

Crossings

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SPECIAL CHRISTMAS ISSUE

As we end the year, may we all be reminded of the blessings we have received in the last few years. We bow our heads in thanksgiving for the life, the friendship, the community, and the connections we're able to keep and allow to grow.

Face-to-face classes at ALC resumed in April this year, and as we say good-bye to 2022, we see our learner population bouncing back to pre-pandemic level. We welcomed back to our language classrooms (both physical and virtual) learners from different parts of the world--China, Vietnam, South Korea, Myanmar, Kenya, Brazil, Indonesia, the Philippines, Peru, Madagascar, Congo, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, France, and Angola.

ALC has also expanded its course and language offerings. We have classes in English, French, Spanish, Tagalog, Korean, and Arabic. We continually strengthen our TOEFL and IELTS Review and Preparation Classes.

And 2023 is going to be an exciting year for us as a school and as a community. Please wait for major announcements about new courses and some major moves!

We're welcoming the New Year with joyful anticipation. Merry Christmas, everyone!

Love: Challenge of a Religious Life

By Peter Cuong Nguyen, Vietnam

When I was in high school, I admire a religious person. His name is Anthony. He taught me math. He is very kind and humble. I wished to be like him. But in 2010, he gave up his religious life to marry a woman. I was very sad and disappointed in him. I was thinking, "why can't he overcome the religious challenge of love between a man and a woman?"

Since then, when I see monks giving up their religious life, I hate them. I have asserted that if I am a religious person, I wouldn't love a girl. After completing high school, I decided to become a religious person at the Congregation of Anthony Padova.

At my Congregation, I studied music and some of the subjects needed in religious life. 7 years ago, I was appointed by my superior to live in Hau Thanh parish. I mainly practice singing for the choir to serve Mass there.

My service was very successful, I was loved by everyone. But after living there for 5 months, I realized that I love a girl. She is very beautiful and gentle and she sings very well.



I really enjoyed listening to her sing, especially because she cares about me.

I also feel that she loves me too because she wrote a letter to express her love for me. I was very sad because I did not live as I asserted. Saint Augustine said, "You have a heart and your heart loves".

To renounce that love, I asked my superior to let me leave that place and he accepted my request. I have not contacted her until today.

Today, I just realized that Love is a challenge of a religious life. I am a religious brother.

I must be diligent in prayer and union with God so that I can overcome the challenges of my religious life. Now, I feel happy because I chose "Christ as my love".

Especially now, when I know a religious person has abandoned his or her religious life, I don't hate them but I will sympathize and pray for them. Agatha Christie said, "Don't ruin the today with a negative perspective of yesterday. Yesterday...It's over" (1950).

How to be Successful

By Chu Thi Thien, Vietnam

Everyone wants to be successful in their life, but not everyone knows how to do it.

In my experience, to be successful, we need to follow three steps.

First, you should have a goal. When you start to do something like studying, getting a new job, learning a new language, losing weight, or creating a new habit, you should answer the questions: What do you want to do? Why do you want to achieve these things?

Write your purpose, the more specific the better. Your goal will guide you to be successful.

After you identify a particular goal, take action. If you want to achieve it, you will take small steps.

Even a big tree starts from a small seed. For instance, in growing vegetables, you should make an effort to water them every day.

Watering plants every day only takes a few minutes and it seems to be too simple, but that small action will make the vegetables grow.

The final step is to have endurance in your goal. Achieving it is not always like a walk in the park. There will be challenges. The path to success is not easy.

Your wins make you more joyful and your difficulties make you stronger. If you persevere, you will be successful in life.

Success can be different for everyone, but when you have a goal, you take action, and you have endurance, you will be successful.

Just keep going.



CULTURAL EXPERIENCE IN THE PHILIPPINES



By Sr. Tran Thi Bich Phuong Cecilia, Vietnam

Coming to the Philippines is a blessing for me. Fortunately, I am able to study at Assumption Language College.

Last Saturday, I was able to visit a few cultural and historical places in the Philippines with my teachers and classmates for a day.

I was proud and happy to see people here go to Mass in large numbers. They are pious, the churches are beautiful, and there are always people coming to pray.

I also went inside many shopping stores. There were many beautiful items and the sellers were quite friendly and approachable.

The weather was quite hot on that day, but everyone was happy because they could experience many places together, talk in English, and have lunch together. I felt good and happy that day.

When I visited the museum, I really felt like I went back to the origin of the country and the people of the Philippines. I love the stories, paintings, ceramics, and other kinds of art that were made from different materials, but all contain meaningful messages and content of the previous generations.

I felt connected with the Philippines because my country shares many similarities with the Philippines in terms of ancient history.

I love art and when I visited the National Museum of Anthropology; I fell in love with and understood more about the country, people and culture of the Philippines. I appreciate everything that I saw, heard, and experienced.

Thank you for allowing us to visit and learn about the culture of your country. It's so beautiful and so heroic, thank you to the artists who left behind beautiful paintings and art for future generations and the world to know about you.

My Special Possessions



By Theofani, Indonesia

I had a few special treasures when I was little. Namely, earrings, a ring, and a gold necklace that my father and my mother bought when I was ten years old.

I wore them and took good care of them for a long time.

These possessions are important to me because they're gifts from persons who I love and mean something to me - my father and mother.

They are also precious to me and I have a lot of respect for them.

I took care of what they had given me until I decided to leave home and follow God's call to become a nun.

When I wanted to go to Flores, I returned the precious items to my father and mother because in the monastery I was obliged to live in the spirit of poverty.

My Favorite Artist

By Lusida, Indonesia

Rano Karno was born on October 8, 1960, in Jakarta. His father's name was Soekarno M. Noer and his mother's name was Lily Istiarti. He grew up in Kemayoran, central Jakarta.

Rano grew up in poverty, seeing and experiencing economic life in the Karni family trying to rise from adversity. Even though his family did not have enough to pay for his schooling, Karno tried to finish school after the costs were reduced by half.

When he was a child, he often went to a library to read classic works of Indonesian literature, including novels by Abdul Muis and the traditional folktale Malin Kundang.

His passion for reading helped him get his first acting job when he was ten years old. And then in 1972, he starred in the film *Adopsi Si Doel Anak Betawi*.

He continued to play a role in making various films. In 1990, he switched to directing.

Starting in the late 1990s, he entered politics. From 1997 to 2002, he served as a member of the People's Consultative Assembly and from 2002 to 2007, he served as a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador.



Taoranting Park

By Shuai Li Peter, China

Taoranting Park is located in Beijing, the capital of China, and has a long history.

There are some very beautiful ancient buildings, but also many trees.

The vegetation everywhere creates a very pleasant scenery, especially in the summer to attract a lot of tourists to go here.

Located in the center of the city, this park has a beautiful view of the bustling city, but it's also a peaceful place in a noisy area.

I liked walking here very much, because I could escape the noise and I could think and rest.

This park is a very valuable and meaningful green space in Beijing, so the country continues to build and maintain this green space. I welcome friends to travel here.



FAVORITE BUSINESS

By Nguyen Thi Hoang Tho, Vietnam

My favorite business is Shopee.

It's a very famous business.

It's a smartphone app that is available in some countries (Taiwan, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippines, Singapore, and Malaysia).

Because it's an app, people can go shopping and choose anything they want at any time.

The prices for the items in Shopee are usually the same as in the store, but there are discounts from time to time.

I like Shopee because I feel it gives me a lot of experience to be creative.



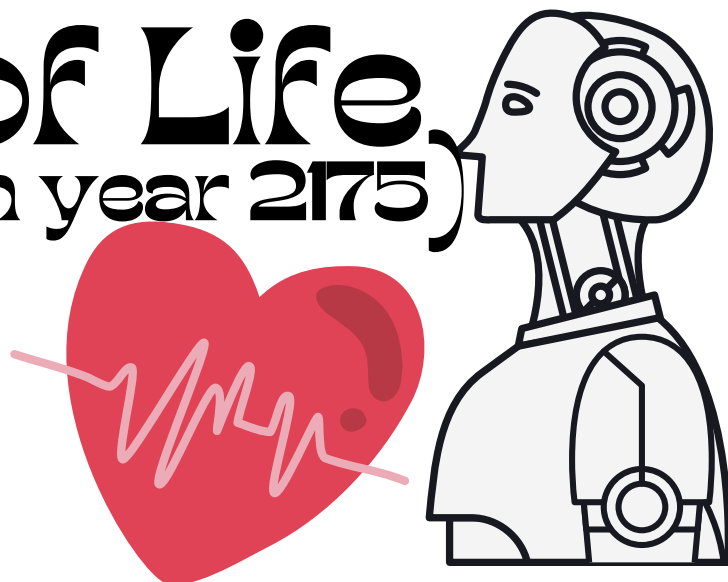
Portrait of Life (in year 2175)

By Raffly Arshan, Indonesia

Human life is dynamic. The dynamics of life change cover various aspects or dimensions from technology, science, social, politics, health and other fields. One of the things that happen in the world of science is that experts find new ways to extend a person's life. The proof is that many people live longer than previous generations. In 2175, many people still live up to 300-400 years and even become immortal. This reality is something that was unimaginable before, and now people recognize that longevity is part of the reality that can be experienced by anyone.

With an extremely long lifespan, I feel that life is something to be enjoyed. For me, there is nothing to blame for longevity. There is a high probability that the longer a person's life, the wiser he will be in dealing with various problems. But it is by no means an absolute truth to generalize to all people whose life span is long. There is still another possibility is that people who are old can also influence bad things to the younger generation.

Nowadays, the concept of marriage became more widespread. Marriage is no longer in the narrow sense, in the sense that only one man is married to one woman. The definition of marriage is broad; same sex marriage is allowed or another reality is the concept of polygamy, polyandry and the divorce rate is increasing. Marriage will no longer be bound by custom and religion. That is the consequence of faith that is not solid and that more and more people are becoming atheists.



Personally, I prefer not to marry. That choice is a form of my personal awareness. For me, life will be better when I manage myself without anyone else demanding and forcing me to do something.

There are several advantages to having a long-life span: First, being able to learn new sciences and knowledge. Second, the relationship is wider and can be known by many people, especially when someone becomes a writer, good speaker, knowledgeable person, etc. Third, you can work longer hours to earn money and support yourself or your family. However, there are also disadvantages that can be found, namely: First, population density. When many people live long it is likely to create an unproductive population. Second, economic burden of families caring for people with doubled lifespan. The presence of non-productive people in the family will increase the economic burden for the family concerned. Third, there is a possibility that people with longevity will be neglected by their families. Society is increasingly modern, the demands of life are increasing, and the consequence is that the consideration of profit and loss is always the main focus in life. Automatically, unproductive parents are not taken seriously.

A long-life span does not only have an advantage but also a disadvantage. The reality of human life is always divided into two aspects that cannot be avoided, namely positive and negative aspects. If people are fully aware, these two aspects always have value and meaning for everyone who experiences them. The best principle for dealing with the negative side is to be wise, so you won't easily give up and be stressed.



“Scientific research” is it the savior or the enemy of mankind?

By Baoli Wang, China

With the rapid development and breakthrough in the field of biotechnology, scientific achievements are both exciting and worrisome.

Modified experiment success on one hand, to those terminally ill, a rare genetic disease, and cancer patients has brought hope and light. That is to say, the medical profession latest scientific research results can be used to treat these patients through genetic modification.

With the right DNA to replace defective and dysfunctional gene to make human become smarter and live longer.

On the other hand, faced with the success of these scientific experiments, scientists cannot predict all the changes caused by gene mutation on human cells, how to judge the rationality of gene reprogramming, and what kind of future world the reprogrammed gene will enter, which is full of infinite possibilities.

And scientists' research into growing human cells in monkey embryos has raised ethical questions.

Are genetically engineered humans still humans?

What would the world look like if politicians used genetic modification to build a super-powered army?

If genetic modification is used commercially, it can be used to clone cattle and sheep for food consumption.

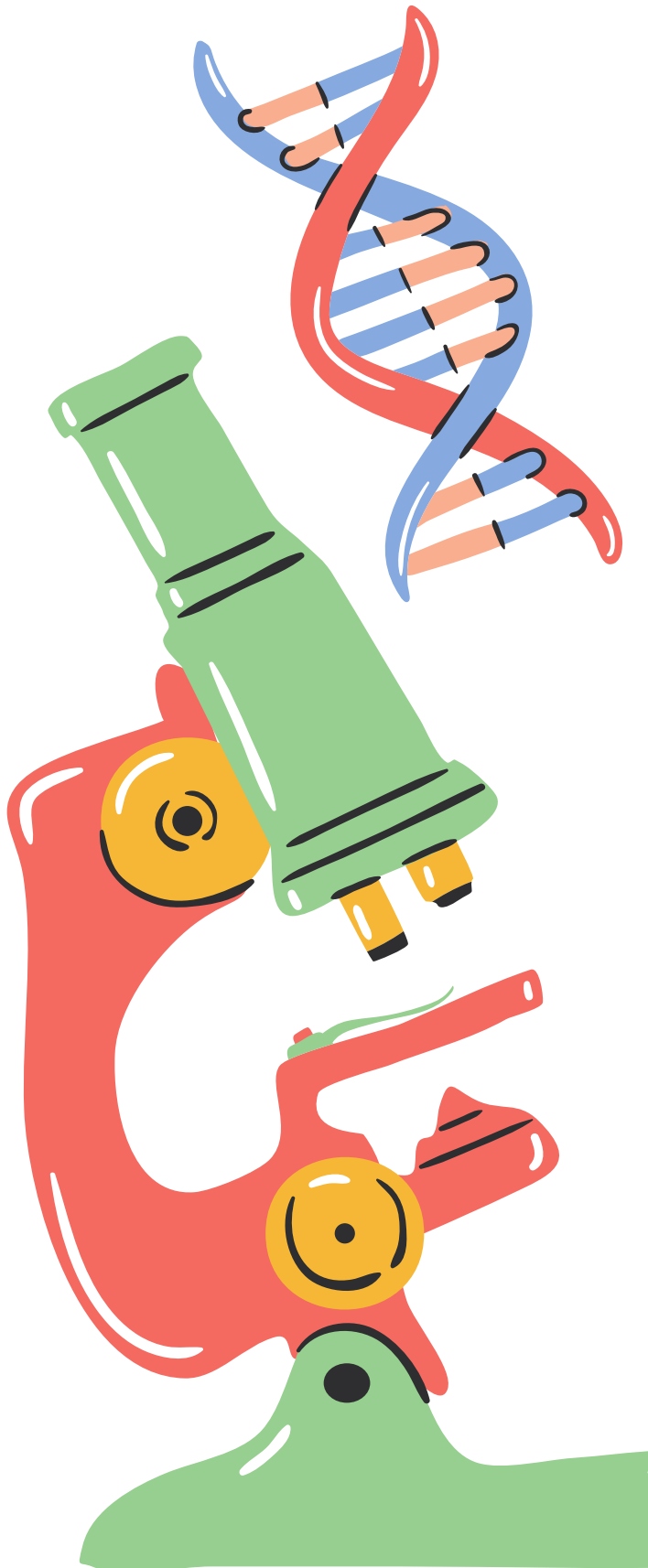
Some thought-provoking topics indirectly ask us through modern science fiction like movies, chips can be successfully implanted in the human body, human beings will become superpowers, disease and death will no longer haunt human beings.

Would you like to be partly human, partly machine?

What is the purpose of scientific research? Is it to help people live longer by getting rid of disease and death?

But who can give the assurance that these scientific achievements are not misused in other fields?

Does scientific research benefit mankind or put us at unpredictable risk?



Ocean Pollution

By Robertus Kim, South Korea

More than 70% of the earth is covered with water bodies that play an important role in our day-to-day life and form an indispensable part of our existence. Ocean pollution is caused by the introduction of toxic materials and harmful pollutant such as agricultural and industrial waste, chemicals, oil spills, and plastic litter into the ocean waters.

At this very moment, it is a serious problem in our society because of micro-plastic which is accumulated at the body of fish can cause health-related problems in the future. So, in this article, I'd like to introduce 4 possible solutions of solving the problems of ocean pollution in our time.

The first solution is the clean-up theory which was proposed in the past by many people. Boats and nets would be used to clean up the ocean. The area is as large as the size of Texas which would take many thousands of years and billions of dollars to clean it.

The second one is the prevention theory, which was created in 2013 by Slat who is a teenager from Netherland, that focused particularly in the region located between Hawaii and California known as the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. He proposed installing very long floating screen floating around to concentrate the plastic like an artificial coastline. However, it's still in the prototype stage and continual study is required to make it happen.



The third way is through scientific solution. In 2016, a Japanese scientist discovered a plastic-eating enzyme that can digest plastic. However, the breakdown process remains to be relatively slow, and now scientists have been working to speed it up: it needs more research to realize it.

The fourth way is the practical way in supporting legislation to curb plastic production and waste.

The most important matter is to change our individual behavior; however, such changes alone are insufficient to stop ocean pollution.

We also need legislation that reduce plastic production, improves waste management, and make plastic producers responsible for the waste they generate.

Despite many ways to support local, national, and international legislation to limit plastic production, it needs one's participation and attention to preserve our ocean, not to produce plastic waste.

In my opinion, we should ask ourselves how we can help solve ocean pollution, especially in terms of micro-plastic.

In this article, there are some scientific solutions like the second or third theories, even though some processes are required to study more about it.

In my point of view, these can be temporary solutions for now because it takes time to achieve it, and ocean pollution is already a serious problem in our society.

Furthermore, we can also find one's activities like clean-up theories, and it's related to our attitude on how to preserve our ocean.

However, we easily notice that our effort is insufficient to make it. Eventually, most important thing is to participate in supporting legislation to curb plastic production and waste.

If we failed to regulate plastic production and waste, there would be more plastic product which end up and contaminate our ocean.

So, we should pay more attention to ocean pollution, and it's time to start our activities by regulating plastic production, and disposal. Ocean pollution starts and ends with you!

MANDATORY VOLUNTEERING: A BAD IDEA

By Hary Tambunan, SCJ, Indonesia

“Mandatory”, this word doesn’t make sense to us when it comes to mandatory volunteering idea, because it is contrary to what some people think about the stereotype concept of volunteerism.

How could it be a volunteering activity, if it is mandatory and they do this as a burden in their life?

The idea of mandatory volunteerism for students has gained attraction in several countries as a way to teach students the value of philanthropy, civic engagement, and work experience.

However, some critics have argued that such requirements can have negative consequences on teens, such as poor performance and even burnout among students.

First of all, forcing a high school student or a college student to participate in volunteerism may result in poor morale.

This will lead to lower productivity than if they were doing these things in their own accord. Also, it won’t make your institution look good especially if the news reports about low morale in your education system.

Secondly, when someone is forced to do something, his mind automatically shuts down so it can’t absorb anything new.

Effective training isn’t possible if the school tries to force it on students, because their minds can only learn something if it’s interesting or they are passionate about it.



That’s why a high school or college student forced to do mandatory volunteering usually ends up ineffective and stressed which can lead to many problems such as anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, etc.

Then, mandatory volunteering, or rather the pressure of having to do “good deeds” not only has a negative impact on students but also on the efficiency of their graduation. When teenagers are forced to do something not their cup of tea, they’re likely to experience stress and burnout.

When that happens, it can make it even harder for them to focus on their graduation requirements. If the school makes volunteering mandatory and the students go against it, the school may also lose its credibility in terms of effectivity.

Finally, based on these facts, we, especially the school should think more about mandatory volunteering. Is it still a good idea or a bad idea?

We agree that this activity has good values or aims to achieve, but should this activity be done in term of “mandatory”?

As for me, I think it shouldn’t be like that! Participating in a community service project such as volunteering activity shouldn’t be a burden to anyone.



What I learned from my teachers (aside from English)

By Dau Thi Kim Thoa, Vietnam

The teachers are the people who directly care for their students. So, they have the ability to influence students and use that to teach them.

Their lessons can have a lasting impact on students. Their students can be more confident and open-minded in many ways. With me, I learned a lot from my teachers.

My teachers taught me how to live responsibly through my actions. Live in accordance with school rules. Respect myself and others, teamwork, care about friends, and courtesy to adults. I also learned that mistakes bring valuable life lessons. So working hard will pay off.

Most importantly, learning goes hand in hand with practice. I'm learning how to practice and to experience a new environment.

I'm lucky to be here, I met dedicated and kind teachers. I learned a lot of new and interesting things from them. They taught me lots of English knowledge that I hadn't experienced before.



Our Experience So Far

By Bualae Hadsavhang, Khammasone Chansouk, and Marvilay Somsanouk, Laos

Hello! We are Aouk, Tick and Bua. We are from Laos. We live in the Philippines and we stay in Radio Veritas Asia, Quezon City. We study in ALC. We have been in the Philippines for 2 months.

We are from different places in Laos: Aouk is from the north, Tick is from the middle, and Bua is from the south.

The Philippines is a small country with a large population more than 100 million. It has the 8th largest population in Asia and 12th in the World.

They have a lot of transportation like taxis, buses, trains, "FX", tricycles, jeepneys, etc. People here are kind and most of them can speak English.

The weather is very hot and sometimes it rains. We like the food here, their food is delicious and is eaten together with rice. They have a lot of attractions and museums, I love it.

We're grateful and thankful for ALC and all the teachers because they work hard for the students and always help us improve our English a lot, such as our speaking, listening, conversations, verbs, and grammar. and teach us to not be afraid to make mistakes when we're speaking English.

But one thing that we want to suggest is that our class room is quite small and isn't comfortable when we are have some activities about our lesson.

My ALC Experience

By Paul Ji-Ming Li, China

I have studied in ALC for about four months. During the four months, my growth has been closely connected to ALC teachers and classmates. I also have many pleasant and unforgettable experiences in ALC.

How time flies! My English level has improved a lot compared with that of me four months ago.

I've had a very profound experience in learning. In the first three months of my English class, I couldn't do without my mobile phone translation software. Even the teachers often reminded us not to rely on and use mobile translation too much, so our brains would not form a lazy habit.

There would also be a false impression that I learned many words, but only recorded them on my mobile phone, not in my mind.

After the seriousness of this problem of my consciousness, I decided to listen to the teacher and not rely on mobile phones, but to think with my mind and heart, to feel that these knowledge and skills would really belong to me.

I am grateful to my English teachers, classmates, and friends I met in ALC, especially to my English teacher Mitzie, who is very serious, rigorous and plans well in teaching.

From my Teacher Mitzie, I not only learned some English skills, but also learned the attitude towards life and learning, which has a great impact on me.

I enjoy my English class and the experience of getting along with people in ALC. I find that God's grace is here. I thank God for giving me the opportunity to study in ALC, so that I can become a better person and serve others and our church better.

Thank you!



Our Stories

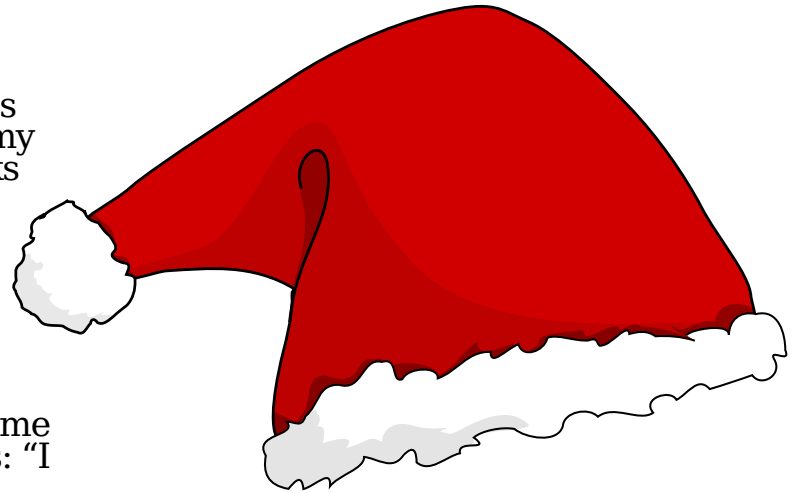
“I’m not good.”

By Peter Li, China

When I was young, I liked Christmas so much. I liked going to church with my friends, and we prepared for two weeks for Christmas.

We practiced singing songs and dancing. We wrapped gifts. We decorated the Christmas tree. We decorated the church. We prepared a show. We prepared food.

Then, I told my teachers I would be absent. I knew my teachers didn't like me going to church. So, I told my teachers: “I am sick.”



This is a Happy Memory

By Lucy, China

When I was young, I celebrated Christmas Eve. At 8:00 P.M., it was Christmas mass with my family. In the mass, fathers held baby Jesus on the street parade.

There was a choir and a band. I and many children held candles. After mass at about 10:00 P.M., the church started to celebrate. There were people singing a song, dancing, playing games, and reading a story.

Finally, Father gave us presents. Then, I went back home. In the living room under the Christmas tree, there were many gifts with our name on the gifts' boxes.

We were surprised. I took out the food I made. Our family shared feelings, experiences and food. We opened gifts and shared each other's joy. This is a happy memory.

Jesus Christ's Birthday

By Josephine, China

When I was young, I liked Christmas because my classmates and I went to church to celebrate mass. I was in the choir. When the mass ended, there were many people in the church to celebrate Jesus Christ's birthday. There were some Santa Clauses who gave cards and presents. Everyone had a good time. We were very happy.



My Faith is My Bread

By Apriana, Indonesia

My Christian belief is important in my life because it has been guiding me since my childhood.

Faith cannot be described but can only be experienced.

I believe that God, who created everything, exists so I can live. My faith is anchored to how Jesus lifted the bread, blessed it, gave thanks, and then distributed it to others.

I grow my faith by establishing a good relationship with God, others, nature, and myself.

I pray, give thanks, work, and study.

I do good to everyone; wherever I am.

Faith is good behavior or good work.

Faith must be realistic and alive. A believer is a person who brings life not death; likewise to my faith.

I want to give my life to others so they may live in abundance.



God's Word



By Romana, Myanmar

I strengthen my faith by reading and listening to the word of God every day and, most important, by practicing to be like him.

As God loves the poor, the voiceless, and the children, I am living my life trying to be able to love all people equally according to the Bible.

I always reflect on myself to balance my prayers and actions. I like solitude so I can reflect. By living in silence and solitude, I can connect with God and find peace.

IMPORTANCE OF MEDITATION

By Steven Leichao Zhang, China

Listening and meditating on the word of God is very important to me because I live in a noisy society.

A noisy society can easily make me lose myself that sometimes leads to insomnia, anxiety, and depression, which are popular nowadays.

Therefore, I need the word of God for it serves as the light before my steps. The word of God always reminds me of my identity and mission.

Moreover, through practicing meditation, I can guide others who are in need of God's help by meditating on the Lord's words.

The Life of the Filipino Coconut Farmers

By Sr. Angiena Pomoy, the Philippines

Survival in the Philippines is difficult because of the existing gap between the rich and the poor. There are people who have money, and people who do not. The rich people enjoy seeing trees, farms, mountains, and ornamental plants for their relaxation. But for the poor people, when they see nature it means life. Their income depends on the gift of the nature. They exert effort to work in the farm to provide the basic needs of their family. We are lucky enough that we can eat at least three times a day. Up to this day, the number of the poor is gradually increasing, and it is alarming.

Many of the impoverished in several regions of our nation are battling to survive after the typhoon devastated their crops, which were their only source of income, and were also taken advantage of by the agricultural industry. May it be natural or man-made disasters, it affects a lot of poor individuals every year. As a result, the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

According to a study by Oxfam International and Development Finance News, the Philippines continues to lag behind other countries in the world in terms of narrowing the gap between the rich and poor because of inadequate funding for social services, poor tax collection rates, and lack of enforcement of labor laws during the pandemic (DFN).



The Philippines placed 102nd out of 161 nations in the Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index (2022) for its efforts to decrease inequality during the first two years of the COVID-19 crisis. It ranks 19th out of 25 countries in East Asia and the Pacific, a region where the number of people living in poverty has increased to 1.4 billion as a result of COVID-19, and where inequality has increased by 8%.

I'm speaking on behalf of the coconut farmers, we want you to understand their hardships, setbacks, and grievances about their current farming circumstances by seeing through their own lens. They are the nation's most defenseless people. They should be the top priorities of farm landowners because they work in the farms.

Let's not forget that the farm cannot function without the laborers. It should not be practiced to underprice farm product customers for export then overprice their goods on the market. Since they are the ones who cultivate and harvest the crops, the farm's products ought to be more expensive. Narrow the gap between the rich and the poor may be impossible for now. But we start by acknowledging the fact that our farmers are the backbone of the society and they deserve more.



Obesity in the Vietnamese Society



By Vo Dinh Nhat, Vietnam

Over the last five years, Vietnamese society has seen close to a 40% rise in the number of children who are obese. This essay will argue some reasons why this has happened and examine the results of this problem.

The main cause of this issue is street food. Over the last decade, there has been a rapid increase in the number of street foods. For example, on nearly every high street there is a fat food, instant food and some kinds of frying food. The food in these places has been proven to be very unhealthy, and much of instant food is targeted at children, thus ensuring that they constitute the bulk of the consumers of these stores.

However, it is not only relative to eating out, but also the type of diet many children have at home. Abundant food consumed is processed food, specifically with regards to ordered foods which are a quick and easy option for parents who wants to save time.

The effects of this have been and will continue to be very serious. First of all, there has been a large increase in health related diseases amongst children, especially Cholesterol. This Cholesterol illness means a child has to be injected with insulin for the rest of their lives.

To conclude, it is evident that there are several cause of obesity amongst children, and a large number of negative effects. Vietnamese society must ensure steps are taken to decrease this problem from deteriorating further.

1ST CYCLE 2023
4 JANUARY - 24 MARCH
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