It was originally formed as a recital choir, and it continues to reinvent itself as it develops into one of the Philippines' most outstanding choirs. The choir has been honored with the "Ani ng Dangal" award by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts in 2009, 2010, 2013 and 2015, in recognition of Novo's achievements in international choral competitions.

compositions of European masters such as Palestrina, Gesualdo, Monteverdi, Brahms, Mendelssohn, and many others, the Novo Concertante Manila sings interesting folk, popular and contemporary songs from around the world, highlighting music written by Filipino composers and arrangers, such as Francisco Feliciano, Lucio San Pedro, Ramon Santos, Ruben Federizon and Eudenic Palaruan. The choir has premiered many works of its

resident composers and arrangers: Ralph Hoffmann, Jay-el Viteño, Joshua Cadelina, and Tinnah de la Rosa, among others.

The choir has performed in numerous International and local choral festivals such as the XII Festival Internazionale Seghizinregione in

Udine, Italy (2014), 50th Organ and Choral Festival in Kamien Pomorski, Poland (2014), the 7th Organ Festival in Szczecin, Poland (2014), and the 6th International Edmund

Szymanski Choral Festival in Murowana Goślina, Poland (2014), Strings of Unity in Yilan, Taiwan (2014), Glorificamus Te in Manila, Philippines (2014), the Chinese Choral Music Festival in Kuala Lumpur (2010), the 1st Manila Choral Festival (2007), the 2nd International Silent Film Festival (2008), the Jubilate Choral Festival in Singapore (2004), the Mundawit, "Madz



et al" and "A Merry Novo Christmas" Choral Festivals. It was ranked no. 4 in the Top 1000 mixed choirs of the world by the Musica Mundi and Interkultur, Germany in 2015.

The Novo Concertante Manila sings at the Christ the King Church in Green Meadows, Quezon City. ■



The choir's repertoire covers music from the Renaissance period to the 21st century, showcasing the various possibilities of the human voice. Aside from the classic choral