

Jet News vol.3

Dear all, since February was a short and unusually calm month, this Jet News will also be unusually short. Since last time I talked about the general weekly plan both for us and for the children, this time I will focus on some of its parts—especially activities for our kids from the social mission and my adjustment to life in the house (after all, I've been here for two months now, so it's time to adapt).

Since I've already started talking about adapting, after two months the initially "chaotic" (or rather variable) schedule of meals, mandatory and optional activities, bigger and smaller services, prayer, etc., has become quite natural.

Focusing for a moment on prayer, I have to tell you that although waking up for morning prayer will probably always be a challenge for me (alarm at 6:50, prayer at 7:00), fortunately other missionaries (there are four of us now) have the same problem. So I'm no longer the only one running into the chapel exactly at 7:00 or 7:01.

A special morning prayer takes place every Monday at 8:00—it's a prayer for the beginning of the week, attended by everyone who forms SanLo (staff, social mission, PIC, community, missionaries, LLN). Together with Jack and Shareen, we are responsible for the musical side of this. In short, we start the week with brief worship, then someone reads the Gospel of the day and a reflection (each time a different team), followed by a short prayer and announcements for the upcoming week. I think it's truly beautiful to start the week together with prayer and the Gospel that leads the whole "village" for the coming days, instead of just announcements. This way we pray together but also share our plans, problems, and news.

Besides that, just like in Zaragoza, every Tuesday after desert time and personal prayer (or rest, if you prefer), we have an evening of worship. Weekly worship is really something I will miss and truly appreciate—not only because I like this form of prayer, but also because it's a "mandatory point," meaning that at least once a week I have to stop and spend an hour praising God. A very nice obligation

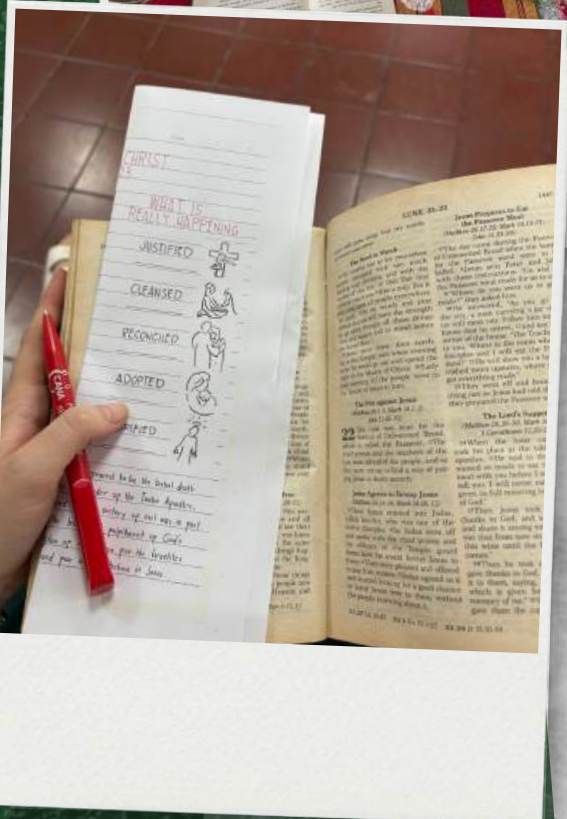
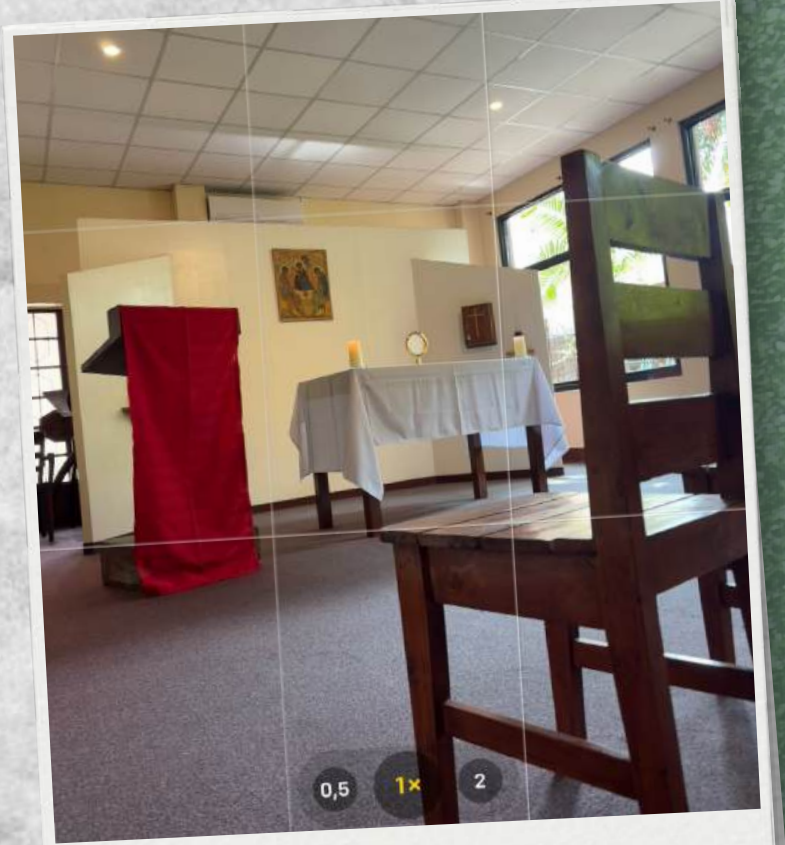
Thanks to our mini retreat in January, I also have a group of students with whom I sometimes talk, eat lunch, or participate in worship. Although for students it's not mandatory, it's really nice to meet them and spend time praying together. Usually, we also talk about what happened during our week. I'm very grateful for the CPA group—when I meet with them every Tuesday, I feel that even though we don't cross paths daily, we still live in the same house.

Putting together a few other points: as I mentioned, I'm not the only missionary—there are four of us: me, Bere, Ray, and JC. (We also started our, for now, monthly gym adventure—we'll see how it goes; at the moment what motivates us is the membership we bought.)

Bere is a coach in PIC, Ray and I mainly work with the children, and JC is involved in the developing Health Center, as he is a dentist.

Because of this, our Monday and Thursday lunches among missionaries have become much more interesting, and our fraternity has fully started. It's really nice to have time to share what we live, why we decided to come and give our time in SanLo, and to develop all topics related to spirituality.

We also had the chance one evening, during a board game night with the Sterin family, to eat the worst pizza in all of Manila. Although pizza in the Philippines doesn't set a very high standard, when you feel like the cheese is plastic and the salami resembles the entire periodic table, you start wondering whether rice wouldn't have been a better choice.



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Returning more to the social mission and our children—being a scout instructor (ZHP) was not in vain. I created a SWOT analysis of our mission, goals, and an annual plan. From now on, each month has a main theme, and each week all activities are aligned with a weekly theme. Four or five weekly themes together form the monthly theme, which is a broader topic.

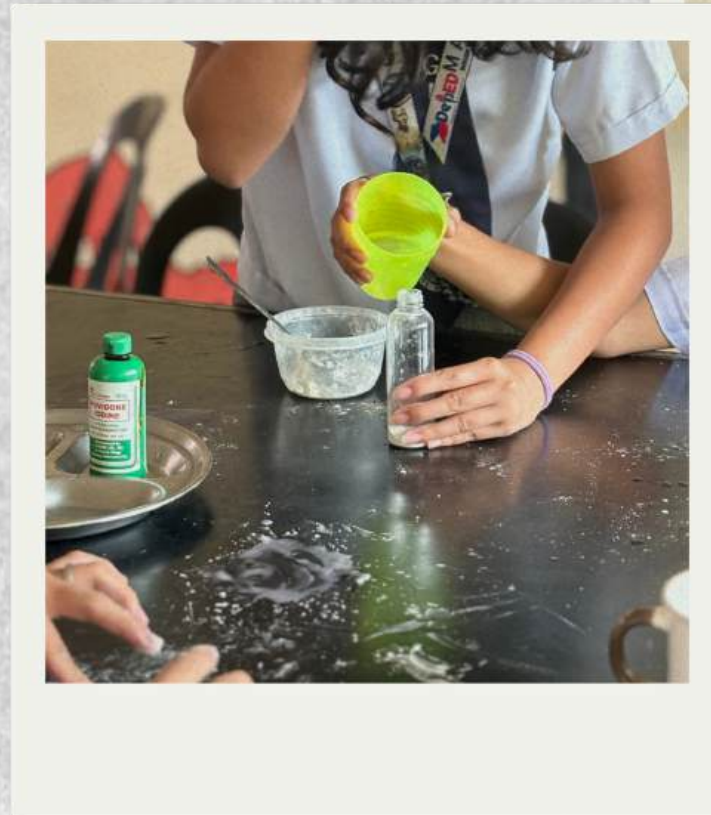
Since we introduced this in mid-February, for the first two weeks we talked about hygiene and good manners, which was combined with a meeting with dentists. It was a great opportunity to address prevention topics with all our children.

Our theme for February and March was geography, so the next two weeks were devoted to seas and oceans, environmental protection of marine ecosystems, and we started with the continent we are on—Asia.

The activity classroom after renovation is starting to look better and better. We've already moved most materials there, and I managed to organize it to divide the space into workshops, play areas, and give children access to games and some art materials during their free time.

During art classes in Asian Week, we made origami (which required a lot of effort from me because I had never mastered it). Whales, elephants, and dinosaurs we created now decorate the classroom window.

I hope we'll manage to buy two large cork boards where I can display children's work and create something like a monthly-themed bulletin board so we can summarize what we've learned at the end.



What we do here seems obvious to us—topics like art, hygiene, general geography. Unfortunately, it's not like that here. Schools don't teach open-mindedness, and for our children sometimes their whole world is just the two streets where they live and play (they don't know, don't need to know, and don't have the opportunity to know even their own city).

That's why activities that are obvious for children in Europe give our children in SanLo the chance to learn open thinking, and we believe that thanks to this we can give them the opportunity and desire to change their lives.

We also went with Bere to Mass in Quiapo (the church with the Black Nazarene statue I mentioned before). Sunday is one of the worst days to go there (besides Friday). The devotion among Filipinos is truly extraordinary. The church is full all day long, even though Mass is held every hour. That's how we experienced real Filipino crowds, a constantly packed city, and heat. After Mass, we concluded that once was enough for our entire stay.



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The last important part of this month is many small (and larger) events.

On February 14th, we organized a Valentine's dinner for married couples. It was an opportunity for an event that might become the beginning of the Cana mission in the Philippines, but also a time to welcome those who work in SanLo in a different way. Fourteen couples participated, most of them staff members. It was very touching to see them with their spouses, dressed elegantly. It was also very meaningful for us missionaries and the community to feel that we could serve and take care of those who take care of SanLo daily.

Thanks to attention to detail and everyone's involvement, we had a truly beautiful evening with great food, workshops, time dedicated to one another, live music, and "professional waiters" played by missionaries.

I also had my Valentine—Zeze (age 5) asked me to be his. That day he was dressed as a knight. The only downside was that we speak different languages—and that he thought I was 36 years old.

As part of inculturation, on Fat Thursday I bought donuts for everyone (unfortunately not as good as in Poland—local patriotism is strong). Thanks to the richness of cultures living in one house, less than a week later we also celebrated Fat Tuesday (French tradition) and ate pancakes.

Fully aware of my delay (since everyone reading this is already past Easter), I'll briefly mention our community day before Lent, Ash Wednesday, and the general house meeting (monthly meeting of all students), this time focused on entering Lent.

Starting from Tuesday, it was a slightly different "desert" day. After morning prayer, we had a short teaching introducing Lent and practiced liturgical singing for the next 40 days. A different opening of prayer (Lenten, without Alleluia) seems easy until you realize that at 7 a.m. you sing automatically and Alleluia is ingrained in your head.

Then we followed the usual desert rhythm with time for prayer, and after lunch we shared our expectations for this time and decided together on our sacrifices (no phones at the table, one night of shared adoration, extra compline on Monday, fasting on Friday—everything except night adoration had my full support).

In the evening, we spent time together with Marioro and Arthur's children in the park with games and a picnic. We wanted to enter this time—which can feel lonely—as a community, to experience not only the joy of resurrection but also the preparation together.

One thought I carried into Lent: it's a time to make space—for God and for people in your life. I believe it will be a time to remove what is unnecessary and make room for what truly matters.

The first general student meeting I attended took place on the roof of PIC. We had dinner in a beautiful setting with lights, played integration games about shared SanLo experiences (like secretly feeding cats), learned each other's names, and listened to a conference about Lent given by a guest priest working with indigenous mountain communities.

We also officially announced the first "Welcome to Paradise" in the Philippines (June—save the date).

That's all for now.

Thank you for supporting me and this mission. I pray for you.

Bless, Klara

