

CHRISTMAS INSTITUTE 2023

Pasasalamat

Pagtanaw at Pagbabahagi

One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him - and he was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?"

Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."

(LUKE 17:15-19 NIV)

December 26-29 2023 | Flores Integrated School San Manuel, Pangasinan



Name:		
Local Church:	A	

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LESSON I: PACTANAW

Scriptural Reference: Luke 22:19-20

Key Verse: Luke 22:19

"Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Preparation:

- 1. Why is remembering important for you?
- 2. How does remembering affect your life today?

SCRIPTURE

Luke 22:19 was part of the narrative when Jesus gathered His disciples for a meal (Passover meal) to commemorate the event when God delivered its people from bondage in Egypt. The Passover feast was yearly celebrated by the Jews to acknowledge and remember not only what God has done to liberate them from slavery and its goodness but also to reminisce their struggle against the oppressive hand of the Egyptians and the Pharaoh. Every time the Passover was celebrated, the exodus event where the Israelites in the time of Moses were set free from Egypt became present in the mind and hearts of the Jews so that they can reflect and relate their lives to them. The Passover meal is essentially a Jewish religious service set around a dinner table of every household eating, praying, singing, talking about current social justice issues, and sharing experiences. Through this practice, Jewish people are also able to preserve and transcend their experience and struggle from generation to generation.

Jesus, after breaking the bread, told to his disciples "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me".

Through the Passover meal with his Disciples, he gave a glimpse of what he was about to do for the fulfillment of God's redemptive act for all and commanded them to do the same in remembrance of him. The day after, Jesus was arrested and crucified on the cross, offering his life for us. He never offered his life for nothing – his death on the cross was a manifestation of God's unconditional love for us that we should be thankful for. He died for a reason, and this is the greatest gift that God gave to us that material possession cannot give. We remember and acknowledge this favor done by God for us through our acts of worship and service.

TRADITION

The Breaking of the Bread and sharing of the cup became a tradition of the early Christians to remember and give thanks to the saving act of God through Jesus Christ. Early Christians have their breaking of bread every time they gather and this became a sacrament of the Church. The Holy Communion became an essential part of worship for early Christians and was even made the center of worship. But how often do we celebrate the Holy Communion? How often do we remember the favor God has done for us through Jesus Christ?

"In the New Testament, at least six major ideas about Holy Communion are present: thanksgiving, fellowship, remembrance, sacrifice, action of the Holy Spirit, and eschatology. Holy Communion is remembrance, commemoration, and memorial, but this remembrance is much more than simply intellectual recalling. "Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24-25) is anamnesis (the biblical Greek word). This dynamic action becomes re-presentation of past gracious acts of God in the present, so powerfully as to make them truly present now. Christ is risen and is alive here and now, not just remembered for what was done in the past."

John Wesley, in his sermon entitled "Duty on constant communion," says "It is the duty of every Christian to receive the Lord's Supper as often as they can". Not only because it is commanded by Jesus Christ or our duty but primarily for us to be continuously reminded of God's redemptive act through his death on the cross. Our failure to remember Christ's sacrificial act on the cross makes our worship incomplete and merely empty for it is the primary reason why we gather – to remember Christ. Through the sacrament of the Holy Communion, we are reminded of God's redemptive act through the death of Christ on the Cross. While we approach the Lord's table to partake in the elements of the Holy Communion, Jesus again assures us of God's forgiveness and favor.

EXPERIENCE

There are lots of things or moments that remind us of God's goodness in our lives. We often fail to recognize these things because our minds are too busy thinking and worrying about the future.

But if we try to focus our minds and hearts on what God has done for us in the past and present, we will be forever grateful.

Our experience during the three years of the pandemic was quite hard and difficult. It blatantly impacted our lives, spiritually, mentally, socially, and economically. Doors and borders are closed because of lockdowns and fear of being infected by the virus. Church and other social gatherings are restricted which caused us to be socially isolated and trauma for those who are afraid of being alone. The economic shutdown due to the pandemic also caused every family, especially the poor to starve and forced them to survive on their own. But now, everything is back to normal as if it never happened. This is not to romanticize our Covid-19 pandemic experience but to show and remind us that God is really working amid these difficult times.

John Wesley, in his sermon entitled "Duty on constant communion," says "It is the duty of every Christian to receive the Lord's Supper as often as they can". Not only because it is commanded by Jesus Christ or our duty but primarily for us to be continuously reminded of God's redemptive act through his death on the cross. Our failure to remember Christ's sacrificial act on the cross makes our worship incomplete and merely empty for it is the primary reason why we gather – to remember Christ. Through the sacrament of the Holy Communion, we are reminded of God's redemptive act through the death of Christ on the Cross. While we approach the Lord's table to partake in the elements of the Holy Communion, Jesus again assures us of God's forgiveness and favor.

When the Jews gathered to remember their experience of God's liberating work, they are reminded again of their covenant to God that they are God's, and they should live according to God's command. The Apostles and early Christians gathered for the breaking of the bread to remind themselves of Christ and reaffirm their faith in God. In partaking in the Sacrament of Holy Communion, we are reminded that we are redeemed by God through Christ, and we should exemplify his example as we go out of the church. That is why in our Book of Worship, after partaking in the Bread and Wine, we pray "Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves for others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." As we remember how God saved us from the pandemic, let us also offer our lives for the healing of others and the world.

REASON

Pagtanaw or remembering God's goodness is the prelude of gratitude. It helps us ponder every single detail of our lives and acknowledge the works of God in our lives even when we are not aware. Pagtanaw in Tagalog is not only for us to recall an event. It is a gesture of looking at what is ahead. It helps us anticipate what lies ahead of a journey. As we remember the things God has done for us, we also anticipate and hope that God will work in the future.

Pagtanaw plays a great role in how we act in the present and in the reality of life. It inspires us to live in the present and moves us to hope and fully trust God for the future. Remembering God's goodness also challenges us to act or respond to the present with eagerness.

Remembering Christ is not only about his death but also about how he lived. In remembering, we are challenged by Christ to live like him. We remember Christ when we exemplify Jesus' service to others. We remember Christ when we love other people. We remember Christ when we feed the hungry. We remember Christ when we serve justice to the oppressed. We remember Christ when we give ourselves to others like Jesus did on the cross

- 1. Recall an experience that reminds you of God's goodness.
- 2. Why do you think remembering the works of God is important?
- 3. What does remembering Christ compels you to do?

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

By Johnson Oatman (1897)

When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed, When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost, Count your many blessings, name them one by one,

And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.

Refrain:

Count your blessings, name them one by one; Count your blessings, see what God hath done; Count your blessings, name them one by one; Count your many blessings, see what God hath done.

Are you ever burdened with a load of care?
Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?
Count your many blessings, ev'ry doubt will fly, And you will be singing as the days go by.
[Refrain]



Please, scan to play Count your blessings by Johnson Oatman

LESSON 2: PASASALAMAT

Scriptural Reference: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NIV)

Key Verse: 1 Thessalonians 5:18

"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

Preparation:

Ask each person to thank God for one circumstance that they are not happy with but that they are trusting God will work out.

SCRIPTURE

Paul's primary purpose in writing his first Letter to the people of Thessalonica was to commend and celebrate the faith of every believer in Thessalonica. But behind their commendable faith, believers in Thessalonica were experiencing persecution by the Romans due to their faith in Jesus and lost all their hope for their future. Paul encourages them to cast their care to God and give thanks in all circumstances.

This passage tells us about giving thanks to God in all circumstances and depending on God's grace. Giving thanks in all circumstances demands us to look at life from a different perspective with optimism and live our lives with gratitude. Paul in our text is speaking through his experience. He went through a lot of persecution and critical time while doing his ministry. These experiences of Paul did not encumber Paul from proclaiming but instead fueled and inspired him to continue his missionary journey.

TRADITION

John Wesley, in his commentary in 1 Thessalonians 5:16 says "Thanksgiving is inseparable from true prayer: it is almost essentially connected with it. Anyone that always prays is ever giving praise, whether in ease or pain, both for prosperity and for the greatest adversity. It blesses God for all things, looks on them as from God, and receives them only for God's sake; not choosing nor refusing, liking nor disliking, anything, but only as it is agreeable or disagreeable to God's perfect will."

Thanksgiving is a manifestation that we appreciate and acknowledge God as the source of blessings and appreciate everything that is provided to us. It also connects us to the giver of the blessing and improves our relationship.

EXPERIENCE

There are lots of reasons to be thankful to God. We are thankful for our lives, blessings, good health, success, and other positive events in our lives, but things aren't the same when suffering, death, sickness, oppression, and persecution happen. Let's just be honest, how can a person be thankful when he/she is suffering, sick, hungry, and/or oppressed?

There are lots of people in the world suffering from different situations. There are people living in poverty. Some people are going through lots of struggles. Some people are experiencing discrimination and violence. Some have trauma from negative experiences. Some are living in fear because of social stigma. There are victims of oppression and exploitation. And maybe some of them are with us now. It would be unreasonable for us to be thankful because we are experiencing this hardship in life. Paul tells us to "Give thanks IN all circumstances" not "FOR all circumstances". Paul does not tell us to give thanks for the hardship we experienced but rather give thanks even we experience hardship. There is a difference.

REASON

The threshold to Thanksgiving is acknowledging the blessings and the Giver of blessings. And Thanksgiving itself is the moment we enjoy and appreciate the things we have and received. Every day we experience and witness the works and blessings of God in our lives through simple things like the fresh air, the sun, healthy and happy family, and others. But often we see these things as ordinary moments and just a normal day or experience. These things are manifestations of God's presence and grace that we should be grateful for.

Gratitude also opens our eyes to see more reasons to be thankful. The more we are grateful, the more we see beauty in all things and appreciate every single detail in our lives. Our journey as believers of Christ is not an assurance to not experience hardship or problems. Life is uncertain, and this is the reality. But amid all these uncertainties, there is one thing that we are certain of: God will never abandon and forsake us. This is what we should be grateful for.

- 1. What keeps you from Thanksgiving?
- 2. How can you foster a thankful heart and an appreciation for God's work in your life today?

PURIHIN ANG DIYOS

Huni ng ibon at daloy ng alon Nagpapaalala sa atin Ihip ng hangin sa ating damdamin Ay may nais ipahatid Ang kalawakan sa katahimikan Ay may ibig ipabatid Lupa at langit sabay sa pag-awit Ng luwalhati

Koro

Ating purihin, purihin, Purihin ang Diyos O purihin, purihin, Purihin ang Diyos Sa 'ting puso at isip, Sa salmo at awit Purihin, purihin ang Diyos



Sikat ng araw tila pumupukaw Sa atin upang manalangin Upang sa diwa at katotohanan Ang Diyos ay ating sambahin Sangnilikha Niya ay ating kasama Sa inaasam na daing At sa ating buhay ay maipamuhay Kanyang bilin

LESSON E: PACEAEAHACL

Scriptural Reference: Hebrews 13:1-16

Key Verse: Hebrews 13:16

"Do not forget to do good and to share with others, for such sacrifices God is pleased."

- 1. How do you demonstrate your gratitude to God?
- 2. What are your intentions in doing good and sharing?

SCRIPTURE

According to tradition, the Book of Hebrew was written for a certain group of Christians in Jerusalem who spoke Hebrew, they were formerly Jewish but chose the path of Jesus. They are living in conflict with the Jews because of their faith in Jesus and they are not allowed to enter the temple for worship. So, these believers had to choose between Judaism and Christianity. But the author wrote them a letter to remind and encourage them to keep trusting Jesus.

Worship is important for the life of the Jewish community; it brings the community together. This is what makes them a community. Therefore, if the early Christians were not allowed to enter the temple and synagogues for worship, they are deprived of their life in a community. But the author encourages them to continue their lives with Christ and follow his teachings.

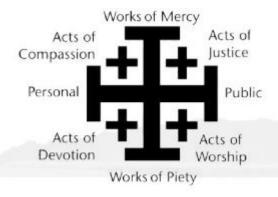
Chapter 13 of the Book of Hebrew started with the exhortation "to keep loving each other as brothers and sisters" and is followed by things that a follower of Christ should do as a manifestation of their love, joy, and faith in God. Although they are restricted from demonstrating their faith and love to God through worship and offering sacrifice in the temple, they are reminded of what Christians should do to show their love to God – show love to each other and to other people for this too are sacrifices that are pleasing to God.

TRADITION

THE GENERAL RULE OF DISCIPLESHIP

The General Rule of Discipleship, to witness Jesus Christ in the world, and to follow his teachings through acts of compassion, justice, worship, and devotion under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is a simple guide for the Christian life. It serves to remind disciples of the essential practices required of those who accept the challenge of Jesus.

The General Rule of Discipleship aims to help disciples maintain a balance between works of piety and works of mercy, the personal and social practices of Christian discipline. It serves to remind us of loving God (works of piety) and compels Christians to love whom God loves (works of mercy).



Works of Piety

These inwardly focused practices are intended to help us grow our relationship with God. We can do these individually (private) or communally (public).

Acts of Devotion: Individual works of Piety include studying scripture, prayer and meditation, fasting, healthy living, and sharing our faith with others.

Acts of Worship: Communal works of Piety include congregational worship, sharing in the sacraments (Baptism and Communion), Christian conferencing, which holds us accountable to others, and group Bible Study.

Works of Mercy

These means of grace are outwardly focused and help us to grow in our relationship with others, as well as God.

Acts of Compassion: Individual works of Mercy include doing good works, visiting the sick and those in prison, feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, and giving sacrificially.

Acts of Justice: Communal works of Mercy aim to end the systemic causes of injustice and oppression that cause the need for our individual works of Mercy in the first place. Working to end poverty, homelessness and discrimination of any kind are communal works of Mercy.

EXPERIENCE

The pandemic that left a great impact on our community awakened the spirit of bayanihan in our community. This bayanihan spirit embedded in our Filipino culture and tradition led and helped us to be more resilient during difficult times. Through bayanihan, Filipinos demonstrated a spirituality that is grounded

by service to others as a manifestation of love for God. One of those so many ways that Filipinos demonstrated *bayanihan* and sharing was the Community Pantry during the pandemic.

While the Pandemic incapacitated the economy and impacted many families especially the poor because of the economic shutdown, Filipinos responded with an effort to provide for the needs of their neighbors in the community. They donated their inkind donations such as vegetables, rice, bread, canned goods, and others to the makeshift pantry on the street. Anywhere in the street, you can find a community pantry with the slogan "Magbigay ayon sa kakayahan, kumuha batay sa pangangailangan" or "Give according to your means, take according to your need". This community effort fed thousands of people and families across the country during the hype of the pandemic. While many appreciated this effort as an act of bayanihan, charity, and volunteerism, some people took this effort negatively. They linked this effort to the communist movement and viewed it as a threat to the community. But for us Christians, this is a manifestation of our faith and love for God

REASON

Today, Christians are more focused on growing personal relationships with God while neglecting their duty as Christians – to serve other people as a demonstration of faith and love for God. Pagbabahagi calls us to examine ourselves on what we have and what we can offer to other people. "Do not forget to do good and to share with others." implies that an effort is needed. We are compelled to do good and share. We are not redeemed and blessed by God to just sit on the pews inside our churches. We are redeemed and blessed to be a channel of blessing for others. We are called not just to listen to the preacher every Sunday but also to hear the cries of the oppressed. We are fed by God to feed the hungry. We are not called for nothing.

- 1. What are the ministries of your local church that manifest the works of mercy?
- 2. As a youth, what can you offer to the world/your community to end injustice, poverty, discrimination, and homelessness?

MISYON

by Garry Granada

Hangga't may isang nagugutom
Hangga't may isang nauuhaw
Hangga't mayroon mga pusong nagdurusa't
namamanglaw
Hangga't mayroon naaalipin sa layaw ay
nalululong
Tayo ay mayroon gawain
Tayo ay mayroon misyon

Hangga't may isang naulila
Hangga't may isang nakapiit
May kapansanan't napinsala
Naimbalo't nagkasakit
Hangga't may isip at damdamin
Naghahagilap ng tugon
Tayo ay mayroon gawain
Tayo ay mayroon misyon

Hangga't ang kanyang katarungan Pagpapala at pagmamahal Mangyari sa sandaigdigan at pangalan Niya'y itanghal Hangga't may luhang papahirin Hangga't may pagkakataon Tayo ay mayroon gawain Tayo ay mayroon misyon



Granada

LESSON 4: PACTUCON

Scriptural Reference: Luke 17:11-19

KEY VERSES: Luke 17:15-19

¹⁵One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. ¹⁶ He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan.

¹⁷Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? ¹⁸ Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?" ¹⁹ Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."

1. What are the favors you received from God and how do you respond after receiving them?

SCRIPTURE

Lepers in the time of Jesus were isolated, marginalized, and discriminated. The Jews believed that these people are punished by God because of their sins. People never get in touch with them and worst, treated them as animals. These people are living on the borders of Samaria and Galilee, away from other people because of the stigma in society regarding sick people, especially lepers.

In our text, Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem when he met ten lepers on the border between Samaria and Galilee. At a distance, they shouted to Jesus to have pity on them. the Lepers do not even come close to Jesus for they are living the stigma that they are unclean and sinners, yet they are recognized by Jesus and were told to go to the priest. They went as instructed and one of them recognized that he was already healed. He went back to Jesus in gratitude and praise, but Jesus told him to "Rise and go." But before

we commend the gratefulness of the one who returned to Jesus, we also commend all of them for trusting Jesus and their response to Jesus' command to go and show their selves to the Priest. The ten lepers responded out of their desperation for change to their condition, while the one who returned to Jesus responded with gratitude. Their obedience brought transformation to their lives – they were able to return to their communities and their dignity was restored

TRADITION

On May 24, 1738, on Aldersgate Street in London, John Wesley had an experience that changed his life and became the start of Methodism. This life-changing experience began when he heard a reading from Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. John Wesley described this experience in his journal "In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

Soon after his conversion, John Wesley was invited by George Whitefield to preach outdoors to the people neglected by the church – the poor and the oppressed. During his time, preaching outdoors was viewed by the Anglican Church as a rebellious act and not respectable so John Wesley was excommunicated or banned by the Anglican Church, but he responded with his famous saying "The World is my Parish". This enthusiasm of John Wesley led him to continue to minister and proclaim the good news to the poor, orphans, oppressed, and all people neglected by the church.

EXPERIENCE

The experience of the leper and John Wesley was life changing. It began after they recognized and acknowledged the work of God in their lives. Like the lepers, we too have experiences that made us depend on God: experiences of desperation, healing, and restoration. While the Covid-19 pandemic tested our faith and greatly impacted our normal lives, our faith became stronger and led us to dependence on God and God alone.

We are now almost back to normal after three long years of the Covid-19 Pandemic that impacted our lives. We are like the lepers who were healed and excited to be reunited with society and their families. We are now free from fear of being infected. We are now able to return and enjoy our normal lives. But after all of these, do you realize and recognize that it is God who restored everything? Have you thanked God for all these things?

REASON

As Jesus responded to the shout of the ten lepers begging for mercy, God is also willing to respond to our prayers. Even when we feel distant from God and seem like God never heard our cries like the ten lepers shouting at a distance, God is there listening to our prayers and is able to respond. God's response to our prayers sometimes seems so nonsense but along the way, we can see God is working and even when we are not aware of it.

Some of us are still on the journey for validation like the nine lepers who did not return to Jesus. We cannot tell that they are not grateful because of not returning. Maybe they still needed more time to reflect and realized what Jesus just did for them or maybe they are just too excited to live their lives reunited with their families. We cannot tell. And maybe some of us are like the leper who returned to Jesus filled with gratitude, praising God in a loud voice and ready to be sent.

- 1.If you are one of the ten lepers, how will you respond to Jesus' command?
- 2. If you are the leper who returned to Jesus, what will you tell other people after being restored?

KAALAGAD

by Garry Granada

Tayo'y binigyan Niya ng puso Upang umibig at matutong mangarap Pinagkalooban ng talino At mga bisig upang humayo't magsikap Ng kalakhan pagbabago Ay maging ganap at lubos

Tayo'y kaalagad katipunang Kristiyano Manggagawa ni Kristo sa lupang sinta Tayo'y kaalagad kaagapay kasama Kapanalig ng masa dito sa bayan Niya

Tayo'y binigyan Niya ng himig Ng kapatiran damayan at paglingap Upang maglaan at pumanig Makipamuhay sa mga mahihirap Sa gabay ng ebanghelyo Sa mga yapak ni Hesus

Tayo'y kaalagad katipunang Kristiyano Manggagawa ni Kristo sa lupang sinta Tayo'y kaalagad kaagapay kasama Kapanalig ng masa dito sa bayan Niya

Tayo'y kaalagad katipunang Kristiyano Manggagawa ni Kristo sa lupang sinta Tayo'y kaalagad kaagapay kasama Kapanalig ng masa dito sa bayan Niya



Please, scan to play Kaalagad by Garry Granada

BS WRITERS

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Pastor Jedidiah Garcia is a former deaconess, former youth coordinator (of Bataan District).



She is a graduate of Bachelor of Arts Major in Christian Education at Harris Memorial College and is currently taking Master of Arts in Theological Studies at Philippine Christian University.

During her academic journey, she was a recipient of the Arichea Award for academic excellence and the Cogswell-Tapia Award for Bible and Theology.

JUNIOR LEVEL

Pastor Joy Arquero is a provisional member of the United Methodist Church in the Northeast Luzon Philippines Annual Conference (NELPAC). He graduated AB Theology at Eveland Christian College in 2019 and took his Master of Divinity at Union Theological Seminary (Class of 2023). He is currently appointed as the Administrative Pastor of General Aguinaldo United Methodist Church.



BS WRITERS

SENIOR LEVEL



Pastor Christie Ferrer is a member of the Visayas Philippines Annual Conference (VPAC). He completed his Bachelor of Arts in Theology at Southern Philippines Methodist Colleges, Inc. in 1999 followed by his Master of Divinity at Wesley Divinity School in 2003.

He served as the District Superintendent in the Central Visayas District from 2016 to 2022 and is currently appointed as Administrative Pastor of Sibulan United Methodist Church in Cangmating, Sibulan, Negros Oriental.

CITHEMESONG

Salamat, Salamat, sa lyo

Verse 1

Pinagaling Mo ang aming karamdaman Inilawan Mo ang aming kadiliman

Naririto kami lumuluhod Sa'yo Mangapamulala Ginu king kekang dapat Salamat, Salamat, sa Iyo

Chorus

Aming Diyos, Salamat po Agyaman kam, O Apo Kung Iyong Ioloobin Lahat kaya Mong gawin Salamat, Salamat, Sa'yo

Verse 2

Magpadayon bisan unsay maagian Gagawin lahat Ika'y mapaglingkuran

Hahayo sa binigay mong kalakasan Ibahagi lahat ng 'Yong kabutihan Daghang Salamat, Salamat, Ginoo

Instrumental

Chorus (2x)

Bridge

Oooh, oooh, oooh (4x) (Oooh) Salamat, O Ginu (Oooh) Agyaman kam, O Apo (Oooh) Salamat O Ginoo Oooh, oooh, oooh

Chorus (2x)

Kung Iyong loloobin Lahat kaya Mong gawin Salamat, Salamat, Sa'yo (3x)