

Dear family at Cannon Beach,

Again Raquel and I have so much to be thankful for. 2016 was a good year and we trust 2017 will be just as good if not better. The last two weeks though of 2016 were kind of scary, but again our Lord rescued me from what could have been disastrous. Coming home from a wedding of one of our nephews I fell in an open cemented canal, and then a couple of days later went through my first kidney stone experience. Oh the pain! You can read up on those events in the attachment I'm sending with this update.

On New Year's day I was the speaker at the Bethany church we normally attend (which is in the same compound where our school is). Pastor Rey's father had just passed away and he and his family drove up to Luzon beyond Manila to attend the funeral. He asked me if I'd share during the coming Sunday (New Year's) service. As I generally do when asked to be the preacher for a Sunday service, I went over the passages found in the Revised Common Lectionary. The first one for Jan 1, 2017 is Numbers 6:22-27 which reads:

"The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the Israelites: You shall say to them,

The Lord bless you and keep you [shamar - "to exercise great care over."];

the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you;

the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace [shalom – meaning more than peace but general well-being]."

I also read these verses in Tagalog, the language spoken here in San Jose, Mindoro. I then shared with them that although Aaron and his sons, being priests, were asked to do this, yet in Christ we all are priests. Rev. 1:5-6, "All glory to him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by shedding his blood for us. He has made us a Kingdom of priests for God his Father. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen." I then had each one bless those sitting near them with the above blessings. I then read the next passage for the day which is Psalm 8. Verse 2 reads, "Out of the mouths of infants and children your majesty is praised above the heavens." With that I had all the children of the church come forward and sing a couple songs of praise that they were familiar with. I then had the whole congregation come up and each one blessed each of the kids. It went very well, thanking Him for answering my prayer that His Spirit guide us all. With that I too, being one of His priests, send you the above blessing. Yahweh, bless the recipient of this letter.

As I go over all that I'd like to do in 2017, all the needs I see here in the Philippines and in India that I can help meet with the gifts He has given me, I get a little overwhelmed. Pray that I will know how much I can do and make sure I take time out to just enjoy our loving Father.

Often I've wanted to record the wonders of God guiding my life and how He so regularly marvelously orchestrates my steps. This Holyday season I thought I'd take some time off to put in writing what I've recently experienced related to these so called "circumstances". As I began writing, my thoughts also diverged to other topics as well, related nonetheless. The attachment is mainly for my record and for Shoni to keep for my mga apo/grandchildren. However if you are interested in a somewhat detailed record of God's involvement in the life of Kermit, read on. You might want to boil a pot of coffee first though. The attachment covers "circumstances", "love", "protection from an open canal", "kidney stones", "meditating on pain", "prayer request" and "praise and thanksgiving".

Yours in His service,
Kermit and Raquel