

The Feast Of Our Lady Of Snow

(February 9–10, 2019)



We are so grateful and blessed to be a part of this great and memorable occasion, the Feast of Our Lady of Snow, the Patron of this beautiful, heaven-like sanctuary, the Our Lady of Snow Parish in Shinjo, Yamagata Prefecture. It was a cold and snowy morning when we started the more than 300 kilometer-journey. A very exciting and enjoyable trip, taming the beautiful sceneries along the way, viewing the white covered mountains and a two meters high or so, of piles of snow on both sides of the street. We arrived in our destination, shortly before five in the afternoon with few short stops. We were amazed of the beauty of the place. The church is on a hillside, half covered with snow that it looks like we were on top of the clouds. We were welcomed by smiling, beautiful and friendly faces, the parishioners, all of them are Filipinos, and the delicious smells from the kitchen. They were really preparing for a feast. THE OUR LADY OF SNOW FESTIVAL was held on the night of our arrival. The Archbishop of Tokyo, His Eminence Archbishop Isao Kikuchi, SVD, who had come all the way from Tokyo, to join the parishioners of Shinjo Catholic Church, for this celebration. It is an unforgettable and wonderful experience, of an ordinary faithful like me. We had a prayer to our Lady, lead by Reverend Father Michiaki Chihara, the parish priest, followed by a procession outside the church to the snow-made grotto of our Lady. Along the way to the grotto, the parishioners made small caves and placed candles in it, which we lighted one by one as we sang a song of praise. Father Chihara, lead the final prayer and as we looked back where we came from, I was stunned by the beautiful scenario. From a small light of a candle, when all the candles in the small caves were lighted, it transformed the place like a paradise. When we started the procession with the lighted candles only in our hands, we hardly determined what we were stepping at, whether the soft part of the snow or the slippery part. We are like these candles, if we all work together we can produce something better.

After the prayer ceremony, as expected when the hosts or hostesses are Filipinos, foods were served. We Filipinos believe that food, is one way of communicating one another. At home, when all are busy, the family discuss important matters at the dining table. It is a part of our Filipino culture to have meals together whenever possible. As we cheered to the celebration, I felt so much blessed. How wonderful to be a part of this family and this occasion, dining with this beautiful people, with the Archbishop, the parish priest and the newly ordained deacon. The celebration didn't end up there, but still had some activities until the late hours of the night. Everybody were so energetic that no one feels to retire in their beds early.

There was a celebration of the Holy Mass the following morning presided by the Archbishop of Tokyo, another blessing. In his homily, I learned that the church was named after our Lady, as the protector and refuge from heavy snow. He also mentioned of the upcoming anniversary of the church, of what they have done for the last ten years is important, but what they will do more, for next ten years is more important. Same is true in our lives, our past is passed, what we can change for the better is the best thing we can do. And more importantly, how we strengthen more our faith and how we can perform our mission we received from baptism .The parishioners are so lucky for having these chances , a close interaction with these kind- hearted messengers of God, His Eminence Archbishop Isao Kikuchi, Reverend Father Michiaki Chihara, Reverend Father Kenji Honma and Reverend Brother Don Brian. I feel envious, and wish to have like them too, in our parish.

From this feast, aside from gaining many friends, I learned many things. Through these beautiful, kind hearted and hospitable people, I learned much. Thank you very much Father Honma for bringing us here, for Marites Gonzales, for including me in your invitation and Soledad Agasa for the company. Special thanks to Father Michiaki Chihara and the Our Lady of Snow family, for accommodating us. I feel that I attended this feast not by accident but a plan by a Supreme Power to know myself more. Thank you very much. To God be the Glory.

(By: Nelie Editha Madariaga Tatenno)



帰る間際の写真 (まだ帰りたくな～～～い(笑^^笑)

“本間神父様、ブラザーブライアン、茨城県の皆さま(Ate Nelie, Soledad, Marites)来てくれてありがとうございます、是非また遊びに来てください。



“はい チーズ” (笑)



Candles in snow caves symbolizes to our faith and devotion our Mother Mary, Spiritual enlightenment, spiritual strength, purity and unity of the spirit.



ブラザーブライアンお誕生日おめでとうございます



“お祈りのあとは楽しいミニパーティーです、
“おいしいフィリピン料理ありがとうございました。”

お楽しみタイム with Our Beloved Archbishop Isao Kikuchi.





菊地功大司教様、千原神父様、ブラダーブライアン、茨城県下館教会の皆さま
（Ate Nelie, soledad & Marites）、山形教会、秋田県横手教会、
「雪の聖母祭」に参加して下さって本当にありがとうございました。
そして新庄カトリック教会の皆さま協力してくれてありがとう
ございました。神に感謝。