

Magis

Formation for Mission

Stewardship

Simplicity

Sharing

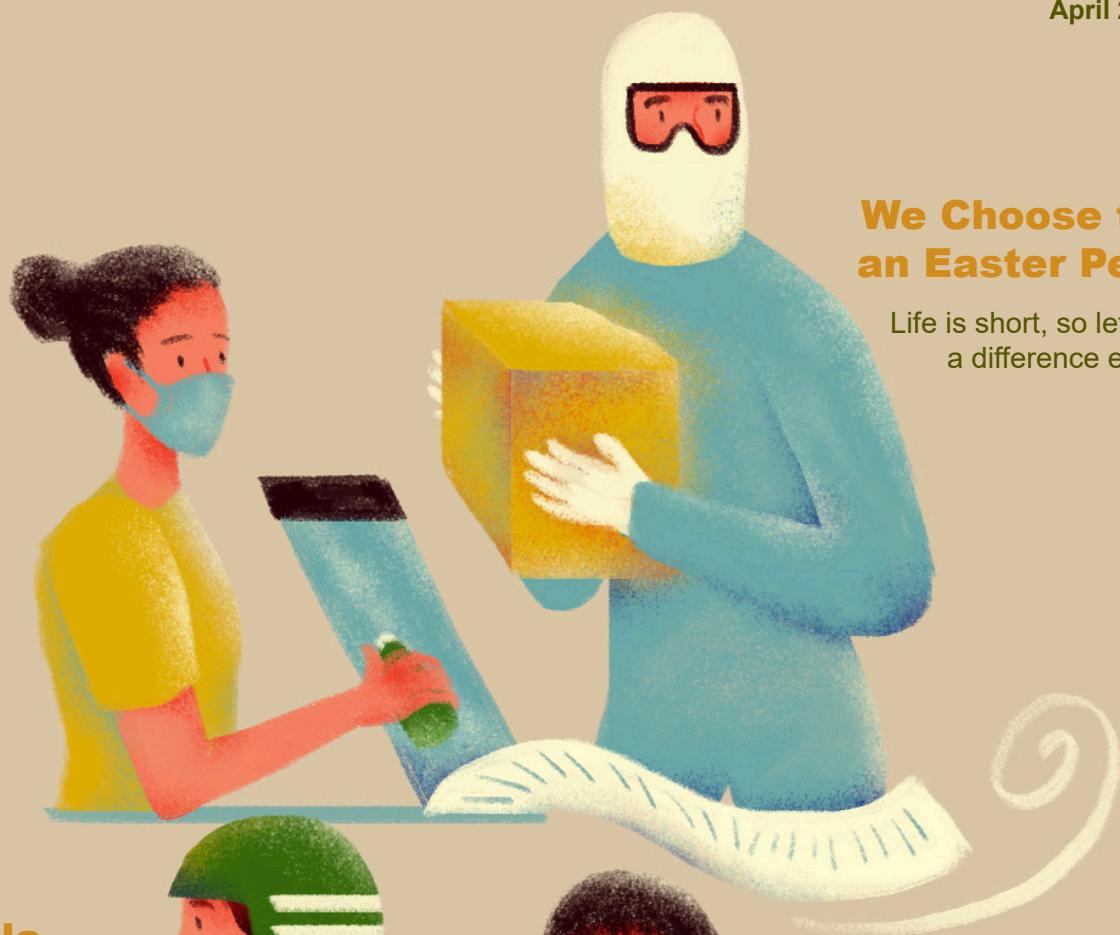
Service

Official Publication of the Magis Deo Community

April 2020 Issue

We Choose to be an Easter People

Life is short, so let's make a difference each day



Pwede Pala Magbago

Realizations during quarantine, that we can continue to do

Lent & Easter in the Time Of Covid

Hope and transformation are at center of our journey to resurrection



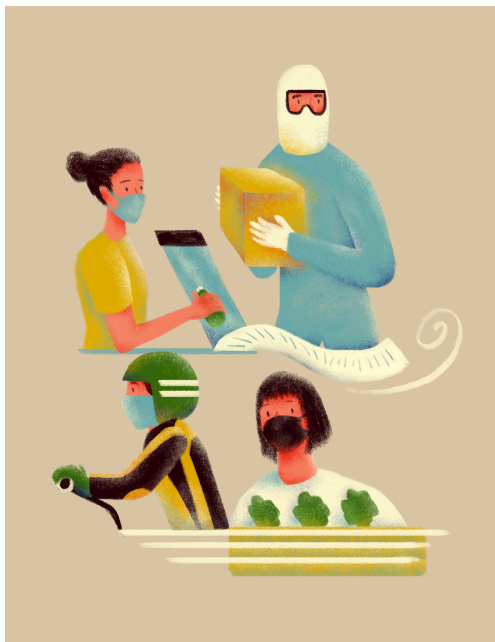
Longing

There is still love that radiates even after life

Sana All

Accept all forms of love that is given to you

About the Cover



Farmers, vendors, security guards, garbage collectors, delivery riders, gas station attendants, jeepney/tricycle drivers, cashiers and many more jobs that are looked down on — are now praised for they prove to withstand the trials of this pandemic. But beyond their perseverance, do our *bayanis* really have a choice, what with the working conditions and insufficient to non-existent benefits that they face everyday? Will our praise help feed them and their families? After this quarantine, one can only hope that things won't go back to normal. I say this in the context that we should be more selfless when it comes to supporting the marginalized with donations and causes, and to be more critical of the unjust system that they have to build their worlds around on. It's a sad reality that even in a crisis like this, people still choose to be blinded and ignorant inside their bubbles. Right now, we can only do so much in our comfortable homes — so use your voice. Share your privilege.

Editorial Board

Magis

Official Publication of the Magis Deo Community
2/F RMT CeFam Bldg., ADMU Campus, Q.C.

Editor-in-Chief
Rufo Dacanay

Managing Editors
Cesar & Delsa Sangalang

Illustrator/Layout Artist
Levenspeil Sangalang

Council Chaircouple
Ted & Susan Concepcion

Editorial Board
Sally Chua Chiaco
Tina Mossesgeld
Ricky & Trixie Sun
Joy Uy-Tioco
Marlyn Angeles

Photographers
Anchit Chua Chiaco
Manuel Naldo

Spiritual Director
Fr. James Gascon, SJ

Table of Contents

EDITORIAL

Lent and Easter in the Time of Covid-19

4

YOUTH

Sunny Summer Camp on Raincheck
by Jane Aldeguer, Chronicles BCGG / Youth Ministry Head

13

COUNCIL CORNER

HOPE-LINERS by Vina Dimanalata, Francis BCGG

5

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Love is the Language of Families: A Post-Valentine Hangover
by Virgie Abella, Mustard Seed BCGG

14

MEMORIES

Longing by Mimi Santos, Samaritans BCGG

6

REFLECTIONS

We Choose to be an Easter People
by Rico Lim, Easter BCGG

18

REFLECTIONS

Our Father by Marikar Tariman, Samaritans BCGG

7

We are the Women of Easter!
by Elyn Aracid, Easter BCGG

Stillness amidst lockdown – Easter for a renewed life
by Paul Puthenpurekal, Easter BCGG

What Easter means to me
by Yasmin Punzalan, Easter BCGG and Jes Gumila, Easter BCGG

Pwede Pala Magbago (Realizations during the time of pandemic)
by Ojay Reantaso, Samaritans BCGG

PROSE AND POETRY

Covid-19 Times: Lockdown by Chacho Angeles, Thessalonians BCGG

21

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Sana All by Mark Maulit, Prodigal 102 BCGG

12

Lent and Easter in the Time of Covid-19



Photo by Kamil Szumotalski

Pain, suffering, death and resurrection are recurring themes of Lent every year.

The nature of our pain and suffering may have changed, but yes, the journey to resurrection is what gives this season its central meaning: HOPE and TRANSFORMATION.

This year, for the first time in modern history, we experience LENT differently, not in the presence of a physical community, but in the privacy of our homes, and perhaps for many, in the silence of our rooms. We try to connect with others through Facebook, Zoom, Twitter or Viber. Still at the end of the day, we know we are physically alone.

Perhaps this is meant to be. As days pass and move into our fourth week of quarantine, and possibly into its extension of another two to three weeks, we awake to the reality that in truth we are not in control. We are not in control of our suffering nor much of anything that is happening around us.

"We do not handle suffering, suffering handles us in deep and mysterious ways that become the very matrix of

life, especially new life." (Richard Rohr) How then do we go through this? This Holy Week, Jesus has shown us the way, not by avoiding it, or fleeing from it, but by going through it, and leads Himself to His own resurrection. We are thus invited to let suffering transform us into the new life that His resurrection promises.

We see so much death, pain and crying, and experience perhaps a feeling of helplessness. But at the same time we have seen how these very things that move us to cry, drive us to reach out to each other, offering ourselves, our service and whatever else we have and can do. We see many of us helping others get through their pain, by just being there with our presence, and in the process, healing our own pain as well.

So as we go through April and experience the extended lockdown, the invitation we face is, how do we allow suffering to handle us? How do we let it transform us? And after we go through it, what new life are we being born into?

HOPE-LINERS

Vina Dimanalata, Francis BCGG

Easter Sunday, Day 29 of the Luzon Enhanced Community Quarantine, Pope Francis' homily centered on HOPE. "A contagion of hope, a message transmitted from heart to heart: Christ, my hope, is risen."

HOPE, a four-letter word that we cling to these days. No other word more spoken, more written, more prayed.

Like a young child we become again, when only yesterday we seem to have calendared all our plans and goals. Did we time travel? Past or future I cannot seem to tell. But everything was reset -- everything! Shaken, perplexed, anxious, frustrated.

How do we socially distance from a global crisis? When will the government unlock the lock down? What will be the new normal? How do we face an unseen enemy? Too many questions with no exact answers. Even Google cannot help.

The Covid-19 pandemic definitely hit us all big time!

With no end yet in sight, we cope as we live. Differently. Each braving his own nightmare. Fortunately for us, we will weather this crisis with deep concern and strong affinity from our Magis Community. I turned to the members of our Francis BCGG on how they struggle through; what keeps them going amidst these trying times. One answer: **Faith in God.**

My faith in God keeps me going; knowing that He leads me and helps me with all the tasks at hand; gives me wisdom to think of meaningful activities while staying at home with my family. God keeps me mindful of others, reaching out to some of my friends who I know have no one to support them.

Faith in God, trusting in His plan for us, and prayers keep me going in these difficult times. I choose to have faith in God knowing that He is always there, loving and protecting us. I choose to see these trying times as our finally seeing what God wants for us... to take a rest from our busy lives and have time to marvel at His love.

Because of His unconditional love for us, I am holding to God's promise that He will never leave us nor forsake us.

We lift everything to God. Kahit mahirap pero alam mong nandiyan siya at di niya tayo pinababayaan. God is everything, without GOD we are NOTHING.

Indeed, faith is to be confident in what we hope for and certain of what we do not see (Hebrews 11:1). God is bigger than our problems. Choose your fighter in the battle of the invisibles. Our prayers are our armor. It shields us from worrying too much. Turn your worry-time to prayer-time.



Photo by Ron Smith

Praying for me is like the breaking of dawn when the long nights give way to new mornings. Sunrises never fail to uplift, lending new hope. The aurora of my soul. For as long as there are mornings, there will always be new beginnings.

On the other end, this forced quarantine is also an answered prayer for our families. No more excuse to say, "I do not have time." We rediscover our family members, our conversations, our encounters. We talk more, listen more, play more, pray more. Magis! The gift of family has never been so felt until this time.

We revisit our homes, our lives, with all their clutter and excess. And then we learn to let go. Essentials from non-essentials. What do we really need to survive?

Smile, for we are not alone. Faith, hope and love. We carry these in our hearts and live them out with our hands. We stay safely in our homes so as not to further burden those who cannot. We share whatever we can to lighten someone else's load. We simplify our lives so others can simply live. We say with fervent hope that this, too, shall pass.

Allow me to say a little prayer for each one of us in Magis Deo: With Christ, our hope, may He bring forth protection and compassion to all, especially the front-liners. To home-liners and hope-liners like us, may He calm our worried hearts and grant us the grace of patience and resilience. May He renew our faith and hope in our leaders and in humanity. May He embrace our families with His unconditional love. Lord Jesus, our hope, have mercy on us. AMEN.

Longing

Mimi Santos, Samaritans BCGG



More than two years have passed since I last held you in my arms and the longing for you becomes more fervent.

Thirty-nine years ago, you were just a stranger who came into my life. You came at the time when I was praying for someone to love, and you were actively in the market for fun and a good time. I am not sure if I loved you then but maybe unknowingly, I was challenged to tame you. It was a real challenge as we were opposites – extrovert vs. introvert, risk taker vs. risk averter, golden spoon vs. wooden teaspoon, confident vs. insecure, righteous vs. liberal.

These differences resulted in a colorful life for us as a couple. There were points in our life together when we almost broke apart. The love that developed and grew between and within us glued our relationship. With God's grace, in our hearts we accepted and understood each other's shortcomings, and because of our love, we each strove to change for the better. I recognized the best in you and realized why I came to love you – you were someone who I wanted to be – confident, assertive, passionate, and righteous. For the same reason, you were the person I want to always be with. I love you because you were truly an exceptionally good person – inherently kind, generous, compassionate, family-oriented, and God-fearing. I love too

because I know you love me dearly and you made me feel safe and cared for.

Unexpectedly, you left me. No matter what spiritual and emotional preparation we went through, I was devastated, and I was not ready to let you go. I was heartbroken. I got consolation from imagining that you are in a better place and very happy to be with our Father in heaven. I keep going by clinging to the Lord for strength and guidance.

Your absence really left a big void. Your shoes were too big for me to fill. I get to miss you more as there are so many things that only you can make right. Even in your absence though, I learn about you more, the good deeds you performed while you were still here. I even miss the things you did that irritated me then. I feel for you when people you love take you for granted or still misunderstand your intentions even now that you have gone. Even in your absence, my love for you grows.

I thank you, Mahal, for our earthly life of togetherness, for the rollercoaster ride, the learnings, and even the pain. Thank you for your love and care, for raising our children and for your presence in our lives. Thank you for the gift of your last loving gaze at me which is still imprinted in my heart and mind.

I love you and miss you very much.

Our Father

Marikar Tariman, Samaritans BCGG



Photo by Motoki Tonn

The Lord's Prayer, or the Our Father, is my favorite prayer. Tears always flow from my eyes whenever I pray this at night especially in times of sorrow.

Whenever I sing this prayer in church it moves me to tears. This prayer is a complete recipe for me.

Our Father, – Is my source and my dwelling place

Who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name

Thy will be done. On earth as it is in heaven – This is all I need to know, that God's will for me is better than anything I can imagine. How can I go wrong with His will for me? I know His Love will never hurt me.

Give us this day our daily bread – for me it translates to.... The Lord promised to give me my needs not my wants. This prayer teaches me to depend on God and rest upon Him. I also realized that it has a spiritual as well as a physical meaning. It is more than food, and in John 6:35 he said "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst" it is reassuring. It speaks of God's willingness to answer my prayers. "Ask and it will be given unto you."

Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. – It acknowledges my need for

forgiveness and my need to forgive. I am not boasting... I am many things but not unforgiving. Although I do it for myself, but now I realize I have to do it for your glory, Lord. I may harbor pain and hatred, but I never harbor hatred toward a person for so long. Madalas nga sinasabi sa akin ng asawa ko, wala daw akong kadala-dala sa mga taong nanloloko sa akin. Madali akong maawa. Minsan nga tinatanong ko sa sarili ko, forgiving nga ba ako o gullible lang. Yung case ko sa isa kong supplier is still a work-in-progress but I hope someday, by God's grace, sana mapatawad ko rin siya. Because for me, guilt makes sin, and sin makes guilt, and guilt makes more sin to escape more guilt. Forgiveness makes love, and inspires us to forgive others. Love begins, and grows, with forgiveness.

Deliver us from evil. – I am a brave person. I always say.... ang Batangueña hindi tumatakbo sa laban, but the truth is, I cannot save myself and I cannot save anyone. I ask God to set me free from the destructive idea of a *false self that I make up* in order to survive, but in fact destroys me. I learned the hard way Lord.

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen!!

Stillness amidst lockdown – Easter for a renewed life

Paul Puthenpurekal, Easter BCGG



The Lord's language of intimacy is Stillness.

He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. Mark 4:39

To hush the winds or to calm the seas or to call out to the Father from the silence of the mountains. The best thing that we can experience now in this time of Covid-19 ECQ is the stillness around and to be aware of the Lord's presence.

We can heal ourselves through this by letting the Lord touch us through this intimate moment as we contemplate through the events in our lives that have led us to the present.

The Lord leads our battles and does not push us into the frontlines.

The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still. Exodus 14:14

Sure, we hear sirens wailing and news about the daily struggles of people. The global war against this pandemic. What outcomes are we expecting? As stupid it may seem we are used to compete as cities, countries or even as East and West. Thus, we see these comparisons of how many people died and where, in order of significance. Little do we care that these are all lives and the enemy is a common virus that cares for none of these statistics.

We can let the Lord lead this battle for mankind as we unite to profess our faith and trust in Him. Again, let's be still and let Him lead.

How long should we wait? What should we expect when chaos sets in?

I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits, in His word I put my hope. Psalm 130:5

What are we waiting for? Things to get back to the chaotic life? Why don't we change the paradigm? Aligning ourselves to wait for the Lord. To surrender ourselves as the Psalmist says (my whole being waits). Are we expecting to be able to add more to our wealth and be better prepared for the next pandemic, or should we put our hope in His word? If He has let us remain safe through this time it is mostly because we chose to stay still and wait on Him.

Have I updated my bucket list? Can't wait for things to open up?

And to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you. 1 Thes 4:11

The bitter reality is, we have been victims to social media. Mostly engulfed in self adulation to be heard and to express our voices of dissent and disgust if challenged. What would be the lash out once things are back to old times again? My bucket list is updated and should I be now checking all the places yet to be seen or food to be eaten or, better yet, cars to be bought?

Or we allow the stillness to create a new relationship with God. To chalk out new aspirations to live in peace (with ourselves and others) and to toil with our hands for His Glory.

Pwede Pala Magbago

(Realizations during the time of pandemic)

Ojay Reantaso, Samaritans BCGG



Pwede pala ang work from home
Pwede pala mag Mass/worship online araw-araw
Pwede pala mag Rosary ang family everyday

Pwede pala sa gabi lang maligo
Pwede pala pumila
Pwede pala maghintay
Pwede pala hindi gamitin yung kotse

Pwede pala matuto magluto
Pwede pala mamalengke ang mga tatay
Pwede pala mag liquor ban more than 30 days at hindi lang during election period

Pwede pala gumising araw-araw ng 8am at hindi 5am.
Pwede pala hindi mag make-up at mag lipstick
Pwede pala walang alarm clock
Pwede pala magtulungan

Pwede pala mag 100kph sa Edsa ng Friday 5pm (nasubukan ko na)
Pwede pala maglakad
Pwede pala libre sakay
Pwede pala libre concert
Pwede pala makatanggap ng relief goods kahit hindi bagyo

Pwede pala mag exercise everyday
Pwede pala matuto mag sayaw sa tiktok
Pwede pala mag zumba class araw-araw kasama ang asawa mo
Pwede pala hindi na mag padeliver ng drinking water at Ecosphere na lang gamitin

Pwede pala maghanda at magpakain kahit hindi mo birthday (by feeding the frontliners)
Pwede pala ang online school sa mga students
Pwede pala magtipid
Pwede pala matuto maglaba

Pwede ka pala kumanta via FB Live and maka raise ng 90,000php to be donated to sponsor hot meals for our frontliners
Pwede pala hindi kumain sa fastfood
Pwede pala ma-Instagram ang home-cooked food mo

Pwede pala mag hugas ng kamay ng maraming beses sa isang araw
Pwede pala pumasok sa banko kahit naka-mask ka (kahit mukhang magnanakaw)
Pwede pala maging close mo mga ka-zoom, ka-messenger mo kahit hindi kayo nagkikita
Pwede pala sa bahay lang ang tatay

Pwede pala na may sakit ka na pero di mo alam (Asymptomatic)
Pwede pala kahit hindi kayo magkita ng matagal ng girlfriend/ boyfriend mo

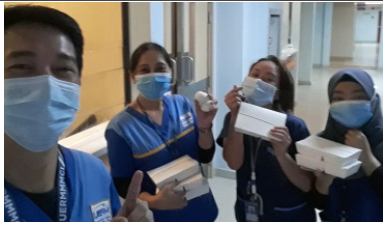
Pwede pala hindi mag-travel
Pwede pala mura ang gas
Pwede pala sumunod sa gobyerno

Pwede pala formal sa taas, pero naka shorts at tsinelas lang habang may meeting
Pwede pala mag-dinner date sa bahay
Pwede pala walang polusyon

Pwede pala hindi magpagupit
Pwede pala mag-group photo online
Pwede pala sa bahay lang mag swimming

This Pandemic leads me to realize a lot of "Pwede pala"

Ultimately, pwede pala magbago.



**Magis Deo calamity fund (P62,000)
equally donated to:**

1. Tanging Yaman Foundation of Fr. Manoling Francisco (under Ateneo)
2. Skin and Cancer Foundation c/o Drs. Rudy and Bib de Guzman of Archangel Gabriel (for identified MM hospitals)



Magis Cares to our Frontliners



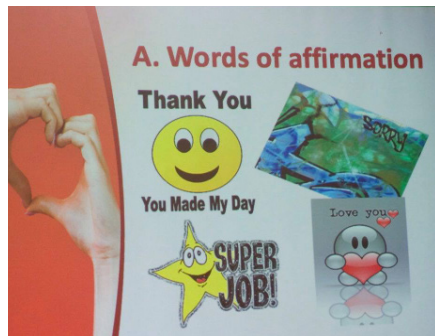
1 March 2020 Community Celebration



St. Peter BCGG



Magis Deo Community Celebration - March 1, 2020, Layforce



Sana All

Mark Maulit, Prodigal 102 BCGG

"By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:35)

As Christians, we are called to proclaim God's love to everyone. Given the diversity of cultures, personalities, and circumstances, is there a "one-size-fits-all" approach to loving?

I had been hearing much about love languages as an aspect of personality which determines the forms of love a person is naturally receptive to. It always seemed to be an idea worth looking into, but I did not have the opportunity to really delve into it. That was until the first of March this year when the Magis Deo Community's spiritual director, Fr. James Gascon, SJ, facilitated a workshop on it.

I liked how Fr. James helped us understand the topic. After his short introduction, instead of jumping straight into an exposition of each of the love languages, he let us discover for ourselves what our own love languages are. He used a multiple-choice test for this purpose. Each question typically began with the phrase "I feel loved when..." or something similar followed by a set of phrases describing actions that someone who loves us might do for us. We were to respond by choosing which phrase among the selection would make us feel loved the most. Each possible choice had a corresponding letter which we were supposed to write down if that phrase for that particular question applied to us. For example,

No. 2

B - I like to spend one-on-one time with you.

D - I feel loved when you give practical help to me.

After the test, Fr. James asked us to count how many of each letter we wrote down – which he explained corresponded to one love language. The love languages with the two highest scores were our primary and secondary love languages, respectively. Then taking this new knowledge about ourselves,

we were asked to gather with our families and share what we found out with another family.

What I learned about myself was no surprise. Acts of service and quality time were my primary and secondary love languages. However, it was not enough that I knew what my love languages were. As Fr. James said, every lover should find out what their loved ones' love languages are and love them accordingly. So, I asked my spouse and kids what their test results were. And then the information manager in me took over for a while. I tabulated the results for my whole family. The table showed that my family has three love languages: *acts of service*, *quality time*, and *words of affirmation*; and the common one (whether as primary or as secondary language) among all four of us, is *acts of service*. I also saw that my spouse and kids have words of affirmation as a common language, which I do not have.

Here is that table:

	SERVICE	AFFIRMATION	TIME
My Youngest	1	0.5	1
My Eldest	0.5	1	
My Spouse	0.5	0.5	1
Me	1		0.5
Totals	3	2	2.5

What does this information tell me? What course of action does it point to? After learning all this, I decided I should keep expressing my love for each member of my family through acts of service and also through quality time, which are also my own love languages. I also resolved to work harder on being more affirming in my words to each of them.

This second track is easier said than done because being affirming is not natural to me. I do not instinctively or preferentially express my love that way nor do I expect those who love me to be that way towards me either. In fact, one parenting strategy I adopted while my children were young was not to praise them too much if they did something right. I feared they would learn to do the right thing only for the positive attention they would earn and not for the intrinsic goodness of the action. This attitude persists today and had I not learned about love languages; I would have continued to unwittingly deny my family the opportunity to experience my love in this way.

Continued on page 13

Sunny Summer Camp on Raincheck

Jane Aldeguer, Chronicles BCGG / Youth Ministry Head

“Tara, let’s do the ocular na. Next week! Jane can’t on Thursday. I can’t on Friday. We have 2 to 3 venues to visit.” “Okay! Para isang puntahan. Where do we meet? Where is it safe to leave a car? Need to work, need to be back by 3 pm.”

That was the usual conversation of the Youth Camp core group, headed by the energetic couple Dong and Gin Galang, and chuwarewip members Cathy Maulit and Jane Aldeguer. Our planned ocular of 2 to 3 venues turned out to be 6 different sites. With our countless debates in the car on each of the venues, we forgot to have a decent lunch. Good we had a taste test of bulalo soup in our first camp site.

After budget calculations, weighing pros and cons, we zeroed in on Ten Cents to Heaven Leisure Camp. The attendance campaign and sign ups started during the March 2, 2020 ComCel where we had 25 excited kids who gave a “Yes!” looking forward to the camp.

But, just as the whole nation... nope, the whole world was shocked, our spirits were dampened by the lockdown. And there was no doubt that we need to rebook the event. No, not this year due to the uncertainty of how things will turn out, plus the



Photo by Wunmanang

cramming of the universities, but best to reschedule to next year. At the moment, we are praying that the leisure park’s owner will give us leeway on extending our rebooking. God listens to the prayers of the children, we know He will make this happen according to His what’s best for them.

Raincheck.

Well, we have more time to look forward to and plan for this event that our Magis Youth continue to be excited about.

Meantime, stay safe at home with your families dear Magis Youth, have an equally meaningful and fun interaction with your families. This is the best time to help in spring cleaning the cabinets in our homes, tidying up our closets, and maybe learning several cool tricks in cleaning and cooking.

What may look like a gloomy situation, not being able to go out of the house or push through with the camp, may actually spell time well spent for health and family, and communing with God through our families.

Sana All, continued from page 12

Affirming words may not be my own love language but I need to learn to use them in order to effectively express my love especially to my family members who have it as their primary love language. Expressing my love for them in this way, lends my action a transcendent and sacrificial quality.

These are the messages for me, the lover. But there is another lesson for me, the loved one. Knowing the love languages of my family members also helps me recognize their acts of love for me. This eliminates the risk of me saying to those who love me, “These are my love languages and I will only accept love expressed to me in these ways.” It teaches me instead to be receptive of love in whatever form it comes to me. For example, even though I do not prefer to receive love in the form of verbal affirmation I will recognize it as love when my spouse pays me verbal compliments because that is one of their love languages. After all, gratitude for love received is an act of love too.

Just like any other tool, when used responsibly, knowledge of each other’s love languages helps us to communicate and

recognize love more effectively. Abused, it gives us the power to hurt each other and ourselves as well. I pray for God’s grace so that I may use this knowledge in the service of love. I have the same prayer for everyone in our community as well so that we may all fulfill our Christian mission.

In vogue these days is the expression “sana all.” Saint Paul has a “sana all” statement in one of his letters: “Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings” (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

Love is the Language of Families: A Post-Valentine Hangover

Virgie Abella, Mustard Seed BCGG



Photo by Jude Beck

Fr. James W. U. Gascon, SJ, Spiritual Director of Magis Deo Community, ignited again love in couples and families at the March 1, 2020 Community Celebration.

Why is love important? We all need to be loved. At the heart of mankind's existence is the desire to be intimate and to be loved by another, otherwise there will be isolation. Marriage is designed to meet the need for intimacy and love, as well as to promote love in the family. Love is the language of families.

Inside each person is an emotional tank waiting to be filled with love. When one feels loved, the person grows and develops normally. If empty, there is a tendency to misbehave. How is your emotional tank today?

Fr. James pointed to the need to understand love language, i.e., how to express love so others can feel it emotionally. He guided us through a love language test activity (see attached love language test). Fr. James referenced Dr. Gary Chapman, who identified five kinds of love languages: (1) words of affirmation, (2) quality time, (3) receiving gifts, (4) acts of service, and (5) physical touch.

What do your love language test results mean?

A. Words of Affirmation

Words of affirmation may be done in forms of verbal compliments, words of appreciation and encouraging words. These are powerful communicators of love. They are best expressed in simple, straightforward statements of affirmation. Examples of words of affirmation are: (1) Thank you, (2) You made my day, (3) Super job!, (4) I am sorry, (5) Love you, (6) Sarap ng luto mo! Salamat.

B. Quality Time

Quality time is best expressed to those who are in need of attention. They are those who say "focus on me," "give me time," or "do things with me." They want and value so much togetherness not just proximity but focused, undivided attention. Quality time includes quality conversations – a sympathetic dialogue where two individuals are sharing their experiences, thoughts, feelings, and desires in a friendly, uninterrupted context.

To be able to achieve quality time, one must seek to understand and empathize with others, not solve their problems.

C. Receiving Gifts

Gifts are visual symbols of love. These symbols are more important to some people than others. For example: differing attitudes to wearing rings. Gifts come in all sizes, colors, and shapes. Gifts can be purchased, found, or made. They need not come every day, or even every week. They don't even need to cost a lot. What is important for them is not the monetary value of the gift but that the giver knows the recipient well by the gifts they give. There is truth to the saying that gifts reveal the giver as well as the receiver.

D. Acts of Service

Acts of service mean doing things you know your partner would like you to do. You seek to please him/her by serving them, to express your love by doing things for them. Examples: cooking, cleaning, doing the laundry, painting a bedroom, maintaining the car. They require thought, planning, time, effort, and energy, little sacrifices which will ensure a happy relationship. If done with a positive spirit, they are indeed expressions of love.

E. Physical Touch

In certain instances, physical touch can make or break a relationship. It can communicate hate or love. It may be by means of holding hands, kissing, embracing, cuddling, and sexual intercourse. They communicate emotional love.

Spouses must discuss which touches bring physical pleasure and which are irritating and annoying.

Being aware of and knowing our spouse's as well as your children's love language is the first step. Fulfilling their love needs through their love language fills their emotional tank.

Activities using love languages to express love.

A. For families

On the separate sheet: use art or any form of expression "I feel loved when you" (Mention the particular act your spouse/child does that makes you feel loved)

"Ramdam kong mahal ako kapag....." (Mga anak sa magulang; Mga magulang sa anak.) (Recall an incident in your life that you felt so loved by any member of your family.)

B. For sharing groups

Two families (with children) group together.

Couples only can join any group.

Appendix: The Love Languages Test

An activity for couples. Instruction: Read each pair of statements and circle the one that best describes you.

1. A. I like to receive notes of affirmation from you.
E. I like it when you hug me.
2. B. I like to spend one-on-one time with you.
D. I feel loved when you give me practical help.
3. C. I like it when you give me gifts.
B. I like taking long walks with you.
4. D. I feel loved when you do things to help me.
E. I feel loved when you hug or touch me.

5. E. I feel loved when you hold me in your arms.
C. I feel loved when I receive a gift from you.
6. B. I like to go places with you.
E. I like to hold hands with you.
7. C. Visible symbols of love (gifts) are very important to me
A. I feel loved when you affirm me.
8. E. I like to sit closer to you.
A. I like it when you tell me that am attractive/handsome.
9. B. I like to spend time with you.
C. I like to receive little gifts from you.
10. A. Words of acceptance are important to me.
D. I know you love me when you help me.
11. B. I like to be together when we do things.
A. I like the kind words you say to me.
12. D. What you do affects me more than what you say.
E. I feel whole when we hug.
13. A. I value your praise and try to avoid your criticism.
C. Several inexpensive gifts mean more to me than one large expensive gift.
14. B. I feel close when we are talking or doing something.
E. I feel closer to you when you touch me.
15. A. I like you to compliment my achievements.
D. I know you love me when you do things for me that you don't enjoy doing.

Continued on page 16

Appendix: The Love Languages Test
continued from page 15

16. E. I like for you to touch me when you walk by.
B. I like when you listen to me sympathetically.
17. D. I feel loved when you help me with my jobs around the house.
C. I really enjoy receiving gifts from you.
18. A. I like when you compliment my appearance.
B. I feel loved when you take the time to understand my feelings.
19. E. I feel secure when you are touching me.
D. Your acts of service make me feel loved.
20. D. I appreciate the many things you do for me.
C. I like receiving gifts that you make.
21. B. I really enjoy the feeling I get when you give me your undivided attention.
D. I really enjoy the feeling I get when you do some act of service for me.
22. C. I feel loved when you celebrate my birthday with a gift.
A. I feel loved when you celebrate my birthday with meaningful words.
23. C. I know you are thinking of me when you give me a gift.
D. I feel loved when you help me with chores.
24. B. I appreciate it when you listen patiently and don't interrupt me.
C. I appreciate it when you remember special days with a gift.
25. D. I like to know you are concerned enough to help with my daily tasks.
B. I enjoy extended trips with you.
26. E. An unexpected kiss on the cheek excites me.
C. Giving me a gift for no special occasion excited me.

27. A. I like to be told that you appreciate me.
B. I like for you to look at me when we are talking.
28. C. Your gifts are always special to me.
E. I feel loved when you are touching me.
29. D. I feel loved when you enthusiastically do some task I have requested.
A. I feel loved when you tell me how much you appreciate me.
30. E. I need to be touched every day.
A. I need your words of affirmation daily.

How do you score your Love Language test results?

In order to determine the score of your love language, you must give points for the letters as shown below. Then put the scores at the blank spaces provided below.

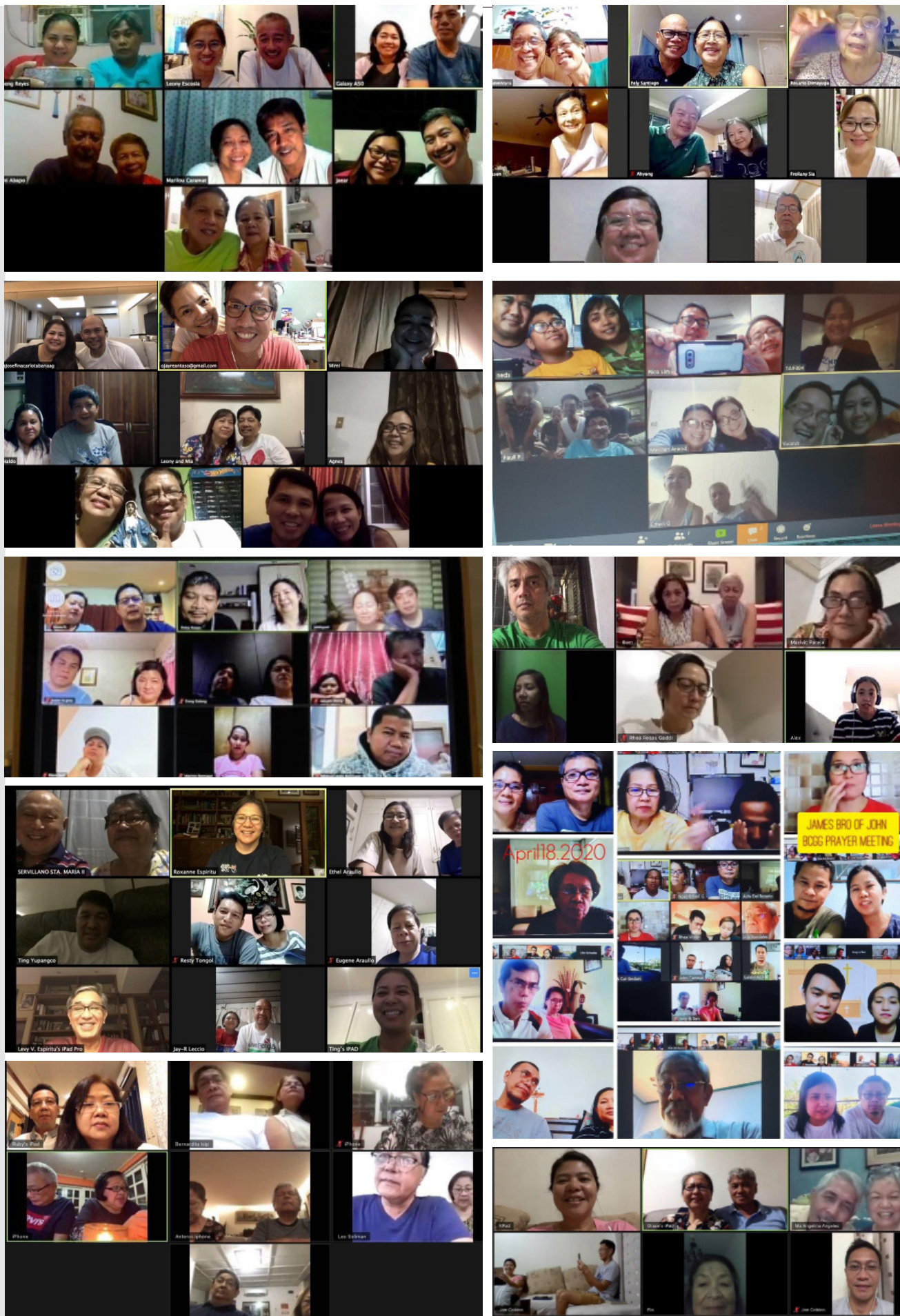
A ___ 9 ___	A – Words of Affirmation
B ___ 8 ___	B – Quality Time
C ___ 0 ___	C - Receiving Gifts
D _ _ 8 _	D – Acts of Service
E ___ 5 ___	E – Physical Touch

A _____	Words of Affirmation
B _____	Quality Time
C _____	Receiving Gifts
D. _____	Acts of Service
E _____	Physical Touch

Highest score is the primary love language. Compare your love language with your spouse. Take note of the similarities as well as the differences. Know the love language of your loved ones. Any love language can change in time. Because we can change our love language, we can love more. We can be able to speak the language of our loved ones.

Love your children according to their needs. As parents, we need to adjust.

BCGG Online Prayer Meeting



We Choose to be an Easter People

Rico Lim, Easter BCGG



Photo by Bruno van der Kraan

Easter Sunday, April 12, 2020, was a unique and meaningful celebration of the resurrection of Christ, not only for my family but for many Filipinos. Whenever I sing this prayer in church it moves me to tears. This prayer is a complete recipe for me.

We celebrated Easter at our respective humble homes with our families and loved ones who are forced to stay home under the guidance of the Enhanced Community Quarantine. We all heard Easter Mass together digitally or by watching TV in our houses. We cooked simple meals and ate together in our dining tables as a family; on an ordinary occasion, we would have gone to a restaurant and feasted on sumptuous meals. Even Pope Francis celebrated Easter Vigil Mass alone in St. Peter's Basilica. But though he was alone, I believe he touched millions of peoples' hearts.

The world has changed because of a very tiny virus that has already claimed so many lives and affected so many. Covid-19 has physically separated us from each other through Social Distancing but it has made us even closer to GOD. We now pray so deeply and intently to ask the Lord to shine His light and illuminate this dark moment of our lives.

Easter is an important celebration for us Catholics. Jesus died for us and resurrected. His rebirth symbolizes the Hope, Peace, Joy and Love that Jesus gives us. No matter how dark our situation may seem, He will console us and be with us in our journey. We do not have to feel alone for He walks with us and leads us in this battle. We should not despair for we will be victorious in this fight against Covid-19. The Lord wants us to be happy for we are an "Easter People" more than a "Good Friday" people. God's plan of salvation did not end in the death of Christ;

rather, it went on in his rebirth. So, let us choose to be happy! Let us be EASTER PEOPLE. Let us focus on HOPE. We must believe He will lead us out of the darkness. There is always a reason for things to happen, you just need to trust Him. God has a great plan for all of us. Life is short so let us make a difference in our life. Let us choose to be happy and spread that happiness to others for we are an Easter People.

This Easter Sunday, we also celebrated our coming together as a BCGG. Our shepherd couple Tony and Bambi Narciso gathered the remaining members of ME 94 and ME 95 to become Easter BCGG. It was around the 2nd week of April 2010, after Holy Week, when the Pastoral Council decided to combine the remaining participants of these two ME classes into one BCGG. Since this was right after Holy Week, the most logical and best name for our BCGG name would be EASTER. Honestly, I would not like to be called the Good Friday Group (hahaha). I believe God had a plan for us. He led our couple shepherd to choose our name and He gathered us to become His servants. Since 2010, we have been together.

We have meetings almost every week, regularly sharing stories. We have become comfortable with each other. We have shared our happy and challenging life stories and we consider each other as family. We have learned not to pass judgement on our frailties; rather, we encourage each other to be better, and be hopeful that He will bring us out from our darkness. Through the years we have grown in number and have been better Christian soldiers. We started with 7 couples, now we are 12 couples and still growing. We all choose to be EASTER!

Herewith are the stories of our members who will talk about the meaning of EASTER in their lives.

We are the Women of Easter!

Elyn Aracid, Easter BCGG



Photo by Todd Diemer

I have a chat group called “Women of Jerusalem,” a moniker given us by Fr. Arnel Aquino, SJ in an Advent recollection he facilitated for my colleagues and me at CeFam (this after we protested his initial reference to us as Titas of CeFam). Whenever I sing this prayer in church it moves me to tears. This prayer is a complete recipe for me.

In this chat group, we are our natural selves. We can be serious and religious. We can be naughty and irreverent. We ventilate and we rant. We request for prayers and, conversely, share inspirational and uplifting GIFs, memes, and messages. We post our days’ main events like: I cleaned the bathroom!; I know where to get the best (insert a category here); my paella was a smashing success; and so forth. We complain about and profess our love for the men in our lives. We share our homes and hearths, recipes and DIY remedies. It is an extension of our pantry at CeFam – a place of debriefing, celebrating, sharing, much laughter and so much eating!

Today I woke up to this Easter morning with gratitude for the many blessings, despite the imposed lockdown. In my prayer, I remember and express my deep gratitude for my group, The Women of Jerusalem, and the many women who, like me, will prepare breakfast, clean the house, do the laundry and the million other chores that fill up a lockdown day (believe me, it’s not boring and the idle moments are not that many). Life is interrupted but does not stop – all because of a pandemic. A pandemic lockdown indeed brings anxiety, worry and fear, but food has to be cooked and served, houses have to be cleaned, pantries stocked, stories need listening to, connections need to be maintained even with social distancing, prayers and novenas need to be recited but now with clinging desperation mingled with faith and hope.

In my prayer, I go back to THAT particular Easter morning. It was Mary Magdalene who started the frenzy of the day... she ran and told everyone about the Good News. She wiped her tears, did not rest and stop for a manicure or spa and became this brave woman unafraid to go out in a pandemic-like situation where everyone was locked in and afraid. Just like a nagging mom, she roused the men who had gone into their man caves feeling desolate and abandoned – into some action, albeit distrustfully and sluggishly at first.

As I imagine this scene and reflect on where we are now in this dark episode in our history and lifetime, I realize that it is

us women who make things happen in practical and significant ways. We all are like Mary Magdalene. We do not waste time to keep the world moving. We do not waste time with fake news. We tell it as it is.

This Easter morning also made me reflect about a balancing act between the Marthas and Marys (the active and contemplative) in us women, especially if we are to be women for others in this time of the Resurrection. The lockdown has brought out these two parts in women in very tangible ways.

Surprisingly, the Marthas in us are not the driven professional parts of us that need to accomplish, achieve and be relevant in our line of professions (unless you are the doctor, nurse or health care worker, the supermarket cashier, the policewoman or any of those providing basic health and security services), although our do-gooder professional Marthas can also do some home-based online work and Zoom conferences. The Marthas in us that emerged from this pandemic lockdown are the homemakers and hearth-keepers who take care of the family and home. In this time of want and lack, the Marthas have become creative with what is available, hence many versions of “resurrection” in the food that is served so that wastage and spoilage are avoided. The Marthas in us are the quarantine experts of sanitizing and disinfecting, making sure that anything that comes into the home premises is free from contamination. The Marthas in us are the ingenious shoppers who will source anything and everything from wet market produce, to medical and health needs, grocery items and home items from the reliable Facebook women’s grapevine and support systems. The Marthas in us are the all-around Jill-of-all-trades, especially for those without household help.

On the other hand, the Marys in us have also been activated. Never have we prayed so hard! The lockdown has given our Marys the much-needed time to just be. It is a most welcome and opportune time to quiet down, reflect, become more aware of the inner stirrings as well as the external noises – and to really have these deeper conversations with our God at His foot. We listen within and around us. The Marys in us reach out to and appropriate for ourselves the sufferings of people affected by the pandemic. In a manner of speaking, we have become like another Mary, Mary the Mother of God, our very own mother who prays, consoles, protects and guides others: family, friends, community.

Continued on page 20

What Easter means to me



Photo by Brooke Lark

These are indeed difficult times. We feel uncertainty. We feel anxiety. We fear and anticipate the possibility of affliction, pain, and loss.

But crises like what we are experiencing now, reflect how we are as humans and as Christians. This is the time where a global show of compassion and selflessness takes center stage, and for me, this Easter brings the promise of humanity's healing over all the grief.

Christ's resurrection did not promise the disappearance of all our problems. Rather, as Pope Francis emphasized, His resurrection was about the victory of love over evil.

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen!!

– Yasmin Punzalan, Easter BCGG

During my teenage years, Easter week was my favorite time of the year. You would find me and my siblings on a beach in Batangas or La Union, enjoying the water or lying in the sand while eating sweet mangoes from the local market. I did

not understand then why my parents insisted that we refrain from talking and being noisy especially on Good Friday. I do remember laughing with my siblings whenever we would pass by small gatherings doing their own version of the "pabasa." For me then, Easter should be a festive and joyous occasion since we commemorate the resurrection of Jesus.

It was only during the latter part of our marriage, a time when Edwin and I experienced a major crisis in our lives when I truly understood the meaning of Easter. Aside from celebrating the resurrection of Jesus, it is also a time to remember the pain and suffering that Jesus had to go through. And just like Jesus, we had to go through our own passion and death in order to experience resurrection. Through our Easter BCGG, Edwin and I continue to grow spiritually together with other couples who have become good friends and mentors. We pray and encourage each other to stay strong and be courageous through all the trials and struggles we encounter. Having experienced our passion and death made us aware how truly Jesus loves us by dying on the cross for us.

– Jes Gumila, Easter BCGG

We are the Women of Easter, continued from page 19

And so, as this pandemic lockdown continues to be a tomb or cave experience, there are Easter and Resurrection stories going on each day as we wake up to a new morning of hope. And that is because we are women of Easter. We run and spread the Good News like Mary Magdalene, whether in our own homes or online via the web. We keep the world moving through the Marthas within. We give a sense of calm and serenity in these times of fear and chaos by giving the more contemplative and prayerful Marys a perfect place at God's foot, listening and praying. And finally, we, like Mary the Mother of God, accompany the many suffering faces of Jesus to the Cross and to the Resurrection.

Covid-19 Times: Lockdown

Chacho Angeles, Thessalonians BCGG

4 April 2020

During Holy Week, we commemorate the Passion (suffering), death and, on Easter Sunday, the resurrection of Jesus. This week is also the 4th week of the lockdown due to the rapid spread of the Covid-19 virus, and there is a continuing rise in the infection and death rates. The ordinary people are adversely affected because of the economic tightness that resulted from the lockdown, prompting some to beg for the money and food because the government-promised assistance is taking too long to arrive to the people. I find meaning in this confluence of events because as we suffer, Jesus too was tortured, executed in a most painful and inhuman manner.

The suffering of human beings has been happening since time immemorial, caused by nature like bad and destructive weather, volcanic explosions, pests, and plagues, or by other people through invasions, wars, criminal activities, etc. And even by the self. This pandemic makes the fairly recent SARS and MERS-COV experiences appear to be just dry runs, yet it still caught many governments and nations flatfooted. Jesus through His suffering, death and resurrection takes this inevitable human suffering for what it is, accepted it and performed His mission despite knowing the repercussions, teaching us that this is not the end and we will rise after. He transformed this suffering into something that redeems us, believers. The apostles and disciples followed in His footsteps and many paid the price with their lives because they know that if they keep His word, they will have peace and freedom in this world, and be united with Him in this world and after – heaven! The meaning that Jesus gives my human suffering is that even if it is inevitable, it is not futile. He heals me when I focus on Him and the mission that God gives me, transforming my suffering. If I fall, I will rise again in Him, with Him and through Him. The grace is the love that He showers on me, undeserved, which I then share with others.

Who is afraid of Covid-19? I am. But I am not immobilized by this fear because Jesus walks with me.

Father,

I ask for the grace to be like Mary of Bethany, extravagant in her
 Love for Jesus, in her own way. Let me be present to you like His
 Mother Mary, Mary from Magdala and Mary wife of Clophas
 Who are present in your crucifixion, burial and resurrection.
 Let me be like Peter who denied Jesus, but continued to
 Love Him, follow Him and perform His very crucial
 Mission of establishing Your community in this
 Earth. Let me be like Simon Cyrene and
 Joseph of Arimathea who helped realize
 Your plan in their own way. Let me be like the
 Criminal crucified with Jesus, who accepts his sins
 And humbly asks Him for His mercy. Let me be like the
 Beloved disciple, John, who takes Mary His mother into his
 Home to care for her in her grief and destitution. Let me be like
 Your son, Jesus, a brother to all, helpful, compassionate, merciful,
 Wise, obedient to the end, steadfast in His love for You, for us – my Lord
 And teacher. Amen.

11 April 2020

Happy Easter! This greeting appears to be inappropriate during this period of lockdown due to the ravages of the Covid-19 virus, in the Philippines and in other countries. There is much death and suffering, as if the commemoration of the passion, crucifixion and death of Jesus is still ongoing. But I think that there are reasons to be truly happy in celebrating the feast of the resurrection at this time.

The Covid-19 pandemic has stripped me of my usual self, of my routines, my accustomed way of thinking. What is happening is something like the Passion of Jesus when all was taken away from Him, from His clothes, His dignity, His life. This emptying of myself appears to be an unpleasant and painful but welcome necessity. It allows me to rest, hopefully in the loving arms of God, to let me examine my previous life, to make me have a new understanding of pain and suffering. I can only pray that I am emptied of my sense of self-sufficiency, my vices, my previous prideful way of thinking and relating with others, as God makes me ready to receive His most wonderful gift, the Resurrection of Jesus, His son, the son of man and the son of God. This singular event, the resurrection, frees me from sin and the separation from God, from the fear of death, of death itself, renews me and returns me to union with Him. This is indeed a very happy situation for me, for He makes all things new!

Oh my

Loving brother Jesus,

The two Marys sat in front of Your tomb after Your burial, grieving, sad, hurt, in pain.
They return to Your tomb on the first day of the week, hoping to be with You again. At the tomb
The ground shook, the stone cover is rolled away. A glorious angel blinds the guards and tells
The women that Jesus has risen and to look inside the tomb. They see that it is empty and
They rejoice. The angel tells them to tell the others that Jesus has risen, and go to
Galilee where He will meet them. In wonder, in fear, in anxiety, in joy they run
But on the way, Jesus appears to them and tells them not to be afraid,
And to tell the disciples to meet Him in Galilee.

Let me come to You, Jesus, in my pain
And in my grief, that I may find You
And be healed with the joy of Your
Resurrection. Call to me while I languish
In the tomb of my sins that with Your self-
Sacrificing love, I may rise and roll away the large
Stone that covers the darkness. Let me share in the glory
Of Your rising, and post haste go to the Galilee of my
Daily life and live it in Your loving presence,
Guiding me, teaching me and inspiring me, that
I may live it in union with You
In this life, and forever in the
Life hereafter. Amen.