

# Balitang Nagbibigay Buhay

Filipino Ministry



... in the footsteps of the Lord



## 500YOC STO. NINO

*To celebrate 500 Years of Christianity (YOC) in the Philippines is also to celebrate the oldest Catholic icon in the country, the Sto. Nino or the Holy Child (Infant Jesus).*

Susan Papas Hauck's devotion to the Infant Jesus started when she was young after visiting the Shrine of the Infant Jesus of Prague. She carries a mini statue of the Infant with her to keep him close to her heart. The statue is made of wood, with the Infant Jesus dressed in majestic and regal clothes. His left hand encircles a miniature globe topped by a cross. The right hand is extended in blessing. It is said that many miracles have been attributed to the intercession of the Divine Infant and Hauck is a witness to that.

### ***A BIG THANK YOU!***

Eighty (some anonymous) donors contributed a total of **\$11,193.28** to the Philippine Relief Fundraising that we conducted for the month of November 2020. The full amount was remitted to Caritas Manila which has confirmed that at least another 10% of the Philippine population has been added to the poor sector as per latest report.

She shared how her devotion to the Infant Jesus has made coming to Canada, marrying a faithful husband and having a daughter after nine years of trying possible.

In a trip to Prague in 1998, she met the nuns who were the guardians of the Infant. They were the only ones allowed to touch the Infant statue; but Hauck believes the Holy Spirit touched their hearts and allowed her to help change the garments of the Holy Infant.

*"The first time I held the Infant, he felt very much alive as a real child. He was glowing. On other occasions, I was allowed to change his clothing."*

Upon returning to Canada she started a group devotion to the Infant Jesus of Prague at Guardian Angels Parish in Vancouver where they installed the first Holy Infant Jesus of Prague statue. Hauck travels to Prague two to three times a year to obtain a replica of the Infant for other countries such as the Philippines, Brazil, Mexico, USA, Peru, and more. She also brings the statue of the Holy Infant to sick people at hospitals and their homes.

*"Personally, my devotion to Infant made me calm, cool and collected. Joy replaced fear. When one is joyful, no matter how challenging the situation is, it becomes manageable."*

Hauck's story is reminiscent of the arrival of the first Sto. Nino image in the country. As Hauck shares her faith by bringing replicas of the Infant Jesus to other places, we remember the arrival of the first Sto. Nino image in the Philippines as we celebrate 500 Years of Christianity in the country. It was in 1521 when Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan landed in Limasawa, Leyte and offered the image of the Holy Child as one of three gifts presented to Rajah Humabon, ruler of Cebu island. It was also during this time when Rajah Humabon together with his queen and subjects were baptized to Christianity.

Mike Calingo from the Filipino Ministry of the RCAFV says the significance of the Sto. Nino's arrival in the Philippines 500 years ago is also why a novena devotion to the Sto. Nino is part of the 500 YOC celebration.

A Sto. Nino Commissioning for 37 coordinators with their respective Sto. Nino images was held last January 2020 at the Immaculate Conception Parish in Delta to invite families to hold 9-day Sto. Nino novenas. A second commissioning was held in the same parish in March and a virtual commissioning in August. Rev. Fr. Amador Abundo officiated all the commissioning. The goal is to have 500 families doing a devotion to the Sto. Nino by April 2021. This was later extended to September 2021 due to pandemic.

*"We have a number of kababayans who are Sto. Nino devotees and are witnesses to His grace. This feast reminds us that despite the hardships and troubles we experience in life, we remain faithful to God the father who will always take care of us no matter what circumstances we are in."*

The feast of the Sto. Nino comes a few weeks after Christmas. Calingo adds the Filipino Ministry is also planning a virtual novena to celebrate the feast of the Sto. Nino in January 2021.

## SIMBANG GABI BREAKTHROUGH

**We did it at the height of the new corona-virus pandemic!**

Twelve parishes in the Archdiocese of Vancouver livestreamed the Simbang Gabi 2020 as a way to stay faithful to the tradition and at the same time abide by the protocol set by the Health Authorities relative to not having group gathering for worship.

For example, in All Saints Parish, Coquitlam, as well as in most of the parishes, the mass was held with just the priest and a few workers to manage the videography and music. Then, after the mass, parishioners could come in front of the church, ushered car by car (limiting contacts to existing bubbles such as one's family) to receive Holy Communion.

Simbang Gabi 2020 will go down in history as unique.