

*Beloved Brothers and Sisters in the KFI Ministry,*

*As we get ready to welcome the Christ Child into our world, let us think of the joyful light and warmth Christmas brings.*



*To all our brothers and sisters in FAITH, we are thankful for the opportunity to serve you. As your shepherds, our service started with an induction in January 2020. No one knew that COVID 19 was among us in early February 2020 that would become a pandemic in March 2020. Due to human-to-human transmission via respiratory droplets, the recommendation of CDC, as prevention tip, was to avoid close contact with sick individuals. This resulted in many cancellations of in-person activities planned by KFI-ME Ministry. Some brothers and sisters and others with their own individual families lost their fight against the COVID 19. We remember them in our thoughts and prayers.*

Individually, we all experienced the "seasons of the year" in different ways. Before the pandemic we had scheduled Life in the Spirit Seminars in various months of the year. In June we used to hold the Luke 18 weekend, followed by the Antioch weekend in July, and then the Barnabas weekend later in the summer. In the month of June, as devotees of Birhen ng Antipolo we would meet every night in the assigned host home to pray the daily novena, and after the 9<sup>th</sup> day we would travel down to Washington, DC as part of the annual pilgrimage. We would hold our SUMMER GATHERING in memory of Bro. Conrad and Sis. Bing on the first weekend of August. Marriage Encounter Florida was usually held during the months of September and October. Marriage Encounter NY/NJ were usually held in the fall followed by the Family Encounter weekend during Thanksgiving weekend. Before the end of the year, we would gather in the month of December not only to hear the annual reports of the various ministries, but also to celebrate Christmas. But during the past two years we have had to minimize in-person activities due to the demands of the COVID 19 pandemic.

The past three years have been challenging. Perhaps at no other time in KFI history have we held our activities outside of an in-person setting but still accomplished them using the Zoom app. Zoom

is a video conferencing app that lets you connect with other people via webcam or audio-only using virtual meeting spaces called Zoom rooms. The members of the Council of Elders (COE) and all ministries, including the ME Board and Youth board, downloaded the Zoom app and learned how to use it on both computers and mobile devices. Bi-monthly meetings of the COE, monthly meetings of ME Board, and random meetings of the Family Encounter Ministry (FE) were all done via Zoom. Likewise, the Youth board managed to meet monthly via Zoom. The Life in the Spirit Seminar (LSS) ministry conducted one virtual seminar in the year 2020. The youth had their first UNITY NIGHT virtually in May 2020. Initially, it seemed too high a mountain to climb, but with some adjustments the events went through.

As the year 2021 set in, we learned what the virus could do. Though our hearts wanted to move back into in-person meetings the health of every attendee has been our top priority. In the year since COVID-19 emerged, the world has seen over 85 million cases of the disease. We held our summer gathering with a controlled number of attendees. The Life in the Spirit Seminars resumed in-person settings this year. We conducted a one-day retreat for ME Couples in-person in November 2021. We held it at Don Bosco Retreat Center in New York.

When we welcomed 2022, every ministry was too eager to meet in-person. The Life in the Spirit (LSS) ministry ended the year 2022 with four in-person seminars. Due to the lifting of some restrictions on in-person activities we successfully held the annual summer gathering with better attendance at Holy Face Monastery in Clifton, NJ on July 30, 2022. The youth also held their UNITY NIGHT with fund raising. The funds raised went to the refugees from Ukraine being housed by their Polish host homes during the WORLD YOUTH DAY in Poland. This took place on November 5, 2022.

Marriage Encounter was resumed in-person on a hefty scale by having 13 couple candidates on November 18-20, 2022 at Don Bosco Retreat Center. This was followed by the Family Encounter Weekend with five family candidates on November 25-27, 2022 at the Malvern Retreat House in Pennsylvania.

Our KFI-ME Ministry had a special year-end gathering held at the Joshua Evangelization Group (JEG) Center in Hillsborough, NJ on December 3, 2022. We call the JEG center our home. Each ministry was represented and the head of each ministry delivered their reports. The common message was that each ministry is eager and looking forward to continue the mission of evangelization with the hope that the end is near for COVID 19 and its lingering variants. Additionally, the youth serenaded us with Christmas carols. The cheerful givers put cash or check in the box to raise money for their trip to Lisbon, Portugal for World Youth Day in August 2023.



We are finishing our term in January, 2023. As I take a breath and look at the past three years, I can see that these have been very different and trying years in the KFI-ME Ministry. Just like in any organization, I see how we have had to make adjustments in the way we conduct our activities and even come up with creative things to substitute in person meetings with Zoom meetings. We see how fast life can change. As we reflect on our term as your shepherds, it is a blessing to be in the KFI Community.

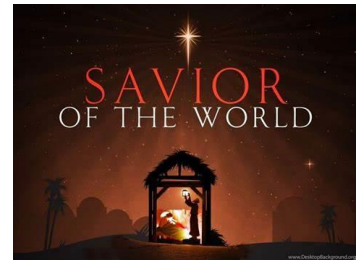
We would like to express our sincerest appreciation for the trust you have given us. Perhaps at no other time in KFI history have we ever gone outside meeting in-person that characterized our various activities. We lost some sense of comfort and convenience that has become traditional in our yearly gathering when it is associated with Christmas along with the many traditional social norms. Yet, maybe there was a purpose for it. We have a chance to be closer to the true meaning of Christmas like no time before. The Advent season is a time of waiting and longing. It is a time that is representative of finding the light in the darkness. When we see a bright star at nightfall, it makes us think how much that Star of Bethlehem must have been such a defining light of hope for an expectant virgin and lowly carpenter as the world around them seemed chaotic and out of control. For many of us, 2020-2022 seem like three years that have been placed outside of our control; it has been like Merle Haggard's song 'If We Make it through December.' But we have to remind ourselves that what was so significant about the first Christmas is really true today- a new life was given in a tough world, and that life would be built on a foundation of sacrifice for

fellowmen, friend or foe, to pay the ultimate sacrifice for us all. We hope this new year we can pluck the moments of light out from the darkness and realize the true meaning of this day. Let us energize our hearts with hope and selflessness as we trudge on through 2023 and beyond, tired but resilient. Now is the time we anchor our souls in hope and put our focus on working toward better days by knowing the power that sacrifice has over selfishness.

"It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas..."

Let us return to Him and give others hope to overcome the darkness and cold.

We hope everyone will remember that we have a Savior in Christ Jesus. The Christmas season being upon us, so we ask everyone to be safe in however you have chosen to celebrate this season and from the KFI-ME Ministry may you all have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Your shepherds,



Bro. Jun and Sis. Marlene Osma

December 2022