



# That they may be one! Jn. 17:21

# Ugnayan

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## Christ is Born Unto Us

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Migrants Minister - Nagaoka District



A very merry Christmas to all of you. For those who do not know me yet, I am Fr. Chito Lorenzo, SVD, a Filipino missionary priest at present assigned to the Nagaoka district of the Niigata Diocese. I have been a priest for 22 years. I came to Japan 20 years ago and I have had the privilege of working in all the 4 SVD districts that the SVDs minister to: Akita, Tokyo, Nagoya, and Nagasaki. My present assignment in Nagaoka is but icing on the cake, as they say. I get to work in a number of churches that are not in the usual SVD territory. I also get to interact more with diocesan priests as well as the Franciscans who have dedicated their lives working in the Niigata diocese. I believe that all these will contribute to my growth as a priest and as a person.

Every encounter provides us an opportunity to widen our horizon and enable us to understand better our lives and the world we live in. The people in our lives have a great impact on who we are. Our families, loved ones, and friends. Even those people we do not particularly like can give us a glimpse of our personalities. But it is those people who we respect and admire that mainly influence our lives. This Christmas, we once again focus our attention on the one person who should truly influence us in a big way. Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

As we celebrate Christ being born among us, I would like to take a few moments to share with you a few reflections on Christmas. Birth implies something new. Perhaps a gift we can give Jesus on His birthday is something new that we do to strengthen our faith. Maybe a promise to do morning and evening prayers. It could be to forgive someone you have not forgiven for a long time now. What is important is to have a gift for Jesus. And in giving our gifts we grow in faith and love. Christ being born was the fulfillment of God's promise to send a Savior so that we might be freed from sin. Once again we are presented an opportunity to thank God for His great love for us. Let us also find ways on how to repay His love by how we live our lives.

May Christ be born in our hearts and minds. May Christmas bring us closer to God. And may the Holy Family protect you and your loved ones. Again a merry Christmas to you all!



# NEWS - EVENTS



## SADO FIL-COMM FIRST YEAR ANNIVERSARY

The Spirit of the Lord blows wherever He wills and whoever heart He touched no one can resist the grace. After so many years living in Japan, the Filipinos in Sado had been looking for means that will help them deepen their faith. Their search ended when they participated in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist in their own language celebrated by a Filipino priest, Rev. Fr. Ferdy Faminialagao, SVD. Since then, they were determined to return to their original religion

which is the Catholic faith. In giving significance to that homecoming experience, they celebrated their first year of being found last September 10-11, 2011.

The celebration started on September 10 with the praying of the Rosary in Riyotsu. It was followed by a pilgrimage to Aikawa, where the Tomb of the Christian Martyrs can be found. Mr. Kichi Kawazaki was very helpful in giving us some historical background. After which, we paused and prayed. The participants went to the Sodayu Tunnel in Ginza to see the place where Catholics worked hard. Even though it was just for some minutes, we felt their hardships, and of course we have a little touch of history.

The following day, September 11, the celebration of the Holy Mass in the Filipino language was offered. The Mass' main celebrant was Rev. Fr. Ferdy Faminialagao, SVD, and it was concelebrated by Rev. Fr. Kawazaki and Rev. Fr. Hubert Nelskamp, OFM. Then it was followed by Agape and the celebration of Fr. Ferdy's birthday.

Our Congratulations to the Sado Filipino Community for their First Anniversary. May the Martyr's blood in the Island of Sado continue to inspire all of you and bear fruit in your life as a Catholic Christians. We also express our heartfelt thanks to all those who have been part of the celebration. God bless you all...as always! (msl)

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## 1ST YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF SHINJO CHURCH

On October 28, 2011, the First Year Anniversary of Shinjo Catholic Church was celebrated in a very simple but memorable way. The energetic parish priest, Fr. Honma, SCCS presided the Mass together with some visitors and friends, religious priests, sisters, and seminarians. After the Mass, a fun-filled programs were presented, and overflowing foods were shared followed. With the initial one year passed, many difficulties were encountered. But with everyone's deep faith in God and in one another, and of course with the unwavering help from generous benefactors and friends, for sure, we will survive. Aida Igarashi (Shinjo Catholic Church)



## ANG MABUTING BALITA AY ... *Magingning!*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, but the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him. But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in his name, who were born not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man's decision but of God. And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth. From his fullness we have all received, grace in place of grace, because while the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. The only Son, God,\* who is at the Father's side, has revealed him. (Jn. 1:1-5; 9-14; 16-18)

**THANKS FOR ALL THAT HAS BEEN, YES FOR ALL THAT WILL BE!**

God’s fidelity is always the reason in celebrating anniversaries whatever and wherever it is. We only know that God remains faithful if we are aware that we are unfaithful to Him. Even if we are faithless, God is always there waiting for our return, with an open hand and heart, into His loving embrace. And so, gratitude to the Lord for letting us festive and be united in our first year anniversary as God’s community here in Sado Island at St. Susana Parish last Sept. 11, 2011. It is really joy and fulfillment that fills my heart during that moment. Again and again, God manifested that He accompanies us always in all our efforts in following Him.

I thank the Almighty God for giving me a chance to be one of His leaders in our place. I can say that serving God through His people made me strong. There are lots of good and meaningful memories that help me grow and become the person God wants me to be. Nothing I can be proud of in serving God because I know that I cannot do everything without the help and guide of our dear God. However, before I became a leader, I was worried whether if I can make it or not. But nonetheless in surrendering myself and giving Him my 100% trust, I know nothing will be impossible. And if somehow there will be an opportunity to serve Him again, my heart will always says that I am happy and grateful to be His servant.

We also want to express our appreciation for all the loving supports that given to us. To all of you who have been part, most especially to: Fr. Kawasaki for his welcoming presence, to Fr. Hubert for his untiring support, to Fr. Ferdy, who chose to be with us during his birthday, to Sisters Mila and Cherry for their sisterly concern, and to the representative from Takada Filipino community for their presence. Thank you and may God bless you all! *Myra B.*

*Tsurunaru* (Sado Catholic Church)

**I AM GOD’S SERVANT, MAY HIS WILL BE DONE**

The Installation of the Core Group in Tokamachi Catholic Church is one of the unique precious moments in my life. It is really great to be called for the service of God and accomplish it in the best of my ability and capacity. I felt that I am so lucky because God chose me! He chose me even though I am a great sinner, and so, who am I to refuse Him? Who am I to refuse His valuable invitation? And I’ve got a feeling that "what if, He will not invite me again?" It is once that I pass on this earth, and whatever good that I can do, I will carry out for God’s glory. I just trust and believe in Him so much that He will not let me fall on the ground. In fact, He’s always there for me when I needed Him. I believe He’s the one who putted me in this situation so that I can continue to grow as a person and deepen my relationship with Him. I do appreciate it so much dear God, thank you very much!

I know that I did not deserve being God’s servant because of my weaknesses, but I suppose that the most important is the opportunity to serve Him in the way He wants me to do. It is not easy to follow Him; there are lots of obstacles that will come along the way, one of these is, I and my husband have different religious faith, and he is totally against about it and he’s also against my religion as well. But yet I am still begging him to be one of us someday with the help of our Almighty God, because I want to be in the Church than those some extra activities in life.

Whatever hindrance I will encounter in serving God, I can say at all times the respond of Mama Mary to the annunciation of angel Gabriel: “I am God’s servant... be it done unto me according to your Word.” I know that no matter what happens, He will be there for me and for all of us. Try friends, to be God’s servant, and you will experience fulfillment and happiness. Just TRUST HIM and surely He will never break His promises!

I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the one who planned/arranged that wonderful moment... I want her to know that she helped me so much. *Flordeliza Takahashi* (Muikamachi Catholic Community)

There was a four-year-old girl who was part of a Christmas tableau in their school. After the last practice, she brought home her costume and a big Star which she had to told during the tableau. As soon as she entered the house, her mother asked what her role was in the play. The girl replied: “I am the star that shines near the stable.” The mother continued: “But what do you do?” The small girl retorted: “I just stand near the stable and shine.” Yes, Jesus is truly the light of the world. He enlightens everyone who comes into this world. He shines in the darkness of egoism and selfishness. Through his life as a human being he showed us the kind of life that everyone must live.

Despite our self-centeredness and selfishness, there is a desire in each one of us to get out our selves, a desire to live a life in service for the others. But we fail to do it because we insist on living in self-concern and selfishness.

The celebration of Christmas reminds us that God who is love showed us what it means to love. He got out of himself, and shared himself with us through his Word which became man in Jesus. Becoming man like us, he has given us an example that also we must get out of ourselves, forget our self-concern and put ourselves at the service of others, and in so doing we put into practice our Christian vocation as true children of God our Father. By following the example of Jesus, we, too, become examples to others, we become like stars that shine in the darkness of egoism and selfishness. Thus, like that little girl, we can say that our role as Christians is precisely as she answered her mother: We “just stand there and shine.” (From The Word in Other Words by Fr. Magdaleno Fabiosa, SVD)

# Ang Hiling Ko sa Pasko?



- ☉ That everybody will be continuously blessed by God. Wish for good health, happiness and may warring nations be reconciled. (*Yuri Yamazaki* - Muikamachi)
- That all the Filipinos will participate in building up our Church community and be an active member in participating on the celebration of the Holy Mass. May the coming year be another year of blessings. (*Joy Kaneko* - Kashiwazaki)
- ☉ May the coming year be bountiful for all and good health to everybody. I also wish to visit my family in the Philippines. (*Joy Sakurai* - Kashiwazaki)
- Wish for good health, good relationship among family and community. May we become vigorous associate of our Church. (*Marisa Hatori* - Tokamachi)
- ☉ All of us will be always healthy and strong in our relationship with each other and in our faith in God. (*Cata Yamagishi* - Takada)
- May my children remain good, delivered from all temptations and become successful in life. (*Eva Simojo* - Takada)
- ☉ That there will be more Japanese who will be converted into Catholic faith with the help of Filipino community. (*Cynthia Koshino* - Koide)
- To have great friendships with God and others, have a simple yet comfortable life ahead. To be of help to less fortunate people and good health to my family and love ones. (*Chanella Padilla Yashane* - Tokamachi)
- ☉ I wish to have a joyous year ahead and well being of my family. May my husband become more understanding, kind and loving. (*Nikki Palabay* - Matsudai)
- Peace and Happiness to all. (*Jackie Kambayashi* - Kashiwazaki)
- ☉ I wish to help build a church in the Philippines. And may my dream of having man-sized statues of saints in our house be fulfilled in God's time. (*Theresa Filler Hashimoto* - Niigata)
- It's a blessing to celebrate Christmas with my family and best friends, so I'll just pray for all those who won't be able to and wish everyone peace and safety, keep warm and be happy. Merry CHRISTmas! (*Ellen Calimlim* - Ojiya)
- ☉ I wish everyone to have a good health specially to my family, and a permanent job so I can continue to support the people who relies on me. (*Lory Kasaka* - Ojiya)
- Good health ng buong family natin. At nawa'y makatapos sa pag-aaral ang mga anak ko. (*Hanna Lacson* - Mitsuke)
- ☉ Sana makasama namin yung eldest daughter na nasa malayong lugar para kompleto kami ngayong Pasko. At magkaroon ng peace of mind para sa sa sarili ko. (*Vivian Takahashi* - Shinjo)
- Pasasalamat sa lahat ng biyayang bigay ng Diyos at dalangin namin na sana matuto ang bawat-isa sa mga pagkakamali at magbago patungo sa tuwid na landasin ng buhay. Wish namin na patuloy na magkaisa ang aming komunidad at bigyang halaga ang pagsasama ng pamilya. Maging mabiyaya nawa ang taong darating upang makatulong sa aming mga pamilya sa Pilipinas. (*Filipino Community* - Yasuzuka)
- ☉ Maging malusog ang lahat at makapaghanap buhay upang makauwi ng Pilipinas at makasama ang pamilya na matagal nang di nakikita. Magkaisa ang bawat Filipino, maging bukas sa pagpapatawad upang gumaan at maging masaya ang Bagong Taon, 2012. Malunasan nawa ang problema sa Fukushima Nuclear Power plant upang makabangon muli ang bansang Japan. (*Filipino Community* - Takada)
- Masaya at nagpapasalamat sa Diyos sa pagsagot sa mga dalangin at biyayang bigay na nagkaroon ng bagong bahay, wish ko na sana merong maayos na tirahan ang mga nawalan ng tahanan sanhi ng mga kalamidad. Sa taong darating nawa wala ng lindol at mga sakuna, tulungan nawa tayo ni Lord. Always be grateful to God for the many blessings and pray for more blessings this coming year para makatulong sa pamilya at nangangailangan. (*Filipino Community* - Myoko)

## FACES



Sr. Antonia C. Cabanig, SFIC simply known as Sr. Ana was born on January 17, 1967 in Angeles City, Philippines. The 2<sup>nd</sup> eldest from the brood of nine of Mr. Paulino & Mrs. Simplicia Cabanig who are both from Rosario, Batangas, Philippines and are now residing in San Diego, California, USA. She earned her bachelors degree (BS BA) in Holy Angel University, Angeles City in March 1988. She worked for four years as data encoder in the inventory and purchasing department of Asset Marketing Corporation in Cabuyao, Laguna branch for 2 years and in San Matias, Pampanga branch for 2 years until before she decided to enter the religious life. She entered the SFIC on April 24, 1992 and professed her First Vows on May 22, 1995 in Marikina City. After her first profession of vows she was assigned in various SFIC communities. She had her perpetual profession of vows on May 31, 2000 in St. Francis Church, Mandaluyong City. After which she was assigned in Quezon City (2000-2009) as comptroller of St. Joseph's College and Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya (2009-March 2011) as treasurer of St. Teresita's Academy. She arrived in Takada, Joetsu-shi, Niigata Ken last October 6, 2011. At present she is attending a Nihongo class with Akagi-sensei in Takada Church.

## Ignayan

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