



anawim HERALD

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2021

Lola Belen: Her War and Battles

PEACE and quiet, palm trees, and open air.

Those don't seem to connote war. But Avelina Galvez, Lola Belen to us, has a lot to tell about battles in her life.

If you were born in the 1930s, what you well know about war is World War II which happened in 1939-1945. World War II is said to be the deadliest conflict in human history, involving 30 countries, killing 70 to 85 million, majority civilians.

Japan, said to be wanting to gain power in Southeast Asia, brought World War II to the Philippines in a surprise attack.

And changed Belen's life.



Please turn to page 15



We Shall Overcome!

WE started preparing this October-December 2021 issue right after the end of the quarter—in the first week of January 2022.

So, our major *Celebrations* story is Anawim's Christmas!

Amid the Coronavirus Disease (COVID) onslaught, it might not be merry. But as always, the birthday season of our Lord Jesus is always the most wonderful time of the year, *page 2*.

Yes, COVID might have put on hold, if not totally cancelled, events and activities worldwide. But not Mercy. Read on, *page 6*.

And, of course, receiving more and more blessings as we continue to serve our lolos and lolas. Like the *Overflowing Stars* of Sis. Stella Apao, recently promoted as supervisor of Anawim's Admin-Human Resources section, *page 10*.

As we put this issue to bed, fears of a looming World War grip the world as Russia and Ukraine battle over territorial rights. Our Cover Girl, Lola Belen, remains unperturbed. Why? Because she knows war and battles and with Anawim, she has well survived! And by God's grace, we will too! We shall overcome!

May your dreams come true,


Bo Sanchez

Celebrations!

Anawim Christmas

DETECTED late 2019, the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) and its variants continued to wreak havoc worldwide in 2021. To curb the spread of the disease, not a few cancelled super-spreader events such as Christmas celebrations. But the COVID-19 continued since late 2020, Delta, the predominant variant that year, accounted for 99 percent of COVID-19 cases. Then, in November 2021, another variant, Omicron, dashed hopes for a merry Christmas in December. Grand celebrations may had been cancelled. But Christmas, the greatest of all events, can never be cancelled. For it is the day God became man for us not simply to be merry, but to have eternal joy in God's heavenly Kingdom.

In our own simple, humble way, we gathered together for the birthday of Jesus, our Messiah.

DECEMBER 1, 2022 THANKSGIVING

Anawim Christmas starts right on Day 1 of December 2021 with the celebration of the Holy Mass presided by Rev. Fr. Romeo G. Nimez, CICM. Bro. Bo Sanchez and his wife Sis. Marowe lead the attendees.



INSPIRATION

Bro. Bo inspires everyone with the key message of the season:
*“For unto us a child is born,
unto us a son is given: and the
government shall be upon his
shoulder: and his name shall be
called Wonderful, Counsellor,
The mighty God, The everlasting
Father, The Prince of Peace.”*
--Isaiah 9:6.





MEMORIES, MERRIMENT

Traditional Christmas songs bring poignant memories of Yuletide past with loved ones. Action dance by the lolas and another presentation by Anawim personnel wake up the merry feeling.



REMEMBRANCE

Of course, Anawim Christmas for Bro. Bo isn't complete without a *wefie* with his lolas on this most wonderful time of the year!



Gifts!

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

– John 3:16

ON the first Christmas morning, God gave us the greatest gift of all: His only begotten Son, born on a lowly manger in the little town of Bethlehem—thus fulfilling Scripture prophecies of the birth of Jesus Christ.

At right, via Zoom, Bro. Hermie Morelos, chairman of the Light of Jesus Feast Mercy Ministries, joins our Anawim Christmas with special guest, Rev. Fr. Romy Nimez, CICM, with lay ministers, here welcomed by Sis. Babes Zambrano, Anawim spiritual adviser.

Why do we give gifts?

Early on, God created Man and Woman intending that they would live forever with Him in Paradise, in the garden of Eden. God forbade them to eat the fruit of a tree in the garden. The Devil tempted them to eat the forbidden fruit for this would enable them to distinguish good from evil-- so they would be like God. Disobeying God, Eve ate the fruit, gave some to Adam. And thus blemished with sin, they could no longer be in that holy place of Paradise. So, they had to move east of Eden, said to be our Earth. Here, God would come down to become man to be mankind's Messiah, our Lord Jesus, to bring us back to Paradise.

Another tree—the Cross—would be set on Calvary where Jesus, the new Adam, would die to atone for the original sin of the first Man. With God's foreknowledge that she would consent to be the mother of Jesus, Mary was conceived without original sin, and thus became as the new Eve.

John 3:16 summarizes our faith that God gave us His Son as our gift of salvation. And so, on the birthday of Jesus, we also give gifts as a gesture of our gratitude for God's love.





Games!

Anawim Christmas means fun. And fun means games! Participants divide into teams: Green, Red, and Yellow!



The games begin... And everybody saved by the Birthday Boy Jesus wins!



HIS MERCY NEVER CEASES!

*The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases
his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness, Oh Lord!*

--Lamentations 3:22-23

English Standard Version (ESV)

OCTOBER 2021

October 14



Thank you, Elite Driven - Sante
Barley International



Thank you, Novannie Trading

October 19



Thank you, Neil Ivan Torrefiel

Thank you, Mr. Simeon Tiu
of Peerless Manufacturing
Corp. PEPMACO
and Mr. Patrick Cua



October 31

Thank you, Tabang Outreach,
c/o Rogem Lagusan!



NOVEMBER 2021

November 13



Thank you, Tzu Chi Foundation!



Thank you, Angelita Ravallo!

November 20



Thank you, Angel Y. Tan Foundation!



November 21



Thank you, Ashley Cooper!



Thank you, Sharing Across, c/o Ma. Lynda Mae Hernane

November 26



Thank you, Project Joy!

December 2



Thank you, Belikenz Pharma!



Thank you, Chinette Peñaflor!



Thank you, Froilan Florendo!



Thank you, Ria Casano!

For the Lord!

'Truly, I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me. --Matthew 25:40 (NIV)

Overflowing Stars!

By STELLA MARIE JOSEFA A. APAO

IT is said that your name describes who you are and who you will be. Like Jesus means Messiah or Savior.

I looked up the meaning of my name and I found out *Stella* is Latin for *star*. *Marie* is the French version of *Mary*, the name of the Holy Virgin Mother of Jesus. *Stella maris* is Latin for *star of the sea*. *Josefa* is Spanish for *God will increase*. And the Filipino *Apao* is root word of *umaapao*, meaning overflowing.

Have I become my name? Read on...



Here I am with the lolas at the Anawim Home for Abandoned Elderly where I serve as supervisor in the Administration-Human Resources section--my latest among the overflowing stars in my life!

First Star: Family

My very First Star, great blessing ever, is, of course, my family.

Here we are: My father Joventino, 45 years old, and mother Maria Leilanie, 44; sister Joanne, 21; brother Raphael Angelo, 18; and me.

Like most mothers, my mother wished I'd have a good education and have a good job. And it's not only for prestige.

I am eldest in our family, born and raised in Canlaon City, Negros Oriental.

My father works as a service driver-- his income just enough for our daily sustenance, but not enough to send my sibs and me to college. So, I had to have a good job to be able to help our family make both ends meet.



Second Star: Education

My mother egged me on to study hard, have high grades, so I'd qualify for Academic Scholarship in college — you know, for free tuition. Otherwise, we couldn't afford college.

So, first, thank God for public schools, I got to study for free at the San Isidro Elementary School. I studied hard and so I graduated valedictorian.

Then I leveled up to San Isidro National High School. I studied hard, ended up valedictorian.

Graduating valedictorian, I qualified for the Academic Scholarship in college. I then enrolled at the University of Rizal System Rodriguez for a course in Business Administration—you know, so I could be in business and earn that income that would help my family make both ends meet.

My uncle priest, Fr. Alejandro A. Gronifillo, cousin of my mother, also kindly supported me.

Still, I feared I would not be able to maintain the high grade required to continue qualifying for the Academic Scholarship in college. Not easy. So, I worried that I would disappoint my parents.

But this is where I saw God has all along planned for my college education.

Third Star: Anawim!

This is how God's plan continued to unfold for me. My maternal grandfather, Wilfredo B. Aguirre Sr., worked in the Anawim Home for Abandoned Elderly as an organist. *Below*, here I am (wearing Santa hat), with Bro. Bo Sanchez and Bro. Tim Duran, then Anawim executive director, grabbing an opportunity for a photo-op with Bro. Willie and his family whom he led as members of the Anawim Music Ministry.

So, as early as I was six years old, I already knew about Anawim. My Third Star!

One day, my Aunt Margarita Gronifillo with her brother, Fr. Alejandro Gronifillo, brought me to Anawim.

At once, Anawim impressed me. The people were so genuinely friendly. There's no other way to say this, but I've fallen in love with Anawim since then. We went back and visited this place a lot of times.

In time, I learned that Anawim is the first Mercy Ministry of the Light of Jesus Family, the faith group founded by Bro. Bo Sanchez, who would name LOJ's weekly prayer gathering as The Feast.

Anawim then would have a small version of The Feast called Feast Light, and I eventually joined in.

Learning about our Catholic faith, I began to serve as a lector at Mass, and even taught catechism to the children of the Anawim workers here during summertime.

I went on to serve in the Anawim Feast Light, helping prepare the monitor or widescreen, and communicate with the attendees, sending them copies of The Feast talks which I got from Sis. Jing Rangasajo, assistant of Bro. Hermie Morelos, chair of LOJ's Mercy Ministries.

Fourth Star: Hope of the Family

God's grace continued to flow upon me. From the LOJ Mercy Ministry, I came to know about the Pag-asa ng Pamilya Scholarship Foundation. Indeed, it's serving as our family's *hope* — as Pag-asa eventually granted me a scholarship too! And so, I had two scholarships: the Academic Scholarship, and the Pag-asa Scholarship! My Fourth Star!

I then earned a degree as Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, major in Human Resource (HR) Development Management, graduating with an average grade of 1.33!



Fifth Star: Career

At first, I planned to gain just a brief administrative experience here in Anawim, as I was eyeing high-paying job in bigger companies.

I planned to volunteer as assistant in Anawim's Administration office-- as sort of payback for my Pag-asa scholarship. My mother helped me by informing Sis. Myrna G. Tropezado, then Anawim's administrative head, that I would like to serve as volunteer in the office.

But knowing I already hold a BSBA diploma, major in Human Resources, Sis. Myrna offered me a job. Because, as God's plan continued to unfold, there was at the time vacancy in Anawim for the post of an administrative assistant!

Sis. Myrna told me that she wanted to put systems in order in Anawim and maybe I could help them do that.

Could I ever! I did not hesitate to accept that offer.



On December 5, 2017, I started working in Anawim as Admin Assistant II, focusing on Human Resources. And on May 1, 2021, I was promoted to be Admin/HR Supervisor. Wow, a career in Human Resources Development--my Fifth Star!

Here, with our super blessed Anawim servant stars, *from left*: Andro B. Montegudo, Logistics and Farm supervisor; Me; Executive Carlos Ferdinand H. Dimson; Lucilyn T. Zambrano; Spiritual Ministry head; Myrna G. Tropezado. Admin consultant; Arsenia D. Binohhi, Social Services head; President and Chief Executive Officer Herminio R. Morelos; Joie M. Cabrillas, nurse administrator/consultant; Danril M. Villarama, In-House head nurse.

Overflowing Blessings

To this day, I'm very happy working here in Anawim because, as my surname Apao would have it, I receive *umaapao*, or overflowing blessings. I've found here not just a job, but a family, a second home, and the priceless blessing of serving God's anawim, which means God's poor.

Well, that's what I think--I think I am serving, giving to God and our lolos and lolas. But God cannot be out-given.

Blessings continue to flow upon me.

First, my father found a job as service driver in a better-paying company. My mother also found a job as parish secretary at the San Isidro Labrador Parish Church.

Second, my sister Joanne is an SK Kagawad (Council member) in our Barangay and is already in her fourth year in college, graduating this June 2022. And my brother Raphael is a first-year college student.

Third, we will soon have a new house. You see, our relatives serving in Anawim live in Sitio Tanag, San Isidro, Rodriguez, Rizal. The house was just a three-minute walk to Anawim. In 2006, my family and I transferred from Negros Oriental to San Isidro, living with our relatives.

And then, time is coming that we won't have to live with relatives anymore. Through my Pag-IBIG housing loan, augmented by the increased income of my parents, we will soon have our own house in a subdivision -- at Eastwood Residences in San Isidro!

Fourth, and best of all, Anawim is not simply a workplace for me. It is a sanctuary for my spiritual nourishment, where God continues to fulfill His promise in my favorite Bible verse, Isaiah 41:10: *"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."*



Belen's War

... from page 1

Avelina Galvez was born in Baliwag, Bulacan, on November 11, 1930. She was 11 years old when the Japanese started occupying the Philippines-- and the United States, with Filipino guerrillas, started defending our country.

Belen had started in Grade 1 but with the chaos, she was not able to continue her studies.

She was already 15 years old when World War II ended in 1945

The following year, Belen, at 16, already had a boyfriend--Cecilio Perez. With the country and its institutions still in shambles, they would forego formal wedding rites and they just started living together.

Belen's Battles

Belen and Cecilio would have 11 children. Sadly, Cecilio would pass away when the children were still young.

Bravely, Belen faced her battles.

To fend for her children, she worked as a laundrywoman and sold fruits in the market.

In time, eight of her children also passed away, one after the other. Amid her grief, Belen continued taking care of her remaining children until they grew up and got married.

Since they already had families to take care of, the children could hardly attend to Belen.

Belen's Blessings

Friends helped Belen to get by until she met Rev. Fr. Perfecto Manheim Abellana who took her in as among his beneficiaries. But not for long, as Fr. Abellana's Mercy program had limited resources.

By God's grace, Fr. Abellana happened to know about our Anawim Home. So, long story short, he arranged that Belen would be accommodated in Anawim.

Belen arrived in Anawim on June 19, 2013, already 83 years old.



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Belen's War

... from page 15

In Anawim, Lola Belen began to receive blessings after blessings.

Physical Health. Anawim first attended to Lola Belen's health problems. She arrived already with cataracts, and so she suffered blurred vision.

Anawim promptly arranged for her to undergo a cataract operation-- and by 2014, she could already clearly see the beauty of the world again.

Old age, however, continues to take its toll on her frail body. Of late, she has been diagnosed with hypertension, diabetes miltus, and arthritis. So, Anawim doctors have prescribed medicines, and they see to it she undergoes treatment procedures for these ailments.

And like everybody else, Lola Belen observes Coronavirus Disease Quarantine protocols, wearing masks even inside her bedroom.

Emotional Well-Being. Aside from the physical, Anawim also takes care of Lola Belen's emotional well-being through counseling provided by professional counselors and social workers.

Anawim also reconnects her with her children and some other relatives.

Anawim welcomes visitors to minister to our lolas and lolos and make them happy. In return, our elderlies gratefully treat their visitors with entertainment programs.

Lola Belen sings a song and dances, balancing bayong, a native bag, on her head— to the loud and long applause of her audience.

Spiritual Nourishment. Completing blessings for Lola Belen is nourishment of God's Love through daily Holy Masses, prayer meetings, caring group sessions.

So, she still desires to serve the Lord with Anawim— inspired by her favorite verse, Joshua 24:15: *As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*

Yes, World War II is over. Another war, battles may happen. But having survived those that came her way, in Anawin, Lola Belen is now a happy and healthy 91-year - old.



LET'S GET CONNECTED!

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Thank you very much

And God bless you more and more!

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