

Magis

Formation for Mission



*Stewardship
Simplicity
Sharing
Service*

Official Publication of the Magis Deo Community
October 2018 Issue

Celebrating Pearl

We rejoice with the pearl
of great price

God calls us to Holiness

Be holy and
blameless in love

In deep gratitude

Seeking God for the
greater good

Tribute to Lucy

Lover, mother,
and best friend

Magis Hits the Fairway

A day full of
accomplished goals



About the Cover



In this month's issue, respective writers ponder on their reflections and realizations as they enter the 30th anniversary of the *Magis Deo* community. Hand in hand through the trials and tribulations of life, the community's members remain as strong and everlasting as pearls.

Because of these, illustrator Levenspeil R. Sangalang of Magis Youth, enlivened his vision of *Magis Deo's* 30th Pearl Anniversary with God at the center of our own lives. Wearing a shining pearl necklace, he sheds his light even in our darkest times; to find optimism in His plan.

Receive the Blessings of a
MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER

DATE: NOVEMBER 23-25, 2018
VENUE: BLD COVENANT HOUSE
AND RETREAT CENTER,
DASMARIÑAS, CAVITE

Fr. James Gascon SJ
SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

FEE OF PHP4,500.00 PER COUPLE
FOR OTHER DETAILS, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE
TO CONTACT US:
MAGIS DEO OFFICE: (02) 426-7191
MARIVIC PAREJA: 0918-979-7576
JOSIE LLAMAS: 0917-893-4005
JANE ALDEGUER: 0917-822-5263

Magis			Official Publication of the Magis Deo Community		
2/F RMT CeFam Bldg., ADMU Campus, Q.C.					
Editor-in-Chief		Council Chaircouple		Photographers	
Rufo Dacanay		Philip & Malu Panlilio		Anchit Chua Chiaco	
Managing Editors		Editorial Board		Publication	
Cesar & Delsa Sangalang		Sally Chua Chiaco		Mimi Santos	
Illustrator/Layout Artist		Editorial Board		Spiritual Director	
Levenspeil Sangalang		Sally Chua Chiaco		Fr. James Gascon, SJ	
		Tina Mossesgeld			
		Ricky & Trixie Sun			
		Joy Uy-Tioco			

Table of Contents

EDITORIAL	4	EVENTS	17
<i>In Deep Gratitude</i>		<i>Magis Night</i> by Leo Soliman, Corinthians BCGG	
COUNCIL CORNER	5	MUSICAL NOTES	18
<i>Strength In Numbers</i> by Cesar & Delsa Sangalang, Samaritans BCGG		<i>Angel of God</i> by Leslie Gatchalian, Psalm 98 BCGG	
COMMUNITY CELEBRATION	6	PILGRIM PIT STOP	19
<i>God Calls Us to Holiness</i> by Leo Soliman, Corinthians BCGG		<i>On the Journey to Midlife</i> by Zarah Gagatiga, Emmanuel BCGG	
<i>Called to be COMPANIONS of CHRIST</i> by by Levy & Roxanne Espiritu, Group Praxis Ministry		MAGIS YOUTH	
THE BREAD OF LIFE	8	<i>Growing Up</i> by Rianna San Gabriel, Magis Youth	
<i>The bread of life</i> by Fr. Ruben M. Tanseco, SJ		PROSE AND POETRY	20
<i>Tribute to Father Ruben M. Tanseco, SJ</i> by Tina and Monchito Mossesgeld, Cana BCGG		<i>Ang Daan ng Puso, Life Offering, & Silence My Heart</i> by Chacho Angeles, Thessalonians BCGG	
CELEBRATING PEARL	11	OUTREACH	21
<i>Celebrating Pearl (Mt 13:45)</i> by Fr. James U. Gascon, SJ		<i>Suyuan</i> by Sr. Bernadette Eugenie Casas, R.A.	
<i>Tribute to Father James U. Gascon, SJ</i> by Cesar and Marivic Pareja, Prodigal 102 BCGG		<i>Donations for Marikina Flood Victims / Disbursements for Olandes, Marikina Suyuan Relief</i>	
BCGG CORNER	13	EVENTS	23
<i>Remembering Joemarie</i> by Lito Naldo, Samaritans BCGG		<i>Magis @ 30 Hits the Fairway</i> by Leo Soliman, Corinthians BCGG	
<i>Tribute to Lucy</i> by Tatic Castillo, Cana BCGG			
<i>Mama</i> by Frances Zyra Mella, Magis Youth			
<i>Finding Humor in God's Plan – The Mellas</i> by Paul Puthenpurekal, Easter BCGG			

Calendar of Activities: October - December 2018

October	November	December
19-21 Annual Ignatian Retreat (AIR)	23-25 ME Weekend	2 Family Day
27 Magis Youth Tree Planting & Farm Tour		

In Deep Gratitude

After attending the ME Weekend in 1984, we searched for a follow-up program that would deepen the learning and graces we received in the ME. Like other graduates, we joined the LSS or the Christian Life Programs of Charismatic communities and were invited to join the community afterwards. After being in a Charismatic community for a number of years, many of us felt we needed something more in our spiritual growth.

This need became more pronounced in 1985 as the country was preparing for the snap elections announced by President Marcos and scheduled for February, 1986. A group of “Encountered” couples led by Fr. Ruben Tanseco, SJ, organized a series of well-attended public fora to reflect on our role as Christian couples at this critical time of our country’s history. As we continued to reflect on our faith and where God may be leading us, Fr. Ruben introduced us to the Ignatian way of praying. We realized this was what we were looking for. This spirituality was what could enrich our lives as couples who respond to the call to be couples and families for others. Thus was formed Magis Deo (‘More for God).

Fr. Ruben gave more teachings on Ignatian prayer methods including the Examen. We met at the Loyola House of Studies, divided into three small prayer groups with Fr. Ruben present at each meeting. Fr. Ruben developed formation programs which we religiously attended: the Spiritual Deepening Weekend, which provided an overview of St. Ignatius’ Spiritual Exercises, the Christian Parenting for Peace and Justice Weekend, which deepened our love of country, and the Family Encounter, which taught the dialogue process to our children. Later on, he introduced the ME II to deepen our experience of ME I.

Over time we grew as a community as we strove to live out – *isabuhay* - the values of Simplicity, Stewardship, Sharing and Service. The Basic Christian Growth Groups (BCGGs) organized into the North, Central and South sectors with each sector identifying an outreach area. We also responded to major calamities, giving not only material assistance but our time. After the earthquake of 1990 we assisted a small barrio in Anduyan, La Union rebuild their homes.

¹ “Magis” translated as “more” means choosing the **greater good** or what is **more** conducive to attain God’s purpose for us. Simply put, choosing and doing what will bring us closer to God. See First Principle and Foundation from St. Ignatius’ The Spiritual Exercises.



A year later, Mt. Pinatubo erupted, and we helped build a relocation site in Capaya, Pampanga for the lahar victims. We also shared our other treasure – the Suyuan and its follow up formation program. What is also remarkable about Magis Deo is its governance and equal regard for men and women. The composition of the Pastoral Council changes every year with a pre-determined number of couples staying on for another year to provide continuity. In the spirit of our Lord, positions of leadership are regarded as opportunities to serve and not for self-promotion or power.

We treasure these milestones in the life of the community along with fond memories of friendships formed, the spiritual growth of the community as a whole, and of individuals, the commitment of the young couples who step up to serve. We owe a lot to Fr. Ruben who inspired us to form Magis Deo and who was there for our families. We are thankful for Fr. James for his pastoral care of Magis Deo after Fr. Ruben.

As we celebrate 30 years of community life, may we realize how much God has blessed us in Magis Deo. May we continue to be inspired by St. Ignatius of Loyola to seek and find God in all things, to have compassion for the poor, and to love the Earth, our common home.

“.... You will seek me and you will find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,” declares the LORD Jeremiah 29:13-14. (NIV)

Strength In Numbers

Cesar & Delsa Sangalang, Samaritans BCGG

The main task of the Community Services Ministry (CSM) is to bring the whole community together in joyful sharing, celebration and discernment, by providing services and organizing activities and liturgical celebrations that are consistent with Ignatian Spirituality, and build and strengthen the community. We are fully committed to this responsibility; hence when we look at the monthly Community Celebration attendance last year, we feel sad and frustrated to see an average of 30% (or less than 100 members) attending the ComCels.

A number of initiatives were implemented in the past, such as changing the ComCel schedule from Saturdays to Fridays, and then back to Saturdays; having and sponsoring varied activities; and interesting teachings/topics from distinct and fascinating facilitators. Despite these, we continue to hear excuses for missing the ComCel, particularly the traffic situation, work schedule conflicts, or family affairs. These did not deter us from coming up with more ways to engage our community and bring members back to our fold.

When we were preparing for the Family Day last Dec 2017, the very first concern was again attendance. We had to get rid of any possible reasons why a family won’t be able to attend. We acquired the services of a caterer so members won’t have to worry about preparing and bringing food very early on a Sunday morning. Then, we lowered the BCGGs’ contributions and sharing of the costs, regardless of how many will attend. And very significantly, we created a Viber group wherein we were able to instantly, easily and constantly communicate about the number of attendees, and share as well as elicit other ideas and suggestions to make the Family Day more lively and memorable. To our surprise, the attendance was overwhelming and the San Jose Gym even seemed small to accommodate all the Magis families.

And that became our benchmark beginning this 2018 for the Community Celebrations. We considered the 3 main factors in that,

- 1) The schedule should be a Sunday morning,
- 2) All communications should be mainly through the Viber group, and
- 3) Maintain the Family Day concept, and that means including the children and reactivating the Youth Ministry’s programs for each ComCeleb

Gratifyingly, our ComCel attendance this year has risen to over 50% on the average. Aside from the improvement in attendance, the majority of our couples and families arrive on time; hence the ComCel activities also finish on time. The youth invigorate with their own set of activities prior to the mass – thanks to the leadership and dedication of the Youth Ministry. With the success of the ComCel, we noticed that the community is once again alive. It’s so heartening to see again the increasing active involvement of members in other Magis activities such as the ME Weekend, Formation Programs, and Outreach activities.

On the occasion of Magis Deo’s 30th anniversary celebration, the CSM once again was at the forefront of the fund raising event, the Magis Golf Tournament cum Magis Night. With everyone’s support and participation, this was a big success. We especially thank all the sponsors, CSM Head Leony and Mia Parada for their dedication and hard work, Chair Couple Philip and Malu Panlilio for their guidance, and our ever supportive Spiritual Director Fr. James Gascon. Most of all, we dedicate and offer this success to our dear God almighty.

While a 50% attendance rate is already a significant improvement, we know we can still do better. There are other areas for continuous improvement that we can address as a community. May these numbers inspire us to do more, to love more, and to serve more.



Photo by Milivoj Sherrington

October 2018

God Calls Us to Holiness

Leo Soliman, Corinthians BCGG

The August 12, 2018 Community Celebration was no different from the recent ones: jam-packed crowd with friendly faces in their Sunday's best, the delicious breakfast with brewed Vietnamese coffee, the lively participation of the Youth Ministry, the blessing of birthday and wedding anniversary celebrants – these are now the new norm we are getting used to.

But in his talk Fr. James says there's more, much more. That we are being called by God "to be holy and blameless in love." The Lord wants us to be saints and not to settle in our present comfort zones. A personal call to be holy and righteous in His sight may sound tough but if we respond to our life struggles with a positive approach, God assures He will sail us through.

The challenge is how we react to situations before us. We know that Jesus is inside the heart of everyday people, pleasant or otherwise. He is inside the good, the bad and the ugly. Our tendency is to embrace the good, avoid the bad, and reject the ugly. Understandable. But is it holy? If we believe that Jesus is also in the ugly (addicts, pushers, rapists, thieves, corrupt officials, killers, scumbags and the like), shall we still reject them outright?

Am I holy? Check out these 5 signs:

1. Perseverance, Patience and Meekness
2. Joy and a sense of humor
3. Boldness and Passion
4. In Community
5. In Constant Prayer

In the end, Holiness is living life, living it to the full. Other than this, is death.

Beware of the enemies of holiness – contemporary gnosticism and contemporary pelagianism. Before anybody develops nosebleed on these high sounding words, allow me to put them in simple terms.

We must be on guard against our being selfish, being private and confining our beliefs to what we wish to believe. We box ourselves in our own thoughts and feelings that we don't care about others anymore.

And the thinking that we intellectually know this, and that we feel we are already saints. So wrong. We must always stay humble no matter how knowledgeable we are, no matter how successful we are, no matter how high we are on the pedestal. You can never find an arrogant saint.

So you think you are holy? You feel you are already a saint? Think again. There are flaws in all of us. Flaws that, as humans, serve as obstacles to our objective. The way we treat our house help, our officemates, our neighbors; how we talk against them behind their backs. The way we deal with our clients, how we lie through our teeth just to close a sale. The list goes on.

Nobody said being holy or saintly is easy. Challenge yourself. If you can limit your sins to 7 a day, by God, consider yourself a saint. But you have to be very honest with yourself.

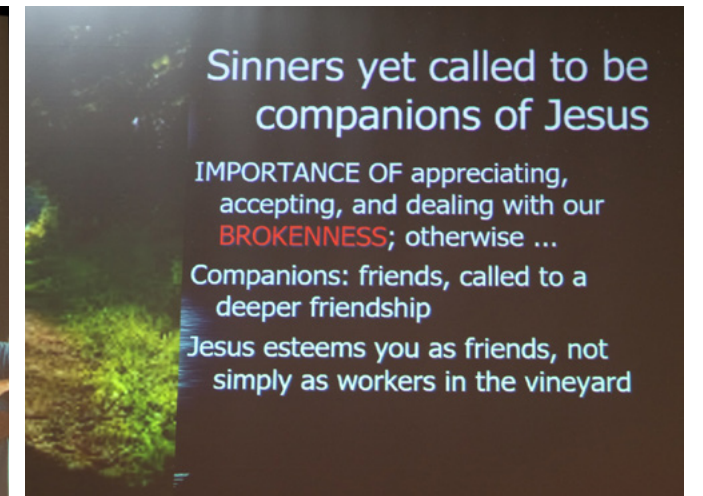
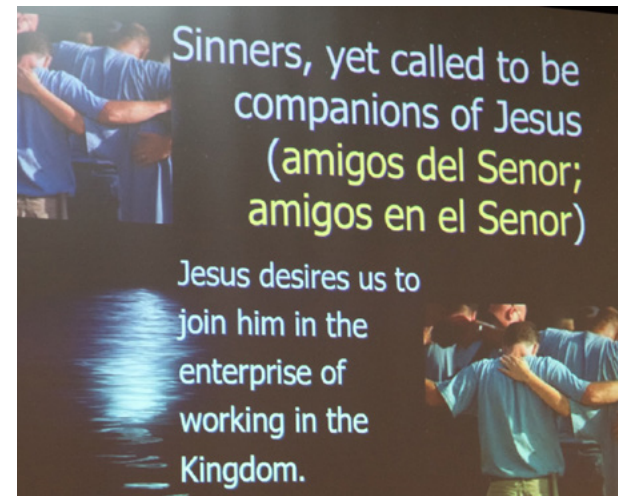
We can be holy in our simple everyday acts like caring for the environment, raising our family in a decent way, being kind to others. God is never demanding. He knows our weaknesses. But He also tailor-made us to be saints. How we suit up to what He blessed us with will define us eventually.



Called to be COMPANIONS of CHRIST

Talk given by Fr. Bob Buenconsejo, SJ

Levy & Roxanne Espiritu, Group Praxis Ministry



Last September's community celebration was well-attended by 179 members (139 adults and 40 youth).

Fr. Bob Buenconsejo, SJ gave a talk about how to continue to be companions of Christ, a timely topic as the community is about to embark on a change of leadership this October.

His talk started on the premise that we are all sinners, broken, wounded, narcissistic and even dysfunctional, and yet Jesus desires us to join Him in the enterprise of working in the Kingdom.

That is the essence of us being in a community such as Magis Deo. It is because of these imperfections that we need to work on, and thus embark on a spiritual journey that will lead us back to our Creator.

Our imperfection starts from our being narcissistic, especially in the age of technology, where everything is about self-gratification. This unhealthy narcissism affects our community as it tends to make us critical of everything and everyone, be envious, show lack of empathy that can be interpersonally exploitative and self-serving.

Being aware of our imperfections, we need to be healed of various types of sins that block us from being a community. God gave us the gift of faith, the gift of community and the gift of vocation.

It is important that we appreciate, accept and deal with our brokenness in order to heed God's calling for us to utilize the gifts He has entrusted to us.

For us to be God's companions, we should be willing to be taught, to accept the posture of a disciple by engaging in prayer, and paying close attention to what the Lord values.

That is why we are in Magis Deo. We work on our imperfections as we continue to seek God and heed his call. It is not often that we can find a community that cares for our faith, hence the importance of doing our share to make the community flourish.

In Magis Deo we are taught Ignatian spirituality wherein the practice of consciousness examen is paramount. We continue to ask the Lord what He wants from us. Every year, we find ourselves having to choose God over again in the unique particular situation we find ourselves in.

Our spiritual journey in Magis Deo reminds us that we belong to the Lord. And because we belong to the Lord, His work gives importance to what we are doing. Our identity is to be a servant in Christ's mission. Our call is to give our hearts to someone larger, and that is God. We know that heeding God's call requires sacrifice, self-denial and willingness to carry the cross at all cost.

The Lord constantly gives us an opportunity to love and serve others. The gift of community lovingly challenges us to be the best of our selves as we continue our spiritual journey, we work on our spiritual maturity so we can partake in building God's kingdom here on earth and be suitable companions of Christ for one another.

The bread of life

12 August 2018 / Fr. Ruben M. Tanseco, SJ

Part One. In our first reading for today's holy mass (1 Kgs. 10:4-8), it is written that Elijah is persecuted for preaching God's word against King Ahab and his wicked queen Jezebel. He was ready to die and offer his life to the Lord. But through a "tiny, whispering sound" (v.12), he felt God asking him to continue his work for the Lord. And so he did. Inspired by this, allow me now to share my own experience. Not for my ego, but for a most grateful recognition of God's love and compassion, not only for me, but for each one of us.

As a young adult, I was already a college graduate of the Conservatory of Music, University of Santo Tomas. I was planning to teach and perform as my profession, but I never thought of becoming a priest. One day, I accidentally read an article about the Jesuits in one of the daily newspapers. But that's all. Life went on as usual. Until one day, out of the blue, I heard in my heart that "tiny whispering sound." That changed everything. For a whole year, I went through a long process of discernment under a spiritual guide. At the end of it all, I came to the decision to apply for the Jesuit Novitiate. The many years that followed ended with my priestly ordination in 1965. Indeed, what a loving and compassionate God you and I belong to.

In 1969, I heard another "tiny, whispering sound" which led me to introduce the Marriage Encounter Weekend that I had experienced in the USA. Again, it is God's doing and not mine. I am only His human instrument. The Marriage Encounter Weekend succeeded in spreading to different places. Today, it is all over the country, with a one-day adaptation in Tagalog and Visayan for our poor couples who cannot afford to spend for a whole weekend. The skill of mutual empathy as the main tool of the Marriage Encounter Weekend is really incredible. Each spouse is able to set aside one's ego and enter the world of his/her spouse, so that each one is able to be with, think with, feel with the other. The couple then moves toward a win-win situation, where each one wins a little and loses a little. Mutual love is the ultimate answer.



Part Two. Our second reading for today (Eph. 4:30-5:2) is very realistic and inspiring indeed. The reality of good and evil in human life is described as the road that leads to God's love and forgiveness. Not only that. God Himself as Son comes down to be one among us and shows us the way. As the reading goes, "All bitterness, fury, anger, shouting and reviling must be removed from you, along with all malice" (v.31). This is immediately followed by what should be, as in the person of Christ. "And be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ" (v.32). All of this and more are ways and means of expressing love, the most fundamental law of our most loving God. Jesus used all his human strength to go from town to town, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and curing every disease and illness. "At the sight of the crowds, his heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for the harvest'" (vv.37-38). That includes you and me! Thank you, Lord, for calling us to your mission. May we give our best till the end of our days!

More than that. Incredible but true. "But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have? Do not the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what is unusual about that? Do not the pagans do the same? So be

perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt. 5:44-48).

Part of this love is carrying the cross as Jesus did, all the way to the crucifixion, only to be followed by the resurrection. Indeed, in our own lives, too, the cross serves as an opportunity for one's growth, greatness, and Godliness as a person. Godliness here means more and more like Christ, who carried His cross all the way to the end of His human life, only to be followed by His resurrection and ascension into heaven.

Part Three. The first part of our Gospel reading points to the Jews murmuring about Jesus. As one author describes it, murmuring "is a willful disbelief in the power of God... a refusal to submit to the authority of God... and sow seeds of alienation and division... Murmuring is a scandal, a grave offense" (W. Maestri, *Grace Upon Grace*, pp. 189-190).

The punch line of it all comes from Jesus Himself, who expressed to the crowd: "I am the bread of life... I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world" (Jn. 6:48-51). The climax of all this was initiated during the Last Supper, before the crucifixion. "While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to this disciples said, 'take and eat; this is my body.' Then He took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins'" (Mt. 26:26-28). cf. also Mk. 14:22-24, Lk. 22:19-20. What a most loving God we belong to! And how can we respond in kind? "The Eucharist is a reminder that those who come to the Eucharist to be fed spiritually by God are bound to do and give their utmost to feed the hungry and the poor, as Jesus did" (N. Orqueta, *Green Pastures*, 2015, p.177). May I add to that: Let us give our best to one and all. This is our mission of love. Christ showed us the way. There is no other way.

What a privilege God is giving us. To live and die like Christ, who is God the Son. To each one of us: to live as the bread of life.

Photos by Anchit Chua Chiacó

09 September 2018 Community Celebration



Tribute to Father Ruben M. Tanseco, SJ

Tina and Monchito Mossesgeld, Cana BCGG



Father Ruben was the Tanseco I did not know as I, Monchito, was growing up. My family – dad, mom, sister and I – were neighbors of the Tansecos and frequented their big house in Alta Vista in Loyola Heights, near Ateneo. I still clearly remember the delicious bread pudding that Mrs. Tanseco would bake and serve fresh from the oven. We knew all the eight Tanseco children who lived in that home, from Rene to Joey. But the eldest, Ruben, we did not know because he was away, studying to be a Jesuit priest.

Then in 1984, we took our Marriage Encounter in then Villa Adelaida in Tagaytay. Fr. Ruben was the priest presenter, along with presenting couples Pompy and Marilen DInglasan and Ping and Josie Sison.

That weekend was a significant milestone in our marriage. It was as if, as I wrote in a letter that weekend, a window opened and fresh air filled the room. It promised a new beginning for our marriage.

It was our introduction to a priest who would play a significant role in our spiritual growth. Powerful though the presenting couples were, it was Fr. Ruben's deep spirituality expressed through his inputs and personal sharing that shone through for us. He led us through a process that weekend that enriched our perspectives and helped us see marriage and our relationship in a different and renewed light.

Towards the end of lunch on Sunday, Fr. Ruben approached us and asked us to consider being a presenting couple. It was a frightening idea – revealing our innermost selves to a group of strangers – but it was our introduction to concretely being a couple for others, which in the future would take the form of serving the Magis Deo Community as ME shepherd, BCGG shepherd, ministry head, and Pastoral Council couple. We owe our growth as a couple for others to Fr. Ruben and it all started with that invitation.

Fr. Ruben, we owe to you our awakening that our faith and our responsibilities as husband and wife, as parents, as community members, and as citizens who are called to love and serve our fellow Filipinos and our country, cannot be separated. We owe to you our awareness that stewardship, simplicity, service and sharing should be guiding values of our lives.

Fr. Ruben, we owe to you our introduction to and growth in Ignatian spirituality which remains a vital force in our lives and guides the way we relate with God, others, and His creation. We owe to you the seeds and the flourishing of the Magis Deo Community that has been a vehicle of our and hundreds of other couples' growth for the past 30 years.

But we owe you much more, Fr. Ruben, as a family. You were the first and only person Tina and I thought of to run to and guide us when we

experienced a family crisis. You were of great comfort to the entire family in the midst of the darkness we felt then. But you were there also in happier times. You officiated in the wedding of both of our children, in the renewal of our marriage vows in simple ceremonies in our 25th anniversary before our fellow Magis Deo friends, and in the 10th anniversary ceremony of our daughter Pia and her husband Albert with only their family and us present in the CEFAM chapel.

You have been present as a guiding light to us through what you have taught us about marriage and our faith for almost 30 years now. There is no other person who has had that impact on Tina and me as couple. You are, as one of your books is entitled, a "pearl of great price."

For many years now, every time we see you and ask how you are, you invariably say that you are going soon. In response I always tell you that you will outlive us all. Yes, you will outlive us all because you will live forever in the hearts of many couples and their families who have been blessed through your person, your ministry and your healing kindness, mercy, love and compassion.

Thank you Fr. Ruben. We love you very much. We pray that your remaining years will be fully filled with God's love, presence and consolations. Please pray for us too.

CELEBRATING PEARL

Celebrating Pearl (Mt 13:45)

Fr. James U. Gascon, SJ



Photo by Vitapix

The image of pearl is one of the most moving and precious images of the Gospel. In Matthew's Gospel, the Kingdom of God is compared to a pearl of great price (Mt 13:45). It is such of incomparable value that anyone who finds one, sells everything one has in order to buy it. Perhaps we can conclude that this kind of pearl is the most expensive and most valuable there can ever be. And so it will be when we have found the Kingdom of Heaven.

Today, this same kind of pearl is given to us as a blessing. We are celebrating our pearl anniversary! Our celebration is a festival of thanksgiving and hope, of challenge and call. As we celebrate, we take a few moments to reflect. We pause and ask ourselves: what message does this pearl of great price convey to us?

Pearls are a quaint jewel. Come to think of it. They start from a misfortune. A parasite attacks an oyster. Contrary to common belief that it is dirt or sand that irritates the shell, parasites are actually what attack the oyster. Parasites make best and precious pearls. In its effort to protect itself from this foreign object, the bivalve coats the irritant with its own nacre. It gives part of itself. Until what started as an invasion by a foreign object becomes a precious jewel. A gem is born. The more parasites attack, the more pearls are produced. But not without effort and endeavor though. And it takes time; requires patience and perseverance. A precious jewel like a pearl is complete hard work. So much so that it can command the best of prices.

The story of the genesis of the pearl may really sound strange but it mirrors for us life, especially of spiritual life in Magis Deo. I invite you to look back on how you first met this "irritant," how you were first nudged by a friend to join the ME Weekend, which for many of us may have been an intrusion to our otherwise peaceful weekend. That's our moment of contact. As it were, the "irritant" entered our system. But the irritant was persevering, and we succumbed into attending the weekend, perhaps for many, after numerous attempts. This was our consent. We said yes, may have been half-heartedly though. And

yet, God's hand was present; God neither gave up nor allowed us other options but to continue. God nudged us. Every re-union, every prayer meeting after finally joining a BCGG, every community celebration, every outreach endeavor and suyuan weekend, were opportunities to give of oneself. These were the content of our experience. These were the "nacre" that covered the "irritant" yet eventually became our identity as Magis Deo. But unknown to us, and only through the grace of God, our struggles, challenges, and perchance lethargy, not to mention our moments of apathy and disinterest, have become the nacre of the pearl. A pearl is born!

Then we celebrate. We rejoice with the pearl of great price because celebrations are part of a believing community. Our memory is further enhanced when we proclaim our joys and pains that have become part of who we are as a community. But life is a cycle. Celebrations give birth to challenge. Our celebrations lead us to ask: what are we facing after celebrating? We are aware that one of the many challenges to our community is the dwindling participation of members, especially in community celebrations. We are also challenged in our recruitments. Perhaps as we celebrate, let's give our challenges a thought. Unlike the merchant in Matthew 13 who kept his pearl of great price, ours will be shared. We won't keep it to ourselves since its value appreciates more as we share it. If Magis Deo has become your pearl, how much do you value it; how do you share it? Is it so precious that far from keeping it to yourself, you labor to share it so that others may discover their own pearls of great price too?

This is what anniversaries are all about. We look back to our contact, consent, and content. Then, celebrations bring forth challenge; a call to greater responsibility as one celebrates with a grateful heart. We rejoice with a prayer in our heart — that the Lord will continue to bless us, each one of us, every family and the entire community, we are now pearls of great price in the Kingdom of God shared for the good of all. Be blessed and share your pearls. Happy Pearl Anniversary, Magis Deo, more for God!

Tribute to Father James U. Gascon, SJ

Cesar and Marivic Pareja,
Prodigal 102 BCGG

Dear friends in the community,

We all know that our Spiritual Director, Fr. James, is a bit fond of using acronyms to drive a point in his lectures, talks or homilies. Allow us to return the favor by using his name as an acronym for how we see him in our community.

J A M E S

J - You are our **JOLIBEE!**

We read an article stating that Jollibee advertisements are such a hit primarily because of two reasons:

1. Its ability to touch consumers' emotions.
2. Its creativeness to tell a great story using the ordinariness events of life.

For the past five years that you have been presenting talks, you definitely struck a chord in each and every one of us. Your topics were very timely to what we members need to hear, understand and reflect upon. In your talks, you use examples that are very close to our hearts – our love and yearning for God and our relationships with family members and our community, thus making it easy for us to grasp the message and/or challenges we have to face in answer to our calling as members of Magis Deo.

A - You are our own version of "James the **APOSTLE**"

Just like St. James the Great, you were about the same age when he became an apostle. You were 31 when you were ordained, while he was thirty when our Lord called him and his brother to be "FISHERS OF MEN."

There is a phrase in the internet that says, **"When you fish, you bring the fish out of the water. But when men are converted, they are put into the water of Baptism."**



Having been around you for quite a while, we are witnesses to how you are able to call upon the right persons to immerse themselves in the service of our Lord.

St. James was likewise one of the three apostles whom Jesus selected to bear witness to His transfiguration.

Many will agree that you are indeed one of the best gifts from God to our community. Just like St. James, you are blessed with a gift of transformation, such that it is not only you who sees the light; you become a light for us members, a light that guides and leads us in the hope that we, too, will become apostles in our own little ways.

M - You are a **MENTOR**

Mentor is defined as an experienced and trusted adviser; a counselor, a consultant, a confidante.

You possess qualities that define a good mentor, most especially the ability and willingness to communicate and share what you know. Your capability to actively listen, your approachability, objectivity, fairness, compassion, honesty and genuineness are the very qualities we have received from you the past five years, that enabled and empowered us to be the members and the community that we are today.

Just like an effective mentor, you give us the freedom to be ourselves and allow us to do things, but at the same time empowering us to make the right decision not only for ourselves but for the whole community as well.

E - You give us **ENERGY**

You are very energetic and your energy radiates to us and empowers us to move and be active in our community.

You lead by example and are always ahead of us in our activities, whether these are simple gatherings, a prayer meeting, a community celebration, or an outreach program. Your mere presence goads us to perform our best under any circumstances.

S - You are our **SHEPHERD**

The image of Jesus as a fisherman is considered second only to that of Jesus as a Shepherd. In the Gospel of John 10:27: **"My sheep hear My voice; I know them and they follow Me."**

That is quite true as you know us by now so well. You have established personal relationships with us members and it is so heartwarming to see and feel your personal care and concern for Magis. There are so many instances when you go out of your way to know and make "kumusta" how a certain member is coping with his or her difficulties. Your assurance of including us in your Masses and prayers are indeed uplifting.

You have been telling us that when you accepted the invitation to be the Spiritual Director of Magis Deo, we are to understand that there are other priorities before us. Be that as it may, we are so grateful that you never let us feel that we are the least of your priorities. In fact, your presence even in the simplest gathering of the community make us too special in your eyes.

As our shepherd, you not only guide and feed us, you also protect us; not just from outside forces, but more importantly, from our own selves. Your words of wisdom, admonishing us from committing sin, is the best protection we can use in our everyday life.

In closing, as we celebrate our 30th anniversary and your birthday, accept our deepest gratitude. Thank you, Father, for being our **J A M E S**.

BCGG CORNER

Remembering Joemarie

Lito Naldo, Samaritans BCGG



My wife Anne and I are happy to have three living children: Miggy 26 years old, Michelle 21, and Manuel 17. Very few

know, however, that we had a baby born between Miggy and Michelle, on this very day (Oct 1) twenty-three years ago... Joemarie. Anne was only 5-and-a-half months on the way then... Joemarie didn't have a chance. Anne's lady OB-Gyne who presided over the delivery was the one who gave the name Joemarie, because she said it was still too early to ascertain if our baby was a boy or a girl. So, our second child was baptized Jose Maria Yared Naldo, also by the OB-Gyne.

It's really strange that although I wanted a girl for our second child, I have always felt that Joemarie was a boy. But definitely a different kind, a much smaller, slower, and quieter boy than his manong Miggy. I imagined him to be the kind of boy who would always tug along my side, holding my hand always, as if he'd stumble and fall if he didn't. We hear some kid being called "Mama's Boy," but probably Joemarie would have been a unique "Papa's Boy," someone who preferred to stay near me, needing my attention and care, every day. Unlike manong Miggy who was active and playful when he was small, I imagined Joemarie to be sluggish and fragile, even sickly. He probably would have stayed at home more often and longer than any of his siblings.

Actually, that was not hard to imagine because Joemarie, did stay with us for a long time. Swimming and dancing inside his small formalin jar, we never allowed him to get far... he was always at home. Among all our children, he was the one who really spent the most time with me and Anne. He was the one who witnessed most of the happenings in our family,

the happy and sad moments... the times when we were good parents, and the times when we were bad. And I guess we really were bad parents because we didn't let him rest... until he was 17 years old. Joemarie's minute ashes now lay at rest at the St. Therese of the Child Jesus Columbarium in Pasay City since 2012.

Today, October 1, the church also celebrates the Memorial of St. Therese of the Child Jesus. Maybe it is providential that Joemarie was also born today... maybe God is telling us that Joemarie, like St. Therese, is also a saint. He never had a chance to experience this cruel and dirty world, probably shielding him from the possibility of falling to its temptations and ills. We therefore thank our Lord for giving us today not one, but two child-saints.

We also remember and thank the Lord for the other "saints" in our lives, in our community, in Magis Deo. The 30 years of Magis Deo would not have been possible without the big and small contributions of those who have gone ahead of us. May their memories inspire us to give more, serve more, and share more to Magis Deo, as this community fulfills the wondrous deeds of our Lord.

As Anne and our family remember Joemarie today, I pray that Joemarie prays for me. That I may never forget that I almost had one more son, one more human being to care for, one more soul to love. May the time, treasures, and love that I should have given Joemarie be released and poured out of my heart now, so I could give, care, and love more... my wife Anne, our children, and my fellowmen. Amen.

Tribute to Lucy

Tatic Castillo, Cana BCGG

To the family and friends of our dearly beloved Lucy, and to the members of the Magis Deo Community who are here to celebrate Lucy’s passage to her eternal home, good evening po sa inyong lahat.

Honestly, I was stressed when Rey texted me yesterday, requesting me to give a two- to three-minute eulogy for Lucy. My challenge was how and where to begin, knowing that almost everything about Lucy is good, and that I surely needed more than 3 minutes to accomplish my task. Finally, I calmed down and told myself: Just keep it simple, Tatic.

Cana BCGG meets every Friday. Rey and Lucy are never absent and if they cannot come together, Lucy was always the first to arrive, and later joined by Rey. Lucy was the first to respond to BCGG reminders. Rey and Lucy kept attending BCGG meetings and community events even when Lucy was already suffering and visibly in pain from her cancer. She surely inspired better attendance from our BCGG members, and, hopefully, also the Magis Community at large.

Lucy’s dedication and commitment to Magis Deo and her love for the Community are beyond compare. She was a perfect role model for Magis. Lucy was our baby – she was the youngest among us Cana wives – but I believe she was so much more senior in spirituality than most of us.

Rey and Lucy were always ready to attend recollections, retreats, and other values formation programs. To my recollection, she has not missed attending the Harana. In fact, she was present at the latest one at St. James Retreat House in Cavite, braving inclement weather and despite her feeling weak; she should have been at home resting.

Cana was so blessed when Rey and Lucy joined us 8 years ago, transferring from Thessalonians BCGG. They continued to grow in service and eventually became South Sector Head and Pastoral Council Chaircouple. Their accomplishments and service to Magis Deo make all of us proud!

On a more personal note, what impressed me most about Lucy is her simplicity. For example, in the past 8 years, I’ve seen her wearing make up in only two special occasions: at the wedding of Rico, the son of Monchito and Tina, and at the wedding of Joyce, the daughter of Joseph and Emma.

Lucy was always soft-spoken and smiling, but watch out, that is how she got things done. I learned a lot from Lucy’s weekly sharing and envied her special relationship and control over Rey and their children Zyra, Jared, and Fiona. *Sino ba naman dito sa atin ang nasasama ang buong pamilya sa lahat ng lakad ng Magis?* To Rey, you had the best wife. To the three children, you had the best mother, and to Cana, we had our best friend in Lucy. Rey, we in Cana will always be here for you and your family.

There is so much more to tell but time is limited. And so in parting let me just ask one big favor from all of you before Lucy is taken to her final resting place tomorrow.



May I request you to rise and join me in giving Lucy, our best friend, a big round of applause. I have always wanted to do this for Lucy, but it is so much more meaningful when we do it all together. Maraming salamat po.

Mama

Frances Zyra Mella, Magis Youth

Hi I’m Lucy’s favourite eldest daughter. Some of you know me as Frances, some as Zyra. Thank you for being here with us.

I used to think of mama as not particularly affectionate. I thought of her as strict, almost scary even. While papa was the head of the household, mama was the law. What she said was final. Which was why you never go to her for any toy or anything you might want to buy, or if you wanted to go out with friends because if she says no, that’s that. We always go through papa first, because he’s easy to persuade. *Konting lambing lang, papayag na.*

That’s why I didn’t think of us as close growing up. She was my mom and she was scary, that’s it.

As I grew older though, I didn’t just see her as strict. Sure, mama was strict. But she was also kind, generous, understanding, simple, genuine, hardworking... and so much more. She always made sure that papa ate well, that he took his vitamins, that he didn’t spend too much. She was always checking up on Fiona and was always making sure that dancing wasn’t all she did in school. She was always making sure that Jared was safe when he was out, and always checking if I got home okay.

We grew to become friends somehow, which I wasn’t sure was possible between parent and child. But I wanted to be mama’s friend too; wanted to be someone she could talk to when she needed someone. She told me once that she was the “strong” one in her group of friends, which gave me the impression that she couldn’t share her burdens as much as she wanted. So when she first got sick, I spent as much time with her and listened as much as she would allow me to.

Continue to next page

Finding Humor in God’s Plan – The Mellas

Paul Puthenpurekal, Easter BCGG

I have known the Mellas for nearly 15 years. Rey has this incredible sense of humor that he can convert the shortest possible sentence into something to laugh about.

Lucy of course with her pretty smile could not fuel any less his appetite for more humor. Their three kids, Zyra, Jared and Fiona, have got a bit of both the parents and together they form the perfect family for any occasion.

Rey and Lucy had patiently waited for me and my wife to be part of the Magis Deo community. For over 3 long years they kept inviting us to almost every ME Weekend. Finally, the stars aligned for us to be part of ME 95. Since then Rey has been the brother I never had, and they were the family we could always count as close to ours. Rey and I have been each other’s sounding boards in most of our trials and triumphs. During our catch up sessions I often admire how he uses technology in getting organized and plan his time to the nth second. We have tried our luck as business partners in several ventures. Besides making millions (for other people) we have always had the trust and confidence that God has plans for us to keep trying. Both Lucy and Rey have always supported me in every possible venture I started, and continue to do their best including backing me financially when things go south.

Sometime in 2016 I got this call from Rey to discuss something serious. Lucy was diagnosed with what most people dread to hear. He was with his usual gadgets and the calendar for almost a year and more was spread out before him. With great precision he had planned out the journey ahead to be with Lucy and fight alongside her every single day till this thing was under control. He had planned months in advance his early retirement and how they would be heading to the US for treatment. But then there was the humor in Rey as usual. He smiled and explained how they would be heading to Turkey in a few months, as tickets were cheap due to the bombings there.

For months the two of them went together on their journey. Through the deserts of Arizona to the extreme cold in Edmonton, it was always a family reunion for the Mellas. We managed to steal a few dinners and moments with them and had our hopes high for Lucy to make a comeback. Rey meanwhile was constantly working on boosting her morale and always exploring remedies

Continued from page 14, Eulogy

I’m glad I got to take care of her when she got sick, as children are supposed to do when they grow older. It may have been under difficult circumstances, but I wouldn’t have it any other way. There are so many things that mama gave to me, to us, that there is no other way for me to repay her than to be of service to her at the time she needed it most. By the way, mama’s love language is acts of service, which makes it even more perfect.

It’s hard to find words at a time like this. I’m so out of my depth that I feel like a little girl again, unsure as to how life works. Of course I know that losing someone is hard. But this level of “hard” is almost beyond comprehension. What I can comprehend, though, is that love never goes away. It may change, but never disappears. I know that mama will always be with us, with all the memories that we have of her. It will be difficult but I know everything will be okay.

Thank you, mama. Thank you for being who you are. I love you.

I want to thank all of you who are here to celebrate mama’s life with us. You don’t know how much my family, how much I appreciate all your love. Ever since mama first got sick, we’ve had endless support, prayers and love from all of you. Thank you for your love. It is through all of you that I know we will all be fine. Thank you.

and therapy for Lucy. They set up an organic farm to keep her occupied as she gets fresh produce at home.

Then towards May of 2018 Rey expressed concern that the battle seemed to be taking its toll slowly and steadily. He could sense what was to come and yet his smile and humor never left him. He would still be writing for the community newsletter, the usual joke about life amidst daily anecdotes, as well as prodding the kids to inherit his enthusiasm for life.

We visited Lucy the night she had her major surgery. The Mellas were all huddled as one big Christmas carol around Lucy. There was joking and laughter and an overall feel good about this family as they cheered Lucy as she regained strength. We took selfies and parted that night, little knowing that perhaps it would be the last time we would be talking to her.

Sunday night we were at the Mellas’ home as Lucy was settled in the room. Rey was trying to fix the oxygen gadget and both of us got to work on it. Once it was set I advised him to take a few whiffs to stay strong and he joked that yes, he would sneak in and borrow it from Lucy from time to time.

When Fr. Gascon and the community elders gathered later Rey gave an update. He said that human intervention is good to prolong life. For Lucy now it was a case of not to prolong dying. He was composed as he found his humor to remind Father about his talk months ago about who is ready to go to heaven and how nobody dared raise their hand. The family just had 3 things to ask the Lord: (1) Take Lucy to heaven, (2) Completely heal her, and (3) If there is a delay in both the decisions by the Lord then please take away her pain.

I could not help but feel a deep sense of joy and gratitude for making Rey and Lucy a part of my life. Even in a moment of grief they could find humor in God’s plan. This is what our life comes to ultimately. Not just how well we lived but also how well we treated death. To Lucy – you fought with grace and never let your smile leave you. Now it’s time to be in peace. We will miss you. Rey – you could not have done anything more for her. You made her laugh as you accepted God’s will. For Magis Deo – this is how people become part of fairy tales. By finding humor in God’s plan. In life and beyond.



Magis Night

Leo Soliman, Corinthians BCGG

As a segue to the Magis Cup, what a better way to cap the busy day of September 28, 2018 but to be where the action is – at the much anticipated Magis Night.

The Navy Golf Club opened its entire Alano Hall function rooms to accommodate 150+ Magis members that came dressed to the nines.

Fr. James Gascon officiated the Pearl anniversary mass and blessed the sumptuous dinner that followed. All feasted on the beef, fish, lechon, salad and dessert that the clubhouse catered. Wine and booze also made it to some tables.

Providing the soothing bossa nova music for our listening pleasure while we had dinner was the Flashback Band of our very own Doc Manny(+) and Leslie Gatchalian.

Spicing up our dinner were trivia questions about Magis Deo asked by our gorgeous emcees Marivic Pareja and Jane Aldeguer. Those who answered correctly were given wonderful prizes donated by Leony and Mia Parada and Rico and Terry Lim.

Two gigantic LED monitors showed the Magis Cup event and the mini-documentary featuring Magis Deo history and how the community grew to its 30th year. Thanks to the efforts of Milo Parada of Magis Youth.

Fr. Ruben Tanseco, Fr. James Gascon, Monchito and Tina Mossesgeld, Philip and Malu Panlilio, and Jojo and Jane Aldeguer shared their insights on the purpose, struggles, challenges and fruits of Magis Deo for the past 30 years. Monchito and Tina read a 'Thank You' piece for Fr. Tanseco while Jun and Mila Sison gave an impromptu inspirational talk for the old and new members.



Marivic and Cesar Pareja read a tribute to Fr. James in a creative way by giving meaning to each letter of his name, J-A-M-E-S. The glitter of the occasion shone brighter when Fr. James blew the candle of a very special cake in celebration of his birthday. His birthday wish? To be with us till we reach our Diamond anniversary! Claps and cheers roared in approval.

On cue, the Flashback Band sent our feet a-dancing on the dance floor with their upbeat retro music that no dancer could resist. With two D.I.s leading the line dance, the floor was filled in an instant. All that energy, all that harmony, all those happy faces enjoying the music – what a sight to see. Others even danced beside their tables. From cha-cha, to boogie, to swing to what-have-you, Fr. James was there in front of the pack. That's leadership personified. Ha, ha, ha.

The dance floor was literally stomped. Thanks to the Flashback Band which provided the entertainment for free! At this time of high inflation, EJKs and rice shortage, meron pa rin palang libre. Many, many thanks, guys.

Thank you too, to Leony and Mia, for once again uplifting our dancing spirits even for just a night. And for those two gigantic LED boards that posted our activities real time, which I know you donated.

And to all those who helped tremendously in making this event a huge success (you know who you are), thanks a million.

A wonderful day, indeed. Magis Cup and Magis Night. All for the glory of God.



Angel of God

Leslie Gatchalian, Psalm 98 BCGG

Waking up one morning and after my morning prayers, I sang the beginning lines of the prayer “Angel of God.” Then I decided to record the first line so that Jerry Olaguer, Magis Deo Chorale musical director, might hear and might be inspired to continue the song. Without realizing it, I sang and recorded the whole song, just like that. In disbelief, I recorded it two times more. Surprisingly all recordings were of the same length except for one which is three seconds longer. Searching the internet, in awe I didn’t find anything similar in tune.

I was filled with gratitude and humility when Jerry made a choir arrangement of my music. Much more, privileged and ecstatic when our president Fortunato (Boy) dela Peña informed us that the priest approved our singing it during the Holy Mass for the opening of Epsilon Chi Center on October 2 which falls on Guardian Angels Memorial Day!

What does our catechism say about angels? My curiosity was piqued because of this special event and opportunity to give music to the prayer; also, the Feast of Saints Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, the Feast of the Archangels, or the Feast of Saint Michael and All Angels, was observed in our liturgical calendar last 29 September. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states in Paragraphs 329 - 330:

329 *St. Augustine says: “‘Angel’ is the name of their office, not of their nature. If you seek the name of their nature, it is ‘spirit’; if you seek the name of their office, it is ‘angel’: from what they are, ‘spirit’, from what they do, ‘angel.’” With their whole beings the angels are servants and messengers of God. Because they “always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven” they are the “mighty ones who do his word, hearkening to the voice of his word”.*

330 *As purely spiritual creatures angels have intelligence and will: they are personal and immortal creatures, surpassing in perfection all visible creatures, as the splendor of their glory bears witness.*

It goes without saying that although they are equipped with free will and intelligence; they are primarily to do the will of God, nothing more. As such, we can only ask their help in accordance with God’s will. That’s why the traditional Catholic prayer goes:

Angel of God, my guardian dear
To whom God’s love commits me here,
Ever this day be at my side
To light and guard, to rule and guide.

It only asks for light or guidance, as to what action is beautiful in the eyes of God. It asks for help to rule against what’s not good for us and to guide us in the right path towards God or what is right. Such a wonderful and reassuring prayer!



Catechism teachings also say:

336 *From its beginning until death, human life is surrounded by their watchful care and intercession.*

We believe that each and every human being was given from birth an angel to protect us, and in the end bring us back to God. Such is their role that one of the biblical readings speaks of these angels seeing the face of the Heavenly Father, reporting to Him daily about the children they take care of. This reading also tells us they get their command from God alone and not from us. Though we can ask their help, they can only do so with God’s permission or according to God’s will. For this reason, we are discouraged from naming our angels primarily because they are not at our beck and call. Only God can give or know their names. The angels belong to Christ. We cannot name them. Only the names of Michael, Gabriel and Raphael were made known to us through the bible. We don’t want to call or name some spirits without knowing who we are calling. Suffice it to know that they are our God-given guardian angels.

Thank God for them, and know that God gave them as our companions. Catechism teaches, “They are here for the sake of those who are to attain salvation.” It is such a comfort to know we are never alone and someone is with us to help save us.

The song that God gave to me for the prayer Angel of God has been in my mind ever since, and I now tend to sing it in times I need help or feel lonesome. In singing it, we pray more than twice, then much more cumulatively if with a group or chorale. Thank God for angels!

On the Journey to Midlife

Zarah C. Gagatiga, Emmanuel BCGG

One Saturday I was at the clinic of my primary care doctor. I was there so she could help me read the results of my blood chemistry (plan 12) and hematology. This reading helped me understand new terminology and words pertaining to my health in general. I was fascinated at the way my doctor read the results to me, explaining every acronym such as SGPT, SGOT, BUN and what it indicates per reference value. Telling me about all the “philes” in my blood cells, what each of them mean and their difference with the “cytes,” the implications if results go over and beyond their value. It was a very informative and helpful session. I will never look at a blood cell the same way again.

Why did I learn about this only now, I thought? The biology and health education I had back in the day didn’t sound this interesting. Aha. The folly of youth. If not for my mini-stroke two years ago, I would not pay attention to my changing body. Indeed, life is a bundle of experiences that needs to be unpacked, sorted and make connections to new ones. Unknowingly sometimes, life experiences allow us to take random mental notes of imaginary posts, to be retrieved when the situation calls for it. And here, at the other side of the spectrum, I find myself being grateful for the benefits of ageing and growing old.

Long and short of it, the results of my blood test gave me reason to celebrate. Images of another cheat meal crossed my mind.

Banana pancakes with a generous helping of maple syrup and whipped butter. Yummy. However, before I could run to the nearest branch of Pancake House, my doctor reminded me to drink plenty of water, take longer walks, spend more time in the sun, have enough sleep – 6 to 8 hours when possible, continue keeping a record of meals taken in a day, and to keep smiling. Lastly, she gave me a list of medical specialists to see. Ophthalmologist. Cardiologist. Gynecologist. And my dear Neurologist. Sigh. The GIST saga continues. There go my cheat meal ideas out the window. *Salamat po, doktora!*

Seriously, I have been thanking God for answered prayers. One of which is the provision for medical access to doctors who truly care for their patients. For two years now, I have seen doctors who dispense and prescribe medicines with utmost care, taking into consideration my medical history first of all. The other month, the dermatologist told me to anticipate changes in hormones as I age. The eye doctor I paid a visit to last week sensed my anxiety when he mentioned the need to use progressive lenses. He calmly said, *Lahat tayo darating sa ganyang pagbabago sa buhay.* He smiled and added, You are not alone. How comforting.

At that instance, I acknowledge God’s presence in my life. He is in all things and in all beings. I only need to humbly seek Him and ask Him for graces. He is all I need. He is enough.

Growing Up

Rianna San Gabriel, Magis Youth



For September’s ComCel, the young adults (aged 15 to 21) had a talk with Mr. TJ David. He taught us about the habits we should have as we grow up to be effective people. I have attended only three ComCels in my life, as I am new to this community. This was by far the most enjoyable talk I attended. Mr. David did not just give a lecture; he helped us learn more about ourselves through various activities.

The way he gave his talk was different, and I liked it. He made it a point to engage everyone without making us uncomfortable. He also set a calm and comfortable atmosphere, which made it seem like there was no age gap among us. Mr. David was able to get us all to mingle and be comfortable with one another. Another thing I liked about his talk was, it was more of a self-reflection. He did not force his beliefs on us, but he gave us food for the thought. Truly, Mr. David is a commendable speaker, not only for teaching us about how to go about our lives, but also for bringing us, the kids, closer together.

Magis Deo YOUTH Activities:

Tree Planting & Farm Tour, open to all

Date: Oct. 27, 2018 / Saturday
Time: 9:00am to 12:00nn (for carpool, meet at CEFAM at 8:00am)
Place: Adventure Park, Timberland Heights, San Mateo
Fee: P100 for first 40 kids/Youth who register & pay
P375 for the rest (parents, adults, other kids after first 40)
Contact Person: Pinky Rosas 0917-563-7784 / 0918-941-1657
Please update participant list in the Magis Viber group.

Prayer Orientation Workshop for Youth aged 13 up

Date: Nov. 18, 2018 / Sunday (ComCel Day)
Time: 8:00am to 12:00nn (Youth will have own mass)
Spiritual Director: Fr. Roseller Atilano
Place: San Carlos LayForce
Fee: None
Contact: Pinky Rosas: 0917-563-7784 / 0918-941-1657
Jane Aldeguer: 0917-822-5263
Please update participant list in the Magis Viber group.

ANG DAAN NG PUSO

Ama,
Ang buhay ko ay isang paglalakbay
Kung saan tutungo'y di noon mawari,
Sa aking akala'y matiwasay na buhay
Kasama ang mga mahal sa buhay,
Na walang inaapakan ay sapat na.
Ang aking paroroonan sa buhay na ito'y
Maayos na lipunan di lamang para sakin,
Nguni't para sa lahat.

Kinalauna'y sa tulong na rin ng aking
Mga kasanlakbay, aking nawari
Mga kagustuhan ko, at ang aking
Pagtalima sa mga bagay-bagay
Ng mundong ito, ay di sapat.
Ang buhay dito, at ang mundo mismo,
Ay mayroong taglay na di naaayon
Sa aking kalooban at kamalayan,
bagama't
Ang pagmamahal ko sa kapwa't kalikasan
Ay isang marangal at dakilang adhikain.

Nguni't ang aking kaluluwa'y pumipiglas,
Sapagka't and daang aking tinatahak
Ay mabato and malubak, masakit sa
Paa at puno ng hapdi sa puso.
Sa kabila nito'y nangako Ka sa akin
Ng isang mapayapa at malugod
Na paglalakbay na ang patutungua'y
Ikaw, pakiki-isa sa lyo at pagluklok
Sa lyong pusong mapagmahal.

Nawa'y makarating ako sa aking
Patutungan, sa kabila ng kahirapan
Sa kabila ng pagkalugmok ko at
Pagkaligaw ng landas. Sapagka't
Ako'y tumataya sa lyong pagmamahal,
Malasakit, at pag-aruga sa harap ng
Aking mga kahinaan. Kargahin Mo po
Ako kung kailangan upang makasama Kita
Ngayon sa buhay na ito, at sa kabilang
Buhay din, at maratnan Ka sa iyong
Malawak, masagana at mapayapang
Tahanan, na puno ng pagmamahal.
Amen.

LIFE OFFERING

Why do I love my humanity so much?
Makes me think this is all I am.
Life has been good to me,
Though I cannot say the same
For a lot of other people I know.
Survival has been easy,
Rewarding and fulfilling
Because You have blessed me.

But there are still moments
Of restlessness and a desire
For more or for something else.
I am not as accomplished
As a lot of other people,
Of old, and of the present,
Whose contributions to humanity
Are major and significant.
In my little corner of this universe,
I may appear content and happy
With what little I have done.
But there is this nagging feeling
That I am still incomplete.

This restlessness I can understand,
Though it makes me unhappy.
Maybe I should learn to be more patient
For life may have its own timing.
Maybe my faith in a mysterious Father
Calls me to trust that silent, almost
Inaudible voice that calls me to a
Mission set even before the
Beginning of time.

That little voice has been there
Since I can remember, constantly
Whispering words that rule my heart.
Give me the wisdom to know
What You have in store for me,
Where to go, what to do.
Help me make my humanity
As You have loved it,
That my life may be an offering,
Pleasing to You.

SILENCE MY HEART

Father, it has been sometime
Since I have spoken to You thus -
Heart to heart.
Often I was off to do some work,
Or do something in the house,
For my adorable granddaughter,
For my numerous projects.
Sometimes these are for You,
But often these are for myself.
I am becoming my busyness.
Oh, were life a lot simpler
And my mind less distracted,
I could list a lot of "I could have's"
Like focus on my relationship with You,
And pray and meditate all day long.
But that is not me.

Though I know that You're here with me,
And I am what I am, Your fretful beloved.
Often confused, often in the dark,
Often feeling alone, despite
An apparent busy schedule, moving
With my noisy fellow travelers.

Yet I know too that You are immanent
In this space-time continuum, yet
Transcendent and holy. Did You not
Become flesh thru Jesus? Born, ministered,
Died, resurrected and ascended?
Who taught us through His words
And through the example of His life.

It is seldom that I feel You these days,
Though I live for You; maybe it is
Because my heart is too preoccupied
With myself and other things, maybe
It is because I have a wooden heart.

But I have been painfully training
My heart to know, follow and love You,
Whatever my condition and situation;
To hear you, see You and feel You,
To experience and learn from You,
Every single moment of my life.

For I know that all is meaningless
If my center, is not with You.
I may follow and obey like a robot,
Doing things because I am programmed,
But without my heart in it, free and
Unburdened, all is for naught.

I will have to learn to open my heart
For You to change, inspire and enflame,
For You to fill, amidst all this busyness.
I know that I cannot do it by myself,
No matter how hard I try, but
Only by Your mercy and love.

Let me be successful in this one
Difficult and challenging endeavor,
Even if just partially.
Help me find my true self,
Help me find You in others,
And know that I am Your beloved;
Let me touch just the hem of Your coat,
And I shall be fulfilled.

First, I will have to learn to still
My heart, and be silent.

OUTREACH

Suyuan

Assumption Malibay Community
San Juan Nepomuceno School, Inc.
Sr. Bernadette Eugenie Casas, R.A.

If there is anyone who vibrantly
responds to the signs of the times... it
is the Magis Deo couples who facilitate
and assist in a unique seminar they call
“Suyuan.” Thanks to Rev. Fr. Ruben
Tanseco, SJ for founding this ministry that
providentially champions the on-going
Formation of Parents in their relationships
as husbands and wives, and as parents
of God's sons and daughters.

Initially it was Couples for Christ
who were our partners in extending the
apostolic mission of Assumption Antipolo
beyond the school to 8 sitios surrounding
its property along Sumulong Highway.
From 1999 to 2004, the CFC's 13-week
Christian Life in the Spirit Seminars were
instrumental in the spiritual formation
of couples in poor communities.
These became the foundation for
preparing couples for the sacraments of
Confirmation and Matrimony. We later
asked the program to be shortened to 7
weeks. The climax of these efforts was
the “KASALANG BAYAN,” working with
the Parish of Immaculate Heart of Mary.
Thereafter, these couples became active
parishioners in the Church and served
as Lectors- Commentators, Eucharistic
Ministers, Altar Servers, and in other
areas of service in the Parish.

In 2004, the Archdiocese of Manila
defined itself along the direction of PCP
II for a new way of being CHURCH OF
THE POOR. Thus Cardinal Gaudencio
Rosales launched MAGPAS – Manila
Archdiocesan General Pastoral Assembly
– to which our San Juan Nepomunceno
School (SJNS) used to send its faculty,
Staff and Sisters every First Saturday
of the month to Paco Catholic School
Auditorium where various parish
representatives would attend.

Assumption Malibay is a rare
Assumption insertion. Our Religious
Community Convent and School is
in the very midst of poor neighboring
communities of Barangays 174 and
175, Malibay-Pasay. The clientele of
SJNS are children of side car drivers,
laundry women, security guards, local
government staff, OFW parents, service
employees, construction workers. Many
parents at SJNS, even those who are

October 2018

professionals, have not yet had the
benefits of a civil wedding, much less
the Sacrament of Marriage. It was
providential that an alumna of Assumption
Herran – Bambi Reyes married to Tony
Narciso of Magallanes – acquainted us
with the Magis Deo Community.

In 2009, counting on the promise
of a Jubilee Year of 40 years, we
hoped to bring 40 couples among our
parents for a Mass Wedding. Magis
Deo volunteers sponsored 5 sessions
of SUYUAN. Eli and Edith Prieto (Magis
Deo Suyuan Facilitators from August
to November 2009), Ellen Rubio and
Rose Simpao from our Parish of San
Juan Nepomuceno, volunteered to
follow up the submission of requirements
for reception of the Sacraments and
validation of certificates. Instruction and
Formation for the sacraments were given
by our Parish Priest Rev. Father Antonio
Navarrete Jr. and Assistant parish Priest
Rev. Fr. Roberto de la Cruz. Twenty-
seven couples were able to join the
January 12, 2010 Kasalang Bayan at
the Manila Cathedral with His Eminence
Cardinal Gaudencio Rosales as the Main
Presider and five assistant priests to
minister to five couples each during the
Marriage rites.

At a later date, another alumna from
Assumption Iloilo and a former parent
of Assumption Antipolo – Celine Barrios
married to Mike Magpayo – offered us
again the services of MAGIS GEO. Their
group called Remnants volunteered
themselves for many Suyuan sessions in
2012-2013 together with other volunteers.

This year 2018, the Spirit of God
directed us once more to gather couples
for Suyuan as an offering of thanks for
the Assumption mission which started
50 years ago with the building of 32
housing units for 32 squatter families.
This project resulted in the founding
of the Maryville Homes and San Juan
Nepomuceno School. Today, the Lord
is asking our Community to “rebuild the
holiness of families” so His “sons and
daughters” may fully open themselves to
the overflowing streams of grace in the
Sacraments that can transform them into
joyful and active Christian Communities
celebrating the Good News of Jesus
Christ.

We are now in the process of calling
the Parents of SJNS as well as the
Maryvillians, the Parents of Assumption
Early Learning Center (a Montessori
school in Maricaban for toddlers 2-½ yrs.

old to 4-½ yrs. old.) our alumnae and
neighborhood to experience Suyuan. We
are grateful that the Lord sent us again
a new couple facilitator in the person of
Fred and Cora Buenaventura. Though
they live in Imus, Cavite, they generously
come to Malibay for the Suyuan sessions
(February 4, May 1, August 19, and
September 23, 2018). We are moved to
see other volunteer couples assisting in
these sessions, enlivening the sessions
by their encouraging presence and their
being prayer warriors.

We look forward to the Suyuan on
November 11, 2018 in Malibay, and one
in Cavite for former Malibay residents
now living in Maryville Emmanuel
Homeowners Association-GK Village in
Buhay na Tubig, Imus We pray and hope
that all these efforts may finally lead to
the celebration of the wedding banquet of
the King's Son.

Last August 19, 2018, I stayed
and listened to a whole day's session
to refresh myself with the process of
Suyuan. I glimpsed and experienced
how right and just it is to sharpen and
heighten the lines of beauty with which
God adorned the relationship between
husband and wife, the father and mother
of the children that God will call as His
sons and daughters, brothers and sisters
of His Son Jesus Christ! The effect on
me, however, was to see with deeper
appreciation the way God called me to
be espoused to His Son Jesus since I
was 11 years old, and how I promised I
would not be married to anyone but that
I would dedicate my whole life for Him
alone. I saw how my relationship with
Jesus grows with every encounter with
Him in my daily life of prayer, of reading
the Word of God, and in my relationship
with my sisters in community and with
the people sent to be part of my mission.
So much more did I see my consecration
as a religious confirmed each morning
when I receive the exquisite grace of
being intimately transformed by the very
Precious Body and Blood of Jesus each
morning! No wonder my parents would
approach Holy Communion and receive
the Eucharist daily with their hands twined
together! May couples be enriched too by
daily mass to become so intimately united
with the King's Son. So praise, honor and
glory be to the Almighty for the Ministry
of Suyuan. May blessings come upon
you, the Magis Deo Community, and your
families!

Continue to next page

OUTREACH				
Donations for Marikina Flood Victims (as of 18 September 2018)			Disbursements for Olandes, Marikina Suyuan Relief (as of 18 September 2018)	
Donor	Amount	Goods		
CASH				Amount
John BCGG	20,000		Cash Given Out on Aug 14, 2018	2,050.00
Levy Roxanne Espiritu	20,000		Cash Given Out on Aug 16, 2018	7,150.00
Transfiguration BCGG	2,000		Rice / 6 cavans	12,530.00
Leslie Gatchalian	5,000		Plastic bags, paper plates, cups	440.00
Noel & Yayette Ventigan	5,000		Merienda on Aug 16	370.00
Easter BCGG	3,000		Ice	52.00
Cana BCGG	10,000		Various groceries	1,905.00
Samaritans BCGG	2,000	1 box sardines (100 cans); 2 boxes noodles (144 pcs); used clothes	Various groceries	4,944.25
Sirach BCGG	21,500		Pork and groceries for lunch of workers	1,444.44
Jon Kleng Cobico, Thessalonians	5,000		Pork and groceries for lunch of workers	1,485.51
Jazmin Punzalan, Easter	1,500			
Mr. & Mrs Sony Gavila, Genesis	1,000			
Benj & Fely Santiago, Sirach	5,000			
James BCGG	5,000			
Jun & Vivian Ahyong	2,000			
Chronicles		1 cavan rice; 3 boxes sardines (300 cans); 100 toothbrushes: 288 pcs Shampoo sachet; old clothes		
Song of Ruth		2 boxes sardines (100 cans); 2 boxes noodles (60 pcs)		
Charley & Jay Ng Sy		2 suitcases of old clothes; 1 box of toothbrushes		
Nina Lopez of CEFAM		2 sacks of old clothes		
Mustard Seed BCGG		2 boxes of Ma Ling luncheon meat, Meals for cleaners on August 14		
Archangel Gabriel		Pillows, pillow cases, blankets, raincoat		
Agnus Dei		2 boxes of noodles; 3-in-1 coffee		
	108,000			

Continued from page 21, SUYUAN Evaluation from Couples

Mga Paraan na Nakatulong sa Mag-asawa

Magbalik-tanaw kung ano ang nagustuhan nang nagliligawan at paraan ng tamang pag-uusap ng isang mag-asawa. At ang pagsasanan kung ano ang dapat nag-uusap ang mag-asawa. – Jose Maki Sandoval & Carolina Mejica, Sept. 23, 2018.

Open forum communication of husband and wife relationship at ang mahirap pag-usapan. Pagsasanay ukol sa mga bagay na dapat pagtibayin at palaguin sa pagsasama at paano baguhin ang kahinaan ng bawa’t isa at paano gawing sentro ang Panginoong Diyos sa pagsasama. – **Crisanto & Dolor Manlapaz, August 19, 2018.**

Ang nakatulong sa amin ay ang binahagi sa amin na pagmamahal sa isa’t isa at maging may respeto sa isa’t isa at kung may problema mag-usap ng mahinahon para malutas ito. Ang aming nagiging problema minsan ay napag-uusapan nang masinsinan. – **Paulo Letegio & Michelle Padasas, Sept. 23, 2018.**

Lahat ng binahagi ng Magis Deo Facilitators ay nakatulong sa aming mag-asawa. Nakita namin na marami pa kaming kailangan gawin para gumanda ang pagsasama naming mag-asawa. Nalaman naming ang kakulangan naming mag-asawa sa pag-uusap. Nalaman naming ang saloobin ng isa’t isa kaya naman pagpapatuloy lang naming ito para tumibay ang pag-iibigan namin. – **Jaypee C. Lopez & Katherine Charlotte C. Lopez, Sept. 23, 2018.**

Nagkaroon kami ng gabay sa kung paano maging matatag at harapin ng magkasama ang mga problema . Sila po – mga Magis Deo – ang naging instrument para sa katulad namin na bago pa lang sa buhay pamilya. Natutunan naming pag-usapan at magkaroon ng pagbibigayan sa bawa’t pagsubok na darating at paano maging matatag at ang pagkakaintindihan sa mga gawain ng bawa’t isa. – **Ronald Abad & Janessa Juco, Sept. 23, 2018.**

Mungkahi na Makatutugon sa Inyong Pangangailangan

More prayers to make us stronger para harapin pa ang trials na darating. – **Crisanto & Dolor Manlapaz**

Sana mapag-usapan din sa seminar ang hirap ng isang ina lalo na sa pag-aalaga sa mga anak at mamulat din sila sa sakripisyo ng isang ina. – **Jose Maki Sandoval & Carolina Mejica**

EVENTS

Magis @ 30 Hits the Fairway

Leo Soliman, Corinthians BCGG

The Friday dawn sprinkle didn’t dampen but added luster to the pristine greens at the Navy Golf Club that played host to 31 players (18 from Magis and 13 guests).

On hand to welcome the players were the ever-reliable Samaritans Cesar and Delsa Sangalang, Lito and Ann Naldo, and Mimi Santos assisted by Navy Golf registrar Madz.

So eager were the players that most arrived an hour earlier than their assigned tee time. And so, the camaraderie that was surely bound to happen whenever golfers meet, did happen. Stories from Tiger Woods’ fantastic comeback to current Ryder Cup standings to personal handicaps echoed at the clubhouse tables.

And when the first flight teed off, the golfers let their clubs do the talking. The usual serene atmosphere of the golf course was broken by constant laughs from different flights, notably from Claro Santos and Jun Sison. Only shows that all were enjoying their games.

When asked how they fared, Levy Espiritu and Lilit Tumbocon opted to talk about the fine weather. You know what that means. Ha, ha, ha.

As the dust settled, eleven awards were won:

Lowest Gross - Rannie Salenga 80

Lowest Net - Paulo Villarreal 69

Class A Champion - Butch Vargas 70

Class A Runner-Up - Michael Montero 70

Class B Champion - Mike Magpayo 70

Class B Runner-Up - Doremi Sarmiento 70

Class C Champion - Jun Sison 70

Class C Runner-Up - Rudy Ebardo 72

Nearest to the pin - Ting Yupangco

Accurate drive - Doremi Sarmiento

Longest drive - Butch Vargas 245 yds

The fellowship and awarding, presided by Leony Parada, was likewise lively, with everybody going home with at least a raffle prize. Manolet got the lion’s share, though.

Everyone so enjoyed the game, the food and the fellowship, that all promised to play again at our next Magis Cup.

A big, big THANK YOU to our sponsors, organizers, staff, waiters, caddies and of course, to our LORD, for making our Magis Cup a huge success.

A wonderful day, indeed. Magis Cup and Magis Night. All for the glory of God.

Our sincerest thanks to our Sponsors;

Platinum Sponsor:

DATEM Inc.

Gold Sponsors:

Tangent Solutions

Philip & Malu Panlilio

PBTS

Flowline Water Technologies

Sirach BCGG

John BCGG

Silver Sponsors:

SGV Foundation

RNM Dynamics Phils., Inc.

Roxas Holdings, Inc.

Star Keratin

RMS People Support, Inc.

Kent Floors

CWC Prime

Charley & Jay Ng Sy

DMS Corporation

LP Engineering

Francis BCGG

Cana BCGG

Samaritans BCGG

Tony & Bambi Narciso

John & Glo Boren

Donors:

K&G Golf Apparel

Vietura

Miles & Evelyn San Pedro

Melendres & Associates

Corinthians BCGG

Levy & Roxanne Espiritu

Mustard Seed BCGG

Wings Tech

SPI Semicon

St. Peter BCGG

Reggie & Daisy de Guzman

Marcia Balderas

Jojo & Jane Aldeguer

Raul & Gigi Orayani

Mon & Ting Yupangco

Mike & Celine Magpayo

MAGIS GOLF TOURNAMENT



Gold Sponsors:



John BCGG
Sirach BCGG

Philip & Malu
Panlilio

Silver Sponsors:



Silver Sponsors:

DMS Corp.

Francis BCGG

Cana BCGG

Samaritans BCGG

Charley & Jay Ng Sy

Tony & Bambi Narciso

John & Glo Boren

Donors:

• Melendres & Associates
• Raul & Gigi Orayani
• Corinthians BCGG
• Marcia Balderas

• Miles & Evelyn San Pedro
• Ting & Mon Yupangco
• Mustard Seed BCGG
• St. Peter BCGG

• Levy & Roxanne Espiritu
• Jojo & Jane Aldeguer
• Mike & Celine Magpayo
• Rico & Terry Lim

