



20 July 2020

**FOR: MBG ARCHDIOCESAN/DIOCESAN/MOP/APOSTOLIC VICARIATE/PRELATURE COUNCILS
PARISH UNITS OF DIOCESES NOT YET CONSTITUTED AS A COUNCIL/SPECIAL UNITS**

REF: 22 JULY FEAST OF MOTHER MARIE JOSEPH BUTLER

My Beloved Mother Butlers,

Warm greetings.

On Wednesday, 22 July, we celebrate the feastday of our patroness Mother Marie Joseph Butler. It was her love for Jesus in the Eucharist which inspired our Mother Butler Guild service that is now on its 59th year. You may ask, as I did some nights back, Lord, how can we celebrate ... what is there to celebrate?

Covid19 has suddenly robbed us of reasons for celebration ... has suddenly plunged us into unexpected unbelievable suffering. It has even locked us down from our MBG tasks of caring for the sanctuary of our parish churches, preparing the table of the Lord, sewing and washing his linens and vestments, most of all tasting the sweetness of Jesus in the Eucharist. But then the breath of the Spirit filled my soul. He whispered: You are alive ... you are without covid19 ... you are free to sing praises to God, to do good for others even while locked down ...you have food to eat, water to drink, clothes to wear, a home to rest in, you have gadgets to follow the Mass online ... so why do you fret and grieve?

Then I suddenly remembered our Talita Kumi Inengs in Kalookan living in Smokey Mountain, literally living on garbage, breathing in and smelling nothing but garbage, seeing day in and day out garbage all around; our Inengs in Cavite packed like sardines in their squatter barong-barongs, some with parents in jail, not knowing where and how their next meals will come from; our Inengs in Laguna whose parents are suddenly jobless, whose one bright happy experience of school in private Liceos and living like other normal children could now suddenly disappear like a bubble.

Then images came flashing through my mind. Nancy wading through Smokey Mountain garbage in the midst of covid19 contagion to make sure our Inengs are okay, assuring them that we shall continue giving them something to eat for their bodies, minds and souls. Elo braving covid19 frustrations with undaunted enthusiasm and contagious faith to beg from friends and people of means for the tuition fees of our Inengs. Helen unmindful of covid19 fears pleading with school authorities in charge of 3 Liceos for discounts to the tuition fees of Talita Kumi Inengs.

And there was the picture of Fely cooking singlehandedly 30 kilos of chicken adobo and boiled rice every week for distribution to frontliners in Q.C. hospitals. Cristy and MBG CDO sewing and distributing face masks to tricycle drivers and garbage collectors. Countless Mother Butlers offering online Masses for covid19 victims –dead and still fighting for life. So many Mother Butlers transforming their homes and families into domestic churches through praying the rosary daily and other pious practices as household devotions.

God is indeed so good to the MBG. If covid19 prevented us from taking care of Jesus on the altar, he led us to seek, find and take care of Inengs who otherwise would be walking dead in the filth of poverty and dehumanized environment. If covid19 removed the focus of our attention from the linens, vestments and vessels we had to maintain, Our Lord turned our gaze to see the poor, to sew masks for them. If covid19 prevented us from receiving and tasting the Body of Christ, the love of Jesus urged us that to cook for and feed his hungry poor is tantamount to tasting his sweetness. How Jesus the Servant God we follow, obey and serve has, through the tragedy of covid19, expanded the landscape of our mission ... from the altar to the peripheries.

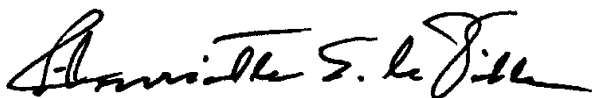
A hundred reasons for us all to celebrate. And so we shall celebrate through intense worship, increased sharing, forward-looking resolve ...

1. Each MBG Council and Parish Unit, including Special Units, are enjoined to hear Mass anytime from July 22 to 31, if possible live in your parish churches since these have already been opened, but practicing physical distancing and other ECQ/GCQ/MGCQ protocols, otherwise online for those who are still on lockdown.
2. All MBG Councils and Parish Units, including special Units are to continue, if not double their efforts for Talita Kumi Inengs and expanding the landscape of our mission from the altar to the peripheries even after lockdown.
3. Each MBG Council is exhorted to form at least one or two Junior Sections (MBG Constitution Article IV-Organization, Section 7-Junior Section) in the diocese from now till July 22, 2021; while each Parish Unit, including Special Units are likewise exhorted to recruit at least 3 to 5 members who are below 50 years old from now till July 22, 2021.

We are asking the Council Presidents to kindly submit their reports regarding compliance to above items # 1 and 2 by Sept. 8, 2020. The Regional Coordinators are herein directed to please report on above item # 3 covering their areas of care and concern by Sept. 8, 2021.

Let us sing a new song to the Lord. He may chastise us with the rod like covid19 as punishment we deserve for our sins, but he will never withdraw his love. The Lord, our God whose love endures forever! Let us celebrate!

Hugging you all tightly with #CHRISTHUGS.



Amb. HENRIETTA T. DE VILLA
National President