

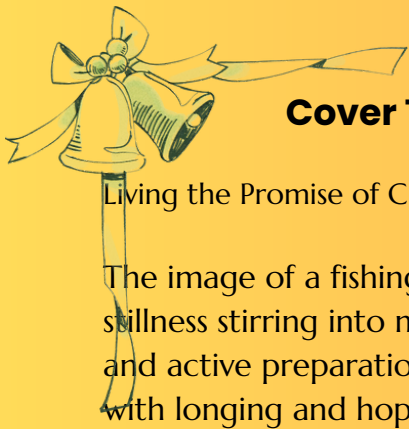
PILGRIMS OF HOPE:

From the Manger to the Rising Sun

Living the Promise of Christmas,
Longing for His Return



Romans 5:5 - "and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the holy Spirit that has been given to us."



Cover Theme: “From the Manger to the Rising Sun”

Living the Promise of Christmas, Longing for His Return

The image of a fishing boat at sunrise captures a sacred transition—darkness yielding to light, stillness stirring into mission. It’s a fitting metaphor for Advent, a season of quiet anticipation and active preparation. We remember Christ’s birth with gratitude, and we await His return with longing and hope.

- The manger holds the humility of His first coming—God made flesh, born in poverty, dwelling among us. It is where divine light first broke into human history, a light that continues to shine in every heart that welcomes Him.
- The rising sun over the waters symbolizes His second coming—the dawn of eternal day, the fulfillment of every promise, the return of the King. Just as the sun rises faithfully, so too will Christ return, bringing justice, peace, and glory.
- The fishing boat reminds us of our calling. We are not passive observers—we are sent to cast our nets, proclaim His mercy, and prepare the way. As a covenant community, we sail forward with hope, sustained by grace, anchored in the promise that “our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed” (Romans 13:11).

To live the promise of Christmas is to let His light shine through our lives. To long for His return is to walk in readiness, joy, and faithfulness. May we be a people who reflect His love in a world longing for dawn.



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Editorial: Pilgrims of Hope: Walking in the Light of Christ

As the season of Advent dawns, we are invited once again to enter the sacred rhythm of waiting and preparing. We look back with gratitude to the first coming of Christ in humility, and we look ahead with hope to His return in glory. In this holy tension, we walk as Pilgrims of Hope—a people shaped by promise, sustained by grace, and sent forth in mission.

This issue of Shining Light is the first of two special editions marking the culmination of the Jubilee Year 2025, a year the Catholic Church has dedicated to rekindling hope in the hearts of the faithful. As BLD Vancouver, we join the universal Church in celebrating this sacred milestone, giving thanks for the grace that has carried us and the mission that lies ahead.

Throughout this Jubilee year, the Lord has poured out His mercy upon our community in powerful ways. Through the Marriage, Solo Parents, Singles, and Youth Encounters, and most recently through the LSS, we have witnessed lives awakened, families renewed, and hearts set ablaze. These moments were not isolated events—they were sacred thresholds where salvation was made visible in our midst. Each testimony shared in this issue is a living echo of God's faithfulness and a reminder that He is always drawing near.

We are reminded that salvation is not a distant reward but a present grace, unfolding each time we choose to walk in the ways of the Lord. As Scripture proclaims, "*Our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.*" This is not just a call to urgency—it is a call to readiness, to holiness, to joy. In a world often marked by distraction and division, we are called to be watchful, to clothe ourselves in Christ, and to live as radiant signs of His coming Kingdom.

This Christmas, we are encouraged to draw near to the manger with hearts full of wonder. In the stillness of Bethlehem, we rediscover the tenderness of God, who chooses to dwell with us. Christ's birth is not only a moment in history—it is a daily invitation to let His light shine through our lives. As a covenant community, may we be vigilant, not weary; faithful, not fearful; joyful, not complacent.

Let us continue to build a community that reflects His love—a people who walk in the light, who proclaim His mercy, and who live with eyes fixed on eternity. May this Advent and Christmas season rekindle our joy, deepen our prayer, and renew our mission. Let every encounter, every act of service, every word of encouragement be a step forward on this pilgrim path.

Together, let us celebrate the first coming of our Savior with gratitude and prepare for His return with hope. Truly, "*our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed*" - Romans 13:11.

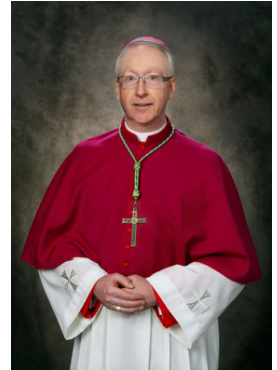


Christmas Message 2025: Archbishop Richard Smith

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Every heart longs for hope. At Christmas, that longing is fulfilled in the child of Bethlehem — God Himself, who enters our story to remind us that we are never alone.

“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14).



In that little child, we see the reality of our own lives. We are vulnerable to loneliness, longing for love, searching for meaning. Yet it is precisely in our weakness that the Lord draws near with tender love and warmth.

The wonder of Christmas reminds us that God's glory shines through what is small and simple. May that beauty open our hearts to welcome Christ anew.

As we enter the final weeks of the Jubilee of Hope, I invite you to reflect on where you need hope most in your life. Christmas is the season of hope — when God reminds us that everything will be all right, that all things work together for good, because He draws near and remains with us. No matter how dark things may seem, the hope born in Bethlehem assures us that Christ's light will always prevail.

My friends, as we celebrate this season together, may the peace of Christ dwell in your hearts. May His gift of hope bring light to your days. And may His love move you to serve Him with gratitude.

With prayerful best wishes for a blessed and joyful Christmas,

✠ Richard W. Smith

Archbishop of Vancouver





The Roman Catholic Bishop of Imus

DIOCESE OF IMUS
IMUS CITY, 4103 CAVITE, PHILIPPINES

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Greetings of hope and peace.

As we celebrate the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ, we rejoice in the profound truth as expressed in the Community Word: *"Jesus, Our Emmanuel, brings salvation to the world and hope in every heart."* In a world longing for peace, healing and unity, the coming of the Lord Jesus, the Emmanuel, through the Blessed Virgin Mary assures us that we are never abandoned by God. Through His Incarnation, God walks with us and abides with us. He became like us in all things except sin so that we may share in His divine life.

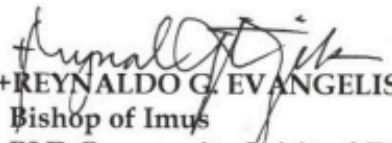
As Pope Francis said — *"Christmas means meeting Jesus...He asks simply that you listen to Him or rather that you seek Him."* Christmas is not only about God visiting His people. It is about God journeying with us. As St. Paul exhorts us in his Letter to the Colossians, those who have encountered the Emmanuel — God-with-us, are called to *"put on heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience"* (Col. 3:12). These virtues are essential characteristics of authentic disciples of Christ.

In this Christmas Season, be compassionate to all those who are experiencing pain, loneliness, grief and anxiety. Show kindness to all people you meet in simple gestures of love. Imitate the Lord Jesus who was born in a manger in genuine humility. Be patient always by trusting in God's promises.

As we approach the closing of the Jubilee Year 2025, we should be grateful to God for the many graces that He has bestowed on us. The Holy Year has indeed become for us a grace-filled year. May you be disposed always to treasure the graces of the Jubilee Year.

As BLD members may you radiate hope and peace to everyone. May you be living witnesses of God's love not only to your loved ones and friends but most especially to the poor and the marginalized of society.

I assure you of my prayers as I wish you all a grace-filled Christmas!


+REYNALDO G. EVANGELISTA, D.D.
Bishop of Imus
BLD Community Spiritual Director





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St. Nicholas
Roman Catholic Church

Dear BLD Members,

As we enter this holy season of Christmas and the dawn of a New Year, our hearts are filled with gratitude and anticipation. This year, the Church invited us to celebrate the **Jubilee Year 2025** with the theme "*Pilgrims of Hope.*"

A pilgrim is one who journeys with purpose — not merely traveling from place to place, but walking in faith, trusting that every step brings them closer to God. In this Jubilee of Hope, we were called to be such pilgrims — men and women who carry the light of Christ through life's valleys and mountains, sustained by the promise of His unfailing love.

Christmas reminds us of the beginning of this divine pilgrimage. God Himself became a pilgrim — leaving the glory of heaven to walk among us, to share our joys and sorrows, and to lead us home. The journey to Bethlehem was not just Mary and Joseph's path; it is the path of every believer who seeks to welcome Christ into the heart.

As *Pilgrims of Hope*, let us allow the Child Jesus to renew our faith and rekindle our joy. Let us carry His light into our families, our communities, and our world — especially to those burdened by fear, loneliness, or doubt. Hope is not a distant dream; it is the presence of Christ walking with us each day.

May this Christmas fill your hearts with peace and wonder, and may the coming year be a grace-filled journey of faith, joy, and hope.

Merry Christmas and a Hope-filled New Year 2026!

In Christ,

Fr. Nixon D'Silva



Walking Toward Bethlehem as Pilgrims of Hope

"Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage." – Psalm 84:5

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we enter this season of Advent, we begin a new journey, not a journey of distance, but a journey of the heart. We are reminded that we are all pilgrims of hope, walking toward Bethlehem, the place where God's promise became flesh. Psalm 84:5 tells us, "Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage." These words invite us to see Advent not just as a countdown to Christmas, but as a sacred journey. We are travelers guided by faith, walking together toward the light of Christ.

Bethlehem is more than just a place; it is a symbol of God's faithfulness. It is where heaven touched earth, where hope was born in a humble way. We walk toward Bethlehem to rediscover that God still comes close to us today, in our families, our communities, and our hearts.

To be a pilgrim of hope is to walk with trust even when we cannot see the path ahead. Like Mary and Joseph on their journey to Bethlehem, we, too, travel in faith, trusting that God will guide us even through the unknown. It means to move forward with purpose, knowing that we are not alone. It reminds us that God is with us, not only at the destination but also along the journey. We may stumble, we may grow weary, but we never lose sight of the goal, to meet Christ who waits for us in the manger.

As pilgrims, we are not meant to walk alone. We journey together as a community of believers, encouraging one another, sharing our burdens, and celebrating our blessings. When we care for the poor, comfort the lonely, or bring joy to others, we become living signs of God's love on the road to Bethlehem.

My dear friends, as we journey at this time of Advent, let us walk toward Bethlehem with hearts full of hope, open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Let us be pilgrims strengthened by the Lord, trusting that each step brings us nearer to the peace, joy, and love that only Christ can give. May we wait with prayer, journey with compassion, and arrive at the peace of Christ who comes to dwell among us.

"Blessed are those whose strength is in the Lord, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage", walking toward Bethlehem, where hope is renewed. This Christmas, may the light of Christ shine brightly in your life and may the Holy Spirit empower you to bring His love wherever you go. Wishing you a blessed Christmas and a joyful, Spirit-guided New Year!

With Love and Blessing,


Deacon Rolly and Malou Sanares





Christmas Message Jubilee Year 2025

This Jubilee Year 2025, which is centered around the theme “*Pilgrims of Hope*”, calls us to embark on a journey of faith and hope as we face the challenges of the post-pandemic world. The Jubilee Year is a special year of grace, a holy year.

As the world confronts serious social justice and environmental issues, we are asked to carve out that sacred space necessary to address these challenges with faith and hope.

We are encouraged to deepen our relationship with God by works of mercy and charity, by prayer and fasting, and by pilgrimages to holy sites.

We thank the Lord for sustaining our community, the BLD community, which has been our constant guide and support in both our personal and communal renewal. Let us look at this Jubilee Year as a God-given opportunity to reconnect with our spiritual roots while looking forward with hope.

As we celebrate the birth of our Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, let us be renewed with His grace. God’s love and mercy know no bounds.

A blessed Christmas to you and yours!

Deacon Vic and Lyn Gallamos





Christmas and New Year Message

Grace and peace to you and your families as we celebrate the joyful season of Christmas and welcome the hope-filled New Year.

Our BLD Community Word for December 2025 proclaims: **“Jesus, our Emmanuel, brings salvation to the world and hope in every heart.”** With this message, we are reminded once again that Christ is truly with us—guiding, strengthening, and renewing our community, especially in moments of trial.

This year, we give thanks to God for the grace of celebrating global BLD’s Ruby Jubilee (40th Anniversary), a milestone that affirms His enduring faithfulness to our mission. We also rejoice in the continued growth of our community: the increasing number of covenanted disciples, and the expanding evangelization through our Encounters and Life in the Spirit Seminars, and efforts to develop more mission areas, prayer groups and districts. Truly, the Lord continues to raise laborers for His harvest.

We are deeply grateful as well for the spirit of solidarity and the generous outpouring of contributions from our districts to help to those affected by the series of earthquakes, typhoons, and flooding in the Philippines. Your heartfelt donations, prayers, and compassionate response have brought comfort, relief, and renewed hope to our brothers and sisters who have suffered great loss. Your kindness shines as a true reflection of Christ’s love alive in you.

As we celebrate this holy season, we acknowledge that the past year has not been without hardship, marked by calamities, issues of corruptions, socio-political and economic challenges, and even personal concerns that have weighed heavily on many. Yet, through it all, we have witnessed the unwavering faith, unity, and resilience of the BLD members and community. The birth of Jesus reminds us that even in uncertainty, God’s light breaks through with promise and purpose. No darkness can overshadow the mission entrusted to us.

Guided by our Order for the month, **“Put on heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience”** (Col 3:12), may this season restore our strength and renew our courage. May the New Year bring clarity, compassion, and joy as we serve God and His people.

From our hearts to yours, **we wish you a blessed, meaningful, and Merry Christmas, and a grace-filled New Year!**

THE COUNCIL OF SERVANT LEADERS (2024 – 2027)



Ross and Dina Manlapat
Presiding Servant Leaders

December 2025





Bukás Loób sa Diyós **(Open in Spirit to God)**

CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC COVENANT COMMUNITY
Cluster 10 Districts (Vancouver, Edmonton & Seattle)

2025 CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As the joyous season of Christmas is upon us, our hearts are filled with gratitude for each of you and for the privilege of sharing our lives and our faith together. This year of Jubilee, let us pause to celebrate miracle of Christmas, the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who is the source of our hope and the reason for our joy. As we celebrate this season, let us remember to express the true spirit of Christmas in our daily lives and offer kindness, patience, and support to one another, recognizing that these are the most precious gift we can give.

We offer our heartfelt prayers and blessings to our community during this joyous holiday season and may the spirit of unity and compassion prevail, bringing peace to everyone's heart. May our actions mirror the teachings of kindness and generosity, extending empathy to those affected by conflict.

As we approach the final days of Jubilee Year's "Pilgrims of Hope", may the light of Christ guide your path, and may His love inspire you to share the good news with those around you. In the year ahead of us, may we grow closer to God and to one another as a community of faith. Let us be diligent in prayer, steadfast in service, and eager to learn and study His word from the teachings offered by the community.

Wishing you a Christmas filled with the peace and joy that comes from Christ's love. May you continue to be inspired to serve with kindness and empathy and may the spirit of the season bring you renewed hope and strength.

Have a blessed Christmas and New Year to all.

Floren and Tita Jose
Cluster Shepherds
(Cluster 10)





Dear Beloved BLD Community,

“For a child is born to us, a son is given to us...” - Isaiah 9.5

As we rejoice in the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, we thank God for the beautiful ways His Spirit has moved within our community this year.

We offer heartfelt gratitude to each of you for sharing your time, treasure, and talent in the Lord’s vineyard - especially through all our District Teachings and Encounters, LSS26/YLSS23 last October; the LSS at the Good Shepherd Parish in Surrey, LSS in Saskatoon, YLSS in Seattle, and the many blessed encounters such as the SE, SPE in Seattle, and the SPE in Calgary.

Your generosity has allowed the light of Christ to shine more brightly in the lives of many.

As we welcome a New Year, may we hold firmly to His promise:

“The Lord will guide you always and satisfy your thirst in parched places...” - Isaiah 58.11

May Christ, our Emmanuel, guide our families, strengthen our community, and lead us into deeper faith and unity.

Wishing you and your loved ones a holy Christmas and a Spirit-filled New Year!

The District Council of Stewards:

Evangelization Apostolate	- Ross & Cristy Mina
Formation Apostolate	- Alex & Mel Ebarvia
Management Apostolate	- Linggo & Mely Almonte
Mission Apostolate	- Ted & Ondette Lim
Pastoral Apostolate	- Ed & Bebeth dela Rea





In Loving Memory of Maria Michelline Montero

Born on March 2, 1950, the second of eight children, Michelline lived a life marked by unwavering devotion, quiet strength, and deep compassion. She was the heart of her family and the light of every room she entered.

She was a loving and devoted wife to Miguel Montero, her partner and best friend through the decades of shared joys, challenges, and adventures. Together, they built a home filled with warmth, laughter, and love - a true reflection of Michelline's generous spirit.

As a mother, Michelline was endlessly nurturing and wise. She poured her heart into raising her two daughters, Maria Montero Mitrani and Mimi Monteros Paclaon, instilling in them the values of kindness, resilience, and grace. Her daughters carry forward her legacy with strength and love.



She found immeasurable joy in being a grandmother to Olivia Paclaon and Gabriel Paclaon. Whether through her comforting presence, her stories, and her soft laughter, she created a bond with her grandchildren that will be cherished forever.

To those who knew her, Tita Mitch, as she was fondly called, will be remembered for her quiet generosity, her radiant smile, and the way she made others feel seen and loved. She had a gift for making the ordinary feel special and for finding joy in life's simple moments. She will be deeply missed and lovingly remembered by all whose lives she touched.

"We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to His purpose." Roman 8:28



POEM: "A BEAUTIFUL SOUL- MARIA MICHELLINE MONTERO"

By Samuel Mensah

Yes, I went and "viewed" the body; a Beautiful Soul!
Matching through the aisle to the front
I had the opportunity to pay my last respects to my dear "ATE".
A dear friend indeed; What a beautiful soul!
For the joy she had brought to her beautiful family and us
We who were privileged to worship with her
And to be taught by her, not only by word but by her humble life.
A humble and God-fearing lady, she was
Full of laughter and joy
Her humility, I found no match
To her, there was never a stranger; all are one in God
But by a stroke of the chilling hands of "death", there the body lay; lifeless!
The ultimate curse of Adam in Genesis has once again manifested itself
"For you are dirt, and to dirt you shall return"
That is not the end, but the threshold of Eternal Life with God
A new birth to our Mother, the Immaculate Conception
The Word of God teaches us (John 12:24)
"A grain of wheat must die in order to produce much fruit."
From dust she came, and to dust she has returned
Now, she has been called home by our Father in Heaven
The Book of Wisdom reveals to us:
*"The souls of the just are in the hand of God
And no torment shall touch them
They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead;
And their passing away was thought an affliction
And their going forth from us, utter destruction
But they are at peace
Chastised a little, they shall be greatly blessed
Because God tried them and found them worthy of Himself
As gold in the furnace, He proved them
And as sacrificial offerings, He took them to Himself."* (Wisdom 3:1ff).
O My dearly beloved "ATE"
Absent though in this world,
you are born into the loving embrace of our Lady of Mercy
May your soul rest in the Peace of God.
May His perpetual Light shine upon you and all the souls in Purgatory
In Eternity, we shall meet again. What a beautiful soul!
Praised be God, for His mercy endures forever! AMEN!



Pilgrims of Hope 2025

By Franco and Remy Tan

Jubilee year 2025 starts December 24, 2024, until January 6, 2026.

Jubilee year is traditionally proclaimed by the universal church every 25 years. Originally celebrated in the Hebrew tradition every 50 years, to free slaves and forgives debts, the Christian Jubilee was started in 1300 by Pope Boniface VIII for special year of grace and forgiveness. “Pilgrims of Hope”, is the theme chosen by Pope Francis for this Jubilee year 2025.

It began with the opening of the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica on December 24, 2024, and will conclude on January 6, 2026. His message is for the Church to experience personal encounter with the Lord Jesus, the “door” of our salvation, giving “hope” to all, strengthening and renewing our faith in Jesus, to bring unity, love, and care for one another.

The Pope invites every one of us to embark on a pilgrimage of hope, so that through our witness, we may spread hope to others. Pilgrimage is one among the many acts of piety through which we can obtain plenary indulgences through the merits of Christ and saints.

On August 14, 2025, we feel blessed to be able to join our local parish of St Joseph the Worker in Richmond BC to a one-day pilgrimage to the Shrine of Sto. Nino de Cebu, Agassiz, BC. About 125 pilgrims participated in this journey of faith to the Shrine in Agassiz to commemorate the 500 years of Christianity in the Philippines. We prayed the rosary and had Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the small quaint chapel, had lunch and fellowship with fellow pilgrims, concluding our visit with Vigil Mass for the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Our most recent trip to Poland, Central Europe, and Medjugorje during the last week of September to mid-October 2025, was called the Pilgrimage of Mercy and Miracle.

We visited different cathedrals, basilicas, palaces and monastery, gaining more knowledge and understanding of history, culture and spirituality of the people in this part of Europe. Their faith challenged by wars and political conflicts reflects their resiliency relaying messages of hope, strength and renewal of faith to visiting pilgrims.

The icon of the Black Madonna at Jasna Gora Monastery, represents their deep faith in God and the blessed Mother, evidenced by their devotion today for its miraculous and divine intervention during various political invasion of their country, calling the icon of the Blessed Virgin as Queen of Poland.

Walking up the Wawel Hill, the panoramic view of the city of Krakow Poland was a sight to behold on a sunny cold October morning. The Wawel complex housed the Wawel Cathedral, royal castle, royal tombs, museum with royal treasures, tapestries and many other significant political and religious items dating back to the 10th century. Across the entrance door to the Wawel Cathedral is the bigger than life image of Pope John Paul, for this is where he celebrated his first Mass following his ordination to priesthood in 1946 and appointment as bishop in 1958.

The day we visited the camp at Auschwitz brought sadness in our heart, listening and reliving the human sufferings behind the walls of the barracks, as our knowledgeable guide relates the history of one of the cruelest assaults on humanity. St Maximillian Kolby was a prisoner in this camp who offered his life to save another prisoner.



Pilgrims of Hope 2025...page ii
By Franco and Remy Tan
Jubilee year 2025 starts December 24, 2024, until January 6, 2026.

We also visited the Divine Mercy Shrine in Łagiewniki, Poland, where St Faustina received messages from Jesus as written in her diary. Our pilgrimage included a visit to the Church of Our Lady Victorious in Prague with the icon of the Infant Jesus.

Praying and meditating on the rosary as we stepped on the rugged stones of the Apparition Hill in Medjugorje, our group was filled with hope and encouragement for one another. The climb on Cross Mountain the following day was even more challenging. Stunning views of Medjugorje await those capable of reaching the very top of the mountain. The hill is steep, with sharper rocks to step on. We prayed the Stations of the Cross as a group and silently offered our individual intentions. Medieval cathedrals in the Diocletian Palace in Croatia heightened our understanding of the long history of Catholicism and the mystery of God.

Each pilgrim site we visited brought us an appreciation of the beauty of the Lord's creation, a realization of the vulnerability of humans to destroy, the capability to rebuild, and resiliency to adapt. Behind all political conflicts and war, one rises back individually or as a nation in the strength of our divine Creator. The prayers and intentions we carried as we crossed every threshold and every step over each "door" of our pilgrimage site transformed us profoundly both in wisdom and knowledge, enriching and guiding us to deepen our spiritual direction in life.

Jubilee 2025, with its message of hope, will soon be a part of our meaningful past. As pilgrims of this earthly life, we take every step with courage and confidence, knowing Jesus is at our side.



**To "Learn the Five (5) Ways of Living the Jubilee", please read the full letter of
Archbishop J Michael Miller, Archbishop of Vancouver on Pilgrims of Hope:
<https://rcav.org/announcements/archbishop-miller-s-pastoral-letter-on-the-jubilee-of-hope>**



OUR JUBILEE PILGRIMAGE EXPERIENCE: WALKING THROUGH THE HOLY DOORS:

By Jun & Lalaine Soliven



When we signed up for what we thought would be a scenic spiritual tour through some of Europe's most storied cities, we had no idea we were stepping into one of the most sacred years in the Catholic Church: the Jubilee Year. On our pilgrimage, the Lord blessed us not only with holy places to visit but with holy ministers to walk beside us. With our priest (Fr. Deyre Azcuna), we met Christ in the sacraments; with our Deacon Norber, we met Christ the servant. At first, we thought it would just be a trip to a holy place, but as we walked, prayed, and reflected, we realized it was also a journey of the heart. As a married couple, we saw this pilgrimage not just as a spiritual journey, rather, it embodies the idea of walking life's journey hand in hand-with each other and with God.

One of the most powerful symbols of the Jubilee is the Holy Door. We were blessed with the rare and life changing opportunity to enter through the Holy Doors of the four major basilicas: St. Peter's Basilica, St. John Lateran, St. Mary Major, and St. Paul Outside the Walls. Traditionally sealed shut outside of Jubilee years, these doors are opened only during this sacred time, signifying the extraordinary pathway of mercy God extends to His people.

As we approached the grand façade of St. Peter's Basilica, we were immediately struck by the majesty of the Holy Door, adorned with scenes of redemption and grace. Stepping toward the Holy Door, we were reminded that Christ Himself is the door. "I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved" John 10:9. This threshold is more than stone and bronze-it is a passage of grace, from burden to freedom, from death into life. Our hearts carried prayers, burdens, hopes, and regrets. Others touched the door gently, as if greeting something sacred. In that moment, we felt part of a living faith that spans centuries, shared by countless others who've come in search of healing, clarity, or simply closeness to God. As we passed through the Holy Door, we weren't the same as when we arrived. It felt providential that this moment coincided with Pope Francis's wake. To step through the Holy Door at the same time was like entering more deeply into the very message he lived and preached. As we walked in solemn procession around the casket of Pope Francis, guided by the simple rope that marks our path, we join a great multitude of witnesses. The body of the Holy Father lies in quiet repose, guarded with dignity, yet his spirit and his teaching continue to speak to the church and to the world.

The Holy Door of St. Mary Major Basilica (Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore) in Rome is one of the four Holy Doors of the major papal basilicas. Though less universally recognized than the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica, it carries equal spiritual significance and plays a vital role in the liturgical celebrations of Jubilee Years. It is one of the most beautiful Marian churches in the world. Once inside, we were enveloped by the warmth and serenity of this sacred space, which houses the relics of the Holy Crib. Passing through the door felt like walking into the embrace of a loving mother.

As we step through the Holy Door of the Lateran Basilica, we were reminded that this threshold is not just a doorway of stone, it is also a passage of grace. As the Cathedral of the Bishop of Rome –the Pope- St. John Lateran is known as the “Mother and Head of all Churches in the City and the World”. It is the official ecclesiastical seat of the Pope and the oldest of the four major papal basilicas and the first legally recognized Christian church in History. Entering through its Holy Door was a moment of symbolic rebirth, especially after reflecting on the beautiful inscription above the door: “Porta Sancta”. Its Holy Door is a powerful symbol of conversion, grace, and reconciliation.

St. Paul Outside the Walls- The final Holy Door we entered was that of St. Paul’s. Built over the tomb of the Apostle to the Gentiles, this basilica invited us to reflect on the missionary call of our faith. Walking through its Holy Door, we felt Paul’s fervor to spread the Gospel stirring within us, urging us to witness with courage in our own lives.

Each Holy Door we crossed marked a step deeper into the mystery of God’s mercy. The Jubilee year reminds us that we are all pilgrims, journeying not only to Rome, but toward the eternal home Christ prepares for us. Even though there were moments when we felt tired, we realized that these challenges could be offered up like small crosses, just as Jesus carried His own.

During our pilgrimage, we were blessed to visit many beautiful churches. A few of them, Our Lady of Victory with the Infant Jesus of Prague, Our Lady of Czestochowa-the Black Madonna in Poland, the Shrine of Divine Mercy, is where the message of Divine Mercy originated, which Christ himself wished to pass on to our generation also in Poland, and the famous Salt Mines of Wieliczka, a splendid underground complex of chambers, chapels and statues sculpted from salt.

As we look back on this pilgrimage, we realize that the physical journey was only the beginning. The true grace of the Jubilee lies in the transformation of our hearts- hearts renewed in mercy and strengthened in faith. The pilgrimage ends, but the mission continues, as we return home renewed in spirit, and guided by God’s unfailing light.



My Devotion to the Senior Santo Niño

By Aster A. Tambis (ME#5 & LSS#3)

I was born and raised in a small town located high up on a plateau, ten kilometers away from the capital city of Tagbilaran in the province of Bohol, Philippines. Legend has it that a very welcoming and courteous people met the Spanish conquistadors upon their arrival, so much so that they named the place *Cortés*. The town's parish is solemnly dedicated to the Most Holy Child Jesus (*Señor Santo Niño*).

It was within the sacred walls of the parish church that I was baptized into the faith and where I received the sacraments that nourished my Christian life. Devotion to the Holy Child has been a constant presence since my earliest years, shaping my spiritual journey and grounding my identity as a son of God. All my six siblings received their Holy Sacraments of Matrimony here, but I, being the youngest of seven children, was the last among us to be married.

In the mysterious providence of God, He had led me to come to Canada to marry a fellow *Cortesianon* who was my elementary and high school classmate when we were still in my hometown. Coming here, the first gathering I attended was a Santo Niño fiesta. My wife and I joined the confraternity of the Santo Niño at a Vancouver parish where we got married. My devotion to the Holy Child grew stronger, for as a family we abide in Him as He also abides in us, and we always pray for His guidance and protection. Together with other members, our group celebrates the feast of the Child Jesus every January of the year.

Novena prayers are said in households as the image of the Santo Niño is being passed around. This catholic tradition honours Jesus' sacred infancy and the virtues of innocence, humility, and childlike trust He embodied. Just like a child, my family and I submitted and committed our total dependence to our loving Santo Niño, who is the originator and source of both physical and spiritual life.



Just recently, a big event honouring the third anniversary of the installation of the Holy Child's Shine at the St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Agassiz, BC was celebrated. The Viva Senior Santo Niño of BC members honored and offered a traditional Sinulog dance as a tribute to His Righteousness and Glory. Our group is one of the many active associations whose devotion emphasizes trust in the Holy Child's mercy and power to earnest prayer and fosters a deeper appreciation for His humble infancy.



GOSPEL REFLECTION – 22nd Sunday in Ordinary time
By Jojo & Bing Zulita, BLD Vancouver ME Class #9

“For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.” Luke 14: 11

This verse is a powerful reminder that the values of God’s kingdom are very different from the values of the world. The world often teaches us to seek recognition and status be it at work and maybe sometimes in the community where we belong. Yet Jesus warns that those who seek recognition will be eventually brought low.

Our journey with the Lord through the BLD community allowed us not only to learn more about our faith but also guided us on how to put it in practice. We learned that being in the Service ministry tests our humility. We learned to pray for the needs of others with the Intercessory ministry. We participated in BLD’s service at the Door is Open that allowed us to serve the less fortunate in our society. What we learned from the teachings and practical applications of our faith through community activities allowed us to acknowledge that we are nothing without God and that we need God in our lives.

Further, we realized that: self-exaltation leads to being humbled because pride is not what the Lord wants us to have but rather humility. Humility makes space for God to work. It allowed us to serve without recognition, not wanting the credit for what we are and will be doing. To trust that the reward is in God’s warm embrace.

The path to true greatness in the eyes of God is not through self-promotion, but through humbling ourselves. These realizations allowed Bing and I to serve the community in any way we could. This allowed us to share our life’s story at the marriage encounter as our way of witnessing to how God worked in our lives.

Luke 14:11 is truly a simple but profound truth that our true worth does not depend on being praised or placed above others. Self-exaltation often leads to being humbled and to serve without recognition will result in a great reward from God. Brothers and sisters in the community, God sees the hidden acts of love, the quiet service and the prayers spoken in secret. Indeed, it is only God that sees the true humility in us.

Father in heaven, make us gentle in speech, patient in times of trials, and joyful in serving others, so that we may one day enter through the narrow gate into Your Kingdom. Amen.



Reflection on the Marriage Encounter, April 25 – 27, 2025

Little Flower Monastery, Carmel Hill Deroche BC

By Joy Gomez Nobleza, ME# 47

Every relationship stage has its challenges. At the beginning of most romantic relationships, couples are often smitten with each other, and every quirk is often an admired trait of their partner. As time passes, each couple will typically learn more about how their partner operates, their views, values, and how their influences growing up helped shape them into the person they have become. There is a point in most relationships when partners decide whether to part ways or take the next step.

For Rommel and me (Joy), our next step was to pursue marriage. The early stages of our marriage were similar to our dating life, as we were long-distance for a year before he moved to Canada from the US. Once we were living together, it was about learning each other's habits and idiosyncrasies. Since most of our relationship was long-distance, I thought our communication was great as we were comfortable discussing our ideas, opinions, and feelings about various issues in our lives. It wasn't until we had kids that our shortcomings as a married couple were exposed. We struggled to be on the same page regarding matters we once agreed on, and often had disagreements about issues relating to parenting. I couldn't quite understand what was happening, as I thought our communication skills were great. Still, somehow, it felt like we had trouble completely being honest with each other to avoid arguments and it felt as though we had to work harder to keep that spark in our marriage. Our children are young, and they were often exposed to our disagreements before the encounter.

We knew about the Marriage Encounter as Rommel, and I both grew up in this community. I asked him if we could take the encounter or pursue counseling, as I felt our marriage needed support. Why struggle when we only have so much time together here on earth? I wanted to spend the rest of our days filled with love, rather than anger or resentment, because of misunderstandings.

The Marriage Encounter showed us how to talk through our disagreements with love, and was a great reminder always to put God at the centre of our marriage. If God is there, love is there, for God is love. The encounter was also a great reminder of the sacrament of Marriage we both received, and that we should continue to participate in the other sacraments given to us through Reconciliation and Holy Communion. It is through this that we have strengthened not only our relationship with each other, but our relationship with God. Since our encounter, our prayer life has changed drastically, and the way we communicate with each other has improved greatly. We are still working on our relationship daily, but the biggest difference we feel is that there is more peace in our lives as we continue to invite God to lead us, and be the centre of our family each day.



Becoming a Disciplined Disciple of Jesus
by: Suzeth Sanares

My first call as a community instructor to give a teaching on the topic Christian Discipline was something not new if you are a committed or covenanted member of the community. In fact, as I was preparing for it I thought this is just a refresher, a gentle reminder for many of us.

One cannot grow in any skill, ability & knowledge without the exercise of discipline. Even for successful people, they probably don't have superpowers, but what they do have is DISCIPLINE. Discipline is not about big gestures. It's about the small, everyday choices that add up, that build a strong tower, brick by brick.

But we are not just talking about "worldly" discipline that is frequently driven by the desire for success, recognition, or material gain. We are talking about "spiritual or Christian" discipline that guides us towards spiritual maturity, holiness & righteousness, aligning our lives with God's will. 1 Timothy 4:7 "Train yourself for Godliness" – like our body that needs training & discipline, our soul does too.

Discipline is a prerequisite for a disciple of Jesus. The areas of Christian discipline that are very central to His life & are very vital for our spiritual development are the disciplines of prayer, study, worship, solitude/silence, fasting, service, giving, simplicity & evangelism.

Because of the weakness of the flesh, the strength of the evil one & the lure of the world's standards those many of which are opposed to God's, these disciplines are very essential. We need spiritual disciplines in order that we conform ourselves to the character of Jesus.

While we strive to develop Christian discipline, there are obstacles that we may encounter along the way. Unfortunately, many Christians not just in our community struggle & we need the power of the Holy Spirit to help us in our weakness.

Personally, distractions always played a significant role in my laziness. With the rise of technology & social media, it's easier than ever that I get sidetracked & lose focus especially in the areas of prayer & studying the word of God. Being busy with worldly cares is undoubtedly one of the devil's ploys to keep me from these disciplines that I should be pursuing. By the grace of God, He would always give me gentle nudge to remind me if there are signs that I struggled in these areas.

Disciplined disciples are those who follow the disciplines of discipleship. If we took the Christian disciplines very seriously, we will be radically transformed into the image of God. We need discipline if we want consistent results in any areas of our lives, spiritual or otherwise. And in our community, these are very essential in our spiritual growth & maturity. In a world full of distractions & temptations, it is my prayer that we will commit to Christian discipline that will provide the steady guidance we need to live a life pleasing to God. To Him be all the glory. Amen.





Faith Meets Fellowship: BLD Singles Encounter 23

By: Roy Sioson

The BLD Singles Encounter class SE22, under the guidance of Outgoing Class Shepherds Dong and Bing Manlapus sponsored SE23 during the weekend of June 20-22, 2025. The encounter was held at Carmel Hill Monastery in Deroche, BC. The sponsoring class headed by Class Coordinators Danae Orig and Lorie Ann Tagabucba, assisted by fellow classmates Josh Banayad and Jacinth Joy Bondoc worked tirelessly with their Class Shepherds to bring about a successful and memorable weekend for the 18 candidates and Incoming Class Shepherds Eddie and Lisette Natoc.

The weekend began on Friday with our SE Spiritual Director Fr. Jeevan Dalmeda celebrating the anointing mass, followed by the welcoming of the candidates. The evening was spent on orientation and talks on what to expect during the weekend. The candidates were asked to introduce themselves and present two interesting tidbits about their personal lives to foster the sense of belonging and acceptance. After a light snack and going through a few housekeeping rules, it was time for bed.

Saturday saw the opportunity for participants to hear talks by Fr. Jeevan on the encounter with self, encounter with others and encounter with God. Fr. Jeevan captivated his audience with his wit and insight. He made us feel like we have known him for a long time. Along with Fr. Jeevan's talks, the SE Facilitators shared their personal stories of trials and victories through their testimonies. The vulnerability showed by the Facilitators gave the candidates the assurance that they were in a safe space and they too can be vulnerable and open to share their personal experiences. Many candidates, within their little groups opened up about past hurts, failures and current concerns. These were met with support, encouragement and prayers from other members of the group.

At the end of the day, the candidates were led through a thorough examination of conscience and how they have been living their lives—providing them a chance to look within themselves, seek forgiveness, and also to forgive themselves and others. This powerful experience brought many to tears as they released their burdens and finding peace through confession. Some took the opportunity to express their remorse and forgiveness through voicing out their innermost feelings to the facilitators who represented people in their lives whom they wished to confront. The mutual trust and bond among the candidates and facilitators were evident in the way they supported and uplifted one another. They found each other's shoulders to cry on and each other's hands to wipe away the tears.

Throughout the weekend, the candidates bonded over shared experiences, forming connections that went beyond surface-level conversations. This culminated with the candidates eagerly showing their willingness go along with joyful songs, playful skits and group performances as the weekend went on. Everyone let go of their shyness as they sang danced along the theme song "I Thank God". The catchy rhythm and the meaningful lyrics, set to action by Lorie Ann provided a common ground to which SE23 as a class came together and be united as one.

As the weekend drew to a close on Sunday, the candidates reflected on the impact the event had on them. Many expressed gratitude for the opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals and deepen their faith. The sense of connection and community gave the candidates a renewed sense of purpose and belonging. We are grateful to SE22 for ushering SE23 into an unforgettable weekend experience in encountering the saving power of God, to which they can boldly say "By His Grace I Am Redeemed".

On behalf of Pastoral Apostolate Heads Ed and Bebeth Dela Rea, SE Weekend Head Facilitator Suzeth Sanares, SE Weekend Coordinator Nikki Lomotan and SE Weekend Facilitator Cheya Cunanan - Thank you very much to Fr. Jeevan Dalmeda for his spirit-filled talks and reflections as our SE Spiritual Director. Thank you very much to Dodie Tejero and Corr Deliverio from BLD Manila, Brian Buensuceso from BLD Seattle, Adam and Eve Oakley from BLD Edmonton for coming to Vancouver to work side by side with us in facilitating the SE weekend. To SE22 and Outgoing Shepherds, auxiliaries and members of the community for your tremendous efforts through service, vigil prayers, praise, logistics, meal preparation and clean up - thank you very much.

BLD Vancouver SE#23 Testimonial: Bearing an Imperfect Community.

by *Brian Buensuceso, Facilitator, BLD Seattle*

June 25, 2025

Greetings members of the BLD Vancouver community!

First off, my name is Brian Buensuceso and I have been a member of the BLD Seattle community since the year 2005. I was the facilitator/sharer for **Bearing an Imperfect Community in the recent SE#23 in BLD Vancouver.**

Reflecting on the SE#23 weekend, I am truly forever grateful to answer the call to be one of the facilitators. From what I witnessed, it was a life-changing experience for the new grads and a life-changing experience for me as well. The readings from Saturday, June 21st, “but he said to me,

‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.’ I will rather boast most gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell with me. (2 Corinthians 12:9).

When I shared that Saturday, it wasn’t just me speaking; it was Christ working through me to reveal his light in my trials and hardships. No matter how many times I’ve shared my story, there will always be someone who needs to hear it. From those I was able to interact with, they were able to resonate with aspects of my sharing and offered words of gratitude for being present with them during the weekend.

“Therefore, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and constraints for the sake of Christ, for when I am weak then I am strong.” (2 Corinthians 12:10).

I am not someone who is just physically strong, but I am also someone strong in my faith. I pray that each of the newly SE#23 grads are inspired by the talks and sharings to keep on growing their relationship with Christ and to one day share their own stories of how Christ was working through them. To God be the glory!

Your Brother in Christ from BLD Seattle,
Brian Buensuceso



POST SINGLES ENCOUNTER REFLECTION
By Ivan Russell E Alcala, BLD Vancouver SE Class #23, YE#19
SPE#23, June 20-22, 2025

"Still Called, Still Chosen"

When you think that there's nothing else for you to learn more about, or to believe that there's nothing to grow, well, there is a lot of that coming around. *Mathew 13:31-32 says, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree."* Even the smallest amount of seed you may have will grow as big as you can make it.

It has been 10 years since I joined BLD back in Family Encounter #7, and the difference between who I was then and now is truly remarkable. At that time, it was hard to believe that I would be this active in BLD, living strong with the strength of the Holy Spirit coursing through me every day. Throughout the decade, I've learned not only to be a servant of the Lord but also to be a person of speech who can convey God's word in a way that people can understand, to deliver the messages that he offers and let me share with the community.

My time here has been mostly spent helping with the Youth with many event activities such as Youth Encounters, fundraisers, and playing for praise and worship. I loved every minute of it and wouldn't replace them for the world. As the years continued, I started to feel distant/out of place as I was getting older and started to lose my interest in staying in BLD. It was not until I was reminded about the upcoming Singles Encounter #23 that happened in June 2025 that I decided to join because I felt that it was the next step in my path.

Taking the weekend along with my friends was the best feeling I've felt in a long time since my YE weekend. Being able to spend time with friends and meeting new people is always a great time. Not worrying about playing guitar was another reason, because I could just focus on listening during the weekend, although I brought my ukulele just in case. Fortifying my past relationships with people, as well as securing the new ones, showed me how much I have grown since YE #19. It was definitely a weekend to remember, honestly. I realized that the whole time I've thought I was always the one with the shoulder to lean on, I, too, needed a shoulder to lean on. I still have a purpose in BLD, and I want to help and be a role model for the community.

The support was incredible from everyone during the weekend, and the Lord's presence was for sure strong. The facilitators were a blessing to have, and our class Shepherds, Tito Eddie and Tita Lizette Natoc, have brought so much life to our class, and I cannot thank them enough for it. I thank my classmates for taking this journey together and for everything we've done after SE. Most importantly, I thank God for being in my life, and I will abide by Him in BLD and outside wherever I am.





Singles Encounter # 23 | June 20-23, 2025

POST FAMILY ENCOUNTER REFLECTION

Our Faith Journey to Family Encounter Sharer

By: Rico, Flor, Aleezah & Alexa Suce

FE#11, July 11-13, 2025



“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.” Jeremiah 29:11

Our family experiences and trials affect everyone in our family and become a critical point in each of us. No matter how devastating the trials are in our family, they become the way that each of us in our family draws us closer to the Lord and to each other. In the Gospel of Mark, we hear the story of an ordinary family, the family of Jairus, caught up in an extraordinary situation. With the love of Jesus, He was there to listen to our prayers. He walks with us through our trials, as we enter the reality of family challenges, and calls us to a life transformed with hope.

Our family was blessed with the opportunity to be sharers in the Family Encounter Class No. 11 in Vancouver, and it was both humbling and enriching. Preparing and sharing our story allowed us to reflect deeply on our journey as a family, the joys we've celebrated, the struggles we've faced, and the grace that carried us through it all. The feeling of comfort was present to each other, the unconditional love, the unwavering support, and encouragement grew for each of us. It wasn't easy to open up, but we felt God's presence as we spoke from the heart. We were amazed at how our simple experiences resonated with others and sparked meaningful conversations. Many came up to us afterwards to thank us, and it reminded us that sharing our lives can bring light and healing to others. The experience also strengthened our bond as a family, as we were reminded of how far we've come together. Being sharers was not just about giving but also about growing our faith in the Lord and as instruments to witness His goodness in our lives.

The unconditional love of Christ Jesus that we experience in our family was extraordinary. We lay down and surrender all the trials and our daily sacrifices, as we walk each other in good times, and in hard times, in sickness and in health. It is a life-changing encounter with Jesus, who transformed our family to be His disciples. Through his guidance, he formed and equipped our family to be a living witness to His missionary discipleship within the family and to continue and enliven the Christian community of faith.

Our family faces so many challenges, and sometimes, the way we respond to these challenges is often imperfect. Family is a *“proclamation of faith in which our faith is lived, where each of us shares primarily by witness.”* Our love and unity for each of us stand at the forefront as we discover the importance of loving one another. Love is more than a feeling; it commands us to act, to support, and to create a harmonious environment. As we reflect on God's love, which binds us together as one. Embracing love, we cultivate our strong faith and bond of togetherness through the storms of life. We praise God and are thankful for His love and grace to our family. We are blessed with the BLD Community.

Thank you all for the love and prayers.

Our Family Encounter with God

By Mondejar Family

We appreciated the family encounter we took part in in July 2025. The experience exceeded our expectations, and throughout this brief weekend, we have felt a wide range of emotions. We went through periods of joy, sorrow, and anger, and we managed to turn those feelings around to find a solution to the problems and disputes within our family.

Rex and I were also surprised and concerned by the worries and problems our kids brought up during our family conversations because they weren't initially informed about them. The questions and other topics raised during the encounter have taught us a lot, which has made our family realize that we still need to work toward being holy and deserving in God's eyes.

Furthermore, we have come to understand that every family has imperfections and challenges, and that love, faith, and good deeds will enable us to grow closer to God.

We will always be grateful for this experience. In some way, our family has strengthened our bonds and given us the strength to overcome life's trials. We sincerely thank God for the opportunity to be a part of the BLD community and the FE family, as well as for giving this experience deeper significance in our spiritual lives.

Our Family Encounter with God

By: Renfred, Joen, Kylie and Katharynn Mina

There is something special about taking an encounter together as a family. To pray, praise, worship, laugh and cry together. We heard and saw each other's joys and hurts. We were able to laugh a lot together but also heal a lot of the hurts that we had in our hearts. We met one another with grace and we were able to pray for one another intentionally.

After the Family Encounter, we are more intentional with the time we spend with one another. The things we learned and discussed in our homestead reaffirmed some of the things we were already doing together. Our family traditions became a habit, our prayer life is intentional, and we are more mindful in meeting each other with grace and patience.

Family Encounter Class #11 By Llarena Family

In July of this year, our family had the opportunity to attend BLD Vancouver's Family Encounter #11. Coming from the unique perspective of each of us having already attended BLD encounters, we thought we knew what to expect going into the FE #11 Weekend. However, as is with most things, God had more in store for us than we could have ever imagined. It had not been an easy wait getting here. It had been even less easy when we arrived, but we all agreed that we would make the most of the time together.

Alongside the talks and sharings, we were given the chance to really focus on each other. Just us four face-to-face and side-by-side. We were brave and honest about our feelings, we were quiet and attentive to what each of us had to say, and we got to pray, pause and truly reflect on what we wanted for each other and our family. God's love flowed and flowed, and we felt it with every hug, at every laugh and through every tear.

"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity"; Psalm 133:1 Our cups really did runneth over; they always had, and today they continue to do so. The FE #11 Weekend allowed us to take a good look at our family, to have the hard conversations, and to let God into each and every part. We learned that it would in fact, take all of us to put our family first and to put God in the center of it.

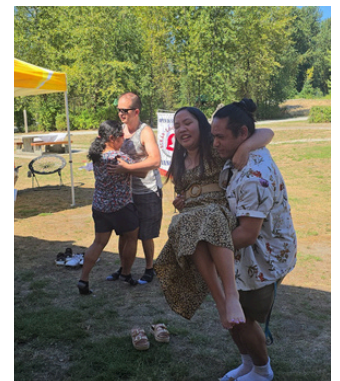
So we each take responsibility - for each other, for our family, for our first church. And we get to do it all alongside our FE #11 classmates, families who answered God's call to attend the weekend too and by doing so, now walk together. Led by shepherds brave enough to be our examples of the True Shepherd, we are all striving to know and love God more, so that we can know and love each other better.

"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" Joshua 24:15





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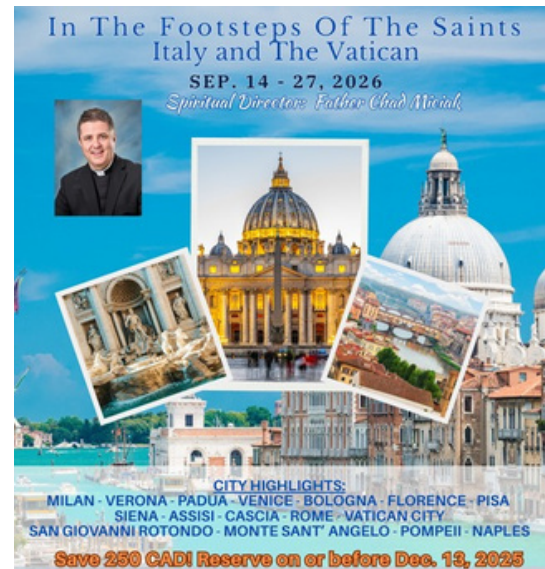
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