

Excellence

WAS THE FIRST CHRISTMAS A DIFFICULT DECISION?

Carol Atacador

I often wondered what it took for the Father to decide on the notion of Christmas fully aware in-between Christmas and Easter is Good Friday. The All-Knowing Father still sent His only Son despite the preview of what is to come. Still I wonder why. In my humanity, I could not explain what could be more compelling than a Father's love for His own Son.

In the last two weeks, I have done various chores and visited many places I would ordinarily not do. I was hosting three American guests who have been instrumental in ensuring that CENTEX has the latest textbooks in Language Arts, Science and Mathematics. They wanted to experience the Philippines outside of Makati. A visit to Quiapo, shopping underneath the bridge for native bags and parol, capiz lights and bahay kubo replicas allowed this experience. Nearby is the Balikbayan Store where they found wood decors to bring back home. I took note of the excitement evoked by the Christmas spirit clearly felt in the area. Surely, this excitement is one huge flavor of Christmas. Could the Father have seen this when He was making a decision about Christmas?

CENTEX is one project where daily decisions made are about life, quality of life, respect for life, sanctity of the Filipino, and hope for the children. Although it is touted as an educational project, in its core is the alignment of the Father's vision with our implementation. It is about offering the opportunity to families to live as the Father has so dreamed for all to live. It is about Christmas and all the trimmings of Christmas...the gifts, the magic of lights, the promise of the Christmas tree, and even the making of the cross from the same Christmas tree.

Did the Father consider making the people to whom He sent His only Son accountable? Did He excruciate over the First Christmas knowing the very people to whom He has committed the First Christmas will see only the glitter and magic of Christmas just during the Holiday Season then lose the real gift of His only Son the rest of the year? Did the Father see how the people would usurp the Gift that is Christmas and turn it into their right rather than a Gift?

Whenever a phone call is made informing the chosen 75 that they made it to the CENTEX Kindergarten, the initial reaction is, "This is more than winning the lottery! This is like Christmas!" Still I wonder, why it is so difficult to live up to Christmas.

The decision to extend the feeding program only to Kindergarten, Grades 1, 2 and 3 is a life decision. In my heart there are 4th, 5th and 6th grade students who may not eat a nutritious meal a day when we scale down our Nutrition Program. It breaks my heart to even think this much less decide to do so. Was this how the Father felt when He saw Good Friday connected to Christmas? Did the Father cry Himself to sleep as I do? Did He write-off those who would not be held accountable? Did He keep tab of their skills and behavior as we do in CENTEX? I wonder, did the Father get sick when He allowed that First Christmas?

No matter, for more than two thousand years humanity continues to be under the magic spell of Christmas. The evergreen wears the Christmas lights, the three Kings visit, and the economy picks up from the purchases of gifts. And when Christmas is over, we anticipate the next one, only to do the same things over.

Certainly, the All-Knowing Father saw it all...the joy, the magic, the goodwill, even the tears of Good Friday. He saw the First Christmas and decided we are worthy of His Son's visit. He saw CENTEX and saw Christmas in May when announcements of acceptance are made. He saw our gift giving and He smiled. Jesus saw it too...the manger, the wood, the Easter lily.

Believe it! We count in God's eyes. To all of you, a Blessed Christmas. May your generosity to our CENTEX scholars be the gift you give back to our FATHER and His Son.

Was the First Christmas
a Difficult Decision?

The Cody Family,
CENTEX Advocates

CENTEX Choir Sings at
Glorietta

The CENTEX Prodigy

CENTEX Manila Family
Day and Scouts of the
Philippines Investiture

Bright Child: Yaman ng
Pamilya, Yaman ng
Bansa





The Cody Family, CENTEX Advocates



Suzette Cody is a Filipina married to Jay Cody, an American formerly stationed in the U.S Embassy in the Philippines. They both migrated to Singapore where they raised their two children Diwa and Marga.

Diwa has always been a brilliant academic performing student which earned her a place in the International Baccalaureate (I.B) program which is a nation wide honors program in Singapore consisting of various advanced classes for bright High School Students. One of the classes for this program is Global Concerns. This subject looks into problems of developing countries and ways to aid them. As her voluntary project for this class, Diwa sought to look into a particular developing country's problems and give direct aid to this country.

Suzette despite being a Filipino and having a natural desire for her daughter to look into the Philippines, did not at all try to convince her daughter to do a project on the Philippines because she wanted her daughter to make her own decisions. At first, Diwa seemed to be more interested in looking into Africa or Bangladesh. But to her mother's surprise and delight, she eventually decided on studying the Philippines' development problems.

While searching the Internet for Philippine development projects and concerns, Diwa stumbled upon the Ayala Foundation Inc. website an organization which coincidentally is headed by the former boss of Suzette while she worked in Malacañang Museum, Mrs. Vicky Garchitorena. Since Diwa was interested particularly in education concerns, she looked into CENTEX. Also, after much research on

weak science programs and sought to give aid to this particular problem any way she could. She and her family finally decided on aiding CENTEX based on the information they saw on the CENTEX website. They decided that CENTEX was transparent enough that any money or aid they would give would certainly be used for the intended purposes.

Diwa started raising funds in her school through bake sales of cakes and pastries. After their fundraising efforts, Diwa and her whole family flew to the Philippines, visited CENTEX Manila, sat in some classes, and donated 1000.00 Singapore dollars to the school. Aside from the money, they also donated other science materials such as microscopes and a science lab internal organ model.

Being so touched by the experience, and impressed by the ability of the CENTEX students, Diwa and her family made another fundraising effort through bake sales when they got back to Singapore, wherein they raised even more money than the first time for the CENTEX cause. And just last October 2006, Diwa went back to Manila with her mother Suzette and her sister Marga to donate 1000.00 US dollars to CENTEX. Aside from the money, they were also able to donate textbooks and other materials given to them by other donors.

Aside from the direct aid they gave, the Cody family was also able to help CENTEX through other means. Thanks to Suzette Cody's urging, her good friend Isabel Garcia from Meralco Management Leadership Development Center (MMLDC), gave a free seminar for the CENTEX teachers sponsored and facilitated by MMLDC.

The Cody family is a perfect example of regular people giving extraordinary help to a great cause with just a little effort and initiative. May God bless CENTEX with more people such as these.



children's hour CENTEX Choir Sings at Glorietta



Last October 24 at Glorietta, Makati, ten members from the CENTEX Children's Choir were invited to participate in Children's Hour's celebration of the Children's Month. The choir had the opportunity to sing for the public their own rendition of the song, "Sana" and "A Little Bit More of Love." The audience were impressed with their performance and they were thankful to the children for participating in their celebration of the Children's Month. The CENTEX choir was so happy that they were given an opportunity to showcase their singing and dancing talents to the people.





HAPPY HOLIDAYS



This article was written by a Grade 6 student of CENTEX Manila. His work will be published in the Newsletter of the Council for the Welfare of Children.

Let me end this with a poem:

We are the hope of this country,
The agents of humanity
To fight every injustice
Without expecting any money and fee.

We need to love each other
And serve it as a gift to our Father
For this country He guides,
To be successful at every side.

I know that we are intelligent
To make this country excellent
So be hopeful and persistent
For the bad dreams that we have
Will finally meet their end.

BRIGHT CHILD: YAMAN NG PAMILYA YAMAN NG BANSA

by: Andrei Mark Asuncion



hey say that dreaming is free. It is one of the few things that money cannot buy. Everybody can do it and as young as I am, I also have dreams of my own. One of these is that someday, we, Filipinos will reach the goal of uniting together while doing our very best to have a beautiful and progressive country.

Our country is very rich in human and natural resources. We have resources that offer us everything. Our culture is no doubt beyond compare. But, these will be wasted if we do not know how to take care and use them properly. If these are used in nonsense, shameful and useless activities, no good future awaits us.

Wasted future is such a drastic moment one could ever have. How can we prevent it? In search for this question, I found myself reading the theme for this month of October. It says, "Bright Child: Yaman ng Pamilya, Yaman ng Bansa." This struck me that it reminds us all that we, the Filipino children are gifted, smart and talented enough. How do we develop these? The love of our parents, basically, is the foundation of our character. Our parents are nurturing and molding us to be a significant person of our community. Our talents are enhanced at school with the inspiration from our teachers and classmates. We learn things that cannot be taught at home. Quality education is given to us and we have to apply what we learned in school. We always hear that we are the hope of our nation, the hope that someday we can be free from the ills of poverty, suffering and injustices. It is in our hands to make it happen. We can use both of these to make this happen!

We must keep in mind that bright children, like us, are valuable possessions of our families and our country.

CENTEX Prodigy



ear 2000, a fragile looking pale little boy entered CENTEX Batangas with his right hand holding his mother's skirt tightly. Little did people know that Dale Wilson A. Garcia II, a soft spoken boy, the eldest son among the three boys of Wilson Garcia I and Janette Agulo both residents of Barangay Aplaya, would amaze the entire Batangas with his academic genius.

When he was grade 2, both his parents worked abroad and left Dale and his brothers with his grandmother in Aplaya. Despite this, he became a consistent Math Medalist. He could solve difficult Math problems without using paper and pen in less than 30 seconds.

Now, Dale Wilson Garcia is a Grade-6 student who makes CENTEX and AFI proud. He is an academic genius showcasing his talents, not only within the CENTEX walls but also across the nation. Dale recently represented CENTEX Batangas as an individual in a series of Math Quiz bees. He first won the Math Quiz bee representing CENTEX in the district of Bauan. After gaining this first victory, becoming the district champion in Bauan, he went on to win the Area Quiz Bee championship representing the whole district of Bauan against neighboring towns.

And this doesn't stop. Being the Area champion, he then went on to claim the Batangas championship in the Math Quiz Bee, making himself the Math Batangas Division Champion. And just this November 6, representing the Batangas Division, Dale Wilson Garcia was crowned the Regional Math Quiz Bee Champion in region 4-A, representing Batangas against Laguna, Cavite, Quezon and Rizal. Dale has been inspired to win the contests because of the decision of his mother to stay with them forever.

The next step is for him to win the Philippine National Math Quiz Bee representing Region 4-A. Let us all pray for Dale, as he aspires to show the country what a CENTEX student can accomplish by winning the National Championships. Dale is a perfect example of the quality students CENTEX develops.

CENTEX Manila Family Day and Scouts of the Philippines Investiture



This past October 6-7, CENTEX Manila celebrated its family day and Boy Scout and Girl Scout Investiture. During the family day, every member of the CENTEX family conducted their own presentation. The Kinder and Grade 1 students performed a lovely song number with hand gestures that everyone found adorable. Each grade level from 2-6 also presented dance numbers showcasing their skills. The teachers dazzled the audience with their modern song and dance number. Of course the CENTEX parents wouldn't go down without the fight, so they strutted their stuff in their own dance number with cowgirl costumes. The family day was concluded with a friendly volley ball game, teachers vs. parents. The game ended with the parents taking the trophy.



After the family day, CENTEX initiated the Boy Scout and Girl Scout Investiture. During this event, all CENTEX boys and girls from all grade levels who are part of the Scouts were officially inducted into Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of the Philippines. All the inductees recited the official pledges and performed the necessary rites. All students Grade 2 and below were made official Cub Scouts, while all students Grade 3 and above were made official Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.

... resting by her mother's side
a child glows with quiet joy

... secure in the touch of her mother's hand

... encircling her with love

... opening her to exciting possibilities of land and waters

This is at the Heart of a touch of love...

Federico Aguilar Alcuaz is a lawyer-turned well-known artist and the Filipino with the most international awards for his works of art. Alcuaz captures the essence of a touch of a mother's love in his painting "Mother and Child."



"Mother and Child" by Federico Aguilar Alcuaz

In this season of love

share a touch of love...
a touch of you... in others

Help support our CENTEX scholars!



Yes! I want to donate to the CENTEX High School Assistance Fund !

Name : _____
Address : _____
Tel.No. : _____
Email : _____
I want to donate the amount of _____
_____ (P _____) to CENTEX.

Choose from the following schemes !!!
For 1 year, you and your friends can donate :

P 68.00 daily	P 2,080.00 monthly
P 480.00 weekly	P 6,250.00 quarterly
P 1,040.00 twice a month	P 25,000 yearly

CALL US NOW FOR MORE DETAILS

Be a Dream Catcher! Send a CENTEX child to High School! FAX US TODAY!

To make donations, you may either fax this form to (632) 8134487; call Sarah Sevilla at (632) 7521171; log on to www.centex.org.ph; email sevilla.sb@ayalafoundation.org, or write to CENTEX, 10/F Ayala Wing, BPI Main Bldg., 6768 Ayala Avenue cor. Paseo de Roxas, Makati City