

Magis

Formation for Mission



*Stewardship
Simplicity
Sharing
Service*

Official Publication of the Magis Deo Community
August 2017 Issue

Sexual intimacy

How is it connected to spirituality?

My faith, my life

Meet Christ:
your life's CEO

Reflections on AIR

Feeling God's presence
and purification

Awareness of life

Realize life's abundance
and His generosity

Don't dream it's over

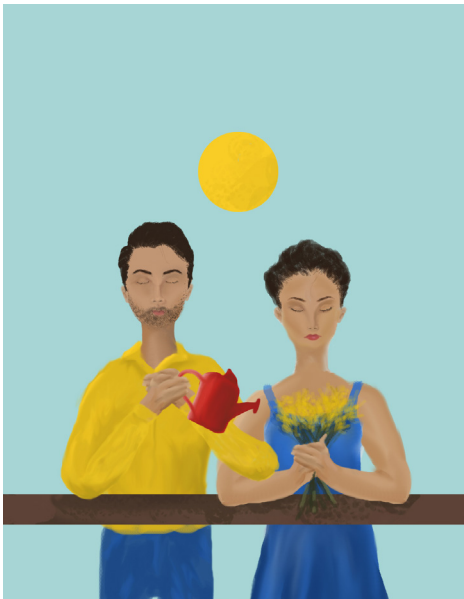
It's never too late to dream

ME weekend reflections

Ponder once more



About the Cover



In this month’s issue, respective writers contribute their insights on what truly is solidified during each couple’s matrimony. It sheds light on how sexual intimacy shouldn’t be such a taboo subject than how Filipinos make it out to be, because there is a connection between sexuality and spirituality; a deeper importance to such a union.

Because of these, illustrator Levenspeil R. Sangalang of Magis Youth, enlivened his vision of how married couples have signed on nurturing each other interdependently. That both should water each other’s flowers till death do them part. That both should make each day more blooming than yesterday.

And so, the illustration encapsulates a literal bouquet of flowers, and a watering can, plus a ball of sunlight - a symbol of God’s essentiality in between, as He helps each other grow. It should also be noted that a couple is praying with linked arms - a symbol of strength through faith, prayer, love, commitment, and intimacy.

List of Eligibles for 2017 Pastoral Council Election

SURNAME	NAME	BCGG	SURNAME	NAME	BCGG
1 ALDEGUER	Jojo & Jane	Mustard Seed	11 DELA PEÑA	Boy & Kit	Exodus
2 ANGELES	Chacho & Marlyn Thessalonians		12 GO	Mon & Alice	Psalms 98
3 APO	Atoy & Malou	Exodus	13 LECCIO	Jay-R & Leila	Transfiguration
4 BALDERAS	Marcia	Archangel Gabriel	14 LLAMAS	Josie	Genesis of David
5 CASTILLO	Ed & Tatic	Cana	15 PALMARIO	Kit & Nancy	Psalms 98
6 CASTILLO	Uriel & Yella	Archangel Gabriel	16 PARADA	Leony & Mia	Psalmaritans
7 CHUA	Harry & Helen	Sirach	17 SAN PEDRO	Miles & Evelyn	Cana
8 CHUA CHIACO	Anchit & Sally	John	18 SANTOS	Ramie & Mimi	Psalmaritans
9 COLLADO	Danny & Lilian	Song of Ruth	19 SUN	Ricky & Trixie	Matthew
10 DE GUZMAN	Regie & Daisy	Corinthians			

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Magis			Official Publication of the Magis Deo Community		
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Calendar of Activities: August - November 2017

Aug 5, Sept 2, Oct 14 Community Celebration	November 24-26 Marriage Encounter Weekend
October 9 Magis Golf Tournament 27-29 AIR	

Sexual Intimacy

Cesar & Marivic Pareja, Chaircouple

In our community celebration last July 01, 2017, Fr. Ruben Tanseco, SJ once again reiterates the importance of sexual intimacy among married couples. He talked about the 3S's: Sensuality, Sexuality, and Spirituality.

The topic of Sexuality is one that is often neglected by married couples especially because we Filipinos are conservative by nature. Sex plays a very important role in a marriage, but because couples don't talk about it very often, this leads to some husbands looking for sex elsewhere.

Nowadays, marriages are easily taken for granted. The wives don't care anymore about how they look, they're not flirtatious, they neglect their appearance, and the husbands tolerate this. Couples forget to make time for pleasure, for sexuality and sensuality in the marriage.

Fr. Tanseco reminds wives: Take care of your appearance. Try to look sexually attractive for your husband. Prioritize your husband, be best friends with him and be passionate as lovers. Husbands, be more appreciative of what your wives do. It takes two to tango. Be aware when sexuality is being neglected and take the initiative to dialogue about this. Seek more ways to be more sexually attractive to each other.

The five senses should be the entry points of God's presence in a marriage. Couples must learn to dialogue with each other about their sexual intimacy. Ask, "What more can each of us do (or not do) to be more sexually attractive to each other?" Both husband and wife should be aware that physical changes can be a challenge. Being aware that you have a problem, as well as seeking medical help to address the problem in sexual intimacy can be a topic for couple dialogue.

Your spouse should be our best friend, with whom you should be able to discuss anything and everything. Let us not be shy with our sexuality. We should open our sexiness to our spouses, talk about what will make the relationship more romantic, passionate and sexually fulfilling.

Sexuality and Spirituality are connected. Couples were married in the eyes of the Lord; you should not be ashamed of what you can sexually do to each other. Nothing is bastos in the eyes of God. Sex is part of God's plan in a marriage. There are so many things couples can do to make each other happy.

Let us be reminded of this verse in the Bible: The husband should fulfill his wife's sexual needs, and the wife should fulfill her husband's needs. – 1 Corinthians 7:3.

Let this be the greatest legacy a spouse can leave the other, the memories of LOVE in their hearts.



"The Kiss" by Gustav Klimt, Oil on Canvas, 1908

Photo retrieved from: www.dunyahukukburosu.com

Sensuality-Sexuality-Spirituality of Married Couples

Fr. Ruben M. Tanseco, S.J.

Situationer: Subject matter is one of most neglected in Filipino culture.

Taboo subject. Topic not given enough attention by the couples; one cause for womanizing being prevalent in the country.

Modern woman tends to be busy with profession, etc. The marriage is taken for granted; neglecting their appearance. Hindi na FLIRT.

Husbands tolerate this (also to blame) but look for sexuality elsewhere.

Wives: The older you get, the more you should take care of your appearance. Try to look attractive sexually FOR YOUR HUSBAND!

Husbands: Be more appreciative of what wives do. It takes two to tango.

Wives: Priority value as husband and wife should be number one – to be the best of friends and the most passionate as lovers.

Wives who are very religious tend to neglect sexuality. Is that being spiritual? Husbands should be aware of this and take the initiative to dialogue about this: to seek out ways to be more sexually attractive to each other.

Sensuality - Five senses as entry points of God's presence

Dialogue: "What more can each of us do (or not do) to be more sexually attractive to each other?"

Both should be aware that physical changes can be a challenge. Seeking medical help can be a topic for dialogue; this is still part of sexual intimacy.

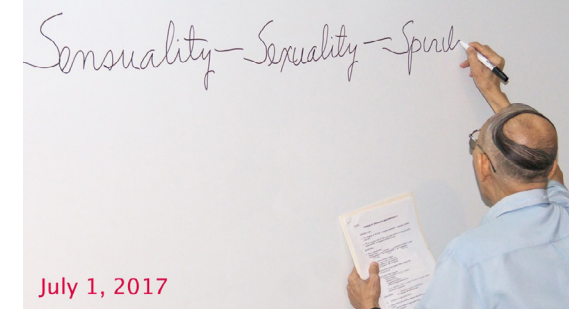
What you can discuss with your friends (barkada) you should discuss with your spouse. Couples should be the best of friends; open to talk about everything. MAGKABARKADA.

Open your sexiness to your spouse. Attractive sexually, physically, mentally, emotionally, etc.

Connecting with Spirituality. Couples were married in the eyes of the Lord; you should not be ashamed of what you can sexually do. Nothing is BASTOS in the eyes of the Lord. Sex is part of God's plan for a marriage. You can do a lot to make each other happy.

LEGACY - what is the greatest legacy a spouse can leave the other? THE MEMORIES OF LOVE IN THE HEART OF THE SURVIVING SPOUSE.

Fr. Ruben Tanseco, S.J.



July 1, 2017



SONA

Cesar and Delsa Sangalang,
Psalmaritans BCGG

A few days ago, Pres. Rodrigo Duterte made his State of the Nation Address (SONA) after his first year in office. As expected, he illustrated all the achievements of his administration, which primarily centered on suppressing the drug and criminality problem in the country. He also laid down his plans to improve the lives of the Filipino people, by all means. And just like every SONA, a 2-hour talk generates a lot of actions that need to be done by all government departments and institutions, and, more importantly, the cooperation and support of the people.

After the first half of 2017, it might be interesting to also look at the current state of Magis Deo as a community and how its plans and programs are being implemented. But in this issue, we will limit our updates and discussions to the Community Service Ministry (CSM) only, being the head of this ministry.

When we took over as ministry overseer at the start of this year, there were two immediate challenges. First, the CSM head resigned and no one took over the responsibility. Thus by default we had to take over. Sadly, to date we haven't found someone to head the CSM. Second, Rufo Dacanay needed to hand over the management of the Magis Newsletter for reasons we all understand considering the health condition of Louren.

As most know, the CSM is primarily responsible for the monthly community celebration. While one of the other ministries is assigned as lead of each ComCeleb, the CSM still has to ensure that all aspects of the celebration – from preparation of the venue to the speaker, the mass, and the program proper – are well taken care of. The perennial challenge at ComCelebs is the anemic attendance of members. To address this, we initially

looked at its basic components such as the date/day, venue, the relevance of topics, the choice of speaker, and even the officiating priest. There was also feedback from some members that they don't feel welcomed in the community as no one or very few talk with or greet them during the celebration. Hence, we assign one of the 3 BCGG sponsors at each ComCeleb to take charge of welcoming participants, especially the relatively new members. We admit this is still not consistently done and must be re-energized with the help of other members who are gifted with people skills. To easily recognize members and recall names, our ID system is now consistently being implemented, thanks to our Magis Secretariat.

While doing a quick analysis and assessment, we noted that majority of the BCGGs have an average attendance rate of less than 30%. Worse, there are few with 10% attendance; and some have zero. In the 1st half of this year, our average attendance is 84, or 29% of the 289 registered members. While we understand the challenges of individual schedules especially for those who are actively working, and the ever worsening traffic situation in Metro Manila, we believe there are deeper reasons why some do not attend ComCelebs. We hope the ongoing council visitation of each BCGG will help us understand and get inputs and feedback, and improve attendance at our community celebrations. We humbly ask for the support of our members and we keep praying that God will touch our hearts to become more involved and be present in our community celebration.

Equally challenging was the responsibility to manage our Magis Newsletter. Aside from having no experience in this area, we are also not inclined to writing articles. But God made us realize that

we were gifted with a son with skills and talents not just in writing and drawing, but more importantly, in doing the entire layout of the publication. Of course, we would like to express our grateful appreciation for the support of our members who regularly contribute articles, and the quick editing services of Rufo Dacanay. Instead of a monthly issue, we have decided to make it bi-monthly, to give way for significant enhancements such as making our newsletter a magazine-type format, with more pages (and colored prints), and better paper quality. Thanks to the help of our printing partner, Ramie and Mimi Santos of Psalmaritans BCGG.

On June 17, 2017 we had our Magis Night, dubbed "Millennial at Heart." More than 70 Magis members and guests attended and danced the night away to the music of the Flashbacks LiveBand at RJ Bistro Makati. With the support of members, the event was successfully held, without having to draw on community funds.

The next big event is our annual Magis golf tournament tentatively scheduled on October 9, 2017 at Ayala Greenfield Golf Course and Country Club in Calamba, Laguna. With the usual support of our members and sponsors, we expect to raise substantial funding for our community programs and activities.

Moving forward, we will continue to explore ways to make every activity worthy of our time and resources. We will constantly reach out to our members through the BCGG heads to solicit feedback and suggestions. With our collective efforts and constant prayers, we are certain we will achieve our goals this year.

Building God's kingdom on Earth

ME Recruitment: Our mission and our passion

Levy & Roxanne Espiritu,
Transfiguration BCGG

Magis Deo's vision is "to help build God's kingdom here on earth in response to His unconditional love and His call and invitation, in the Ignatian spirit of magis (more) as a community, as an individual, couples and families."

The close of each Community Celebration usually ends with an ME Class standing nervously in front of the community making an urgent plea for couple recruits. This has always been the experience of every sponsoring class, but last month, the plea sounded so urgent we could not help but feel the desperation and anxiety of the class begging for more couple-candidates. The number of couples for each Weekend has been dwindling for some time now, and it seems recruitment is a Calvary at this time.

That is so sad. We remember our own Weekend – 33 couples! We were so many we needed five couples as class coordinators. Thirty-three couples on retreat to make their marriages work! Many of us came burdened with problems and pain and even anger, but by the end of the Weekend, most, if not all of us, had come to the realization that when we carry our crosses with love, God will give us Easter.

Every time we recruit couples for the ME Weekend, we are carrying out our mission of helping build God's kingdom. Yet inviting married couples to what could be

the start of their spiritual journey is a real challenge. We need to pray passionately to be touched by the grace to pursue, persist and find creative ways to entice other couples for a Weekend that begins just for themselves and which, with God's grace, could end up as a life-long love affair with God. This is how we change the world.

Who can forget the excitement of sponsoring an ME Weekend? We have served as auxiliaries, prayed for candidates, solicited palancas and vigil prayers, given up our family Sunday so we could accompany a couple candidate's family to the harana. And still each Weekend is accompanied by anxiety and the fear that we have not done enough, that our many "kapalpakans" will be an obstacle for the candidates.

But we also remember consoling a first-time sharer shaking after her talk, and then watching her anxiety turn to deep joy and gratitude when a candidate comes up to tell her she was deeply moved by her sharing. Listening to them, we realize we have just witnessed Jesus' breaking of the bread and accepted His invitation to come in and join the feast. Who can count the many times the Lord blesses us and allows us to witness resurrection? How can we not believe the Holy Spirit is working to touch the hearts and minds of every couple and individual in the room, from the presenting team to

Dear Magis members – this editorial was written and published in the July 2015 issue of our Newsletter. Our concerns and desires are the same; sadly, the situation remains the same. And in the continuing face of dwindling numbers firstly in recruitment for the ME Weekend, and consequently entrance into the community, we reprint this moving testimony from a couple who began in Magis Deo when their children were in grade school, and who are now grandparents.

the sponsoring class, from the candidates to the haranistas?

We have had our share of journeys with couples we have brought into Magis Deo, and each time, without fail, they have brought us wondrous joy and renewed our spirits. All of us in Magis Deo are witnesses to how an ME Weekend experience can bring hope and vitality to couples, rekindling relationships with renewed compassion – and passion – for each other. And then watch it overflow to our families, friends, and the the bigger community out there. Again, God confirms: this is how we change the world.

Similarly, we have experienced renewed vigor and confidence in carrying out God's mission for us. And so, three months before every ME Weekend, we set ourselves, armed with the grace, wisdom and courage; and each time the cycle starts, we pray, and search again and again for another couple recruits. Our marriage and our family is overflowing with love and grace because of the Marriage Encounter Weekend. We have accepted the Lord's commissioning to spread the gospel of the Marriage Encounter to other couples, so that they too may experience life fully. With deep gratitude, we continue to recruit.

Cross is Joy

09 July 2017 / Ruben M. Tanseco, SJ

Our first reading from the prophet Zechariah in today's liturgy depicts our coming king as riding on an ass, in humility and poverty. This is the very opposite of that worldly vision of a rich and powerful king riding on a two-wheeled chariot pulled by a horse. Therefore, long before the person of Christ came to be one among us; the vision of a humble and poor Prince of Peace was already there in historical terms. The vision that came to reality has not changed to this very day. When we feel and experience the reality of Christ today, we realize that God's vision of reality for the good of mankind has never changed, from the beginning of history. God's love and way of giving that love has been there since the beginning of time, all the way to the present.

The humble and poor Prince of Peace in the person of Christ ministered to multitudes with His never-ending love and compassion. He performed so many miracles, from healing the sick, including lepers, to reviving the dead to life again. "Jesus went around to all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and curing every disease and illness. At the sight of the crowds, his heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few, so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest.'" (Mt. 9:35-38). This message is not only for his original disciples, but to all his disciples of all times, which includes you and me. Today, there are so many people who are turning their backs from God's love and mission. We must become more and more aware of this as time goes on. One of the strongest temptations in today's world is Godlessness. Sinfulness.

But as we are told in the Second Reading for today, God's love for us is so great that His Spirit dwells in each one of us, and this makes all the difference. With the Holy Spirit as our constant companion and "fellow-sufferer," love lightens the burdens of life. As the spiritual writer Wm. Maestri reminds us: "Love lightens the burdens of life... Burdens are removed



by being accepted, and are transformed by love and grace. In fact, Jesus clearly promises that those who accept the challenge to follow him can expect many crosses, persecutions and rejections. But, even more, for those who remain faithful there is hope of eternal life and joy without end." (Grace Upon Grace).

One of our places of apostolic ministry is Payatas. Many of the families there are financially poor. But what strikes me deeply is that many of them live in peace, harmony, and love. They attend Mass regularly on Sundays, and quite a number of them are actively involved in some form of ministry, either in the parish or in some apostolic organization. Their simple but loving relationship with God and with one another in their daily lives quietly reveals the reality that the Holy Spirit dwells in them. On the other hand, there are those who turn their backs from the Holy Spirit and live sinful lives, causing some form of harm to the community. Another place I want to single out is Forbes Park in Makati. Most if not all the families there are rich or middle-class. There, too, you will find families where the Holy Spirit dwells in an active, loving way, and some families where the Holy Spirit is ignored and denied.

Our two examples are found all over the world. God's loving presence is in all of God's creation, but because of the gift of free will, the situation is where it is. God's love is accepted or denied. But God never ceases to give His love, which we find in our Gospel reading for today. "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light." (Mt.

11:28-30). This loving and inspiring invitation and mission from Christ should be throbbing in our hearts all the time. What a meaningful and worthwhile life you and I have been gifted with. The crosses in our lives are really preludes to our resurrection with Christ.

In our country, we have quite a number of organizations who help the poor and disabled. Let me mention just a few that I have an involvement with. One is the Blind Industrious Group of Masseurs, Inc. This helps the sightless to become economically self-sufficient by developing their skills and abilities. Another is the Orthopedically Handicapped Victims Livelihood Association, Inc. A third is the Philippine Angel and Indigents Sound Group, Inc. Due to lack of space, the last I want to mention is the college scholarship program that we run in Payatas. This is quite expensive indeed. How can we experience such a yoke as easy, and such a burden light? There is only one answer, and that is LOVE. Christ's profound love for each one of us, and our response of loving Him and loving one another in return, and this does not happen only within the family. The ultimate punch line of God's love goes all the way to loving even your 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. For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have? Do not the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what is unusual about that? Do not the pagans do the same? So be perfect, just as your heavenly father is perfect." (Mt. 5:44-48). Amen.

the guidance of their parish priest. They decided to cancel their trip to the Holy Land, since they needed the money to pay the debts, and the next few months were really an experience of mourning and bereavement. But they became even closer to one another as a family. And their relationship with God and love for Him became much stronger than before. Amen.

01 July 2017 Community Celebration



My Faith, My Life

I can recognize Jesus only through the eyes Faith, with the grace that God grants to all. My faith covers all that my mind can grasp, and all those mysteries it cannot, though my heart understands even those things my mind cannot. But I still have to do my part and nourish this faith, studying and being guided by Your word and the example of Your life.

As in this modern world, Jesus is my CEO, in this business called life. Your vision encompasses this life, and life after this, a life of peace and harmony, of total union with the creator. Your mission while you were here with us, was the mission that the Father gave You, that of spreading the good news of how we can return to God after a serious separation. Your strategic approach is compassion and love, in freedom, as You feel for the people around you, as You accept persecution from religious authorities threatened by Your teachings, as You give Your life for us – all in, so to speak. Your programs are plain: be simple, sincere, love as You loved, carry no baggage, be forthright but discerning. Accept everyone, help everyone. You give us all that we need to perform the mission you passed on to us. You assure us that You will be with us, taking care of us, protecting us, telling us what to do and say. The target market is everyone. The target revenue You gave us is 100%, everyone. Your bottom line is complete union with God in complete freedom, not half union, not three quarters union.

But as I reflect deeper, I realize that this Jesus Company is not a business in the usual sense. There is no managing of costs and increasing of revenues. There is no continuous growth of accumulated surplus to sustain and grow the business, and to keep the stockholders and investors happy. I, an employee, am to work pro bono, and costs are to be shared with co-workers. I am not motivated or encouraged to perform through promotions, multiple month bonuses, trips abroad. I do not have to sell myself to my CEO and show Him how good I am, because he works with infants, the young and beautiful, the gifted and the experts, even the broken and retired senior citizens. The reward He offers me is His vision. All I have to do is be myself, wherever and whenever, and live and grow as my CEO directs.

And as I grow in my faith, little seeds growing into great trees, my heart grows in love and compassion. I should be unafraid for I am given the strength to live my faith and thus spread the good news. However, my heart still easily becomes afraid, swayed, and led astray.

As a counterpoint, my God cares for me, for all of us, and through grace and the inspiration Holy Spirit, brings me back to the right path that leads to Him. This path is Jesus, my CEO. His words, directions and teachings. The example of his life. From all of which I learn and see the path to God. And my faith begins to fill my whole being.

But because my faith springs forth from my humanity, it is full of paradoxes, point and counterpoint. And as in music and art, this interplay of humanity and divinity (be myself and yet be perfect as the Father is perfect), grace and freedom (God's

love and free will), failure and success, pain and joy, thesis and antithesis, brokenness and integrity, revelation and mission – all produce a beautiful concerto and life-scape: the over-arching harmony of which is compassion and love. As art consumes the man wholly, love subsumes life totally.

Jesus,
How may I know you, my Lord and my God?
You are totally holy and I am totally profane.
How may I expect water to mix with oil?
You were with us two thousand years ago
And what you did and taught I know only
Through the writings of Your disciples.
And yet these same things set You apart
From this puny creature called a human.

Let me sit with You at table, dining on
Simple dishes of flat bread and broiled fish
Washed down with water or country wine,
Savoring the simple meal You always shared
With those You chose. Please choose me.

Let me walk with you through the roads in the
Countryside, without baggage, without money,
Relying only on the goodness of those You
Find along the way. And if there is none, You
Multiply food so that You and the people may
Eat. You stay in the open air, and pray under the
Moon and stars. Please nourish me.

Let me fish with you in the still salty Lake of
Galilee, catching even those that do not want to
Get caught, but could not escape the net of Your
Love. Let me see and feel Your compassion
Whenever You meet the people, a shepherd-less,
Broken flock, healing them of their afflictions,
Banishing demons that possess their souls and
Spirits, and even bringing the dead back to life.
Please catch me and heal me.

Continued on page 15

On Prayer Life and Examen Prayer Apps

Zarah Gagatiga, Mt Olivet BCGG

I started writing for the Magis Deo Newsletter nine or eight years ago. I took a hiatus for more than two years, I think.

But, I am back now. Thanks to a divine intervention, I was inspired once more to write on a regular basis. Thanks to Deo for allowing me a space to write once more in the Newsletter.

Last June, Pilgrim's Pit Stop debuted with an article on the anniversary of my Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA) last April 2016. For the July issue, being the feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola on July 31, I write about the Examen Prayer and three mobile apps that assist and help direct anyone who is willing to do the Examen.

I was first introduced to the Examen by Fr. Jean Desautels, SJ. I signed up for the 19th Annotation where he was the spiritual director. I was in my third year of employment at Xavier School at the time and, having attended the yearly Ignatian Retreats provided by the school, I felt I needed to deepen my prayer and enhance my prayer life with more meaning and verve. There was also the Consortium required for all newbies. I attended this in the middle of the school year and, oh my, how it rocked my soul! I didn't remember praying for God to disturb me, but He did at a time when I seemed to be demanding so much from my relationships and from life, in general. Yet, happiness had been an elusive dream. The Consortium was my spiritual baptism of fire. Looking back, it was there where my spiritual journey began. I will share about this sometime soon on another platform or issue of the Newsletter.

Now, for the apps. These mobile apps on the Examen Prayer are produced and created by the Loyola Press, JesuitPrayer.org and The

Prodigal Father. These three apps are: The 3 Minute Retreat; Jesuit Prayer; and the EXAMEN Prayer App. All three follow the five steps of the Examen and all can be downloaded for free in mobile phones, laptops and PC, and tablets and iPads. An internet connection is needed to download the apps, of course, as well as Google Play for Android and App Store for iPhone users.

The Examen Prayer App is made by The Prodigal Father, Fr. Michael Denk. It has an introductory video where Fr. Denk instructs users of the app through the Examen. Of the three apps, it has a space for journaling which can be shared with one's spiritual director, confessor, spouse or a trusted friend via email. It includes a social media channel for sharing on Twitter and Facebook. Of course, the choice to put up one's prayer petitions out there is a personal choice. The app is password protected. Users of the app can set the alarm as a reminder to do the Examen twice in a day.

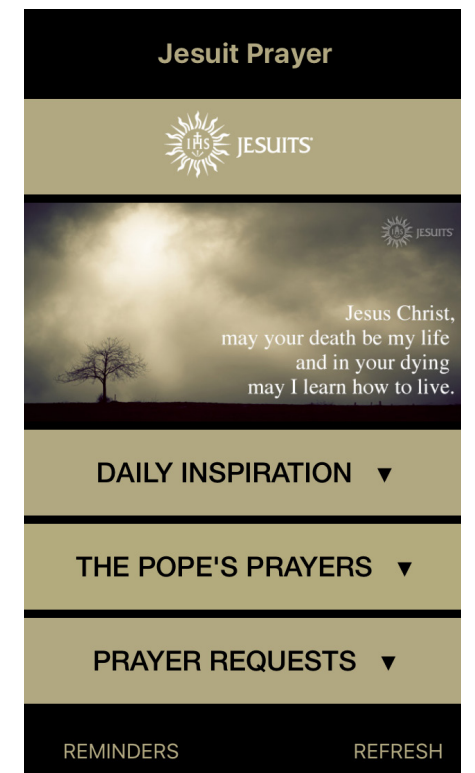
The Jesuit Prayer is an online ministry of the Jesuit Midwest and Jesuit West in cooperation with the Spiritual Outreach through Leadership, LCC. The app presents the scriptural reading and Gospel for the day, then leads users of the app to Ignatian Reflection and Ignatian Prayer. There is a separate space for the Examen, prayer cards and a link to the Pope's Prayer.

The 3 Minute Retreat is the creation of Loyola Press. It lives up to its name. It is short, sweet and simple. Yet, it follows the five steps in the Examen. Of the three, this app is something I recommend for people starting out in the Examen. The Examen is a prayer technique that is not easy to do, but when done regularly and if the person is willing, then, he

or she can start small and build up towards longer prayer time.

If you think these apps on the Examen can help you, why not try them out. There is nothing wrong with the traditional way of praying the Examen either. I think the beautiful thing about Ignatian Prayer is that we are able to meet God where ever we are in our life cycles and life journeys.

St. Ignatius of Loyola, pray for us!



I Was Present with God at the Recent Annual Ignatian Retreat

Rey Mella, Cana BCGG



This was one retreat that I did not wonder why I was there in the first place. We planned for it and I had it in my calendar weeks or months before. Made a reservation and paid for the deposit. It was a deliberate plan to be present, not just attend. To listen to God speak to me, not just hear the words of Fr. Ramon Baustita, SJ, the ever inspiring retreat master.

That was quite a weekend, July 21-23, at the beautiful and holy grounds of the Sacred Heart Novitiate. Fr. Ramon was director of the novitiate for several years and he told us he has a lot of memories there. So did I. I've been there a couple of times and the place has never ceased to inspire me, slow me down, and connect me with God. I just love walking and running around there. I went for a run on Saturday morning (when it rained, had to run faster for cover at the kitchen area, and, got worried about Tito Tony who was walking about the same time it rained...), and then again on Sunday.

It's like a kilometer from the gate to to the cemetery of the Jesuit priests. Took a selfie there with Fr. Horacio de la Costa's tomb in the background.

With 48 participants or so to manage, the always-dedicated Ted and Susan Concepcion, did a fantastic job of planning, arranging, accommodating and coordinating everyone and running the "show" with Fr. Ramon.

And more, actually. There is always a first time – we forgot to bring towels! And, my close friends – even closer now – the Concepcion's – provided us towels. So, you see, Ted and Susan solved all the problems during the very quiet weekend. Can you imagine being with one's prayer companions, who we normally just see and meet and chat during monthly community celebrations, for three days and not being able to talk and chat??

But, to my amazement, it was a silent retreat, and Fr. Ramon commended us for being such a quiet and disciplined group.

The trip going to the venue started well from lunch and

a medical appointment in Mega Mall, until I made a wrong turn and found ourselves driving towards Makati instead of to Quezon Avenue! My oh my. I was upset with me and with my companion – my wife – who I was also blaming for my mistake. Until I corrected myself – who actually had the steering wheel. Last time I checked I was the one driving!

Anyhow, in spite crawling Commonwealth Avenue at slower than funeral-procession pace, we made it with no other incidents and I made peace with my wife. But, we missed the first mass prior to dinner. All good, we were allowed dinner even without attending the mass.

My personal takeaways from the retreat? Lots. But putting God on my calendar of activities and appointments was on top of the list. I realized that while I am obsessive-compulsive about putting my activities and appointments on my calendar and I live and die by my schedule and calendar, my prayer life and my daily examen are not on my calendar. While the weekly BCGG meetings and the Sunday masses with my family are scheduled and calendared, I simply insert my prayer life whenever I can. They are not on my daily schedule. I learned to include God in my schedule of activities and in my calendar.

Some of the things I picked up were: Solomon as a model of a retreatant, Bartimeus as a model of a pray-er, the spiritual exercises, the daily examen, discernment, spiritual quotient, and more.

Begging for God's mercy and blessings and regular and repeated contemplation and prayer and prayer times were things I had to learn one more time during this retreat.

Fr. Ramon's well prepared delivery of the inputs, his many stories, characters and personalities exemplifying spirituality and God's love, the expositions of the Blessed Sacrament during our prayer time, reflection and journaling, the reconciliation and confession, and then the daily masses, the food, and of course, the siesta all made for a rare and great weekend with the Lord.

Reflections on the Annual Ignatian Retreat with Fr. Mon Bautista, S.J.

DATE: JULY 21-23 2017

VENUE: SACRED HEART NOVITIATE,
NOVALICHES, QUEZON CITY

Marlyn Angeles, Thessalonians BCGG



Every year, Chacho and I make it a point to attend at least one AIR. AIR retreats give us the chance to pause, reflect and meditate on our life's mission.

It took us close to three hours to get to the Novitiate from Makati, a long and tiring drive. We arrived at the novitiate just in time for dinner.

So, what makes this retreat different from the others?

The retreat covered four themes and of these, the first two allowed me to get in touch with my deepest feelings that affected my own personal prayer. These sessions helped me move forward to a much deeper experience of a renewed relationship with the Lord.

For the past six months, the challenges Chacho and I faced have taken their toll on my interior disposition. I felt so tired, weary and worn out that I hardly could meditate, much less contemplate. I resorted to studying, working to drown out my own questions on what was happening, and to put aside what I was feeling. I resorted to formula prayer to assure myself that I was praying. I cut my prayer time with the justification that I was late for my appointments. While mentally, I could relate to the Lord, my heart was simply shut. I could not open up, and

there were times I just stared at the Lord on the cross, and not say or feel anything.

This is where I was when I started. The first input on Solomon as the ideal retreatant and the Heart Exercise helped me to name and acknowledge my festering mixed emotions of pain, sadness, deep disappointment, discouragement, loneliness, frustration, anger and fear. Naming these emotions was the first step. I reflected on them and accepted that this is who I am before the Lord. I felt naked. I was stripped of the masks I had on and felt very vulnerable. When I talked about them with the Lord, I was relieved and felt a faint reconnection that I have been yearning for. I sensed Him listen intently, assuring me of His presence. It as a warm feeling that was all over me.

I expressed how I missed Him terribly. I missed our long talks where I could just ramble on and feel safe and happy. I saw the smile as I asked for the gifts of clarity, peace, trust and a loving heart.

The second theme with Bartemaues as the subject of study further opened my heart and allowed me to contemplate, something I had difficulty doing for the past months. I prayed that I would be able to see HIM and my situation much more clearly. Contemplating on this encounter with the Lord gave me the clarity I asked for. I felt His silky dark brown hair, saw His blue gray smiling eyes, felt His firm

hand on my left shoulder assuring me of His love. He was and is always with me no matter what. Before Him, I prayed that I would see myself as He sees me, smile and assure others as He does, and love as much as He continues to show me.

The confession in the afternoon answered my prayer for clarity. Purification, Purgation were words that came to mind as I talked to Father Confessor about my difficulty and my sins. And as I prayed before the Lord's mother, I felt reconnected and reconciled.

The two other themes, on Examen and the depth of one's spirituality cemented the fruits of the retreat. From the holy darkness, came the dawn I have been waiting for. From the confusion, came the clarity I sought. And my last prayer was to grow deeper in my relationship with Him, knowing fully well this would mean possible more purgation as I have gone through now. I would like to think that the growth in my own spirituality is not a straight line but a spiral that goes up. Thus purgation, disappointments and pain will still be there. My acceptance, my deeper faith, my trust and love for Him will make the difference in bringing the spiral-turn into a higher plane.

My Prayers In The AIR

Lito Naldo, Psalmaritans BCGG



July 22, 2017
10:33AM

Dear Lord,

Thank you for giving me this weekend to be here at this beautiful place for my first AIR. Thank you also for your presence here now. I know that you have always been present in my life, and most of the time, I have not allowed your presence to be felt. For the many times that I have ignored and/or disbelieved in your presence in my life, I ask forgiveness.

I thank you Lord for your Gospel today. Thank you for your gift of healing, mercy and forgiveness. Thank you for reminding me again that whatever I ask of in your name, as long as it is according to you will to love others, you will make it happen for me.

I also thank you Lord for teaching me to pray the Ignatian way of contemplation. May I learn and practice it often, so that I may know you better, and be able to do your will in my life which is to love and love until the end of time

I love you Lord,
Lito

July 22, 2017
5:06PM

Dear Lord,

Thank you for the very meaningful input from Fr. Mon this afternoon. Thank you for your gift of the Ignatian Exercises. Firstly Lord, I find this form of prayer difficult and time consuming. It is not easy to dig deeply into my own feelings, consolations and desolations. Discerning your will for me is also the hardest part, I think of my spiritual life. Because, I have admittedly & have always been in control of my life, placing and figuring out on my own, what I should do, and what should happen to me and my loved ones.

Help me Lord to surrender this control of my life to your will and loving desire for me. Teach me more on how to pray the Examen, guide me, and remind me to do it everyday. Help me Lord to find time in my busy schedule, to pray the Examen at least once a day. I also thank your Lord for this gift of the sacrament of reconciliation. Thank you for continuously making me feel your loving mercy and acceptance. As I prepare myself for confession, help me Lord to have an open heart and a humble spirit, being grateful of your loving mercy.

Remind me Lord of your ultimate sacrifice, giving up your life on the cross, that I may have everlasting joy with you, in spite of my sinfulness. Please remind me Lord to do this often, not only because confession can make me feel good, but because I know that I am a sinner, and your constant forgiveness is what my soul needs, so that I may live in your peace each day of my life.

I love you,
Lito

July 23, 2017
10:25AM

Dearest Lord,

Thank you very much for the inputs of Fr. Mon this morning. It is my first time to learn and listen about Ignatian Spirituality and the concept of Spiritual Quotient or SQ. Thank you Lord for reminding me that there are still many aspects of my spiritual life that needs to grow and mature. Although you have given me the grace of accepting myself as your son and beloved creature, and have inspired me to have a very thankful heart, I still need to grow in the other aspects of spirituality. Help me Lord to have a stonger sense of personal vocation. In my life, I have always focused on my successful career and how much salaries and professional fees I have been receiving.

Although I have always acknowledged my successful professional life as a true gift from you, I have seldom gone beyond my success to find out the real purpose of these. I often see my success as simply a measure to gain more wealth for myself and family. Give me Lord the grace of knowing the real purpose of my success and what you really want to do with my success. Help me Lord to find, and understand my vocation more. Help me Lord to first meaning in the things that I do in my life, especially in my work. Help me also Lord to lessen my focus on my profession, as compared to my role as father to my children and husband to Anne. Give me more reasons and occasions to be joyful when doing my chores at home or when caring for and spending time with my children. I also pray Lord that you give me the grace to ask deeper and more profound questions whenever I make decisions. Your loving guidance is all I need to make the right decisions in my life.

I love you Lord,
Lito

My Faith, My Life

Continued from page 10

May I hold You and hear you say my name?
While I sit beside You, guide me through
Your teachings, which I often find puzzling.
Let me touch Your hand, no, even just Your
Clothes so that I may experience Your power
Up close. Let me touch your wounds, let me
Touch Your hair, caked with blood and grime,
The thorns on Your head, pricking my fingers
With a sharp pain. May I feel Your suffering,

Your sacrifice for my sake when you made
Sacred us whom You love, that I may learn
That love goes all the way, even to death.
Please let me return Your love in kind.
Let me feel the pain of Your love, and the joy
That Mary felt when You conquered death,
And she heard Your loving voice again.
Please let my heart be like her joyful heart,
And put her glorious smile upon my lips.



Magis Deo Community
Annual Ignatian Retreat – July 21-23, 2017



Retreat Director – Fr. Mon Bautista, S.J.

REFLECTIONS

Caesar's due

Mennen M. Aracid, Easter BCGG

When scripture says give to Caesar what is due him, I think it is still a bottomless pit.

I recall in class many years back, we were discussing the philosophy of the absurd. Why take a bath when you get dirty? Why invest in anything when you cannot take them with you? Why learn and develop when in the end you will die? Why be healthy why you cannot escape death?

So here I am again, running the rat race so Caesar gets what is due him. And on the drive home, I asked myself the same question: Why go through all the trouble of working hard when you can't take any of these in heaven?

Well, I think that's overdoing it a bit. Over the last four weeks I went missing from the BCGG Meetings, I have been on the road 2 to 3 days a week. Work is now based in Tanauan. And there is Ateneo on Wednesdays and St. Paul on Saturdays. So literally I am logging in kilometers that will make me king of the road by Waze standards. Our usual daily trips will be about 350 kilometers.

In all those trips, there will always be an accident that leaves me wondering whether or not a fellow traveler died. I recall one trip we did in Zambales. An 18-wheeler was ahead of us by just a few minutes. The trailer hit an L300 van and both overturned. The 18-wheeler spilled its contents on the road. What we did not see was the damage the collision caused on the other side of the overturned trailer.

So I think no matter how hard we work, Caesar will still and never be a pleased master. Where does this leave me?

Because I am tired, I feel lazy on Sundays. I have to fight the urge to dismiss the Sunday mass and skip it altogether. I want to blame Caesar and point to this fatigue as his doing. To me, even weekends and Sundays also feel like a bottomless pit.

That's also pretty much how I feel when it is my turn to go to Bilibid and teach Sunday catechism. It is also tiring, but unlike the road trips, serving the Lord is less risky. Hehehe, very little mishaps can happen during Sunday outreach missions.

But admittedly, both are tiring also if your heart is not in its right place.

I'll keep on doing the routes because my loved ones depend on me. I'll keep on serving my community because I know I may help brighten someone else's future.



Photo retrieved from: www.dunyahukukburosu.com

Awareness of Life, Living and God’s Presence

Rey Mella, Cana BCGG



One Sunday morning, I was sitting in the lanai of my home, in solitude, in prayer, quietly, staring at the sun shining on the small garden and greenery, listening to the birds and the dripping water in the nearby aquaponics system.

Without doubt, God was nearby or around me. In the simplicity of my home, I was aware of the divine presence of my creator and of the “beauty” that I was enjoying and experiencing.

How can I not recognize God’s signature?

In those same moments, I was reminiscing my and my wife’s experience during our recent vacation – visits, walks and hikes in the Arches, Monument Valley, Sedona, Bryce Canyon, Balboa Park, La Jolla Beach with the sea lions, Torrey Pines, all in the US; and in Mill Creek Ravine Park, Hawrelak Park, Moraine Lake, Lake Louise, Banff in Canada – all beautiful and awesome sites.

We were in awe, staring and appreciating God’s creation.

The views of the rock formations, the greenery, the snow on the mountains and on the lake, were just breathtakingly awesome!

We took lots and lots of pictures with the views and sites. We sat for several minutes savoring the scenery in all the places we visited. They were all worth the long drives.

And we could never get enough pictures. No matter how many poses and shots we took, we simply could not capture enough of God and His creation in our cameras.

At that very moment, in front of nature’s

beauty, I realized there are things that I can never get enough of: God Himself, His abundant love, His mercy, and His generosity.

“It is incomprehensible that God should exist, and it is incomprehensible that he should not exist.” –Blaise Pascal

After retiring from an active daily 8 to 5 corporate life last November, I turned 60 two months ago.

In my reflection about being a senior citizen, I feel very grateful to the Lord for the abundance of His blessings, the talents I have received, the material things my family and I have enjoyed all these years.

I realize that at this stage of my life – that of having a healthy and physically active life, being able to own my time, no longer a “slave” to a daily grind of 10 to 12 hours of work and a 24 x 7 responsibility, being able to do what I love to do, still being gainfully and productively engaged – I am where I have always wanted to be.

Even as I am enjoying the life of a busy yet happy “retired” person, I am surrounded by family, friends, former colleagues and a community of prayer companions.

At 60, healthy, physically active, accomplished, experienced, financially well, with lots of memories, I believe I am in the sweet spot to accomplish more, do more, contribute more. I am ready for the next 30 to 40 years of my life.

“We may ignore, but we can nowhere evade, the presence of God.” –C.S.Lewis

During karaoke sessions, I have a list of my favorite songs. One time, I happened to browse through my list in my iPhone notes.

- My Love Will See You Through
- You Raise Me Up
- You’re Still You
- You Are Mine

I didn’t realize that my favorite songs, while dedicated to my wife whenever I sing them, were also spiritual songs. They can all be sung for and about God! Wow! All this time, I thought I was just singing them for a loved one, not realizing I was and could have been singing them for my God or that God was sending me a message in those songs.

I know that Footprints in the Sand makes me cry and I’m sure that God’s love saw me through in some of my most difficult situations and circumstances in my life.

“If, then, I were asked for the most important advice I could give, that which I considered to be the most useful to the men of our century, I should simply say: In the name of God, stop a moment, cease your work, look around you.”

–Leo Tolstoy

God’s Creation

In the beginning, God created the earth and rested.

Then God created Man and rested.

Then God created Woman.

Since then, neither God nor Man has rested.

Who Makes the Coffee??

A married couple was arguing about who makes the coffee. The wife argued that the Bible says men should make the coffee; and the husband asked where this was in the Bible. The wife opened the Bible and said: “Right here in HEBREWS!”

Continued on page 19

Learning to Listen

Kit Palmario, Psalm 98 BCGG

The hardest lessons to learn in life are the ones we think we have already learned. Many think of themselves as good listeners, but isn’t it a fact that we often only hear but do not actually listen? Shouldn’t there be some elements like comprehension, retention, interpretation, etc. for one to effectively say that he is a good listener?

From time to time it is good for us all to learn to listen again. Listen to those you love. Listen to your body. Listen to the sounds around you. Listen to your conscience and soul. Listen to God.

One of the fastest ways to improve any relationship is to become a better listener. Here are some ways to do this.

- Since childhood, the words we hear from our parents indicate that we have learned to listen. My two grandchildren who were born in the USA, speak Tagalog fluently because their parents talk to them in Tagalog. On the other hand, my Philippine-born grandson speaks English fluently because his parents talk to him in English.
- Look at whoever is speaking. Smile, make appropriate eye contact, and look at the person speaking. If you are not looking at that person you’re like sending a signal: “ I’m not interested, I’m not paying attention, I’m bored with you.”
- Listen with your body. Be mindful of your body language and get yourself into a comfortable position that makes it easier for you to listen. Our music teacher always tells us that to hit the high notes you have to move your body, squeeze your behind if you are seated.
- Avoid distractions and disruptions. Try not to think about the next thing you are going to say. This causes our minds to wander hence we stop listening to whoever is speaking. It signals. “What I am about to say is more important than what your are saying.” Interrupting is broadly considered rude.

Every relationship improves when we really start to listen, especially our relationship with God.

Awareness of Life, Living and God’s Presence

Continued from page 18

Amen!

Q: Why do they say ‘Amen’ at the end of a prayer instead of ‘Awomen’?

A: The same reason they sing Hymns instead of Hers!

“In my work, if I am not conscious and self-aware, it would be very easy for me to go on with my work without being aware of the aspects of life that I and my people have to worry and take care of in the course of daily living.

My spirituality and the gift of a high EQ have both given me a high level of self-awareness such that I am fully aware of the needs of others. I am also aware that people go through the same things I go through daily. I suppose my caring for others’ needs is higher than others. I say this in all humility...”

And on September 28, 2014, a Saturday, at 5:40 PM, I wrote:

“Counting my blessings...

1. Family
2. Community
3. Health
4. Friends
5. Peace of mind
6. Time for myself
7. Awareness of God“

I’m pretty sure God was there during those times I was reflecting and pondering about things and I was aware of His presence during those moments...

“Be present in all things and thankful for all things.”
 – Maya Angelou

Don't Dream It's Over

Frances Zyra Mella, Magis Youth

The world, to a child, is simpler than for most. Everything is beautiful and life is usually comfortable. When a child cries, unable to say or express what he wants, adults scramble to give all sorts of things to make him smile again. Everything is handed to him because he's very young and doesn't know any better. I think it's also because of this that dreaming is far easier when you're younger. The possibilities are endless, and whether you want to become an astronaut or the president or even a mermaid or a prince, it really seems like it can happen.

I wanted to be many things when I was a child. I wanted to be Ariel from The Little Mermaid, Jasmine from Aladdin, and even Sarah Crewe from A Little Princess. Growing a little bit older, I became fascinated with Ancient Egypt and Indiana Jones and told myself I was going to dig up bones, unravel cultures of olden times, and become an archaeologist. When I started swimming seriously in high school and our coach told me I could become an Olympic swimmer, I wondered if I could do that too – become an Olympian. Along with these high school Olympic dreams, I started wondering more seriously about what I wanted to be when I grew up. It was also the time we were told to look into universities.

I thought of becoming a lawyer. Should I go into business? I even wondered if I should follow in the footsteps of my parents and become an engineer (this, mind you, was a very fleeting thought because there's just too much math involved). The most serious path I considered was becoming a doctor. As long as I can remember, my parents wanted me to pursue medicine. I don't remember when or how it started; all I knew was they wanted me to become a doctor. Later on, I found out that doctors make a really good living and that the profession is very respectable and I understood. Of course my parents want me to be successful and well-esteemed. Much later, I realized it would take me forever to become a doctor (much respect to all doctors in the world). I was sitting at the back of the school auditorium when a representative of the school of medicine of one of the best universities in the country spoke about the amount of time becoming a doctor would take. I remember thinking, "Wow, that's a lot of

time!" and then, "Do I really want to do that much studying all over again?" Still, I seriously considered it.

What I didn't seriously consider was studying writing and making it my career. When I said earlier that dreaming as a kid was easier, I realized I never even really dreamed of becoming a writer. I don't know why, because I've been writing since I was in grade school. What began with writing a story about me and my friends and our crushes, became something I genuinely enjoyed and did in my spare time. My writing evolved into original fiction, as well as some "fan fiction," wherein we take the characters of a certain world (e.g., Harry Potter) and write them into a plot of my own making. For some reason, being a professional writer never occurred to me then because, as they say, "there is no money... in journalism, in creative writing, in film, etc." But that was okay with me because I didn't really think about it.

I went to University of Asia and the Pacific and took up Integrated Marketing Communications. My thought process went like this: UA&P was a good school and marketing communications is close enough to writing and media. Don't get me wrong. I was happy with that choice. I was lucky to have parents and a family where decisions are made together and each one's wants are respected. Taking that course in UA&P and being surrounded by professors and schoolmates who dressed well and were so confident, worked to my advantage because I was timid, shy, and didn't really know how to assert myself then.

My first job was at GMA New Media, Inc., a subsidiary of the network, in the Business Management Department. I was excited because it was a good company, because it was a broadcast company, and because I was sure to bump into and work with celebrities (which happened a lot). I was there for almost three years, then I went into business. I handled our family's laundry business in Better Living for five years. I learned a lot from both jobs. I learned how to stand my ground when working with people who think they have power over me because I was a newbie in GMA. I learned how to multitask, manage my time, and how to be patient and work well with different kinds of people when I managed our business.

All these times my writing didn't stop. It was something that I did, all the time, because writing really made me happy and took all my stress away. Some time in between my two jobs, I wondered if I could go into writing professionally. But fear immediately set in, telling me I couldn't do that... how could I support myself with just writing? I also thought, "I'm not good enough because I don't really have the proper training for it." I also kept thinking that I didn't want to make money out of something I'm really passionate about because what if it takes the fun out of it? I was afraid that writing for work would make it stressful and would make me want to stop

Dreaming, going after what one wants, really seems easier as a child because you don't think in terms of limits, you just think in terms of the possibilities. But when you grow up and become an adult, real life hits you with limits from every angle, and then you just start settling for things you don't really hate, but don't necessarily want just because you want to live well. I'm not saying that's a bad thing. I just think that doing what you love can make you live well too.

I now work as a research analyst; while this sounds like I do a lot of intense research, I really don't. I do a lot more writing now than in my previous jobs. Basically, what I do is to monitor news and write and report about what is relevant to our client. Aside from this, I get asked to do "quick takes," which is writing about anything that's relevant in the supply chain industry. On the side, I do some freelance writing, mostly for Summit Media's Sparkling magazine. Through all that, I still do, as I always have, write stories. I write stories about people finding love and going for their dreams. I'm considering taking a class about writing romance novels soon, holding with it the possibility of getting published if I end up doing it well. Just thinking about the class gives me anxiety, but I figured, it's taken me this long to go for it, so why not now?

Continued on page 21

Millennial at Heart...

Leo Soliman, Corinthians BCGG

Magis Deo members once again let their hair down last June 17, 2017 at the Bistro RJ in Dusit Hotel for the annual Magis Night.

Members and guests gamely came wearing the motif of the event's theme "Millennial@Heart." Agnes Tumaneng came with a dozen of her beauty queen guests; obviously belonging to the same flock. Leony Parada, our resident D.I., brought a tableful of guests from the National Irrigation Administration. Leo and Marilyn came with brother Alex, President of AMA Bank, and wife Joan.

Doc Manny Gatchalian not only provided the jumpy, funky and swinging live band music with his Flashbacks Band, but also stuffed our ala carte dinner plates with the crispiest and tastiest lechon I've ever tasted. Where did this come from?

Who said God doesn't play favorites? Rudy Ebardo's Francis BCGG romped with practically all the raffle prizes!

But the night belonged to the 70 plus pairs of dancing feet that couldn't help stomp on the dance floor to the beat of the Flashbacks Band.

And when the "Open Mike" portion came, the singer wannabes of Magis wouldn't let go of the microphone. Rey Mella was the Singer of the Night, hands down. It was nice to see now single Eli Prieto joining the line dance.

Kudos to the Community Service Ministry headed by Cesar and Delsa Sangalang for another successful gig. And to the council members who graced the event, to all members and guests: 'till next year, guys.

And thank you, Heavenly Father, for blessing the joyful Magis Night.



Don't Dream It's Over Continued from page 20

It feels like I fell into writing as a job by accident. But I don't believe that. I've been writing since I was a teenager and, thinking about it now, it was bound to happen sometime. In The Alchemist Paulo Coelho says: "... When you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it." Maybe I'd been sending signals that I really wanted to write, and somehow the universe helped make it happen. It took me a long time to steer towards writing as a job, but I'm getting there and I'm happy. I don't think it's ever too late to start doing what you want in life. No matter what you did or didn't study in university, no matter what jobs you've done, what work you get into, there are lessons to be learned. But if there's still something you want to do or maybe just try, there's still the rest of your life for that. As a friend of mine always says, "Stop dreaming and start something." Dreams can only become reality if you act on them.

August Birthday Celebrants			September Birthday Celebrants		
2	Andy Mangahas	St. Peter	2	Jaear Briones	Francis
5	Ronald Ong	Prodigal 102	6	Ricky Perez	Tala
5	Rommel Villafuerte	ME Class 121	7	Marivic Canoso	Magnificat
7	Will Gonzales	ME Class 121	7	Regie De Guzman	Corinthians
7	Jes Gumila	Easter	7	Cat Geslani	James, Brother of John
7	Trixie Sun	Matthew	8	Henry Cruz	Psalmaritans
8	Boy Cruz	James, Brother of John	10	Glo Boren	Agnus Dei
9	Nilo Sta. Maria	Magnificat	11	Jun Sison	Corinthians
10	Terry Abella	Mustard Seed	12	Leslie Gatchalian	Psalm 98
10	Larnz Briones	Francis	14	Rodel Acosta	Song of Ruth
11	Susan Concepcion	Archangel Gabriel	14	Janice De Guzman	ME Class 121
13	Lito Gonzales	James, Brother of John	14	Melissa Gonzales	ME Class 121
13	Dange Tupas	ME Class 121	14	Joy Uy-Tioco	Sirach
15	Zarah Gagatiga	Emmanuel	15	Vikki Brillantes	Cana
16	Clyde Abapo	Francis	17	Rufo Dacanay	Song of Ruth
16	Jay Belga	Mustard Seed	18	Beng Pascual	Corinthians
16	Joey Eustaquio	Genesis of David	19	Mina De Castro	Mt. Olivet
17	Josie Llamas	Genesis of David	19	Nan Palete	Prodigal 102
18	Chacho Angeles	Thessalonians	19	Myr Serranilla	Mustard Seed
18	Maan Masungsong	Francis	20	Jojo Aldeguer	Mustard Seed
19	Harry Chua	Sirach	25	Jojo De Castro	Mt. Olivet
20	Marcia Balderas	Archangel Gabriel	25	Del Domingo	Song of Ruth
21	Fred Buenaventura	Sirach	25	Fort Orboc	ME Class 121
21	Ariel Masungsong	Francis	25	Ian Serranilla	Matthew
21	Cesar Pareja	Prodigal 102	26	Chie Llamas	Corinthians
21	Joey Vargas	Easter	26	Lucy Mella	Cana
22	Alan Santos	ME Class 121			
23	Rolly Beltran	Genesis of David	29	Cecil Rivera	Song of Ruth
23	Jay Ng Sy	Agnus Dei			
23	Peaches Plaza	Easter			
25	Malou Caramat	Francis	September Wedding Anniversaries		
25	Malou Ronquillo	James, Brother of John	8	Noel & Dina Valdes	Archangel Gabriel
25	Linda Santos	Agnus Dei	8	Art & Neds Vargas	Easter
26	Betchay Villafuerte	ME Class 121	18	Jojo & Mina De Castro	Emmanuel
27	Rosie Pineda	St. Peter	18	Joe & Myr Serranilla	Mustard Seed
28	Agnes Tumaneng	Psalmaritans	20	Eloy & Tess Del Rosario	St. Peter
29	Danny Collado	Song of Ruth	20	JC & Chinkee San Juan	Song of Ruth
29	Merl Cruz	James, Brother of John	22	Val & Glo Bisquera	Agnus Dei
30	Alex Caramat	Francis	22	Peping & Celia Echivaria	Exodus
			29	Apin & Chie Llamas	Corinthians
30	Leila Leccio	Transfiguration			
August Wedding Anniversaries					
8	Ramie & Mimi Santos	Psalmaritans			
10	Rudy & Lyn Ebardo	Francis			
14	Joey & Portia Eustaquio	Genesis of David			
31	Floyd & Mina Tamera	Mustard Seed			

ME WEEKEND

Our Guiding Hand

Josie Llamas, ME Ministry Head

The just concluded Marriage Encounter weekend was unusual in the sense that there was no sponsoring class. The ME Ministry was joined by volunteers of class 123 to sponsor the weekend.

There were lots of disappointments and frustrations along the way as calls and texts where not being answered. We passed through many stressful and anxious moments. But God has His plans and He is in control of everything. Through prayers and with God's grace the ME Weekend pushed through.

Friday morning, on our way to Tagaytay several couples backed out (a son brought to hospital due to an emergency; another a part of roof of their house was blown away, etc.) yet in spite of the pouring rain, ten couples arrived to attend the MEW. I believe that these couples where hand picked by God, and they responded to His call!

Thank you dear Lord for your guiding hand, for sending us Jojo & Jane, Ney & Pinky, Eljon & Chelle, Roel& Nette, Hex & Faith, Jojo & MeAn, Domeng & Zarah , for Your palpable presence in the weekend and for giving us the opportunity to serve You once more.

All for Gods' greater glory!



Marriage Encounter Weekend

St. James Retreat House,Tagaytay City / July 28-30, 2017

Fr. Allan Morris T. Abuan, Spiritual Director

Revitalized, Rejuvenated, and Rekindled

David & Mache Ackerman, ME Class 125

From the beginning of our relationship, we knew that it had to be a partnership with God, between the two of us. Our relationship was never perfect from the start and we knew that all we needed was His ultimate guidance and Him as our source of strength. We have been through numerous trials that have tried and tested our love for each other and our faith in God.

The ME Weekend has truly deepened our bond and relationship more through His graces. We surrender our marriage, children, businesses, health, and future to Him. We are assured that our journey in life will be brighter and safer with His ultimate love, mercy and forgiveness. As God forgives, we have learned to forgive ourselves and others.

Indeed it was a once in a lifetime experience, for the ME Weekend made sure we were insulated from the outside world at least for three days. This was such a blessing, as for once, we able to put ourselves at the very center, without thinking of the business, the kids, our friends, and everything else. The exercise gave us the chance to evaluate many aspects in our relationship as a married couple. In many respects, this ME Weekend has revitalized, rejuvenated, and rekindled a lot of exciting aspects in our marriage and we are ultimately grateful. We are so blessed to be able to experience this opportunity. Thank you so much to our sponsoring couple, David and Marissa Serrano, who happen to be our Wedding Sponsors as well. We appreciate all your prayers and support.

We are happy to be welcomed by the Magis Deo Community, our new family in love and service.



1 Thessalonians 2:17-18: "As for us, brothers, when we were separated from you for a little while, how we missed you and how hard we tried to see you again. We wanted to return to you but Satan hindered us".

Satan hates evangelism and discipleship, and he will throw every obstacle he can in the way of his evil doings. We personally experienced this last ME Weekend. The weather was so bad Thursday afternoon that I had to confirm with Tita Josie if we are pushing through with the weekend retreat. When she said it's a go, the pessimist in me prevailed and was expecting most of the couple participants to back out at the last minute. Our own couple participant would have cancelled too but since I was riding with them because Edwin will be coming from a golf tournament in Tagaytay, they were forced to go as scheduled. Although there were other participants who didn't make it to the venue, ten couples were able to spend the weekend together, away from distractions

A Grace-Filled Rainy Weekend

Jecelyn Gumila , Easter BCGG

tions and the tensions of everyday life to listen to Fr. Allan and allowed themselves to re-discover each other.

This is our second time to be couple sharers but the same apprehension remain. Although this is a much smaller group, having 80 participants last March, the same uneasiness prevails. Who can be at ease when we will be airing our dirty linen to them? Even Fr. Allan's reassurance that there is nothing shameful in sharing because after the mistake comes remorse and conversion can't take out the feeling of anxiety. Before every talk, we would pray hard for courage and guidance to be able to be effective in imparting His message.

In between our sharing, we would listen to the other more 'veteran' team couple, Ramie & Mimi and Fr. Allan's animated but effective explanation of the other topics. Even if it's our fourth or fifth time to hear the topics being discussed,

we still happen to pick up insightful revelations and valuable tips. It was also heartening to hear Tita Josie, through the persuasion of Fr. Allan, talk about the death of a dear spouse. It has indeed been a very worthwhile weekend not just for the participants but also for us both. After all the fear of being judged, there is a sense of fulfillment after you see sympathetic faces and hear appreciative words. You feel that God has used you in speaking to other couples who need guidance in putting some direction to their relationship - and for this we are very grateful. We invite other Magis Deo couples to heed the call from God and allow themselves to be instruments as well.

In the end, God prevailed. Our prayers were heard and God didn't let the evil one triumph. No amount of rain or wind could dampen our spirits that weekend. It was truly a special weekend for all of us.

ME CLASS 125



From left to right: David & Mache Ackerman, Buen & Leslie Ocampo, RJ & Ann Santiago, Anjelo & Carissa Quintos, Randy & Dinday Cabangon, Frankie & Penny Villafuerte, Earvin & Jemima Pasayon, Raul & Honey Dimayuga, Rex & Den Lipana, Jono & Mico Masinloc