

# SOLT *Sisters'* SPOTLIGHT



## *Dear Friends,*



Some years ago I was driving from our parish in Mora, New Mexico to the convent in Holman a couple of days before Christmas. It was a beautifully clear night and the sky was full of stars. I was thinking of all the things that needed to be done and how unprepared I was for Christmas. At the same moment, I saw a shooting star streak across the sky that seemed to land on the roof of the convent. As I watched this marvel, a thought shot through my mind that seemed to be Jesus saying, "ready or not, here I come." May this Advent and Christmas season be filled with grace and peace and may we all be ready to encounter Christ when He comes.

*Sister Megan Mary, SOLT*



## PHILIPPINES

- NUEVA CACERES\*\*
- LEGAZPI\*
- SORSOGON\*
- NOVALICHES\*

## PAPUA, NEW GUINEA

- MT. HAGEN\*\*

## THAILAND

- RATCHABURI\*
- CHANTABURI\*

- \*DIOCESE
- \*\*ARCHDIOCESE

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## MISSA DE GALLO



For the nine days before Christmas, all throughout the Philippines, people are waking at early hours to be present for Mass at 4 am. The Churches are packed and children are in costume, praying and singing. On the islands where SOLT serves, many people walk overnight and sleep in the Church in order to be ready for Missa de Gallo (the rooster’s Mass). The island becomes so alive, just like heaven coming down to earth! Each barrio is assigned a day to

prepare breakfast after the Mass. As a child, I always looked forward to the hot chocolate, ginger tea and bibingka (sweet rice wrapped in banana leaves) after the Mass because it would be so cold outside!

*Sr. Maria Teresita Coloma, SOLT professed her first vows in 1983, has served at SOLT missions around the world and currently resides in Violet, Texas.*

## ST. ANDREW NOVENA

The Advent candles were lit as we sat quietly near the lights of the Christmas tree. Grandma Lucy had just passed away, and I was home to be with my family. Mom, Dad and I were drawing warmth from the wood stove and I decided to share one of my favorite devotions: the St. Andrew Christmas Novena. I shared the words, “Hail and blessed be the hour and the moment in which the Son of God was born of the most pure Virgin Mary at midnight, in Bethlehem, in piercing cold. In that hour vouchsafe oh my God to hear my prayer and answer my petition.”

I had been introduced to the novena over 20 years ago while serving in North Dakota. The St. Andrew Novena’ begins November 30th, the Feast of St. Andrew and is to be prayed 15 times a day until Christmas. I have found peace reflecting on the moment of Christ’s birth, the poverty he chose and the tender Mother that embraced Him on that holy night.

*Sr. Mary Emmanuel Schmidt, SOLT professed her first vows in 2001, serves as the American Regional Sister Servant and resides in Corpus Christi, Texas.*

## TO SEE GOD FACE TO FACE

CS Lewis' last novel: "Till We Have Faces" is a modern retelling of a classic Greek myth. Lewis had been fascinated by the story of Cupid and Psyche for many years. Cupid is a god who falls in love with Psyche, a mere mortal. He takes her as his bride and places her in a palace full of wealth and treasure but only comes to her at night, warning her she must not look at him.

One night her curiosity gets the best of her, and she peeks at him while he is sleeping. He is so stunningly beautiful that she accidentally lets a drop of hot oil from her lamp fall on his arm. He awakens and flees in anger. What follows is an intense and complicated drama which ultimately ends with Cupid bringing Psyche to Olympus and making her immortal so they can live together happily ever after.

Whether you are a believer or an unbeliever, a saint approaching the heights of holiness, or a sinner struggling to crawl out of a pit, the desire to see God is a primordial one. It is found in everyone, even the skeptical and the young.

During Advent, we cry with the prophet Isaiah... "Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down," and, we might add, "so we can see you!" Christmas is the answer to our desire to "see" God in time.

Before the Christmas mystery, we whisper, with Lewis: "I know now, Lord, why you utter no answer. You are yourself the answer. Before your face questions die away. What other answer would suffice?"

May this Christmas find us enraptured by the light radiating from the face of the tiny Babe, whose breathless beauty and infinite love transforms us and makes us His own.



*Sr. Anne Marie Walsh, SOLT professed her first vows in 1988, is the author of *Gathering the Light* and resides in Willey, Iowa.*



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EL PETEN, GUATEMALA

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# Advent Hymn

## Rorate Caeli

Drop down ye heavens from above, and let the clouds pour down the Just, let the earth be opened and bring forth the Savior.

The heavens declare the Glory of God:

And the firmament His handiwork.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

## On the cover

Sr. Christine Marie delights in the Advent wreath with little ones from St. Anthony's school in Robstown, TX.



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of the Most Holy Trinity

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*Sr. Maria Clara prepares special decorations for the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception in Benque Viejo, Belize*



*Sr. Teresita, left, her cousin, and Sr. Agnes make a pilgrimage to a Shrine honoring Padre Pio in the Philippines*

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