

# Magis

*Formation for Mission*

*Stewardship*

*Simplicity*

*Sharing*

*Service*

Official Publication of the Magis Deo Community

February 2019 Issue

## **Christian is a verb**

Express through acts of loving

## **Gifts of the Community**

Give and receive spiritual gifts



## **Heaven-sent angel**

Be a parent of the soul of a child

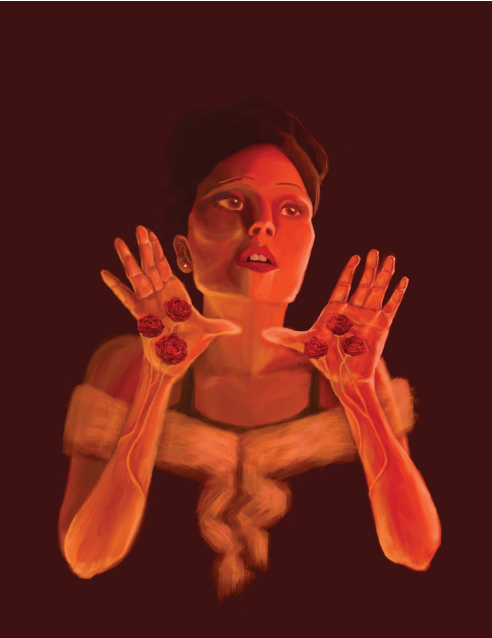
## **Blessings & graces of old age**

Growing is a greater blessing

## **Boys will be boys**

But how about girls?

# About the Cover



In line with the season of love, Levenspeil R. Sangalang from Magis Youth illustrates an image drenched in red — a visual rendition of “*La vie en rose*”, or life through rose-colored glasses. It simply means that one has to have a positive outlook in life, to have love growing and ever so blooming from your veins. Everything you create and everything you do, you do with a burning passion; for it all has an effect towards a bigger picture of your relationships, all intertwined like roses in a garden. And just like how every person has their thorns — we have to love despite. Despite their imperfections and mistakes; nothing is sweeter than forgiveness.

Ultimately, illustrator Levenspeil paints a melancholic imagery that equals to a symbol of none other than love and life, one that reminds us that *Life is fleeting, like a fading rose of glorious beauty. We do what we can to tend and nurture each person in our lives — to watch each garden, each life, to flourish to its highest potential. Because love is the elixir of life, we all want it; even if all of us have it. There is nothing to do but to give love, and receive those roses in return.*

# Editorial Board

<div><div>Magis</div><div>Official Publication of the Magis Deo Community 2/F RMT CeFam Bldg., ADMU Campus, Q.C.</div></div>		
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## Calendar of Activities: March - May 2019

March	April	May
3 Community Celebration	7 Lenten Recollection	5 Community Celebration
1-3 Spiritual Deepening Retreat	26-28 Spiritual Deepening Retreat	17-19 Annual Ignatian Retreat
8-10 ME Weekend		18-19 Youth Camp
10 Conversational Essentials Part 1		
24 - Conversational Essentials Part 2		



# Christian is a Verb

Fr. James U. Gascon,  
Spiritual Director



Photo by Unsplash

**I**n a far-flung mountain school called Miarayon, a group of grade two students was having a lesson in English. For adults, it can be quite stressful given the preparations for family get-togethers and reunions. For children, it is filled with excitement since they are recipients of the gifts adults have painstakingly chosen.

The teacher was explaining to the class the difference between a noun and a verb. She said: A noun is the name you give to persons, to things, or almost anything, while a verb is the word that connotes actions. To further explain her point, she gave some examples. Nouns: man, Luis, school, God. Verb: run, look, walk, swim. To test whether the students understood her, she asked them to give examples of nouns and verbs. Then she called Juan who looked a bit perplexed. “Can you give an example of a verb?” the teacher asked. Juan confidently replied: “Christian!” The entire class burst into laughter because everyone knew that the word was a noun. So the teacher inquired why Juan chose the word “Christian.”, Juan sheepishly explained his answer: “According to my mother, Christian is to do what Christ did. Isn’t doing what Christ did an action word?”

This is the point of our being called Christians. However, we all call ourselves Christians but we often understand the word as noun. Since for us it is a noun, it then remains to be a name, a title. However, we know that if our way of following Christ is just a name, a title, then it is empty. Christ calls us to understand the word as a verb. Jesus said to his disciples: “Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him.”

In the Gospel of Luke (Lk 3, 10-18), the people asked John the Baptist, “What should we do?” And he answers uniquely to different kinds of people. “Whoever has two cloaks should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise.” To the tax collectors his admonition: “Stop collecting more than what is prescribed.” And the soldiers he told them, “Do not practice extortion, do not falsely accuse anyone, and be

satisfied with your wages.” If you are going to sum up all these actions words, it can be summed up to “loving.” It is *loving* that is demanded of us. And we know that loving is a call to action; more in deeds than in words. It is very easy to say we love someone, but it is a challenge to act out this loving. As St. Ignatius reminds each one of us “in the contemplation to attain love” in the spiritual exercises, loving is an act, more in deeds than in words. Why so? Because Jesus ushers us to a new commandment that defines our being a Christian: As I have loved you, so you should also love one another. As Jesus have loved, this is the standard, this is the measure of the verb called loving. And how does one love like Jesus loves us? When we love someone despite his or her not being lovable. We do not only love those who love us; we love even those who hate us. And we do our loving. This is Christianity in action. This is the reason for God’s being among us. Perhaps, this is also why we remind ourselves in February what love is all about.

A popular song goes this way; “what the world needs is love... love, sweet love.” I say that what the world needs is loving... not the noun but the verb.

Celebrating the love month, we are challenged not only to express our love through things (e.g., chocolates, flowers, balloons, etc.) but more through acts of loving – forgiving, understanding, empathizing, compassioning, seeking, and spending time with the beloved. These are all verbs which can be equated to Christianity. My special prayer is that your intention this Valentines is not only to receive something. Rather, may it also be an intention to start an act of loving that leads towards sharing the happiness of being called to act in Christ. Change must come from us.

Thus, Juan may have misunderstood the difference between a noun and a verb. But he knew his faith. He may have failed English grammar, but in God’s eyes, his was an excellent mark. We too are invited to go beyond the noun. We must *Christian!* Act now. Transform Christian from noun into Verb and be real lovers.

## 111223

**At a glance, it seems like a group of numbers in an IQ or abstract test.** Well, it’s simply a tool to help us remember what we enjoin you to be the year’s goals of our community. It is essentially carrying on the thrusts from last year, which remain to be basic and critical relative to the fruits of our survey of the lights and shadows of 2018. And with both this and the community sharing from Fr. James Gascon’s talk last October 2018 on “God Calls Me Beyond Myself,” we made some enhancements.

### 1 – AIR / SDR per member

Magis Deo members are truly fortunate as we do not need to look for or organize our yearly “dessert” or “mountain” retreat. Our Formation Ministry prepares/d an array of recollections to help us “re-ignite” our connection with our God. We invite you to attend at least ONE Retreat this year as part of the thrust of forming our shepherds and members in a continuing manner – Spiritual Deepening Retreat for the ME Classes and the Annual Ignatian Retreat for our BCGG members. We will continue to remind you of the dates for these retreats so you can readily block your calendars.

### 1 – OUTREACH / SUYUAN per BCGG

We need not look for or organize our special outreach program as we have our Outreach Ministry who provides opportunities to share our God-given gifts and grow in our compassion for others. We invite each BCGG to host or sponsor ONE Outreach/Suyuan this year. Note however that financial concerns should not be a hindrance for a BCGG to carry out a Suyuan. The Outreach Ministry / Council / community are here to give support.

### 1 – BALIK MAGIS per BCGG

Another way of increasing our membership is rekindling our ties with our former or inactive BCGG members or ME classmates. For all we know, they are just waiting for us to reach out to and re-connect with them. Let us invite them to our prayer meetings and Comcel. Praxis and Formation Ministries are here to assist you in commissioning them as full-fledged members.

### 2 – COUPLES @ COMCEL per BCGG

We enjoin each BCGG to commit attendance of TWO couples or at least 50% of their membership in all community celebrations of 2019. Let us continue the ignited spirit in our monthly community celebrations. Let’s bring the whole family!

### 2 – PRAYER DEEPENING SESSIONS per BCGG

How more meaningful it is to be able to pick up the message of our prayer which only comes from self-processing. Reading our prayer beyond the story is the significance and meaning of our prayer.

In TWO of the three interfaces this year, we will have an opportunity to be assisted by our very own Magis Prayer Deepening Facilitators (under the tutelage of Fr. James Gascon). Let us take advantage of this opportunity.

### 3 – MEW COUPLE CANDIDATES per BCGG

We were once a recipient and participant of the Marriage Encounter Weekend as an MEW couple candidate. Then we continued on to embrace our growth in Ignatian spirituality, being part of a bigger community, Magis Deo. Let us share this wonderful blessing with other couples. We all know that the fruits of the MEW are not just in our couplehood but in our family... our children... and yes, our children’s children.

We also hope that the Shepherd’s logsheet, member’s Sacred Space and Examen bookmark, the Magis Deo profile and handsheet, aside from entertaining and accompanying you, are helping Magis Deo to be more significant for you, every single day.

So 2019.... Here we go..... **111223**

Moving on to the first Magis Deo Pastoral Council meeting this year, we had an opportunity to see where we are financially and project where we are headed this year. We thank you for all your efforts in updating the membership dues, and your generosity in your donations, love offerings, and contributions to the activities. This year, as we are mindful of “donor fatigue,” we would like to defer our full-blast community fund raising efforts. Subsequently, even if we are seeing a deficit in our projections this year, we are optimistic that God will provide. We hope that with the diligence in our timely payment of our membership dues, our continued open-handedness in our love offering and tithes, and some resourceful ways of executing our activities, we will be able to carry on in still making the year’s community activities meaningful.

In ending... as the saying goes in Talk 1 of the Marriage Encounter Weekend... “Your attendance here is neither a coincidence nor an accident.” In hindsight, ours might seemingly look like an “accident” as we were actually not elected to be a part of the 2018 and 2019 Pastoral Council. Instead, the 4 of us (Aldeguer, Palmario, De Guzman, and Santos) were the only couples left as eligible candidates for the positions. Whether we were many and have garnered enough votes or otherwise, we felt the numbers were not what was important for the Lord, but if He wishes to put us in a certain spot, or go on a certain mission, He will find a way, His way.

We believe this is His way this 2019, our Way with Him, and His way to all of us, through Magis.

Magis Deo... as our way of life.

Jojo & Jane Aldeguer



# The Gifts of the Community

Levy and Roxanne Espiritu, Group Praxis Ministry Head

Last year the community took a GIFTS survey using the Wagner-Modified Houts questionnaire provided by Mr. Manny Blas, our guest speaker at the May 2018 community celebration. It took us a while to compile the survey results but we think it is very timely to share the results now as we start our year with our re-commitment as members of Magis Deo Community.

As we learned from the talk on Spiritual Gifts, our God is a giving God, so much so that we were given SPIRITUAL GIFTS unique to us. A spiritual gift is defined as a special qualification granted by the Holy Spirit to every believer to empower them to serve within the framework of the body of Christ. A manifestation of God’s power and presence, given freely for God’s honor and glory and for the service of others.

It would be interesting to know what spiritual gifts we have in common as a community, thus the objective of the survey conducted. Of the 284 officially listed community members, 206 members accomplished the survey, or 73% compliance. There were 25 identified gifts and the top five dominant GIFTS of the community are as follows:

As a MAGIS COMMUNITY

1. Hospitality and Administration
2. Helps
3. Wisdom and Service
4. Leadership
5. Faith

	NORTH SECTOR	CENTRAL SECTOR	SOUTH SECTOR
1	Hospitality	Administration	Hospitality
2	Administration	Helps and Wisdom	Administration
3	Service	Hospitality	Helps
4	Helps	Leadership	Wisdom
5	Leadership	Service	Leadership and Service

The outcome of the TOP FIVE gifts across all sectors showed the capability of the whole community in undertaking unified action. In other words, we have a community of people who are naturally gifted with these gifts, that when we are able to consolidate and utilize these gifts well, Magis Deo will be able to accomplish and sustain its initiatives, thrusts and goals for this year and the years to come.

The Pastoral Council recently laid out its working objectives for 2019 and these top five dominant gifts will further bolster our confidence that we have what it takes to carry out the vision and mission of our community and continue to make Magis Deo a way of life.

DEFINITION OF THE GIFTS – gifts given to certain members of the body of Christ:

Hospitality	To provide an open house and warm welcome to those in need of food and lodging.
Administration	To understand clearly the immediate and long range goals of a particular unit of the body of Christ and to devise and execute plans for the accomplishment of these goals.
Helps	To invest the talents they have in the life and ministry of other members of the body, thus enabling others to increase the effectiveness of their own spiritual gifts.
Wisdom	To know the mind of the Holy Spirit in such a way as to receive insight into how given knowledge may best be applied to specific needs arising in the body of Christ.
Service	To identify the unmet needs involved in a task related to God’s work and to make use of available resources to meet those needs and help accomplish the desired results.
Leadership	To set goals in accordance with God’s purpose for the future and to communicate these goals to others in such a way that they voluntarily and harmoniously work together to accomplish these goals for the glory of God.
Faith	To discern with extraordinary confidence the will and purposes of God for His work.

# Prayers for Grace

Chacho Angeles,  
Thessalonians BCGG

LOVING FATHER:

(1)  
Up in Mirador Hill in the days of my youth,  
When I was ready to consign You to the  
Dustbin of irrelevance, I spent some time  
Drinking in the beauty of the mountains  
Then green with many trees and plants.  
I took pen and paper and drew an image  
Of a gnarled pine tree nestled by the hillside  
A few meters below me. With crooked lines  
For the trunk and branches, short lines for  
The pine needles, I drew a simple image.  
I wrote beside it a short poem, metered and  
Rhymed, as I used to in those days. Now lost,  
That sheet of paper makes me realize  
I was then filled with love, unknowing and  
Undeserving. I was united with You in the  
Beauty of Your creation, with a heart that  
Knows what my mind could not, in a few  
Short minutes, an eternity of grace. Amen.

(2)  
I pray for the grace to know You in my mind  
When I read Your words in the Holy Bible,  
When I hear words of wisdom from others  
Who know You; I pray for the grace to feel  
You in my heart when I see You in the beauty  
Of creation, when I see You in others who live  
Your word daily in their lives, in the joyful smiles  
Of little children and the innocent, in the suffering  
Of the neglected, abused and unfortunate, that I  
May be intimate with You in partaking of Your flesh  
And blood, the food You give me to feed my body  
And spirit, my whole being; I pray for the grace and  
Guidance for my actions and my relationship with  
Others, the whole of creation; I pray for the grace,  
And the strength to be steadfast in preparing my heart,  
To be forever ready and open to live always in the  
Shadow of Your love. Amen.

(3)  
Tell me to believe in joy when I see pain.  
Tell me to believe in smiles when I see tears.  
Tell me to believe in trust when I see betrayal.  
Tell me to believe in miracles when I see disease.  
Tell me to believe in obedience when I see self-interest.  
Tell me to believe in mission when I see commissions.  
Tell me to believe in others when I see the ego.  
Tell me to believe in love when I see hatred.

Despite all these, I believe that You love me,  
Care for me, and that You are with me through  
All my struggles and pain; and by Your grace,  
Let me see You in others and in Your beautiful  
Creation; let me hear You in the whispering breeze  
And the clap of thunder; let me feel You in my  
Heart and in my whole being; and let me be one  
With You the rest of my unworthy life. Amen.

(4)  
Following You and living as You lived,  
I am a salmon swimming against the flow  
Towards an unburdened, loved-filled life.

Overwhelming difficulties in relationships,  
Gigantic hurts and pains, eating me alive,  
A voice, silent, sure, calls and guides me  
To the beginning, the source of my life.

To reach You, I must go back to what that source,  
That voice whispers to me throughout my travels,  
To enable me to struggle with life, while I suffer and die,  
I continue to find that space so that I can pray:

Embrace and bless me like You did the little children,  
And welcomed the sinners.  
Save me like You did Peter when he started to sink,  
And fed the multitude.  
Heal me like You did the hemorrhagic woman,  
The lepers and the possessed.  
Give me the grace that made Peter drop everything  
And follow You to the end.  
Give me the strength to love You despite the pains  
That Your mother endured till the cross.  
Grant me Your mercy as You forgave the adulteress  
That I too may learn to forgive others.  
That I may be healed and made whole.

(5)  
You know how much comfort I need  
To see me through my hurts and pains.  
You know how much wisdom I need  
That I may discern Your will for me.  
You know how weak I am, prone to fail,  
Your strength will carry me through.  
You know how lonely I can become  
In performing my mission in this world,  
With Your compassion, I will never feel alone.  
You know how badly I need Your grace,  
That I may live and share Your love daily.  
All these I humbly ask in the name of Jesus  
Your Son, my Lord, that I may be  
One with You throughout my life,  
Amen.



# What’s love got to do with it?

Zarah C. Gagatiga, Emmanuel BCGG

**E**xactly ten years ago, I wrote an essay about love for the February issue of the Magis Deo Newsletter. Back then, we were able to churn out monthly issues. Ten years after, a lot of things have changed but the love remains.

I have an archive of the articles and essays I have written in a private online journal so I recalled what I wrote about love in that issue. This is the advantage of keeping soft copies of works and written articles in this age of digital media. Going back to memory lane is easier and more accessible. Reading the article, one paragraph struck me because, to this day, I still believe in the words I professed. I wrote, “When we realize its (love’s) presence in our lives, we are moved to do greater things beyond our known capacity. In our all too human eyes, the ordinary becomes extraordinary. A painful experience transforms into something beautiful. The old is seen as fresh and new, even ageless. With love, time and space do not matter at all. In love, we’re diminished but we surface more enriched and fulfilled. When we love we become fearless. We endure. We persevere... We grow.”

I think about how these lofty beliefs and ideals on love are made real in my life in the decade that passed. I was only thirty-four when I gave up a position I enjoyed doing over truth, fairness and humility. Ten years ago, I witnessed how estranged family members helped us survive Ondoy in its aftermath. I was gifted with the kindness from friends when I least expected it. I received the generosity of communities I belong to so I can revive my hope and faith in humanity. There are days when I pray for a humbled heart to continue acknowledging this grace because, I feel I do not deserve it all.

As a wife and mother, my heart has been broken several times over. Yet, I go on loving and living because I am surprised that I am capable of devotion and faithfulness. For this, I thank my husband and my children.

At the ripe old age of forty-four, these I know. True love allows us to accept loss. Things will never be the same again in parting and in leave taking, but it is alright. And, when it is time to set free the people I hold dear, it is a way of loving myself as well.

May you find love and may love continuously find you!  
Happy Valentine’s Day!

*Boys will be boys continued from page 19*

And again and again and again, I have to remind myself that it’s not the clothes and it’s not the skin. Leering faces in the streets do not discriminate between a girl in pants and a girl in shorts and skirts. Catcalls will ring out no matter if you’re wearing a hoodie or a uniform or a tank top.

As I write this, I know that “boys will be boys” will forever be a weapon against my existence. As I write this, I know that “boys being boys” will mean that girls cannot be girls unless we change how society treats sexual harassment, assault and abuse.

As I write this, I know I’ll probably (though I hope I don’t) get protests of “not all men.” Yes, I know, men are not a monolith. They are not all sexist predators. Nor am I trying to pit men against women. The problem is that there are too many men and women who participate in victim-blaming, because that’s what they’ve been taught; maybe that’s all they know. There are too many people who say “Boys will be boys” instead of saying “Boys are responsible for their actions,” and too few people saying “Girls, it is not your fault; girls, your skin is not an invitation or a temptation to sin; your skin is only skin and it houses a person who deserves respect no matter how covered up you are.” Too few, far too few, people say that. As I write this, I know that the phrase “boys will be boys” will breed only monsters until we teach those boys to be human.

**Girls will be – need to be – girls, too.**

–

*Daniela Magdiwang S. Castillo, is a psychology student at the University of the Philippines Diliman.*

*Her article was first published @inquirerdotnet on November 15, 2016.*

# Magis as a Way of Life

Djarn Pestano, Sirach BCGG

**A**t the January 13, 2019 Community Celebration, Fr. James Gascon talked about “Magis as a Way of Life.” He said that a community formed in Ignatian Spirituality is a community “committed to a life of stewardship, simplicity, sharing, and service.”

Prayer is the most important foundation of our relationship with God and understanding the “**Ten Elements of Ignatian Spirituality**” helps us deepen this relationship. Fr. James presented these elements and how St. Ignatius responded to a life with God:

1. **“It begins with a wounded soldier daydreaming on his sickbed.”** St. Ignatius of Loyola was a Basque aristocrat who became a soldier. While recovering from his war wounds he converted and became a passionate Christian. Through his insights in life and spiritual experiences, he founded the Jesuit order in 1550, and left the church with a legacy of his “Spiritual Exercises.” These exercises have helped many people strengthen their connection with God.
2. **“The world is charged with the grandeur of God.”** This line from Gerald Manley Hopkins’ poem summarizes the central theme of Ignatian Spirituality. It insists on discerning God’s presence in all aspects of our life and invites us to respond to how it affects our daily life.
3. **“It is about call and a response – like the music of a gospel choir.”** Discernment and decision-making are essential for Ignatian Spirituality because it emphasizes the value of human freedom.
4. **“The heart has its reasons of which the mind knows nothing.”** God communicates to us through our feelings and emotions (the inner movements) and leads to the renewal of our hearts by means of “imagination in prayer, discernment and interpretation of feelings, cultivation of great desires, and generous service.”
5. **“Free at last.”** St. Ignatius’s call for radical detachment allows us to choose rightly, saying “We should not fix our desires on health or sickness, wealth or poverty, success or failure, long life or short life. Our goal is the freedom to make a whole-hearted choice to follow God.”
6. **“Sum up at night what thou hast done by day.”** The ‘daily examen’ helps us reflect on God’s presence and how we respond to Him throughout our day’s activities. We may use these questions as our guide: What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What ought I do for Christ?

7. **“A practical spirituality.”** The Ignatian Spirituality is not a program that has a set of rules. Instead, it is meant to be adaptable to people’s lived experience and his/her attitude and insights towards it. St. Ignatius highlights the importance of “Cura personalis” – care of the person; attention to people’s individual needs and their unique circumstance and concerns.
8. **“Don’t do it alone.”** To develop a meaningful relationship with God requires a collaborative effort wherein the retreatant and the director work together to find God’s will. Fr. James said, “For Ignatius, it’s not to save my soul so that I can save others. Rather, I save my soul in my work of salvation in others.”
9. **“Contemplation in action.”** Ignatian Spirituality is an active spiritual attitude that seeks God’s presence in our life. St. Ignatius explains this as enjoining God in his labor to save and heal the world starting with our workplaces, home, families, and communities.

10. **“Men and women for others.”** A term from Fr. Pedro Arrupe, it signifies a deep commitment to social justice and a radical giving of one’s self to others. This goal to help souls requires the service of profound generosity – “I can give because I have received.”

With all these elements summarized, Fr. James reiterates the important ones and its process. **Prayer**, as the foundation, allows **Discernment** in finding and responding to God’s will, that leads us to an **Examen** of having constant consciousness of God’s presence, and eventually connecting with the **Community** to which God enables us to continue our journey with Him.

In ending his talk, Fr. James gave us these reflection points:

- At this point in your life, how much have you absorbed or practiced Ignatian Spirituality as a way of life? Rate yourself from one to ten, with ten as highest.
- In order to move two steps (e.g., from 5 to 7), what needs to be done? Where am I invited to grow?
- How has my relationship with my family (spouse and children) improved through my years in Magis? Why so and why not? How about with the larger community?

Let’s keep in mind that Magis Deo is not just a community where we gather together, it is a way of life that brings all of us as a community, as a family, into a deeper relationship with God. As our community’s name advocates, everything we do, through Ignatian Spirituality, we do “more for God.”





## PRAYER WORKSHOP

### Prayer Workshop & Magis Orientation

January 27, 2019 – Magis Deo Office, QC



**Participants (in no particular order):** Chronicles BCGG: Duke & Marivie Remogat, Samaritans BCGG: Pam Narciso & son David Narciso, ME Class 125/126: Raul & Honey Dimayuga, Keith & Kaye Angeles, ME Class 127: Lito & Mona Ramos, Brye & Leann Sangalang, Anthony & Mylene Cadiz, Fil & Lanie Cipriano

### Workshop for Prayer Deepening Facilitators

January 26, 2019 – Magis Deo Office, QC



**Participants (in no particular order):** Fr. James Gascon • Monchito Mossessgeld • Tina Mossessgeld • Marivic Pareja • Djarn Pestaño • Ricky Sun • Ted Concepcion • Susan Concepcion • Virgie Abella • Lilian Collado • Suni Rodríguez • Jane Aldeguer

"It wasn't my first prayer orientation workshop but being there certainly had its unique fruits! And it's a grace to be reminded of the basics. What spoke to me was TIME... Giving time is vital in knowing someone. Jesus is not an exception. It also rekindled the importance of really putting a weekly "date" with my kids for solo time. And my daily "how are you's". Taking time to really listen, and the value of being more focused.... whether with God, my family, or the people around me." - Jane Aldeguer



# UNDERSTANDING PRAYER

Jojo & Jane Aldeguer, Chaircouple

1 1 1 2 2 3

Still remember these numbers?

The first of the two 2s is one of our goals for this year for our BCGGs to have 2 PRAYER DEEPENING SESSIONS.

**Rationale / Objectives:**

- Reading our prayer beyond the story is the significance and meaning of our prayer.
- Teach, if not, strengthen our skills or self-capacity to process prayer and how to interpret and apply this to oneself.
- Pick up the message of prayer which only comes from self-processing.

Our Facilitators for the Prayer Deepening are several active members of Magis Deo. They had their workshop with Fr. James Gascon last January 26, 2019 at the Magis office. Under the Fr. James’ tutelage and by the grace of God, they are now ready to journey with you, their assigned BCGG interface group, twice this year. For coordination and reference, the BCGG interface groupings are as follows:

<b>North Sector</b>	Chronicles St. Peter	Archangel Gabriel Agnus Dei	Mustard Seed Song of Ruth	Prodigal 102 Exodus Magnificat
	JANE ALDEGUER	SUSAN CONCEPCION	VIRGIE ABELLA	MARIVIC PAREJA
<b>Central Sector</b>	Sirach Samaritans	Transfiguration Corinthians	Matthew Easter Thessalonians	
	DJARN PESTAÑO	SUNI RODRIGUEZ	RICKY SUN	
<b>South Sector</b>	John James brother of John	Cana Genesis	Psalms 98 Francis	Tala Emmanuel
	MONCHITO MOSSESGELD	TINA MOSSESGELD	LILIAN COLLADO	TED CONCEPCION

May this opportunity to deepen our prayer experience allow us to be more sensitive to God's presence and prodding in our lives... our Magis Deo way of life.

## REFLECTIONS

# I love you, Nanay Asiang

Kit Palmario, Psalm 98 BCGG

**It was Sunday evening of 29 July 2018 when our mother, 96, was hospitalized due to pneumonia.**

Her being hospitalized every now and then is not new to us given her age, and to ensure close monitoring and focused care. This time, however, her difficulty in breathing was more intense; she had hallucinations, calling out her late mother’s name while reaching out as if to touch her mom. Extreme forgetfulness suddenly kicked in; her deterioration was not only physical but also mental. She was in semi-coma for 2 days – no food, no medicines, nothing by mouth; and she refused to have intravenous intervention.

We thought we would lose her and we prepared ourselves. We discreetly informed our children and asked them to call or visit their Lola Asiang; we even had her receive the last sacrament — Anointing of the Sick. We prayed harder than we have ever prayed in the past: “Let Your will be done unto her...”

With His grace, Nanay recovered. Perhaps her mission is not yet done; perhaps God had given us a second chance to express our love for her...

As we look at her journey and how she made a dent in our lives, her children, and her siblings, allow us to share lessons learned on *Loving Nanay Asiang*...

1. Loving Nanay taught us to not simply EXIST, but to put MEANING to WHY and HOW we live. Life is a beautiful gift that is shared with us from above; however, it is finite. Live life fully not only for ourselves, but live life mindful of how we make an impact on and how we add value to others. It is not always about what we can get but what we can give to people around us. It is not about material things, nor our surpluses; it is about the time we share, the kind gestures and words. It is about anchoring our decisions and behavior towards a purpose far bigger than ourselves, which only the one true God can



ascertain and understand. We learned how to connect the dots on what has happened and are still happening in our lives, leading us to a bigger purpose.

2. Loving Nanay taught us to choose RESPECT, KINDNESS and LOVE. In the digital world where speed and practicality drives our decisions and everyday lives, choose to pause and be still... can high tech also be high touch? Choose to spend time with the people you love, choose to show kindness instead of apathy to people who have wronged or continue to wrong you. Commence with respect then show kindness. Sometimes they get the message and respond too with acts of kindness. At times they may not, but that is all right – we have chosen to show goodness and love towards others in His name and in His time.

3. Loving Nanay taught us how to be truly HAPPY. To be mindful and appreciative of the little blessings we receive in life. To be grateful and thankful. To see the world from a different prism and realize the abundant blessings bestowed on us. Most of all, loving Nanay allowed us to truly love one another as a family – unconditionally.

Thus at 96 (turning 97 this love month - February 2019), through our Nanay we have experienced His love, His kindness, true Happiness and a bigger purpose as a family... And we hope to continuously discover and experience these as we journey together and share these with every person and family that cross our path.



# On Brokenness

Michael James “Sonny” Maroon, ME Class 129



Photo by esprit-kintsugi.com

**L**et me put it out in the open. You are not alone. **EVERYONE is broken.** Now that I’m a bit older, (though still younger than my wise dinosaur friends... hehe), I realize they were wrong.

The only thing that differentiates one and the other is, some of us choose to accept our varied levels of brokenness and live life attempting to fill the cracks, while others wallow in self-pity, dwelling on the broken pieces instead of trying to fix them.

Sometimes we get somber news about people in their prime ending their lives... they see their brokenness and feel there is no other way but to “check out” and escape from life’s realities.

On the other hand, those who try to fix and fill the cracks sometimes choose the wrong materials. Some fill the void with useless vice; some choose to live a hedonistic existence; and some try to fill the emptiness with material gain. Some resort to substance abuse; others find solace in the wrong companionship. Sadly, none of these work. Fixing our brokenness in these ways only break us more.

The Japanese have a beautiful tradition of celebrating brokenness. They call it Kintsugi – “golden joinery,” or Kintsukuroi – “golden repair.” Kintsugi is the centuries-old Japanese art of fixing broken pottery with special lacquer dusted with powdered gold, silver or platinum. Beautiful seams of gold glint in the cracks of ceramic ware, making the same more beautiful than it originally was. The philosophy behind this technique is to make the repair the highlight of a piece, instead of hiding the imperfection. It is such a beautiful art that we should apply it to ourselves.

Why don’t we try to fill our brokenness with God? Those who have done so have become the most beautiful beings. It is a matter of taking just 2 small steps:

1. Accept your brokenness
2. Fill those cracks with God and good things you do for others.

Trust me; there is no greater happiness than filling your own void with the smiles of those whose lives you touch. Be a blessing to others and that blessing will make you whole.

God in his infinite wisdom has made goodness like perfume. There is no way you can transfer it to others without getting some of it on yourself.

Fill your brokenness with Gold that is God and you will find that life can be magnificent.

Celebrate your brokenness and you will find that it is only with God that you can be more beautiful than you ever were. God bless you.

*If I can stop one heart from breaking,  
I shall not live in vain.  
If I can ease one life the aching,  
Or cool one pain,  
Or help one fainting robin  
Unto his nest again,  
I shall not live in vain.*

Emily Dickinson

# Heaven-sent angel

Jay Ng Sy, Agnus Dei BCGG



**“You are the parent of the soul of a child” is a quote that caught my attention in one fostering forum we attended.** Charley and I are licensed foster parents and started fostering babies in 1995 and have taken care of about 20 babies who were mostly third-degree malnourished. They were either abandoned or sick babies from orphanages that needed special care. We nurtured them to health until the time they are eligible for adoption. We took care of each baby and loved them as our own so much so that each parting day has always been heartbreaking.

However adoption was never an option.

We stopped fostering babies in 2009 due to my being out of the country most of the time, coupled with the feeling that we might not be able to cope with the demands of taking care of babies because we are no longer “spring chickens.”

However, one day a social worker called asking me to foster an abandoned 7-day-old baby, I did not have second thoughts and said “yes” without consulting my husband.

*“Whoever welcomes a child in my name welcomes Me.”*

Just a few hours after the call, the tiny baby wrapped in a blanket was handed to me by the social worker who said... “Alam mo ba ma’am na ang binigay na pangalan sa baby ng doctor sa hospital for recall purposes ay Angelica?” (Huh!?) My full name is Jay Angelica.

I immediately called her Angel. I felt she was an angel sent to our home. That day was September 15, and the doctors who checked the baby concluded that she was 7 days old (the umbilical cord still fresh). Counting backwards, she must have been born on Sept. 8, Mama Mary’s birthday!

Angel is now 2 years and 6 months old. We are in the process of legally adopting her.

Personally taking care of Angela has brought so much changes in our way of life: Charley and I can’t go on vacations together by ourselves (one thing I thought we were now free to do since all my four children are grown up)... not being able to have undisturbed sleep all night long or even sleep to my heart’s desire in the morning... having to be awake and worried in times Angel is not well , not to mention not feeling my husband’s warm embrace as we sleep which I’ve been used to for four decades . However that is well-compensated for by the tiny hands and feet that touch me through the night.

Our once quiet house is now filled with crying once in a while, most of the time with a child’s mumbling of words and innocent ripples of laughter. Our house is no longer as neat... toys are everywhere and we have to be extra careful in walking around the house lest we step on them and stumble.

Challenging as these may be, Angel’s coming to our lives is a blessing. Charley and I now have a common interest – Angel.

At times that irritations get our way and we just choose to give each other the silent treatment (comes with age?) Angel bridges the gap. We are forced to lift our bodies, move about and flex our muscles throughout the day instead of being couch potatoes, watching TV or being engrossed with our computers or mobile phones. No need going to the gym!

We also get the best medicine... laughter. Laughing with Angel about something that makes no sense at all keeps us feeling young. Now we have proven that age is just a number.

We are blessed for being an instrument in bringing out the compassion and generosity of others because every now and then baby milk and diapers are given to us. The pediatrician with whom I have Angel checked doesn’t charge us professional fees and gives us medicine and vitamin samples.

*“Even the smallest caring for another person is like a drop of water, it will make ripples in the entire pond.”*

Most importantly, we are imparting to our children and grandchildren how to love, care, and share.

We are frequently asked why we are adopting Angel... we don’t even know her genes and genealogy, and we already have grandchildren. Our response would always be... we cannot have Angel go through another rejection and we want to give her a bright and secure future. Saving one life would save more lives in the future. We may not know Angel’s genes but I have always believed that what is inherited are physical features, but character is molded by upbringing. As to our grandchildren, they have their parents and us to give them love and security; Angel does not have her biological parents and grandparents.

It has always been said that everything happens for a reason so I believe that Angel came to our lives because WE ARE THE PARENTS OF HER SOUL!



## Blessings and Graces of Old Age

Lilian Collado, Song of Ruth BCGG



**W**hen I was a child, I had all the toys I wanted and beautiful dresses to wear. Those made me happy and contented. When I was a young adolescent, I had dreams and an ambition to aspire for. I was excited and fully energized to fulfill my goal and make my dreams come true. And when I reached my young adulthood, I successfully reached my goal and became the person I wanted to be... a doctor. And added to that, I also became a wife and a mother! I felt so special, so blessed, so exceptional! I thought there was nothing more to achieve, nothing more to attain, nothing more to prove. **What great blessings!**

But as I grew older, personal trials and problems arose and reared their ugly heads in my seemingly serene fulfilled life. There were more tears than smiles, more conflicts than harmony, more sadness than happiness. Blessings and graces seemed to have been withheld. I felt drained but at the same time, new dreams, new desires and new needs began to fill up the emptiness of my being. Then graces slowly poured down on me. Gradually, I began to see things clearly. Bit by bit, spiritual gifts of discernment, understanding, patience, humility, forgiveness, compassion and much more, continuously developed in me. Harmony, peace, joy and contentment in my relationships came back. Opportunities to heal the emotionally and spiritually wounded, to guide and to teach the troubled youth, and to counsel the confused, were offered to me. I thought that at last, I was carrying out the purpose of my life. I truly felt blessed and fulfilled. **Growing old is a greater blessing.**

At this age, I have come to realize that youth is one of God's most precious gifts that we must really nurture, enjoy, and be thankful for.

My youth made it possible for me to aspire, acquire and share things that gave me pleasure, honor and privileges. I thank God for those blessings I received then. But those are almost gone now together with my youth. But the graces that came as I grew older are still with me. Lately I realized I have received the utmost grace of aging that I did not consciously ask for, and surely did not deserve at all. God, by His Kindness and Generosity, gave me the **gift of wisdom.**

And so let my youth fade away for I can no longer share it. But let my aging continue that I may continue to receive and share God's gift of wisdom with those who desire it.

I am now in my late maturity. As others say, I am already in the "departure area." Senility may come or it may not. Will I still receive blessings and graces even in my state of senility? I will never know the answer to that. What I believe is that He will be using my senility to teach those around me the meaning of perseverance and kindness as they care for me. God would be enlightening them to the meaning of patience and endurance as they feed me and carry me around. He will use my absentmindedness to teach others the meaning of respect as they continue to uphold my wishes, and forgiveness for my shortcomings that I can no longer remember. He will use my total dependence to teach them the meaning of unconditional love. If getting old and being senile means nurturing others' spiritual growth and bringing them into closer relationship with God, then I pray to you O Lord...

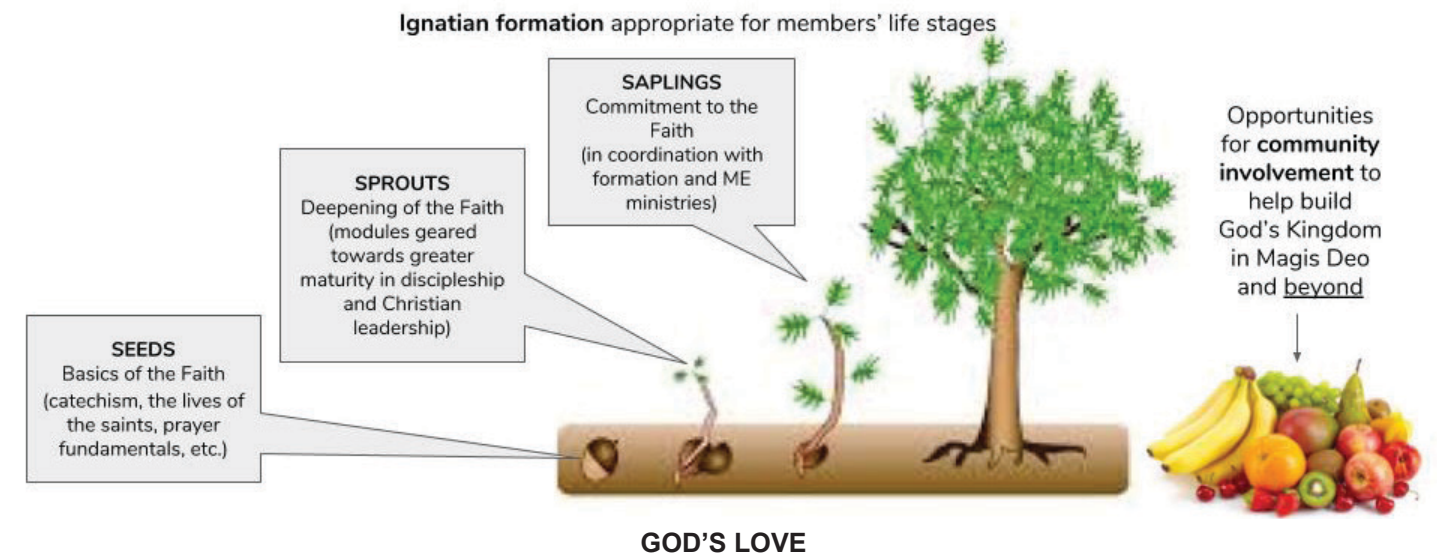
**"Please let me be senile even for a while."**



## 2019 Youth Ministry Tasks and Goals

**TASKS:** To provide the youth with **Ignatian formation** appropriate to their life stages and to provide them with opportunities for **community involvement**; so that

**GOALS:** the youth develop a **mature relationship with God** and their **service and leadership capacities are enhanced and utilized in building God's kingdom** within and beyond the Magis Deo Community



This month's theme is love and we invited the young people of the Magis Deo Community to share how they have experienced the most important love of all – God's love. Here are the contributions of some representatives of Magis Deo Youth's Seeds, Sprouts and Saplings...

### SEEDS

Even though we were a broken family, God never left us and made sure we would be okay. God was like our protector and our provider. – Paco Reyes, 11 years old



Whenever I pray, I feel like God is listening to what I'm saying. – Kaye Sangalang, 9 years old

I find God in my silly family and friends. It's like a jungle of mess and noise! Still, at the end of the day when we pray I know that they are my family, and I feel God's presence when I'm with them. – Eli Ang, 11 years old

### SPROUTS

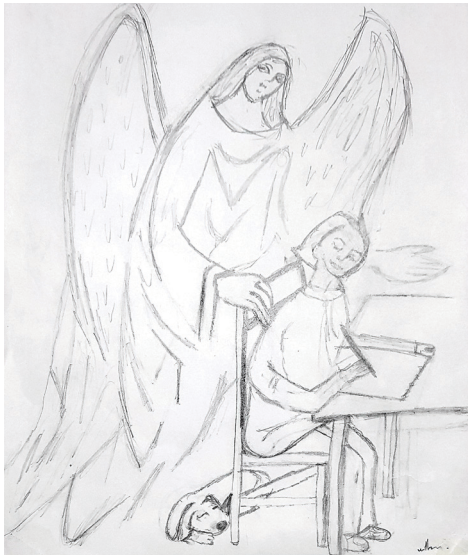
I experience God's love by the signs He gives to me and my family, showing us how we can reach our dreams. You can tell God loves you through your parents. God heals me and takes away all my pain. – Aye Gascon, 14 years old

God's love can be experienced through all his creations, especially in the hugs you share with others and laugh trips with friends. These remind me that God loves us every day, every minute, every second. – Isay Galang, 15 years old

I experience God in my everyday life. I can feel His strong presence especially whenever I have a problem. – Aira Gascon, 19 years old



The Magis Deo Youth Ministry for 2019



by Anonymous 14-year-old

Every day I get to spend with my family is an experience of God’s love in my life. The comforting humor of my siblings as well as the genuine happiness and satisfaction in the faces of my parents show me God’s evident love. – Ian Jericho Sun, 19 years old

For me, Jeremiah 29:11 encapsulates what God’s love is. Whether good or bad, everything happens for a reason and in the end, God always means well for me and His love is relentless. The impact on me of the people I have connected with and the lessons I have picked up from every mishap I have overcome are all manifestations to me of God’s love. – Ria Maulit, 19 years old

His presence is presented through the people I meet, the memories I make, the knowledge I acquire, and the mistakes I correct.

I feel that He’s rooting for me to slowly achieve my goals, to let loose to vulnerability, and to constantly regain

strength after each downfall — for I wouldn’t survive without Him through them. – Leven Sangalang, 20 years old

I experienced God prodding me on during my first sem in Med school when I wanted to give up.

When I dissected our cadaver during Anatomy class, I could not help but be amazed at how beautiful the human body is. God’s work is truly amazing! Our bodies and how the different parts work are simply astounding! – Anna Katrina Sun, 20 years old

God’s love, in my experience, is best felt when around kind people; be it the support of your parents, the laughter shared among friends or a welcoming smile from a fellow passerby. – Karl Cedric Sun, 21 years old

SAPLINGS

I experience God’s love in my life when I witness or experience random acts of kindness. When people go out of their way to do something kind for another person, without expecting anything in return, their selflessness and thoughtfulness truly make others feel loved. – Pam Tumbocon, 23 years old

I recall graduating from college without having a clear picture in mind of what the future would look like or what it has in store for me. I doubted myself so much back then because of fear of failure and uncertainty. But here I am now, with my parents and God supporting me, slowly overcoming my fears and working hard towards my goal of becoming the person I’ve always wanted to be – a lawyer with a heart for the people and her country. – Andrea Louise San Juan, 23 years old



by Joaquin Aldeguer, Magis Youth

Boys will be boys

Daniela Magdiwang S. Castillo, Magis Youth

**W**e’re all familiar with that phrase. And if you are like me and like to lurk on Twitter, probably you will have seen the thread of four college boys harassing a young girl – a minor, I might add – in a group chat making its rounds. Screen shots from the chat found their way to Twitter after the four added the girl to the vile group chat full of lewd, sexually loaded comments about her body and how they would like to use it. She and her cousin compiled screen shots of the chat to publicly shame the harassers.

Here were college-age boys making lustful comments about a child’s body, and then adding that very same child to a chat dedicated to objectifying and sexualizing her. The girl was obviously the victim, right? Surely that warranted public humiliation; after all, they brought this on themselves – adding the victim to the chat and re-adding her even after she’d left several times.

Apparently not.

People were quick to defend the boys’ behavior; even women were justifying their predatory, pedophilic comments, saying, “Boys will be boys,” and hurling insults and threats to the point that both the girl and her cousin had to deactivate their Twitter accounts. The victims were called attention whores for calling the boys out publicly.

Boys will be boys, they say – but where does that leave girls?

As I write this, on Nov. 8, the US presidential election is about to take place: In a few hours, the global superpower will have elected either its first woman president, or a businessman who says, “Grab ’em by the p\*\*\*\*,” who degrades his opponent not by her policies but by her appearance, who has assaulted over a dozen women and even sexualized his own daughter – and who still has the support of thousands of Americans, including women. And as I write this, a man occupies the highest seat in this country – a man who is a blatant misogynist, who has publicly and proudly stated that he has assaulted women, who made a rape joke in response to a tragedy that befell a missionary, and whose sexist comments are brushed off by his supporters.

As I write this, I know that as long as we, society, continue to absolve men of any responsibility, we are perpetuating a culture that blames victims and celebrates sexism. Boys will be boys, they will say, as though boyhood is about power and violence. This



culture of victim blaming is subtle; we don’t notice the threat behind seemingly benevolent warnings until we are faced with the violent result — those boys who will be boys.

When I was a child my well-meaning but somewhat conservative family would tell me to cover up; I would be told to put on a bra even while at home. Why? I would ask, and they would answer, “May bisita.”

The man came first, even in my own house.

My high school did this, too, by telling me that I had to be “chaste” in my manner and in my dress, because that was apparently the only way I would ever be respectable. At that time I took those to heart; a girl wearing “slutty” clothing was obviously asking for it. Now I’m aware that modesty does not mean respectability; it only means you’re comfortable showing less skin, and that’s just how you like it. If I myself were braver and cared less, I’d wear what I want – shorts, skirts, anything and everything under the sun – and let the men avert their eyes if they feel it’s inappropriate, let the men be uncomfortable if their sensibilities are offended by a body, it’s not my concern. But the fear is there – the fear that maybe some pervert will stare at me too long or that someone might assault me if I show too much skin. It’s only this year that I’ve managed to wear shorts in public – and even then, only if I know that I’ll be going home early, or if I’m not taking public transport. But the stares are the same.

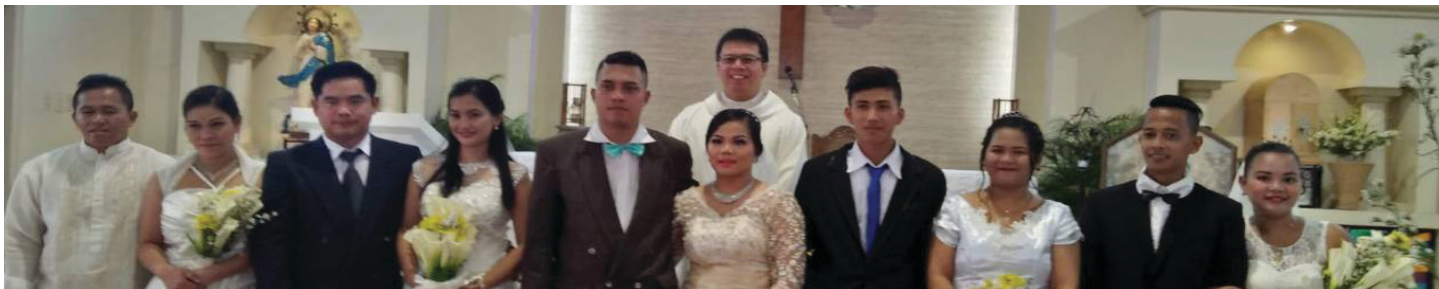
And again and again and again, I have to reinforce in my head that, no, it’s not the skin, it’s the men – and it’s not just the men, it’s society that enables them. It’s disturbing that I still fall into this way of thinking, but that just goes to show that victim-blaming has become so normalized. Girls are seen as bodies before we are people, and these bodies are commodities, receptacles of the male gaze, of catcalls and of whistles in the street. It’s not the skin and it’s not the prettiness of the girl – it’s the lack of accountability that breeds violence. People will tell women it’s their fault – somehow, in some way, even though it’s the impunity that enables and creates these boys, who are only ever being boys.

continued on page 8



## Kasalan Bayan and Christmas Gift-giving for Olandes Suyuan

*Dec 1, 2018 • Supported by: Magis Deo and Mustard Seed BCGG,  
in cooperation with the Nativity of Our Lady Parish*



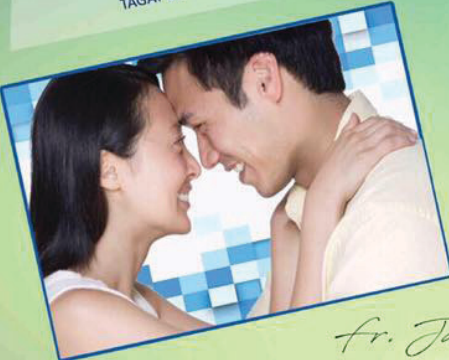


# Receive the Blessings of a **MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER**

DATE: MARCH 8-10, 2019  
VENUE: ST. JAMES D' APOSTLE  
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FEE OF PHP4,500.00 PER COUPLE

FOR OTHER DETAILS, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE  
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MAGIS DEO OFFICE: (02) 426-7191  
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*Fr. James Gascon SJ*  
SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR



**MARRIAGE  
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