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Christmas Message 2021

A couple of years ago when international travels were free without restrictions, I was in the Philippines for a retreat. It was September, guess what I heard and saw in the shopping mall? Christmas carols and decorations! I remember asking was it not too early for that? “Of course not” was the response. Any chance to hype consumers’ shopping psyche would be good for the economy.

Am I hyped for Christmas? Are you? If Christmas were to be celebrated like a secular festival in the holiday season, it is not easy to get hyped up in a world still very much living under the clout of COVID-19 pandemic.

However, Christmas for us Christians is the celebration of Immanuel “God-with-Us” (Mt. 1:23), God intervening directly with the Son of God coming into our human history walking with us.

God decides to send us His Son to tell humanity how close He is to us and how much He loves us. Closeness and love cannot be substituted by material gifts. The better way is to be willing to ‘waste’ time being with our loved ones without concerning the outcomes. Spending time to “be with” them, listening to them emphatically, feeling for them, celebrating their achievements and failures, standing by them, looking ahead with them, and pointing to them the Hope and Love that are of God.

We are invited to be God’s messengers through our companionship with those who are in need of that. These can be our loved ones, especially our young people, those who are feeling helpless, lonely, and frustrated, those who are struggling with mood disorders, those who are waiting to be pardoned and reconciled, and the list can go on.

My friends, we can be certain that we have much to give on our Lord’s behalf during this Christmas Season and into the New Year. May the blessings of Immanuel be with you and your loved ones throughout this Christmas Season and 2022!