

# QC WORD NEWS

The Newsletter of the Verbum Dei Missionary Community of Quezon City



## Sharing A Love That Sets People Free

By Angelo Balsita &  
the Wordnews Team

To be loved and to love.

This is what everyone desires: to be loved and to love. The good news is that YES, all of us are loved by God and all of us have the capacity to love generously as God does.

Armed with this good news, some members of Verbum Dei's youth and adult Schools of the Word from the QC community visited the Molave Youth Home, a center for about 180 children in conflict with the law (CICL).



How important it was to bring to these young ones, through a recollection, the truth that sets everyone free: that **Someone** has loved me, that I am lovable, and that not believing this is what can imprison and destroy me.

While preaching to them, how I longed that their hearts were touched by the words we preached: Have faith in God. Believe. He is setting us free with His Truth, His Way, and His Life.

Personally, I truly felt the grace of the Holy Spirit and His passionate call "to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives." (Luke 4:18)





Missionaries with students of Far Eastern University (FEU)

## Campus Ministry Starts

*The Word News Team with Fr. Vincent Guinoo, FMVD*

Verbum Dei is now helping out with campus ministry at Far Eastern University (FEU) and Philippine Normal University (PNU). This involvement started with the campus minister of the Archdiocese of Manila, who invited the Verbum Dei sisters to help out. The Verbum Dei sisters in turn invited the Verbum Dei priests and brothers to collaborate. Thus, a joint university apostolate has been growing, little by little, since late this year.

“Campus ministry is really not new for Verbum Dei,” says Fr. Vincent “Bong” Guinoo, FMVD. “In other places, we work with universities. This is really part of our effort to keep reaching out to more people, especially young people. The QC *misioneros* have long been exploring options in schools and universities.”

Fr Bong currently celebrates mass at FEU on Tuesdays and at PNU on Wednesdays. “Right now, the campus ministry revolves around the sacraments, mainly the mass. The youth serve as lectors, choir, sacristans,” he said. “Little by little, however, we are trying to introduce the School of the Word. We call it sharing of faith. In FEU, we have had six 1-2 hour sessions already since October. Anywhere from 2 to 6 students come, a mix of boys and girls. They don’t always come at the same time because of class schedules. Last December, we started offering free coffee to those who came. We also invited them to play board games after the sharing sessions. It works! They really stay and enjoy.”

Verbum Dei always needs new blood. “New blood and new vocations,” says Fr. Bong. “This will necessarily come from the youth, both from communities like Pansol and the universities.”

## A Mission for the Deaf

*By Elaine Solomon*

The mission to the Precious Deaf Community of Paco, Manila was initiated by the Friends of Verbum Dei, an organization that supports advocacies and programs of Verbum Dei in Luzon.

Married couple Lichel and Sherwin Layoso, both Verbum Dei disciples, were then assigned to continue the program together with Carol Peralta and Donna Duerte—who help this community. (Photo of them below)



On December 10, Sherwin and Lichel shared their testimony of life at an Advent Recollection with this community. They will continue to visit and share the Word with the people every other month.





## A Charity that Bridges Gaps

*By the Wordnews Team with Gabriel Lanada*

The youth and teens of Pansol had **two Advent formation sessions**. One was on December 16 for regular participants of the School of the Word. This was facilitated by Verbum Dei *misioneras* Sr. Dolly Celeste Tan and Sr. Lupita Granados. The second one was on December 17 for new people. It was facilitated by disciple Sherwin Layoso.

The youth and teens reflected on **healthy charity**, the kind that truly helps and does not just create more dependency, and where one spends time with the people in need—making them feel valued as brothers and sisters and reminding them of their dignity as children of God. **This formation prepared the young people for a December 17 outreach to very needy families in Pansol and Kaingin.** The youth also spent time packing the food they were to bring to the families.

**On outreach day**, young disciple Gabs Lanada accompanied two teens to visit a family in Kaingin. **“The experience was an eye-opener,”** he said.



The family they visited, a mother with four children, lived in a tiny shanty with no ready access to water, electricity, or a toilet. It was the kind of poverty they did not expect to find right in their own community.

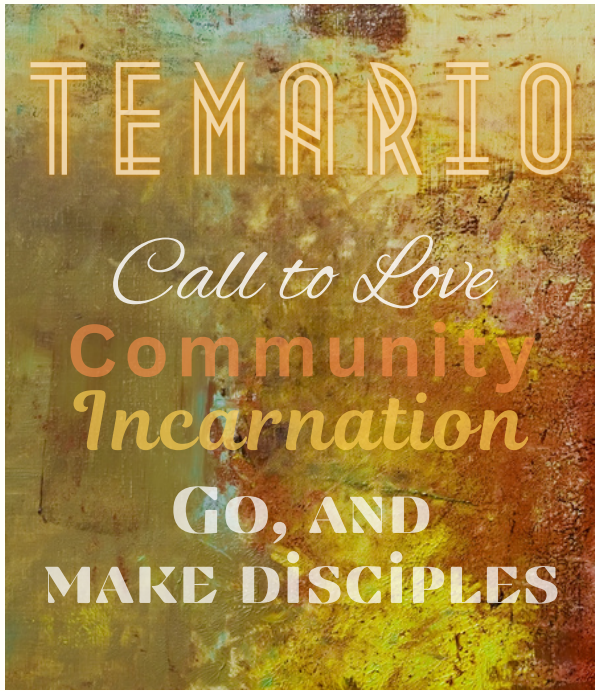
**Interaction** was awkward at first. To break the ice, Gabs brought out pens and paper. He told the children they would hold an ‘art contest’ and as they eagerly began to draw, conversation began to flow. Gabs was grateful for what he learned while helping with the kids’ School of the Word because **he and the teens were able to give bits of catechism in a natural and conversational way.** Time went by fast.

When they had to leave, the children begged them to stay. Gabs said playfully, “If we stay, what do we do? There isn’t enough food for us.” They were so touched when the children answered, “That’s okay. We will share the food with you. Stay and sleep here, we’ll sleep side by side!” **In those moments, Gabs and the teens felt that roles were reversed.** He said, “To think that there are such families who will welcome you into their poor home even if you are complete strangers— and give you their own food to eat and their own meager utensils for you to eat it with. That made a big impact on us. They made us feel welcome and special. **They** reminded **us** of our dignity as children of God, our bond as brothers and sisters.”



**Season 12.** Tagalog Shots (TS) entered its 12th season in January 2024. TS are short audio reflections on the Gospel of the day, released Mondays and Fridays. The QC, Tagaytay and Manila-Pasig communities contribute reflections. Marichelle Infante provides coordination, Fr. Joseph David guides preachers, and Fr. Iwao Ikegami does technical audio editing and posting on Viber and Messenger.





## Taking Up the ‘Temario’

The School of Apostles (SOA) is a Verbum Dei formation program catering to those who feel called to grow more deeply in the Verbum Dei charism and who commit to formation and mission within the Verbum Dei community. Since May, disciples and friends from the QC community have been joining disciples and friends from the Manila-Pasig communities for the monthly formation and prayer sessions of the SOA.

In October, the SOA led disciples into the richness of the “Temario,” (Spanish for “theme set”). The Temario is Verbum Dei’s set of themes or talks that explain but also illuminate the truths of faith. The Temario is like the backbone of the retreats, recollections, and other programs that Verbum Dei offers.

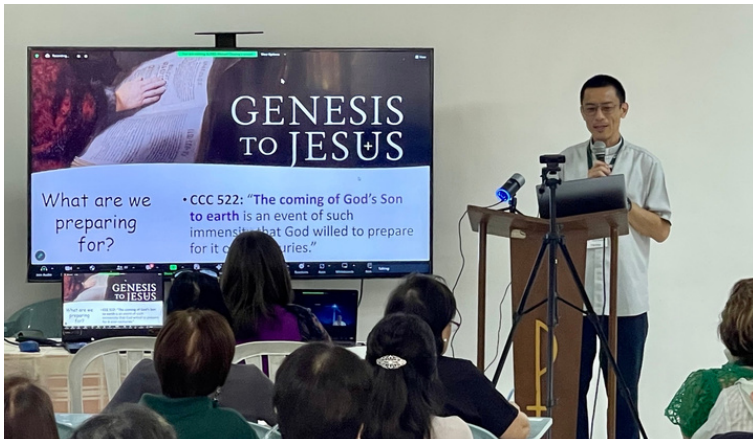
On the first Sundays from October to January, disciples listened to moving talks like “Call to Love,” “Incarnation,” “Community” and “Go, and Make Disciples.” To prepare to give these talks themselves in the future, disciples also participated in different exercises to help them understand, pray about, and absorb the content of each talk as well as start making their personalized drafts of each talk, following outline guides. The month after each SOA session was also a time for disciples to complete their own drafts of each talk.

“For I know well the plans I have in mind for you...plans for your welfare and not for woe, so as to give you a future of hope.” (Jer 29:11) Taking up the Temario has been a journey into the marvelous plan of God, the tremendous hope that it offers everyone, and the burning desire He has that all of us become His close friends and co-workers in this plan.





## “See How He Comes (Songs 2:8)” An Advent Recollection



On November 30, 2023, Verbum Dei - together with Christ the King Parish - held an Advent recollection entitled “See How He Comes.” (Cf. Songs 2:8). Seventy-two (72) people participated face-to-face, while 99 came online. Fr. Michael Cheong gave a short catechesis on Advent as a season of hope, and helped people reflect on the astonishing way Jesus came—and lived: in simplicity, poverty, chastity, and obedience to the Father. That Jesus also came as “Mr. Synodality” was Michelle Dayrit-Soliven’s joyful take on this God who comes to be with us. With her own examples, she helped people to reflect on living ‘synodality’ day to day.

People were given the chance to pray, to share in small groups, to go to confession. Mass was celebrated, with Fr Joseph “Jojo” David giving the homily.

Once again, the members of the School of the Word came together as a wonderful team to take care of publicity, registration, snacks, welcoming participants, group facilitation, coordination with the parish, and of course the technical challenge of sharing the recollection on zoom.



## Storytelling with the Missionaries

“Kwentuhan with the Missionaries,” Verbum Dei QC’s podcast, continued throughout November and December. This podcast aims to introduce people, especially the youth, to the missionaries: their vocation stories and their daily lives as men and women who have found their calling in Verbum Dei.

*In photos: Podcast host Bro. Angelo Balsita with guests Fr. Vincent “Bong” Guinoo, FMVD (top) and Fr. Michael Cheong, FMVD (bottom)*



# Christmas Celebrations



**Youth and Young Professionals**



**Teens and Kids**



**School of the Word at Christ the King Parish**



**Thursday School of the Word (Pansol)**



**Feeding Program**



# Fr. Filipe's Community Visits

As the ecclesial zone responsible, Fr. Filipe Vaz Pardal visited different communities in the country: Bukidnon, Cagayan de Oro and Cebu. Early in 2024, he was invited to Australia to give a retreat, as part of the male missionaries' plan to strengthen ties between their communities in the Philippines, Vietnam and Australia.

## CAGAYAN DE ORO Nov 4-10,2023



Conversations, Bonding,  
Mass at Capitol University and School of the Word

## BUKIDNON Nov 10-17,2023



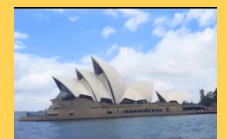
School of the Word in Damilag.  
Mass, School of the Word, and other activities  
at the Central Mindanao University in Musuan

## CEBU Nov 29-Dec 10,2023



Helped facilitate the last of the 3 disciples' retreats, with the theme "I have eagerly desired to be with you." (Cf. Luke 22:15-16)  
Spent time with the community

## SYDNEY Dec 31,2023-Jan 4,2024



Facilitated a silent retreat  
for parishioners who have become  
close to Verbum Dei

Spent time with  
the missionaries





## Permanent Formation

by the Word News Team with Fr. Michael Cheong, FMVD

A fun-filled sportsfest and lights on synodality. These were the special features of 2023's annual post-Christmas Day *permanent formation* for the members of the Verbum Dei Fraternity. The Fraternity consists of the consecrated members of the Verbum Dei Family - consecrated women (sisters), men (priests and brothers) and married couples with special bonds.

“No one was expecting a sports festival,” recalls Fr. Michael Cheong, “but everyone thoroughly enjoyed it — the bonding, the team building, the games, the laughing together, the competitiveness. It was truly a refreshing moment of just having fun together, a fraternal bonding in a very natural and uncomplicated way.”



A day of formation followed. The resource person was Fr. Jason Laguerta who heads the Office for the Promotion of New Evangelization of the Archdiocese of Manila. He gave rich input on synodality as a way of “being church”. Later, Fr. Michael recalls, “seeing Verbum Dei’s three branches there, listening to how we worked together and realizing that the spirit of synodality was already there right in front of him, he said, ‘I think that you can teach us what synodality is.’ He told us to value and to share this gift that our community has—because what we have been living since our foundation is really something new in the church in the Philippines.” Everyone felt quite encouraged and motivated to share the gifts of Verbum Dei even more.

The next day was devoted to preparing for the 2024 Congress on Mission using the dynamics of synodality. Fr. Michael says, “We were able to practice what we learned from the formation by sharing with each other our dreams as individuals, as branches, as a Fraternity—all in the spirit of really listening to one another.”

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