



FROM THE VALIANTE FAMILY

2019

December 24, 2019

Dear Family and Friends,

This year might be described by the word "adjustment" for our family. Change can be difficult, but eventually the feeling of adjustment to a new plan comes. For us, moving from Pennsylvania and Delaware to the Philippines has definitely brought about change, and adjustments have been faced head on, sometimes with excitement and other times with struggle. I can imagine Mary and Joseph experienced a similar type of adjustment to a new life together as well as being parents of the Son of God! This Christmas has caused us to stop and think a little more about the adjustments this couple must have faced. Along with adjustment comes blessing, especially for those who are seeking God's plan for their lives. I am sure Mary and Joseph reveled in these blessings even as we are learning to see God's hand in ours.

For Tim, adjustments have been that of starting a seminary, and teaching Greek, Hermeneutics, and Systematic Theology for the first time. It has been quite an endeavor, but one long awaited, and has brought a feeling of satisfaction as he sees the excitement on the faces of students grasping concepts and stretching their minds, hearts, and ministries. Tim has also adjusted to a new hobby he has picked up while being challenged with the change of foods along with diet restrictions for our two gluten-free children. He has become a chef, experimenting with making our own breads, pastries, and at present—pretzels!

I (Sarah) have been adjusting to a new way of ministry. Homeschooling is my main priority, so it has been fun to settle into our new home with this in mind and guiding our routine. I also enjoy having neighbor kids come to play, giving us a break to routine and challenging us to communicate and share what God has blessed us with. I have become librarian, cooking instructor, and game director as we share books, treats, and activities with our newfound friends. Our church here has also requested my help with mid-week lessons for the children and missions conference activities, which have not been available to them before. It has been a blessing to be a part of the children's lives as well as having a closer connection with the pastor's wife who helps.

Adjustment has been fun to see in Micah (12) as he has changed in height and maturity. He is nearly 13 and has been learning to be a leader in the different interactions we have with children in our church and in our home. Micah has already thought of his plans for the future, considering being a pastor. At present he enjoys playing games and building with Lego. He has worked hard in school, learning how to make outlines and write book reports, as well as researching for a semester long report on the state of Delaware. The neighbor kids love to play in the ocean with him, learn new games, and teach him how to start an open fire, especially when marshmallows are available!

Kiersten (11) has had the hardest struggle of adjustment. She is sensitive to the gawks and stares we often get while walking in crowds of Filipinos. We have been so proud of her as she grows to be like Christ even when



FROM THE VALIANTE FAMILY

2019

adjustment is scary or confusing. Kiersten has also grown in being a big sister, caring for her sister, Noemi, and becoming a good friend to Lydia. We love seeing the interactions of siblings, with Kiersten often heading up the imagination side of things for the younger ones. She also has an amazing talent in writing and character drawing (especially while surviving Math)! Our evening family devotional time is almost always made interesting with Kiersten's deep questions and comments. It gives us excitement to know she is learning and growing. We hope she will continue to use her sharp mind for God's glory, maybe even pursuing her desire to be author and illustrator.

Lydia (8) is our sunshine! She loves jumping in with both feet when it comes to playing outside or caring for abandoned creatures. We now have two kittens, Cookie and Cream, whom we rescued from the ocean waves. She has also become the owner of her own dog named Daisy. These responsibilities have drawn her to consider farm life in the future. It is exciting to imagine what each child will someday pursue. Lydia loves taking care of her dear "children" (her stuffed animal family), and creating special events for them from watching movies to having weddings for her more mature stuffed animals. It has also been a joy to watch her grow in reading many Boxcar Children books and sharing her love of reading with her younger brother. Life is never dull with Lydia!

There has been a lot of adjustments for Jonas (5) as he steps from being a child playing as he desires to being a Kindergartener. He has done very well in learning the alphabet and sounds of letters and moving into reading words and sentences. He does well in Math, too, although he does not really enjoy the schedule of school. He would rather be artistic at the crafting table and picking out books for Mommy to read that are all about science. He is thrilled to have a little sister "obey" him, (at least at the present!) and enjoys taking walks with her and Mommy on the beach during school breaks.

It has been a family thrill to watch Noemi adjust to her new home. She is in the throes of being 1 1/2 years old, learning to communicate with words, facial expressions, and of course, noises of all sorts. She is our climber, explorer, and dish-washing helper. With her light skin and curly strawberry blonde hair she has gotten much attention, though not always responding with the same enthusiasm. It has been exciting to see her become a music director when melodies are sung, and a mommy of all the stuffed bears and bunnies we might have around the house. Having the Philippines as home for her may make visiting the States a greater adjustment, but we will see as the years progress.

We all look forward to visiting the States in March 2020 and spending nearly four months there, but we are also enjoying what God has before us now. We trust you are content as well where God has placed you. May He be our strength in adjustments and change we all may face in this coming year!

With love,

The Valiante Family