

Paskuhan 2024: Ever Thankful, Ever Hopeful
“*For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son...*” (Jn 3:16).

As we celebrate the UST Paskuhan Season, our hearts are filled with joy and expectation, for this season marks a time of *profound gratitude* and *deep hope*. Our theme, “**Paskuhan 2024: Ever Thankful, Ever Hopeful**,” invites us to reflect on the core of the Christian faith: the boundless love of God, beautifully captured in John 3:16: “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son...*” This one verse, though simple, reveals the entire mystery of Christmas—the mystery of God’s immense love for us. It is a love that transcends time, extending from the very beginning of creation to this present moment, and beyond into eternity. God’s gift of His only Son, Jesus Christ, is the ultimate expression of this love, and it is this gift that we are called to be ever thankful for and ever hopeful in.

Ever Thankful: A Grateful Heart for the Past

To be ever thankful means recognizing how God has acted in our lives and in the Thomasian community. We are reminded of the countless ways God has blessed us in the past. In the Old Testament, the people of Israel were constantly reminded to remember the deeds of the Lord—how He freed them from slavery, guided them through the wilderness, and gave them the promised land (cf. *Ex* 3:7-8; *Dt* 8:2). Similarly, we are called to look back on our own journey with grateful hearts.

Perhaps, for some of us, the year has been marked by challenges and difficulties. Yet, as we reflect on this past, we realize that even in those moments of trial, God’s love was present. He never abandoned us. Instead, He walked with us, sometimes carrying us when we could not walk on our own. Today, we say, “Thank you, Lord,” not just for the moments of joy, but also for the times of hardship, for through them we have been strengthened and renewed in our faith.

Ever Hopeful: A Hopeful Heart for the Future

But gratitude does not end with the past. To be ever hopeful means looking forward with a firm belief that God is still at work, that His plans for us are good, and that He will continue to fulfill His promises. This is the essence of Christian hope—it is not mere optimism or wishful thinking. It is a confident trust in God’s providence, even when the future seems uncertain.

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus, we are reminded that God did not simply enter into our history once and then leave us to fend for ourselves. No, God is with us—*Emmanuel*—and He remains with us every step of the way. This hope is rooted in the certainty of God’s eternal love, demonstrated in the birth, life, death, and resurrection of His Son.

Our world today is in desperate need of hope. We are surrounded by uncertainty, conflict, and challenges that may at times seem overwhelming. But as Christians, we know that Christ is our hope. We are ever hopeful because we trust that the God who gave us His Son will never abandon us. He will continue to guide and provide for us, even in the most difficult of circumstances.

A Time of Renewal: Past, Present, and Future

Our celebration today is more than just an annual tradition; it is an opportunity for us to renew our faith and our commitment to living lives of thanksgiving and hope. The past, present, and future are all interconnected in God’s plan. The past teaches us gratitude, the present challenges us to live with faith, and the future invites us to hope.

Let us remember that Christmas is not just a commemoration of a past event but a living reality. Christ is born in our hearts today, and His light continues to shine in the darkness. In anticipation of the *Jubilee of Hope*, may we embrace the future with hope, knowing that God’s love remains constant, and His grace is always sufficient for us.