

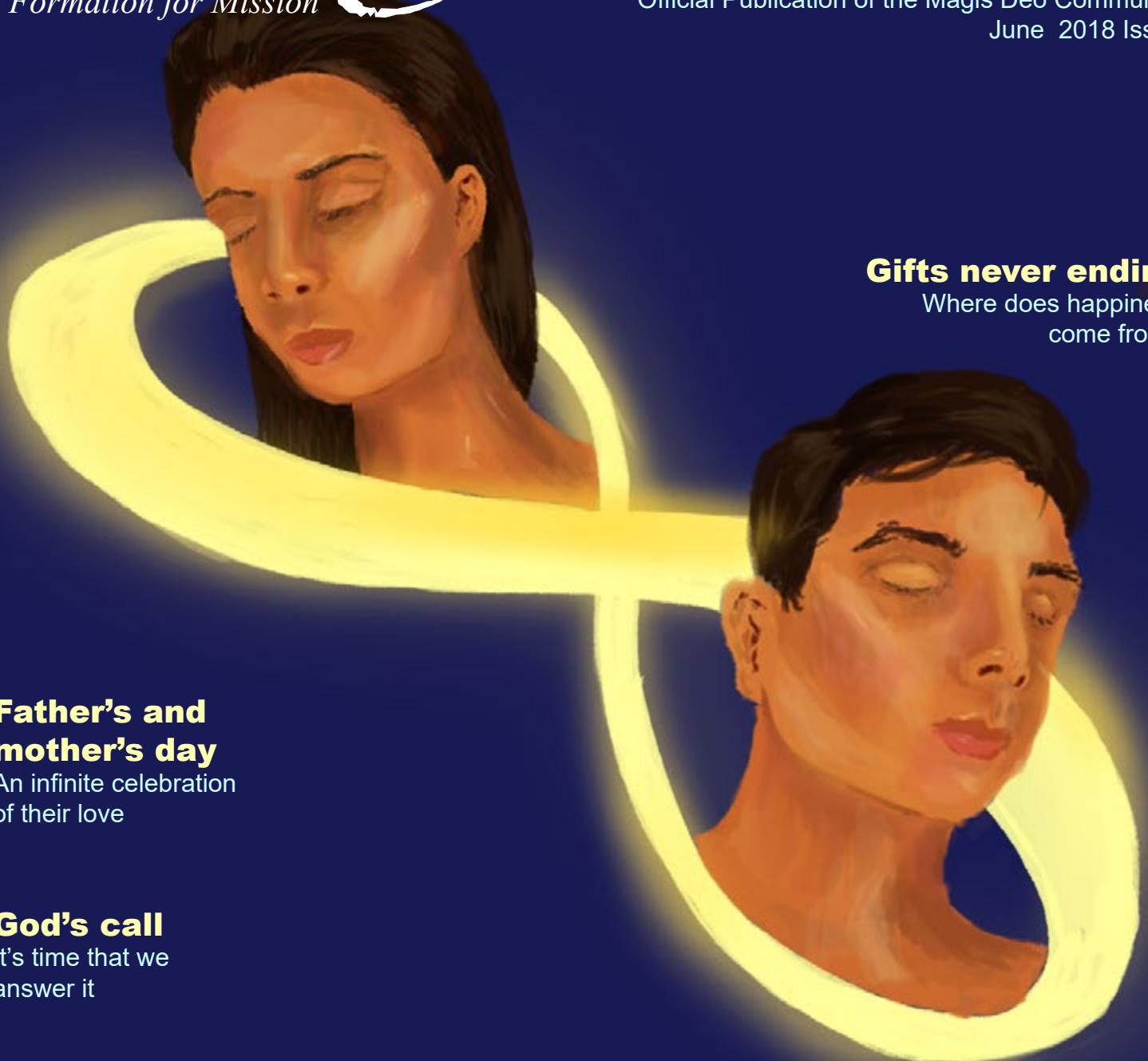
Magis

Formation for Mission



Stewardship
Simplicity
Sharing
Service

Official Publication of the Magis Deo Community
June 2018 Issue



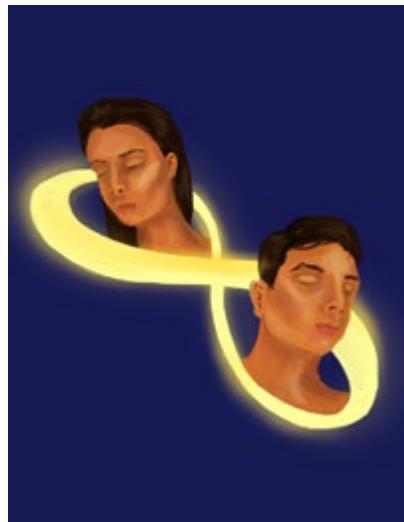
**Father's and
mother's day**
An infinite celebration
of their love

God's call
It's time that we
answer it

The easter story
Family is companionship

Bilibid recollection
A second chance at life

About the Cover



In this month's issue, respective writers contribute their insights on the closest persons in our lives: our parents. Our rock, our pillars, our sanctuary. They have been there ever since the genesis of our existence, molding us as we grow. We learn to love them as they love us, with no other reason other than the fact that we're their children.

They say that it takes two to tango; but even if sometimes that isn't the case, surely we all have looked up to someone who deserves to be celebrated. Someone who has made countless sacrifices just to help us get through the next step of life.

Because of these, illustrator Levenspeil R. Sangalang of Magis Youth, enlivened his vision of how eternal a parent's love is through the symbol of an infinity sign. In both rings, our two parents' respective faces are drawn; forever we celebrate the hard work for the people that they love selflessly.

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The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The Manifestation of Sanctifying Grace

Joy Uy-Tioco, Sirach BCGG
Reprint, June 2015 Magis Newsletter

When the Holy Spirit descended on the apostles gathered in the Upper Room after Jesus ascended into heaven, a rain of grace announced the birth of the Church.

The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit enumerated in Isaiah 11:2-3 are gifts of grace God gives to people to help “complete and perfect the virtues of those who receive them.” What a wonderful birthday gift for a Church meant to stand till the end of time! These gifts are present in their fullness in Jesus Christ but are also found in all Christians who are in a state of grace. We receive the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit when we are infused with sanctifying grace, the life of God within us – for example, when we receive a sacrament worthily. When we are infused with His gifts, we respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit as if by instinct, the way Christ Himself would. **

1. Wisdom, the first gift of the Holy Spirit, is the perfection of Faith. In Faith we simply believe all the truths that God has revealed to us (for example, in the Apostles' Creed). But the gift of Wisdom gives us a certain divine understanding of these truths and make us value them properly. The gift of wisdom enables us to become detached from the world, and we “relish and love only the things of heaven.” We judge the things of the world in light of the highest goal of man — the contemplation of God. Wisdom is the gift which enables us to choose to treasure God above all things. Wisdom helps us to love the world properly, as the creation of God, rather than for its own sake. The material world, though is still worthy of our love: we simply need to see it in the proper light, as gifts given to bring us closer to God. It is wisdom that allows us to recognize that the Creator, not the created, comes first. When we are gifted with wisdom and value the material and spiritual properly, we can more easily bear the burdens of this life and respond to our fellow human beings with charity and patience.

2. Understanding, becoming certain of the truths of the Christian Faith, is the second gift of the Spirit. It is different from wisdom in that wisdom is the desire to contemplate the things of God, while understanding allows us, to “penetrate to the very core of revealed truths.” This doesn't mean that we understand, say, the mystery of the Trinity the way we do a mathematical equation, but that we become certain of the truth of the doctrine of the Trinity. This kind of certainty is more than faith which merely accepts what God has revealed. Once we understand the truths of the Faith, we can see the world and our life in it in the larger context of the eternal law and the relation of our souls to God. Understanding is above natural reason, which is concerned only with the things we can sense in the world around us. Thus, understanding is both speculative –concerned with intellectual knowledge – and practical, because it can help us to order all the actions of our lives toward our final end, which is God.

3. Counsel, the third gift of the Holy Spirit, is the supernatural ability to make correct judgments. Anyone, whether in a state of grace or not, can make prudent decisions and choices. But through sanctifying grace, the natural virtue of prudence becomes supernatural. Counsel is the fruit of this supernatural prudence. Like prudence, counsel allows us to judge rightly what we should do in a particular circumstance. It is different from prudence in that it allows us to make the right judgment promptly.

With the gift of counsel, the Holy Spirit speaks, to the heart and in an instant enlightens a person what to do. When we are infused with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, we respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit as if by instinct.

It is the gift that allows us as Christians to be assured that we will act correctly in times of trouble and trial. Through counsel, we can speak without fear in defense of the Christian Faith. Counsel “enables us to see and choose correctly what will help most to the glory of God and our own salvation.”

4. Fortitude, the strength to be prudent and just, is a cardinal virtue. Fortitude is the virtue that allows us to overcome fear and to remain steady in our will in the face of obstacles. Prudence and justice are the virtues through which we decide what needs to be done; fortitude gives us the strength to do it.

Fortitude is commonly called courage, but is not quite the same. Fortitude is always reasoned and reasonable; the person exercising fortitude is willing to put himself in danger if necessary, but he does not seek danger for danger's sake. Fortitude is not foolhardiness or rashness, “rushing in where angels fear to tread.” Indeed, part of the virtue of fortitude is the “curbing of recklessness.” Putting our bodies or lives in danger when it is not necessary is not fortitude but foolishness. **Continue to page 14**

Gifts Never Ending

Regie and Daisy de Guzman, Corinthians BCGG

At the May 6 Community Celebration our speaker, Mr. Manny Blas, gave us reading material enumerating 25 spiritual gifts with corresponding scriptural references.

Of those gifts, we believe at least three are inherent among our Magis Deo members – giving, leadership and service. All these gifts are graciously contributed in different forms: time, talents, skills and knowledge of our members as shepherds, ME/Suyuan sharers, ministry and BCGG heads, workshop and seminar trainers, pastoral council members, and in some other capacities. And yes, in the form of financial support.

Generally, our members' financial support is given by way of love offerings and monthly membership dues. Magis Deo members are also generous givers and supporters to its flagship outreach – the Suyuan. BCGG members and ME classes sponsor Suyuans by providing admin and logistic needs and in some instances the food and supplies needs. In identified Magis Deo mission areas, our support does not end with the one-day seminar for couples; we also provide them with some livelihood training/support, medical/dental consultations and vocational/college scholarships to some deserving children. Our community also provides a helping hand to victims of calamities.

As in the past, the accomplishment of the following plans of Magis Deo will rely on the gracious generosity of its members:

1. Recruitment of at least one (1) couple per ME Weekend or a total of at least three (3) couple recruits for the year;
2. At least 50% attendance of the monthly Community Celebrations;
3. Sponsorship of at least one (1) Suyuan plus any other outreach activities (if so desired);
4. Attendance of an AIR/SDR by its members at least once a year; and
5. Regular payment of monthly membership dues.

The year is already half way and we are very happy to inform you that with your never ending gifts, we have achieved the following:

1. We had a successful ME Weekend held in St. James Retreat House, Tagaytay City on March 9-11, 2018 attended by 15 couples, 8 religious and 10 married (solo) singles/lay;
2. Since January, our monthly ComCeleb has an average of 175 attendees and noticeably, we always have a good number of regular youth in attendance;
3. We maybe lacking in the number of Suyuans conducted to date, but we are optimistic more BCGGs and ME Classes will sponsor at least one this second half of the year;
4. To date, many have already signified attendance to the Annual Ignatian Retreat (AIR) to be held this Aug. 3-5 in Sacred Heart Novitiate, Novaliches, Quezon City; another one is scheduled on Oct. 19-21 at the same venue, and;
5. As of May 6, our total receipts from membership dues is P176,400 which is around 35 % of the total collectibles for 2018; while love offerings are P158,100.

In our three decades with Magis Deo, we have witnessed how members have graciously shared their time, talent and treasure for the realization of its mission committed to a life of stewardship, simplicity, sharing and service.

Allow us to share a quotation we recently read and has disturbed us: “Happiness doesn't result from what we get, but from what we give...”

The Easter Story: Our Own Story

Talk/Teaching by Father James U. Gascon, SJ
06 May 2018 – Magis Deo Community Celebration

Reported by: Jojo S. Gaddi, Prodigal 102 BCGG

At the April Community Celebration, Fr. James Gascon talked about the story of Easter, the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He began by saying that stories are very important to all of us and that stories help shape our lives.

Stories help in the growth and development of young children. Stories help develop a child's inquisitiveness, imagination and creativity. Stories are used for exchanging human experiences and knowledge. Telling stories can also be therapeutic. For example, at wakes, talking about the qualities of the deceased loved one, his/her achievements and accomplishments, somehow eases the pain and grief of the bereaved.

With regards to Sacred Scripture, the Apostles' experiences with Jesus Christ and His works were passed on by word of mouth/preaching – a method of storytelling. These were eventually written down and recorded so that they will not be lost or forgotten.

The Resurrection, or Easter, has always been depicted as the time when Jesus rose from the dead three days after dying on the cross. Not only is the Resurrection about Jesus; it is also about those who first witnessed Christ's return from the dead, namely: Mary Magdalene, Peter, John, Thomas and the two other disciples who failed to recognize that it was Jesus who was accompanying them on their way to Emmaus. It was only when Christ broke bread with them that they began to realize it was He.

WHAT DO WE WITNESS IN THE STORY OF THE RESURRECTION?

The story of the Resurrection is difficult to understand. In fact, it may

also be difficult to believe. It was the first time that one who died came back to life and lives forever. The Visayan word "nabadhaw" (which means hindi na ult mamamatay) is a term that appropriately refers to the Resurrection.

The Resurrection brought forth a wide range of emotions: fear, doubt, disbelief, contradiction. It was a difficult reality. The Resurrection requires faith to experience it, hence, only those who believed saw Jesus. The Resurrection challenges us in our present times.

The Joy and Power of the Resurrection is not to be found in the empty tomb, or the testimony of another, or the historical fact of the Resurrection. It is found only in our own personal encounter with the Risen Lord: in the Eucharist, in our neighbor, in the events of our lives, deep within the insatiable desire of our heart.

In our lives, the four ways we can experience the Resurrection are (1) in the CHOICES we make, (2) in our COMPANIONSHIP with other people, (3) in the CHALLENGES we face, and (4) in the SECOND CHANCES that come our way.

Easter is a choice. Life all is about choices. Our present culture puts much emphasis in the choices we make, and there are so much to choose from. This in turn overwhelms us. "We make our choices, then our choices make us." Everything in our life reflects the choices we make. Our choices are resurrection choices when they are life-giving. When one choice is made, other choices have to be given up. Bad choices are failures while good choices are the times we experience the resurrection.

On Good Friday, Jesus chose to love, to obey. On Easter, God chose to glorify His son, and chose not to let death triumph. The salvation of choices

is when we are able to let go and let God. Christ on the cross said, "Father into your hands, I commend my Spirit." He let go.

Easter is a Challenge. This is how to trust even when what is ahead is not clear. When Christ died, He did not know for sure He was going to be resurrected. But he took the challenge and trusted God. Our families are challenged every day. Contemporary values challenge our beliefs and morals. Our response is our fidelity. Can we remain faithful to what we believe in?

Challenge is spirituality for family. Part of which is to choose good over evil, then discern amidst good choices and then take a stand. Can we take a stand? When we don't, we get blown away in different directions. Challenge is to seek the greater good. This would show how each member of the family grows into who he/she is, as created by God.

Easter is Companionship. Companionship is empathy. Empathy seeks to understand and see the reality as the other sees it without our judgment and without our bias. It grows out of active listening. When there is empathy, the response is to empathize as well. And when there is mutual empathy, there is companionship.

Our family is our companion in our journey, and it is our mission as well. Life was never created to be solitary. It was meant to be communal, to be shared towards community.

Finally, Easter is filled with Second Chances. The Resurrection gifts us with another chance, a choice to take another chance. We can choose to love amidst hatred and give a person another chance. We can choose to forgive amidst enmity and give relationship another chance. In the family, we can choose to start all over again. When we fall, we can choose to stand up again and continue the journey.

GOD'S CALL: To serve joyfully and comfortably

Summarized by: Levy & Roxanne Espiritu Praxis Ministry
Assisted by: Dodo & Jon Sta. Maria, Transfiguration BCGG

Our guest speaker Manny Blas was formerly a La Salle brother. His vocation for teaching has remained with him through his activities in the formation ministries of various church organizations (now including St. James Parish in Alabang) and in training sessions with Ayala Land where he currently works. He is a member of the Board of the Institute of Pastoral Development. Manny taught in De La Salle University – Dasmariñas, Taft and Greenhills. He and his wife Rowena are members of the Sounds of Santiago Choir in St. James Parish, Alabang.

This was the third time Manny has given this talk on how we can discover our spiritual gifts and how we can use these gifts to respond to God's calling and to help our community grow.

The highlights of his talk are as follows:

John 15: 9-17 "As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love. Just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in His love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. This is my commandment: Love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends. If you do what I command you, I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father. It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name He may give you. This I command you: love one another!"

We are all commissioned to love one another by being of service to each other. Our entire life is a service and the service we render is the fruit of that love. Our God is a giving God, so much so that we were given SPIRITUAL GIFTS that are 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.

The characteristics of spiritual gifts are:

1. There are no ungifted believers. Ephesians 4:7 "Each of us has received God's favor in the measure in which Christ bestows it."

1 Corinthians 12:7 "To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."

2. Gifts are UNIQUE to you. 1 Corinthians 12:14 "Now the body is not one member, it is many"

3. Gifts are Time-Bound. Depending on circumstances, gifts may change over time according to God's plan.

The community was tasked to undertake a Gifts Test in order for us to better appreciate and acknowledge what gifts we have.

How do we know if the results of the test were right?

1. Discuss - Get feedback from others.
2. Desire - Does it confirm with your inclinations?
3. Do - Try them and serve.
4. Development - Do you get better in your gift?
5. Delight - Do you find joy in using your gift?

Spiritual Gifts are totally undeserved and, because they are undeserved, we are to share these gifts with the community. Using these gifts allow us to improve and better our community.

As we use these gifts, we also grow spiritually and growing in spirit we find joy in service. It is not seen as an imposition but a loving service given to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

In summary, Jesus as a friend is asking us to bear fruit in our love for Him by serving others. We were given spiritual gifts in order to love and serve one another in Christ. We offer our life by sharing those gifts we have and how we share those gifts is the fruit that God expects from us.

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DIVINE OMNIPRESENCE

Divine omnipresence
May 13, 2018 / Ruben M. Tanseco, SJ

What a loving God we belong to. After ascending to heaven as God the Son, He makes sure that He is still with us as God the Holy Spirit.



After ascending up, up there, He makes sure that He is also down, down here, and not just limited by His human person, but is everywhere as God the Holy Spirit. As God the Son, Jesus was here and there, from one place to another, to preach the Gospel, perform miracles, and express His love to each and everyone He met. But now, more than that, as God the Holy Spirit, He is everywhere with everyone at the same time. That is how much He loves all of us, His living creation.

Just a couple of weeks ago, I was walking one evening across our third-floor corridor here in our seminary. Suddenly, I looked up at the sky and saw an astonishingly beautiful full moon against the cloudless, blue sky. I found myself just contemplating, with my mind and heart feeling God's presence no less. God the Holy Spirit. I felt His love within me and all around me. I am sure you have also experienced in other, different ways the presence of the Holy Spirit within you and all around you.

Here was a couple who were already about to separate as a solution to their marital problems when a close friend convinced them to give it a last try by going to a professional marriage counselor. Early on in the process, the counselor guided them through experiencing mutual empathy, where each spouse was led to set aside one's ego, and place one's self in the shoes of the spouse, and understand the spouse's world – where each one is really coming from. To make the long story short, the whole process was psycho-spiritual, but non-denominational. In fact, each spouse belonged to a different religious denomination. After a couple of months of counseling, the couple learned to really love each other again. This time, they experienced what we call a love triangle: Husband, Wife, and God.

All human beings all over the world are our brothers and sisters under the

one Creator-God of the whole universe. Institutional religions are not dividers of humankind. All are called to the one and the same law of the one and the same Creator-God: LOVE. This is found in all the four Gospels. Let me quote just one: "There was a scholar of the law who stood up to test him and said, 'Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus said to him, 'What is written in the law? How do you read it? He said in reply, 'You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.' He replied to him, 'You have answered correctly; do this and you will live.' (Lk. 10:25-28).

At times, when we pray and want to feel God's presence, we tend to look up, up there in heaven, so far away from us. But God the Holy Spirit reminds us that He is down, down here with us, not only to us Christians, but to all of mankind. God is asking us to experience universal fraternity. Ecumenical and interfaith. The ascension of the Risen Christ into heaven is the beginning of God's omnipresence here on earth. And so as we pray, looking up, up there and down, down here, our ever-loving and compassionate God is with us, responding to us in so many different ways all for our own good and salvation. And the Holy Spirit empowers all of us to proclaim and bear witness to the Gospel all over the world. However, quite a member of us prefer not to listen to the Holy Spirit. And the disastrous results are happening everywhere. But in God's own time, my faith tells me that more and more people all over the world will open their hearts and minds to the Holy Spirit. It is already happening to people in so many places. Those of us who are already converted by the Holy Spirit are missioned to increase, strengthen, and deepen our fearless love and compassion for our brothers and sisters, whoever and wherever they are.

What a loving and compassionate God we all belong to. Allow me to repeat that those of us who are already experiencing the presence of the Holy Spirit within us and all around us are now missioned by God the Holy Spirit to reach out to those who still need to experience the same. And come to think of it, there are many more fellow human beings who are victims of the ungodly forces and are led to not recognize the presence of God the Holy Spirit. From individuals to couples, families and the political, economic, and social sectors. And yet, God the Holy Spirit is there, all the way to the end of the universe.

I am particularly concerned with our youth, who are hungry for the meaning of life. And so many of them are becoming victims of social media, which is predominantly materialistic, egocentric, and Godless. Let us continue to support and promote youth organizations in schools, parishes, and homes. And they should be psycho-spiritual in approach, non-denominational, and universal.

To conclude: We very much need a global spiritual conversion for the good of the human race. This is God's call. And God manifests Himself as Three Persons for us not to miss Him. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Father and Son are up, up there in heaven, waiting for us to join them. But more lovingly and with great compassion: He is also down, down here with us and all around us. God the Holy Spirit. We cannot miss Him, provided we do not turn our backs on Him. His loving, divine omnipresence is no less than our constant companion all the days of our lives. And our problems and crosses in life are precisely given as opportunities for our growth as persons, our greatness as persons, and our Godliness as persons. Godliness in the sense that we become more and more like the person of Christ, who carried his cross for the sake of love, all the way to the crucifixion, only to be followed by the resurrection. What more do we want! Amen.

EVENTS



08 April 2018 Community Celebration



06 May 2018 Community Celebration

Love in Greek

Chacho & Marlyn Angeles, Thessalonians BCGG

Because we live in a “banana republic,” we have names for each of the many varieties of bananas, whereas in English there is only one name – banana.

For us, banana can mean the generic “saging,” or it can mean “lakatan,” “latondan,” “sabá,” “señorita,” and other varieties. No wonder we are amused when a foreign visitor would say, “The banana I like best is “saging.” The English is less precise, because bananas are not as much a part of their lives as they are to ours.

The word “love” is also less precise in English as it is in Greek. And it is far more important to be precise about love than about bananas! The word “love” is so familiar to us. We encounter it every day. And yet, it can mean many things to different people. Somebody may say, “I love this mansion,” “I love bananas,” or “I’d love to go to Boracay with you,” or “I love you,” or “God is love.” People talk about “making love.”

Greek, the language in which the New Testament was written, is more precise about love.

There are four words describing four kinds of love:

1) There is the word **storge**: This word is the characteristic word for family love. It describes the love of a parent for a child and a child for a parent.

2) There is the word **eros**: This word describes the romantic love of a man and a woman. There is always passion in it. And there is always sexual love.

3) There is the word **philia**: This is the warmest and the best Greek word for love. It describes real love, real affection. It is the word, which describes the relationship between closest, nearest, and truest friends. It is the word of warm, tender affection, the highest kind of love.

4) And there is the word **agape**: This word indicates an invincible goodwill, unconquerable benevolence. If we regard a person with agape, it means that no matter what that person does to us, no

matter how he treats us, no matter if he insults us or injures us or grieves us, we will never allow any bitterness against him to invade our hearts or lessen our love, but will regard him with that unconquerable benevolence and goodwill which will seek nothing but his highest good.

The Scriptures today use the word “agape,” the Greek word for God’s love, more times than in the readings for any other Sunday in the church year. Today’s reading from the First Letter of John uses “agape” no less than 15 times!

Agape describes God’s totally self-giving love for us humans and for the whole world. It’s the amazing love that takes the initiative, reaching out to forgive and accept the undeserving. It is God’s faithfulness to his commitment to love us no matter what.

Because of this love, the central message of Scripture is called “Gospel” – “Good News.” Someone has defined the Gospel as the “good news that God loves us at our worst.” God doesn’t love us on the condition that we’ve cleaned ourselves up and done things worthy of divine favor.

No, God loves us when we were in sin, when we’ve hit rock bottom, when there’s no way to go but up. We can take comfort in Paul’s words in Romans 5:8: “God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners, Christ died for us.”

When all is said and done, God’s love of agape boils down to a question of giving.

It’s a question of self-giving.

It’s a question of forgiving.

It’s a question of thanksgiving.

Someone asked him later if there was one moment or event in his historic visit to England that stood out above all the others. “Yes,” he said, “there was such a moment.” He went on to say that one bitter cold night, when he was returning to his hotel suite, he passed a vacant building. He saw two street children huddled together in the doorway.

One was a boy of about 12; the other was a girl of about 4, obviously his sister. The boy had taken off his coat and put it around his little sister’s shoulders. And he had taken his wool cap and put it around her feet.

The dignitary said that the picture of those two children, huddled together in the doorway, completely eclipsed the pomp and ceremony of the coronation, the excitement of the coronation ball, and his conversation with celebrities.

That story dramatizes, especially, the kind of love that Jesus describes in today’s Gospel when he says, “Love one another as I love you.” And, “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

We have seen how love is a question of self-giving. Let us now see how love is also a question of forgiving. Forgiveness has to be part of every love relationship, precisely because we are human. Being human, we sin against one another and hurt one another – even members of our own family. And for that reason, fathers must be ready to forgive sons. Sons must be ready to forgive fathers. Mothers must be ready to forgive daughters. Daughters must be ready to forgive mothers.

Brothers must be ready to forgive sisters. Sisters must be ready to forgive brothers. And friends must be ready to forgive friends. And they must be ready to do this not seven times, but as Jesus said, “seventy times seven times.”

How often do we pray the “Our Father” at Mass, especially the words, “Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.” And how often we say them on Sunday but fail to practice them from Monday to Saturday even within our own family. We often forget that Jesus himself said, “If you forgive others their wrongs, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your wrongs.” And so besides self-giving, love also involves forgiving.

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The Wonders of May!

#Threenings

Mia Parada, Samaritans BCGG

In addition to the love month of February, another favorite month I look forward to is the merry “Mary” month of May.

To begin with, I was born on the 1st of May in St. Anne Hospital in Manila. I was named Mary Anne Geraldine. My aunt, Anna Sabado, gave me this name.

I studied kindergarten at St. Mary’s College in Quezon City, and part of my grade school at Fatima Canossa. In my teens I became a Marian devotee, through my grandmother who accompanied me every 1st Saturday of the month to Our Lady of Lourdes Church for the devotion, wearing the habit of Mary. The month of May is also the month of our Blessed Mother Mary and the feast day of Our Lady of Fatima.

The Philippine festival held every May is called Flores de Mayo (Spanish for Flowers of May) and flowers are offered to the Blessed Mother. This festival is concluded by a Santa Cruzan, a ritual pageant that commemorates the finding of the true cross by the Reyna Elena.

It is also in May when I receive 2 sets of flowers or bouquets from my family – one on my birthday and another on Mother’s Day. May honors all Mothers in the world. The first

God’s Call: To serve joyfully and comfortably, *continued from page 7*

REFLECTIONS:

1. CHOICES: What is the most significant choice you made in your lifetime? What is the basis of this choice? What are your feelings about this choice? How did this choice significantly affect you or others?
2. CHALLENGE: In what areas in your life are you being challenged right now? What is your response?
3. COMPANIONSHIP: Companionship is also communion. Are you called to a deeper communion with someone, called to a deeper companionship?
4. SECOND CHANCES: Are you being called to take another chance? Can you pray for the courage to stand up again amidst failure, to forgive when offended and to rise from death?
5. A calling for your family: What is your family’s resurrection story: choices, challenge, companionship and second chance? Where is your family being drawn now? What is your role in this calling?



time I became a mother was when I gave birth on May 29 to a baby girl we named Lourdes Anne Mileiny (Miny). Five years later, I gave birth to another girl on May 15, and we named her Denise Leianne Marie (Leia). My husband Leony calls us his “tatlong Maria” because all our names are taken after the blessed Mother Mary. We are his “3 flowers” celebrating birthdays with intervals of exactly two weeks: May 1, 15 and 29.

We are all devotees to our blessed Mother and the coincidences made us closer to one another. My daughters Miny and Leia, both living abroad, are always reminded to continue praying to Her, the novena and the Memorare in times of need.

No distance can separate us from our faith and love for the Blessed Mother. So many answered prayers and miracles in our lives as a family and individuals happened through the intercession of our Blessed Mother.

Thank you Mama Mary!!!

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.

The Best Things in Life are Free

Maricel Suarez, Tala BCGG

A love of a mother for her child is forever."

Recently I was on an incentive trip to Madrid, Spain which started on the eve of my birthday and ended on Mother's Day. And who could be the best person to tag along... not my husband, but my unico hijo Johann.

When the clock struck midnight seven miles up in the air, I was thrilled. "Oy, birthday ko na," I said to my son who was my seatmate for the rest of the 7-hour flight to our layover in Dubai. He was going to be seated next to me on an almost 24-hour flight to Spain and it was most exciting. What?! Birthday in an airplane? I wanted to ask for wine and have some cheers, but no, I was content to have my son sit beside me all the way to our destination.



You see, since he left for college, he rarely sat beside me for like 24 hours. This time he had no choice but to be cheek to cheek with his mother. Just like any college student, Johann is independent, has a mind of his own, and since he is an only child, a world of his own.

We arrived in Spain on my birthday, May 4, 2018. From the airport we rode a panoramic coach for a city tour of Madrid. Our first stop was at the famous Plaza de Toros de las Ventas, the Spanish bullring. The stadium was huge with Moorish design and we were so excited to be finally on Spanish soil. Our cameras never stopped clicking. Lahat ata na spot nag-pose kami. This was also where we had our first gelato ice cream. Oh, what a joy to be eating ice cream at 14°C weather. Ang saya!



Our second stop was at Estadio Santiago Bernabeu, the world's most famous football venue. On our way there we saw the statue of our National Hero, Jose Rizal, who we all know fought against the oppressive rule of the Spaniards. We were impressed to see his statue in the middle of the city.

My company always pampers us at every incentive trip. We are always treated first class from accommodations, transportation, sightseeing and meals at Michelin-rated restaurants. You can travel with our company without having your wallet. All expenses are paid, with allowance. Johann got his allowance too.

Our home for the 4 days stay was at the Intercontinental Madrid. "Hola, buenas tardes," we were greeted. A stick of churros was handed to us on a glass of chocolate. I learned there and then that the chocolate's thickness should only be 'suficiente' that you can take it afterwards you finish your churros.

Our first night was the most important event for every incentive trip: the Recognition and Fellowship Night. We had it in La Pesquera de Madrid Casa de Campo, with a Fiesta Hispanica theme. It was a night of overflowing sangria, Cavas, red wine and tapas, guitar playing, flamenco dancing, and of course our first taste of the real thing – paella and the Spanish culture. It was also the night of my birthday. Of course, I got to blow candles with my fellow birthday celebrants. It was an unforgettable night.

Day 2 was a tour to ancient postcard-like views of Toledo City. We saw and visited the beautiful Cathedral of Saint Mary of Toledo. It is a 13th century gothic-inspired cathedral rich in history. Its interior brings a wealth of artwork, starting with the architecture. Lunch was at the Restaurante Venta de Aires, and an incentive trip will never miss out on outlet shopping, this time at Las Rozas. After everyone shopped till they dropped, we were treated to a special dinner at La Tohana. We had cochinillo (baby pig lechon) right in front of our eyes as we entered the restaurant, ready to be cooked in a brick oven. We had cocktails, black sausages, and

salad to complement our main course, and overflowing Cava, or Coke (yes, Europeans love Coke) to quench our thirst. It was still an extension of my birthday celebration and I think I had too much sparkling wine.



Day 3 was a walking tour on our last full day in Madrid. We started at San Jeronimo el Real, then to Plaza Mayor, then to Mercado de San Miguel and Puerto Del Sol. Lunch was at Posadas De La Villa where we experienced the most mouth-watering roasted lamb chops with beer or wine and coke (again), green olives as appetizers, green salad with crusty bread as huge as our tablecloth napkins, and pastry for dessert.

After lunch we walked to the grounds of the Royal Palace, the home of the Spanish Royal Family, for our group picture. We toured the 135,000 sq. meter palace with 3,418 rooms. Of all the few palaces I went into, this was the most beautiful. Picture taking was not allowed.

The huge gothic landmarks in Madrid are so full of history, are every artist's dream to see. They are all beautiful and mesmerizing.



On our last night in Madrid, after attending Sunday mass at the La Milagrosa Church (where a beautiful statue of the Miraculous Medal stands at the altar), we rode the Metro Train to Plaza Mayor where the action is. We wanted to try more types of Spanish food and the famous calamari sandwich. It was a night of more sangria, paella and yes, the calamari sandwich. #haha

The following day, it was time to say goodbye to Madrid. We had a good pampering most especially from the Travel Agency who took good care of all of us during the trip – Marsman Travels and Tours. Everything was just perfect.

Our 4th day was the start of our side trip to Barcelona. This time, we were on our own. This was the start of the real adventure.

Barcelona is the capital and largest city of Catalonia, and the second most populous municipality of Spain. It is where the famous La Sagrada Familia is located and other famous landmarks like the Gothic inspired Barcelona Cathedral. From a laid-back Madrid, comes a chaotic Barcelona. It is a progressive city where wifi is available just walking down the crowded Las Ramblas.

We started our Day 2 in Barcelona with a city tour, a visit to Montjuic Castle and Spanish Village in the morning, and the afternoon a trip to the Santa Maria de Montserrat Monastery where we experienced the Black Madonna. The gift of being able to attend Mass in the monastery and to touch the statue of the Black Madonna was heart-warming. It was our third encounter with Mary. She was with us all the way and my devotion to her becomes stronger at every encounter.

The final leg of our travel was to Paris, the City of Lights, the City of Love. We flew to Paris from Barcelona, and as soon as we checked in our hotel, my son started to plan his own itinerary. "Mom, we need to go to a museum." "And where?" I asked. "Louis Vuitton Museum."

"For what?" I asked? "No, mom, it's not a store, it's a museum." And he started explaining.

"Ok, let's go then." We walked a few steps to the Paris Metro, bought our tickets good for 3 days.

This is where I fully experienced my son as a travel companion. He is quite adventurous, a risk taker and reads maps and directions excellently, a talent he got from his father, being his navigator.

We took the Metro and alighted at the Arc de Triomphe which totally surprised me. Oh, wow, we are at the center of Paris. We walked and found a shuttle that brought us to the museum. While waiting, my son was reading the map of

Paris, "Saan ka ba talaga gusto pumunta, anak?" I felt his energy going wild. My son, at 20, wants to explore the world. "Ah, magiging amazing race ba to, anak?" "Let's just go, Mom," he said. Finally we reached Fondation Louis Vuitton. This museum that started as a dream and was designed architect Frank Gehry. Each room displays paintings and artwork of different genres by different artists.

This was where I saw the artistic side of Johann. I realized that he loves the arts, drawings, paintings and structures. The museum was truly a beautiful modern structure that represents France's profound culture.

On our way back, we ended up sitting at the park facing the Arc de Triomphe. We were mesmerized, and observed and appreciated every scene. Nasa Paris ba talaga ako? Is this a dream? I was awed. We walked through the Champs-Elysees – a long shopping stretch, and experienced how tourists from different countries come just to shop. I was warned to be careful of snatchers and gypsies, but really, I felt safe. I felt the goodness of the Lord. We were enjoying the present moment, enjoying God's providence and goodness.

What makes a trip to Paris more memorable is of course the overwhelming, mesmerizing Eiffel Tower, by day and night. We first saw it at night, with its shining, shimmering, splendid lights. Finding a spot for a best photo was so stressful, I didn't want to walk anymore. But no, we cannot miss a thing with the Eiffel Tower. We just have to have that best shot! After all, we had already walked almost 9,000 steps that day and it was not time to waste any of it. Smile there, pose here, repeat, rewind. It went on for a long time and we really did have fun taking pictures of each other.

The following day, together with our group, we started our adventure to Versailles Garden and the Grand Palace. Taking the train, walking for miles to get to our destinations were very challenging. Learning what train to take, and which stops to get down, took a little time to learn. Johann was our boss, he led all of us to the right train and the right stops. #galingnakakaproud

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Of course, we did not miss the other landmarks like the Louvre Museum where we saw the original Mona Lisa, the Cathedral of Notre Dame where we luckily were able to attend Mass, and Sacre-Coeur Basilica, the most beautiful basilica in Paris. Overall I would say traveling in Europe is worth every penny.

It was indeed like an amazing race with my son wherein we would argue every little detail, laugh at our craziness and deal with our differences. It was a test of our patience for each other especially in moments when we lose sight of each other. Most of the time, instructions came from him – stay on the right, it's still a red light, look where you are going, hurry up, etc., etc. Ano to, ganti??? Love surely endures forever, and love conquers all. (Buti na lang talaga hindi sumama si Joey, di sana dalawa na yung instructor ko). It was a trip where I got the most hugs from my son; it was also a trip where we tried our best to get along with each other. It was a trip where I demanded respect 24/7, it was non-negotiable. It was a trip full of new learnings and new stories to add to our book of life.

"Thank you for keeping up with my energy, Mom" was the best compliment I heard from him.

We arrived home on Mother's Day. We miss our Papa Joey of course, yet we were so tired to even start our story.

Till our next #PruAdventure, this time with Joey.

Buenas dias, bon journee!



The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit, continued from page 4



When Fortitude is a gift of the Holy Spirit

Fortitude is the virtue of the martyrs, who are willing to give their lives rather than to renounce their faith. It is in martyrdom that we see the best example of fortitude rising above a mere cardinal virtue (able to be practiced by anyone) into one of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit enumerated in Isaiah 11:2-3.

Fortitude as a gift of the Holy Spirit can also be found in examples of moral courage when we resist the more subtle temptations of the spirit of the times: against improper fashions, against human respect, against the human tendency to be comfortable, if not self-indulgent.

Fortitude, as a gift of the Holy Spirit, also allows us to cope with poverty and loss, and to cultivate the Christian virtues that allow us to desire and choose more than the basic requirements of Christianity. The saints, in their love for God and their fellow man and their determination to do what is right, exhibit fortitude as a supernatural gift of the Holy Spirit, and not merely as a cardinal virtue.

5. Knowledge is the fifth of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Like wisdom, knowledge perfects the theological virtue of faith. The aims of knowledge and wisdom are different, however. While wisdom helps us to penetrate divine truth and prepares us to judge all things according to that truth, knowledge gives us that ability to judge. The object of the gift of knowledge is to see the whole of created things insofar as they lead us to God.

Knowledge allows us to see the circumstances of our life as God sees them, although in our more limited human way. Through the exercise of knowledge, we can determine God's purpose in our lives and His reason for placing us in our particular circumstances.

Knowledge is sometimes called "the science of the saints," because it enables those who have the gift to easily and effectively discern between the impulses of temptation and the inspirations of grace. Judging all things in the light of divine truth, we can more easily distinguish between the promptings of God and the subtle wiles of the devil.

6. Piety, the sixth gift of the Holy Spirit, is the desire to do what is pleasing to God. Piety is the perfection of religion. When we are infused with the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, we respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit as if by instinct, the way that Christ Himself would.

Of all the gifts of the Holy Spirit this instinctual response is most obvious in piety. The Modern Catholic Dictionary defines piety as "The moral virtue by which a person is disposed to render to God the worship and service He deserves." Far from being a boring obligation, worship becomes an act of love, because piety is the instinctive affection for God that makes us desire to worship Him.

Sometimes we say that "piety demands it," which usually means we feel compelled to do something we don't want to do. True piety, however, makes no such demands but inspires in us a desire to always do that which is pleasing to God.

7. Fear of the Lord is the desire to avoid offending

God. Fear of the Lord is the last of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit and it is related to the virtue of hope. The gift of fear of the Lord is the desire not to offend Him, and the certainty that He will give us the grace necessary to keep from doing so. It is that certainty that gives us hope. The fear of the Lord is like the respect we have for our parents. We do not wish to offend them, but we also do not live

in fear of them, in the sense of being frightened.

What the Fear of the Lord Is Not

The fear of the Lord is not a fear of punishment, but a desire not to offend God that parallels our desire not to offend our parents.

Even so, many people misunderstand the fear of the Lord. Recalling the verse that "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," they think that the fear of the Lord is something that is good to have when you first start out as a Christian, but that you should grow beyond it. That is not the case; rather, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom because it is one of the foundations of our religious life, just as the desire to do what our parents wish us to do should remain with us our entire lives.

** The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are enumerated in Isaiah 11:2-3 and should not be confused with the charismatic gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:8-13, nor with the fruits of the Spirit described in Galatians 5:22-23.

http://catholicism.about.com/od/beliefsteachings/tp/Gifts_of_the_Holy_Spirit.htm

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A Letter to my Parents

Ryan Alonsagay Ebardo



Dearest Dad and Mom,

Happy Father's Day and Happy Mother's Day!

In a few months, I will be turning 40. Looking back at the years I have spent in this realm, I feel grateful to two persons who played a pivotal role in molding the destiny I have come to embrace – my parents. You see, I have never fathered a child and therefore missed the opportunity to be a parent. Needless to say, I consider my students as my children. Guiding them in school and teaching them values and lessons in life has become my vocation for more than a decade now. For some, this calling is considered a lost cause. But I survive and this dedication is largely due to the upbringing I am fortunate to get from my parents.

Dad, thank you for believing in me. I may not have taken the road you wanted me to traverse, but I am grateful that you gave me the freedom to walk a path I chose. You gave me the encouragement I needed to build a dream to chase after. You believed I have the talent to reach my goals and I will forever dedicate this vocation to you.

Mom, thank you for making me realize that I'm worth everything in this world. That I must excel in all the things I do and that I should never settle for less than what I deserve. The discipline you gave me when I was young has become my guiding principle inside the four corners of the classroom. I shape young minds because in my eyes, you are my first and forever teacher.

Dad, thank you for driving me to school. I remember I lacked confidence on my first day of school. I thought I would not fit in. But you encouraged me and took me to my first day of school. Like many milestones in my life, you are the silent cheerleader. You supported me in all my decisions.

Mom, thank you for getting to know my friends to make sure I was choosing them wisely. That I was continually surrounding myself with respectable and responsible people through each and every phase of my life is the primary reason I was not led astray. As a teacher, I make sure my students do not succumb to peer pressure and do bad things. You have contributed immensely to the fragile lives of these young individuals.

To my parents, Mom and Dad, thank you for showing me true love. My principles, character and values are all anchored to my faith, your greatest legacy to your children. Without each of you, I will not be who I am today – and the person I am still working on becoming. No words can best describe my appreciation, but I think this is a good start. I owe you one.

Sincerely,

Your son

Honoring My Father

Mennen Aracid, Easter BCGG

My father is 82 and my mother is 9 years his junior. Both of them were afflicted with stroke but it was Papa whose affliction was worse. My sister and I decided to bring Papa from CDO to Manila for his rehab. When he had his attack, he came out of the hospital not being able to walk and control the left side of his body. His face was asymmetrical. He had a heavy speech slur and struggled with swallowing.

He struggled with high sugar, an enlarged heart, hypertension, and a bad liver. More than his physical affliction, he needed help to mentally and emotionally handle his physical handicap.

I saw Papa weave in and out of depression and regret; give up for so many months but finding courage to try again. It is not easy to deal with him because he still wields authority over me. His yes is still a yes. And he still issues a no when the logical answer is a yes. We battle over his need for more exercise, his preference for unhealthy food, his hours spent over the internet, and sleep among others.

My biggest consolation was the health numbers. They eventually went back to the normal range after 3 years. The secret was rehab, careful diet, constant encouragement, consistent partnership with his doctors, and most of all Love. At some moments, I felt our roles reversed. I was the parent and he was oftentimes acting like the child. What gets through him is not the task. He responds more to relationships. He responds less to command. But warms up when the intention and the action are in the context of Love. Parenting is not easy. Because there are no cut and dry principles to influence people, it takes much to invest in the relationships. When that is present, the tasks will take care of themselves.

I know what he is good at. I also know where he may be weak in. And at this point, I am grateful that he is still there.

Love in Greek, continued from page 10

This leads us to the third kind of giving that love involves – thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is especially important when it comes to our love for God. The one thing everyone is capable of giving God is thanks. When we have nothing else to give God, we can still give our thanks. There is no excuse on earth for not giving thanks to God.

Helen Hayes was one of the first actresses ever to come out of Hollywood. She recalls the end of World War I. She was only 18 then, starring in the Broadway play, *Dear Brutus*. During a rehearsal one day, someone came running into the theater shouting the news that the war was over. Immediately the entire place went wild. The cast forgot about the rehearsal and took off to drink and to celebrate.

Helen did not join them, however. Instead she left the Empire Theater and headed for St. Patrick's Cathedral, making her way through the crowds of celebrating people. She writes: "I had visions of being the only person in that vast chapel offering thanks to the Lord. But when I got there the cathedral was so packed I couldn't get inside. I was forced to offer my prayer on the steps."

That moving story illustrates the kind of giving that love involves – especially love of God. It makes us ask ourselves about our own love of God. How filled with thanksgiving is it?

And so love involves three kinds of giving:

1. Self-giving, as the story of the children shows,
2. Forgiving, because we all make mistakes, and
3. Thanksgiving, as the story of Helen Hayes shows.

Let us close with a prayer:

Lord, on this special day of days,

Give us the courage to imitate our mothers.

We give you thanks for our mothers – especially for their living example of what love involves:

Self-giving to others,

Forgiving of those who hurt us, And Thanksgiving to God.

Give us the courage to imitate our mothers.

Help us bear witness to the world – as they do –

That love is ultimately a question of giving:

Self-giving, Forgiving, and

Thanksgiving.

Amen.

Can we balance success in career and family?

What matters most

Josephus B. Jimenez, Cana BCGG

Will the marriage of Prince Harry and the new Duchess of Sussex last? Will it not end up like the marriage of the late Princess Diana and Harry's father? How do successful and famous personalities keep their family and marriages intact?

I was saddened when I read that the marriage between the Senate President, Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III and Jewel Lobaton had finally been annulled. I am also concerned that the marriage of Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez was reported to be on the rocks, with the wife even threatening to run against the speaker in their congressional district in Davao del Norte. Well, of course, we are all aware of the rather colorful married life of our president. With the three highest officials of the land in focus, we are tempted to ask: Can there be a balance of a successful career and a solid and happy family and marriage? In other words, can one succeed in politics, career, and business while preserving the sanctity of marriage?

The answer to this crucial question is that this is a matter of priority, a correct sense of priority. It is easy for some to put family first and foremost and all else shall follow. But for others, they would say that family is important but they could not just leave behind their promising career. When I was a very young lawyer in the '70s, a strong political group in Cebu urged me to run for mayor in our town. It was Martial Law and that group was dominant. I could have won the polls easily. But my family vetoed it. And since my first priority is family, I yielded and set aside my ambitions. I was offered a high position in government. Again, my family disapproved. And I yielded again.

My priorities are clear to me. Family, then career. Service to the nation and service to the church. And God is the center of all of them. I know of many successful politicians who have more than one wife and a lot of children from so many women. I know of many businessmen who are billionaires but have broken families and shattered marriages. I know of so many famous professionals and highly-placed executives who have annulled marriages and have very problematic children. I even know of a father who was gunned down by his own son because of a woman. I know of a multi-billionaire who disinherited his eldest son because the latter stole his girlfriend.

Balancing career and family, business and marriage, and profession and love is a difficult task. It is a risky balancing act. But if our priorities are clear and correct, we can never go wrong. What matters most is that we pursue what our heart desires. And our desires should be aligned with the will of God. Those who are too driven for money and for prestige, for glory and for material possessions, end up giving up their marriages and their families, the ones who could give the love and affection they really need, in order to make life meaningful.

At the end of the day, what matters most is love. When we die surrounded by family and those who love us most, it could be rightly be said that we did not live in vain.

PROSE AND POETRY

Chacho Angeles, Thessalonians BCGG

Post Easter Prayers 2018

I. Father in heaven,
What is being with you like?
Is it like living in your mansion
With plenty of luxurious suites,
With a full service complement,
With overflowing tables and
All sorts of delicious food and
Drinks, fruits and sweets,
A mansion in the midst of paradise?
True Freedom?

Is it like attending a wedding
Party, a joyful and happy
Celebration of new life
With loved ones and friends?
Loving relationships?

Is it like being in a throne room
With Jesus seated at Your right,
With all the pomp of royalty and
Everyone obeying Your will?
Is this what I can expect with
Easter, the resurrection and
The promise of Eternal life?
Unity of mind and heart, of being?

In this life, I cannot imagine, and may
Never know and fully comprehend
What heaven is like; but peace, freedom,
Loving relationships and unity of
Purpose I can understand, and to a
Limited extent, experiencing these in this
Life paints for me a picture of heaven!

II. Loving Jesus,
I too am afraid of facing Your love,
Used to the light of an empirical mind
Ever suspicious of that which I myself
Have not experienced with my mind and
My senses. But I am also afraid of the
Consequences of drawing ever closer
To You and Your ways, for this entails
Changes in the way I do things, my
Way of thinking and my comfort.

As I move from early dawn darkness
To the coming of the light, I slowly
Begin to see things, hazy, and without
Form, afraid to move about because
I cannot see the way clearly, not seeing
Where I am supposed to go, stumbling

Over stones, plants and obstacles.
As the sun slowly give more of its light,
I can see better, more confident in
Safely navigating my way. And I can
See my destination. And with the full
Light of day, everything is revealed,
My path, the obstacles, but also the
Beauty around me. Golf is impossible
In the dark. And so is my life.

I would love to sit on the grass
And receive nourishment from You,
Not only bread and fish for my
Body, but especially food for my
Spirit, my heart, Your teachings,
Your admonitions, Your presence.
These will give me light, and show
Me the way, Your way, not mine.
The food of Your presence will
Strengthen and make me persevere,
Though I fall, I will rise, though
Facing challenges, I am at peace,
Though hurting, I can still love,
As You, my God loves me from
The start, till the end.

III. Father,
I pray for the grace to hear the voice
Of Your son, to feel His presence
And Yours, too, to feel the love
You give to me unconditionally,
That I may share this love freely
With my fellowmen every minute
Of my life. I pray that I learn, in my
Heart, His way of compassion,
A way of peace, a way of truth, a
Way of love. His heart is the only
Way to You and the home that You
Prepared for me. In the name of Jesus
I ask. Amen.

IV. Come Holy Spirit,
Come to me and bring me to where
Jesus and the Father want me to be.
Open my mind that I may take in and
Remember all that Jesus teaches me,
A continuing opening of the horizons
Of my mind but only within the purview
Of His words and the example of His life.

So enflame my heart that I may fully
Understand His teachings, make these
Part of my living, filling it with such
Apostolic zeal, passion, purposefulness.
Give me the strength to live like Jesus,
Living as He taught us, as He Himself
Demonstrated by dying on the cross,
Showing this love in the way that I
Relate to others, and to the rest of creation.

In Jesus' name I humbly ask for all these
Because I know I am weak, proud, and
Prone to fall and fail. Amen

V. Loving brother Jesus,
As you are now with the Father in
heaven,
Do not forget us here on earth, even as
We look forward and prepare for a life
With you here on earth as if in heaven.
Keep us close to your heart,
Protect us from the evil one
And from our frail selves.
Guide us and continue to teach us
That we may effectively perform the
Mission you give each and every one
Of us. Continue to inspire us with the
Fire of the Holy Spirit, Your presence
Here on earth, our teacher and hope.
Amen.

VI. Come Holy Spirit,
Spirit of fire purify my heart;
Spirit of strength enable my body;
Spirit of truth guide my mind;
Spirit of courage make me steadfast;
Spirit of light show me the way;
Breath of life sustain me through
The dark moments of my sinfulness,
My fall, my death;
Dove of love help me serve
And return this love that
The Father and the Son
Shower on me always.
And through this love,
Make me one with my
Fellowmen, one with
The whole of creation, and
United with You, my God
Forever. Amen.

MAGIS YOUTH

Father's and Mother's Day – From What I Know to What I've Learned

Gita Manuel, Magis Youth

Mother's and Father's Day – some may know just a little about these days. Hopefully, through this article, I can elaborate on the essential things about these special days and why they deserve to be celebrated.

Mother's Day usually falls on the second Sunday of May in the Philippines, United States, Australia, Canada, and India. In other countries like Thailand, it is celebrated in August on the birth date of the current queen, Sirikit. As for Father's day, it is usually celebrated on the third Sunday of June in the United States, Barbados, Hong Kong, Japan, Pakistan, United Kingdom, and the Philippines. As for other countries, Uruguay celebrates it on the second Sunday of July, Korea on May 8, Egypt on June 21, and Sweden on the second Sunday of November.

According to care.com, there are several ways to celebrate Mother's Day. In Brazil, it is one of the most commercial holidays second to Christmas, with massive numbers, especially children, doing special performances and attending church gatherings. In Japan, it is a day to pamper moms; kids take over the household chores, cook a special meal and give their moms red carnations or roses and cards as gifts. In Ethiopia families gather to sing songs and partake in a large feast that is a part of Antrosht, to honor motherhood. In the United Kingdom, children present gifts such as cards, flowers, chocolates, neckties, and or even handmade gifts, showing their sincerity through these gifts. In Ireland, various organizations have special programs to emphasize the vital role played by the father in the personal development of the child. It's also to continuously remind fathers to make a constant effort to fulfill with devotion and sincerity their roles as fathers and head of the family.

Why exactly do we celebrate these days? Simple as it is, we children should never forget to acknowledge and appreciate the constant efforts of our parents. They go through millions of extra miles and cross oceans for us to have basic needs such as food, house, clothing, and education. We show them how grateful we are for every sacrifice they make in order for us to have and enjoy the blessings we have right now. It is also our chance to reciprocate the love our parents willingly bestow on us every single day, so that they and their children are motivated to doing their respective roles well and rightly.

Some inappropriate social constructs about being a mother are: just a homemaker, only in the kitchen, cannot have a high ranking position, weak and fragile. On the other hand, fathers also experience social constructs such as: not capable or knowledgeable of household chores, incapable of taking care of a child (which also explains why paternity leave is not prevalent in our society), barely shows any emotions or absolutely must not reveal emotions or weaknesses.



Are we capable of breaking these current constructs? Of course. We are making baby steps already in destroying these societal misconstruts. Every family has different dynamics, backgrounds and stories as to how they evolved to be. We must understand that when someone has one or both parents absent, this does not mean that he/she is less of a person. Another is to accept that mothers can handle important and critical jobs and make vital decisions in the family; and that fathers can show weakness, can do household chores, and can be gentle enough take care of children.

Besides our parents, for whom are we celebrating Mother's/Father's Day also? We also celebrate for the widows, single parents, Overseas Filipino Workers, and those who have lost one or both parents.

How can we show our love to our parents? For the kids, they can do design cards, write a short letter expressing their appreciation and gratitude for their parents. Another is to do the chores to lessen their workload and reduce their level of stress. Those who are financially capable can treat their parents to dinner, bring them to a movie, or perhaps something as simple as chocolate and flowers. For those who are away from their families, they could send a video, send text/e-mail messages, or perhaps actually go traverse the miles to visit each other. What is important is to constantly tell your parents that you are blessed to have them and that you love them very much.

As we children continue to mature, we realize how Jesus is well-manifested in our parents, working His mysterious ways through them. Our parents sacrifice so much because they genuinely love us, their children, and want to provide the best for us. They motivate us to achieve; they acknowledging the hard times we go through. When we fail, our parents always point out this is temporary and actually provides us the opportunity to improve hence our mistakes are turned into lessons.

In essence, Mother's Day and Father's Day are most meaningful when we show them how thankful we are for them and how much we love them every single day of our lives. They truly deserve this. They have never given up nor lost hope on us, they did not leave us when we needed them.

MAGIS YOUTH



Magis Deo Youth Camp: No Signal? No Problem!

By: Angeline Concepcion

A weekend filled with no phone signals, obstacles courses, long walks, unfamiliar faces, and dogs that could trek faster than the youths was a perfect set-up to make a weekend to remember.

Upon arrival in the venue, we were already met with a lot of unfamiliar faces and several obstacle course. Everyone was with their own circle of friends at first but as soon as we were put into our teams, bonding came naturally. As the day continued, teammates learned to trust each other and work with each other well. They also learned to work and discuss obstacles with other team members. Unfamiliar faces became a new circle of friends and became people that made you comfortable.

As a Magis baby, this is one of the camps that was most memorable to me. As someone stated on the last day, it was nice to be surrounded by new and old faces. This camp was truly a fun one and hopefully there are more to come. Hopefully more people join next time too.



Team Power Rangers

Team Wakanda

Team Sky High

Team Red Hot Chili Peppers



O
B
S
T
A
C
L
E
S..

..and more OBSTACLES!!!



Oh mudslide, you're so fun!!



What are the most memorable/exciting/grateful events during the weekend?



Keep the fire burning..
Roasted mallows and
grilled hotdogs, anyone?

Hiking, I got to reflect on the things that have been bothering for the past few months because of how attached I was to people and technology that it stopped me from appreciating myself and nature; campfire, esp. burning the letter and jamming with people; obstacles courses, pushes me to be the best of myself or to follow the motto, you don't have to be the best just finish the race. It motivates me that I can actually do it and be proud of what I can achieve. -Gita Manuel

A lot of you have facebook but have you really faced yourself?

Ruziel Delos Reyes, a facilitator from RMT CEFAM conducted activities on self-awareness and shared insights on getting to know one's self and relating to others.



Most memorable was continuously doing great at the games with my team. Everyone works well together and everyone does well together. Most grateful for meeting old and new people. To be able to hang out and enjoy the places together. Being able to just play and learn about yourself is definitely a blessing; obstacle course; Team Red Hot Chili Peppers. -Fiona Mella

The most memorable experience I had this weekend is the part of the schedule where we did obstacle courses because these courses tested the teamwork, determination, and grit of every single camper, including me and the wonderful people I've met. -Albert Soliveres

Success and significance in God's eyes

Rey Mella, Cana BCGG



In the early years of my career, I was an equipment and a maintenance engineer. Leading a team of technicians, one of my many responsibilities was to make sure the machines were checked daily.

We had simple checklists before operating our machines. Our newer models, however, had a nice feature called self-check. They automatically checked their functionalities without the need for a technician. This reduced the amount of maintenance attention required from my team, and allowed us to focus on higher priority activities like repairs and preventive maintenance.

Recently, on several occasions and quiet moments, as I went through my daily tasks, I would pause and reflect on whether the things I'm working on and am busy with will make real sense among the bigger priorities of my life.

I'd be working on something at home and these thoughts would come to me: What am I doing? Why am I here? While having coffee in a restaurant, similar questions suddenly come up: Is what I'm doing adding value to my life?

Once I was walking from the Greenbelt bus station to our office a kilometer away. The same reflection questions came to my mind. I tended to them as I continued with my leisurely walk. Why am I here in this place and now? Will this activity matter in five years? Does this contribute to the betterment of people? Of my family?

Only those who have learned the power of sincere and selfless contribution experience life's deepest joy: true fulfillment.

– Tony Robbins

Some 10 years ago, on my way home I was deep in thought and I drove past my Filinvest exit. I had to drive an extra 30 to 45 minutes to get home.

At that time, I said that life gets in the way. Actually, trying to make a living gets in the way of really living. We get defocused from why we are even working for a living.

A wise man said that obstacles are the things you see when you take your eyes off the goal. I say that problems and things that stress us daily are what we go through and experience when we take our eyes off the things that really matter.

I am reminded of Dr. Stephen Covey's question: "What does it matter how much we do if what we're doing isn't what matters most?"

Dr. Covey, author of the best-selling book *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, preaches "To Live, to Love, to Learn, to Leave a Legacy" as the should-be main preoccupations in life.

I ask myself these questions and more. Am I really living the life I want? Is my life aligned with what God wants me to do? Am I loving and taking care of my family enough? Am I continuously learning in order to fully utilize my talents and faculties for the betterment of others? Is my work making some significant contribution to other people's lives?

Should God be happy I am alive and still roaming around in the world He created?

In his book *The Blue Zones* Dan Buettner explores and describes the five places in the world (the Italian island of Sardinia; Okinawa, Japan; Loma Linda, California; Costa Rica's isolated Nicoya Peninsula; and Ikaria, an isolated Greek island) where the highest percentage of healthy and fully alive centenarians live.

The author outlines and discusses in great detail the nine lessons (actually, reasons) why these people get to live that long. One of the reasons is, they have a purpose for living, a reason to wake up every morning.

In summary, the nine lessons, covering the lifestyle of blue zones

people, are:

- Moderate and regular physical activity
- Life purpose
- Stress reduction
- Moderate calories intake
- Plant-based diet
- Moderate alcohol intake
- Engagement in spirituality or religion
- Engagement in family life
- Engagement in social life

My life's purpose and my relationship with God are essentials to living a long life. I pray I am on the right track towards becoming a centenarian.

The practice of forgiveness is our most important contribution to the healing of the world.

– Marianne Williamson

As I was writing this article, I had a nice distraction – I watched a documentary (the Netflix link of which my daughter sent me a few days earlier but I forgot to watch then): *Minimalism: A Documentary about the Important Things*.

The movie is about life, about simplicity, about what really matters, about what makes us truly happy, about going against consumerism, about not being brainwashed with the advertisements on TV, on billboards, and in magazines, about the concept of less is more, about focusing on the really important stuff. It is more than just pursuing and valuing simplicity, but it does complement and help in living life simply. It is living and enjoying life with less.

Continue to page 23

Zarah C. Gagatiga, Emmanuel BCGG

I was cleaning my laptop a few weeks ago. Weeding out old files. Keeping the ones with sentimental value and the documents that prove our family's reason for being, to a safer storage. Oh boy, do I have a lot of memories stored in my laptop. One of these is a video I made in April 2009 about the Family Encounter Weekend (FEW) we attended as family auxiliary. Of the numerous files I was organizing, this one made me stop from my inventory. I watched it and I was hurled back to the past.

I remember the Prietos – Tito Eli and Tita Edith – leading us through the three-day retreat for families. We were joined by our MEW batch mates then, the Macalalads and the Antonios, as assisting auxiliaries. Fr. Ruben Tanseco was the spiritual director of that weekend and the family sharers were the Concepcions and the Escosias. So many things have happened since then. Some of the people in that FEW are still active in Magis Deo. Many have left us for a variety of reasons. A few faces I recall and I wonder where they are right now. At the end of the video, I could only utter a prayer of thanks. We have grown and matured through Magis Deo's formation programs that have enriched many areas and facets of our lives. We are grateful to belong to a community that nurtures couples as well as their children.

Nine years ago, both our kids, Nico and Zoe, were young grade school students. Now, Nico is a junior in college in UP Diliman and Zoe is in 10th grade at the school where I currently work. I was, at the time, unemployed. I had just retired from Xavier School after fourteen solid years of service with and among Jesuits and lay partners. I was neither young nor old to sit in a rocking chair. I wanted to try something new. Something entirely different. For the next two years, I worked freelance. Domeng, on the other hand, was fully employed. To this day, he remains consistent, stable and steadfast.

That's when another realization hit me. Domeng is my constant.

Right now, he is the reliable presence in my life. As I have learned in Magis Deo, one's relationship with God reflects his or her relationship with his or her spouse. God is my home and it is in His strong and steadfast love where I rest. This fills me with contentment and joy. However, the mere idea of death and being rent apart from Domeng assaults me with sadness and deep anxiety. I often wonder how the widows and widowers in the community manage life on their own.

I turn to prayer. I lift all these thoughts to God. For who else could fill the empty spaces and the vacancies in life? Only God.

Success and significance in God's eyes, continued from page 22

I quote from the website of the authors of the book and the producers of the movie: "Minimalism is a tool to rid yourself of life's excess in favor of focusing on what's important – so you can find happiness, fulfillment, and freedom."

I am sure that my daughter's finding this movie as I was reflecting on my life's purpose and writing about it, is no coincidence. God sent the documentary to my daughter! I am scheduling my entire family to watch this beautiful and very meaningful 1-hour 18-minute documentary next weekend.

A Mafia Godfather, accompanied by his attorney, walks into a room to meet with his former accountant. The Godfather asks the accountant, "Where is the 3 million bucks you embezzled from me?" The accountant does not answer.

The Godfather asks again, "Where is the 3 million bucks you embezzled from me?"

The attorney interrupts, "Sir, the man is a deaf mute and cannot understand you, but I can interpret for you."

The Godfather says, "Well ask him where my damn money is!" The attorney, using sign language, asks the accountant where the 3 million dollars is.

The accountant signs back, "I don't know what you are talking about."

The attorney interprets to the Godfather, "He doesn't know what you are talking about."

The Godfather pulls out a 9 mm pistol, puts it to the temple of the accountant, cocks the trigger and says, "Ask him again where my damn money is!"

The attorney signs to the accountant, "He wants to know where it is!"

The accountant signs back, "OK! OK! OK! The money is hidden in a brown suitcase behind the shed in my backyard!"

The Godfather says, "Well...what did he say?"

The attorney interprets to the Godfather, "He says... go to hell...that you don't have the guts to pull the trigger."

– www.fantasticjokes.net

Alone?

Leslie Gatchalian, Psalm 98 BCGG



Some of us in the community are in that unique situation of having been left behind.

Don't get me wrong – to be left behind is a mean feat; it presents the option to show your continuing love or to simply clam up. It entails imposing challenges, and God's help is needed to strengthen the heart and body. One needs fortifying emotionally, physically, spiritually, mentally, and yes, financially! It is a big channel for growth.

Life suddenly becomes a jumble when you lose someone so close that a part of you is taken away too. Life becomes a puzzle with a lot of missing or disarrayed pieces – pieces that only you know are missing because you notice a hole in the puzzle. Unfortunately, in this reality game, that piece will never be retrieved... forever!!! If there is a forever, it is that forever missing piece! And that, ladies and gentlemen, when it strikes you, is the hardest. Something that a grief therapist will initially tell you to hurdle, to accept the loss. The reality that the person is never coming back. You just have to swallow that! (Hindi hugot kundi lunok.)

We believe that those who have traversed to eternity go to a place better than that of the living. Meanwhile the one left behind has to carry on and continue in this earthly life. It seems trivial and just plain natural to do so. As people would say, "You gotta move on." (Mag-move on ka na.) You nod to seemingly affirm. But how do you really move on when you have lost your "better" half, that important meaningful piece of the puzzle?

Grief therapy suggests rituals for doing the things you used to do. To be honest, the task of adjusting to doing things previously done with your loved one, and now by yourself and alone, can crush your heart. One painfully finds out – now there's no one to share your meal with. That you have to order for one alone. If you order more, you realize using only one senior card is a

trickle in restaurant bills. You mark your anniversary and think: is there really an occasion to celebrate? Maybe you could spend Valentine's with friends; hear Mass for the dead (How appropriate! Pun unintended.) You hear Easter Mass by yourself. Your son's birthday is celebrated with only one parent. You miss your best midnight snack buddy. You miss your listening ear and commentator. You miss hearing unsolicited advice. You even miss the nagging of your tardiness. You miss your best critic when choosing things. You thought you had to buy that pair of shoes or pants because you know he will like them.

It can be harrowing to walk alone, to drive alone, to shop alone, to go out alone, and worst, to sleep alone! You look at your friends and you remember what he says about them both naughty and nice. You continue to look at your friend then he tells you, "What's keeping you busy? You have to move on!"

The many happy moments you've had together are where to draw out joy when you experience that deep feeling of missing someone. With that thought surely you can "cry pretty" (lifted from the song Cry Pretty). You can eat those fancy cashew nuts and panettone whilst thinking how you enjoyed them together. (Surprise! It's gone saltier, tastier... it's admixed with your nasal tears!)

Looking at the puzzle from a greater distance, you note that it has not lost its meaning at all. Its beauty and what it depicts remain the same. It will never be the same puzzle with one piece missing but it draws out the same smile on your face. Wonderful memories can go to waste by focusing too much on that hole, that missing piece, instead of what the whole puzzle is showing.

I think this is where legacy connects us to the missing person and relieves the grief. Seeing the beauty of the puzzle, we try to see and maintain its essence, and patch the hole by continuing what was started. This makes you feel you

were never really left behind, and that the person lives on as part of what you are doing. "Love can touch us one time and last for a lifetime" (lifted from the song My Heart Will Go On). It is actually a new piece, a new life getting its vibrancy and strength from the whole puzzle. No, you don't put that puzzle to waste! You put it to work, to help you gently embark on a new episode with a prayerful wish of creating a nice piece that will also be a source of inspiration.

We each have our own lives to live. Some live long; some have shorter lives. We have different life expectancies and God sets the calendar for that. God dictates it for a reason. For those left behind, not accepting the reality that you do not own any life won't help. It can even waste your life; you won't be able to live to the fullest. You know, "losing tomorrow reaching back for yesterday" (lifted from the song I'll Never Love This Way Again)?

As an Indian priest said in his homily, "You must not lose the zeal for life because God wants you to live!" Oh, now I know! "You've set my heart on fire! Filled me with love... I'm alive!" (lifted from the song I'm Alive).

Oh me, oh my, my being in the choir!

Please, for those left behind, it's best not to suffocate on those memories but to gain meaningfully from them. Learn from the mistakes and happiness of the relationship. Yes, by all means laugh. Cry and laugh if you must at the same time. Laughing again does not mean you have forgotten all about that person. Laughing again doesn't mean you are not hurting at the same time. Laughing again means you continue to love yourself, that person and those around you.

Get involved. Continue working if you can. Dance. Have a hobby. Do sports. Spend time with friends and relations. Sing. Join the Magis Deo Chorale!

Walang susuko! Walang iwanan!

Winston Cruz, ME Class 124



This was the battle cry emblazoned on the back of Fr. Manol's shirt as we wrapped up the Suyuan session sponsored by Matthew BCGG and ME Class 124.

This battle cry served as a reflection on what had gone before, and as a clarion call for how participants and facilitators should face the future.

This theme of not giving up started with the preparations. We had arranged for seven couples to attend, and I understood it took a lot of effort for the planners to get the couples to commit and sign up. As we made our way to the Darcy Hall of San Jose Seminary, we realized that not everyone could make it. After waiting for a little more than an hour for the last participant to show up, we counted three and a half couples in attendance. Our facilitator count vastly outnumbered our audience! But never say die – Walang susuko! Walang iwanan! So we went ahead and started the session.

Chacho and Marlyn Angeles started the talk and discussed the importance of listening and talking in turn. This started a series of sharing sessions and helpful guides and lessons for our participants on nurturing their relationships and making their bonds stronger through open and empathic communication. These were highlighted further by our second set of speakers, Fred and Cora Buenaventura, through conjugal dialogue exercises. Finally, the couples went through an exercise to reflect on how truly important each one is to the other. Emotions, epiphanies, realizations – swept through the participating couples. From their expressions and body language you could "hear" them saying: We should see this through despite our challenges – Walang susuko! Walang iwanan!

The Suyuan ended with a mass and a renewal of vows of the couple-participants, and capped with a graduation ceremony. With a sigh of relief and a feeling of fulfillment, Matthew and ME 124 facilitators gave each other a pat on the back for a job well done. It was satisfying to see our participants beaming with joy and renewing their commitments to each other. But this is just the beginning for the participants, as they start a journey to continue building a loving relationship, with God at the center. And as Fr. Manol's t-shirt "advised" us, we will continue supporting our small group of participants till the end.

The Suyuan was held on May 13, 2018 at Darcy Hall, San Jose Seminary, Ateneo de Manila Campus, Quezon City. The sponsors were Ricky & Trixie Sun, Zaro & Levy Pingol, Ian & Elaine Serranilla, Roel & Neneng Claros, Winston & Mae Cruz, Jun & Cecile Gacias and Mon & Nina Vinluan. Fr. Manuel Montesclaros, S.J. was the priest presider. The participants are members of KrisKap (Kristiyanong Kapitbahayan) ni San Andres. Their slogan is to build their Kapitbahayan into a Basic Christian Community.



OUTREACH**Bilibid Recollection #9: "Ang Aking Kuwento ng Pagkabuhay"**

Sally G. Chua Chiaco, John BCGG

Outreach activity Easter recollection for 250 inmates (male)**Date** Saturday, April 14, 2018**Venue** School inside the Medium Security Compound
National Bilibid Prison**Recollection time** 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.**Theme** "Ang Aking Kuwento ng Pagkabuhay" - Juan 20:19-29, 21:15-19**Food provisions** We sponsor morning snacks and lunch.

32 joined the recollection from "laya" as residents refer to visitors from the free society. 19 from Magis Deo, 13 non-Magis Deo friends. 8 were first-timers, and 24, repeat visitors. 17 of repeat visitors were from Magis Deo.

Fr. Eli Lumbo, SJ

We were accompanied inside the Medium Security Compound by Fr. Eli Lumbo, SJ, Executive Director of the Philippine Jesuit Prison Service Foundation, Inc. (PJPS). PJPS is one of the ministries of the Society of Jesus, perhaps the least known. I first met Fr. Eli in August, 2012; he was my Spiritual Director for my third Retreat in Daily Life. He introduced me to the prison in October, 2012 with a Mass in and tour of the Maximum Security Compound during Prison Awareness Month. Before that visit, the prison was nowhere in my radar screen. Today, after nine recollections, I have come to see it with a heart of compassion

A Magis Deo Outreach

God bless Magis Deo for supporting our Lenten/Easter and Advent recollections in Bilibid.

While not directly related to the community's primary mission outreach of conducting Suyuans, the recollections are opportunities to evangelize to our lost (or once lost), last, and least brothers behind bars. Every visit is a corporal act of mercy and a concrete response to Pope Francis' invitation to bring Jesus to the outcast of society.

"Sis." Djarn Pestano (Sirach BCGG)

Our first gospel reading was about Jesus breathing "Peace!" to His apostles and Thomas moving from doubt to faith. Djarn related her own journey from sorrow, confusion, need, and helplessness to acceptance, peace, and joy. The starting point was her husband Egay's sudden demise which left her struggling to put food on the table for their four young children and to put them through school. She

worked two jobs in the mornings and in the evenings, and humbly accepted financial support (and moral support as well) from Magis Deo friends and family. But God used those difficult times to draw her to Him in an intimate relationship. "Ang Pasko ng Pagkabuhay para sa akin ay ang pagbigay ng Diyos sa akin ng kaligayahan, kapayapaan, misyon, Espiritu Santo, at ng isang mapagpatawad na puso. Dahil sa mga biyayang ito, 'nakapag-move on' ako, at ngayon, maayos na ang aking mga anak, at masaya akong nagtratrabajo upang makilala ng mas maraming tao ang Diyos at mapalapit sa Kaniya. Yon ang misyon ko ngayon."

"Sis" Yoling Sevilla (John BCGG)

Yoling shared on the gospel reading about Jesus asking Peter "Mahal mo ba Ako?" three times, and telling him "Pakanin mo/pangalagaan mo ang aking mga tupa."

"Mahal mo ba Ako, Yoling? Pakanin mo ang Aking mga tupa." "Pinalaki, pinakain, pinag-alaral, inaruga naming mag-asawa ang lima naming anak, at dalawang pamangkin. Inaalagaan din naming ang nanay kong 88 taong gulang, at ang nanay ng asawa kong 92 taong gulang."

"Alagaan mo ang Aking mga tupa". "Nagtayo kaming mag-asawa ng isang pagawaan na 27 taong gulang na. Natuklasan naming hindi lang sarili naming pamilya ang aming natutulungan at nahuhubog kundi ang aming mga kabalikat at mga pamilya rin nila."

"Pakanin mo ang Aking mga tupa." "Bilang mga Kristyanong aktibista, naging mahalaga sa amin ang pagtulong sa kapwa. Katulad ng mga katutubong Ayta na nawalan ng pamumuhay dahil sa pagputok ng Pinatubo, at ng mga

kababaihang katutubo na tinuturan namin ng paghahabi para may pagkakitaan."

Lessons from our Interactive Sharing

The guide question for our small group sharing was:

"Si Hesus ay namatay at nabuhay muli para sa iyo. Buhay rin ba siya sa puso mo? Ano ang iyong kuwento ng pagkabuhay?"

The common sharing among inmates was that Bilibid is where they found God again, where they learned to pray, and where they were given a second, third, and more chances at renewed life. God is alive even in the darkest places and shows them He loves them through the people who work for them and visit them.

Record Attendance

Our Easter recollection was by far the best attended with about 250 inmates participating.

The number of visitors was just adequate to have one facilitator for each group of about ten residents. Even first-timers and singles in their 20's graciously took on the challenge. All felt blessed to be free, and to have been personally transformed by their experience.

Fr. Eli Lumbo, SJ

Many gave feedback that we should conduct recollections more frequently and in smaller groups since inmates were eager to share yet our current arrangement of accommodating some 25 groups in one hall didn't allow them to be heard and appreciated by their group mates.

OUTREACH**The College Guild**

As in the past, the recollection was capped with a musical performance by the College Guild, their way of reciprocating the kind gesture of their visitors and to use their gifts and talents to make other people happy. Watching some 25 younger residents perform did add excitement to our visit. We were happy to miss a few members who are now enjoying freedom since our last visit in December, 2017, but we were also saddened to see many new faces.

Musings of a Magis Youth on Interacting with "Residents" of Bilibid

The most striking thing to me during the encounter with our incarcerated brothers in Bilibid was how many of them said they are "thankful" to be incarcerated. Imagine, "thankful"! To be imprisoned! However, it was because, as they shared with me, their only choice was to be incarcerated or to be 6 feet under the ground. So to them, Bilibid didn't mean imprisonment. It meant life. It meant a second chance. It meant redemption.

Carline Marie G. Chua Chiaco
John BCGG Youth

A Compliment to Magis Deo

At lunch time, one inmate in his 50's asked me what Magis Deo is all about. After I explained in the shortest and simplest way, he said, "Maganda po ang ginagawa ninyo. Gusto ko pong sumali kapag nakalaya na ako. Pero kailangan po pala na kasama ko ang asawa ko? Ay, di na pala ako makakasali. Wala na po ang aking asawa." What a compliment to Magis Deo that one should desire to be a member because of the good that the community is doing!

**June Birthday Celebriants and Wedding Anniversaries****June Birthday Celebriants**

1	Delsa Sangalang	Psalm 46-Samaritans
2	Marlyn Angeles	Thessalonians
2	Deo Baccay	ME Class 116
2	Bryan Santiago	ME Class 122
2	Nessa Santos	Prodigal 102
2	Jenny Wyco	ME Class 120
3	Chito Babaran	Magnificat
3	Cora Buenaventura	Sirach
4	Cora De Guzman	Agnus Dei
6	Jhunn Coronel	Magnificat
6	Ana Pestano	ME Class 118
6	Rhea Vistan	ME Class 127
9	Petrik Punzalan	Easter
10	Mimi Parayno	Psalm 98
11	Man-Man Dela Cruz	ME Class 122
11	MJ Vistan	ME Class 127
12	Sally Bergonia	ME Class 122
12	Lille Collado	Song of Ruth
13	Dino De Veyra	ME Class 121
13	Manette Yap	Corinthians
14	Paul Puthenpurekal	Easter
15	Boy De Leon	James, Brother of John
15	Jenny Palencia	Tala
16	Dong Galang	Chronicles
18	Boy Lubguban	Exodus
19	Ton Biong	ME Class 119
19	Jang Estrada	Mt. Olivet
20	Sally Chua Chiaco	John
22	Elyn Aracid	Easter
23	Issa Comcom	ME Class 122
23	Charley Ng Sy	Agnus Dei
23	Jon Sta. Maria	Transfiguration

June Wedding Anniversaries

1	Domeng & Sarah Gagatiga	Mt. Olivet
2	Kit & Nancy Palmario	Psalm 98
4	Bobbit+ & Precy Cruz	Thessalonians
4	Chito & Arlene Tanchico	ME Class 118
7	Ali & Wheng Reyes	Francis
8	Rodel & Eden Acosta	Song of Ruth
12	Anchit & Sally Chua Chiaco	John
12	Ike+ & Josie Llamas	Genesis of David
12	Cesar & Dels Sangalang	Psalm 46-Samaritans
13	Lito & Jet Quimel	Exodus
14	Mon & Ting Yupangco	Transfiguration
17	Ted & Susan Concepcion	Archangel Gabriel
17	Ronnie & Malou Tabuzo	Song of Ruth
18	TJ & Ana Pestano	ME Class 118
20	Boy & Joy De Leon	James, Brother of John
21	Clyde & Pachot Abapo	Francis
24	Jhunn & Ellen Coronel	Magnificat
25	Jun+ & Cora Ona	Transfiguration
26	Eugene & Ethel Araullo	Francis
26	Menandro+ & Fely Redual	James, Brother of John
27	Tony & Aida Del Rosario	Francis
28	Ariel & Maan Masungsong	James, Brother of John
30	Elmer & Meg Fajardo	James, Brother of John

OUTREACH

