



Community Newsletter

2nd Edition | January 2022



For Unto Us a Child is Born A Reflection on BCBP USA Virtual Advent Retreat

By Polet Tiano

EVERY month of December, Christians all over the world reflect on and celebrate the birth of Christ as prophesied in Isaiah 6:9. But who besides all of humanity is the “us” to which this child is born?

This is the question which the three weekend BCBP USA Advent Retreat answers in the Zoom-based Advent retreat conducted by retreat master/servant Mike Del Prado on November 28 (Session 1), December 5 (Session 2) and 12, 2021 (Session 3).

This 3-part spiritual retreat is composed of 90-minute sessions on the events surrounding the birth of Jesus that draw on the reflections of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and Dr. Scott Hahn. These reflections hope to deepen the participants’ understanding of the Nativity narratives, its true meaning and how it continues to change the world. Besides these objectives, the retreat

focuses on the principal biblical figures involved in the coming and birth of Christ and how the participants identify with their characters. Each of the 3 sessions lasted over 120 minutes (or a total of over 360 minutes) due to extra time for the breakout sessions/group discussions.

Who are these biblical characters? Session 1: Announcements zooms in on Zechariah, Elizabeth, Mary, Joseph; Session 2: Nativity spotlights on Jesus as the Word made flesh, The True King, born in the humility of the manger, and the manifestation to the lowly shepherds; Session 3: The Epiphany/Presentation zeroes in on King Herod, the 3 Magi, Simeon, and Anna. Overall, we learn that man continues the pattern of rejecting God’s word no matter how clear the signs are. We learn from the openness and cooperation of
(continues on page 2)

SPOTLIGHT: The Role of BCBP USA Regional Council Director (RCD)

By Eric Cordeta

As BCBP USA Area Managing Director (AMD) Jun Obra took on the reins to unify BCBP communities in the USA, he appointed seasoned professionals and community servant leaders Eric Cordeta as West Regional Council Director and Jimmy Castro as East Regional Council Director.

As RCDs, Eric and Jimmy serve as pastoral resource of the West region: Los Angeles County Chapter, San Francisco Chapter, Las Vegas Outreach and East Region: New York Chapter, Chicago Chapter, Metro Washington DC Mission, N Chicago Mission, New Jersey Mission.

The Regional Council Director ensures that all Chapter Heads in his region as well as the members of their respective governance teams are well trained and qualified to carry out the tasks attendant to their respective ministries.

He links the chapters and outreaches of his region with the wider Service Area and the National Government.

He must ensure that all directives issued by Mancom are communicated to the chapters and outreaches in the Region. He serves as a conduit of important concerns and issues of the chapters and outreaches in the Region to the Service Area and the National Government.

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For Unto Us... (continued)

Mary and Joseph, the shepherds, the Magi and Simeon and Anna and yearn to have more of their disposition. In contrast we also identify with the doubts of Zechariah, the attraction to the lures of worldly temptations, the indifference and even resistance to God's call to friendship; Session 3: The Epiphany/Presentation zeroes in on King Herod, the 3 Magis, Simeon, and Anna. Questions about Zechariah's lack of faith, Mary's submission, Joseph's obedience, Jesus's incarnation, the Shepherds' witnessing, Herod's kingly anxiety, the 3 Magi's epiphany, Samuel and Anna's fulfillment were raised for the retreat participants to ponder, answer and discuss.

It's an Advent retreat of many firsts. It's the first virtual Advent retreat orchestrated by Jimmy Castro, Regional Council Director (RCD East Region) involving the Area One USA Governance Team with its BCBP communities in Los Angeles County, San Francisco, Las Vegas, New York, New Jersey, Metro Washington DC, Chicago, North Chicago and major cities in the Philippines.

The format by which it was conducted was likewise first-of-its kind involving role-players, speakers, facilitators, music ministry members from USA West and East BCBP communities garnering a total of 230 plus Zoom attendees. Its planning and 6 dry-run/Rehearsals took a total of 18 Zoom hours of the production crew of Sessions 1, 2 and 3, in addition to the countless hours rendered by Retreat Master/Servant Mile Del Prado who conducted sessions 2 and 3 in Manila, Philippines. A total of 16 performing artists from the 3 Sessions devoted numerous hours of reading practice, voice projection, role emotiveness of scripts and storylines. Not to mention 9 facilitators to supervise 15 minute discussion session of attendees in several breakout rooms. All these were made possible by the zoom tech supervision of Arc Vasquez, Rudy Mendiola.

Session 1 Role Player/Readers: Steve Ureta, (SF) Chit Sapico (LV), Mariza Cordeta (LAC), Speaker/Facilitators: Gary Hernandez (LV) Nilda Aronce (SF) Mike del Prado.

Session 2 Role Players/Readers: Getty Escobia (NJ), Bing Custodio (NY), John Heraty (Chicago), Speaker/Facilitators: Jimmy Villacillo (NY), JC Kabingue (MWDC), Ron Bermudez (Chicago)

Session 3 Role Player/Readers: Jeng Tiano (LAC), Mina Obra (Area USA), Speaker/Facilitator: Eric Cordeta (RCD West Region), Jun Obra (AMD Area USA)

West Region Carolers Jess Sundiam, Connie Lubaton, Estrella Grosvenor, Marilyn Alviar, East Region Carolers: Chris Tan and 9



BCBP AREA ONE USA

The Christmas Story An Advent Retreat

The Announcements

Sunday, November 28, 2021
at 5 pm PT, 7 pm CT, 8 pm ET



BCBP AREA ONE USA

The Christmas Story: An Advent Retreat

The Nativity

Sunday, December 5, 2021
at 5 pm PT, 7 pm CT, 8 pm ET



BCBP AREA ONE USA

The Christmas Story An Advent Retreat

The Epiphany & Presentation

Sunday, December 12, 2021
at 5 pm PT, 7 pm CT, 8 pm ET



members pre-recorded and live renditions of Christmas songs respectively.

A color-schematic background screen filter of each of the sessions color motif were supplemented. Dress Code/Motif for Presentors/Session 1: Green, Session 2: Red, Session 3: Gold.

Retreat Servant/Script Writer/Dry-Run Coach: Mike Del Prado. Executive Producer/-Casting & Zoom Director-Coordinator: Jimmy Castro.

Session 1 heralded the message of Hope as presented by West Region. Session 2 presented by East Region expressed the yearning of Love. Session 3 presented by

Area One USA Governance Team projected the season of Joy and Peace. The end of Session 3 was capped by AMD Jun Obra with a pastoral message.

This Advent retreat other than being the first-of-its kind, brought BCBP members who are counties and oceans apart, spiritually together, and this event will be remembered as such in the hope that the coming year will usher in more in-person togetherness among people in general.

In the midst of lingering pandemic and consumerism, we can rejoice and put back Christ into Christmas, for unto us a child is born so that we may be re-born unto Him.

Given Two Years of Pandemic Hardships, What Are the Changes One Must Make to Ensure a Better 2022 for Self, Family and Community?

THIS QUESTION comes to mind as 2021 gives way to 2022 — which demands more than just making the usual New Year's resolutions. To make 2022 a much better year, requires intentionality. Shifts in priorities. Changes in choices.

What with climate upheavals, rising inflation, virus of misinformation spreading, Covid variant Omicron gaining traction, not to mention anxiety and depression proliferating at its highest levels in the U. S. per Mental Health America report.

Jun Obra, the Area Managing Director of USA Area, with the Governance of BCBP USA on his shoulders has this to say:

The Pandemic proved to be a total life's reality check, a transformative force, a wakeup call, a great equalizer, what matters most, is our interdependence, God is our all. My top three focus in 2022 and beyond are: 1. Build relationship - first and foremost, deepen my relationship with God by constantly seeking him in prayers and delighting on His words in scriptures/devotionals; committed relationship with family, relatives, brothers and sisters in BCBP. 2. Keep fit and healthy physically, mentally, emotionally. Back to basics via simple living, no extravagance nor luxuries. 3.

Serve BCBP with passion to bring about a transformation of hearts and minds among the members towards fullness of the BCBP way of life.

Rinkoy Dumanag, the Formation Director of USA Area Governance says:

2022 will be a great year, we have learned so much from the past two years from better use of technology, better use of our time and resetting our priorities. The past two years allowed us to pause and ponder what really matters. It allowed us to break the routine and see that things can be better if only we are willing to do things differently. It gave us the courage to try new things for it is only in doing things differently that we can see different results. But most of all it taught us to lean more on our God and trust Him more fully especially on matters beyond our control.

Eric Cordeta, Regional Council Director of USA West Region explains that:

People out there now seem to understand more clearly that there is more to life than working to make money to buy things, more to life than seeking to be comfortable and entertained. Quietly and steadily many people, of all ages and in every walk of life, are deepening

their faith or making new decisions about what is important in their lives and how they want to live.

These are positive signs which I believe is an opportunity for our BCBP community to go out and evangelize. Now is the time for rebuilding with God, starting from the most basic foundations of our mission, vision and core values. We have just concluded our area wide 5-year strategic planning and came out with action plans. So let us work on our action plans and go out and invite young businessmen and professionals to our breakfasts.

We are here for one purpose, to evangelize, to proclaim Christ, to tell the beautiful story of Christ's love for us, expressed in his dying and rising from the dead for us and for our salvation, and what that means for how we live our lives.

For Christians, navigating the Year 2022 may find in Romans 8:28 a spiritual roadmap. Paul says: **All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.**

Currently, Covid-19 has claimed more than 5.39 million lives all over the world. So, how can these rising death toll leading to an impending global economic hardship “work together for good?” Non-Christians may agree or disagree.

But to a Christian who knows and loves God, the light at the end of the tunnel is shining brightly. Paul who wrote his Epistles —not in a cozy, study room with a nice outside view of nature but inside a dark, dingy, dungeon says it's all for good. We all read that Paul, after his conversion from being Saul, went on to progressively know and love God, despite all the horrible things he went through for preaching the Gospel. And, he certainly understood how all things work together for good or how things get synergized. So did Joseph, who was sold as a slave by his envious brothers, wrongly accused as a rapist, and thrown to rot in prison. And so did familiar biblical heroes like Job, Moses, David ...

They all seem to have acquired something remarkably opposite that of a PTSD or Post



A Better 2022... (continued)

Traumatic Stress Disorder. Modern Psychology calls it PTG or Post Traumatic Growth: a positive personality change following traumatic life events. This simply means that subjected to a traumatizing situation, an individual may reveal him or herself as either a sinker or a swimmer.

So, here's the good news to all Christians and non-Christians alike. Knowing and loving God make all the difference in the world. PTG or Post Traumatic Growth confirms that even as God allows adversity to happen, He is right behind you in trials and superintends all forms of trauma. This explains how growth happens in spite of harsh and oppressive conditions or situations. God causes growth to happen even if you're between a rock and a hard place.

This is certainly good news to those struggling to know and love God—especially nowadays. Take heart. We can all rest assured that in God's eternal perspective, which Paul has an insight on together with other biblical heroes, nothing good is ever lost or ever wasted in the universe.

No matter how bad things turn out, there is a purpose under heaven which we can hang our hearts unto. No matter how small or simple a good act is, it shines through in God's eyes, more so when such an act is borne out of faith in Him.

Yes, the pandemic is a setback, but it is also a set up. If indeed it's a setup, then now is the time for spiritual growth to take place in us. Why? The Gospel tells us that if there's anyone who can endure intense, crisis-caused suffering because of the knowledge and certainty that the purpose of God is behind it, he or she must be a Christian.

But there's more. A Christian, on top of his or her endurance longevity or PTG (Post Traumatic Growth), has a storehouse of goodness which can generate an outbreak of kindness to all in need of help, comfort, compassion, and renewed spiritual direction leading to a much better outlook in life. These are the days a Christian is made and called for.

When all seems dark or seemingly lost, look at whatever crisis in the eye and declare boldly: nothing good is ever lost or ever wasted in the universe. Rest yourself in Romans 8:28 and be assured that as you get to know and love God more and more, you will certainly shine and persevere through trials and tribulations. Now, try and connect the dots with what Jesus said in Mark 5:13-14 - "You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world."

As for me, the answer to the 2022 question is about attitude and outlook. I agree that in a radically changing world we are in, we need

to make changes and adjustments. But more importantly, we must know where we stand. Where we stand is the key to where we are going.

To make a better 2022, I would endeavor to: *Sustain my pursuit of God's presence and stay plugged in on His redemptive plan and promise of abundant life. Start and end each day with a personal prayer to God as my father and my friend. Increase my knowledge of Jesus through Scripture reading/listening and insight keeping. Live out the gospel message in new and relevant ways to others.*

SPOTLIGHT... (continued)

He makes sure that all policies, directives, and guidelines issued by Mancom and the Board of Trustees are fully implemented by chapters and outreaches in the Region.

He cares for the Chapter Heads and Chapter Heads in training by serving as their Action Group Leader. He acts as their pastoral leader. He attends to leadership development, chapter/Church relationships, and other practical concerns.

He participates in the selection and appointment of major leaders based on the requirements for each position. Any deviation from the prescribed procedure or requirement should be accordingly reported to his AMD.

He is responsible to ensure that chapters in the Region comply with the Financial Policy of the BCBP. Therefore, it is his duty to review the financial statements and tithe reports, making sure that the chapters contribute regularly to the National Operating Fund (NOF) and submit their monthly financial reports.

He leads in the development of Regional Action Plans in line with the Vision and Mission, Community Manual, NSPR Outputs, BOT, and Mancom directives.

He regularly monitors the chapter plans, schedules (Mission, Formation and PSD), and budgets and periodically submits a written report to his AMD regarding the implementation status of such plans.

He provides opportunities and support structures for the evangelization of business people and professionals in his region.

He ensures the availability of the necessary personnel, material and financial resources in his region.

He regularly visits the chapters and

As for those who are still thinking of navigating Year 2022, or those who have made their choices as to what changes they will make to ensure a better year for themselves, their family and community, just know that you and I are the sum total of the choices we have made.

There's plenty of good choices to be made ahead of us. But as one preacher kept on saying to end his sermons on a high note, "We make the choice. HE makes the change."

May God bless us all in forging better pathways to 2022. By Polet Tiano

outreaches of the Region. He conducts chapter reviews and visitations (CRV), represents the BOT and Mancom at major events.

He takes responsibility for the proper mobilization and commissioning of the Senior Leaders in his region.

He evaluates the recommendations of sponsoring chapters with respect to outreach growth and development as well as the proposals for opening new breakfast venues and new outreaches.

He serves his Region with talks and teachings.

As a member of the Service Area of his Region he attends Area Meetings and submits reports concerning his Region.

With these daunting tasks expected of an RCD, it goes without saying that he should be a model of the BCBP member for his region. He should be active in the marketplace, as a business owner or as one employed at a decision-making level of responsibility in his company.

In light of the pandemic, the social unrest and uncertainty in America in the past two years, the RCD should serve as a cheerleader/motivator to community leaders who are impacted with membership retention and recruitment challenges. AMD Jun Obra's goal to unify, foster healthy relationship and instill pastoral care among all members from East and West Region communities may seem like an uphill climb but the RCD must be a rallying voice that God is with us and His protective hand is in all of our lives. Nothing or no one can take us out of the hands of God.

Finally, the RCD serves as an orchestrator towards realizing the one purpose which unites leaders and members together as one community, and that is to proclaim and spread the love of Christ in the marketplace.

God bless One BCBP USA.