READING—MATTHEW 3: 1-12
A voice of one crying out in the desert.
Prepare the way of the Lord.
Make straight his paths.

REFLECTION
The year 2013 may be remembered as a time in our country's unfolding story as one that was occasioned by many tragedies. From the scandalous misuse of public funds; to the Zamboanga incident; to the earthquake in Bohol and Cebu; and to supertyphoon Yolanda. Despite the claims about growth in our economy, there still looms the question of how equitably the benefits of this growth have been shared. These events cry out to us as signs of brokenness in Philippine society. It is to a world such as ours that Jesus came to bring light and hope.

This second Sunday of Advent, our country hears this call for repentance and reconciliation. This Advent season comes with a call for our public officials to turn away from the sense of entitlement and be reconciled with noble end of the resources entrusted to them. There is call for our citizenry to be more vigilant in holding our public officials accountable. This Advent season comes with a call for our country to turn away from its negligence of the environment and be reconciled with nature. In so doing, we live in awareness and in harmony with the natural rhythms that give shape to our world. This Advent season comes with a call for us to turn away from any self-indulgence and be reconciled with the poor among us so that we may break bread with them in the one table of the Lord.

Our celebration of Christmas will be meaningful insofar as we have prepared our hearts to long and wait for Him whose wisdom and understanding will bring God's justice and peace. Let us always nurture this desire for a more just and peaceful society, so that the Christ-child to be born this Christmas, may find a path that leads to our hearts.

RESPONSE
Reform, O God, the passions and designs of our hearts. Let your steady hand guide the nations, and bring forth out of our discord a harmony more perfect than we can conceive—a new humility, a new understanding, a new purity and sincerity, a new sense of truth, and a new hunger and thirst for Your love to rule the earth. Amen.

SOURCE: http://www.holytrinitygnv.org

BIRTHDAYS

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>03 DEC</td>
<td>Rebecca Cruz</td>
<td>(DLSPCH-ACS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>05 DEC</td>
<td>Dexter Doria</td>
<td>(DLSPCH-AdS)</td>
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<td>08 DEC</td>
<td>Br. Noel Hrang Lal FSC</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 DEC</td>
<td>Gliceria Castro</td>
<td>(DLSPCH-ACS)</td>
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PRECIOUS WEEKEND (IMAC2)

Some people consider the weekends as their getaway from stress and problems relating to school, work, and the like. They consider it as a time to go out, have fun, and be relieved from all their worries. Our weekend was very special—full of activities, bonding, learning, excitement, and friendship. We, along with ten fellow ABCDs and Br. Mikey Cua FSC, participated in the 2nd Inter-Mindanao ABCD Conference (IMAC2) at La Salle University, Ozamiz City, from 29 November to 1 December. On the first day, we were given the chance to interact with a certain Brother through coffee, hot chocolate and some snacks. We were assigned with Br. Jimmy Dalumpines FSC and Br. Joseph Dougherty FSC. It was great to be able to learn more about their lives as a Brother.

The next day, we had an Amazing Race activity. We grouped ourselves into three groups and there were six stations, all connected with a corresponding lesson. One station we could never forget was a challenge on sacrifice. We were tasked to raise Php1500 by “selling” our items to the facilitator. Underwear alone was worth Php100 each. Now we know how it feels to run around
without underwear. The three groups tried to duke it out and best each other but in the end, the facilitators revealed the twist. No one wins, no one loses. Everyone was required to work together as one in order to finish the race.

We were then told that we were going to a home for the elderly and an orphanage. One group was assigned to go to the orphanage while the other group went to the home for the elderly. It was great to be given an opportunity to interact with them. It was very nice to learn more about them and their lives.

After our short visit, we went back to the LSU Campus for a Eucharistic celebration. The priest talked about Jesus being fishers of men. It just felt nice to know that we have the Brothers who ‘fished’ and found us. Without them, we would have never been in this event or in the ABCDs, as a whole.

Day 3 of the IMAC was highlighted by visiting the different churches in Ozamiz City. During the tour, we were also able to discover the culture of the city. After the pilgrimage, we parted ways. It was sad to say goodbye, but we felt good knowing that we spent our weekend productively.

We are happy that we were given the opportunity to experience the IMAC experience. We have learned and gained a lot of insights during the event and we look forward to sharing them with our fellow ABCDs and Lasallians. The IMAC2 may have been quite short, but we could say that it was one great experience we will never forget. We do not regret spending our precious weekend with the ABCDs and we look forward to spending more with them in the future. —By Matthew B. Torro and Mark Francis S. Basan II

The Sector of the Philippines bids farewell to Br. Philip Thein Oo FSC of Myanmar who has returned to his home country last 3 December. During his stay here, Br. Philip he was assigned to the DLSP Library and Archives. Upon his return, he will be working at the Come and See program in Kalaw. Congratulations are also in order for Br. Gelo Paragas FSC who recently passed the LET!

De La Salle Health Sciences Institute’s (DLSHSI) Angelo King Medical Research Center is proud to have been selected to conduct a first of its kind pediatric trial of a novel compound against multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB). There is an estimated half a million cases of childhood TB all over the world according to the World Health Organization, which results in 64,000 deaths.

The Phase I trial aims to assess the absorption, distribution, metabolism, and elimination (pharmacokinetics) of a new medicine for pediatric MDR-TB developed by the Japanese pharmaceutical company Otsuka. The company has been conducting global studies on the compound in adult patients with MDR-TB at sites around the world, including the Philippines.
Additionally, an equally groundbreaking Phase II study at the same institution will also be conducted to evaluate the long-term safety and tolerability of the new drug in adolescents, children, and infants.

One of the major challenges with treating MDR-TB in children is the difficulty in first diagnosing the disease in this age group. Because of a difficulty in obtaining actual microbiological evidence of the disease, doctors must often rely on signs and symptoms, which do not determine if the strain is drug resistant or not. In addition, a lack of clinical trials and child-friendly formulations of anti-TB medicines means that there is very little existing information on how to properly treat and dose children suffering from the disease.

Heading the trial is principal investigator Dr. Melchor Victor G. Frias IV, DLSHSI’s vice chancellor for research as well as a practicing pediatrician and clinical epidemiologist at De La Salle University Medical Center.

“This trial is finally putting greater attention on the need to properly treat MDR-TB in children,” said Dr. Frias. “DLSHSI is proud to have been selected to conduct this work and serve as a leader in pediatric TB research in the Philippines and globally.”

This pioneering trial aims to answer some of these questions and establish for the first time, safety and an appropriate dose range of an anti-TB compound for the pediatric population.

DLSHSI, in partnership with its dedicated team of doctors, nurses, laboratory specialists and all other staff, hopes to contribute valuable information that the TB community may use to finally address this urgent health problem.

**VOCATION NOVENA**

**16-25 DECEMBER**

Let us pray that more young people will be inspired to commit their lives to the Lasallian Mission.

**PRAYER FOR Vocations**

God, in Baptism you called us by name and made us members of your people, the Church. We praise you for your goodness. We thank you for your gifts and bless your Church with love. Raise up dedicated and generous leaders from our families and from our friends who will serve as sisters, priests, brothers and deacons. Send your Spirit to guide and strengthen us that we may serve your people following the example of your Son, Jesus Christ, in whose name we offer this prayer. AMEN.

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**So God made a Teacher**

The books are important, and so are the pencils, the blackboards, and the chairs, but if there are no teachers, who will bear the weight and the responsibility of educating the next generation?

Support our teachers through the Lasallian Mission Annual Project. For more information, send a message to advancement@delasalle.ph.