

ARCHDIOCESE
OF
LINGAYEN-DAGUPAN

January 1, 2021
Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

ALD Circular 2021-1

RE: *Dayew tan Pisasalamat*

TO BE READ AS HOMILY IN ALL MASSES ON JANUARY 1, 2021

My dear people of God:

It is a year to give thanks. It is a year to thank the Lord. *Dayew tan pisasalamat*. Five hundred years ago, the first Mass and the first baptism were celebrated in our islands. This jubilee year has become more meaningful after Pope Francis declared this year as Year of Saint Joseph, patron of the universal Church.

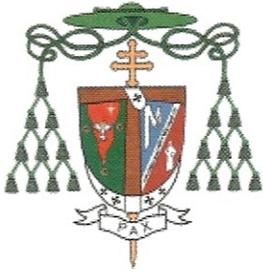
On Easter Sunday this year, that is the fourth of April, we will celebrate with the rest of the Catholic faithful in the Philippines that momentous event when the words “*This is My Body...this is My Blood*” were first pronounced in our archipelago.

On the fourteenth of April, we will thank the Lord for the memory of *Rajah Humabon* who was baptized Carlos and *Hara Humanay* who was baptized Juana five hundred years ago into this same Church to which we belong now.

From that historic event of 1521, the Gospel started to create ripples of grace in our seas and echoes of blessings in our islands.

On February 8, 1579 it saw the creation of the Diocese of Manila covering the entire archipelago. On August 14, 1595, the mother of the See of Lingayen was born to be called Diocese of Nueva Segovia. On the 19th of May, 1928, we were born from the Diocese of Nueva Segovia as an independent See with Bishop Cesar Maria Guerero as our first bishop. The Diocese of Lingayen Dagupan, renamed as such on February 11, 1954, gave birth to its first daughter Church called Prelature of Iba. The second daughter of Lingayen would be what is now called the Diocese of Cabanatuan on February 16, 1963, at the same time creating our

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Church as Metropolitan See. The daughter Church of Cabanatuan herself became a mother to give birth to the Diocese of San Jose on February 16, 1984. The See of Lingayen Dagupan gave birth to twins on January 12, 1985 called the Diocese of Alaminos and the Diocese of Urdaneta.

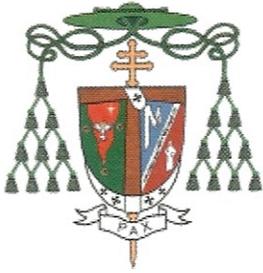
What a journey it has been! This is the season to give thanks. It is the time to praise the Lord. His love is everlasting. Saint John Paul II's words ring clearly for us: *Let us remember the past with gratitude, live the present with enthusiasm and look forward to the future with confidence.*

The pandemic has obviously drastically affected our plans for the fifth centenary of the first Mass and first baptism in our shores. Unable to gather for a national event with delegations from all over the country, we gather as families and Christian neighborhoods, certainly less grandiose but surely not less blessed. The parishes and the Cathedral of Saint John the Evangelist will be our focal points for our festivities instead of Cebu. The jubilee will be a jubilee of the heart and the soul of each one of us. Like the beloved disciple, we are called to rest our head on the chest of the Lord, listening to the beating of His heart, as our eyes look far into the world outside the Upper Room, longing to tell the world of His love. May our life of faith in the Church convince the world that Jesus, God-with-us, indeed lives among His people!

The calling is to be in communion with the Lord by resting in Him and yet with restless zealous hearts set on mission. Our fire for the mission is the heart praising the Lord and the soul thanking the Almighty. *Dayew tan piasalamat...pananabangan tan misyon!*

We are in communion with our brothers and sisters who share our faith in Christ celebrating the jubilee of our first Mass and our first baptism. Beyond this national jubilee, we are even more eager to see our own centennial jubilee come the year 2028. The Archdiocese of Lingayen Dagupan will be one hundred years old by then. With Mary who treasured everything in her heart from Nazareth to the Cenacle at Pentecost, may we be on fire with love for the Lord. Through Mary, Christ became man. In Joseph, Mary placed her trust and with Joseph, Christ matured as a man.

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There is no duty greater than giving thanks to the Lord because all that we hold is grace. Even before we reach our one hundredth anniversary, let us thank God ahead of time! We proclaim that He who has blessed us in the past will bless us constantly into tomorrow and even now we already thank the Lord. This is our faith and strong hope.

Our *dayew tan piasalamat* is not only for yesterday but for tomorrow too and certainly for the great NOW! I invoke the blessings of the new year on you all!

Sincerely yours,

+SOCRATES B. VILLEGAS
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