

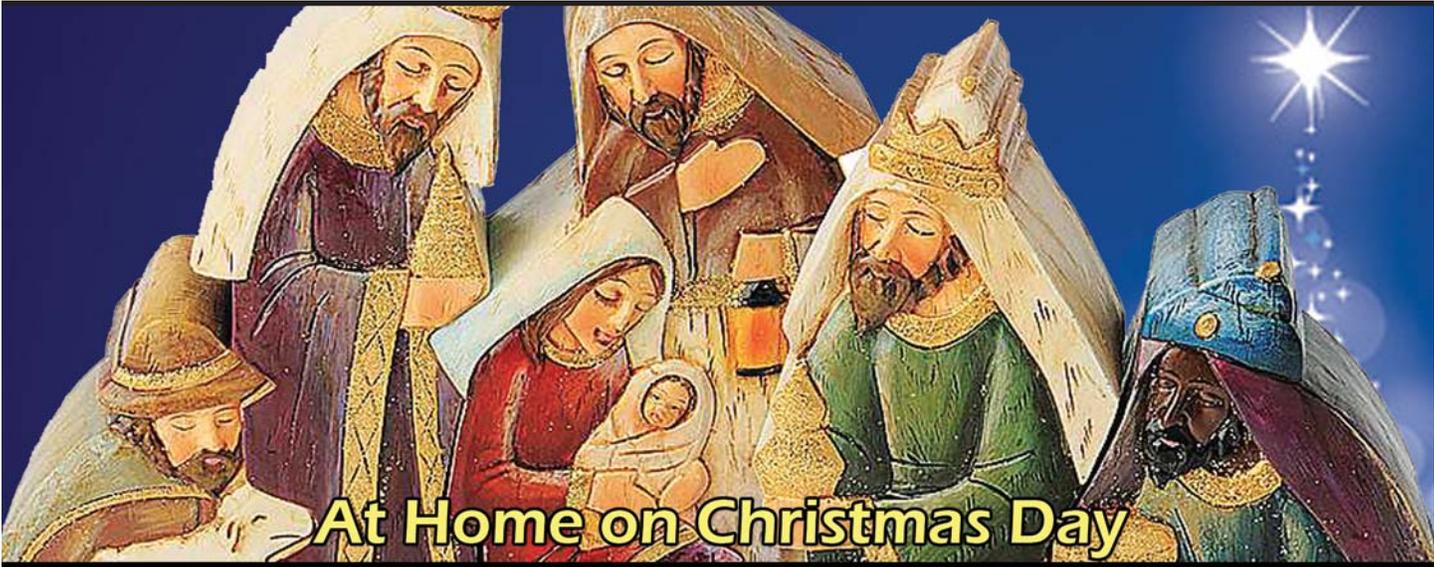


SIMBAHAY

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF ST. JOHN BOSCO PARISH CHURCH, MAKATI CITY, PHILIPPINES

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 13

CHRISTMAS 2012



At Home on Christmas Day

Is it normal to be nostalgic at Christmas time? What came to my mind as I began to reflect on the message for this year's last *Simbahay* issue is an experience I had 20 or so Christmases ago, as a young priest coming home for the Christmas holidays. Since I was still on "religious duty" up to Christmas Eve in the seminary (I was the Spiritual Moderator at that time), I could not leave for home till Christmas day; worse, I was asked to say the evening Mass in our parish that day. So during the one-hour bus ride going home, I kept thinking of what homily to give when it occurred to me to talk precisely on coming home. Yes, the idea clicked that indeed Christmas is a homecoming of sorts! I was not wrong; it was one of the best homilies I had delivered in my young priestly life.

Like me then, so many of us are "rushing" to come home on Christmas. The bus, ship and air terminals are full of vacationers wishing to get a seat; last-minute shoppers hope to reach home with their presents for loved ones; even the office workers who are scraping up as much overtime, as possible, are frantic to be home by midnight. It's Christmas! There is no other time of the year that so tug at the heart to come home to our loved ones. It is everybody's gut feeling that the happiest place to be on Christmas day is at home with one's family; while the loneliest is where one spends Christmas Day alone.

As they say, "Home is where your heart is". There is a rush to come home on Christmas Day because we know where our hearts lie: with our family, with our loved ones, in the place where we

treasure fond memories, among those we love and where we feel loved.

I remember connecting this experience of rushing home on Christmas day in that homily of long ago with the unique "experience" of God Himself "coming home" to start dwelling "among us", in the hearts of mankind. In the Incarnation, Jesus, the eternal Word of God, forever in the presence of God the Father, chose to be born to a poor but dignified family in Bethlehem. Ever-connected with His divinity, He nonetheless chose to share our humanity and make it His "home", to be born to it, to live in it and to die for it.

Greek philosophy considers man and his humanity as the imprisonment of the soul and that the moment of salvation only comes when the spirit is finally liberated from the human body. God's philosophy is different: the **body** that He created "was created in **His own image and likeness**" (*Gen 1:26*), thus assuming a human body is no longer slavery but a quest for freedom, the beginning of salvation, not for God, but for man. When God, through Jesus, became man, it was as if He was "coming to His own", and that which He created in the beginning, was finally tasting the divinity of His only begotten Son. When Jesus became man, God came home to man and man came home to God. Indeed, the first Christmas day was Jesus' homecoming.

A blessed and joyful homecoming to everyone! I greet you all with a heart full of Christmas love!

— Fr. Ting Miciano, SDB



As part of the preparations for the 35th (Jade) Anniversary of the dedication of our Parish church, we humbly appeal to those who are willing to donate sacred vessels and other articles (chalice, ciborium, cruets, censer, procession cross, wash bowl) to be used during the Anniversary's Eucharistic Celebrations, to contact our Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Ting Miciano, SDB. Thank you for your generosity.



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Many a wide-eyed child have marvelled at the Belen (Nativity scene, *tableau, crèche*). Mary and Joseph are gazing lovingly at the newborn Jesus in His manger crib. A shepherd offers a lullaby on his pipes, another, a tiny lamb. Three “Kings” kneel before the Baby bearing shiny gifts. Their camels join oxen, mule and sheep in silent adoration. While overhead, an angel hovers, sharing airspace with a giant star.

Yet, only a few know who created the first Belen, and even fewer, the miraculous vision which accompanied its debut.

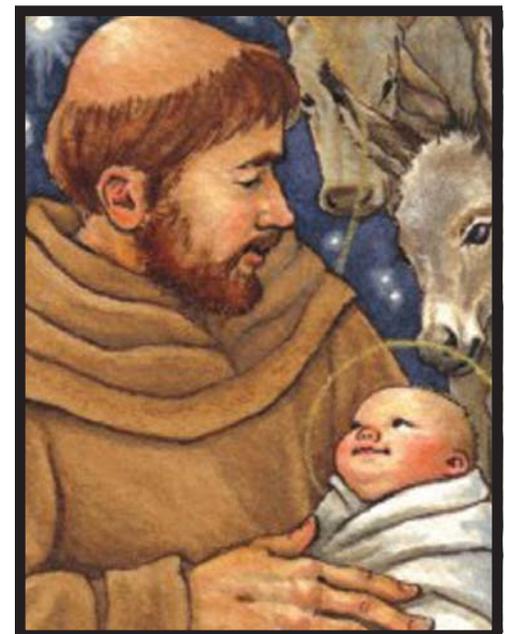
In 1223, the deacon, St. Francis, founder of the Franciscan Order was preparing to celebrate Christmas in the Italian town of Greccio, a small mountainside town with a beautiful view of the valley below. Realizing that the small Franciscan hermitage chapel was too small to fit all the villagers for the Midnight Mass, St. Francis asked and got the pope’s permission to celebrate it outdoors by a niche in a rock near the town square.

St. Bonaventure, another Franciscan saint relates in his biography of St. Francis, how that Midnight Mass was like no other.

“Then he [St. Francis] prepared a manger, and brought hay, and an ox and an ass to the place appointed. The brethren were summoned, the people ran together, the forest resounded with their voices, and that venerable night was made glorious by many and brilliant lights and sonorous psalms of praise. The man of God [St. Francis] stood before the manger, full of devotion and piety, bathed in tears and radiant with joy; the Holy Gospel was chanted by Francis, the Levite of Christ. Then he preached to the people around the nativity of the poor King; and being unable to utter His name for the tenderness of His love, He called Him the Babe of Bethlehem.”

A certain valiant and veracious soldier, Master John of Greccio, who, for the love of Christ, had left the warfare of this world, and become a dear friend of this holy man, affirmed that he beheld an Infant marvellously beautiful, sleeping in the manger, Whom the blessed Father Francis embraced with both his arms, as if he would awake Him from sleep.”

While our windows twinkle with constellations of *parols*, our gardens blaze with firefly lights, and our living rooms sprout forests of Christmas trees, let us not forget to set up our *Belens*, whether these be family heirlooms or the cardboard pop-up variety, to remind our children and the wide-eyed child within us to offer acts of kindness, real charity, compassion and forgiveness as birthday embraces for the Babe of Bethlehem, our King and Messiah, the reason for the celebration (and decoration).



SCHEDULE OF MASSES

Monday to Friday:

6:30am • 7:30am • 12:15pm • 6:00pm

Holy Hour every Thursday after the 6:00 pm Mass

Saturday:

6:30am • 7:30am

6:00pm (Anticipated Mass)

Sunday:

6:00am • 7:15am • 8:30am • 10:00am*

11:15am • 12:30pm • 4:00pm • 5:30pm

7:00pm • 8:30pm

*with sign language interpreters

Confessions are available during all the Masses

Adoration Chapel - open daily from 7:00am to 8:00pm

**PARISH OFFICE & RELIGIOUS
STORE HOURS**

Monday to Friday (except Thursday)

8:00am - 11:30am • 12:30pm - 6:00pm

Thursday:

8:00am - 11:30am • 12:30pm - 4:00pm

Saturday:

8:00am - 12:00pm • 1:00pm - 5:00pm

Simbahay thanks several people who made possible this feature on the Belens in the different Salesian settings and in MonteMaria including Fr. Salvatore Putzu, SDB and Fr. Chris Kennedy, SDB.



Don Bosco Technical College Mandaluyong
c/o Fr. Drans Nolasco, SDB



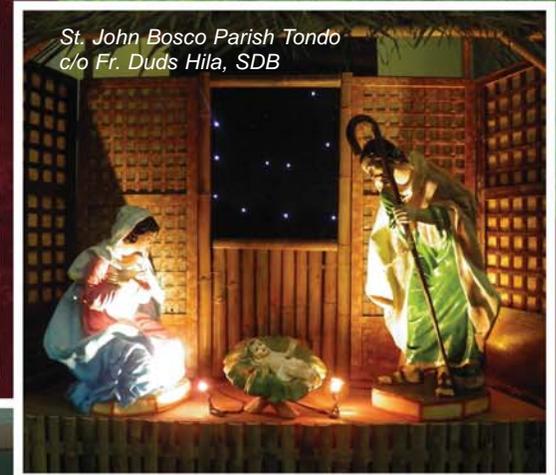
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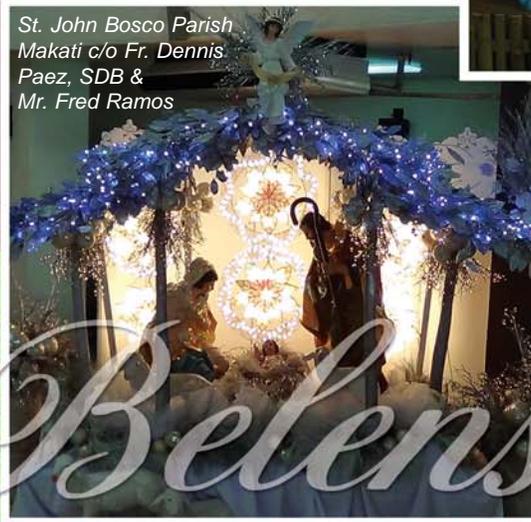
Don Bosco Batulao Retreat House
c/o Ms. Jen Aure



Don Bosco Batulao - Chapel on the Hill
c/o Ms. Jen Aure



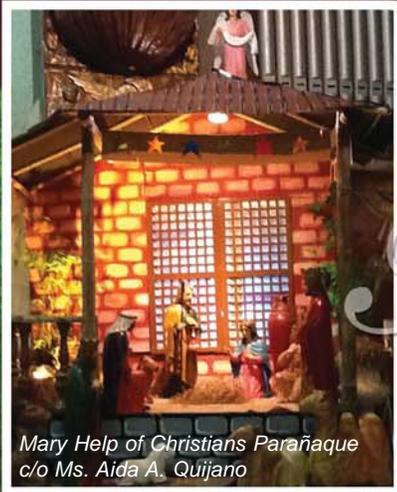
St. John Bosco Parish Tondo
c/o Fr. Duds Hila, SDB



St. John Bosco Parish
Makati c/o Fr. Dennis
Paez, SDB &
Mr. Fred Ramos



Don Bosco Technical Institute Makati
c/o Ms. Alda Sumbingco



Mary Help of Christians Parañaque
c/o Ms. Aida A. Quijano



St. John Bosco Parish Sta. Rosa
c/o Fr. Richard Varela and Ms Juliet Onineza



San Ildefonso Parish
c/o Fr. Remo Bati, SDB and Mr. Mon Angeles

Belens

SUNDAY MASS REFLECTIONS

Simbahay features the Sunday Mass Readings' themes from Fr. Sal Putzu's "Exploring God's Word".

These themes are part of a systematic approach to study and have a good knowledge of the Biblical passages which will be used in the coming Sunday Masses and to relate these readings to our lives.

Listen to Fr. Salvatore Putzu, SDB (General Manager and Editor, *Word and Life*) at *Bisperas sa Veritas* 846 AM, 5pm Saturday.



SOLEMNITY OF CHRISTMAS

Mass During the Day
December 25, 2012 Readings

*Is 52:7-10 – The Messiah is a source of joy and consolation for all.

*Heb 1:1-6 – The Incarnate Son of God is the revelation of the Father's glory.

*Jn 1:1-5.9-14 – The eternal Word of God becomes a frail human being.

Theme: THE LIGHT OF GOD THAT ENLIGHTENS OUR DARKENED WORLD

Everybody abhors physical darkness and is afraid of it. Not all, however, abhor the darkness of sin because the devil has managed to hide its ugliness with the alluring glitter of pleasure. But all those who fall into the trap of choosing it soon discover that there is no greater darkness than the darkness of sin.

In his love for us, God's Son came as "the Light of the world" to unmask the deception of the devil by filling our lives with the splendor of his presence, and even by making us "children of the light" – "children of God."

Christmas, "the feast of light," should remind us of this great privilege offered us by the coming of our Lord. It should also spur us to become as many "genuine lights" in this world still mesmerized by the deceptive glitter of so many forms of sin.



FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY

December 30, 2012 Readings

*Sir 3:2-6.12-14 – The duty to respect and love one's parents

*Col 3:12-21 – Mutual love is the trademark of all Christians

*Lk 2:22-40 – The presentation of the Baby Jesus in the Temple

Theme: FAMILIES ACCORDING TO GOD'S HEART

In these days characterized by so many family quarrels, infidelities, betrayals and break-ups, we can't help looking up to the Holy Family of Nazareth with admiration and nostalgia. That was indeed a family where love and faithfulness were as real as the air breathed by its members. And all this because God was "the Lord of the house." His Word reigned supreme in the hearts of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Prayer was the loveliest of all conversations with the invisible Guest.

Today, the Spirit of Wisdom speaks through the texts from Sirach, Paul, and Luke. They offer us the guidance we need to make our families a realization of God's plan for them. Led by that same Holy Spirit, we renew our commitment to make our families a mirror of all the virtues that can make them churches in miniature, replicas of the Family of Nazareth today.



MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

World Peace Day
January 1, 2013 Readings

*Nm 6:22-27 – Prayer to implore God's blessing

*Gal 4:4-7 – In Jesus Christ, the son of Mary, we are all adopted children of God.

*Lk 2:16-21 – Mary treasured in her heart all that she heard about Jesus.

Theme: MARY OF NAZARETH: MOTHER OF JESUS, MOTHER OF PEACE

Every normal human being, deep in his/her heart, has a strong yearning for peace. Even those involved in fights and wars see their situation as a painful "parenthesis" that will be followed by what they want most – peace. No one can count the sufferings and the destruction caused by war. Its effects spare no one. Its roots lie deep in the desire of the Devil to thwart God's plan of happiness for mankind.

In "family quarrels" among siblings, it is the mother who suffers most in seeing her children at odds with one another. The mother is also the one who brings about peace among the feuding siblings. As we begin a new year, let us remember that in the great family of mankind it is Mary Most Holy, the Mother of God's Son and of us all, who can bring the warring factions and nations to lay aside all weapons and hatred, and start working together to build up a civilization of love and peace.



SOLEMNITY OF EPIPHANY

January 6, 2013 Readings

*Is 60:1-6 – Jerusalem reflects on all nations the light of God's presence.

*Eph 3:2-3a.5-6 – In Christ Jesus, even the pagans share in the fulfillment of God's promises.

*Mt 2:1-12 – The Wise Men recognize in the Baby Jesus the savior of all mankind.

Theme: CHRIST, THE UNIFYING CENTER OF ALL MANKIND

The feast we are celebrating today is not about fancifully dressed kings but about *Jesus Christ, the Savior of all human beings*. Epiphany is the revelation of who

the child born at Bethlehem (of a simple village girl from Nazareth) really is, and what he has come to do for all mankind. He is no less than *the promised Messiah who will bring together into one single family all the nations of the world!* This is the saving mystery we celebrate today.

After almost two thousand years, this divine plan still has to become a reality because of human pride, aggressiveness, greed, and possessiveness. It is only the Spirit of God's Love that can bring together the scattered children of the dispersion, and reveal to them the deep roots that make them all brothers and sisters in Christ, the first-born of the new mankind.



THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

January 13, 2013 Readings

***Is 42:1-4.6-7** – God introduces the Messiah as the hope of all mankind.

***Acts 10:34-38** – Jesus is the Messiah anointed with the Holy Spirit and power.

***Lk 3:15-16.21-22** – John declared that he is not the Messiah. While at prayer after having been baptized, Jesus receives the Holy Spirit.

Theme: THE REVELATION OF THE SIGNIFICANCE AND PURPOSE OF THE INCARNATION

The baptism of Jesus signaled his official identification with sinful mankind and represented his formal anointing as the Messiah/Servant in whom the Father is well pleased. From that moment, the carpenter of Nazareth became the Teacher and Savior of humankind.

Jesus' baptism reminds us also of our own baptism – of how we became God's adopted children and how we promised to live as such. And just as Jesus' baptism was so important at the beginning of his apostolic activity, so is our baptism important for us, because it has been the beginning of so many beautiful things in our lives.

Our baptism should remain our constant reference point for the new life and the unique dignity it conferred on us. The

commitments we undertook on that occasion remain the standard against which to evaluate our behavior.

December 30, 2012 - THE FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY



SI ITAY, SI INAY, KUYA, ATE, INENG AT BUNSOY

By Chato Tobias-Zabarte

A Family was born because God loved the world so much. It was the same love of God that put in order everything else in creation for the benefit of man and his family and the means to give this love back to God in gratitude.

In today's world, this love of God is almost gone, along with patience, charity, faith, among others. From instant coffee to instant death, sacred human life is being commuted to a mere click of the delete button or the pop of a pill. Charity to preserve life is not anymore for humans but for animal pets that are gaining rights to proper care. And faith...does anybody have time for genuine faith, the kind that is lived and shared, the kind that is strengthened and deepened by life's challenges?

It is Christmas and our crib is empty, not so much love to be given away. The bells are tolling in memory of all the unborn who never saw the star of Bethlehem. Such timing that the rejoicing is from supposedly responsible people who will someday claim, like Cain, that they are not responsible for the rise in death by abortion...how irresponsible indeed!

When Baby Jesus' life was threatened by

Herod, the Holy Family received instructions from heaven to escape to Egypt till it was safe to return. Where does the Filipino family go to escape from the wrath of the RH Bill? Does it also run away from the health-care professionals who have forgotten that their Hippocratic Oath requires all of them to commit themselves to the absolute respect of human life and its sacredness?

Cardinal Chito Tagle's new appointment is our gift! His is a call every Filipino family must heed – "We will work harder to promote the sanctity of human life and of the human person, the integral education of the youth, the access of the poor to social and medical services, the preservation of the true meaning of marriage, and stewardship of creation. We call on all Filipinos to work towards healing, and journey together humbly and justly as children of God."

Si Itay, Inay, Kuya, Ate, Ineng at Bunsoy. They are the main characters in our Belen. Yes, they have good chances of delivery from the snares of RH Bill through the efforts and solidarity of their sisters and brothers in Christ.

January 1 – SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD



By Maris Katigbak-San Juan

Eight days after the birth of Jesus or the octave of Christmas, the Church celebrates on the first day of the year one of the greatest feasts honoring the Blessed Virgin Mary – the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God.

We hail and honor Mary the Mother of God so full of grace and blessed among all women. Mary so immaculate and pure and conceived without sin was chosen to carry in her womb the son

of God. Mary was obedient to the will of the Father. A fiat¹ was her response to the angel Gabriel when she announced that she was to become the Mother of God.

She manifested her humility when the time came for Jesus to be born. Together with her spouse St. Joseph, they humbly knocked at several inns asking the owners to let them in because of their predicament. But they were refused. The innkeepers closed their doors on this holy family. Finally, they found a stable and there, Jesus was born in a manger.

We see Mary as a dutiful Mother. Forty days after the birth of her son Jesus, she brought Him to the temple according to a Jewish rite. This day is also known as the purification of Mary, a happy event for Mother and child.

When her son was twelve years old, a worried Mother looked everywhere until the Boy was found amidst scholars and teachers in the temple worry that turned to great pride upon seeing Jesus at a young age preaching in the temple.

Sorrow came to the Mother of God when she saw her Son go through His passion and His agony – the wounds inflicted on Him and the thorns that crowned Him. A sorrowful Mother was Mary as she stood by the cross to see her Son nailed and finally expire on the cross.

With every sorrow comes joy. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead was a joyful moment. To Mary the Mother, seeing her Son alive was not only joyful but glorious!

These are some of the highlights of the Motherhood of Mary, the Mother of God. She is our first Mother too – our dearest Mother of all grace, a perpetual Mother, a loving Mother and a Mother who will be always there for us.

Let us give justice to all of Mama Mary’s sufferings, sorrows, grief and joy by being Mary-like in loving her Son. Then and only then, can we give testimony as true witnesses of the Solemnity of Mary Mother of God.

¹ *Mary’s “Fiat”, the Virgin Mary’s response to the Annunciation (“Let it be to me according to thy word.”)*

January 6, 2013 – THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY

MAGI: WISE OR OTHERWISE!

By Fr. Chris Kennedy, SDB

Once a Bishop was complaining to his resident theologian about people saying there were four Magi. “What do you think?” he asked the priest. “I think there are six,” the priest theologian replied. “There are three in Milan and three in Cologne!” One can

be sure the Bishop was not impressed.

And yet each year when the feast of Epiphany or Three Kings comes around we hopefully look at it not just as a story, but a story with a deeper meaning. From that point of view there is not much more to say than what Matthew has put the story together in the Gospel. They are wise men “from the east” who follow the star until they are confronted by the self-seeking Herod who wants them to report back to him when they find the Child. When they do find the Child they offer him the gifts they have brought and set



out for their homeland "by another road," leaving Herod literally in the dark.

I like to think of the story in the way Matthew must have written it for his own Christian community. It is a story with many levels of meaning. It is indeed a story of what true religion and worship is all about. We are all seekers of God as we set out to find him for ourselves. Our task is made all the more difficult by the presence of all kinds of obstacles in our lives, obstacles that prevent us from seeing the "star" that initially guided us along the way. But if we do not give up, and continue our journey, we will be sure to find "the Child with Mary, his mother." Grateful that their search has been successful, they do the only thing they feel is worthwhile:

they kneel down and worship the Child. Then they "opened their bags and offered their gifts." There is no other way to show gratitude that by giving the best of oneself, perhaps not in terms of gold, frankincense or myrrh, but in the quality of one's real self. Then they set out for home, "by a different road."

Can we see this Christmas story as a story in miniature of our lives. We too seek answers to life's "stars" and we journey along hoping we too will achieve success at the end of the journey. When we do, we offer the best of ourselves, and find true meaning in our lives. After that there is no way to go but home. Encountering God in a Child can help us find the way home in our lives too. In finding Jesus we are 'home at last.'

NEWS BRIEFS

PUGAD PAROL COMPETITION WINNERS ANNOUNCED

By Mon Angeles

Don Bosco Pugad launched its Christmas Lantern Contest last 15 December 2012. Nine groups of Pugad boys representing different provinces of the Philippines presented their artistic skills in creating nine colorful *parols*.

The panel of judges was composed of SJB parishioners: Ms. Diva Abad Santos, Ms. Maris San Juan, Ms. Lynn Angeles and Mr. Mon Angeles who rated each *parol* based on five criteria.

PUGAD BOYS CHOIR GO CAROLLING

One of the special highlights of the Lectors and Commentators Guild Christmas Party last 1 December 2012 was the Christmas carols serenade by the newly organized Pugad Choir. It was a treat listening to melodious renditions of *Pasko na Sinta Ko* and *Carol of the Bells*, among others performed by familiar faces we usually see in the PUGAD livelihood centers (Coffee and Saints Cafe, the water station and the breadshop, etc.) around the Parish. Fr. Dave Buenaventura, Pugad Director, and his boys have been making the rounds of the Parish bringing Christmas cheer to the parishioners.

NEW PARISH WEBSITE LAUNCHED FOR THE NEW YEAR



THE TOP THREE WINNERS



1st place – "Lolong" (Davao)



2nd place – "Jesus the Bright Morning Star & the Taal Volcano" (Batangas)



3rd place – "Mary and Joseph Embracing Jesus" (Romblon)



A test version of the new SJB Parish website will be launched on the first day of the New Year. Running side-by-side with the current website sjbmakati.com, the new website will be tested for performance and ease of maintenance before it takes over as the official website. At the same time, several pages will be under construction, as we complete the migration from the old site.

The new site was designed and developed by volunteer professionals, Kelly Revlin Liwanag, Angel Juarez and members of the Research Information and Development Ministry.

We shall be announcing the URL of the new website in sjbmakati.com. Your comments and suggestions for its improvement are most welcome.

NEWS BRIEFS

YM HOLDS YOUTH ADVENT BINGO RECOLLECTION

By Mary Grace Gueriba

We usually have recollections during Lent or Advent to prepare for Easter and Christmas, respectively. Last 16 December 2012, the SJB Youth Ministry organized a Youth Advent Recollection that was held in Roozen Hall. The date was chosen as it is also the celebration of National Youth Day. The theme of the recollection is all about Faith since we are all celebrating the Year of Faith.

Kuya Grant “Coco” Javier of the Couples for Christ Foundation for Family and Life gave the recollection. He is a missionary who

conducts recollections and retreats for the youth around the world. He talked about his personal experiences in his mission and how these strengthened his Faith in God.

The recollection started with a welcome

dance number from the Legion of Mary, followed by prayer and a short talk by Fr. Chris Kennedy. Later, a modified Bingo game served as an icebreaker. The recollection ended with a simple *salò salò*.



CANTATA OPENS SJB CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS



By Ma. Janina Celeste

For the third straight year, SJB Parish kicked off its Christmas Season celebrations with a Christmas Cantata on 14 December 2012 featuring the combined talents of the SJB Children’s Choir the newly formed SJB Youth Choir and SJB Musical Ensemble, the Auxilium Choir (one of the Parish’s original choirs and the only one which is still active), the SJB Parish Chorale and our Parish Priest, Fr. Ting Miciano.

The performers sang a selection of Christmas carols: some are old – Auxilium’s “Sleigh Ride” and the SJB Children’s Choir “Payapang Daigdig”, some are new – Fr. Ting and all Choirs’ “The Sound of Life” and “Isang Taong Lumipas”, all were well-applauded.

The Christmas Cantata is a project of the Ministry of Music and Cultural Affairs (MOMCA) under Mr. Gaylord Villa. Vince Olandesca was the Cantata’s director.

PARISH HOLDS ADVENT RECOLLECTION



Last 12 December 2012, Fr. Ting Miciano, SJB Parish Priest, presented “Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God made man: Incarnation”, the third of a yearlong series of monthly Catechetical Lectures for the Year of Faith (YOF), the Church-wide movement to enable all Catholics to rediscover their Faith. Because of the topic and the season, this YOF lecture doubled as the Parish’s annual Advent Recollection.

All parishioners are enjoined to make time for the monthly lectures and to take advantage of many other available resources e.g. the official website of the YOF. (<http://www.annusfidei.va/content/novaevangelizatio/en.html>) This blessed year is a rare, for most, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to truly understand and appreciate the richness of the Faith of the Mother Church, and more important, to deepen their relationship with its Author.

YOF CATECHISM FOR MISA DE GALLO MASSGOERS



Still in full support of the worldwide observance of the Year of Faith, Fr. Ting Miciano, SJB Parish Priest took the opportunity to conduct catechetical instruction on selected beliefs and practices of the Catholic faith during the Misa de Gallo novena dawn Masses from 16 to 24

December. The topics included God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and the seven sacraments.

Presentation materials for the 2012 Misa de Gallo homilies and other YOF lectures are available, upon request. Please email sjbmakati@gmail.com.