



QC Word News

NEWSLETTER OF THE VERBUM DEI MISSIONARY FAMILY OF QUEZON CITY



God Is With Us

2021 was a pandemic year, with many challenges and crosses. Yet, for the Verbum Dei Missionary Family in Quezon City, it was also a surprisingly fruitful year, full of meaningful encounters.

One such encounter was held on November 30, 2021. It was a recollection for the Good Shepherd Sisters' *Bukid Kabataan*, a shelter for abused children. The recollection theme was "God is with us." There were games, talks, prayer and sharing, with confessions and mass celebrated by *misionero* priest Vincent Guinoo. "The children were very receptive," writes recollection facilitator Rachel Lumain, one of the Verbum Dei *misioneras* who continue this spiritual outreach initiated by *misionero* James McTavish in 2017. "Leading the children to an encounter with God by teaching them to pray made them experience God's love and mercy. It helped them in their process of healing and in the restoration of their dignity and identity as children of God."

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National Singles Encounter

By Francis Jerome G. Santos

Last December 11 and 12, 2021, a dream that started two years ago finally became a reality. Over 50 singles participated in the first Verbum Dei National Singles Encounter entitled "Come and See." The singles came from the different Verbum Dei communities of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

The two days were filled with food for the heart, mind and soul. There were talks, testimonies and workshops that centered on the concerns of the single person: concerns like the search for meaning and identity.

The event helped the singles to remember the importance of their stage of life. It can be a time for sharing Christ to others and it can also be a happy stage of life.

John 1:39 reads: "He (Jesus) said to them, 'Come and you will see.' They went and saw the place where he was staying. They stayed with him the rest of the day." The Encounter helped the singles realize that staying with Christ will give them true happiness and fulfillment—and that when one is with Christ, being single can be exciting!

From the Newsletter Team

New Year greetings! We hope you will enjoy this newsletter about the Verbum Dei Missionary Family in Quezon City. Our mission has continued in new ways despite the pandemic, and there is good news to share! Truly the Lord is with us and continues to assure us: "In the wilderness, I make a way, in the wasteland, rivers." (Isaiah 43:19)



Little Shepherds

By Stella P. Deriquito

Despite the pandemic, a youth and teens apostolate is slowly growing in Pansol, Quezon City. Back in 2019, misionero priest Vincent "Bong" Guinoo gathered a few college students who had been joining Verbum Dei activities for some years now. He guided them through a simple discipleship formation and soon, they were sharing reflections to each other in their own little weekly School of the Word. In 2021, the misionero began to gather young teens "graduating" from the Pansol kids' School of the Word as well as teens referred to him by the Pansol feeding program volunteers. He encouraged the older youth to help him shepherd these young teens in little ways. "In order to grow, the young also need a mission," he said.

A teens' program is taking shape, where the older youth give the reflections in a School of the Word for teens, and help organize activities for them. These activities include praying the rosary, film-showing, workshops on topics like vegetable planting and even an alternative All Saints' Day celebration--where teens and the older youth came dressed as their favorite saints. A recollection is being planned. Fr. Bong says, "I pray that someday, these teens will also grow into young shepherds of others."





Kids' SOW Relaunched

By Jonnaly R. Estrada

On October 9, 2021, we relaunched the Kids' School of the Word (SOW) in Pansol, Quezon City. It had been on pause mode because of the pandemic.

The first activity was a "kumustahan" (each one shares how he or she has been). As I watched the children, I felt their eagerness to learn good lessons from God's Word. It was fun to listen to each of their stories. I thought it might be difficult for us teachers to handle the kids – maybe they would not listen! But actually, they were well-behaved and very participative. And really, they were so willing to learn.

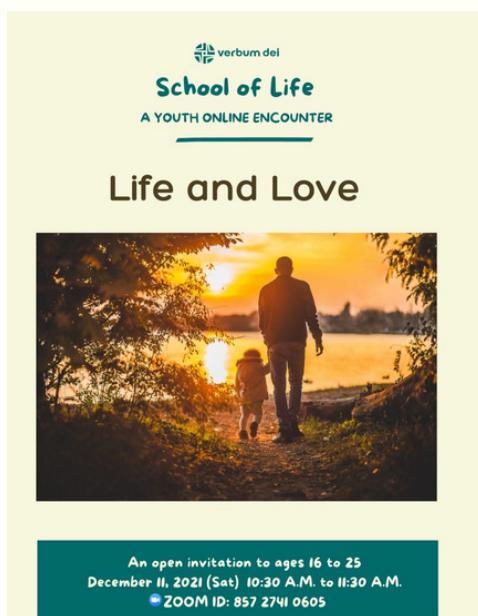
I am so happy because we were able to provide lessons for the children. We teach them online every Saturday from 11:00am-12pm. I am so grateful that I am part of this team working with the children. Thanks to Fr Iwao Ikegami who guides us and to Ma'am Cecilia Bautista and Doc Resti Bautista who continue to inspire and motivate us so that we can teach children well. I also thank my co-teachers—Muriel Garcia, Siony Eduarte, Belen Desilos, Helen Desilos, Mylen Samson and Kharis Leysa. We pray we can persevere and continue to inspire the children. God will inspire and guide us too so that we can be faithful to our mission.

School of Life

By Gelo B. Balsita

The School of Life is a weekly online encounter for the youth where we pray together with the Word of God, and learn about life through it. Making friends, hobbies, work, relationships, stress management, leadership, calmness, self-knowledge and the search for meaning: these are some of the topics we have talked about.

How did this all begin? The inspiration for an online youth encounter came to me in prayer, after joining a School of the Word on Zoom (fondly called ZOW) and listening to some who shared the desire that their children grow to know and love God more. Since I am a student in formation with Verbum Dei, I brought this idea to my formators. They helped me think about it and pray over it more. With the support of then ZOW facilitator misionero James McTavish, a team of consecrated and lay missionaries (Jojo David, Gelo Balsita, Emy Abaya and Judy Tan) worked together to develop a 3-part online youth encounter for Lent 2021. It was called "You are Loved." Fifty young people joined this activity, and some of them wanted more.



"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and every one that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit." – John 15:1-2

So from April to July, we held weekly encounters, where we prayed with the Sunday Gospel. In August, the School of Life was born, a program especially suited to young people who want to learn about life and live it to the full. Students and young professionals aged 16 to 25, have joined the program.

The participants said that they look forward to our weekly encounter because it refreshes, motivates and redirects them in the middle of a busy week. They also share the fruits: their relationships with their families and friends are getting better and their knowledge and love of God is increasing as they learn to pray with the Word. Two of the youth have started sharing their reflections online through our Verbum Dei International YouTube program entitled "Near the Word." (*Cerca de la Palabra* in Spanish)

Join us as we build this vibrant youth community of faith that prays, lives and shares the Word of God. For more details, please contact Gelo Balsita at 09615353162 or at angelobalsita@gmail.com.

Come, Lord Jesus!

By Michelle Dayrit-Soliven

On December 1, 2021, our School of the Word on zoom (ZOW as we fondly call it now)* received a precious Christmas gift: an online Advent recollection entitled “Maranatha 2021! Bearers of Christ to the Nations.”

Fr. Michael Cheong helped us recall 2021 and all that our hearts long for. He helped us reflect on becoming bearers of Christ to our families, friends, communities and the world of today—remembering that Christ’s message of salvation is not something, but SOMEONE.

He also shared these words from Pope Francis. “A special time of discernment is necessary. Discernment is a prayer that makes you think with God. The pain, uncertainty and fear of our own limitations brought on by the pandemic have only made it all the more urgent that we rethink our styles of life, our relationships, the organization of our societies and above all the meaning of our existence.”



Poster courtesy of Yvonne D. Romualdez

Maranatha! 2021

“Come, Lord Jesus!”

1 Corinthians 16:22; Revelations 22:20

Bearers of Christ to the Nations

AN ADVENT RECOLLECTION FOR VERBUM DEI'S ZOOM OF THE WORD (ZOW) AND FRIENDS

With Fr. Michael Cheong, FMVD and Rev. Joseph David, FMVD

WEDNESDAY, 01 DECEMBER 2021
8:00 AM - 12:00 NOON
WITH HOLY MASS AT 11:15 AM



To register, kindly send your name and email address to verbumpansol@gmail.com on or before Sunday, 28 November 2021.

Poster courtesy of Yvonne D. Romualdez

Br. Jojo David said that Advent is a time to remember those we may have forgotten. He reminded us that helping one person might not change the world, but it could change the world of that one person.

An engaging missionary couple, Dr. Resti Bautista and his lovely wife Cecilia, also shared their joyful testimony of bearing Christ to others: a fruit of their constant yeses to God.

In the closing mass, Fr. Michael said that Jesus has already come, but that we need him to come into our daily lives.

*The Zoom School of the Word (ZOW) has persevered online since 2020, with over 100 participants. It is held on Wednesdays from 9-11am. To join, please contact Br. Jojo David at +63 945 553 5362.

Adults



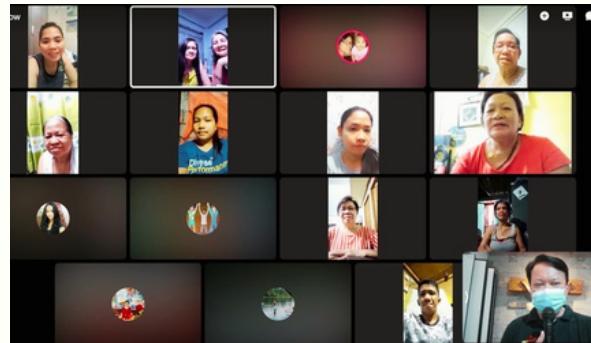
Tagalog SOW Goes Hybrid

By Emy M. Abaya

The Tagalog School of the Word (SOW) was relaunched in April of 2021 under the guidance of Br. Jojo David through FB Messenger. Like many of the regular Verbum Dei activities during the pandemic, the Tagalog SOW had to be migrated to an online platform. This SOW on Messenger started out with 19 people, but slowly grew into almost three times that number in the past 8 months.

As the number of Covid-19 cases continues to decline, the Tagalog SOW took a bold step last December 6 and turned “hybrid.” Almost 40 people were present in the Verbum Dei house in Pansol while 19 others joined virtually.

Adults in their late 20's to their 70's who have joined regularly shared that the SOW has provided them so much hope during these trying times. Praying with the Word



of God has helped them in the past year to cope with their struggles. One person advanced in age shared how grateful he was to be part of this group. There was a time in his life that he no longer had the will to live, but attending the SOW enlightened him. “Maraming salamat din po naging grupo ako ng Verbum, naliwanagan ang isip ko.” he said.

The Tagalog SOW caters to the communities of Pansol, Kaingin I and Kaingin II. It is scheduled every Thursday at 7:30 to 9:00pm.

“He sent forth his word, and healed them, and delivered them from destruction. (Psalm 107:20)



Tagalog Shots: Season 4

Season 4 of Tagalog Shots ran from September to December 2021. Eight people from the Quezon City and Tagaytay local communities took turns sharing insights from their prayer.

Tagalog Shots are short audio-reflections meant to help listeners pray with the Gospel of the day. Tagalog Shots are shared on Mondays and Fridays, through Viber and Messenger. Season 5 begins in January 2022. To receive Tagalog Shots, please contact any of the missionaries.

Food Distribution Program

The pre-pandemic feeding program for poor children in the Pansol neighborhood is now a pandemic-time food distribution program. Since June 2020 up to the time of this writing, 120 families in the Pansol neighborhood have been receiving rice, eggs, vegetables and canned goods every week. Medicine is also provided for those in need. For these families affected by the pandemic, this program is a big help. Many thanks to our generous donors and volunteers!





School of Apostles 1: Batch 2021

By Stella P. Deriquito

In 2021, ten brave souls from the QC community completed the School of Apostles 1 (SOAp). They were Gina Abary, Emy Abaya, Cecilia and Resti Bautista, Stella Deriquito, Belen Desilos, Marichelle Infante, Chickie Locsin, Francis Santos and Bel Viernes. It was a grace-filled journey from 2018 to 2021. We had prayer sessions, retreats, and formation on the basic contents of our faith (as unfolded in Verbum Dei's *Temario* or theme set.) We helped each other prepare talks and gave them in recollections to a few groups. We also had "revision of life:" guided sharing sessions on how the Lord calls us to welcome, share and make his love concrete.

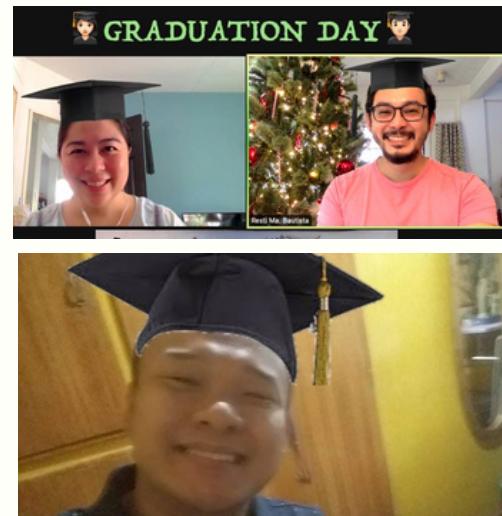
We are grateful to our formators: the misionero priests led by Filipe Vaz Pardal, James McTavish and Iwao Ikegami, with team members Vincent Guinoo, Victoriano Caritos, Michael Cheong and Br. Jojo David, and our revision of life guides: missionaries Grace Gonzales and Iwao Ikagami. Their prayer, preaching, dedication and interminable patience inspired us and kept us going. Most of all, we are grateful to our Lord who "summoned those whom he wanted ... that they might be with him and he might send them forth to preach..." (Mk 3: 13-16) May we—and many more to come—continue growing in his life and love.

What is the School of Apostles?

It is where the missionary disciple is formed through an integrated process of formation, revision of life and spiritual accompaniment. One objective of the School of Apostles is to form us as apostles who preach.
 (From the Regulation of Verbum Dei Missionary Disciples, 2021)



School of Apostles 1: Batch 2021



Being a Verbum Dei Apostle

By Chickie R. Locsin

Being a Verbum Dei Apostle is:

An Honor. God Himself has chosen and invited me to know Him more deeply, to see Him more clearly. Me? Why me? Am I worthy to receive this invitation?

A Challenge. I never thought I had it in me to preach. And writing the talks? Through three years of study, I often thought of more fun things to do on a Saturday morning other than attending School of Apostles. A creative writing class perhaps? Or simply just sleeping in?

A Responsibility. Upon finishing the course, I realized I had just been equipped with the knowledge, the skill and the inspiration to go out and make Disciples, as our Lord, Jesus, has commanded. NO more excuses- it is time for action! With the help of the Verbum Dei community, I can keep a steady gaze on Jesus and persevere in the mission that is given to me.

A Privilege. The invitation to be an Apostle is a Call to Love. Say YES! As our Blessed Mother did. You will be blessed...and happy that you accepted.

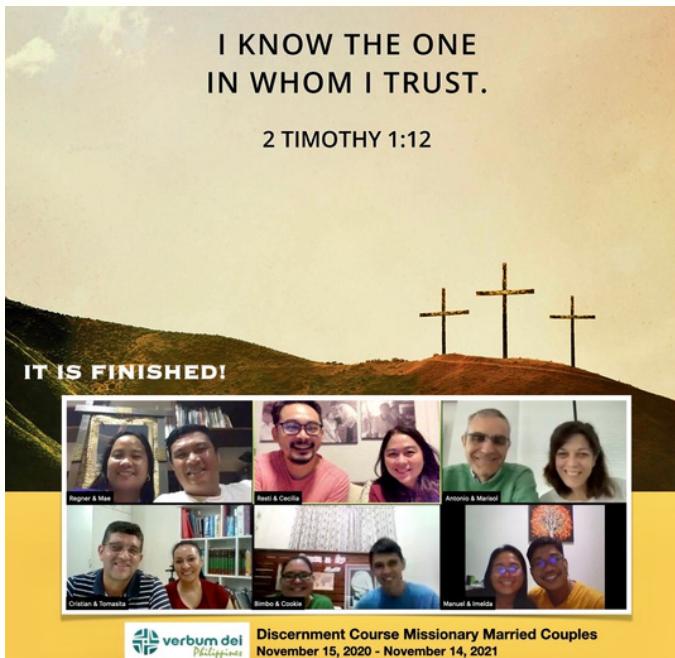
Learning Together

By Marichelle L. Infante

Hearing of the plans to have our School of Apostles' comprehensive evaluation on December 6 to 8 in Tagaytay, I had mixed feelings. I was excited that I would finally see and be with my SOAp family, but at the same time, it brought so much worry. One beautiful thing about it was that we were helping each other with the review. You could see and feel the togetherness, each one helping the other to "pass." The evaluation forced all of us to study and understand the "Temario" in our minds and in our hearts.

At one point, we were asked to explain the flow of the "Temario" in ten minutes. It was a challenge, but when Fr. Filipe asked us to prepare our presentation in prayer, everything just flowed from there, and I was able to do it!

Learning the "Temario," which is really the Truths of our Faith, was a very rich experience. I pray that we may all bear fruit, that we may all be able to share and present this to people in different situations of life, in a way that they can understand.



Discernment Course for Married Couples

The 3rd Discernment Course for Missionary Married Couples of the Verbum Dei Fraternity in the Philippines culminated on November 14, 2021. Resti and Cecilia Bautista, a couple from the Verbum Dei Family in Quezon City, share, "We are grateful for the faithfulness and generosity of our Formators, and look forward to what's next in this discovery of God's will for our marriage and family."

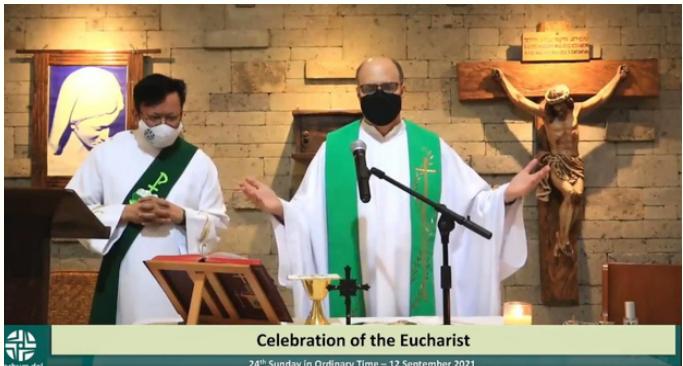
Married Couples



Apostolic Council Formed

On September 17, 2021, the Apostolic Council of the Quezon City Local Community met for the very first time. The Apostolic Council (AC) is a representative pastoral body of a local community that discerns, coordinates and works for the growth of the community's mission and life. It is also formed to train "relays" in the mission, promoting a spirit of co-responsibility and participation. The AC has long been a feature of Verbum Dei communities worldwide, instituted in the spirit of what Pope Francis recently called "synodality." Journeying together as companions, listening to each other, speaking out, co-responsibility in the mission, dialogue in church and society, participation, discerning and deciding: these themes of Pope Francis' "synodal church" are core principles of the AC.

Apostolic Council



Online Masses

For the benefit of local communities in the country, the Verbum Dei community of Quezon City continued to organize online Sunday masses and masses for the sick. Large public gatherings were forbidden for most of 2021, because of the number of COVID-19 cases.



A Deacon by the Grace of God

It was a pandemic year, and the number of COVID-19 cases continued to be a cause for worry. But the Lord made a way. In a moving celebration watched online by his parents and most of his relatives and friends, Joseph "Jojo" David was ordained deacon on September 11, 2021 at the Parish of the Holy Sacrifice in UP Diliman, Quezon City—a celebration made possible with the help and hospitality of parish priest Fr. Jose Tupino III. The ordaining prelate was Most Reverend Honesto F. Ongtioco, D.D., Bishop of the Diocese of Cubao. In his thanksgiving message, Jojo echoed the words of Mother Mary: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior." (Lk 1:46-47)



Seeking and Training Laborers for the Lord's Harvest

By Michael Cheong, FMVD

Due to the urgent need to spread God's Word, the male missionary branch of Verbum Dei in Asia has recently intensified its efforts to grow and nourish new missionary vocations. Having accepted two new Filipino candidates in May 2019, the male missionary branch set its sights on Vietnam, investing much effort to prepare the ground for planting seeds of missionary vocations there. Initial visits were done by missionaries like June Marzan, Ramiro Gallo and Filipe Vaz Pardal since 2005. With the final approval of the 2018 Congress of the Fraternidad Misionera Verbum Dei (FMVD), David Rolo set up a community in Saigon or Ho Chi Minh City with Darwin Capuras.

Since then, two Vietnamese aspirants, Hai and Andy, have journeyed with us for a year to discern their vocation. Meanwhile, this dynamism of animating a serious Christian vocation among young men in Verbum Dei has taken off in a group called "Just for Men – Asia", which includes young men from India, Taiwan, Philippines and Singapore. Due to the pandemic, this initiative has been carried out online so far—an initiative led by Iwao Ikegami, Michael Cheong and Darwin Capuras. We hope to begin a face-to-face encounter here in Manila in 2022.



The Batasan Hills Formation House- in photo, from left to right: formator Michael Cheong, Rudy Esmeralda, newly ordained deacon Joseph David and Angelo Balsita. (Rudy & Gelo are finishing their studies in philosophy in 2022)

Special thanks to all who contributed articles, stories, photos, and advice for this newsletter issue, and to Stella Deriquito, Kimmy Monsod, Emy Abaya and Kyle Abaya for valuable help with the lay-out.

*For inquiries: Verbum Dei Catholic Missionaries,
58 Pansol Avenue, Barangay Pansol, Quezon City
Email: verbumpansol@gmail.com*