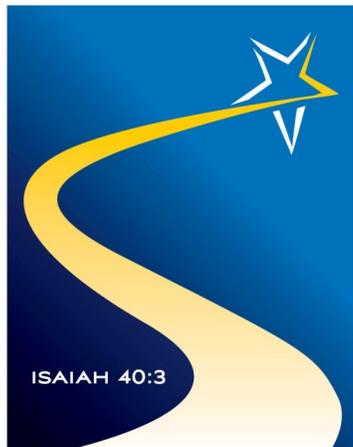


A Publication of the FAMILY OF FAITH Community (NJ, USA)

# Tambuli NEWSLETTER

DEC 2015

A COMMUNITY OF DISCIPLES ON MISSION



Prepare  
the way  
OF THE  
Lord!

## FOF CELEBRATES 22 YEARS

The 22nd Community Anniversary celebration held last Oct. 11 was very inspiring especially after seeing some of the founding members who are still around and running the race of faith. Moreover, the attendance of our members was also very encouraging.

Leading the praise and worship was indeed uplifting knowing that we are celebrating God's goodness and faithfulness to the Family of Faith. As always, God's word never fails to build us up and remind us of our call to go and share the way of life He gave us and that His joy is our strength.

I was struck by Fr. Ed's talk on Pope Francis' emphasis on the family as I looked around to see the families in our community. Indeed, we are called to build our families as God's instru-

ments to reach out to other people and how integral each household plays in advancing God's kingdom.

Kuya Cecil announced our 2016 theme – "Rejoice and let My glory shine!" This is a declaration of God's unwavering joy and victory that He wants us to experience. Personally, I am eagerly anticipating God's blessings pouring out next year.

I delighted in the presentations as well as the delectable meal. Seeing our members step up to perform/host for the entertainment, and serve brothers and sisters with good food, definitely made me experience the joy of being in community.

May we never cease to celebrate His gift of life in the Family of Faith. To God be all the glory! *-By Dennis Pilapil*



# Christ in Christmas

The news that Starbucks Corporation announced that Christmas symbols, such as reindeers and ornaments, have been removed from their holiday-themed cups went viral. This is so because each year there is always much discussion about Christmas and how the Christian holiday has become too commercialized and no longer about the celebration of Jesus' birth. It is true that a lot of us are getting busier and are struggling to put up the Christmas tree, deciding on the menu and completing shopping for gifts.

And while most of us might agree, it can be hard to figure out what to do about it. There is a clamor to put Christ back in Christmas.

How do we put Christ back in Christmas? We do not. Christ is and will always be in Christmas. We believe that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." Christmas is not about the Savior being born in a manger but rather it is about His being God. The true meaning of Christmas is love. God loved His people and provided a way—the only Way—for us to spend eternity with Him in heaven. God could pay for them, and because he loves us, he did - He paid the price in full in Jesus Christ, and we are free from sin and death.

Here are a few simple things we can do to allow us to refocus on the meaning of Christmas. These are but a few ideas to remind us, our family and our friends about the real reason for the season. There are some surprisingly simple ways to honor the holiness of Jesus' birth.

## Read the Bible

We all think we know the Christmas story, but the different versions in Luke 2:1-20 and Matthew 1:18-25 will allow us to go back in time to experience what the Bible says about Christmas. Read the related verses for an even better understanding, including Luke 1:5-56. Consider the feelings of Mary and Joseph. What does it mean for God to be born in a manger? How does one explain God humbly becoming a tiny infant? Our minds cannot begin to understand what was involved in God's becoming man.

## Go to Church

This is a great time to invite and bring along family and friends to reconnect with our faith, listen to the sermons and the music and contemplate the true message of Christmas. Inviting them to come to church with you is less intimidating if the service is about Christmas.

**"Kuya" Cecil Penson**  
Senior Coordinator of the Family of Faith Community

Nothing beats sharing with others why we celebrate Christmas each year.

## Observe Advent with Your Family

Advent is the time of reflection and preparation before Christmas. It offers the opportunity to pause and examine the state of our life, not our shopping or things-to-do lists. You can DIY an advent wreath for your home, and follow Bible readings for each day of advent.



## Write Christmas, Not X-mas

It sounds simple, but be mindful to write the word "Christmas," whether you are texting a friend or writing down your Christmas list, you can use those few extra seconds to think about what the holiday is really about. Write Christ in place of the X if you see one.

## Send Christian Christmas Cards

Use Christmas cards that include Bible verses or Christian artwork to remind yourself, and especially those who receive the cards, about the birth of Jesus--not the arrival of Santa or his reindeers.

## Visit a Sick or Homebound Neighbor

God gave the gift of His Son, so, our presence can be a true gift to someone who is alone or sick this Christmas season. If a loved one is far away plan to call him or her or put together a care package of goodies.

## Have a Family Day of Recollection

Reminisce and acknowledge all of God's blessings to us this year.

Finally, recite with me "The Christmas Prayer" by Robert Louis Stevenson

*"Loving Father, help us remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and worship of the wise men. Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clear hearts. May the Christmas morning make us happy to be Thy children, and Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake. Amen."*

From my family to yours, have a Merry Christmas and we hope that we may all remember that Christ is forever in Christmas.



# Gifts for Jesus

**Bob Tedesco**

As we approach Christmas in this holy Advent season, we become a little more aware of our spiritual nature and eternal truths. Is any truth more important than the Incarnation? “The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” God takes on flesh and becomes a man...Jesus. This is the most colossal thing that has ever happened. It had earthly, heavenly, natural and spiritual implications. The Universe was rattled; powers and principalities were shaken, and the spiritual landscape was forever changed. We bow in respect whenever it is mentioned.

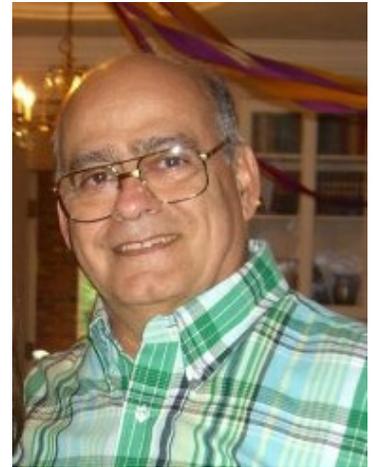
This outrageous reality elicits an outrageous response... and that’s the rub. The whole New Testament reports man’s response to the coming of the Messiah. Even in the Christmas story, we see the spectrum of man’s response; there were those who worshipped Him and those who tried to kill Him; those who loved Him and those who hated Him; there were even some who were indifferent (“no room at the Inn”).

It’s human nature to defend our “freedoms” by pretending that we have not heard of His expectations. He is calling for **radical discipleship**, and in Advent, each of us can examine where we have pretended not to hear Him. He has told us that “unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it can not bear”... the fruit that was intended for us to bear. If we “pretend” to die, we get “pretend” fruit.

Maybe He’s calling for more time in prayer. Maybe He is calling for more joy in time of suffering. Possibly, we are raising our children for radical success in the world, but only nominal success in the spiritual life. It could be that the world and the school system have more influence over our families’ lives than the demands of the Kingdom of God.

Jesus came to proclaim and establish the Kingdom of God. This Christmas, as we consider how to give gifts that will please our friends, relatives, children, and spouses...let us also consider how to please the Lord by giving Him more of our hearts, more of our time and energy.

After all, it is HIS birth that we celebrate.



*Bob Tedesco is past President of the North American Region of the Sword of the Spirit. He is a founder of the People of God community in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA, and has been one of its key leaders for the past 40 years.*

*He is currently the Regional Missionary Coordinator for the Family Of Faith and visits the Community at least twice a year.*

*He is also the author of the book “Essays on Christian Community” and a regular contributor to the Living Bulwark—the on-line magazine of the Sword of the Spirit.*

# The Coming of Jesus in the Year of Mercy

**Fr. Ed Jocson**



We began a new Liturgical Year, and we have entered into the holy season of Advent. It is a time to make ready the way of the Lord. We are invited to prepare our hearts, soul and minds for the coming of our loving God. This year, Advent takes on an added dimension as we inaugurated the Jubilee

Year of Mercy on Dec. 8, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. This Year of Mercy calls upon each of us “to be merciful like the Father”.

The birth of Jesus, the Son of God, is very much about

mercy. Jesus enters the world to live as one of us in all things but sin. He who is Emmanuel (“God with us”) would ultimately give His life for the forgiveness of our sin. The crib leads to the cross. From the cross, the dying Christ would pray for the forgiveness of his executioners; He would forgive the repentant thief. This Year of Mercy provides us a chance to recognize our constant need for mercy and to look deep within and see where we need to extend mercy in our own life.

We can observe this Year of Mercy in many ways, both sacramental and other ways. The jubilee year tradition of passing through a holy door at a designated church is one of them. Usually these doors are found only at the 4 major papal basilicas in Rome.

*(Continued on page 4)*

(Continued from page 3 :“The Coming of Jesus in the Year of Mercy”)

However, Pope Francis wanted Catholics everywhere to be able to walk through a holy door. And so each Bishop can designate certain churches in his diocese to have a holy door. The Faithful are encouraged to make a pilgrimage to that church during the jubilee year. Pope Francis has said that The Holy Door “will become a Door of Mercy through which anyone who enters will experience the love of God who consoles, pardons and instills hope.” Perhaps you may want to plan a trip to one of the churches in your respective diocese where you can walk through a holy door and be reminded of that need to pass from sin to a new life of grace and salvation in Christ.

Other practical suggestions may also be done to observe the Year of Mercy. You could read Pope Francis’ invitation to the Holy Year entitled “Misericordiae Vultus (The Face of Mercy) as your Advent devotion. Become a walking “Field Hospital” – the Holy Father’s vision of what the Church should be. Go back and revisit the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. Perhaps make it a point to practice one every day. If you

are older, say something nice about a young person. If you are younger, say a kind word about an older person. Don’t worry so much about whether the person deserves mercy. Grant it freely. Mercy is given. Mercy is beyond deserving.

Pope Francis loves to say “*God never tires of forgiving us. It is we who tire of asking for forgiveness.*” Jesus who we welcome at Advent and Christmas arrives and is himself the divine message of unconditional forgiveness. Forgive someone you have not been able to forgive – even if it is just one person.

So, take to heart the work of this Jubilee Year. Let mercy overtake you. Let the Prince of Peace, whose coming we await, be your example. Mercy is one of our chief tasks as Christians. There can never be too much mercy, too much forgiveness in our lives.

God is with us always.



(Fr. Ed Jocson is the Pastor of the St. Elizabeth of Hungary Church in Linden, NJ. He is also the Spiritual adviser of the Family Of Faith.)

## Word Gifts from our Anniversary Gathering

“Blessed are you, your community has been there for 22 years. And if it were of human origin it would have died already by now. But we thank God, it has been 22 years and we are here. We are all alive and our community has been touching lives more than ever. I just want you, brothers and sisters, to rejoice with me in thanking and praising God.”

*Psalm 116: ‘O Lord, you have delivered me from death. My eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling and that now I may walk in the land of the living.’*

“The scripture really talks about how we are very grateful for the Lord’s mercy, for He delivered us from our own pain, from our own sorrows, from the low points in our lives. That He has brought us here today, here in our community, that we are able to walk with the Lord in the land of the living. That we rejoice right now that we seek the Lord in heaven but the Lord is here on earth with us. That we are able to serve Him, to love Him and to walk with Him daily, brothers and sisters.”

*Ephesians 4:17–21: ‘Now this I affirm and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their minds, they are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God be-*

*cause of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart; they have become callous and have given themselves up to licentiousness, greedy to practice every kind of uncleanness. You did not so learn Christ! – assuming that you have heard about Him and were taught in Him, as the truth is in Jesus.’*

“I sense that the Lord is telling us – we have learned, we have heard all the talks and the teachings. It is time to walk the talk. To lead the way of life as His disciples.”

“My children, I love you. Continue the work which we started together in the Family of Faith and bring the light to every sea; to those who are in darkness; to those who are in pain; to those who are hurting. Bring the joy you have received to those who are lonely; to those who are forgotten. Bring the love you have received to those who are lost and uncared for. Receive My abundant grace as I shower upon you and be more empowered for the tasks at hand for the coming year.”

“As you continue to walk in your ways and follow the way of life that I have called you, let the joy of your God be your strength. Let the joy of the Lord be your strength. Let it fuel your passion to live for Me My people. Let the joy of your God bring you to those places you have never been to; to do things that you have never thought you will ever do for Me. Let the joy of your God be your strength.”

# Reflections on our Theme

## "I am the Lord your God, come, follow me and live."

"There is only one TRUE way to live our lives and that is to follow our Lord God: To glorify and forever praise him everyday whenever we can, to pray for our intentions and to ask for forgiveness whenever we can and to give thanks for our day to day living with our families. I learn to be more humble and surrender to our Lord God with all my heart. - *Evelyn W.*

"I was able to continue my resolve to live as simply as I could without feeling deprived or wanting in anything. Everyday for me is a day of thanksgiving for all the blessings the Lord has bestowed on me & my family as well as the trials that we sometimes encounter in our life." - *Irma A.*

"Community has learned well to acknowledge that God is leading us to live in Him and experience the blessing that awaits for those who respond to His call." - *Dennis P.*

"The Lord has taught me to act like Him by loving others. In doing so I bring glory to His Name. The Lord has taught the Community to pursue God with our entire being - heart, soul, mind and strength." - *Marita J.*

"Our theme this year just reinforced the fact that God indeed is my Lord, my one and only God, who provides me with every blessing and grace I need to live my life as His child." - *Mell M.*

"Our theme this year confirms that our Lord is the one and only true God. And He is asking us to be closer to Him and know Him better. For me, this allows me to experience a good and blessed life, with me, as His follower and Him as my Lord, the one who is love, mercy and provider." - *Debbie S.*

The Lord has taught me to be faithful to Him, no matter the cost. It is not just simply believing His words but living His words and examples...Living my life for the Lord is living fully. - *Tet G.*

"Our theme is God's continuing call for me and for the Community to enter into the life of Jesus - a life fully lived, committed and surrendered to the will of the Father...a life of mission and a life of joy." - *Medel G.*

The community learned to love more when we follow Jesus and this is best witnessed in our fellowship when we meet during gatherings and small group meetings. The greater challenge in following Jesus is in being radical disciples in our mission. - *Kuya Cecil P.*

"God created me to enjoy the fullness of life with Him. He is all I need - life without him is meaningless." - *Mikmik F.*

"Knowing Him and His voice, I walk towards Him full of confidence as He beckons 'come'. Then, He tells me what to do, 'follow me' which I heed without hesitation or fear." - *Teya D.*

"For me, the theme is an invitation of our Lord to spend more quality time with Him." - *Agnes M.*

"What it means to live is—as we live our daily lives, at home, at work, and in the community, we are meant to live to the Lord and live for the Lord." - *Nilo N.*



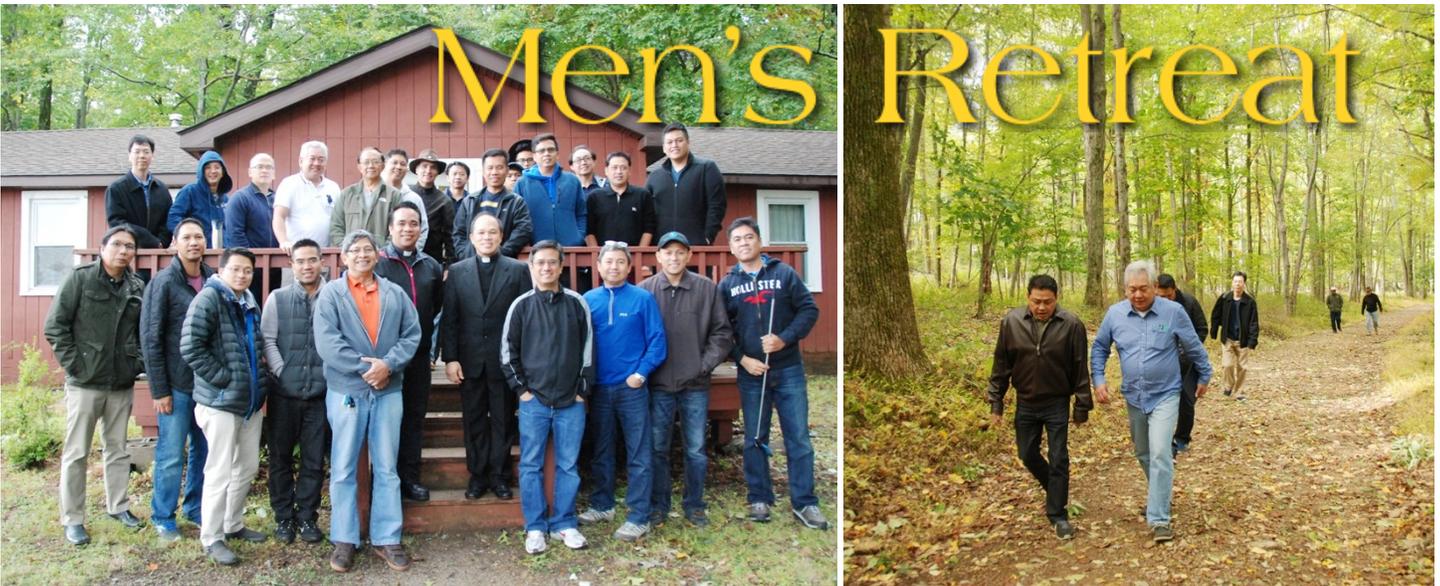
*Acknowledging the founding members of FOF*



*The FOF girls performing their tambourine dance*



*The single women posing with the "22" years sign*



Last Oct 2-4, 2015, the brothers of Family of Faith had their retreat at the Crossroads Retreat Center in Port Murray. Fr. Manolo Punzalan, Associate Pastor at the St. Joseph Church in Maplewood was the main guest speaker of the retreat.

The reading (Exodus: 23-20a) from the Morning Prayers (Divine Office) on Oct. 2 was very reassuring: *"See, I am sending an angel before you, to guard you on the way and bring you to the place I have prepared. Be attentive to him and heed his voice."*

It was an assurance that God will see us through and bring us there to be taught, refreshed and renewed by His Spirit. So, despite the looming threat of Hurricane Joaquin that weekend, it was by God's grace and protection that the brothers came in droves, unfazed. Friday night gave the brothers the time to get to know each other more by sharing something interesting about themselves from specific points in their lives.

The main theme of the retreat was God's Divine Mercy. Fr. Manolo, gave the first three talks on Saturday. The first talk was about the Mercy of God and Forgiveness. Here, he stressed the immense and overwhelming love of our Father, sending His only begotten Son to die for our sins. The second talk was Mercy of God and Compassion. Reaching out to the poor, working for them, becoming a good Samaritan had never been better emphasized than the way he eloquently did. Extreme poverty in this world is a scandal; it is a crime, he continued. The third talk dwelt on the Mercy of God and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Going to confession means you never give up on Jesus, turning towards Him. God is waiting patiently for us. There were personal reflections and group sharing after each talk. Kuya Cecil Penson gave the fourth talk about Forgiveness on Sunday morning.

Instead of spending the free time in the afternoon, the brothers went for confession with Fr. Manolo (and his friend Fr. Noel Sixon).

Having been refreshed by God's grace, the brothers ministered to one another through prayers in their small groups later that evening. The prayer meeting that followed saw the brothers "raising the roof" with Spirit-filled prayers, worship and songs. After the prayer meeting, the brothers spent the rest of the night with games, singing and more fellowship.

On Sunday morning, the brothers had the "Emmaus Walk" activity where they were paired together and went for a walk to share what the Lord is doing in their lives. It was an opportunity to get to know one another and share our spiritual and personal life.

Our retreat started with rains on a stormy Friday night but ended with bright sunshine on Sunday. God indeed saw us through! Praise be to Jesus!

- By Mio Ramos/Medel Guevarra

*Reflections* As this was my first experience to attend a Men's Retreat, I never had any idea what was going to happen. With some apprehensions, I just put my trust in the Lord and let Him do the rest. The outcome was a very wonderful experience, indeed, spiritually. What struck me the most was in the second talk. It was cited how we are so preoccupied with too many material things; things that we really don't need and yet we keep on accumulating, but when it comes to charity and helping out the poor, we seem to be lacking in compassion. We need to change. "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me." - By Mio Ramos

Recently, the women in the community had their much-awaited retreat this Fall. It was held on November 6-8 on the beautiful and scenic views of Villa Pauline, Mendham, NJ.

Beautifully themed "Arise, My Soul", the retreat was a loving collaboration of the Senior Women Leadership Team as inspired by the Holy Spirit. Puring Penson grounded us on faith from Hebrews 11:1, "is the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen." She added that steadfast faith brings out the best in us as we allow God to work His wonders through us. Teya David reminded us of the apostles' Great Commission, which is ours all as well, to spread the Good News of Jesus to a world that is spiritually starved. We become His light to others by having "the Scriptures written large in our lives so that all whom we meet encounter Christ in who we are." Menchie Natural encouraged us that God



## Women's Retreat

called each of us in "our ordinary, normal, and imperfect lives" as we become His provisions to others. In gratitude to God who has made our lives rich and full in the community - we have so much to give and offer to others. Mikmik Farrales exemplified Rahab and Esther as women of great faith and courage in spite of themselves. These Bible women's conviction to partner with God allowed them to enjoy the fruition of their faith, too. I could just imagine how Rahab and Esther must have prostrated themselves and profusely thanked the Lord for an awesome display of His love! Tita Alday, whose gift of music, provided the perfect atmosphere of praise, worship, and thanksgiving throughout the entire retreat.

As always, the retreat was a wellspring of truth, hope, and love. For me, it was much needed because it allowed me to slow down and reflect on how God has revealed Himself in the earlier part of the year. There was so much to be thankful for! It was also fitting as it ushered me strong into Advent and Christmas. I have a pocketful of God's promises and hopeful reminders in stark contrast to the bitterness of cold winter. Undeniably, the highlight of our weekend retreat was the warmth, joy, vulnerability, and openness of the sisters. I was always blessed to witness and to receive the love and friendship among the sisters that deepened and forged at every retreat! - *By Shiela Bugarin*



## Life in the Spirit Seminar (Oct 9—Nov 21)

Part of Family of Faith's mission is to "become witnesses of God's love to others". It is in the spirit of this mission that the Family of Faith conducted its annual Life in the Spirit seminar for 2015 from October 9 to November 20, 2015. It was held Friday nights from 7pm to 9pm at the recently renovated basement of St Elizabeth of Hungary Church, in Linden New Jersey.

Half of the seminar's participants were local to the parish of St Elizabeth. During the seminar's first session, Fr Alexander Cruz, St Elizabeth's parochial vicar, encouraged the participants to continue nourishing their desire to know God by attending all the sessions of the seminar.

The Life in the Spirit seminar is a series of talks whose goal is to help participants to establish, re-establish or deepen their relationship with Christ. The seminar is also meant to help them recognize the power of the Holy Spirit, yield to its power and see it working in them and through them. Additionally, the seminar also intends to demonstrate how Christians can be joined more fully to Christ through the gift of community such as the Family of Faith.

During the course of the seminar, speakers talked about God's Love, Salvation, New Life, Receiving God's Gifts and "Growth and Transformation in Christ". For most part, after each talk, a sharer delivers a personal testimony on how their personal relationship with the Lord affects their lives and the choices they make. After the personal testimony, participants break into small groups for their own sharing.



The LSS sessions were facilitated by Vanni Yorobe

The highlight of the seminar happened on November 13, 2015 during the session for the "Baptism in the Holy Spirit". During a solemn ceremony, the participants were prayed over for the release of the spiritual gifts they have received during their baptism and confirmation.

Altogether, 13 people were blessed to have heard and experienced God's message of love and truth throughout the seminar. But on top of that, those who served were likewise refreshed and uplifted hearing the talks all over again. While it's true that evangelization is our mission, it is also a source of great joy knowing that the Lord uses the Family of Faith as instruments in turning hearts to Him. - *By Vanni Yorobe*



The LSS participants with the LSS Service Team after the last session.

### What some of the LSS Participants say about their experience:

*"I'm truly blessed. I feel more blessed. I have an attitude of gratitude, less stressed, less worried, weight lifted. I see situations with more clarity."*

*"LSS has reinforced the principles I already know and accept of God. I experienced the awakening of the Holy Spirit in my soul."*

*"I'm pretty inspired to see so many young involved in creating an atmosphere of the real presence of the Holy Spirit by their enthusiasm and dedication to spread love."*

**"BE GRACIOUS TO US AND CAUSE YOUR HOLY SPIRIT TO DWELL MORE RICHLY AMONG US."**

## Publicly Committed Members' Meeting

Bob Tedesco, Regional Missionary Coordinator for FOF and his wife Bobbie visited the Community last Oct 16-18. They first met with the Community Council and Women's Leadership Team and discussed several important aspects of life in our Community. During the Publicly Committed members meeting last Oct 17, held at the Family Room of Sts. Mary & Elizabeth School in Linden, NJ, Bob gave a talk on "Events and Processes." In his talk, he described life and Christian life in particular, as consisting of events/milestones and series of processes. He warned of the dangers of trying to turn Christian life into a series of charged events or overemphasizing the process and not realizing an event is happening. Maintaining a balance and recognizing the im-

portance of events and processes in our Christian life is essential in our growth as disciples. Bob reminded us that making a public commitment is an event meant to impact/reform/improve our daily life and that we should take our public commitment seriously as God wants from each one of us. Finally, with regards to raising our children, Bob emphasized that "great children usually comes from families with great process and great commitment to Christ. This means great commitment in the heart, in the speech, in the actions, at meal times, and at play times. Parents must possess the great commitment to raise children as radical disciples of Christ. The gathering was concluded with a Lord's Day celebration, dinner and time for fellowship.



## Men's Breakfast & Bowling



It was a blessed and fun time of fellowship when the FOF brothers gathered together last Oct. 31 for a breakfast at the Bugarin's house in North Brunswick. The day started with a sumptuous meal prepared by our brother Noel followed by a time of prayer to praise and worship God. The brothers then proceeded to a nearby bowling alley (Brunswick Zone) where they had a friendly bowling competition among three groups. The day fostered camaraderie and brotherhood among them. Praise God!

**"MAKE US WORTHY TO WALK IN THE WAY OF YOUR SON."**

## Community Gathering and Parents' Forum (Nov. 21)

Ed Moccia, Senior Mission Director of St. Paul's Outreach in New Jersey was the guest speaker during the Nov. 21 Community Gathering held at the Consolata Missionaries in Somerset, NJ. There were three main parts in Ed's talk: Radical Discipleship, St. Paul's Outreach (SPO), and his own personal testimony.

With Matthew 16 (beginning at v. 13) as his scriptural reference, Ed shared three main points on radical discipleship. First, a disciple has to say that Jesus is Lord! He/she has to be able to acknowledge Christ's rightful place—as Lord of the universe and personally, as Lord of his/her life and heart. Second, is that God's ways are not man's ways. We need to think as God thinks. We need to firmly believe that God's ways are always better than our ways. Third, Ed echoed Christ's words: "If you want to be my disciple, you have to deny yourself" (v. 24). Here, Ed went deeper to the heart of discipleship. Denying oneself is not about doing acts of self-mortification (although sometimes these are involved). To deny ourselves is to "not know" ourselves. We can't belong to ourselves. In other words, our life (and our time, money, resources) is not our own, it belongs to Christ.

On the second part of his talk, Ed spoke about SPO or St. Paul's Outreach ministry—its purpose and its mission. In a nutshell, SPO is a faith-filled community for college students. It's mission is to build Catholic communities that awaken faith on campus and form lifelong disciples. In response to the Church's call of New Evangelization, SPO employs a process of evangelization consisting of four stages: 1) Reaching and going to where the people (students) are, 2) Calling them to conversion to Christ, 3) Forming them to be disciples and missionaries, and 4) Sending them out on mission. It is worth noting that our two college students—Meeko and Gabe Natural are now part of SPO and are living in a SPO men's household.

Lastly, Ed shared his personal story on how the Lord called and guided him as he served God in different stages of his life. Ed left his regular job as a nurse to serve as full time missionary in SPO. His story is indeed an inspiring testimony of radical discipleship.

In the Parents' Forum that followed the Community Gathering, the main theme was Courtship and Modesty. Parents and children (from 7th grader and up) were in attendance to listen to Ben Molnar, a brother from the People of Hope Community. Ben shared from his own personal experience in courtship, dating, and modesty. He also shared his (and his wife) experience in raising their seven daughters and one son to value true beauty and purity in the eyes of God. He gave some practical advice on how to deal and relate with children in teaching and guiding them in the areas of courtship, dating and modesty. It was inspiring to note that following the Community's approach and teaching on Courtship and Dating bore tremendous fruit in Ben's life, in his marriage and his family. - *By Medel Guevarra*



**"R**adical discipleship is to deny yourself and say 'My life is not my own. I don't belong to myself, I belong to Christ.'"



“The Gospel offers us the chance to live life on a higher plane, but with no less intensity: “Life grows by being given away, and it weakens in isolation and comfort. Indeed, those who enjoy life most are those who leave security on the shore and become excited by the mission of communicating life to others.”

- *Pope Francis (#10, The Joy of The Gospel)*

## Jubilee Year of Mercy (Dec 8, 2015 - Nov 20, 2016)



Earlier this year, Pope Francis announced the Year of Mercy. In his words:

"I have decided to announce an Extraordinary Jubilee which has at its centre the mercy of God... It will be a Holy Year of Mercy. We want to live in the light of the word of the Lord: "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful" (cf. Lk 6:36).

"This Holy Year will commence on the next Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception and will conclude on Sunday, 20 November 2016, the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe and living face of the Father's mercy."

"It is indeed my wish that the Jubilee be a living experience of the closeness of the Father, whose tenderness is almost tangible, so that the faith of every believer may be strengthened and thus testimony to it be ever more effective."

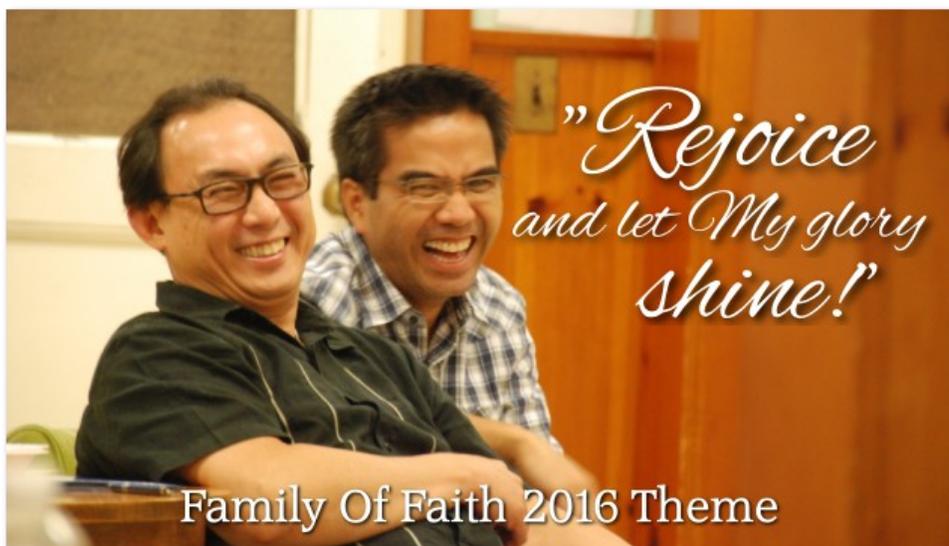
"It is important that this moment be linked, first and foremost, to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and to the celebration of the Holy Eucharist with a reflection on mercy.

"I have asked the Church in this Jubilee Year to rediscover the richness encompassed by the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. The experience of mercy, indeed, becomes visible in the witness of concrete signs as Jesus himself taught us."

## International Year of Caring for One Another

The period from **September 2015 to August 2017** has been designated as the International Year of Caring for One another in all Sword of the Spirit communities.

The goal in the Year of Caring for One Another is **to foster a strong practice of mutual care in the men's and women's groups in our communities, and most especially in the groups of members with Public Commitment.**



## Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (Jan 18-25, 2016)

Jan. 18-25, 2016 is designated as the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. This week is an annual eight-day observance or "octave" of prayer. Its main focus is to pray for church unity. It has been this way from the beginnings of this international movement in 1908 and is observed by Christians around the world. The Family Of Faith, together with the Sword of the Spirit, joins all Christians (Catholics and Non-Catholics) around the world in the annual observance of this octave of prayer for unity.

The theme for 2016 is: "Called to proclaim the mighty acts of the Lord (cf. 1 Peter 2:9)"



"TAMBULI" is a Filipino word for horn or trumpet.

## ABOUT US



The Family of Faith (FOF) is a Catholic Charismatic Community based in New Jersey, USA. We are a community of lay people (married couples, singles, youth and children) that seeks and actively participates in the Church's mission to the world. We stand and work for: Conversion to Christ and

Christian maturity, love and worship of God, Christian personal relationships and Community, daily life in Christian character, commitment to Evangelization, promotion of Christian unity, and defense of the Gospel. Through a life of prayer, worship, service and mutual support we seek to bring the light of Christ to the world.

FOF is a member community of Christ the King Association (Association of Catholic Communities) and Sword of the Spirit— [swordofthespirit.net](http://swordofthespirit.net) (Ecumenical Association of Christian Communities)

The Family of Faith is a registered 501 (c) (3) Non-Profit Organization.

To know more about us and our various activities, visit our website: <http://fofnj.org>

### Social Media connection:

 <http://facebook.com/fofnj>

 <http://twitter.com/fofnj>

For inquiries, email us at: [fofadmin@gmail.com](mailto:fofadmin@gmail.com)

"So then, while we have the opportunity, let us do good to all, but especially to those who belong to the family of the faith."

*Galatians 6:10*

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It calls the people of God for an assembly and prayer.

Like the "tambuli", our newsletter calls us to gather around God who makes His message known.

"I AM THE LORD,  
YOUR GOD,  
COME, FOLLOW ME  
AND LIVE."

FAMILY OF FAITH 2015 THEME

### *Our Mission and Vision*

Our **mission** is to live a life of prayer and holiness, take on the ways of God and become witnesses of God's love to others. We are committed to love and serve one another and the greater Church.

Our **vision** is to be a Catholic Covenant Community with a common way of life that expresses God's truth and word in action.

Access our Tambuli Newsletter issues online at: <http://fofnj.org/newsletter>

LIVING BULWARK ON-LINE MAGAZINE

[WWW.SWORDOFTHESPIRIT.NET/BULWARK](http://WWW.SWORDOFTHESPIRIT.NET/BULWARK)

