

Revisiting Our Prayer Life

by Malu Panlilio
Mustard Seed BCGG

As members, we have varied reasons for staying in Magis Deo. Whether it is because our marriage was helped, or we gained friends, or we were invigorated by Magis formation, one thing is sure: at one point in our Magis life, there is that desire to come close to God or grow spiritually.

The desire to grow spiritually starts with praying. The March 11 Community Celebration was an opportune time to look at prayer and revisit our prayer life.

Fr. James Gascon, SJ, Magis Spiritual Director, gave the Community a refreshing look at why we pray, what prayer is, our images of God, and prayer methods. We found ourselves relating to what was being presented, affirming that prayer is the very backbone of our Community life.

Indeed, we turn to God and pray out of need, i.e., carry out one's responsibilities, cope with problems, stress, demands of loving, loss, temptations, loneliness, transitions. In times of decision or confusion, we pray for enlightenment to gain clarity, see other perspectives and find direction. We pray to sustain good efforts; we pray for other people's needs.

During times of pain and sin, we call on God to ask for forgiveness and seek His mercy and healing.

When things are going on well, we give our thanks to God for His love and praise Him for His goodness.

We pray simply to be in company with God as we desire to be connected with Him. Prayer is our way of connecting with God, our being related to God. Prayer is the reality of our relatedness to God. Prayer is the foundation of Christian life. It is the only way to build a relationship with God.

Today, there is a resurgence of the interest and "need" for prayer. In the present culture of electronic gadgets and social media, there is realization of how vital quiet time is to get in touch one's personal interiority. There is a need to get centered, to be at home with one's self, to be attuned to the deeper voice and the more profound directions, to find a source of peace inside ourselves.

But what is prayer, really? It is an activity in which we set a time in our daily schedule, when we "say" prayers or talk to



God. More than an activity, prayer is a relationship with God who loves us, who is obsessed with us. Just like in any relationship, for example marriage, there is a need to connect with our "beloved" to know him/her more and love him/her more.

In our relationship with God, God initiates and sustains. We just need to be receptive to the initiative and respond. Prayer is not a way to earn or merit the love and blessing of God. God has given His love for us already. We just need to dispose ourselves to receive and await God's initiative.

Prayer is the climate of our soul. We face our true selves in prayer and bare before God. Prayer brings to the fore whatever season we are feeling in life, i.e., cold winter, hopeful spring, warm summer, or the dying of autumn in transition to a new phase in life.

Prayer is all of living. It goes beyond mere "saying" of prayers. Prayer is the whole of our life. It involves opening up to the Lord in all that touches us, our daily joys and pains. The day to day ordinary and extraordinary events and moods of our lives provide the substance of prayer. No part of our existence excludes God. No dichotomy between praying and living. There is no part of our lives that God is not concerned about. Not "life with prayer" but "life of prayer" – a Prayer Life. This means to think and to live in the presence of God: God is in and with my living – I am living in and with God. God manifested and present in our breathing, in every beat of our heart... in our very being. That is why the Examen is the cornerstone of our spirituality – we look for how God became part of our living.

Therefore, if prayer is God in our life, and our life in God, the way we look at God and our concept of God is crucial to our prayer life.

What then are our images of God? Is He a demanding God and we need to earn

His love? Or is God a good businessman, and never gives anything for nothing; we must pay for God's goodness? God is all powerful and so we are not free; we are not responsible? God is all knowing and so we are predestined; it doesn't matter what we do? Is God, while loving the world, not actively involved in it and we don't make a difference?

God was revealed in Jesus. Jesus, who reveals God to us, was vulnerable and subject to the human situation. We are free; we are responsible to have God's ways unfold or not.

Jesus, who reveals God to us, needed to discover his identity and be discerning of God's will. We have to learn, to discern God's ways for us and try to be faithful.

Jesus, who reveals God to us, was immersed in history and affected by it. What we do in historical situation is significant.

The Trinity creates a free universe and is faithful to that action. We are called to a deep personal relationship with the Trinity.

The Trinity works in our spirit by loving, inspiring, encouraging us. We are instruments of love, receiving and giving love... We are part of the human act by which the world is redeemed by Jesus.

To St. Ignatius of Loyola, prayer is important. We are created to share in God's love and life for eternity. The experience of this love is manifested in our response of praise, reverence and service, that is, loving God with all our heart, all our mind and all our will.

Prayer is a means, the end is God. In prayer itself, there are many methods hence it's not about the method as it is about the process and content. Some

Continued on page 13

Our 4 S's: The principle and foundation of Magis

(Reprinted from the January 2012 Magis Newsletter)

This Christmas the shadow of Sendong fell over our celebrations and the memory of flood waters in our homes returned. This Christmas it was Iligan and Cagayan de Oro – a vision of logs smashing into homes and bridges strewn across a devastated coastline, invaded our Christmas thanks to the power of media.

This time no one could blame the flood on an act of God, or of squatters clogging the waterways with shanties and plastic bags full of garbage. The finger points clearly to human greed and our lack of vigilance. Not just lives lost, but the unreal sin of stealing from the future – for the debts incurred to repair the harm will be paid by our children and children's children, pray God, not till the fifth generation!

None of us can avoid the responsibility; protecting the nation's resources is a task that belongs to us all. Stewardship. And if we are courageous enough to reflect as a community and ask ourselves what have we done, or not done, can still do, or not do – then there is hope for the future.

Reflecting on our collective abuse of God's creation, we realize how bagay our alternative lifestyle of STEWARDSHIP, SIMPLICITY, SHARING and SERVICE is when we need to put things in order.

Our first S is Stewardship – our response to a deep, heartfelt knowledge that God, out of love, when we were nothing but a thought in His imagination, created us and gave us all creation to use for all that we need, for only one reason: that He loved us completely, passionately, overflowing with generosity. And the three Persons of the Trinity live united in love so fully they needed to share that love.

We readily call ourselves "stewards" and in the post-Sendong self-examination, it became even clearer to us that an important part of our work in caring for God's earth is to empower our less privileged brothers and sisters to also become stewards, co-workers in the Divine Plan. God intended all trees for all of humankind, for all our children and their children's children, not just for a few. And so the label "less privileged"

applies not just to the financially poor, but also to the spiritually poor – those whose vision and actions include only themselves, and their closed circle. Our primary Christian, Ignatian and apostolic commitment is to serve the many, many poor, those we call "Hesus, na aking kapatid." And to recruit others in that same service.

Simplifying our lifestyles is a consequence of a total commitment to doing God's work. Simplicity means doing what it takes to get a job done, and removing all that gets in the way of getting that job done well. Even something good like dressing in the latest style or serving the best dish we cook at a BCGG meeting can be an obstacle, if it distracts us from our main calling, our first goal and objective. Ditto for other programs and activities.

Simplicity is more than being frugal. Or dressing in our shabbiest clothing when we are doing Suyuan. We can re-think "simplicity" as witnessing, being sensitive to each person's difference and adapting to that individuality whether the gap between us is material, education, social standing, or experience. Simplicity is become a more credible witness to God's tremendous way of loving.

Sharing and service are natural fruits of love. Simplifying our lifestyles because we love keeps us focused on our mission and vision. Less distractions and interesting side graces will flow. The simpler we live, the more disposable income we have to share, the more time to reflect and fine tune our service; the quality of our service is in direct proportion to the quality of our discernment.

How often have we served and left with a bad taste in the month! Sincere and unwise service can be more destructive rather than constructive, creating new problems instead of solving old ones. And horrors, can grow like a mustard tree – with birds of prey roosting in its branches.

St. Ignatius has a very practical guide to authentic service – too rich to completely discuss in a one page editorial. In a nutshell, he says we must consult God. And

in the light of His Presence, examine the beginning, middle and end of our service in the light of discerning God's will. As Ignatius counsels, we know we have chosen God's path if we and those we serve - grow in faith, hope and most especially, love.

Our self-examination begins with the inspiration for our motives – is my motive coming from God, or is it coming from my own, hidden, unconscious desires?

Look at the landmarks: the 10 Commandments, the commandments of the Church, the laws of our land, the guidelines of our community – all are major signposts and established guides. Rarely (but possible) will they not shed light on the situations we encounter daily.

Less easy to discern are the choices that impact the good of the most needy of our brothers and sisters. Here the choices of the our Spiritual leaders both living and dead, can be confusing because they are all correct – the Holy Spirit does come to us as individual tongues of flame. But which is the "more correct," what is the magis for a community of encountered Filipino families, beleaguered by a bad economy and worse weather, formed in Ignatian Spirituality, who choose to practice a lifestyle summarized in 4 Ss, who aspire to make God's kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven?

This 2012, after much prayer and discernment, our leaders are offering us a vision of Magis: offering the Suyuan in a new format – the Lakas ng Mag-asawa – with the same goals, the same beneficiaries but refocused, and with the MEFP and DSWD as new partners and companions.

Today and the days to follow, we ask ourselves as a community: what will it take for Magis Deo to realign ourselves, our mindsets, programs, resources so that we can respond with magis - to the challenges God is presenting to us? This is the time to listen with mind and heart to what God is asking us right now. Let us go with listening hearts to love and serve Him.

Dear Fellow Magis,

At the onset, allow us to greet you a happy 2017!

So many events have been happening around us, in the world, in our country, in our community.

Even before the start of our term as Chaircouple, we were faced with challenges as far as our community is concerned. We relied on our faith that the Lord will be with us as we tried our best to perform the task given to us and, true to His promise, the Lord was there every step of the way.

As we now sit as Chaircouple, we asked ourselves what more can we do? What would be our thrust and direction to address the various issues we had in the past such as lack of participation in community celebrations, outreach programs and servants in our different ministries? As we ponder on these questions, we were faced with a blank wall. We are aware that past leaderships have come up with different programs and we felt that we will just continue what works and look for various ways to improve some programs along the way.

We thought of going back to basics by revisiting the “old” culture of Magis Deo. We discussed this idea with our Spiritual Director, Fr. James, and he agreed, giving us guidance on how to put our ideas into actions.

Our first three community celebrations are all about revisiting our practices: what is Magis Deo; revisiting our prayer life; and today, revisiting the format of BCGG prayer meetings. The other plans this year include ME 2 for all couples of Magis Deo, Family Encounter, Summer Youth Camp, among others. These are just some of our usual activities that were put aside for some time for various reasons.

Despite the challenges that our community is facing now, we can only hope that the outcome of our programs will inspire us to continue our spiritual journey with one another and with the Magis Deo Community.

For this year, this is your Pastoral Council:

Cesar and Marivic Pareja - Chaircouple
Philip and Malu Panlilio - Vice-Chaircouple
Jojo and Rhea Gaddi
Lito Gonzales
Cesar and Delsa Sangalang
Rudy and Lyn Ebardo
Rico and Terry Lim resigned from the Council because of Rico's recent health problems.

More for God,

Cesar & Marivic

Obedience is freedom

February 12, 2017

Ruben M. Tanseco, SJ

What spiritual wisdom is expressed in the very first reading of today's Holy Mass: "If you choose you can keep the commandments, they will save you... Before man are life and death, good and evil, whichever he chooses shall be given him." (Sir. 15:15,17). The spiritual author W. Maestri challenges us, his readers, as follows: "Yet, we must ask ourselves whether we have become as free with our love, resources, time, and service. If not, our freedom is self-serving, which runs counter to the example of Jesus who served the 'other'... Jesus was the freest of men. Yet he never tires in saying that he came to do the will of his father. Jesus' freedom is grounded in obedience to the Father's will. This is a wisdom much in need today." (Grace Upon Grace, p.65).

Yes! Indeed! Today's culture all over the world, including our own, is predominantly narcissistic. For so many people, one's ego becomes one's god, with a small "g." One's ego can then be our greatest enemy in not following God with a capital "G." For so many people, the letter of the law becomes stronger than the spirit of the law. Even among our fellow-Catholics here in our country, so many go regularly to Sunday mass and follow other church rules, but so many of them are unfaithful to their spouses, and others are guilty of corruption in their jobs.

Here was a man in his forties, married for 15 years, with two children and a loving, dedicated wife. Moreover, he had a successful business that was earning very well. But underneath all this, he was having a relationship with another woman, which was unknown to his wife and children. He wanted to end the relationship, but somehow, he was not able to, for he really loved the other woman, just as he loved his wife. Moreover, he knew in his heart that the other woman would be heart-broken if they ended the relationship. At the beginning of the Lenten season that year, a friend of his invited him to join an Ignatian retreat of eight days in a far-away retreat house. Somehow, he felt God's call to do it, so he

went through the eight-day retreat with his friend.

He went through no less than a spiritual conversion – the first time in his life. It was so liberating that after the retreat, during which time he went through a process of discernment, he was finally able to break the relationship with the other woman. Moreover, he even helped the other woman go through a spiritual conversion process herself, and they finally separated with each one experiencing inner peace. No less than a miracle! Each one of them experienced freedom through obedience. Each one did what was God's will for one's self. Such was God's love for each one of them.

It is of utmost importance that we become aware of our ego as our greatest enemy in following God's will. Freedom from our ego can be our greatest instrument in being obedient to God's commandment of love. God the Father exemplified this to us through God the Son. Jesus Christ came to be one among us and became our human role model in obeying God's will of love. This led the human Christ to be free from his ego and became attached to God the Father and God the Holy Spirit in loving all of creation.

In our own lives, Christ showed us the way of freely loving God and neighbor, not only through his preaching, but more importantly, through his life and actions. Early in his adult life, he was led by the Holy Spirit to the desert where he fasted for no less than forty days and forty nights. At the end of that period, human that he was, the devil tempted him no less than three times. He strongly said No! to each temptation, and said at the end: "The Lord your God, shall you worship and him alone shall you serve." (Mt. 4:10).

Later on, he called his first disciples, went around all of Galilee, proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom, and cured those who were sick with different diseases. As our current Pope Francis would remind us, we as Christ's disciples must live our



lives with mercy and compassion. This was how the human Christ lived his. And the three Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke repeated what Christ taught and lived as God's greatest commandment for us all: "You shall love the Lord your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Mt. 22:37-40; Mk. 12:28-34; Lk. 10:25-28). When everything is said and done, love is the answer.

The January 30, 2017 issue of Time Magazine carried a one-page article by Ann Patchet entitled: "The President Who Loved." She was referring to President Obama who recently stepped down from office after eight years. Let me end by quoting her: "For eight years, President Obama gave the American people the example of his careful consideration, compassion, rigorous intelligence, and, wonder of wonders, love. Love was not something I would have previously thought to look for in a President, but now I'm wondering how I'll do without it... There was love in the constant celebration of the achievement of others, in the President's willingness to shine the klieg light of his attention onto veterans, scientists, artists, and educators. He loves books! And Obama gave more Presidential Medals of Freedom than any other President, saving the last one for his Vice-President, Joe Biden, whom he called 'my brother' at the surprise ceremony. Biden, like the rest of us watching, was in tears." God of Love, Amen.

Hate confession? Here's why you should reconsider

James Martin, SJ

February 18, 2017

<http://www.americamagazine.org>

I have a Catholic friend who hates confession. I am not going to break any confidences, but my friend despises confession so much that he hasn't gone for a decade. He has offered several reasons why he doesn't go to what is formally called the sacrament of reconciliation. He is afraid that his sins are now too much to confess all at once; he is frightened of what the priest might say (he's had a few bad experiences); and he is too busy.

My friend is not the only person I've met who feels this way. Several years ago, while directing a retreat, I met a woman who said that she hadn't gone for 20 years. Her reason was also an unpleasant experience with a priest during the sacrament. As I recall, he berated her for not coming in more frequently.

In response, I asked her: "If you had a bad experience with a physician, would you would never see a physician again?" However, even after we talked about her experiences, she was hesitant to return. Our spiritual direction session was brief, and by the time our 20 minutes was up it was time for another retreatant. So, I have no idea if she ever returned to the confessional.

Sometimes I feel nearly tongue-tied in these situations. Not because I judge people in these situations to be bad Catholics, or because I don't know any helpful responses to these common roadblocks. Rather, it's because I go to confession frequently. Very frequently. And I like it.

Admittedly, it's easier for me to do when I live in a house filled with priests, and especially when my spiritual director is a member of my community. If I ever feel burdened by sin, or even a sin, all I need to do is knock on someone's door and ask.

On the other hand, it's arguably harder, since these are men with whom I live and, in many instances, work. After confessing your sins to someone, you may see the fellow at breakfast the next morning. Or at an editorial meeting. But that has never bothered me, because I figure that anyone who lives or works with me already knows I am not perfect.

I often ponder what makes me more inclined to go than the people I mentioned. I am certainly not any holier than anyone else—not by a long shot. It's not that I have fewer sins.

Maybe it's the frequency. I go to confession once a month, if not more. I'm used to it. Consequently, it ceases to hold any conceivable fear. Something like a person who has a fear of flying taking 50 flights in one year, and then suddenly realizing that he's comfortable on a plane. He knows there will inevitably be turbulence and can say, "I'm used to this. And it is not as bad as I thought it would be."

Sometimes I tell skittish Catholics how wonderful it feels to be honest with God in the sacrament. The old argument against confession that you can always tell God your sins is a good one. Of course you can. But often you don't. Moreover, it helps to verbalize your sins with another person. And hearing the words of absolution, *viva voce*, is a lot more powerful than intuiting them in prayer. At least for me.

My comfort level may also stem from experiences with confession from the other side. When hearing confessions, and offering absolution, I can see how people feel unburdened. They exhale. They relax. They smile. And I can feel how grateful they are to be forgiven for something they thought was unforgivable. All that makes confession precious to me.

But mainly I like the way I feel afterward, as if God had given me another chance—which, of course, God has. And no matter if I'm hearing confessions or going to confession, I always think of what my theology professor, Peter Fink, S.J., told our class, "Confession isn't about how bad you are, but how good God is."

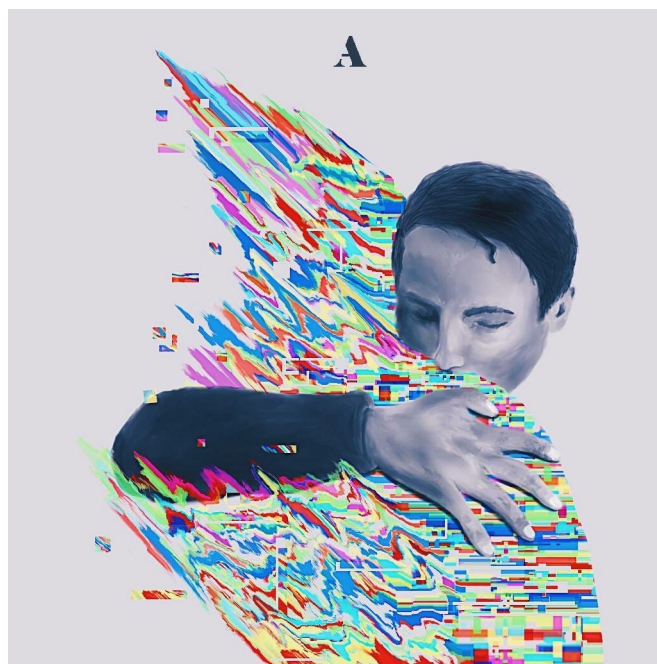
I wish I could invite everyone who has stayed away to come back. And for returnees, I hope you hear some form of what I say to people who haven't been to confession for years: "Welcome back."

How has the meaning of love evolved in my life through the years?

Psalmaritans BCGG

Illustration by: *Levenspeil Sangalang*

Magis Youth



Delsa Sangalang

This year marks the 20th anniversary when I said “I do” to Cesar in front of a judge in Biñan. We started out as friends and that connectedness and warmth of friendship we felt 20 years ago culminated with us taking the big leap towards the conscious decision to build a life together.

In the years that followed, our love changed many times over. Love evolves... Love is a living, dynamic feeling that adapts and grows to meet the changes in our lives and in our relationship. In all the years of our marriage, there were times things just sailed away so easily; I would just have to lean back and enjoy the journey. But no matter how wonderful the person you married is, there will also be times you wonder what you got yourself into. In those tough moments, I always get back to the covenant I made in 2003 with Cesar and with God. I have never forgotten the promise I made to take care of that love we’ve created.

Cesar and I have traveled the world together and have many memories, but the best memories where I feel loved are the everyday conversations and actions where we sometimes argue but accept each other despite our differences. Sure, I seldom feel the butterflies in my stomach now every time I see Cesar but this has been replaced by a much more fulfilling tenderness that I can always fall into its comfort. Life can bring many variables but because everything I do begins and ends with the firm commitment to “we,” with God as our guide, I can say that I have loved and married the right partner, my best friend.

Lito Naldo

When I attended my first MEW in 1996 with my wife Anne, the most significant lesson I learned was that “love is a decision... not a feeling!” Back then, it seemed so simple... as long as I continue to decide to love Anne even at times when she is unlovable, our marriage will be a success.

As the years passed, I realized one very important truth in life... “I cannot give what I do not have!” In order for me to continue giving love, I first have to find myself receiving it. I have to feel in my heart and soul that I am loved, otherwise, I cannot give love even if I wanted to. Unfortunately, it was only Anne whom I expected to give me love... unfortunate not because she wasn’t loving me, but because I was not sensitive enough to realize and feel the kind of love she was giving me. People show and receive or perceive love differently... Anne and I were not exempt from that. And since Anne was the only source of love that I was longing for, eventually, I found myself empty, out of love... with nothing to give anymore. I almost gave up Anne and our marriage...

But God is great! He never gave up on me! God never stopped trying to reach me, even if I was trying to keep myself away from Him... Recently, He eventually reached me... finally making me realize that it was only He, and no one else who can give me the kind of love that I wanted and needed. God has forgiven my sins and gave me His Only Son, to save me, and bring me back to His fold. I recently realized that the only source of true, everlasting and never-ending love is God only, and no one else. Therefore, the only way that I can give Anne and all my loved ones the never-ending love that I should give, I should always be filled with God’s love, in my heart and soul. Anne and I still need to give each other love every day, but as long as both of us receive, accept, and feel the love of God, we never run out of love to give... Amen.

Agnes Tumaneng

We were married for 27 years when Phil left me for good. I would say that from the time we met in 1985, became steady for three and a half years, got married in 1988, and renewed our married vows last 2013... love never really evolved much through the years. Our love was practically the same, but its intensity grew stronger and deeper. Pure love stands the test of time! As the saying goes, fondness lessens with the quantity of contact, but the greatest love knows no boundaries and has memories of quality times spent together!

I wrote my last love letter to Phil last July 8, 2016. I had the chance to write it before he passed away last July 20, 2016. I recovered this letter from his phone inbox during his wake. Allow me to share:

Dearest Dad,

It was really a great chance to make palanca letters to our kids esp to Piolo... So blessed that we were able to do it pa☐. It was several years when we did it for each other... kainggit☐. Medyo high tech na now kasi thru text na....

I'm trying my best to be a good wife to you but sometimes I'm failing but after so many years we tried to be patient to each other... We got so many imperfections but I hope we still try to make up for each other... This time I'm becoming super sensitive and sometimes you become so hot-tempered... But I hope and pray mabawasan natin ito.

I don't get to nag you but I don't have so much patience with our maid... Yesterday during the mass I felt so embarrassed when you turn your head to me re mother's role in the family... Feel ko napahiya ako sa mga bata with people around. Simple things like this makes me really sensitive maybe because of my menopause condition. I'm trying my best to control all the signs pero I get to notice changes in me☐. Please bear with me Dad.

Hope we can communicate and open our line anytime... We can talk and text hahaha. This is what we learned naman di ba in our ME weekend.

I hope we can have a great journey as we age... hope we can affirm each other most of the time... hope we can have a great spiritual journey... Thanks for giving me too a sacred space☐. Thank you so much for all the gracious understanding, great respect and I love you very much☐.

Mommy

Truly indeed, our love has transcended all boundaries. For after all, we are meant to see each other soon and lucky me that the one person whom I love so much has assumed the role of opening the door to eternal life in heaven for me!!!

Myling Hernandez

I sought love in my younger years to fill my needs. And when the love I knew no longer met my needs I justified falling out of love. I felt oppressed when a person who's supposed to love me failed to meet my needs. I thought that love failed me then.

I am now past my middle age, and love this time is what I share from my overflowing cup. As I see it, sin was a necessary accomplice to receiving this grace. For as sin abounds, grace abounds all the more. Unlike the father of the prodigal son who welcomed his son with open arms when the son came home, I believe that my Father left home to seek me like the shepherd who lost his sheep. This love pursued and filled me.

The challenge now is to be able to share this gift: to accept as I have been accepted, to forgive as I have been forgiven, and to give as I have received.

Mia Parada

Experiencing God's unconditional love in my 50 years of existence and inspiring to do more for Him...

Being loved by my family in spite of my imperfections...

Learning to love and accept others just the way they are...

Staying married and in love for the past 29 years with my true love, Mahal, through thick and thin... Nurturing our commitment to be strong and one in everything...

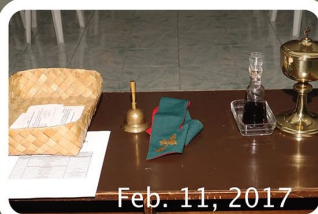
Love is being a good steward to my children, guiding them to be good, to give back, to love and serve God...

Service in a community without expecting anything in return...

is LOVE.

February 11, 2017 Community Celebration – Speaker/Celebrant:
Fr. James Gascon – Topic: Revisiting our Prayer Life...

Magis Deo ComCel
What is Prayer, really
Prayer as all of living



Receive the Blessings of a **MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER**

DATE: MARCH 10-12, 2017
VENUE: ST. JAMES RETREAT HOUSE, NEOGAN, TAGAYTAY CITY



FR. JAMES U. GASCON, SJ
SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

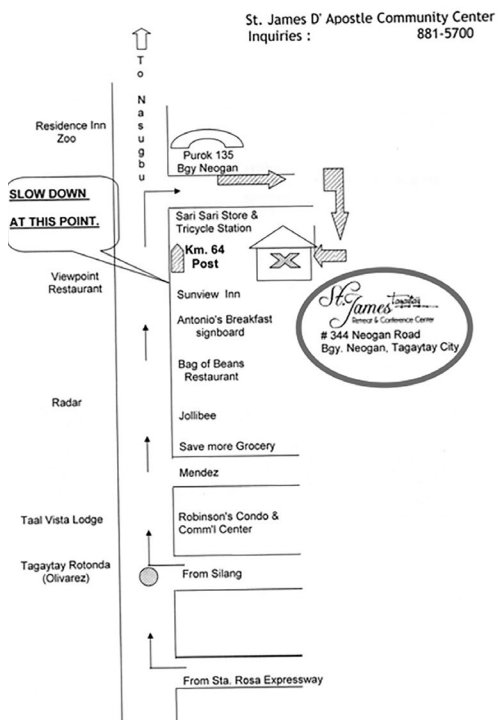
FEE OF PHP4,500.00 PER COUPLE

FOR OTHER DETAILS, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO
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MAGIS DEO OFFICE: (02) 426-7191
MARIVIC PAREJA: 0918-979-7576
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**MARRIAGE
ENCOUNTER
WEEKEND**



**PLEASE JOIN THE
"HARANA" ON
MARCH 12,
SUNDAY, 2:00PM**

HEROES OF EDSA

LEVEN SPEIL SANGALANG
MAGIS YOUTH

Last Saturday, February 25, 2017, was the 31st anniversary of what people will always remember as the EDSA People Power Revolution. Some celebrated in conscious peace, and some in the great outdoors; an estimated 2,000 protesters were at the People Power Monument. News, photos and posts from mass media saw a divide of protesters to the event, both sides singing what they truly believe to be right through a loud and proud chorus.

Singing with the seasoned protesters were the well-educated, exuberant youth, who are now called “millennials.” Even though they weren’t thrown into the world during the unfortunate Martial Law period, their willful stand and steadfastness to fight against any more cases of abuse through power echoes the spirit of the Filipino fighters in ‘86. They proved that they shouldn’t be underestimated, that they aren’t just children behind a phone, sitting down passively.



The harmonious, silent, and bloodless coda of the '86 People Power Revolution that echoed in the streets of EDSA will always be heard and remembered. It established that we Filipinos are heroes who will never be unsung. The sea of people, food, flowers, fists with rosaries in the air, and just the right words to say will be written in history; this will never be erased from our minds, and the entire world's. Let's make it louder for the generations to come.

Works cited: <http://news.abs-cbn.com/news/02/24/17/millennials-take-lead-more-than-3-decades-after-edsa-people-power>

<http://www.philstar.com/inbox-world/660377/what-are-your-most-vivid-memories-edsa-1986>

PROSE AND POETRY

Chacho Angeles, Thessalonians BCGG

Our Father

Our Father

You are not some pillar of cloud,
Nor a disemboweled voice in a
Burning bush, ordering some
Heavyweight faithful around.
You are my and everybody's caring
Papa, making sure that we have
All that we will need in this life
And thereafter.

You are in some place called heaven.
In my youth I was told that it's a place
Where You, angels and good spirits live
Among fluffy clouds, with the sound of
Harps soothingly playing the whole day.
(The devils, the bad spirits live in Hell,
Where fires flare eternal, burning and
Torturing writhing and twisted souls.)
But later on I learned that such places
May not be, as places I know in this life.
Heaven is a state of peace, love and life,
And hell is a state of strife, hate and death.

You are Holy, totally other from me.
A gulf, as wide as that abyss between
Abraham and Lazarus and the uncaring
Rich man, separates me from You.
You are a divine being, and I am clay
With Your spirit. You are in me and
In all of creation, but transcending
All these. Me? I can only aspire
To be humanly holy, hopefully.

Your kingdom is not a political realm.
You are not a mighty, powerful king,
Resplendent in purple flowing robes,
On Your head a gem-studded golden
Crown, whose minions kill on your
Say so, though maybe You can be.
You are lord in my heart, in my family,
In my neighbor, in my country, in all
Of mankind, whenever we do what
You will. And Your reign endures
Through my relationship with You
In love, until all things pass.

Creation always follows Your will,
And unfolds in accordance with the
Blueprint you designed, revealed in
Intricate, complexly wondrous ways,
Moving at Your own pace. This design
Is pure joy with no limits, with no end.
It is beauty created in an instant,
Yet is in constant flux until it
Returns to You, its source.

Father You are grace-filled, which
You unceasingly, unselfishly share
With me and with all of us. My spirit,
You lift up when I am down and in
Darkness, with Your joy. My mind,
You make clear and guide, when
Clouded and confused. My body,
You sustain. It is my kind who,
By some sleight of the system,
Withhold and deprive from many,
These elemental needs.

Often I turn my back on You, and
As I do this, I hurt the people I am
With, knowingly or not, thinking only
Of myself, or of those who are close
To me. When it hurts, I then try to
Return to You, and expect some
Welcome mat. Father let me not
Be blind to those who ask me for
Forgiveness when they hurt me,
For they are frail as I am weak, and
Crash into the darkness like me.

You, Father, are always there to catch
Me when I fall. Always stumbling,
I must learn to rise. And while the
Dark lord enchants me with shiny
Trinkets, golden visions, a famous
Life, violent, yet fast and easy
Solutions to problems, only to fall
Forevermore, You give me the
Means to save myself from that
Darkness within me, from my pain,
My hurts and difficulties. You sent
Your Son, the great shining that dispels
This darkness, to teach me mercy,
Sacrifice, sharing, kindness, and
Love, and bridge this great abyss
Separating me from You. And when
My heart learns from His heart, both
Sacred and human, then I can truly be
Your son.
Amen.

THE LOVES OF MY LIFE

(A tribute)

You'd think perhaps that I'm a whore
to say that I am blessed with more
than just one man to call my own.

Before you judge my fickle heart
listen to these tales of love.

The first man in my life gave
me no diamonds and pearls
for these he didn't have at all.
Security and warmth he shared
with friend to friend unfurled.

He was not even six feet tall
so small a frame for burdens odd,
but what he did not have in height
in love he grew ten feet above.

When mountains seemed insurmountable
and dark clouds hid the hope of dawn
his quiet smile and resolute tone
urged me to rise up from the fall.
Think you it's wrong for me to be
smitten with love for such as he?

This gentle being married my mother
when he was all of twenty and seven.

Now let me speak in happy verse
of the second man who walked into
my life with ease and manly verve
when Youth was new and at its best.

Eyes twinkling with an impish grin,
he told me I was his only queen.
My spirit soared and soon I found
I could not help but be spellbound.

We dreamed dreams of castles and kings
and danced to the music of angels' wings
with arms locked in love's ecstatic hug
bound each to each with love profound.

We sailed along the tide of time
through stormy weather and better clime
despite the wrinkles on our brows
love stands triumphant and unbowed.
Think you it's wrong for me to be
smitten with love for such as he?

This friend and lover married me
When I was all of four and twenty.

The third man is a King of woman born
amid the feel and scent of hay,
a King with thistle crowned not gold.
He stands tall among all men yet stoops
to wash the dust from off their feet.

He makes celebrities of humble men
and humbles those whose pride destroys.
He asks so much of me, a weakling born
but weakens when my tears begin to fall.

Think you it's wrong for me to be
smitten with love for such as He?
This man of contradictions died for me
when He was all of three and thirty.

Teresita "Tita K" O. Kosca
1989

The World, the World

In this time of need,
There's a whole world to feed.
The world today
Is like a dog astray.

Hungry for food,
Hungry for power
The world...
Is it really ours?

As I see it,
I could not believe it...
In this time of globalization
Are we one nation?

As God looks down on His creation,
The endless waters;
The vast green forests;
The whistling wind whipping through the air
And animals lurking everywhere,
He rests His eyes on us.

The leaders of every nation
Pointing fingers...
How can we stop this?
Unity can overcome poverty.
Cohesion can overthrow corruption.

The world, the world,
Is it really ours?

Marco Miguel Kosca Lim
Gr. 7 - D
De La Salle Green Hills

Coco, as Marco is fondly called by family and friends, is the first and eldest grandson of Tony and Tita Kosca, Past National President Couple, 1994 - 1995. He loves to read and play basketball in his spare time. Asked why he wrote this poem, he said this is what he felt about the world around him now.

What is Love?

Levenspeil Sangalang

Magis Youth



Oh February. The love month.

Lots of couples triumphantly celebrate love on the 14th day of the said month. It's odd, that when the month arrives, hues of red and pink get more and more noticeable. Maybe that's because red balloons, rose bouquets, and specially-packaged confections proliferate in the market once more. Some may find it a sight for sore eyes, and some eyes... get sore.

But as Filipinos, we find ways to turn tables around: we make solitude, even bitterness, a relatable and a redeeming experience that will make us feel good. In early February, a new viral collective emerged -- the series of Jollibee commercials that can still be watched on various web sites and on television. This exciting and successful marketing strategy followed a string of *hugot*-yet-relatable commercials and posts. Moreover, the *tambalan* called *LizQuen* (stars Liza Soberano and Enrique Gil) has just released their romantic-comedy film *My Ex & Whys*. A more mature film called *I'm Drunk, I Love You* turned heads as well, and *AIDub* premieres their new show, *Destined to Be Yours*. So what's the point in all of these things that we consume? Do they fully define love?

Maybe this doesn't have to be. Love could be your mom preparing a sumptuous lunch as she calls your name from the kitchen. Love could be your daughter studying hard, not only for her sake but for the whole family's. Love could be your annoying brother, as he hovers around you in playful mockery because maybe that's how he expresses his care. Love could be you, alone in your comfy pajamas, with your newly-found TV series to binge-watch, with a snack clasped in hand. There is no official definition of love. It's meant to be felt. And what you feel is in accordance with how you understand and grasp it. So if you're still struggling to define it, stop and think for a while, and look — love, and opportunities to love, are all around. That's why we need not have a grand celebration of love every February 14 only. Always remember: you have a bunch of familiar people around you, some you haven't even noticed, and the entire 365 days of the year to give and receive love.

Revisiting Our...page 1

prayer methods include the examen of consciousness, pondering the Scripture with your heart, gospel contemplation, lectio divina, conversation with God – “Colloquy”; and some important points on repetition.

Fr. Gascon suggests the following to help us pray better:

- Choose your prayer place and prayer time well. Do not rush when praying.
- Begging in prayer humbles and disposes us to pray better.
- Selection of prayer points is very important.
- Need to learn to pray more with our hearts and less with our minds.
- Too much prayer matter can be unproductive. Learn to relish in prayer.
- “Repeating” our prayer and staying where we have gained fruit is a form of relishing.

- Consolation is never an end in itself.
- We become whom we contemplate.
- Writing down the fruits of our prayer in a journal can help us pray better.
- Prayer must animate love in us and love must animate prayer in us.

Faithfulness in prayer creates memories with God and allows God to school us in other virtues. What a wonderful gift from God!

God never leaves us alone

The year just passed has been the most challenging in my entire life. I do not recall any other year with a greater combination of major crises and challenges.

Of course, over the course of my leadership career, I have been taught, trained and molded to think of problems as mere situations, then as challenges, and then much later as opportunities.

For one, I agree that leading the community in 2016 was an opportunity to serve our members and do something different. While we were concerned about our competence and readiness, we did take it as an opportunity to serve. The opportunity, however, was somewhat stymied by two other crisis situations, and some real problems I had to face and manage during the year.

The complete shutdown of the factory I was running and the laying off of over 650 people is one that I would not consider an opportunity to learn. Unless it was an experience I desired to have, which I did not. It was a major disappointment, and something I was burdened with long before its actual announcement and execution (I learned of the decision sometime in January 2016 but was only announced in August).

"We may ignore, but we can
nowhere evade, the

presence of God." ~ C. S. Lewis

I would consider my wife's cancer diagnosis in March as a combination of a situation I needed to manage with the family, something we needed to work out in our family's financials considering I was retiring, and a challenge in terms of managing the treatment-related travels and schedules, along with my work load as we were winding down our factory operations. Yes, I believe that this was also an opportunity for me to be closer to God.

The impending shutdown of our factory and related work and stress, my wife's treatment, the travel schedules, and attending to the community's needs through the meetings provided some huge challenges. It was indeed unnerving. But nevertheless, I trusted in the Lord's love and inspiration and in the prayers of many people. Nothing deterred me and my wife nor slowed us down in the process of dealing with all of these challenges throughout the year. I

believe I responded accordingly and appropriately.

I can only thank the many people who were praying for me and the various situations I was in, and the Lord for breezing me through the entire 2016. I can only look back with gratitude, blessedness and peace.

A scientist and a philosopher are being chased by a hungry lion.

The scientist makes some quick calculations and says, "It's no good trying to outrun it. It's

catching up!"

The philosopher keeps a little ahead and replies, "I'm not trying to outrun the lion, I'm trying to outrun you!"

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God indeed has His ways. The timing of my retirement could not have been better. His timing is way better than mine.

In agreement with my boss, I had planned on getting out on April 1, 2017. Everything was set. My back-up and replacement GM, a Swede who temporarily handled a project in Mexico, was to come back in December 2016 and we would have a 3-month transition in January to March, 2017.

But God recognized certain things I never saw. Of course. I needed a lot of time with my wife and we needed to travel a lot. And, so He must have approved of certain events. The rest is history. My factory was closed down. Before that, my schedule eased up, I was able to travel and was gone for a total of 4 weeks before the shutdown, and another 2 weeks immediately after the shutdown.

We also needed money for my wife's treatment and our trips. The retirement package I received from the company came in very handy.

"The only fear I have is to fear to get out of the will of God. Outside of the will of God, there's nothing I want, and in the will of God there's nothing I fear, for God has sworn to keep me in His will." – A. W. Tozer

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It would have been very, very challenging to accomplish what we needed to do between July and December had I been required to still work. Not that I was happy my factory closed down and let go of over 600 people – these were simply beyond my control – but things turned out much better than I wanted them to be.

It is just plain impossible for me to say that God was not at work in my life. God was looking after me and my wife.

Psalms 23:4 "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me."

A priest, a minister, and a rabbi wanted to see who was best at his job. So each one goes into the woods, finds a bear, and attempts to convert it. Later, they all get together. The priest begins: "When I found the bear, I read to him from the catechism and sprinkled him with holy water. Next week is his first Communion."

"I found a bear by the stream," says the minister, "and preached God's holy Word. The bear was so mesmerized that he let me baptize him."

They both look down at the rabbi, who is in a body cast and lying on a gurney. "Looking back," he says, "maybe I shouldn't have started with the circumcision."

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My beloved bodyguard

Leslie Gatchalian, Psalm 98 BCGG

Soon after I was conceived, God commissioned a buddy for me – my Guardian Angel – ever vigilant and caring, with the ultimate goal of us journeying together to that place called Paradise. Such sweet delight is the thought that my angel is always at my side, ready to battle for me. I feel so special. St. Thomas Aquinas wrote: “From the very moment of his birth man has an angel guardian appointed to him” (Summa Theologica, I, 113, 5).

Angels appear in many forms. They can also enter a person to communicate, then leave afterwards. I remember very well when my spouse and I got lost in the looping intersections of the highways while en route from New York to Johns Hopkins University in Maryland. Sans Waze or Google Maps, we tried to understand the one dollar map we laid out on the hood of our car at a big, almost empty parking lot. Out of the blue, two white-haired, smiling and friendly grandparents, walking hand in hand, stopped and gave us directions without our even asking. The directions were so clear we remembered without having to jot them down. We looked at the map again for a few seconds, and when we turned to thank them, they were gone! It was impossible for them to walk that fast and disappear in from the vast empty parking lot. We got to the university and back safe and sound.

The bible mentions angels several times. Genesis 28:10-19 mentions a ladder that Jacob saw in his dreams; a ladder where angels go up and down. Also, Jesus told Nathaniel he will see angels go up and down between the earth and heaven. Let your designated dedicated angel, your constant companion since conception, guide you in your journey to heaven. I wonder: it must be extremely painful for them if they fail to bring someone to live eternally with God the Father in heaven, to face God daily, ascending and descending from heaven

They report and get instructions – Matthew 18:10 “See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father

Realizing that angels are real, I gave my angel bodyguard a nickname in order to get more personal with my angel. But I came across an article by Philip Kosloski, and took note that the Holy Mother Church discourages doing so: “The practice of assign-

ing names to the Holy Angels should be discouraged, except in the cases of Gabriel, Raphael and Michael whose names are contained in Holy Scripture.” (Congregation of Divine Worship and the Sacraments, The Directory of Popular Piety, n. 217, 2001). Hence, my bodyguard remains to be named plainly my Guardian Angel, just like your Guardian Angel. We can call on them but authority over them belongs to God. They get their instructions from Him alone.

On September 11, 2001 I was with my sons in the San Francisco Bay Area. My older son woke up shaking and in distress, mumbling that thousands of angels were busy saving people. He said so many were bleeding and hurt and dying, that the Angels were trying to save as many as they could, coming back from heaven after a soul was brought up. I got irked by what seemed to be senseless talk, and told him to stop but he continued talking about the dream that woke him up. A little later, a friend called and asked if I was watching the news. My jaw dropped in disbelief when I watched the news and saw a plane going straight into the North Tower of the World Trade Center. Later, another went into the other tower. Thousands died that day.

My winged friend, my bodyguard

The reality of angels did not quite stick deep in my mind until about a year ago when I experienced relentless coughing that made me almost faint. I had difficulty breathing. Coughing and going out of breath, I fell lying down. I did not want to call on the dead for fear of disturbing them. However, I was forced to call on my son who passed away some years ago, to ask the Holy Angels to help me in my distress. Immediately I saw two tall angels come down swiftly and stop at the side of my bed. My son was between them and he was gesturing that this was his mom whom he asked them to help. I closed my eyes after seeing them, felt at peace, and was suddenly able to breathe freely though still lying down with my mouth closed. As a doctor, I cannot understand how asthmatic cough can be instantly stopped.

I can no longer disregard the presence of Holy Angels. The ones I saw were very fair, wearing white robes, big, but quiet even though they traveled in a flash. I cannot remember seeing their faces but their wings looked strong and sturdy though seemingly soft where they touched my son.

Angels surround us. And as many people as there are in a room, there are as many angels, or even more. Looking at a person now, I know they have a bodyguard standing by. It is so comforting knowing that we are never alone.

It is up for us to befriend our angels who are God-given for our guidance and safety. They are our allies whom we can tap on anytime. They come with the speed of thought, provided it is not against the will of God.

The swiftness of an angel's movement is not measured by the quantity of his power, but according to the determination of his will (Summa Theologica, I, 53, 3, ad 1).

People with near-death experiences give accounts of bright light, or of tunnels with a light at the end. It must be a person's Guardian Angel leading them where to go. Quoting Philip Kosloski: “In the beginning of creation, God made the light.” All angels in the world were created at one instance at the very beginning of creation. One theory is that on the first day when God made “light,” the light He made was the angels (Gen. 1:3). This is further confirmed when God “divided the light from the darkness,” referring to the rebellion of the angels led by Lucifer (Gen. 1:4). This is brought forth by Saint Augustine (<http://www.philipkosloski.com/5-facts-you-need-to-know-about-your-guardian-angel/>).

May our angels have enough strength, endurance and will power to keep tugging us towards the right direction, never tiring nor feeling hopeless when show willful disrespect for what God wants us to do. May our angels' wings never shed due to the stresses we may bring. May our angels never give up till we see their faces and join them eternally in heaven.

Amen!

God never leaves...

The year 2017 started with a big bang. I am retired and adjusting well. We were traveling 6 of the first 8 weeks of the year. But that's another story. Although I am always optimistic about the new year and the future, nothing is certain as I've always known it to be except one thing. God will always be around...

Genesis 28:15 “Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.”

Dates to Remember 2017

Community Celebration	May 6, June 3, July 1, Aug 5, Sept 2, Oct 14, Nov 18
Lenten Recollection	April 08
ME Weekend	March 10-12
Prayer Workshop	April 22 (tentative)
Spiritual Deepening Retreat	April 28-30 (tentative)
Family Encounter Weekend (BLD-sponsored)	May 5-7 (tentative)
Family Encounter Weekend (Magis-sponsored)	May 26-28 (tentative)
Orientation Workshop for ME Classes/New BCGG Members	June 10
AIR-God's Love; SD-Fr. Mon bautista	July 21-23
AIR-God's Love; SD-Fr. Bob Buenconsejo	October 27-29
Couple's Night	June 16
Magis Golf Tournament	October 20
Advent Recollection	Nov 18
Family Day	Dec 3

March Birthday Celebrants

3	Nitz Eslava	Psalmaritans
8	Marivic Pareja	Prodigal 102
11	Bib De Guzman	Archangel Gabriel
13	Nancy Martin	Tala
13	Denis Rago	Agnus Dei
13	Wheng Reyes	Francis
13	Mon Yupangco	Transfiguration
14	Franco Reyes	Archangel Gabriel
16	Dodo Sta. Maria	Transfiguration
17	Eden Acosta	Song of Ruth
18	Rache Ebarido	Tala
18	Philip Panlilio	Mustard Seed
18	Ali Reyes	Francis
18	Neds Vargas	Easter
19	Josephus Jimenez	Cana
23	Shari Consulta	Mustard Seed
24	Gene Bañez	Agnus Dei
24	Jane Fernandez	ME Class 104
26	Mely Peralta	Exodus
26	Mike Santos	Prodigal 102
27	Tatic Castillo	Cana
28	Siony Martinez	Magnificat
29	Celso Martinez	Magnificat
30	Alex Reyes	Prodigal 102
31	Ellen Coronel	Magnificat

March Wedding Anniversaries

Wedding Day	Name	BCGG/Class
5	Mike & Celine Magpayo	Sirach
13	Mennen & Elyn Aracid	Easter
16	George & Beng Pascual	Corinthians
24	Matt & Rosie Pineda	St. Peter
26	Ciel & Manette Yap	Corinthians
27	Jay & Gie Belga	Mustard Seed
30	Easley & Elaine Lariosa	Matthew



Magis

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

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