

Behold I make all things new



Message of Judge Benjamin D. Turgano,
University President
at the Concluding Session of the 2nd Mt. Horeb Prayer Season
May 7, 2021



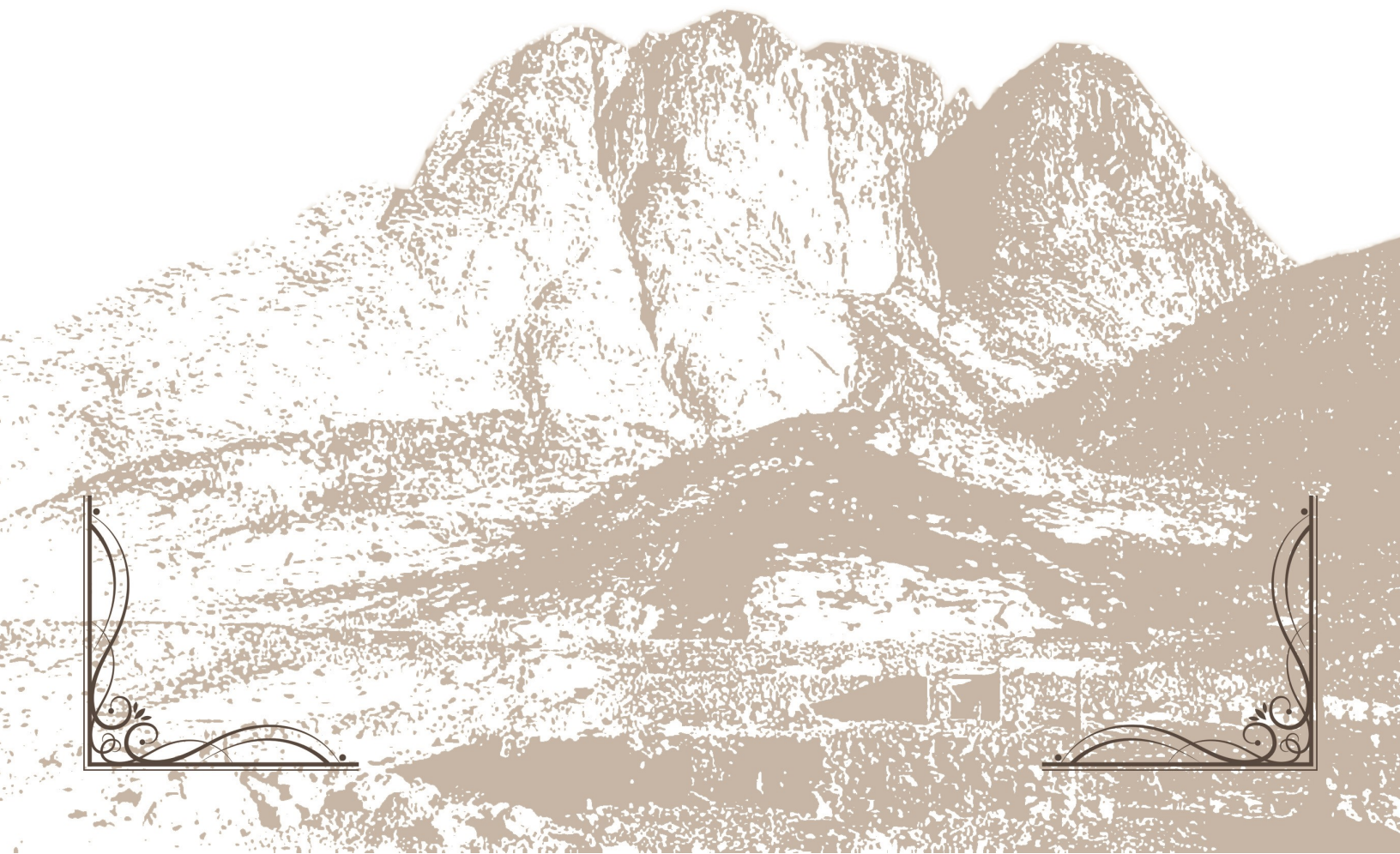
First Mt. Horeb

May I just say - briefly - that in March last year - shortly after we concluded our month-long foundation activities and prior to the nationwide lockdown, we were then alarmed to know that the deadly Corona virus has reached our shores.

Fear of the unknown and anxiety on what can happen - engulfed us and we asked - where else can we go, or who else can we turn to - but - God.

And so on bended knees - as a university community - we turned to God, and continuously for forty (40) days we gathered every morning at the open corridor of the administration building to conduct a prayer gathering where everyone - regardless of creed and faith affiliation - can join and attend.

And all of us who attended and were part of the 1st Mount Horeb Prayer Season can attest to the truth that it was a meaningful and spiritually rewarding activity - as everyone experienced - the comforting balm of peace and assurance - that only prayer can bring to anyone's heart.





Second Mt. Horeb

And so this year – and at about the same time - we reconvened for the 2nd Mt. Horeb Prayer Season – but this time it is virtual – and one of the blessings of a virtual activity is that – we can reach out to more participants.

The Angelus


This year we moved the time for the prayer session from morning to 6:00 o'clock early evening. We also adopted “Angelus” as the theme which reminds us of the need to interrupt our daily routines, turn our thoughts to God and responded to the call for us to pray unceasingly.

However, this year we invited lay people who come from the different sectors and units of the university – to complement the clergy - as our meditations speakers - and the results were encouraging – indeed, everyone has a story to tell, or a faith journey to share. Before we know it – the prayer gathering has evolved into a venue for sharing and affirmations. As we listened to the sharing – we realize that they are giving their own story – their life testimony - their own faith journey – which, on the whole, affirm the faithfulness of God in their lives.

Why Mt. Horeb?

Why did we name this forty (40) day prayer gathering as - Mt. Horeb Prayer Season?

Mt Horeb is described in the Bible as the “Mountain of God.” Most scholars claim that Mt. Horeb and Mt. Sinai are one and the same – the western side is Mt. Horeb and the eastern side is Mt. Sinai; and therefore, it is in this same mountain where God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses.





There are other stories that are associated with Mt. Horeb -

The story of Moses and the [Burning Bush](#) - it was in Mt Horeb- when the angel of the Lord appeared in a flame amidst a bush that was not consumed, Moses was commanded by God to remove his sandals because he was standing on a holy ground;

When the Israelites were in the wilderness without water, Moses struck "upon the rock at Horeb", and drinking water flowed from the rock;



And [Exodus 33:1-6](#), suggests that Mt. Horeb was the location - the jump off point - from which the Israelites set off towards the promised land.

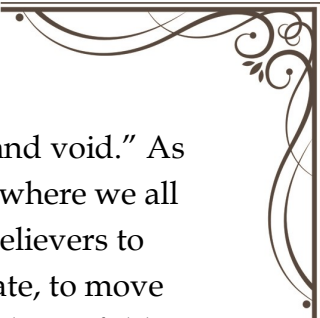
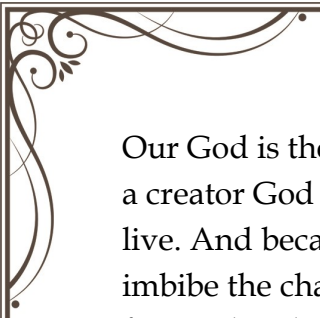
These biblical events on Mt. Horeb - tells us that God is with us - a constant companion in our earthly journey - an ever present help in whatever circumstances we find ourselves enmeshed. Whether in adversity or prosperity - God is with us and he is in control - and that he continues to be interested with us - our welfare and future. This is the paramount thought and motivation in this prayer gathering.

I wish to anchor our meditation this evening on Revelation 21:5 BEHOLD - I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW.

One of the foundational core values in my faith journey is Hope. Hope that whatever difficulties and limitations that we face as a University - these are merely ephemeral, and that in time, and by God's grace - we shall be able to overcome them.

But the hope that I cherish in my heart is grounded on the conviction that the God whom we believe and adore, and in whom we have our being - is a God - who is a creator God. His character is to create - one who does not stop making things new.





Our God is the God who created this earth which “was without form and void.” As a creator God – he creates newness in the life of man and in the world where we all live. And because God is a creator God we know that it is our role as believers to imbibe the character of our God – and that is – to be creative, to innovate, to move forward and to turn our gaze to view new and wider horizons that God is unfolding to us to consider and pursue.

The year that was - has crippled us in many ways, but in what many perceive as a dark time, we saw light through other institutions, individuals, and organizations who we regard as God-sent to Wesleyan University Philippines.

By God’s grace, we were able to move forward - and in this journey we are not alone, because we have the support and partnership of the following alliances:

1. Silliman University - Dr. Betty Cernol-McCann;
 2. Northern Christian College - Dr. Lucris Carina A. Paraan
 3. Miriam College - Ambassador Laura Quiambao-Del Rosario (thru Dr. Trixie Marie J. Sison)
 4. John Wesley College - Rev. Rodel Acdal > will attend
 5. Association of Christian Schools, Colleges and Universities - Dr. Pio Baconga
 6. Association of Colleges and Universities in Asia - c/o Dr. Wilma Tejero
 7. Litan Academy - c/o Ms. Sam Medina > will attend
 8. Shenzhen Dudley Cultural Development Ltd. > Angela Wen will attend
 9. Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities
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10. CHEDRO III - Dr. Semana

11. European Delegation to the Philippines - c/o Ms. Thelma Gecolea
> will attend

12. Association of Universities in Asia Pacific - Ms. Chuanghid

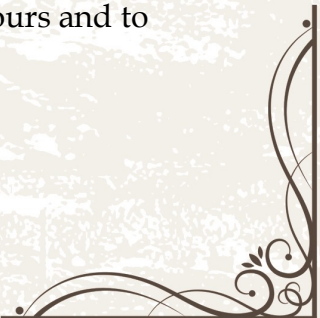
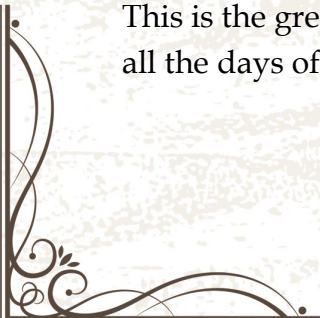
Friends – let me say that it is not for a Christian or a Christian institution to stagnate, to be complacent, or not to go forward - as if it is not for us to go further than a few meters than where we started; as or if there is no destination in our journey, and we were condemned to an eternal wandering, like a rudderless boat merely meandering with the ebb and flow of the ocean.

I believe that is not the DNA of a Christian.

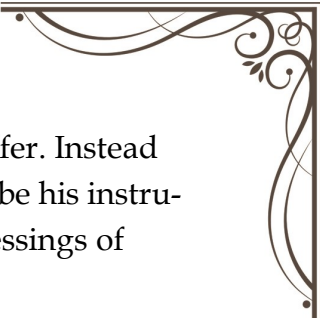
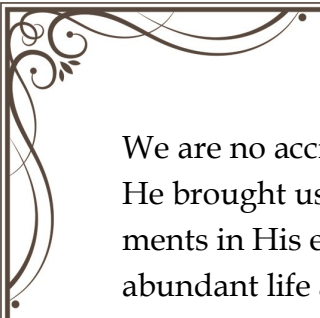
The Book of Revelation tells us that the final horizon in the path of the believer is the new and everlasting Jerusalem: “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. ... He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. ... Behold, I am making all things new” .

We are not unaware there will always be those who stand on the way to new development, ideas, models, strategies and to oppose change in general. This is not to mention the daunting conditions beyond our control such as the pandemic that we now face, and its devastating effect on the economy, and on the health and livelihood of our people.

And yet we believe that over and beyond the difficulties that we now face, we have a God who feel for us, a Father who know our pains and sufferings and who wills for us a different and a better future.



This is the great vision of Christian hope, which extends to all endeavours and to all the days of our earthly journey.



We are no accidents in this world. And God did not mean for us to suffer. Instead He brought us to this world for a good purpose, to join with him, and be his instruments in His effort to make this world better place and to enjoy the blessings of abundant life as promised by Christ.

We are reminded by Jeremiah 29:11 ¹For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

We believe and we know that death, disease, pandemic, hatred, bitterness and indifference are not the last words for a Christian believer. Instead, being a Christian implies a new perspective: an outlook full of hope. As Pope Francis said:

“We believe, instead, that on the horizon of man there is a sun that always illuminates. We believe that our most beautiful days are yet to come. Xxxx We are people of the springtime rather than autumn. We see the shoots of a new world rather than the yellowed leaves on the branch. Let us not cling to nostalgia, regrets and lamentations; we know that God wants us to be the heirs to a promise and tireless cultivators of dreams.”

We, at Wesleyan University Philippines, know that building the Kingdom of God is like growing any crop - even if there is a darnel in its midst, the crop shall grow. In life, there will always be problems, wars, and diseases but the crop grows, and in the end the good shall conquer evil will. In the same vein, we know that creation did not stop on the seventh day of Genesis - indeed - God continue to create newness in us, in our lives, in our university - even in our perspectives - because God is always abiding in love, and he is also concerned for us and about us.

May I therefore invite everyone as we conclude the 2nd Mount Horeb Prayer Season to dedicate ourselves anew and offer ourselves to be the “hands” and “feet”, the helpers of God as he continues to create new things in our midst even as we continue to do our mission as a Christian Higher Education Institution.

