

STRICTLY NOT FOR SALE

DECEMBER 2023  
ISSUE

# Pinkhi

SUNDAY GOSPEL REFLECTIONS  
& CATECHESIS



DOMINICAN NOVITIATE OF THE ANNUNCIATION  
Manaoag, Pangasinan

# What's on

**DECEMBER 2023**

ISSUE

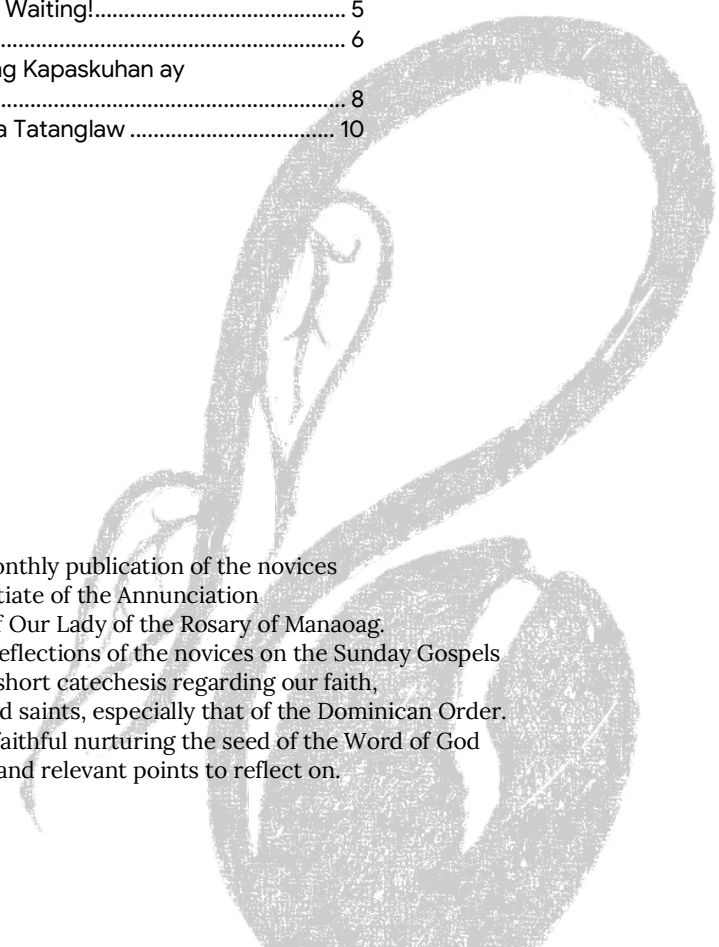
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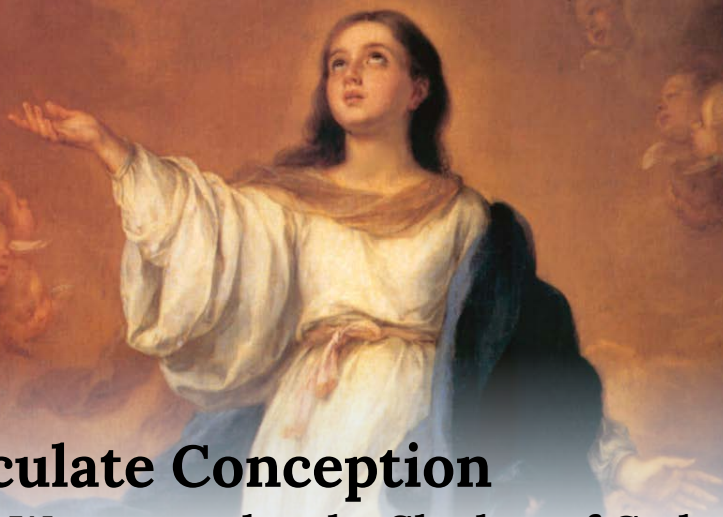
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**BINHI** is the official monthly publication of the novices of the Dominican Novitiate of the Annunciation at the Minor Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary of Manaoag. Featured in it are the reflections of the novices on the Sunday Gospels of the current month, short catechesis regarding our faith, and the lives of selected saints, especially that of the Dominican Order. **BINHI** aims to aid the faithful nurturing the seed of the Word of God by providing practical and relevant points to reflect on.



# Catechism of the Month



## Immaculate Conception A Gentle Woman under the Shadow of God

CATECHISM OF THE MONTH by Br. Athanasio Jonathan Angkhasa Ginting

Today, December 8, we celebrate the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Blessed Virgin Mary. It has been a common error for some of us to refer to this solemnity as the blameless conception within the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary (which is actually the Annunciation). So as to make it clear, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary is commemorating the immaculate, that is sinless conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the womb of Saint Anne, her mother. Pope Pius IX reaffirmed this dogma in the Papal decree *Ineffabilis Deus*. There, he said that the Mother of God had been chosen by God in accord with his work of salvation. So, God, with His abundant gifts, poured His grace so that the Blessed Virgin Mary is preserved from the stain of original sin.

This solemnity had experienced a very long journey. In the Western Church, this celebration was born in England in the 12th century in relation with the teaching of St. Anselm of Canterbury. The lawfulness of this celebration was affirmed in a synod in London after a monk from Westminster brought it up to the authority. In the 15th century, Pope Sixtus IV eventually adopted this local celebration to the Universal Church as a feast. It took almost four

hundred years until this feast was raised to a solemnity by Pope Pius IX in 1854.

When I was younger, my parents introduced to me the devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. I was always overwhelmed by the appearance of the images of Blessed Virgin Mary. Her look seems weak yet so gentle and full of motherly love. She looks so simple yet her grandeur would overwhelm anyone who looks on her. When I got to know her story as the mother of God, I became more amazed. She is indeed the Mother of God but her life is hidden under the shadow of her son and she herself would bear His sorrow. The angel of God appeared to her only once but she would endure the sorrow by herself for the rest of her life by holding fast to her faith to the God in heaven. She lived under the shadow of her son, faithfully followed Him wherever he went even at the foot of the cross.

For me, Mother Mary is an eminent example of humility. She is the faithful servant who while waiting for her master's return, actively fructified and multiplied the talent that was entrusted to her. She is also the example of being the least of all the servants just like Jesus said in the Gospel. She humbled herself under the shadow of her Son, Jesus Christ, the Redeemer. She prayed, followed, and waited for Him. This makes her exalted by God. She became a beacon for everyone who is looking for refuge. Her humility was pleasing before God; thus God gave her the reward of faithful servant. The title "Immaculate" is indeed suitable for Mary, because her singular privilege of being immaculately conceived shone through her immaculate life as the Mother of God and also as the faithful servant.

I recall the homily of Bishop Socrates B. Villegas on the Feast of Our Lady of Manaoag, October 1, 2023, about the virtue of Mary as being insignificant. It means that even though she received a unique privilege, her lowliness and humility are more emphasized in her life. She is the lover of the poor. She would prefer to be with the oppressed, needy, and afflicted. Because they are the ones who are forced to be lowly by the wickedness of the greedy. Her humility teaches us to be more sensitive and always ready to listen. Her humility teaches us also to be ready to be insignificant by avoiding selfishness and egoism. Following her humility, first, may we be always ready to listen to Jesus' words and counsels. We should always look for God's grace through prayer, for we know that we can do nothing without Him. And second, we must avoid giving much attention to ourselves and be always ready to listen and help our neighbor.

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## Mindfulness

REFLECTION on the First Sunday of Advent (Mark 13:33-37) by Br Michael Angelus Devaldi Pradnyadhikka

Have you experienced losing focus in what you are doing? Some might say that you may be dehydrated.

Sometimes, our focus is diverted by other things which make us forget the things that we should do. After some time, we will be reminded of the work we have to do. Our gadgets can distract and divert our attention from doing things we should do. For

instance, our loved ones may chat us while we are doing our work. We reply to their message and then begin to open other apps to de-stress from our works. If we are not aware, we will spend a long

time using our gadgets instead of finishing our works.

***“It is not simply about preparing Christmas decorations, but also disposing our hearts and minds to celebrate the mystery of God’s incarnation.”***



Jesus reminds us to be always watchful and alert. In the parable, the master who travelled abroad instructed his servants to do their works since he placed them in charge. He did so in order to keep everything in order. So that there will be no chaos while he is away. Jesus wants to tell us through this parable that we should be conscious about the work and responsibility given by the Master. So that the Master will not find us sleeping or doing nothing when He returns.

In this Advent season, we are in the period of expecting for the coming of our Master at Christmas. As of now, we might be too excited in welcoming such a celebration. However, we should be conscious

that we should do our works and responsibilities, that is, preparing for His coming. It is not simply about preparing Christmas decorations, but also disposing our hearts and minds to celebrate the mystery of God's incarnation. We still have time to perform good deeds, attend mass regularly, go to confession, and do other spiritual exercises. When time comes for us to celebrate Christmas, we will not be preoccupied by the things we should have done. Hopefully, this will not stop after the Christmas celebration since we are still journeying towards our final end: our communion with God. So, let us spend our time wisely and perform good deeds by doing our works and responsibilities.



## I want to be Seen

**REFLECTION** on the **Second Sunday of Advent (Mark 1:1-8)**

by **Br. Stefano Adi Nagoro Sembiring**

Do you want to be seen? I believe that most people in this world want to be seen and you might as well be one of them. Many people are serving, studying, working, nourishing their talent in sport or music, enriching their knowledge in academics, doing social actions and helping others, leading a group or trying to achieve their goal. In short, people are doing something in their lives, but for what and for whom? If it is for yourself, you might want to rethink about your answer. If it is for your family, friends, or other people, you might also want to rethink



about your answer. If it is for God, once again, you might want to ask yourself, is it true? Sometimes to be seen or to be praised or to feel that “fly high” feeling and to gain what we want are our motives in doing something.

The Gospel today teaches us to transcend our motive in doing something. Saint John the Baptist gave us a very good example of humility. He is a messenger of God, he delivered and prophesied the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was preparing the way for Jesus before He comes. He becomes the GPS for people to go to God. He never asks anything in return and he knows that people should see God and not him, but **GOD SEES HIM**.

My friends, in whatever we do we have to do it for God and not for ourselves. If we learn to do everything for God, later on we can say that it is for others and for ourselves. It always starts from God and not from the other end, which means prayer has a role in it. This is part of denying ourselves and becoming humble because we do not live for praises or popularity; we are more than that. We do not live to be seen by others, but we must live for God and we can proudly say: "I want to be seen **BY HIM**".



## There is Fruit in Waiting!

**REFLECTION** on the Third (Gaudete) Sunday of Advent (John 1:6-8, 19-28) by **Br. Jan Kevin S. Moises**

Literally, there is fruit in waiting. When we want to have a tree, we have to start by planting a seed and patiently nurture it. We have to water it and provide sunlight for it to grow as the days and even weeks go by before we can even notice a sprout is coming out from the soil. Then, the young plant would take more time for it to become a huge tree until it bears fruit. This is how nature works, it takes time, and so, one has to wait for something to yield its fruits.

***“We have to remember that when we wait, we have to be joyful.”***

Advent is the time for waiting and as we wait for the arrival of Jesus in Christmas, we have to remain joyful. Waiting is both an act of patience and love. If you love someone, you are willing to wait for him or her.

Thus, we have to remember that when we wait, we have to be joyful. This is the attitude we need to imbibe especially in our generation. For people are now used to so much convenience, almost everything is accessible and attainable, we can have them at the tip of our fingertips. We have grown impatient when something we desire does not arrive fast because we want them as soon as possible. Information is one click away in the internet, food is readily available because of fast-food. People are now primed not to wait,



yet, we should never forget that good things take time. A special meal we order in a restaurant takes time to be prepared, the tree we want to harvest takes months to yield fruits. Earning a college degree takes years, buying tickets for a major concert means waiting in line at the ticket booth. One has to wait patiently in the clinic of a doctor to be treated. Obviously, bearing a child takes nine months in the womb before it is born. This is how things naturally flow.

This Sunday is also known as Gaudete Sunday. This Latin term means “rejoice”. We are reminded that, in our waiting, we should rejoice! Consequently, rejoicing means to be joyful as well. We should remain joyful as we wait. For practically, our life is an advent, we wait for the arrival of the second coming our Lord Jesus Christ. So, as we wait let us make use of our time, to prepare Him room, to be joyful in our disposition as we prepare for His coming not just this Christmas but when He comes again. Because when the time comes, the waiting, will all be worth it.

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## *Fiat*

**PAGNINILAY** sa Ikaapat na Linggo sa Panahon ng Adbiyento (Lucas 1:26-38) ni Br. Jose Francisco D. Abella

Ang salitang “Oo” ay isang dalawang letrang salita na madaling bigkasin at nangangahulugan ng pagsang-ayon sa isang alok o mungkahi ng isang tao. Pero ito rin ay isang salita na may kakayahang baguhin ang takbo ng mundo ng isang indibidwal o ng pangkalahatan.







Sa huling araw ng ating paghahanda sa Dakilang Kapistahan ng Pagsilang ng Panginoon, magandang balikan natin sa ating Ebanghelyo ang kuwento kung paano naging posible ang pagpanaog ng Anak ng Diyos dito sa lupa at ito ay dahil sa sagot ni Maria sa alok ng Diyos sa kanya sa pamamagitan ng mensaheng dala ni Arkhanghel Gabriel: “Mangyari sa akin ang

iyong sinabi.” o sa madaling salita: “Oo, tinatanggap ko.” Ito ang kanyang fiat. Tinanggap ni Maria ang kanyang misyon hindi dahil sa nakita niya sa kanyang pagkatao na karapat-dapat siya kundi dahil sa kanyang matinding pananalig sa Diyos Ama na sa Kanya ay walang imposible. Mga kapatid, ang sagot na “Oo” ay minsan mabigat din sa ating kalooban lalong-lalo na kung iba ang kalooban ng Diyos sa ibig nating mangyari sa ating buhay. Sa katunayan, si Maria ay may plano rin kasama ni Jose na maging isang pamilya. Pero nang dahil sa pagsang-ayon ni Maria sa kalooban ng Diyos, nag-iba ang kanilang plano at biglang nagbago ang takbo ng kanilang buhay nang pumasok sa buhay nila ang Diyos na nagkatawang-tao- si Hesus. At sa pagdating ni Hesus nagbago ang takbo ng mundong ating kinagisnan.

***“Buong puso tayong manalig sa Kanya dahil sa pagsunod natin sa Kanyang kalooban hindi tayo kailanman magkakamali.”***

Tayo rin ay may mga sari-sariling plano at kung saan may gusto tayong ending na nais mangyari sa ating buhay, pero minsan mapapaamin tayo na mas maganda ang plano at

kuwento ng Diyos. Sumang-ayon lamang tayo sa Kanyang kalooban, kahit mabigat at kahit mahirap. Buong puso tayong manalig sa Kanya dahil sa

pagsunod natin sa Kanyang kalooban hindi tayo kailanman magkakamali. Tularan natin si Maria na buong pusong hinayaan ang Diyos na baguhin ang takbo ng Kanyang buhay.



## Ang mensahe ng Kapaskuhan ay pagmamahal

PAGNINILAY sa Dakilang Kapistahan ng Pasko ng Pagsilang ng Panginoon (Juan 1:1-18) ni Br. Dennis C. Amarante

Sa pagdating ng Kapaskuhan, hindi ko maiwasang maalala yung panahon na nakasama ako sa *Christmas party* na inorganisa ng aking mga ka-opisina. Isa nang tradisyon sa aming opisina na mag-organisa ng ganitong pagdiriwang kahit na kami ay nasa pamahalaan. Marahil ay sa puntong ito ay nakapagdiriwang na sila ng kanilang *party*. Sa pagdiriwang na ito, hindi lamang namin kasama ang aming mga kapwa-kaopisina – kasama rin namin ang kanilang mga anak at mga dating ka-



opisina. Meron pa nga akong ka-opisina na kahit walang Pasko sa kanilang simbahan ay sumasali pa rin sa aming pagdiriwang – kasama pa nga niya ang kanyang anak na binibigyan namin ng pamasko. Ang Pasko, samakatuwid, ay

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**“Ang Pasko naman talaga ay dapat magtulak sa bawat Kristiyano na iwaksi ang paggawa ng kasalanan at gumawa ng mabuti para sa Diyos at sa kapwa.”**

nagiging isang oportunidad para sa amin upang magsaya, magkwentuhan, at bumuo ng magandang samahan.

Ang Pasko naman talaga ay dapat magtulak sa bawat Kristiyano na iwaksi ang paggawa ng kasalanan at gumawa ng mabuti para sa Diyos at sa kapwa. Dapat itong magsanhi ng pagyabong ng pagmamahal sa bawat isa – sapagkat ating ipinagdiriwang sa araw na ito ang pagdating ng Pagmamahal sa ating mundo. Sa pagdating ng Verbo, sabi nga sa Mabuting Balita sa araw na ito, ay dumating ang siyang “puspos ng pag-ibig at katapatan.” Hindi dumating ang Verbo para magkaroon ng *sale* sa mga *mall*. Hindi dumating ang Verbo para ang lahat ay makapagbakasyon sa Baguio o Boracay. Hindi dumating ang Verbo para magkaroon ng rason ang iba na lumalaklak ng alak buong magdamag at kumain ng kaydami-dami, at lalong hindi dumating ang Verbo para ang lahat ay magkaroon ng *Christmas bonus*. Ang Verbo ay dumating upang ipahayag sa atin na sa pagmamahal sa Kanya at sa ating kapwa ay masusumpungan natin ang buhay na walang hanggan.

Nawa’y ang mensahe ng pagmamahal ay mamayani sa ating isipan kapag naiisip natin ang Kapaskuhan. Nawa’y ang mensahe ng pagmamahal ay magtulak sa atin upang ipagdiwang ang Pasko hindi bilang mga alipin ng konsumerismo kung hindi bilang mga nagmamahal na kapatid, asawa, anak, kamag-anak, kaibigan, katrabaho, kapwa-tao, at anak ng Diyos. Paano natin maisasagawa ito? Maaari nating simulan sa pagmamahal sa mga taong nakapalibot sa atin, at sa pagbabalik-loob sa Diyos sa pamamagitan ng pagwaksi sa kasalanan at paggawa ng mabuti. Oo, mahirap! Ngunit walang madali sa pagmamahal – hindi nga naging madali para sa Ama na ialay ang kanyang Anak para sa sangkatauhan, ngunit dahil sa pagmamahal ay ginawa



niya ito. Nagiging imposible lamang ang magmahal kung ating iisipin na imposible ito.



## May Liwanag na Tatanglaw

PAGNINILAY sa Kapistahan ng Banal na Mag-anak Hesus, Maria, at Jose (Lucas 2:22-40) ni Br. French Alfred M. Maaño

Kung tutuusin, maari namang magkatawang-tao ang Anak ng Diyos kahit wala sina Maria at Jose. Pwede namang umusbong na lamang ang Ikalawang Persona ng Santisima Trinidad rito sa mundo bilang ganap na tao na handa nang gampanan ang Kanyang ministeryo at mamatay sa Krus. Ngunit inibig ng Diyos na maipanganak sa isang pamilya bilang isang sanggol. Inibig ng Diyos na lumaki bilang bata sa loob ng isang pamilya. Inibig ng Diyos na pumasok sa masalimuot na ugnayan nating mga tao. Dahil noong magkatawang-tao ang Diyos, hindi lamang Niya ninais na iligtas ang tao bilang isang indibidwal, ninais rin

Niyang iligtas ang kanyang mga masalimuot na pakikipag-ugnayan, kabilang na ang pamilya. At dahil dito, nagkatawang-tao si Hesus sa loob ng isang pamilya, sa loob ng pangangalaga ni San Jose at ng Kanyang Inang si Santa Maria.

Madalas nakakalimutan natin ang katotohanang ito na sa Pagkakatawang-tao ng Anak ng Diyos, ninais rin Niyang iligtas ang pamilya. Alam kasi natin kung gaano kahirap at kasalimuot ang buhay-pamilya dala



rin ng kasalanan at pagkukulang natin bilang mga tao. Tunay ngang masasabi na ang pamilya sa kasalukuyan ay nahaharap sa iba't ibang dilim. Nagiging mas pamilyar na sa atin ng mga kwento ng paghihiwalay, wasak na mag-anak, pagkakaroon ng mga kalaguyo, mga anak na malayo sa kanilang magulang, mga pamilyang nabubuhay sa karukhaan, mga pamilyang nalulong sa bisyo, mga pamilyang binubugaw ang mga anak sa maseselang gawain, at mga pamilyang nagdurusa sa abusong pisikal at emosyonal. Nariyan rin ang dilim ng lived-in relationships, diborsyo, kontrasepsyon, aborsyon at samu't-saring mga ideolohiyang nagsusulong ng artipisyal na mga "pamilya." Ngunit sa gitna ng mga dilim na ito, nariyan si Hesus upang hilumin ang ating mga wasak at magulong ugnayan. Huwag nating sukuan ang ating mga pamilya dahil hindi sumusuko si Hesus upang ilitas ang ating mga pamilya. Gaano man kadilim ang kinasasadlakan ng ating mga pamilya na wari bagang wala nang pag-asa, tandaan nating pumasok ang Anak ng Diyos, ang liwanag ng mundo sa isang pamilya. Nais rin ni Hesus na magkatawang-tao sa loob ng ating mga pamilya upang maging liwanag na tatanglaw, upang madama nating Siya'y tunay na Emanuel -Diyos sa ating piling.

***“Nais rin ni Hesus na magkatawang-tao sa loob ng ating mga pamilya upang maging liwanag na tatanglaw, upang madama nating Siya’y tunay na Emanuel –Diyos sa ating piling.”***

Ang misteryo ng Kapaskuhan ay naganap sa loob ng isang pamilya. Angkop lamang kung gayon na sa mga panahong ito ng Kapaskuhan ay ibaling natin ang ating paningin sa ating pamilya. Higit sa mga salo-salo at regalo, magiging mas makabuluhan ang pagdiriwang natin ng Kapaskuhan kung maipadarama natin sa ating mga pamilya ang pagliligtas ng batang si Hesus. Maligayang Pasko po at huwag nating sukuan ang ating pamilya!





*Have a blessed and  
Merry Christmas!*

# 13<sup>th</sup> Century

## **Dominican Blessing**

May God the Father bless us,  
may God the Son heal us,  
may God the Holy Spirit enlighten us  
and give us eyes to see with,  
ears to hear with,  
hands to do God's work with,  
feet to walk with,  
and mouth to preach the word of salvation with,  
and the angel of peace,  
to watch over us and lead us  
at last, by the Lord's gift, to the kingdom.  
Amen.

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