

Magis

Formation for Mission



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Official Publication of the Magis Deo Community
April 2018 Issue

A Fool's Easter Greeting

A celebration of His love and resurrection

Washing of the Feet

Authentic loving & the Eucharist

Amoris Laetitia

What makes a family

Quaresma Reflections

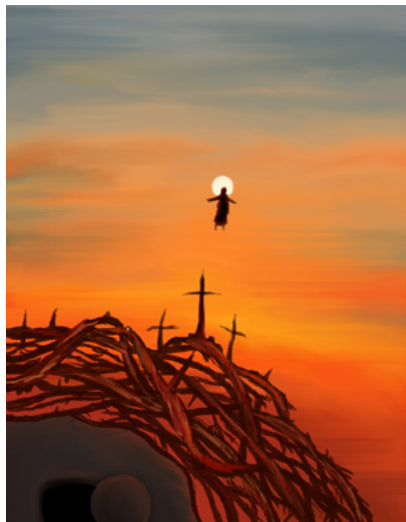
Revelation, conversion and mission

Mayon Relief Mission

An eruption of donations



About the Cover



In this month’s issue, respective writers contribute their insights on the penultimate tradition before the celebration of Jesus’ Resurrection: the Holy Week. We acknowledge and respect Christ’s suffering through sacrifices that we should commit to; so that His very great love for us is requited.

It is important however, that we become holy beyond the Holy Week; in our own ways. For every day we work, hustle, and tire for our loved ones, we must also remember to take a rest; to breathe in Christ, to exhale physical & mental exhaustion, and to go out and start anew.

Because of these, illustrator Levenspeil R. Sangalang of Magis Youth, enlivened his vision of His ever magnificent Resurrection. From His tomb, he floats upwards to the heavens, away from all the pain that he endured. Now at home, now at His sanctuary.

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A Fool’s Easter Greeting

Marlyn Angeles, Thessalonians BCGG



Photo by Pexels.com

Our Lenten journey started on Valentine’s Day, a most appropriate day to remind us of the greatest love we will ever know – until death and beyond.

Through His only Son, Jesus Christ, our Father revealed how we are loved so foolishly. Despite our unworthiness and the many times we have turned our back on our Father, He never stopped loving us. He continues to invite us to be with Him, to return to Him. He welcomes us with open arms and warm embrace. The only thing He asks from us is our faithfulness.

Today, April 1, April Fool’s day, we recall Paul’s letter to the Corinthians when he referred to himself as a fool for Christ. This is perhaps the call we must respond to today. By the world’s standards, we are fools. We are fools to continue to toil in the vineyard of the Lord. We unceasingly build and care for a community of couples and families that follow the path of the Lord, a path that is counter to the world’s political, cultural, and economic standards and values. Despite the many challenges and obstacles, we continue to plod on.

Sometimes it is tiring, sometimes it is difficult. Sometimes nothing seems to bear fruit from what we have worked on. There are times we want to give up, just as the Lord has almost despaired on Good Friday. Yet as on Black Saturday, we are asked to wait patiently. We are encouraged and strengthened by the Lord’s promise of tomorrow and the selfless giving of our co-journeymen.

We thank the Lord for showing us the way. His ways are not easy, and so it is with ours. We take comfort in the thought that He is with us as He has promised. He has sent us His Holy Spirit to renew us with the fire and fervor we need to persevere.

Today we feel the new energy, the joyful work of a community that is alive. And we thank the Lord for this special blessing. We pray that we continue to be renewed in this joyful path we started together. And so we celebrate Christ’s resurrection and the promise of our own. We celebrate his foolish love for us and our response to His call to love in turn, to be fools for Him.

Happy Easter and April Fool’s Day to everyone.

The Washing of the Feet: Authentic Loving and The Eucharist

Fr. Manol Montesclaros, SJ

Fr. Manol Montesclaros, SJ was the spiritual director for the Magis Deo Lenten Recollection held last March 4, 2018 at the Layforce, San Carlos Seminary, Guadalupe, Makati. Fr. Manol talked about how Jesus gave a sterling example of how to love to the highest level possible when He washed the feet of his disciples. He explained that real loving involves respect, welcome, hiddenness, letting go of schedules, and remembering the little details. Real loving is not afraid of dirt and ugliness. It continues - despite challenges, rejection and betrayal - to inspire others to love. Here is a summary of his talk.

In the Gospel according to St. John [John 13:1-15], we cannot find the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. In the Gospel according to St. John [John 13:1-15], we cannot find the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. Instead, St. John replaces the Eucharist with the Washing of the Feet. Why is the Washing of the Feet the Eucharist itself for St. John? Interestingly, this Gospel passage is introduced by the writer of John’s gospel saying, “Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. He had always loved those in the world who were his own, and he loved them to the very end.”

Respected Bible exegetes explain that the phrase ‘to the very end’ has two meanings:

- First, ‘to the very end’ can be understood in terms of time in a quantitative sense. Jesus loved them until the last breath of his body or until the last drop of his blood.
- Second, ‘to the very end’ can be understood in terms of quality in a qualitative sense. Jesus loved his disciples to the highest level possible. His love was a love par excellence – the most meaningful or the best kind of loving. This for John is what the Eucharist all about.

It is very significant that in loving the disciples so intensely, Jesus washed their feet. Therefore, if we want to know what real loving to the highest level is all about, if we want to understand a particular meaning of the Eucharist, Jesus is inviting us to watch and imitate him in the Washing of the Feet.

We can discover 7 expressions of authentic loving visible and discernible in this action of Jesus in the Washing of the Feet, 7 ways we can live the Eucharist in our daily life.

1. REAL LOVING INVOLVES RESPECT AND WELCOME

We normally wash our feet, but we don’t ordinarily wash one another’s feet. But during the time of our Lord, the washing of the feet was a very ordinary thing. This was part of their custom, and this was done very simply to show respect to a person who is a guest.

The host has a servant waiting at the front door of his house. When the guest arrives, the servant washes and cleans his feet to make him feel comfortable... at home... It is a way of telling a guest that he is important and that he is warmly welcome. Jesus tells us something about real loving:

- Loving involves respect and welcome to the person we love.
- To love somebody is to provide him or her enough space to live comfortably and to feel secure in your presence.

Moreover, the servant of the house does not discriminate any of the guests of the house. He serves everyone that comes inside the house of his master. What Jesus is telling us is that we have to give respect to all those sent to us to love in the same way. Real loving is permeated by welcoming and respect... Giving a deep sense of safety and security... Comfort and assurance... And it is universal, not selective. It’s always wonderful to know people who are generous and respectful to persons, regardless of their status.

It is, however, sometimes not the case with us. Very often, our love and respect is selective. We give respect differently depending on the way we look at the person. We respect people differently depending on his appearance, dress, and smell. We respect the status, not the person.

2. REAL LOVE IS CONTENT WITH HIDDENNESS

The washing of the feet is a much-hidden work. When a guest arrives at

the house, the servant washes the feet of the guest. But the guest would not spend time talking to the servant. His attention would be at the host, the master of the house. He will not engage in a friendly conversation with the servant. The servant’s work is hidden . . . unnoticed.

This is an important point – Jesus chose a work that is inconspicuous and hidden. And he tells us another point of real loving: Real loving is content with “hiddenness.” It does not need to be known, to be acknowledged. It does not call attention to itself — to tell everyone of its achievement.

3. REAL LOVING LETS GO OF ITS OWN SCHEDULE

What is interesting here is that Jesus washes the feet “while they were at supper.” That’s very strange because during the time of Jesus the washing of the feet was normally done before supper. What is clear is that Jesus did not follow the normal schedule.

This little detail teaches us the third point of real loving:

- Real loving lets go of humanly calculated schedules.
- Real loving is ready for the untimely act of service.
- When you serve, you do not serve in office schedule.
- When you love, you do not love within a time-schedule.

A good mother easily understands this point. She cannot tell her child when to be hungry, when to get sick, when to ask for her time. A good mother always is ready to let go of scheduled appointments for the sake of the child.

When you love, you do not dictate the times and the seasons for serving. What about us? Do we have particular time for loving? Are we willing to allow our schedule being disturbed because of an untimely call for service? Real loving is able to take the shocks and surprises of life. So much of life is unplanned, beyond our control. Hence, real loving has to let go of its own schedule and allows the will of God to run its course and then continue serving and loving.

4. REAL LOVING IS NOT AFRAID OF DIRT

Washing the feet is a very dirty work. It's different when we reenact this during the holy week. But in a real situation during Jesus' time, it was different. The disciples only wore sandals, walked in dirty roads and in the mud. So, this act of washing the feet was not a clean act. This gives us another aspect of real loving.

- Real loving is not afraid of the dirt:

- Real love goes with dirt, mess, ugliness, and bad odor.

- Real loving cleans even if you get dirty on the process.

So, this act of washing the feet was not a clean act. This gives us another aspect of real loving. Real loving is not afraid of the dirt. Real love goes with dirt, mess, ugliness, and bad odor. Real loving cleans even if you get dirty on the process.

Authentic loving is not afraid of the dirt. This goes so much against our natural way of doing. We like to go with the good, the bright, and the pleasant. Even with our children... Some parents have greater affection with the intellectual ones, the more talented, and the more beautiful. Perhaps even with friends, we are selective. Who are the people we easily go with – the pleasant ones, isn't it? But we avoid many others. It's quite natural for us. True loving includes caring for the problematic. The one who is disadvantaged is the one we should love more. This is part of the dynamics of real loving. The Christian challenge is to have a special preference for the weak and the disabled, the unlovable, the ugly, the dirty!

- Who are the people I am in solidarity with?

- Where else am I called to be in solidarity?

- In the end, solidarity is building community. This is our mission as Christians, called by Christ to build community.

5. REAL LOVING CONTINUES TO GIVE EVEN WHEN WHAT IS GIVEN BACK OF YOUR GOODNESS IS MISUNDERSTANDING

In the dialogue between Jesus and Peter, the latter clearly did not understand. But Jesus continued to explain and help Peter see the meaning of his actions. Jesus was so patient. He did even so to Judas. Jesus' washing of Judas' feet shows that he continues to love even in the midst of ugliness, betrayal and rejection. Here, we have another point of authentic loving – Real loving continues to give even when what is given back of your goodness is misunderstanding.

The Will of the Father:

Not that Jesus would suffer and die! But, Jesus would continue TO LOVE EVEN IF HE HAS TO SUFFER. He would NOT STOP LOVING EVEN IF HE HAS TO DIE!

It is easy for us to love those who love us back. That's a pleasant thing. But the real test of loving comes when you have to continue giving even when it's no longer pleasant, even if it's already painful. I think you also have experienced this. You tried very hard to serve, to do well. And then, some people criticized you and some others misunderstood your service. The question now is, "What are you going to do? Stop loving? Stop caring? Stop serving?"

Real love says, even if you reject me:

- I will continue loving in the darkness,

- I will continue to be gracious, even if there is no return.

This Jesus did! This is the Eucharist! This is the Father's Will!

6. REAL LOVE AWAKENS LOVING

Jesus was not content in simply giving. What he wants is that we will also be inspired to give. "If I, your Lord and Master, washed your feet, you also should wash each other's feet." This is another point of loving: Real love inspires another to love. Some years ago, in a fifth-grade class, one of the boys developed cancer. The chemotherapy resulted in the usual baldness. The boys of the fifth grade were afraid that his baldness would make him feel different from the rest. As a group, they all went to a barbershop and had their own heads

shaved. The teacher was so moved by their action that he did the same thing!

7. REAL LOVE REMEMBERS THE LITTLE DETAILS

The story of the "Washing of the Feet" gives us too many details about what Jesus did. This is unusual. The gospel does not always give us details. We do not know for example how tall Jesus was, how handsome Jesus was, how he grew up as a teenager, etc. But considering this passage of the Washing of the Feet where we see Jesus serving, we are given the most little details:

- he stood up
- he took off his clothes
- he tied the towel around his waist
- he poured the water into the basin
- he knelt before them with the basin and washed their feet
- he dried their feet with the towel from his waist

What's the point of this? Why the unusual details? Jesus is telling us that real loving involves the little details.

It was Mother Theresa of Calcutta who gave us this advice: "It is not so important to do great things; what is more important is to do little things with great love."

- Little things like what?
- Remember the birthdays of your friends
 - Listen to the stories of children
 - Listen to the jokes of old people
 - Smile to a poor fellow
 - Converse with your hairdresser
 - Give the waiter a generous tip
 - Tell your dear one, "I love you even when you are mad at me"
 - Give your spouse a little massage
 - Ask a neighbor if everything is fine
 - Offer one "Our Father" for a drug-addict neighbor
 - Express your gratitude to a significant other
 - Pray for your enemies
 - Say sorry to an offended friend

Authentic loving involves the little details and God will notice everything that you do with great love, no matter how small!

COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

AMORIS LAETITIA: The Joy of Love

Talk of Fr. James U. Gascon, SJ || 04 February 2018 Magis Deo Community Celebration || Reported by Mimi Santos & Marlyn Angeles

While the Marriage Encounter upholds To Love is a decision, the talk of Fr. Gascon focused on love as taught by the Church based on the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis in Amoris Laetitia.

Quite similar to Mary, we started 2018Amoris Laetitia, on the love in the family, was signed on March 19, 2016 and brings together the results of the Synods of Bishops on the family. These synods were convoked by Pope Francis in 2014 and 2015.

Amoris Laetitia, which is addressed to bishops, priests, deacons, Christian married couples and all lay people, tells us the following about loving:

- a. It reminds us that the Joy of Love is a call to love in the family
- b. The Joy of Love experienced by the family is also the Joy of the Church. If the family is joyful, the church is also joyful. This shows the intimate connection between the Church and the family.

- c. The centrality of joy in the teaching of Pope Francis is very important. To be a Christian is to lead a joyful life. Kung hindi ka masaya, hindi iyan buhay Kristiyano.

- d. The joy of Christians is the joy in the hearts of those who encounter Jesus. The joy of the gospel in the end is the love in the family which is the Love of Christ.

- e. It sets a positive tone in that the family is seen as a gift and not a problem. This is important to reflect on. In your life, do you even consider your family as a gift? A gift is something given and is appreciated. The focus is not so much on what the gift is about, but rather on the Giver. Gifts are valued because of the Giver.

- f. Amoris Laetitia is not a new doctrine but neither is it just a repetition of the old. It focuses on the Kerygma or the teaching of the Church that love is at the heart of the Cross. To recognize, to promote and to live the love in the family is a gospel call, a living of the Gospel.

Father And Mother I Love You	The beginning of love in the FAMILY is the love between two individuals, Father and Mother	Father And Mother Is Loving You	This reminds us that Love is an ongoing process. In ME, we say that love is a decision because it is something that we cannot experience right there. It is not static but rather it is a dynamic process that we need to continue to hold on.
Forever Always Mine I Love You	This reminds us that there is forever and to love is to claim it	Forget About Me Is Loving You	This reminds us that we cannot continue loving if the focus is more on ourselves. Christian loving focuses on the other, our beloved.
Forget About Money I Love You	All families have problems with money but the solution is also money. Money is nothing, but if you do not have money you are nothing. That is why in the family, when the problem is about money, a solution is sought because of the love for the family.		

What makes a family? Everything starts with Genetics. Persons not related to each other bring forth a person who is related to both of them. This is the first step in family love. It does not end here but rather goes beyond this. What is important in the family is not only being related by blood but the Connection that exists among its members which is further nurtured to become a Relationship. The relationship between spouses is different from the relationship between a parent and a child. These are not interchangeable as to do that will blur the relationships established in the family.

COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

Because of the special relationship among family members, each one becomes vulnerable (easily affected) by each other's actions. Because people in the family are important to us, we become vulnerable to them and that is the beginning of love.

Key Messages of Amoris Laetitia

1. Families are places where God and His Love are present and at work.

“The love of a parent is the means by which God the Father shows His Love.”

“Love emanates from the love of parents. If we cannot start loving in our family, we cannot expect loving.”

“The Lord's presence dwells in the real and concrete families with all their daily troubles, struggles, joys and hopes.”

If we cannot start loving in our family then we cannot expect love. The first most important skill in parenting is being a spouse. One cannot be a good parent if one is not a good spouse. Even when a family is in crisis, love is still present. All should be able to say thanks for the experience of family. We come to believe in the love God has for us because of our experience of love in the family.

2. Families must be helped to grow and mature in their love.

“I thank God that families which are far from considering themselves perfect live in love, fulfill their calling, keep moving forward even if they fall many times along the way.”

Families are not perfect. Families need to constantly grow and mature in their ability to love. All families have to be helped to grow in love. Love can be present but it is a work in progress. We cannot encourage the path of fidelity and mutual self-giving without encouraging the growth, strengthening and deepening of conjugal and family love.

3. Families in difficulty and persons in imperfect relationships should be treated and helped with love and mercy

“As pastors, we cannot feel it is enough to simply apply the moral laws to those living in irregular situations as if they were stones to throw at people's lives.”

The challenge for us, the Church, is to accompany with attention and care the weakest of her children who show signs of woundedness. Just like a mother, who while clearly expressing her objective teaching, always does what good she can even if in the process her shoes get soiled in the mud. Even in our struggles, there are consequences to us. We have to give up a lot of things but we should continue helping families to love.

Meaning of Love (Reflections of Pope Francis drawn from Corinthians 13:4-7)

1. Love is not rude. It is gentle and thoughtful; not impolite, not harsh. Love is courteous. To be Christian is to be courteous. Our loving can be drawn up in the way we speak with one another.

2. Love is not resentful. It forgives, seeks to understand other people and excuses them. The spirituality of families is grounded on forgiveness. To love is not to look for faults. It is also important to multiply the “thank you.”

3. Love bears all things. This is more than just simply putting up with what is evil but it has something to do with the use of the tongue. Words that scathe are words that we must avoid. We must hold our peace on what may be wrong with another person and limit our judgment. We must keep in check our impulse to condemn. Love recognizes that failings are part of a bigger picture and that we are to labor to work on the failings of others.

4. Love believes in all things. Believing is trusting. We do not have to control the other person. Those who know that they are trusted can be open and hide nothing.

5. Love hopes in all things. It does not give up. It knows that others can change, mature and radiate unexpectedly. Giving up does not have a place in a loving family. Although things may not turn out as we wish, God draws good from the evil we endure in the world. Love every trial with positive attitude. Love is hopeful of change and not completely negative of the future.

Points for Reflection

1. How am I being called by the Lord to grow in the Joy of Love?

2. How is love not rude? Do I speak with respect or am I harsh?

3. Do I try to understand others or do I try to find more faults and bad intentions?

4. Do I know when and how to be silent about the weaknesses of others or do I speak too much about other's faults?

5. Do I know how to trust or am I always trying to control and monitor the other?

6. Do I still know how to hope for some good in others during a difficult situation or do I become completely negative about it or them?

Prayer to the Holy Family

by Pope Francis

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, in you we contemplate the splendor of true love; to you we turn with trust. Holy Family of Nazareth, grant that our families too may be places of communion and prayer, authentic schools of the Gospel and small domestic churches. Holy Family of Nazareth, may families never again experience violence, rejection and division; may all who have been hurt or scandalized find ready comfort and healing. Holy Family of Nazareth, make us once more mindful of the sacredness and inviolability of the family, and its beauty in God's plan. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, Graciously hear our prayer. Amen.

4 February 2018 Community Celebration



A Reflection on a Good Friday

Elias B. Prieto, Jr., Genesis of David BCGG



Photo by cogrestored.org

It was 2:58 pm when I got up from a nap. When I opened my computer, the time registered 3:01 pm, Friday, March 30, 2018... Jesus Christ just died on the cross, a recollection and a remembrance...

It seems that up to now, in the celebration of the Sacred Triduum (Easter Triduum, Holy Triduum, or Paschal Triduum) which recalls the passion, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, it is His death which is greatly ingrained in my thoughts. He died because of me. He died for me. He died to save me. He died to bring me back to His fold. Since I believe that the greatest sacrifice and love anybody can give is his life, the death of Jesus Christ seemed to have defined who I was, who I am and what I would become. Even during reflections, the image of a dead Christ on the cross seems to be a better crutch and support in my contemplations. The greatest pain I experienced and where I cried the most, was Edith's death. The image that vividly keeps coming back to me is her dying in my arms after she sipped her last drink of water I just gave her. She loved me so much that she preferred to die in my arms than leave me at one of those times when I hurt her most. She chose to love me. She chose to share her life with me until death.

It is now 4:19 pm... I ask myself, "Should I keep dwelling on the death of Edith?" I also ask myself, "Should I continue to dwell on the death of Jesus Christ?" The time is 4:29 pm... and I still don't know the answer.

4:55 pm... What would Jesus Christ have wanted of me? "Feed My lambs!!!" – a guiding instruction He gave in His resurrection. He wanted me to not just exist. He wanted me to live my life the way He lived His before His death on the cross. What would Edith have wanted of me after her death? Live a life the way she loved me, the way she reciprocated God's love for her.

The death of Jesus Christ on the cross is past, a memory. He has resurrected. He is alive. His life is active in how I am and in how I choose to be. He is alive in what and where I am and in what and where I choose to be. "Feed My lambs." Edith's death is past, a memory. How she loved me would be a living memory guiding me to follow Jesus Christ in feeding His lambs.

5:17 pm... Thank you Edith for sharing your life with me. Thank you Lord for giving me Edith. Thank you Lord for this reflection.

What a way to celebrate my Easter! HALLELUJAH!!!

The journey from the palms to the cross: What Matters Most

Josephus Jimenez, Cana BCGG



Photo by David Dehner

When Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, He was met by crowds shouting "Halleluia, Hail to the Messiah." Days later, that same crowd shouted to Pontius Pilate: "Crucify Jesus, release Barabbas." How could people change in so short a time? The answer is in the gospels of Matthew, Luke, Mark, and John. There was a conspiracy to eliminate Jesus because He posed a grave danger to the powers-that-be. And the people were too easily manipulated by fake news, propaganda instigated by scribes and Pharisees, the ruling class who were threatened by Jesus.

Jesus was a threat because each day, His followers grew in numbers. He was a very effective preacher. More and more people followed Him in the villages where He spread the good news of salvation. More so, when He healed the sick, made the blind see, the lame walk, and lepers clean again. He gave hope to the poor and the victims of social injustice. He drove away demons and evil spirits and forgave the sins of prostitutes and tax collectors.

The enemies of Jesus bribed the apostle Judas Escariot with 30 pieces of silver and he gave the details of Jesus' planned route. He even accompanied Jesus in the Gethsemane where the ambush arrest was to be made. Judas had the temerity to attend the Last Supper but it was then and there that Jesus said one of them would betray Him. By the washing of the hands before the Last Supper, the other apostles came to know it was Judas Iscariot who would sell Jesus to Caiaphas, Annas, and the powers-that-be. Jesus already knew what would happen, and the rest is told in the gospel.

The journey from the joyful Palm Sunday to the sorrowful Good Friday was the most intensive episode of Jesus passion, death, and resurrection. It was a journey that started with the ecstasy of Palm Sunday and ended with the agony in Calvary. But the story of Jesus did not end on the cross.

The resurrection, which is the central and core essence of our Catholic faith, is the true climax of Jesus' life. If the palms symbolized joy and hopes, and if Jesus' death on the cross symbolized the deepest anguish of the believers, the resurrection represents the ultimate truth: That there indeed is life after death.

This is our essential faith; that we are not just bodies but spirit too, and that there shall be a resurrection of the dead and the communion of saints. Without the resurrection, we would have nothing to hold to, and Jesus' death on the cross would have lost its meaning and purpose.

A Journey Through the Holy Week

Fred & Cora de Guzman, Agnus Dei BCGG

PALM SUNDAY

Two days before Palm Sunday, my youngest daughter who is a “special” was telling me repeatedly “Paspas, buy paspas.” After deciphering what she meant, I was reminded that the coming Sunday was Palm Sunday. Since I retired from work in June last year, I have not paid attention to the exact dates in the month; I was only interested in the days of the week and not the date. Why? Because the number coding of my vehicle is Thursday. Aside from that, I have to donate a little sum to the PCSO every Monday.

It’s a good thing we have a calendar on the wall, in addition to the date and time on my mobile phone. Sometimes I wonder if I am already developing partial “dementia.” As an excuse, we sometimes call it “senior moments.” I remember telling my wife a joke that the time might come when I will ask her “Who you?” And the worst could be when you are driving and forget where you are going. Oh, that’s already Alzheimer’s.

So it’s Palm Sunday and we have to buy “Palaspas.” As always, we have to condition my daughter that we will buy one only because her habit is to buy as many as she can hold. It’s a struggle that we always encounter with her because she is very makulit. The good thing is, my wife can discipline her.

HOLY MONDAY

At 9:19 am I received a text from Jay, our Agnus Dei Shepherd, asking if I could write for the Newsletter about the Lenten Season. Though I used to write memos, manuals on policy and procedure, and even contracts, I find myself weak at writing literary articles, hence I simply said, I will try.

In the afternoon, to the delight of my special (youngest) daughter, it’s Mall time. She and my wife went to the parlor. To pass the time, I went to the Boutique Bingo which was full of middle-aged and

senior citizens. Are they passing the time just like me? Or because of their habit of playing bingo and gambling? It’s Holy Week and yet we were there gambling? In the province the pastime is playing bingo, scrabble or even jueteng; some machos’ pastime is drinking marka demonyo lapad or bilog.

When I was growing up, during Holy Week we were forbidden to play, sing, and listen to the radio. “Bawal ang Masaya” so we should not laugh or do something to be happy, nor read magazines like Liwayway or Bannawag. Definitely no meat for the whole week. When I started earning money, being young and careless and disregarding my parents’ admonitions, on the night of a Good Friday I and some neighbors and co-workers in a plywood factory, had a drinking spree with calderetang kambing as pulutan. The following day, I had an accident in the factory: my left foot was run over by a forklift. Thank God I was able to twist my left foot outward and despite the heavy weight of the forklift, only some blood vessels were cut, and not the bones in my foot. I was disabled for more than a month.

In the evening of Holy Monday, I read the Bible to get some inspiration to write. I wanted to know the events that led to the “Stations of the Cross,” about the Passion of Christ. But simply reading the Gospels did not give me the exact events that led to the Stations of the Cross. When I read a pamphlet on Way of the Cross, I understood where the fourteen stations of the cross came from; the events when Jesus was condemned to death as the first station, and when Jesus was laid on the tomb as the fourteenth station.

In Paniqui, Tarlac where I come from, the Stations of the Cross were not popular with us when we were young. My mother and my elder sister obliged us to attend the service and masses in the afternoon, and join the procession at night on Holy Thursday and Good Friday. Afterwards I and my friends would visit places where there were “Pabasas.” Some families traditionally sponsor the “Pabasa” by shouldering the

cost of the lights, sound system and the food for the singers and guests. Though we did not participate, we were amused and amazed at the several dialects (Kapampangan, Ilocano, Pangasinense, Tagalog) in singing the Passion of Christ. And of course what we loved most was partaking of dinner or merienda. And again, we were obliged to attend the Mass at dawn. Imagine waking up at 3:00 am to witness the reenactment of the “salubong” of Jesus Christ and Mama Mary. And then comes the Pasko ng Pagkabuhay, and, being a Pasko, we children expected to be given money, just like Christmas.

And then to my surprise, I read the name of “Joanna” in Luke 24:9-10, “they returned from the tomb and announced all these things to the eleven and to all others, the women were Mary the Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, the others who accompanied them also told these to the apostles.” (The name of Joanna was not mentioned in Matthew, Mark and John). It reminds me of my eldest daughter Joanna, an OFW for many years. I see her as an independent person, self-accomplished and in control of her destiny, as she surpassed by 4 years my own stint as an Overseas Contract Worker. She brings joy, happiness, and sadness. Joy and happiness because she is on her own, deciding her fate and offering financial assistance, if needed. Sadness because she wants to spread her own wings alone, lives in a condo by herself, away from our house. She sometimes asks her sister to stay with her for a few days, leaving me and Cora alone in our house. When she is around, she drives the car and I am relegated to being a mere passenger, an observer. I’m no longer in control.

HOLY TUESDAY

Did some chores at home and went to grocery at night.



HOLY WEDNESDAY

When Fr. Reuter was alive, Cora and I would attend his annual recollection. When his activities waned we then religiously attended the annual recollection sponsored by the Holy Family group of Della Strada Church in Quezon City. Again, said recollection stopped and we don’t know why.

This Wednesday, we attended a recollection at the SM Megatrade Hall with Cardinal Tagle and Bishop David of Caloocan City as speakers. Cardinal Tagle talked about the Evangelization, Fake News vs. the Good News. Bishop David was ecstatic about the current events in his Diocese, particularly the crime and drug situation there and the replacement of the entire police force because of the murder of Kian delos Santos et al. Fr. Dommie Guzman led the Stations of the Cross, and explained the Fifth Station where Simon of Cyrene, who was just a traveler from Libya (formerly Cyrene), was required to help Jesus carry the cross.

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Attending the service at the Church of Gesu in Ateneo, I was surprised that the guards at the entrance gate did not require me to surrender my driver’s license as they usually do. I do not like surrendering my driver’s license to anyone, especially to a MMDA traffic enforcer. Instead, the guards courteously

asked for an ID card, not the license, recorded the name then returned the ID card. What a relief.

On this day, the Gospel of John is more revealing. It was the Last Supper and Jesus washed the disciples’ feet, as a model to follow. It was also on this day that Jesus gave a new commandment: “As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.” And in Chapter 16, verses 19-22: Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, “Are you discussing with one another what I said, ‘A little while and you will not see me, and again a little while you will see me? Amen, amen, I say to you, you will weep and mourn, while the world rejoices; you will grieve but your grief will become joy. When a woman is in labor, she is in anguish because her hour has arrived; but when she has given birth to a child, she no longer remembers the pain because of her joy that a child has been born into this world. So you also are now in anguish. But I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you.”

Before the Mass, it was explained that the Mass ends after the Body of Christ is placed in the Tabernacle, and that those who will do the Visita Iglesia should pray at the Tabernacle and not anywhere else.

May God forgive me as I may have missed reading in the Gospels that we have to visit seven churches on this day. Is it just a tradition? Just the same, we did the Visita Iglesia. Traffic going to Della Strada Church was not moving at all so I skipped it. Our fourth church was Christ the King at Greenmeadows. To my dismay, I was stuck going towards the parking area; the vehicles in front and behind me were not moving. So when my companions finished praying, I texted my wife to proceed to the area where they alighted. Luckily, the vehicles behind me backed out and I got out of the parking area. Sigh.

The Visita Iglesia was not practiced in our town, at least by the poor families. What was popular was a pilgrimage where those who could afford would visit the Church of Manaoag, Pangasinan and then have lunch somewhere in a beach in

La Union. Our own parish in Cainta, Rizal arranges a Visita Iglesia but it is more of a Pilgrimage where they visit churches in far away provinces.

And for the Millennials, notice nowadays that many young people in the metropolis walk to the Lady of Light Parish in Antipolo. I wonder how these young people spend the night at the Church and how they go home. Since I love walking, I want to try it. But that’s just “wish ko lang.”

GOOD FRIDAY

Jesus was crucified and died on the cross. It was a day of mourning for everyone.

Attended Mass at the Church of Gesu. The church was full. Yet there was a sign that there is another Mass in another area in Ateneo for the Alumni. No wonder going out of the parking area after the Mass took me almost half an hour.

HOLY SATURDAY

Attended the Easter Vigil, also at the Church of Gesu. I am always amazed how they light from a distance, the bonfire in front of the church. It’s like a magic –suddenly there is a bonfire from which the “big candle” is lit. And then the Church staff light their small candles from the big one, then in turn light the candles of the others until every candle is lit. How solemn.

Just as last year, the Mass was celebrated by Fr. Jose Ramon T. Villarin, SJ, the President of Ateneo de Manila University.

EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

Happy Easter every one!

*Loving Kuya Jesus,
I ask for the grace of Your gift of silence
That I may create that space in my heart
That You would fill with Your love,
With Your word, with Your truth.
I pray that I may see You, hear You
And feel your presence, not only
During my time of prayer, but also
During the whole day of my living.
I pray too for Your strength and for
Your gift of perseverance, in the face
Of my sufferings, in the face of my pains,
In the face of my disappointments,
At not getting what I want, of my
Inordinate desires and attachments.
Give me the strength to embrace my
Brokenness and ingloriousness
That I may find You in my humanity,
That I may discern Your mission for me,
That I too may discover my deepest
desire,
That of being united with Your loving
And compassionate heart, and enter
Into the true glory of Your rising,
Our redemption. Amen.*

The way of the heart, some say, is through prayer (conversation, meditation and contemplation), solitude and aloneness with God, as the desert fathers did. This is an effective way of knowing God more, not only in the mind, but more importantly, in the heart. As a lay person, engaged in a livelihood, in faith-based groups and the parish, how can I go into my own desert and find God? This may be effective for some people, but I will have to find my way, or find my own desert, in the midst of all these “busyness,” and be alone with God. Daily praying would help, because whenever I pray, I try to focus all my being on Him and Him alone. And I think that I can bring this focus in my day to day life. As I leave my prayer time and go out into the world, I can still carry God in my heart, in my being. God’s perspective should be reflected in my response to worldly stimuli, characterized by, for example, the teachings of Jesus: mercy, unconditional love, compassion, humility and service especially towards my

brothers and sisters in need. These are more like matters of the heart, and how I live this will depend on my particular circumstances, and those of others.

Here is a tip from a wise desert father on how I can focus on God when I am in the world: talk to those buried in the graveyard, insult and curse them to the lowest depths of hell, or praise them to high heavens, they will not respond to you either way. So also, deal with people in your life when they insult and curse you, or when they praise and honor you. Like the dead, do not respond. Maybe I should acknowledge for the sake of courtesy, especially the praise part, but I should not get distracted by anger or pride, and instead continue living the teachings of Jesus. I would want to be in the presence of my God, because in this silence, I find peace. It is a peace which I experience despite the difficulties and uncertainties of life in this world, a peace which finds expression in my thoughts, my words and my deeds, a peace that heals, not only me, but others as well.

A Way of the Heart is my response to God’s love for me. “For God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son.” Jesus became one of us, and suffered like all of us, not for His own sake, but as a love offering for our salvation. My response is my imitation of His heart, the center of His being, both divine and human. It is pure and perfect, yet is humble and full of mercy and compassion. I can only love God if I love others as I love myself, not in a narcissistic way, but in a self-giving way. Jesus puts His comfort aside to accommodate others, often into the night, always surrounded by crowds, even dying so that we may be saved. So too I give way to others so that they may experience some form of physical and spiritual well-being.

How do I respond to my experience in this world, where there is disunity even among people who equally espouse the good of others, where there is a seeming emphasis on accumulating wealth and power, where there is apathy, anger, disrespect, self-gratification and narcissism, from the highest circles of the land, to the lowest individuals. Sometimes I wonder where faith, hope and charity are. Sometimes I wonder how I can be compassionate in this kind of a situation.

Here is a tip from Pope Francis. For

Lent, he suggests that we Pause, See and Return. Pause sometimes from a fast-paced life, from showing off, from being controlling, from a noisy life, and spend more quiet time with Him. See and look at the faces of our family, children, the poor, the sick and see Jesus’ bruised and bleeding face. Return without fear to a Father who is always waiting for us with open arms. Clear the temple of my heart with the clutter of this worldly life. See the face of Lazarus the beggar in everyone we meet. Be as humble and repentant as the tax collector.

The basis for a fulfilling Way of the Heart is a deep faith. I do not know if my faith is deep enough, but without such faith in the compassionate and merciful Jesus, Son of Man and Son of our loving Father, and with grace from the Holy Spirit, I cannot live my Christian life. My faith in Jesus is the starting point, and from this flows love and compassion, and hope in union with God, in this life and after. I accept this mission, and persevere despite the difficulties because I know that this is the only way to live.

Before Holy Week, the gospels become very foreboding. They talk of the impending death of Jesus. And I find it difficult to understand why Jesus knows He will be killed by the hard-hearted Jews and religious officials, and yet He persists in going to Jerusalem twice or thrice according to the gospel of John, and talking of things the ordinary Jews find hard to understand and put into the context of God’s love. At Gethsemane, He even sweated blood when praying to the Father to “let this cup pass, but Your will be done (still).” Jesus accepted this and was faithful to His mission.

Makes me ask (in my enterprise-based thinking): What’s the plan? What’s the objective? What’s the strategy? What are my programs I don’t understand. The seed does not die before it yields produce, but it grows to become a plant that bears fruit.

However, if I would use my heart more, then maybe I can relate this enterprise based thinking to what Jesus said: I am the way, the truth and the life. Life in union with Him, in His peace, is my objective. The basis for this peace is my forgiving heart, as His heart is full of mercy towards all, as the Father is patiently waiting for me to return whenever I go rogue.

On a macro level, this as a basis for social structures, can ensure peace and goodwill among men. The truth, His truth is my strategy, my philosophy, my value system. And I can discern this from the scriptures and later teachings of the church authorities and experts. His way is my program of life. As he did, so would I.

Meditating on death, His death and mine, I would understand that the death of the seed is not its end, but its transformation from one state of being to another. As do I, if I follow Jesus and die when I do not allow my pride, my egoism, my indifference and my sensuality, to rule my relationships, and I become more understanding and less controlling. Then that state of my being is dying, from a prideful and selfish man, I become a more loving and compassionate man, following in the footsteps of Jesus. The way of the heart teaches me that Christian death is transformation, and is necessary for me to grow in my faith. Yes, maybe I should use more of my heart, less of my mind, and whatever sliver of light that touched my heart a few times in my prayers, would grow to become full-blown daylight, and illumination. And I would see that the Father let Jesus remain faithful to his mission of spreading the good news of God’s love.

The way of the heart of Jesus is a very painful one. This way also entails that whatever the time of the year, I must go to my Jerusalem daily. Life is difficult, and I must learn to bear my pains and my hurts, and yet continue to be loving, kind and forgiving. It is inclusive and accepts everyone, and everything that comes with the territory. His divinity clothed in human flesh, showed me very graphically a way back to God, by demonstrating His purpose, His methods, His acceptance and faithfulness, His hope, His compassion and love, even at the cost of great suffering. He died at the cross out of love for me, for us, to save me from my sins that I may find my way back to the Father. At the last supper, He washed the feet of the apostles, telling them that they are to serve, not only God, but more importantly, their fellowmen. They, I, we, will have no part in Jesus if we do not serve. All kinds of people, from family members, neighbors, workmates and others, especially the more vulnerable among us, are the objects of the ministrations of my heart, as Jesus came for all of us.

I must not be disheartened, for by dying on the cross, He brought with His pain, peace and life. And my reward is not suffering and death, but life with Jesus now and in the hereafter, which will not be blocked by any obstacle. Like the big stone that blocked the tomb of Jesus, obstacles will just be rolled away by the power of this new life. As Jesus rose from death without fanfare, I pray that I too rise to this new life every time I fall, a daily resurrection.

*Jesus, as I travel with you towards
Golgotha,
I can feel every wound opened by the
scourging.
I can feel the pricking pain inflicted by
Each thorn of that crown on my head.
I can feel the weight of that cross,
Getting heavier with each step
And the pain on my knees and legs.
I can feel the pain on the soles of my feet
For every little stone I step on.*

*I can feel the sharp pain of the nails
Hammered into my hands and feet.
I can feel the pain of hanging on my
hands,
My bleeding feet supporting all of my
weight.
I can feel my chest tightening, each
breath
Become harder and harder, as my lungs
are
Pulled down by the weight of my body.*

*I cry out, and all is gone – the pain,
My senses, my consciousness, my
thoughts,
My hopes, my dreams, my plans, my
loves.
I offer all these to You.
Since I am one of those who inflict
Such atrocities on You, I pray for
Your mercy and Your forgiveness.
I pray too that when You rise from death
And return to the Father, bring me with
You,
Even if it means that You carry me
On Your shoulders because I am weak.
For my destiny, my place, is in
Your loving and compassionate heart.*

The gospels portray the resurrection of Jesus in a low key manner. There is no glorious and earth shaking event. The disciples too knew nothing about it and disbelieved the few to whom Jesus appeared after rising from the dead. This low key event, yet full of significance, and is in fact one of the lynch pins of the Christian faith, was even revealed slowly, perhaps to prevent the disciples from having heart attacks, or perhaps to prepare and make them ready to accept this truth. Jesus was, for most of them, mainly a man during the three years that Jesus was with them. They probably could not at first believe that Jesus was both man and God. For many of them, He may be the Messiah, even the Son of God, but for Jesus to be God Himself is contrary to the Jewish faith in only one God.

Jesus had to reveal Himself to the disciples after rising from the dead. He had to chide them for their lack of faith. His resurrection shows them that He is God but human still, for He was still hungry and had to eat. And slowly, they begin to understand. While they believe that Jesus was the Messiah, they now understand the words He spoke to them earlier. The conversion of their hearts is now almost complete. And they are ready to be sent to continue the mission of Jesus here on earth, and proclaim the good news to the whole of creation, not just to the whole of mankind, and make them ready to receive Jesus.

Looking back, I too underwent a similar process of revelation, conversion and mission, though the process took many years and is a continuing one. There is no glory there too, in the sense of the usual honor and praise, medals and trophies. But there was gratitude, some contentment and peace in the thought that my heart travels with the heart of Jesus, in the thought that I try to do as He taught even when I often forget, fail and fall, and in the knowledge that the Father will welcome me as He welcomes all His prodigal children. And when the time finally comes when I make my final crossing over, there will be joy and glory when my Father welcomes me into His loving embrace, the final destination of my way of the heart.

HAPPY EASTER TO ALL!



Father, Son, Spirit

March 11, 2018 / Ruben M. Tanseco, SJ

God loves us so much that He makes sure we do not miss His presence, and for this reason, He manifests Himself to us in three ways: as God the Father, as God the Son, and as God the Holy Spirit. Three persons in one God.

GOD THE FATHER. Creator of the whole universe. We can experience God's presence anywhere and everywhere. This is the focus of what we call today as creation-centered spirituality. For instance, take the opportunity to quietly sit down outdoors, surrounded by nature all around you. Contemplate the different flowers, with their amazing colors and designs, and allow them to touch your heart in their own way. Then, look up and contemplate the various trees, each one with its own uniqueness and beauty, and allow them likewise to silently touch your heart and mind. Each one has its tall, powerful branches and whispering leaves being blown by the wind all around them. Then, notice some pretty birds flying as they chirp their songs that no musical instrument can imitate. Each singing bird is a gem that is priceless. You then look up at the sunny sky so far away, with some white clouds here and there, totally silent but with indescribable beauty. Thus, you can experience God's loving presence, and ending this by feeling His presence within you, as you breathe in and out, in and out, the breath of life. For where life is, there God's spiritual presence is, for He is the very source and author of life. When we experience daily all the above and more, this will change our whole way of life, and the way we relate to ourselves and to all others all over the world. No amount of just words and books can duplicate this direct experience of God through His creation all around us and within us.

GOD THE SON. The human-divine person of Jesus Christ. From today's Gospel reading, we are told: "God so loved the world that He gave His only son, so that everyone who believes in Him might not perish but might have eternal life." (Jn.3:16). Jesus became one among us, so that He could be our role-model in living a human life of love, mercy, and compassion. He was born in a simple manger,



grew up with an ordinary lifestyle, and became a carpenter. But then, his divine self full of love for humanity became active in his teachings, works of mercy, and no less than numerous miracles. St. Matthew's Gospel summarizes it this way: "He went around all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and curing every disease and illness among the people. His fame spread to all of Syria, and they brought to him all who were sick with various diseases and racked with pain, those who were possessed, lunatics, and paralytics, and he cured them." (Mt. 4:23-24).

Not only that. Jesus taught them and us to love our enemies! "But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust." (Mt. 5:44-45, cf. Lk. 6:27-36).

What touches me deeply was His compassion. Let me single out one among so many. As He was entering a city, he witnessed the funeral of a young man, the only child of a widowed mother. You can just imagine what pain that woman was going through. She was now completely alone. Jesus was moved with compassion, approached the woman, and said to her: "Do not weep." He then approached the coffin and brought her son back to life again! How human and divine this Jesus was and is!

Yes. His compassion touches me personally, from the time I was born all the way to the present – my being a Jesuit priest for the last fifty-three years. Countless times have I experienced His compassion, not only toward me, but for the many couples and families who have come to me for counseling. Provided the couples and families set aside their egos

and lovingly surrender themselves to the compassionate Lord through a process of spiritual discernment, they experience inner peace and profound gratitude. Of course, as it was in the life of Christ, there are crosses in our lives. These are the opportunities for our growth as persons, our greatness as human beings, and our Godliness as males and females – like the person of Christ, who carried His cross all the way to the crucifixion, only to be followed by the resurrection.

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT. God did not leave us after the ascension of Jesus. No. On the contrary, God came back to us as God the Holy Spirit, so that His spiritual presence can be everywhere, unlimited. As written in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, the disciples of Christ were able to preach God's teachings in so many different languages for the different communities all over the world.

Today, there are different institutional religious from different cultures and languages. But when everything is said and done, they all point to the one and only Creator-God of the whole universe. Ecumenical and interfaith.

Our beloved Pope Francis himself expressed this simply but lovingly. "My wish is that the dialogue between us should help to build bridges connecting all people, in such a way that everyone can see in the other not an enemy, not a rival, but a brother or sister to be welcomed and embraced! My own origins impel me to work for the building of bridges. As you know, my family is of Italian origin; and so this dialogue between places and cultures a great distance apart matters greatly to me, this dialogue between one end of the world and the other, which today are growing ever closer, more interdependent, more in need of opportunities to meet and create real spaces of authentic fraternity." (From Thoughts and Words for the Soul, 2014, p. 62).

To our all-powerful and ever-loving God: Daghang Salamat, Panginoon, Salamat!!

I am not ready

Rey Mella, Cana BCGG



There is this story about Stanley Villavicencio who, as reported in a newspaper, rose from being dead on March 3, 1993, in Chong Hua Hospital, Cebu City. We also need to take care of the resources God gives us in order to enjoy life and take care of our journey in this world. God wants us to prosper.

“Three days before that, his heart stopped, he had turned blue from head to foot, and his vital organs showed no more signs of life.”

“When he was rushed to the hospital, he was immediately placed in intensive care. His family was told by medical experts that he only had a one-in-a-million chance of survival. His organs had failed and when doctors attempted a blood transfusion they found that the blood was so thick it was unable to circulate around his body.”

“The doctors had asked the wife’s permission to take off all the life support apparatus attached to his body because they said there was no more chance of survival. His family therefore made all the necessary preparations for his burial. They made ready a long-sleeved shirt; his mother-in-law volunteered her memorial plan, including her coffin; Queen City Garden Cemetery was contacted.”

“Suddenly, he stunned his wife and scared off the nurses and medical attendants who were present, when he “took off his dextrose and the endotracheal tube stuck into his nose – and walked away like a normal person. When his neighbors saw him, they scampered!”

In an interview months or years later, and via the same newspaper, Brother Stanley Villavicencio tells this story, and I quote:

“I have also another good experience during my flight from Hong Kong. Our aircraft suddenly depressurized. When that happened, the aircraft suddenly nose-dived. All the passengers were crying and shouting, calling the name of the Lord. They were all crying, shouting, and praying. Then just near me was a priest and a nun who was also crying, praying, and shouting. I was the only one

not praying. I was just looking at each one of them, observing them. When the nun noticed that I was not praying, she got so very angry with me.

When the aircraft normalized, she confronted me. “Why are you not praying?” she shouted at me. Then she said, “Are you not afraid to die?” Then I answered her, “Why should I, I’m already ready.”

Death is not the greatest loss in life. The greatest loss is what dies inside us while we live.

– Norman Cousins

My very good friend, Jun, who told me about Stanley Villavicencio, articulated to me his desire not to be revived in a hospital, if and when his family gets into a situation where a choice for him would be to continue to live or to wait it out and die.

He sincerely and passionately believes that since the whole purpose of life is to do God’s mission and then to eventually join Him, then, when it is his time, there is no point in prolonging his stay on earth.

Every day, he strives very hard to continue to be prepared and ready to die. He is retired, lives a simple life, is busy at home with household chores, prays and serves the church. He really has simplified life to the very basics. Very inspiring.

I was once a Boy Scout and the scout motto is “Be prepared” or “Laging handa.” All my life, I’ve worked hard to be always ready. I have not been successful all the time. I missed a lot of opportunities to be ready for eventualities and life’s risks.

Nevertheless, I keep trying to be ready and to prepare. In my work, I advocate preparedness as a key to success. Being prepared for any operational events, being prepared in a meeting, being prepared for a presentation or a management review. Outside of work, I like planning and preparing for a travel, working on my personal finances, anticipating long

term house problems like pest control, electrical wiring, paint jobs, etc.

I do know that I am not sufficiently working on my readiness to die and join my Creator. And maybe, this is where I should focus my life on moving forward.

I pray that God will guide me in my desire to be better prepared to die.

In my talks on the basics of personal finance, I include and discuss the spirituality of money, and that God wants us to prosper and become wealthy.

In my research, in my power-point slides, I articulate in my talks that by simply using the verses in the bible, we would all be guided about what to do with our money and personal finances. It is all there – from working hard to becoming wealthy, to being trustworthy with money, to spending our money wisely, to not getting into debt, to diversification, etc.

Jeremiah 29:11: “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Proverbs 14:23: “All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty. “

Luke 16:10: “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.”

On borrowing, Proverbs 22:7 tells us that “The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is slave to the lender.”

On diversification - Ecclesiastes 11:2: “But divide your investments among many places, for you do not know what risks might lie ahead.”

In Luke 12:34, God reminds us about focusing on where it matters - “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

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Colors of the sky

Leslie Gatchalian, Psalm 98 BCGG

when all the stars have gone to bed
and the sun’s rays covered the earth
the merging colors painted on your body
and the bottom has the sunset hue in it
still the birds sang that morning
and the world continued its turn
cars pass by honking and belching
no, nothing is happening
the ambulance came shrieking
the gates wildly opening
linen went flying
soon as doors opened banging
men and women started scurrying
to a blue and hardened statue
no life, no misty breath, no pounding
no words, gazes non-assuring
shouts, tears and crying

cannot this body stir
embraces, kisses don’t matter
when this earthly thing is sleeping
movements gone, no will
then suddenly
all the world is silently still
no more running,
no more drumming
no more fun
but the thoughts
kept all those that was
and sitting out in the sun
this box of memories opens
to savor what was gone
and the sky glows once more
with unspeakably wonderful colors
some of them you’ve never seen before!



Spiritual Tidbits and Humor, continued from page 18

Proverbs 21:20: “The wise have wealth and luxury, but fools spend whatever they get.”

On giving, Proverbs 11:24-25 says, “Give freely and become more wealthy, be stingy and lose everything. The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed.”

As various websites say, I have summarized them:

- Sixteen of 38 parables deal with money and possessions
- In the gospels, 1 in 10 verses deal with finances
- There are 500 verses on prayer; less than 500 verses on faith, but over 2,000 verses on finances

This means that every financial decision is also a spiritual decision.

God speaks to us through the bible and guides us through our life, to be prosperous, to be successful, to enable us to be successful, and then, to be prepared to leave this world and join Him in heaven.

A devastated-looking man knocks on the door of a woman known for her charity.

“Please, ma’am,” he says when she opens the door, “can you help this poor, tragic family down the block? The father just lost his job, and his wife is too ill to work. They’re about to be turned out into the cold streets unless someone can pay their rent.”

“That’s the worst thing I’ve ever heard in my life!” says the woman. “May I ask who you are?”

“Their landlord.”

- www.rd.com

“The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our separate ways, I to die, and you to live. Which of these two is better only God knows.”

– Socrates

Reflections

Fiona Mella,
Magis Youth



Self love is very important, especially in today’s time. We always see the importance of outer beauty and we fail to value inner beauty. Everyone says you should always love yourself, but how? I didn’t have an idea how, until I attended Francis Miranda’s talk on “Self-Love.” I learned that it’s easy to say but hard to do.

The talk of Francis was a good reminder. It made me realize that self-love should be second nature. You love yourself even though you’re limited. You give yourself importance and credit for the things you enjoy doing and fail at doing. Self-love is more than accepting your flaws and negatives traits; it is allowing yourself to be happy as you are while striving to be better.

MAGIS DEO



YOUTH

2018 Summer Camp!

Water Obstacle Course
Kayaking / Rafting
Zipline
Rope Course
Swimming

Tentative Plans:

Date: May 26-27, 2018 (Saturday-Sunday)

Venue: Phillip's Sanctuary
Antipolo, Rizal
<http://www.phillips-sanctuary.com>

Ages: 12 to 19 years old

Est'mated Cost: P2,100



Open to friends/relatives of Magis Deo.

Invite your cousins and friends!

The more, the merrier!

Reserve by: April 16, 2018
Pay by: April 30, 2018
Contact persons:
tita Chelle Red (0995) 218-6639
tita Abby Tumbocon (0917) 8560580
tita Pinky Rosas (0918) 941-1657

Mayon Relief Mission

by Leo Soliman, Corinthians BCGG



The mission to provide assistance to the people displaced by the threatened eruption of Mayon volcano called for a blitzkrieg approach. And so, in the dead of night on Feb. 23, 2018, Leony Parada and I hied to Naga City, arriving there at 6:45 am of Feb 24. The ride was smooth as we snoozed the duration of our trip.

Leony’s relatives, the Maravilla family, played generous host and valuable ally by providing us with the logistics for our mission. Jun and Abby Maravilla, by the way, along with 5 other couples, are Magis Deo graduates.

Losing no time, we sped off to the evacuation center at Cumon, Camalig, Albay which was a good 2-hour drive from the city.

We distributed the 150 packages of banig, kumot and assorted groceries to the senior citizen evacuees. The on-point coordination and handling of personnel from the Mayor’s office and local DSWD eased the work flow effort. They surely know their job.

The happy faces of the recipients washed away the weariness of our tired bones. An avalanche of “salamat” from the lolos and lolas fattened our hearts no end.

And, as if on cue, while giving out relief goods, Mayon Volcano again erupted although mildly. Could be its way of saying “salamat.”

And right after the distribution (around 5:30 pm), we rushed back to the central station, narrowly missing our bus ride back home.

Thanks to Corinthians BCGG for the relief goods, to Psalmaritans BCGG for the logistical support, to the Maravilla family for their valuable assistance.

And to our Lord for giving our Magis Deo Community the opportunity to help.

April & May Birthday Celebrants and Wedding Anniversaries

April Birthday Celebrants		
2	Tony Del Rosario	James, Brother of John
3	Eugene Araullo	Transfiguration
4	Roel Wong	Chronicles
6	Floyd Tamera	Mustard Seed
6	Ronnie Pascual	ME Class 126
8	Mon Vinluan	ME Class 124
10	Cathy Maulit	Prodigal 102
11	Malou Apo	Exodus
11	Dina Valdes	Archangel Gabriel
12	Ed Castillo	Cana
12	April Sales	ME Class 127
12	Marichelle Ackerman	ME Class 125
14	John Boren	Agnus Dei
14	Rudy Ebarido	Francis
15	Butch Vargas	Easter
15	Ernie Gagto	ME Class 126
17	Randy Rivera	Song of Ruth
21	Monchito Mossesgeld	Cana
22	Mylene Cadiz	ME Class 127
22	Beth Vargas	Agnus Dei
23	Eljon Red	Chronicles
23	Joe Serranilla	Mustard Seed
24	John Ronquillo	James, Brother of John
25	Paul Marigomen	St. Peter
27	Emma Punzalan	Sirach
27	Roel Claros	ME Class 124
28	Marilyn Soliman	Corinthians
30	Lito Quimel	Exodus

April Wedding Anniversaries		
3	Levy & Del Domingo	Song of Ruth
5	Edwin & Jes Gumila	Easter
7	Manny+ & Leslie Gatchalian	Psalms 98
8	Ian & Elaine Serranilla	Matthew
12	Art & Grace Santos	Thessalonians
23	Fred & Cora De Guzman	Agnus Dei
24	Regie & Daisy De Guzman	Corinthians
25	Petrik & Yas Punzalan	Easter
26	Harry & Helen Chua	Sirach

2018 Schedule of Annual Ignatian Retreat (AIR)

1. August 3-5, 2018
Fr. Mon Bautista SJ
2. October 19-21, 2018
Fr. Manol Montesclaros
- Both AIRs will be at Sacred Heart Retreat House in Novaliches.
- Cost of the retreat is as follows:
Aircon room, private bathroom - **P3200/person**
Non aircon room, common bathroom - **2100/person**
- Reservations shall be confirmed only upon receipt of at least 50% downpayment.**
- Payment may be made with Jane Fernandez at Magis Deo Office or deposited in the following banks under the account name of Magis Deo Inc.:
- PS Bank S/A 089-33200060-4**
Metrobank S/A 093-3-09351539-1

May Birthday Celebrants		
1	Mon Go	Psalms 98
1	Mia Parada	Psalmaritans
2	Fely Redual	Francis
3	Vic Hurna	Mustard Seed
3	Steph Martinez	Song of Ruth
4	Maricel Suarez	Tala
5	Lito Naldo	Psalmaritans
6	Pachot Abapo	Francis
7	Cora Ona	Archangel Gabriel
8	Vina Dimanalata	Francis
9	Jonnie Tabilog	James, Brother of John
10	Jon Cobico	Thessalonians
10	Ricky Sun	Matthew
10	Faith Villegas	Chronicles
11	Art Santos	Thessalonians
13	Nette Puthenpurekal	Easter
14	Jane Aldeguer	Mustard Seed
16	Meg Fajardo	James, Brother of John
18	Lyra Yamat	Matthew
19	Caloy Ang	Tala
20	Danny Dimayuga	Sirach
20	Glo Umali	Magnificat
21	Terry Lim	Easter
21	Evelyn San Pedro	Cana
22	Chelle Red	Chronicles
23	Marilyn Ordoñez	ME Class 127
23	Mona Ramos	ME Class 127
25	Uriel Castillo	Archangel Gabriel
25	Cora Gaza	ME Class 127
25	Bambi Yaneza	Thessalonians
25	Jeng Salvador	ME Class 126
27	Anchit Chua Chiaco	John
27	Benz Dimanalata	Francis
27	Tippi Reyes	Archangel Gabriel
27	Claro Santos	Agnus Dei
28	Boboy Serrano	Genesis of David
30	Bebot Hurna	Mustard Seed
30	Nadea Sarte	Prodigal 102
31	Rey Mella	Cana
31	Mimi Santos	Psalmaritans

May Wedding Anniversaries		
1	Gene & Eve Bañez	Agnus Dei
1	Bong+ & Emma Punzalan	Sirach
1	Chito+ & Nadea Sarte	Prodigal 102
2	Leo & Marilyn Soliman	Corinthians
3	Arnel & Bernie Isip	Corinthians
5	Boy & Merl Cruz	James, Brother of John
5	Franco & Tippi Reyes	Archangel Gabriel
7	Lito & Anne Naldo	Psalmaritans
10	Raul & Honey Dimayuga	ME Class 125
11	Fil+ & Anne Alfonso	John
12	Atoy & Malou Apo	Exodus
12	Rico & Terry Lim	Easter
15	Gary & Marivic Canoso	Magnificat
16	Levy & Roxanne Espiritu	Transfiguration
18	Mon & Alice Go	Psalms 98
18	Dennis & Peaches Plaza	Easter
20	Manny & Nancy Martin	Tala
20	Jonnie & Arlyn Tabilog	James, Brother of John
22	Eljon & Chelle Red	Chronicles
24	Celso & Siony Martinez	Magnificat

ME WEEKEND

ME Reflections



Dear God,

Sometimes, with the busyness of the world that we live in, we get all so consumed with the daily challenges and trials that we forget to be grateful for the daily blessings that you have bestowed on us. One of these blessings is the gift of a best friend and a loving partner (my wife Mona) who always walked with me (hand in hand) as we journey together, facing the life that You willed for us.

Thank you for the ME Weekend for it allowed us to have our long awaited “we time” – to nourish and nurture one another; to affirm our love for each other and validate each other’s role in the growth of our love, our friendship, our marriage.

Be with us, Lord God, as we continue to live our Life according to your will.

Lito & Mona Ramos
ME Class 127

Dear God,

Thank you for the opportunity you have given us to attend the ME Weekend. As a couple, we learned and understood more the true value of marriage. We witnessed what challenges we may face in the future and what we can do about them or how we can prevent these from happening. We were made more aware of our responsibilities to each other as husband and wife; we realized the essence of doing a proper dialogue with our spouse.

May we able to touch lives by practicing what is good in line with the teaching of the church to create more families that will represent “little churches” in the community.

Lastly, we know Lord that there will be road blocks along the way, but as long as we keep you as the center of our relationship, our LOVE and MARRIAGE will be blessed and last FOREVER.

All these we pray, in Jesus’ mighty name. Amen.

Love,
MJ & Rhea Vistan, ME Class 127



“Get rid of all bitterness, passion and anger. No more shouting or insults, no more hateful feelings of any sort. Instead, be kind tender- hearted to one another, and forgive one another, as God has forgiven you through Christ.” - Ephesians 4:31-32

Our ME Weekend brought a great change in our dealing with the day to day encounters in our relationship. Clashes may surface between couples because we are of different personalities. More often than not, we don’t realize that these are minor occurrences, but because of the stresses of daily life, these spats and arguments may pile up; and without our realizing it, we are already hurting each other’s feelings. Our immense experience healed us and taught us how to accept our weaknesses, and embrace our strengths as individuals. Forgiveness is the best medicine for us.

Always,
Reny & Cora Gaza, ME Class 127

Marriage Encounter Weekend

St. James Retreat House, Tagaytay City

March 9-11, 2018



In no particular order: Fr. James Wenceslao U. Gascon S.J., Josie Llamas, Cesar & Marivic Pareja, Edwin & Jes Gumila, Jojo and Jane Aldeguez, Noel & Yvette Ventigan, Ted & Susan Concepcion, Domeng & Zarah Gagatiga. Lito & Anne Naldo, Gina Manuel, Pam Narciso, Ney & Pinky Rosas, Eljon & Chelle Red.

Fr. Efren Balistoy, Sr. Hien Thi Dau, Sr. "Angela" Jinxiu Liu, Fr. Claudio Niones, Sr. Subhashini Raja Raj, Fr. Ignatius Tambudzai, Fr. Sunny Thomas, S.J., Fr. "Peter" Anusonn Phongsiriphat.

Bernadine Ablaza, Christian Almirañez, Ludy Duran, Edwin Enaje, Ma. Celina Lopez, Arlaine Marcelino, Phillip Andrew Mimay, Irene Norbe, Nukshilemla, Michelle Ocampo Tan

Marion & Wendy Aricheta, Don & Florence Buenaventura, Anthony & Mylene Cadiz, Filzen & Melanie Cipriano, Wilfredo & Shirley Cuenco, Renato & Corazon Gaza, Francis & Jennifer Montaner, David & Marilyn Ordoñez, Francis & Mia Peliño, Alejandro & Mary Jean Profeta, Jose Ramon & Mona Lisa Ramos, Julius Caezar & Aprilyn Jane Sales, Bryan Jay & Leann Mae Sanggalang, Marc Jonathan & Rhea Vistan, Mervin Ritche & Maria Annaleah Yazon.