

Magis

Formation for Mission

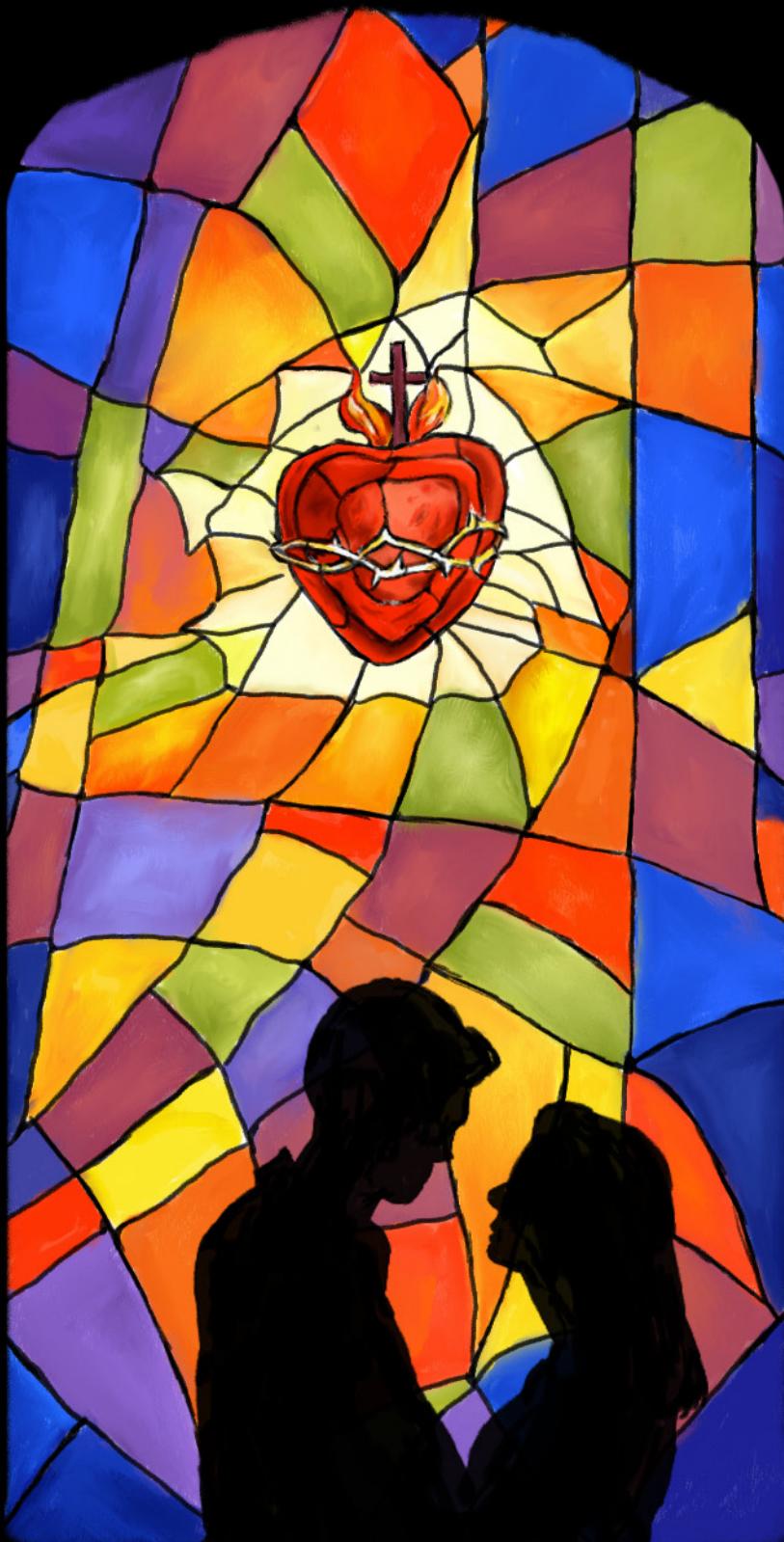


*Stewardship
Simplicity
Sharing
Service*

Official Publication of the Magis Deo Community
February 2018 Issue

Commitment

It takes two to remain
as one



Thoughts on Valentine's

When should we
celebrate love?

Love transforming

You learn to love
unconditionally

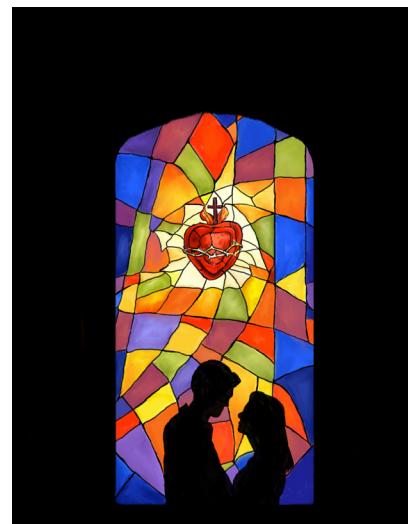
For Papa

An accolade to
a great man

Grace of good beginnings

Hope gives rise to
the community

About the Cover



In this month's issue, respective writers contribute their insights on the four letters that grabs everyone's attention just like its eye-popping red color: love. Yet again, it is that time of the year again when table reservations are full, balloons and flowers come in bouquets, and many more outings; love becomes more expressively shown.

And so, as this month enters and when the 14th eventually comes, we can all just hope that whatever standard you'll put up should be consistently expressed all throughout the remaining days of the year. Not in gift items, but through the spiritual gift of love, care, and attention.

Because of these, illustrator Levenspeil R. Sangalang of Magis Youth, enlivened his vision of true love with a couple in a church as they deeply realize that their sanctity of commitment puts God at the center of their hearts; no matter how dark the days may come, or how rough the waters run.

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Commitment

“ We cannot talk about commitment if we do not talk about the presence of each other. Here, we see four ants rolling together the stone which represents Magis Deo. It takes the commitment of each other to roll that stone.” – Fr. James Gascon, SJ

One cannot talk of commitment without the grace of baptism. In Christian communities, commitment starts in baptism. This is where we start. We are able to make commitments in this community precisely because we are baptized. In baptism, it is not so much that we are committed to God but that God is permanently committed to us.

In the course of our lives, if we decide to change our religion and decide to go back, we don't need to be baptized again. We have been baptized earlier, and that never left us. This is the source and power of our own commitment. Peace, contentment, patience, hope – these cannot be objectified but are there.

In baptism, we become the salt and the light of the world. If the salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything and should be thrown away. It is thus our responsibility to nurture our being the salt and light of the world. This is part of our calling for commitment.

So what is Commitment? When we talk of committing ourselves in an endeavor, three elements guide our reflection about it – Gifts, Service, and Solidarity.

GIFTS - No one is without gifts! A Charism is a gift of the Holy Spirit given to all baptized Christians for the building up of the body of Christ. We are all called by God for a mission and all are gifted by the Holy Spirit to fulfill that mission.

There are seven gifts of the Holy Spirit that were given to us during baptism - Knowledge, Understanding, Wisdom, Counsel, Piety, Fortitude, and Fear of the Lord.

Talk/teaching by Father James U. Gascon, SJ
14 January 2018 - Magis Deo Community Celebration
Reported by Jojo Aldeguer and Marlyn Angeles

The first Community Celebration of 2018 started with recommitment rites of Magis Deo members. It was an opportune time for our spiritual director, Fr. James Gascon, SJ, to give a talk on Commitment.

As a jumpboard of Fr. James' talk, commitment requires the presence of each other. The community was blessed on this one fine traffic-free Sunday with the presence of 247 members and 55 youth – a show of commitment indeed!

In addition to these gifts, we are given other gifts that vary from others such as Discernment, Wisdom, Giving, Administration, Faith, Evangelism, Hospitality, Mercy, Music, Knowledge, Leadership, Exhortation, Teaching, Apostleship, Serving, Prophecy, Shepherding, and Intercession.

Gifts are different from each other and not all have other gifts. We have many gifts - *regalo, kakayahan, galing at biyaya na binigay ng Diyos*. These gifts are not present to all. That is why we need to be aware of, acknowledge, and learn what our gifts are. Sometimes, we fail to recognize these until we are faced with crises or trials. *Kapag nasusubukan, lalong gumagaling*. It is our responsibility to learn and understand what these gifts are, and to use them. *Kapag tinatago, minsan ito ay nawawala*. (If we hide it and don't use it, we lose it.)

“In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.” (Romans 12, 6-8)

Any form of commitment in a community requires an inventory of one's gifts. This is the first stage: what are our

gifts? When we have a gift, the Lord provides the need to celebrate the gift. Our gifts are meant to be shared, and not forced to share. But every day that this is not shared is the poverty of the community. If gifts are not shared, it is not only us that fail to benefit from the gifts but the entire Christian community. We become poorer and suffer.

We are invited to reflect on the following guide questions:

- What are your gifts?
- Are you able to learn to recognize them or do you purposely do not admit them?
- What makes it difficult for you to identify these gifts? Fear? Are you afraid of your gifts?

Others are scared to identify their gifts, while others are afraid to share it. We fear the consequences of acknowledging these gifts which could lead to rejection (as when a child is known to be better than others and is thus alienated by his/her friends). Or we are fearful of what God might ask or demand from us which could be so much more than what we feel we can give. But let us remember, the Lord, in giving us gifts, invites us to be the light of the world and will likewise provide what we need in using these.



SERVICE - Service is the essence of Christianity. If there is anything unique about our faith – Christianity is not inward looking.

We are called to serve. The cross clearly shows this: the vertical beam reminds us of our relationship with God, while the horizontal beam reminds us of our calling to serve and relate to others. Our faith calls us to be outward looking – to go beyond ourselves and to serve others.

Commitment is to serve. We are called to service. We will use our God-given gifts to serve others. As Peter reminds us: “To serve is using the God-given talents to serve others” (1Peter 4:10)

Our service is to use and share our gifts. When we use and share our gifts, we realize we have more gifts. That is why the first step is to identify the gifts we have. Not to serve is to extinguish the light of Christ in you. *Kung hindi tayo maglilingkod, para nating pinapatay ang ilaw na ibinigay sa atin ng Diyos*.

We are invited to reflect on the following guide questions:

- What inspires you to serve?
- When we serve, externally we give up something. But deep inside, we cannot but admit that we gain. What do you get in return?
- What motivates you toward service?

SOLIDARITY - Commitment is the practice of solidarity, to be one with the community, to be one with Christ. When we share our gifts with the community, we become one with Christ. As Pope Francis said: “Let us learn solidarity. Without solidarity, our faith is dead.”

Solidarity is...

- To be ordered to one another
- To be related to each other
- To be directed to each other
- To be focused on each other and not only onto one's self (other-centeredness, to go beyond ourselves)
- To draw out the gifts and service in each other

We do not only discover our gifts and

share our gifts with others, but we also help others see and share their gifts with us. In solidarity, we draw each other's gifts.

We are invited to reflect on the following guide questions:

- Who are the people I am in solidarity with?
- Where else am I called to be in solidarity?
- In the end, solidarity is building community. This is our mission as Christians, called by Christ to build community.

Random Thoughts on Valentine's Day (and a love letter to my soulmate)

Trixie Luna-Sun, Matthew BCGG

When Delsa asked me to write an article on Valentine's Day for the February edition of our newsletter, I readily agreed because I have always been curious as to the origins of this day of romance as well as the person associated with it but never really bothered to read up on these. Now I get the chance to feed my curiosity.

Who was St. Valentine? The Catholic Church recognizes at least 3 saints named Valentine (or Valentinus), all of whom were martyred, but the Valentine most likely referred to may have been a priest who lived in the 3rd century AD. At that time, Emperor Claudius II banned marriage among young men because he thought single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families. Finding this unfair, Valentine continued to wed couples in secret. When the emperor discovered this, he had Valentine jailed and sentenced to death. Allegedly, Valentine fell in love with the jailer's daughter and when he was executed on February 14, he left her a love letter signed "from your Valentine."

How did Valentine's Day start?

The history is likewise unclear and seems to have vestiges of both Roman and Christian tradition. Valentine's Day is believed to have originated from a Roman festival called "Lupercalia," held in the middle of February, officially the start of Spring. An order of Roman priests, the Luperci, would gather at a sacred cave believed to be where the infants Romulus and Remus, founders of Rome, were raised by a she-wolf. A goat (symbol for fertility) and a dog (purity) were sacrificed. The goat's hide would be dipped in the sacrificial blood and slapped on women to increase their fertility. At the same time, young women wrote down their names and dropped them into a giant urn, after which single men would draw out the names. The pairs were coupled for the year and several pairings led to marriage. By the end of the 5th century AD, Pope Gelasius had outlawed this practice, calling it "un-Christian" and instead

declared February 14 St. Valentine's Day to commemorate the martyred Saint. Although St. Valentine has no longer been venerated by the Church since 1969, he is still among the official list of saints.

Summarizing the history of Valentine's Day is the easy part of writing this article.

Writing something profound and relevant while keeping it interesting is the difficult part. I will just allow my train of thought to flow freely and hope I come up with insights and realizations that will be new even to me as the second part of my article unfolds. Try not to cringe as the title has "warned" you that this also serves as a love letter to my soulmate.

Ricky and I have been going out on Valentine's dates ever since we became a couple during my 2nd year of residency. We never went out on the 14th in order to avoid the crowded restaurants which were expected since everyone else was out celebrating. One time, he bought a single rose from a young man selling roses in Remedios Circle. I never received another rose until I teased him about it just a few years back. Consequently, he had a dozen roses delivered to our house on two consecutive Valentine's Days. In between, he gave me love letters which I reread every year on Valentine's Day. During the past few years, we would stay overnight at a hotel which he would book himself, have a quiet dinner followed by a not-so-quiet "after dinner treat." The topics and quality of our dinner date conversations have evolved through the years from the subtly palpable self-conscious talks about one's self while we were still getting to know each other, to the more relaxed conversations about our interests and aspirations, to the future we would be building together, to the blessings we have received and the challenges that we face, to the eager anticipation of the surprises we may face tomorrow. I feel that surge of romantic love whenever I go out with Ricky and I look forward to our Valentine's Day dates.

Unfortunately, that day designated for couples to celebrate their love for

each with romantic dinners or getaways, presents, love letters and flowers comes just once every 365 days so I decided long ago to make each day Valentine's Day. I am blessed to have Ricky in my life, and I thank God for him every day. I feel secure in our love and I am not anxious of the future because I have Ricky with me. I want to let him know these and I have the chance to do so every day. I love Ricky more deeply than I did in the past and I will continue to do so more profoundly in the years to come, no matter the circumstances.

"Love is not blind. Love is the only thing that sees." – Frank Cane

I expand this daily Celebration of Love to my children, our household helpers, and everyone else I encounter every day. If I make an effort to see God in everyone, I know that I will be able to care for, accept and appreciate others in spite of whatever emotional or physical state I may be in.

"To love another person is to see the face of God." – Victor Hugo

Every day is a Celebration of Love with my Lord Jesus, the greatest lover of all. Every day I thank Him for His love in spite of my being me, for loving me just because, and for making me feel His presence especially in my most trying moments. I feel His love with His reassuring presence that I have come to recognize as a simultaneous swirling sensation in my chest that feels like sunshine wanting to burst out from within and a comfortable warmth enveloping me from outside. I am engulfed in His love and I cannot contain my joy and if I could imbue this feeling with color, rays of yellow and orange would radiate from my eyes and from between my teeth. How can I not want to celebrate this Love every day? This love can never remain exclusive between Him and me though. For to love Him is to love others the way He wants me to. So my gift to Him is my daily promise to do as He wills.

"The heart of him who truly loves is a paradise on earth; he has God in himself for God is love." – Abbe Hugo Felicite de Lamennais

A Happy Valentine's Day to all! Let every day be an encompassing Celebration of Love!

The Grace of a Good Beginning

Philip & Malu Panlilio, Chaircouple / Mustard Seed BCGG

As 2018 enfolds before us, we pray like Mary, our Mother, with love and hope. She looked back at the mixed memories of her pregnancy and the birth of her Son --- a mixture of pain from what her neighbors were saying about her having a child before marriage, the discomfort before the delivery but all these overridden by the joy of safely delivering Jesus to the world.

Quite similar to Mary, we started 2018 with Community concerns on the medium-term sustainability of Magis Deo as a community, given the declining ME graduates and diminishing participation in Community Celebrations and formation programs.

But God was gracious, just like in the past. Very much the God we know and love.

The presence of more than 250 Magis Deo members and their children at

the Community Celebration on January 14 is a testimony to this. A confluence of factors may be attributed to why more than 160 Magis Deo members showed up and recommitted to the Magis Deo mission and vision. But definitely points to one driver – the God to whom we all prayed for providence and guidance.

As we were writing this article on January 26, we were struck by the Sacred Space scriptural reflection on Mark 4: 26-34 as it resonates with the January 14 ComCeleb experience. Mark talks of the first parable on the kingdom of God. It speaks of the mysterious power of scattering of the seed on the ground and later on sprouting and growing without us fully understanding the process of miraculous growth. We remembered our mongo seeds experiment in grade school and how much joy it brought to us as a child when mongo sprouts came out after planting the seeds. Very God!

The week after, we were edified by the passion of ministry heads and their members in drawing up the 2018 ministry plans to re-invigorate the Magis spirit. Magis for Bicol relief program launched. Suyuan seminars are already lined up. ME Ministry will work with parishes. Orientation on incoming new BCGG members conducted.

Interface starting in February. Annual Ignatian Retreat with Fr. Mon Bautista, SJ scheduled on August 3 to 5. Magis Deo is partnering with CeFam on the Spiritual Deepening Retreat. Coaching for shepherds is planned. Fellowship and bonding activities drawn up for the year. Spiritual formation for teens and young adults as well as fun and creative activities for kids are set. More details on the ministry plans very soon!

The work of Christmas continues with hope. Hope gives rise to community and community gives birth to hope.

The Marriage Encounter Weekend

is an opportunity to grow your relationship even better...

Where you can enjoy and spend time together,

away from the distractions and tensions of everyday life.

DATE: MARCH 9 - 11, 2018
VENUE: ST. JAMES RETREAT HOUSE,
TAGAYTAY CITY

FEE OF PHP4,500.00 PER COUPLE

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fr. James Gascon SJ
SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR



Are you ready?

January 14, 2018 / Ruben M. Tanseco, SJ

Are you ready to be a genuine, loving disciple of Christ? And for this to happen, are you ready to live your life as He did, whether you are single or married? A life of mercy and compassion. A life of boundless love. A life of suffering, death, and resurrection. No conditions and expectations, as one author puts it. The great adventure of faith.



Jesus for a dead friend is very inspiring indeed.

Mercy and Compassion. Jesus proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom all around Galilee and cured every disease and illness among the people. Moreover: "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" (Mt. 9:36). He then commissioned His 12 apostles to go to different places to cure the sick, drive out demons, cleanse lepers and proclaim the Kingdom of God.

He even violated the Jewish law of not picking grain on the Sabbath because His apostles were hungry and needed to eat. "I desire mercy, not sacrifice" (Mt. 12: 7). Not only that. Later, on another occasion, big crowds followed Him in a deserted place. When He saw them, again, his heart was moved with compassion for them, and he cured the sick among them. It was already early evening, and so his disciples asked Him to send the crowds back to the villages, so they could buy food for themselves. Jesus told them to just share their own food with them. But His apostles said that they only had five loaves and two fish. Again, from a compassionate heart, Jesus performed a miracle of multiplying the bread and fish until all were satisfied. There were about 5,000 men, not counting the women and children. And 12 baskets of food were left over! Another miracle of mercy and compassion.

Jesus performed many more miracles out of mercy and compassion. Just to mention a few more: a woman suffering from hemorrhage and the daughter of Jairus whom Jesus brought back from death to life again. Let me single out the raising of Lazarus from death to life. "And Jesus wept." So the Jews said, "See how he loved him." To contemplate a weeping

Suffering, Death and Resurrection. Jesus was born poor and grew up a simple carpenter. He was tempted by the devil but He refused to give in. "The Lord, your God shall you worship and him alone shall you serve" (Mt. 4:10). As simple as that. But it did not end there. His divine decision to come down and become one among us is the beginning of our own salvation through love. Love and all it takes is the answer. And this is where suffering comes in, as an integral part of loving. In the life of Christ, and in the life of every human person. In your life, and in mine.

Human as He was, Jesus even prayed: "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will" (Mt. 26:39). This was followed by the betrayal of one of His apostles, and so Jesus was arrested. Even His very trusted apostle Peter denied knowing Him to save himself. When interrogated, Peter swore twice to save himself: "I do not know the man" (Mt. 26:72-74). We can just imagine how hurting this was to the human Jesus. He was finally sentenced to death, mocked by the soldiers, and crucified on the cross. The human Christ even cried out in a loud voice: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mt. 27:46). Jesus breathed his last, and His close friends and followers buried Him.

But divine that He was, Jesus resurrected on the third day. And finally, before His ascension into heaven, the Risen Christ told his apostles: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations... and behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Mt. 28:18-20).

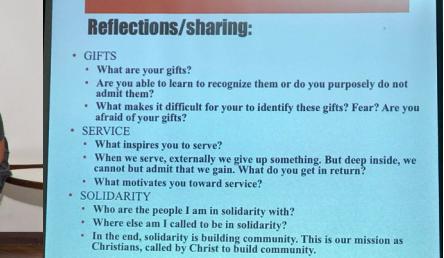
Just last month, in Davao City, at the height of a fire at the NCCC Mall, Melvin Gaa was already able to save quite a number of his fellow employees. But he insisted on going back to the burning building to save more. And in the process, he was killed by the fire. No less than an example of a Christ-like suffering and death. In faith, I know that like Christ, Melvin, too, is now resurrected with Christ somewhere! May each one of us follow, in our individual and unique ways, the example of Christ in this suffering, death, and resurrection. All of this resulting from LOVE. Amen.

14 January 2018 Community Celebration



Reflections/sharing:

- GIFTS**
 - What are your gifts?
 - Are you able to learn to recognize them or do you purposely do not admit them?
 - What makes it difficult for you to identify these gifts? Fear? Are you afraid of your gifts?
- SERVICE**
 - What inspires you to serve?
 - When we serve, externally we give up something. But deep inside, we cannot but admit that gain. What do you get in return?
 - What motivates you toward service?
- SOLIDARITY**
 - Who are the people I am in solidarity with?
 - Where else am I called to be in solidarity?
 - In the end, solidarity is building community. This is our mission as Christians, called by Christ to build community.



Love Transforming

Lilian Collado, Song of Ruth BCGG

As I look back at my childhood, I think I perceived love as being given all the things I want and I need. In my young mind, I assumed that what is mine is mine and what is yours is, well, negotiable. When I reached my adolescent years, I observed two kinds of love. A love that is given for a certain reason – the “I love him because he is blank blank blank” kind of love. The sad thing about this kind of love is that when the reason for loving is gone, love goes with it too. And then there is that kind of feeling loved when one is accepted by the other as he/she is, with all his/her faults and unpleasantries – the “ang pag-ibig ay bulag” kind of love. Some of my friends belonged to the first group. I belonged to the latter group in my young adolescent years.

But in the latter part of my adolescent years till middle age my understanding of what love is again evolved. A love that I once experienced was a reciprocal kind of love – the “I love you but you must love me also” kind of love. This did not work. This gave rise to questions like “Am I loved? Why can they not love as I love?” The experience of unreciprocated love hurt me deeply but opened my eyes. I saw clearly how a selfish restrictive love can give sufferings to others. Situations that I witnessed and experienced as a neighbor and friend, as a physician, a daughter, a wife and a mother made me recognize the different pains and sufferings that arose from frustrations, insecurities, rejections, betrayals, and denials, misunderstandings and unfair judgments, emotional and spiritual abuses. All these made me think and led me to turn more to God. I became more discerning and my prayerfulness rapidly grew. My awareness of another kind of love greatly disturbed me... God’s unconditional love. I read and heard hundreds of times how Jesus perfectly manifested this love in His earthly life. But what does it entail for a man to bring about and practice unconditional love for one another? My “ang pag-ibig ay bulag” philosophy from my early teens slowly changed to a belief that “ang pag-ibig ay nagbibigay linaw.”



In my searching, I realized that to love unconditionally is extremely difficult and full of struggles. And the toughest to achieve is to learn to unfasten and let go of the ties that bind one to his self-centeredness. It seemed to me that absolutely loving unconditionally is downright unachievable if not impossible. But I kept trying. My life experiences as well as the learning I gained from spiritual readings and my discernments that came with it, helped me to recognize who I am, what I am made of, and the attachments I have to earthly things; I recognized my fears and doubts; I began to recognize my limitations, imperfections and shortcomings as well as my strengths and weaknesses. As I discovered my negative traits one by one, I realized that loving me unconditionally could be hard for any other person when what can only be seen was my negative self. I myself, did not like what I had discovered about me.

With all consciousness and determination, I began to transform for the better bit by bit, time after time, year after year, until I learned to recognize and love my inner good-self with the new strengths that grew in me, the expansion from my limitations, the enhancements from my imperfections, the building up against my shortcomings and my

detachment to worldly things. A new belief is formed in me: Knowing, loving, and persistently using one's inner good self will set the tone for anyone to initiate learning to love others unconditionally. As I continue to transform, the respect and love I have for my inner self grew in me, alongside the growth of my respect and love for others.

Now I am in the twilight years of my life and the struggle to transcend pains and sufferings seems to be decreasing; and understanding, forgiving and loving those who wronged me seem to be expanding as years go by. My good inner self is willfully committed to carry out Jesus' command to “... love your neighbor as I have loved you.”

At last, the restrictive kind of love that I knew in the prime of my life has been transformed into a liberating, unconditional kind of love which took, and still is taking, an indefinite time, unlimited effort and endless devotion to be fully achieved. It is an undertaking that has to be willed. I will know that I have reached the peak of loving unconditionally when that feeling of having lived a purposeful and fulfilled life begins and continues to swell in me.

I know I am there... but not yet.

A Pearl Celebration on Valentine!

Three decades of togetherness, happiness, friendship and love.

Mia Parada, Psalmaritans BCGG



On Feb.14, 2018, Leony and I will celebrate our 30th Wedding Anniversary and 36th Lovesary! 30 years of marriage plus 6 years as sweethearts! Feb.14, 1982- Feb. 14, 1988, 36 years and counting...

I met Leony when I was in 3rd year high school while he was in 3rd year college. My high school best friend invited me to join the volleyball league in Bulacan. While there, Karen and I were crossing the street to go to a nearby store when a fast driven vehicle almost sideswiped us. That evening, a young man came to visit and apologized for what happened. His name is Leony. We started out as friends. I was attracted to his sense of humor and intelligence. He courted me but he had to court my grandmother first, as I lived with her. After a few months, I said “yes” on Valentine’s Day 1982. From then on we celebrated our monthly anniversary or monthsary even after our wedding, until today. It will be our 432nd monthsary on Feb.14.

God makes all things beautiful in His time...

We planned our wedding well, especially the date. We tied the knot at Paco Park, had our reception at the Century Park Sheraton Hotel, and I was married to a Park (Parada). Leony was a good person with a good heart. He loves me so much. He is my source of strength whenever I feel down and out. He is my best friend, soul mate and my knight in shining armor.

To celebrate our 3rd Wedding Anniversary we joined the Magis Deo Marriage Encounter Weekend as a walk-in couple on Feb. 15-17, 1991 at Betania in Tagaytay. Both of us wanted to enrich our married life and be closer to God as a couple. We were attracted to Ignatian Spirituality so we decided joined the community after the ME Weekend.

We participated in all the seminars, trainings and activities of the community. We were appointed as shepherd of ME Classes 46 and 74. I was only 29 years old and felt inadequate to lead at that time, but with God's grace, and the support of the shepherds and members

of Pilgrims BCGG, we were able to keep the two groups together, and these are merged now as Psalmaritans BCGG. We felt that from that day there's no turning back from service and community involvement. We believe that we should grow where we were planted.

They say marriages are made in heaven, and so are thunder and lightning. I came from a broken family while Leony came from a complete and happy one. We had some bouts of disagreements and arguments just like other couples. We learned to forgive and keep the fire of love burning in our relationship.

Through the 27 years of being a member of the community, Magis Deo has become a way of life. Our weekly BCGG prayer meeting nurtured our relationship with God. The daily examen helped me to prayerfully reflect on God's presence during the day and His message to me. It helped me focus on the blessings that I have and be grateful for them. I am more hopeful to deal with the daily struggles and difficulties I am faced with. The complexities of life, on dealing with different types of people and financial problems with growing business. Yes, serving God through others does not exempt us from these challenges. Serving humbles us and teaches us the virtue of patience. We need to let go, let God and be at peace all the time.

It is true that you cannot give what you do not have. Leony shared this miracle of life when he had a major surgery five years ago. It was when we entrusted everything to God. Our daughter Miny who was working as a nurse at Makati Medical Center that time took care of him. The bills and other fees turned out to be minimal because of doctor friends, employee discounts plus upgraded hospital amenities. Thank God for the gift of his second life. True to our BCGG once named Psalm 46: “God is our refuge and strength, ever present help in trouble.”

Thank you God for the gift of community and the members we continue to journey with all these years. As we see them during ComCels, I could not help but be inspired being witness to their lives just as they are witnesses to ours. To our Spiritual Directors Fr. James and Fr. Ruben, thank you for your teachings, guidance and prayers.

I thank God for the gift of family! It is the best gift God gave me because now I am whole. Ours may not be perfect, just like the different kinds of pearls, my “mahal” and children Miny, Leia and Milo are the greatest blessings I received from God... as we celebrate our 30th wedding anniversary.

Eulogy for Papa

Dec. 26, 2017 - St. Alphonsus Mary de Liguori Church

Enzo Santos, Magis Youth



Hello everyone. Good afternoon. I am Enzo, the youngest of Ramie Santos and mama.

First of all, thank you so much on behalf of my family for attending today. Your friendship, love, help, and especially your presence at a time of great challenge and grief has been a source of strength that I can't give justice to through words. Thank you for helping me keep my faith in people, in human kindness, and most importantly in God.

When my dad passed away last Wednesday, I didn't know what to believe anymore. On my way to the hospital, I hoped for nothing but the best – that my dad would be all right and that he just fainted during his basketball game. In the end, it didn't turn out the way I hoped for. It was demoralizing. I was in utter shock and was left with no words. At that moment I saw him lying lifeless on the hospital bed, I hated the world. I hated God. I hated everyone, and most especially I hated the fact that I won't be able to see him anymore. I looked for people to blame, but ended up only blaming myself. Blaming myself

for not spending enough time with him – for not giving him enough chances to bond with me, for choosing not to drink a bottle or two of beer with him when we ate out, for shaking my head and getting angry with him when he scolded me for something I perceived as insignificant, for, in his own words, taking him or other things for granted.

During the early part of his wake, I came to realize that I shouldn't be blaming just myself for what happened but I should blame him as well. Blame him for the fact that he has left us. But in my grief with his passing, I also saw that he left me with a beautiful mommy who takes care of us really well. He left me with two good looking siblings who have bright futures ahead primarily because of the support he provided. He left me with good and supportive friends and relatives through bonds he helped form. He left me with a good understanding about life; he left me with a good education and the discipline to help me succeed. These are just tiny specks of the things he left behind with me, and, without them, I wouldn't be the person I am today. Thank you, papa,

for everything. I am and will be eternally grateful to you.

You know one thing about my papa – napaka- strong and independent siya. He didn't want to be seen crying because for him it shows weakness. So I'm very grateful to have shared a moment with my dad recently – around 3 months back – where we both ended up crying and saying "I love you" to each other after an argument. This was the last time I remember telling him that I love him. There was a point in the conversation where my papa asked himself where he went wrong with us. But the truth is, he didn't go wrong with us, and actually I believe he raised us really well. And for that I am very grateful and proud to be his son.

I guess this is it, papa... this is my last speech for you in front of a crowd of people. You can definitely expect a visit from us every now and then. I will be bringing a beer or two just like how you always wanted... to have a beer or two with me. I love you so much papa, and I will miss you dearly.

Leo Soliman, Corinthians BCGG

Tribute to Ramie

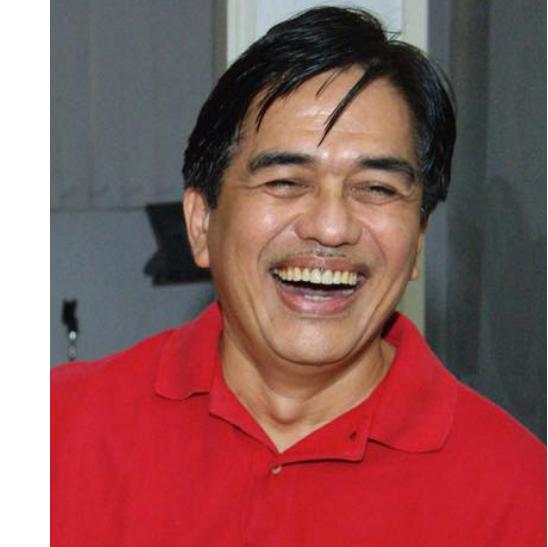
I first met Ramie
At Magis Deo Community
Staunch ally of Ike and Josie
Full of life and always jolly

Sabi nila
Magaling ka makisama
I guess that's typical
For a Letranista

In our college days
We were asked to remember
To live Jesus in our hearts
Forever

For the talks you delivered
And the lives you touched
Fr Ruben and Fr James
Couldn't thank you much

No one saw it coming
No premonition no warning
Your last pic showed you smiling
Not a hint that you were leaving



So many words left unsaid
So many chores left undone
So many paths left to tread
All of a sudden, you were gone

In your wake not an eye was dry
All were weeping as tears go by
Pardon us if we ask why
Why you left without saying goodbye

Worry not for us, Ramie
For sure our community can cope
Worry not for your family
Mimi and the kids are full of hope

We'll pray for you our fallen comrade
We'll remember your smile for sure
Though your passing made us sad
Your true friendship we will treasure

Farewell to you, our friend Ramie
We'll surely miss the life of the party
Farewell to you, our brother Ramie
You'll forever be in our memory.

No date? No worries!

Milo Parada, Magis Youth



Fun fact: Valentine's day is also Ash Wednesday! Let that sink in: no meat allowed, and only one meal allowed. On Valentine's day!

You best believe your date for Valentine's dinner will understand your sudden lack of appetite for that juicy, succulent tenderloin steak on the menu.

Except that you have no date. Yet.

For you, this may spell some pretty undesirable dilemma. Date-less on Valentine's? You're not alone. I know a friend who had to download a dating app as early as December of 2017 just so she could have a Valentine's dinner with someone. And it's barely surprising: we all want to ride on this Valentine's day craze along with our moms and dads.

After all, you can really see the cue everywhere: valentine's cards, valentine's chocolates cards and balloons, and valentine's dinner promos. It's as if their predicament is to nudge you into getting your very own date, because hey, if your friends are dating and enjoying it, shouldn't you also be? Don't you deserve to be "happy" and be given chocolates on Valentines?

So what's your plan? Mag-download ka na ba ng Tinder dating app? Hold on first.

If you think life is unfair enough to you just because you don't happen to have a date on Valentine's, you're also not alone. Apparently, a lot of people DON'T necessarily go in pairs on February 14, and there's no need to look elsewhere: just look at your single, strong, albeit not-so-independent single friends. But if Valentine's day is still your life goal for 2018, well, I have four realizations with Valentine's Day and the need to avoid falling into the trap of making a big deal out of February 14:

Realization 1

The love you give on Valentine's day should not be limited to your love for your boyfriend, girlfriend, or your date. If you don't have a date, don't force yourself to have one, just for the sake of posting something on Facebook or Instagram,

because bandwagoning on the love craze will never be as satisfying as experiencing true love. And what may be true love for you, you may ask?

Search no further: there are your siblings, your parents, your friends, and friends who form your backbone of support whilst you go through high school or college. And if you do have any qualms about your relationship with them, maybe consider Valentine's day as the perfect way to rekindle your relationship with them instead of looking to kindle new ones with people you may have just met three days ago. You may have hitched a date on Tinder and that's definitely good news for you, but you're also going to survive Valentine's day without a kalandian, trust me.

Realization 2

You can do what people do on Valentine's day all year round. Never ever let yourself for the notion that whatever magic that happens on Valentine's day ONLY happens on February 14, especially on this year when you have to skip your breakfast AND lunch for that coveted no-meat dinner date. Factor in the traffic and overbooked venues, and you have yourself a busy day that might not even make you feel like it's the day of hearts.

The truth is, as you grow up, you'll realize February 14 turning into just like any normal day. You'll eventually start looking for other meaningful moments and ways to spend time with your loved one/s, on other days when traffic isn't a nuisance (assuming that you're already allowed of drive of course!). Take for example my parents: they're celebrating their 30th anniversary on Valentine's itself but they also celebrate their "monthsary" every 14th of the month. Cute. Sharing love therefore should go beyond February 14. Example: February 15, May 1, or even June 29.

Realization 3

No matter how Valentine's vendors and malls lure you into going extravagant and lavish for Valentine's day, remember

that those chocolates won't count if you don't live the spirit of Valentine's, that is, the spirit of love and caring. Besides, if the ultimate Valentine's deed for you is limited to just giving roses and chocolates and nothing else, would you consider that lovely enough? Your date might have brought you to an expensive restaurant, but he's always on his phone 80% of the time, and that won't feel good for sure.

Put down your iPhone or your Samsung, and start interacting with the people you're spending your Valentine's day with. Be creative and be genuine, and never stick with the kind of Valentine's cliche you grew up with, because this world's full of clichés and things that don't even count as genuine sign of love anymore. As a millennial, you're bound to be aware of that.

Realization 4

People often forget about putting their self-love as a priority. That's why it's important that you also love yourself. After all, you can never share love to your Tinder date if you can't share love with yourself first. Valentine's day may be an opportunity to love others, but it's also a fantastic opportunity to realize your self-love, your self-worth, and how the lack of those can affect even your relationship with your friends family or girlfriend. Yes, you can review your Instagram stories and be jealous of your friends for having fantastic valentines's dates, but hey, maybe it's not your turn yet.

You're just in your youth, you're still growing up, and once you start loving yourself and setting your goals, and keeping your relationship with people and especially the lord strong, ultimately your ideal date will definitely come into your life. Explanation? We all get attracted to people who can love and support themselves right?

So when someone asks you, "bakit wala kang ka-dinner date sa Valentine's?", you can always say "Nag-Ash Wednesday meal na ako for today. I'm good enough na." And that's good enough.

Happy Valentine's day!

Love: a feeling or a choice?

Angeline Concepcion,
Magis Youth



There has been an ongoing debate on whether love is a feeling or choice. There will always be people telling you it's a choice and there will be others telling you it's a feeling. I'm here to tell you why it's both. Yes, you read that right. It's both. Love does not have to be the result of false dichotomy. Love does not have to be the either/or in your life.

In the 19 years that I have been alive, my parents have taught me that love is both a feeling and a choice. To see them in everything you see, instead of seeing nothing but them; for them to be the noise you needed in the deafening silence; for them to be the dark you search for in the blinding light. That is the feeling. But to listen to them and still want to hear from them despite the constant babbling after a bad day; to swallow your pride and apologize despite being right; to keep quiet instead of speaking up so that the silence can comfort you both and give you time instead of letting the noise take over and ruin everything. That is the choice.

The feeling is what devours you and leaves you with mixed emotions. It's what consumes your daily thoughts and leaves you staring throughout the day wondering if the amount of effort you put in is worth it. The choice is to deal with these mixed emotions. It's what helps you stay and make things worth. It's what enables you to overcome the fear of not being enough and it's what allows you to trust in the process and trust in the feeling.

Love does not have to be the result of a fallacy. Once we come to terms that love is both a feeling and a choice, only then can we say we truly love someone and something.

MUSICAL NOTES

Made For Mission

Kit Palmario, Psalm 98 BCGG



A lot of the dissatisfaction we experience come from forgetting that we have a mission in life. We were not created by God to be served; rather we were created to serve. God designed man for specific purposes. If you use something for a purpose it was not designed for, things usually tend to go wrong. When things go wrong, we start to feel dissatisfied at best, and miserable at worst. We are made for a mission. We will never have lasting happiness until we realize this and act on it.

We always talk about our quest for happiness. Happiness is not found by seeking self gratification but by serving others in ways both meaningful and relevant. It's time to let our light shine. We were created to serve and in order to achieve this we must be ready to share our talents and abilities. We are not masters, we are servants.

Lord, help us to discern what these talents and abilities are, what we really are good at; how we will utilize these talents and abilities to achieve our mission; how we discover what Your mission is for us.



PROSE AND POETRY

Chacho Angeles, Thessalonians BCGG

Simple Love

Father,
How I wish I were a child again.
With no cares, no worries, no work
No responsibilities, no ambitions.
My apo just wants to eat, go out,
play
With the kids, or on her own with
Her toys, dinosaurs and puzzles.

She calls out to me to show a
Discovery, or to ask for help,
Accompany her outside the house,
Or just to sit beside her while
Watching dinosaurs on my laptop.
She loves to sleep beside me
curled up
In the crook of my arm, snuggling.

And she can cry! When she is
hungry,
Does not get what she wants, when
She gets hurt, or when she feels
bad,
But sometimes for no apparent
reason.
And she throws a tantrum, to get
What she wants, or get back con
trol?

She has, I saw, very simple needs,
Around which her world revolves.
And among them is a desire to be
Loved, to cuddle, to be cared for,
To be with her when she hurts, and
When she is happy. She trusts
The love of her parents and older
People around for all her needs.
Her feelings are so transparent that
I know when I do right by her.

How I wish I could be like her,
No ambitions, no deceit, no trickery,
No duplicity, no pride. I pray that I
Learn to trust You unconditionally;
I pray for simple joys, simple hurts;
For Your companionship and care.
I pray for a simple love to rule my
life;
For You love us, Your children,
Far more than any mother can.

Fill My Life

Jesus,
My life is so short, like a breeze that passes,
And I am sometimes at a loss on how
It could have meaning and be fulfilling,
As I manage to stray from a path
That You have laid down for me.
I am nothing without my God, and
I am nothing without my fellow men.
Yet I get attached to worldly things,
And pay attention only to what I want.

I pray that my desires and my worldly self,
Be totally given to you, dedicated to living the
Example of Your life; mirroring that heart,
Compassionate and ever loving, wishing only
the
Well-being of Your flock, You and I, the
Beloved of the Father, with the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Faith Prayer

Lord Jesus, shower on me Your grace.
Let my faith grow from a tiny seed
To a great tree, with fragrant flowers
Whose nectar feeds bees and butterflies,
That produces sweet and nourishing
Fruit and food for animals and humans,
Leaves that cure the body and the spirit.

Shelter this strong tree but with a fragile
Heart from strong winds and rain,
Bowed but unbroken.

Nourish it with your Word that magnifies
Your presence in this self-absorbed world,
That it may grow strong and mirror Your
Compassionate heart, and overcome my
Inborn selfishness, my doubts and fears,
Caused by the apathy of others and
Your seeming absence from this life.

Come and dispel the darkness and disbelief
And cure me, make me healthy, in body and
Spirit because, I believe.



Photo by Amazon

Love Prayer

Father, why do I always run in the shad
ows,
When Your love shines brighter than the
sun?
Why do I often forget You, feel Your ab
sence,
When Your Word is ever present, and Your
Love is shown in all Your wondrous cre
ation
And a lot of people show this love to oth
ers.
Is it my lack of faith, my skinny love for
You?
Or do I give inordinate importance to my
fears,
Worldly attachments and my daily con
cerns?

Father I pray for Your grace, that my heart
Be like the heart of Your son, the seat of
His divinity, our bridge to an ever lasting
Union with You. From His heart compas
sion
Springs forth, dispelling the darkness of
doubt.
From my heart may jump out the spark of
love,
That I may embrace Your son's teachings,
so
That I may believe and love as He does.

Health (and wealth) are God's gifts to us

Rey Mella, Cana BCGG

We need to take care of our body, the temple of God. We also need to take care of the resources God gives us in order to enjoy life and take care of our journey in this world. God wants us to prosper.

For close to 20 years, I tried my very best to take care of my health. I was very much an adult by the time I got educated on health and realized I needed to do something different. It must have been God calling me – He got me involved in a network marketing business initially selling personal care products, which eventually evolved into world class vitamins and supplements. I was 44 years old then. (In fact, I was 35 when I stopped smoking, which I did heavily for 13 years. My son is 25 years old. That's how long I have stopped smoking.)

Since then, I have become passionate about many aspects of health, from diet to supplementation, to stress management, to exercise, to sleep, and also to not taking medications as much as I can avoid, while also going for my check ups and seeing my doctors on a regular basis.

While I eventually outgrew my asthma, reduced my asthmatic attacks to zero, and got out of my dependency on Ventolin inhaler, my passion for health has not been enough to prevent my son from getting asthma (which he also eventually outgrew with help from swimming exercises), my daughter from getting an appendectomy, and my wife from getting cancer.

Of course, I realize that taking care of one's health is an individual person-to-person decision and routine. I do try to rub off my passion and my healthy habits on other people. Even I violate certain things – I eat unhealthy food from time to time; I sleep less at times; I miss my



Muttart Conservatory. Christmas in Canada.

exercise and my vitamins once in a while. My stress may have been out of control for many years during the height of my manufacturing management career. But, generally, I'd like to think I am healthy.

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart."

– Jeremiah 29:11-13

Recently, four generally healthy friends and acquaintances – people I know beyond their first names, people I personally know and whose lives have influenced and affected mine – died.

I know that people who get sick with cancer or some critical illness worry about their mortality, worry about death and about the shortening of their lives on earth. They may think that their time is coming. And I, a generally healthy person who takes care of his health, do not worry nor even think much about death.

When these events took place in a span of one month between the second half of December 2017 and the first half of January 2018, they made me pause, reflect and realize that my life is not in my hands. I should have known that already. But this time around it hit me like a thunderbolt.

While three of these friends were under 70 years old, they were not ill nor were they suffering from any debilitating diseases when they died. Neither was Victor, our chapel organ player, when he died last December 11. He was only 26 years old.

He practically talked to me.

There was a preacher who was an avid golfer. Every chance he could get, he would be on the golf course swinging away. It was an obsession. One Sunday was a picture-perfect day for golfing. The sun was out, no clouds were in the sky, and the temperature was just right.

Continue to page 19

Read Up on Love: Book Reviews by the Pilgrim

Zarah Gagatiga, Emmanuel / Mt Olivet BCGG

Love is everywhere. Love is all around. Love is all that matters. Fill up your bookshelf this February with lots of love. Here are book reviews you may find helpful in completing your reading list.

Chapman, Gary. The Five Love Languages of Teenagers. Makati, Philippines: Church Strengthening Ministry, c 2010. (Non-Fiction, Recommended for Parents)

How do you say I love you? There are five ways, according to Dr. Gary Chapman. Quality Time. Words of Affirmation. Gifts. Acts of Service. Physical Touch. Chapman focuses on the parent-child relationship while lending advice and counsel to parents and teens. He makes use of real life stories that readers can relate to. Apart from fleshing out issues that plague parents and teens as they grow up to become persons of their own, the book includes the five lovelanguages assessment tool.

Robinson, Ken. The Element: How finding your passion changes everything. New York : Penguin Books, 2009. (Non-Fiction, Recommended for young adults, age 16 and up)

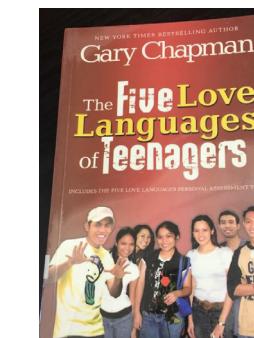
What do Paul McCartney, Gillian Lynne and Arianna Huffington have in common? They have found their "element". Sir Ken Robinson explains the benefits of knowing one's passions and how life can be full of rewards when you choose to follow it.

Lee, Sophia N. What Things Mean. Singapore: Scholastic, 2016. (Fiction. Recommended for young adult readers age 14 and up)

What Things Mean is about Olive who sees herself a little different from her cousins and her classmates. It bothers her a lot, but Sophia N. Lee approaches this personal issue with a nuanced narration of stories from her quirky uncles, her cousins, her aunts, her grandmother and her mother who has her own style of evading the truths that Olive wishes to discover. Her journey towards self discovery is a quiet one; subtle and insightful.

Rowell, Rainbow. Landline. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2014 (Fiction. Recommended for mature readers, age 21 and up)

Georgie McCool's marriage is in trouble. Her husband leaves for Nebraska a few days before Christmas bringing their two daughters along but she chooses to stay in Los Angeles to work on a big script with work partner, Seth. Torn between her career and her marriage, Georgie must make a decision! Rainbow Rowell begins slowly but builds up a middle part that makes the book difficult to put down.



Spiritual Tidbits and Humor, continued from page 18

The preacher was in a quandary as to what to do, and shortly, the urge to play golf overcame him. He called an assistant and told him he was sick and could not do church, packed the car up, and drove three hours to a golf course where no one would recognize him. Happily, he began to play the course.

An angel up above was watching the preacher and was quite perturbed. He went to God and said, "Look at the preacher. He should be punished for what he is doing."

God nodded in agreement. The preacher teed up on the first hole. He swung at the ball, and it sailed effortlessly through the air and landed right in the cup 250 yards away. A picture-perfect hole-in-one. He was amazed and excited.

The angel was a little shocked. He turned to God and said, "I beg your pardon, but I thought you were going to punish him."

God smiled. "Think about it – who can he tell?"

"I am with you always."

--- Matthew 28:20

SCHEDULES & ASSIGNMENTS

2018 Community Celebration

DATE	14-Jan	4-Feb	4-Mar	8-Apr	6-May	3-Jun
THEME	Recommitment	Rekindling Love in Marriage	Lenten Recollection	God's Love	Sin & God's Mercy	Raising Millenials
RESOURCE PERSON & MASS PRESIDER	Fr. James Gascon, SJ	Fr. James Gascon, SJ	Fr. Manol Montesclaros, SJ	Fr. Junjun Borres, SJ (TBC)	Fr. Venus Suarez (TBC)	Fr. James Gascon, SJ
MINISTRY SPONSOR & NEWSLETTER WRITER ON COMCELEB	Pastoral Council (Aldeguers as newsletter writer)	ME Ministry	Fomartion Ministry	Outreach Ministry	Praxis Ministry	Youth Ministry
BCGG SPONSOR	Pastoral Council	Agnus Dei, Corinthians, Cana, & Genesis of David	Archangel Gabriel, Easter & Francis	Exodus, Matthew & James, Brother of John	Magnificat, Psalmaritans & John	Mustard Seed, Sirach & Emmanuel/Mt. Olivet
FOOD HOST SECTOR	North	Central	South	North	Central	South
VENUE	Layforce	Layforce	Layforce	Layforce	Layforce	Layforce

DATE	8-Jul	12-Aug	2-Sep	7-Oct	11-Nov	2-Dec
THEME	Principle & Foundation of St. Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises	Christ & Community Life	Sinners but Called by Christ	God Calls Me Beyond Myself	Advent Recollection	Family Day
RESOURCE PERSON & MASS PRESIDER	Fr. Ramon Bautista, SJ (TBC)	Fr. Arnel Aquino, SJ (TBC)	Fr. Bob Buenconsejo, SJ	Fr. James Gascon, SJ	Fr. Noel Vasquez, SJ (TBC)	Fr. James Gascon, SJ
MINISTRY SPONSOR & NEWSLETTER WRITER ON COMCELEB	Fomation Ministry	Community Services Ministry	Praxis Ministry	Pastoral Council	Formation Ministry	Pastoral Council
BCGG SPONSOR	Prodigal 102, Thessalonians & Psalm 98	Song of Ruth, Transfiguration & Tala	St. Peter, Corinthians & Cana/Genesis of David	Pastoral Council	North Sector BCGGs	All Sectors
FOOD HOST SECTOR	North	Central	South	MDC	North	All Sectors
VENUE	Layforce	Layforce	Layforce	Layforce	Layforce	San Jose Gym

SCHEDULES & ASSIGNMENTS

2018 BCGG INTERFACE SCHEDULE (Feb -April 2018)

North Sector	Agnus Dei & Exodus	Archangel Gabriel & Song of Ruth	Magnificat & Prodigal 102	Mustard Seed & St. Peter
Central Sector	Matthew & Thessalonians	Corinthians & Sirach	Transfiguration & Easter & Psalmaritans	
South Sector	John, Psalm 98 & Genesis of David	Cana, Mt. Olivet/Emmanuel & Tala	James, Brother of John & Francis	

Ministry Heads & Council Overseers

Ministry	Ministry Head	Overseer
Marriage Encounter	Josie Llamas	Santos
Formation	Ted & Susan Concepcion	Panlilio
Group Praxis	Levy & Roxanne Espiritu	de Guzman
Community Services	Leony & Mia Parada	Sangalang
Outreach	Jojo & Rhea Gaddi	Ebaro
Youth	Ney & Pinky Rosas	Aldeguer
Finance	Miles & Evelyn San Pedro	Palmario

Sector Heads & Council Overseers

Sector	Sector Head	Council Overseer
North	Boy & Kit dela Pena	Aldeguer Panlilio
Central	Cesar & Delsa Sangalang	Sangalang Santos De Guzman
South	Rey & Lucy Mella assisted by Anchit & Sally Chua Chiaco	Ebaro Palmario Aldeguer

February & March

Birthday Celebrants and Wedding Anniversaries

February Birthday Celebrants

1	Helen Chua
2	Mark Madrid
5	Levy Pingol
5	Arlyn Tabilog
6	Nette Wong
9	Ferdie Jason
11	Gary Canoso
12	Becky Garces
15	Jovy De Leon
16	Doc Geslani
16	Danny Mendoza
17	Mike Magpayo
18	Domeng Gagatiga
19	Via Niebres
20	Joanna Ong
22	Ronnie Tabuzo
24	Vicky Mendoza
27	Atoy Apo
28	Jun Ahyong
28	Gie Belga

March Birthday Celebrants

3	Nitz Eslava
8	Marivic Pareja
9	Hector Villegas
11	Bib De Guzman
13	Nancy Martin
13	Denis Rago
13	Wheng Reyes
13	Mon Yupangco
14	Franco Reyes
15	Roel Miranda
16	Dodo Sta. Maria
17	Eden Acosta
18	Rache Ebardo
18	Philip Panlilio
18	Ali Reyes
18	Neds Vargas
19	Josephus Jimenez
20	Betty San Luis
23	Shari Consulta
24	Gene Bañez
24	Jane Fernandez
26	Mely Peralta
26	Mike Santos
26	Jun Gacias
27	Tatic Castillo
28	Siony Martinez
28	Happy Pacual
29	Celso Martinez
30	Alex Reyes
31	Ellen Coronel

February Wedding Anniversaries

3	Ray & Ging De Guzman
7	Uriel & Yella Castillo
8	Benz & Vina Dimanala
10	Danny & Charito Dimayuga
10	Frank & Fe+ Reyes
14	Jun & Vivian Ahyong
14	Doc & Cat Geslani
14	Leony & Mia Parada
25	Egay+ & Djarn Pestaño

March Wedding Anniversaries

5	Mike & Celine Magpayo
10	Roel & Nette Wong
13	Mennen & Elyn Aracid
16	George & Beng Pascual
18	Francis & Dolly Llamas
19	Poch & Via Niebres
24	Matt & Rosie Pineda
26	Ciel & Manette Yap
27	Jay & Gie Belga
30	Easley & Elaine Lariosa

Magis Deo Christmas Party and Family Day 2017

Milo Parada, Magis Youth

Last December 3, 2017, the Magis Deo Community celebrated its annual Christmas Party and Family Day at the San Jose Covered Court in Ateneo de Manila University. Members and their families were present in full force at the gathering which included energetic activities and performances.

The Magis Youth showcased their talents, took the spotlight and gave refreshing life to the celebration. With the event hosted by Magis Youths Milo Parada and Michelle Naldo, the participation of the youth is a testament to their role in family-building, and, together with their parents, the vital growth of the community.

The day started off with a solemn Eucharistic celebration, presided by Magis Deo's beloved Fr. Ruben Tanseco. His homily highlighted the importance of the family as the basic unit of the church, and how families have played a role in the happiness of Filipinos. Citing the birth of Jesus, and the holy family as role models for the families gathered, Fr. Ruben reminded everyone that while Christmas is a time to prepare for the coming of Jesus Christ, Christmas is also a time for everyone to strengthen their love and connection not only with their families, but also with their friends and other community members.

The mass was followed by several numbers from the Magis Choir, who serenaded Fr. Ruben, with the community singing along with Christmas tunes and well-loved songs. This segment was capped by a birthday cake-blowing and photo-op with Fr. Tanseco, after which the family day festivities kicked in.

"Magis Got Talent" brought out the best of the Magis Youth, with performances ranging from singing to dancing to stand-up comedy and other unique talents from the contestants, all greatly entertaining and amusing the Magis crowd. It is noteworthy that several of youth performers have joined local and international competitions, as well as performed in live performances and gigs around the country. Magis Deo is truly blessed with these talents.

Champion:

Joya Aldeguer, daughter of Jojo and Jane Aldeguer of Mustard Seed BCGG, together with her friend, Liv Yap, performed an award-winning street dance number.

First runner-up:

Brix, Leven, and Kaye Sangalang, children of Cesar and Delsa Sangalang of Psalmarians BCGG, showcasing a very unique duet, notable of which is Kaye's promising singing voice at such a young age.

Second runner-up:

Wendy Darlene Peralta, granddaughter of Mely Peralta of Exodus BCGG, who belted out an amazing song with a show-stopping singing ability.

Third runner-up:

Fiona Erin Mella, daughter of Rey and Lucy Mella of Cana BCGG, also performing a street dance number, worthy of local and international competitions.

Fourth runner-up:

Immanuel Rivera, son of Randy and Cecile Rivera of Song of Ruth BCGG, who surprised the audience with his drum-playing skills.

Special mention goes to Leonardo Parada of the Psalmarians BCGG who brought everyone to their feet with the dance craze of the year, Baby Shark.

The competition ended with a lively performance from the The Flashbacks band, who enjoined everyone to dance and groove to their repertoire of contemporary songs to old-school disco beats. With a hearty lunch and Christmas gift-giving capping the festivities, the 2017 Magis Christmas Party and Family Day is truly a fun-filled day for the whole community.

Family Day

December 3, 2017

