

# Magis

*Formation for Mission*

*Stewardship*

*Simplicity*

*Sharing*

*Service*

Official Publication of the  
Magis Deo Community  
October 2021 Issue



## **Call It Grace**

One's journey that entails  
6 miracles and thankful chances

## **Accompanying the Sheperds**

Shadows and enlightenment  
on faith and stigmas

## **VP Leni as the Good Samaritan**

Is your decision a moral, Ignatian,  
and Magis choice?

## **Audacious Ignatius**

Helping the youth in difficult times  
through prayer and the daily examen

## **Unity in Adversity**

In a sea of misinformation,  
keep the truth afloat



# About the Cover



As early as the -ber months, campaign season has begun. In a mishandled pandemic, people have started to initiate discussions online. Some friends, families and strangers are willing to exchange opinions nicely, while others riot in the comments section. But there truly is no time prolonging the practice of ignorance at the expense of other people who have become victim to unemployment, killings, and an overall unfair system who are smart enough to leave others out. I myself am a part of the youth, and I feel strongly about the opinions I read because the choices we'll all make will rule our future. There is fear in the present, and a fear of the unknown. Fear shouldn't be plaguing our minds, especially the younger ones who know of nothing yet. Fear shouldn't be reduced to generational resilience.

But if you dig deep within fear, there is also strength. We feel strength in our hearts because of Him. He would want us to make wiser decisions, because He knows what this nation feels, from the ground up. He steps into every single one of our *kabayan's* shoes; you and me. So follow His lead, step into others' shoes. Would you have the comfort you have now? Everything is political because we live in a country divided, where people view success as excessive, easy money that flows inwardly, where people are cogs in a capitalist, elitist machine. It's a triangle, a funnel, where we ask: Who are at the top and at the bottom of the barrel? Where do you place? Don't we want equality, equity and justice for all? We are not looking for a hero nor a savior. Just a public servant who cares. This time, will you care?

# Editorial Board

<div><i>Magis</i></div> <div>Official Publication of the Magis Deo Community 2/F RMT CeFam Bldg., ADMU Campus, Q.C.</div>		
<b>Editor-in-Chief</b> Rufo Dacanay	<b>Council Chaircouple</b> Benz & Vina Dimanalata	<b>Photographers</b> Anchit Chua Chiaco Manuel Naldo
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<b>Illustrator/Layout Artist</b> Levenspeil Sangalang		

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Calendar of Activities: October-December 2021		
<b>October</b>	<b>November</b>	<b>November</b>
<b>30</b> Joint Youth Outreach- God Works in Mysteries Ways	<b>6</b> Accompanying the Shepherd Series	Personal Discernment Process
	<b>7</b> Advent Recollection and Community Celebration	Community Planning for Year 2022
	<b>13</b> Marriage Booster with Fr. James	Magis Deo For Leni (volunteer group organization)
		<b>December</b>
		<b>5</b> Family Day



# Unity in Adversity



standing before me on a virtual platform was the kind of leader who not only could lead us out of the muck and mud that five-and-a-half years of disastrous governance has mired us in, but could also save us from the looming disaster of a repetition of an infamous 15-year dictatorship.

We've been there, we're done with that.

Listening to Leni, my heart and ears warmed – no cursing, no dirty finger, no lies, no rant, just the clarity of truth and intelligence and the aura of a lifetime of love and humble service. Just the refreshing courtesy that comes from a genuine respect for God and for our fellow humans, just compassion for the poorest of the poor, they who have always suffered more than their share of the consequences of disasters, natural and human made.

Just someone who seriously practices the Ten Commandments, and more. The Magis.

Asked why her senatorial slate included candidates with a past, Leni said her main objective was UNITY, that the biggest problem our country faces at present and in the-all-too-near future is Covid. The virus is a force of nature, but totally man-made is the inefficiency, selfishness, and pure ignorance which doubled the disaster many times over. It is the task of government to lead and inspire different stakeholders to set aside differences aside and work together for the common good. And that seems to be the charism of Leni – to unite us into ONE body, and together move in step to accomplish ONE goal. Only when we can move as one do we have a chance to heal our land and our people.

Can she win? Does truth and information have a chance in the battle of TikTok and fake news disseminated by the competition's B!!!!G army of trolls?

Why not? After all the same strategy that was used for disinformation can be used for information. The professionals know how to do this.

And no matter if you are still deciding or have your heart set on another candidate, here is one area where we can all contribute: know the tactics of the enemy. The enemy is fake news and lies and an unleashed hunger for profit. Already circulating on social media are informative memes teaching us how to "STARVE A TROLL" – excellent tips to discourage purveyors of fake news and other nuisances.

**M**agis Newsletter Managing Editor Cesar Sangalang invited me to write an editorial on Magis Deo and the May 2022 Election. One moment we are celebrating, then in another, we are faced with anxiety over the hard lockdown and the rapid rise of Covid cases, that our friends and members of the community got infected with the virus. Amidst all these, we seek the Lord's presence and assurance, holding on to His promise that He is with us. Much like He was with his apostles during that stormy night out in the sea, His presence in our hearts assures us everything will be fine.

An editorial, by definition, is an opinion column addressed to all readers. It is expected to be biased in the direction of truth, honesty, and a clear grasp of community concerns. So I asked Cesar's opinion, not to campaign (Election Code does not allow campaigning till end February 2022), but to have someone I could bounce against, share thoughts and feelings.

Why did you choose Leni? I asked.

"Isa lang tinitignan ko," he said, "ang community values natin - Stewardship, Simplicity, Sharing and Service. Sa simplicity lang, panalo na, hindi kamukha ng ibang maraming pera at Ferrari."

So complete. But it was not until I listened to Leni speak during last week's PressCon announcing her senatorial slate that tears rolled down my face and I was convinced that

## BASIC RULES:

- When you get a meme or TikTok objectionable in part or all, don't reply, don't click, not even to dislike; just ignore, delete.
- Don't waste your time with mga bwisit! Delete!
- Read every piece of social media very carefully, if it doesn't feel right, trust your feelings, and delete.
- Forward only what will help your candidate.
- Do not forward negative TikTok and memes even if it is against a candidate you don't like.
- Negative ones can be so witty they can tempt you to forward them, thus earning money for the troll, at the same time you may be contributing to name recall for the other guy.
- Don't forward anything until you have personally verified source and content.
- We can share information on achievements, programs etc., just do not use the words, "Vote", ELECT" especially tied to a candidate's name. Remember we cannot campaign until 3 months before Election Day.
- Join a group and tie up with the mother organization. Not only do you contribute actively to your candidate's chance of winning, it can be fun and a source of much encouragement (and campaign material) as David fights Goliath.

God be with us! As Pareng Bert Alejo said so well in a recent Community Celebration, quoting Pope Francis' encyclical Fratelli Tutti, we have a responsibility to make politics, election processes, government HOLY. That is Stewardship to the highest degree.





# Outreach Ministry

Noel & Neri Gascon, James, Brother of John BCGG

**T**he Outreach Ministry was affected by fear of Covid-19. Restrictions on physical activities, in compliance with health protocols to lessen the risks of infection, severely limited the programs and activities we were very passionate about in pre-Covid times.

Despite these challenges, the OM pushed hard, spreading the spirit of generosity through the leadership of Jojo and Rhea Gaddi. The ministry concentrated on three pillars of service: Suyuan, Bayanihan, and Edukasyon.

To support formation goals (a.k.a. “Formicom” – Forming Ignatian Community) OM also launched the PUSO (Pledge Ur Service to Others) campaign with all the BCGGs. With this PUSO initiative, BCGGs are given free will and flexibility in expressing generosity in this time of pandemic. As of August, 83% of BCGGs have commenced their own outreach project. We also donated cash to the Tanging Yaman Foundation and to the OVP-SWAB Cab Project, for feeding the hungry during Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ).

With the energy and charisma of Rhea Gaddi we have run quite a number of Online Learning Sessions in cooperation with Google, for the young and not so young members of the Magis Deo Community. Tulong Edukasyon also continues subsidizing wi-fi connectivity and donation of gadgets to Iskolars. With these we help students continue their online schooling.

Many people have been infected by Covid-19 and they must have gone through an ordeal while in quarantine or isolation. To respond to the need for a spiritual journey, volunteers from the community joined the “E-Pray” project of Fr. Luciano Felloni to reach out to Covid patients.

The next challenge for the OM-Suyuan group is to launch the Virtual BEM (Buhay Espiritwal Mag-asawa) for the Suyuan graduates. Because of Covid-19 restrictions, face-to-face Suyuan is still not possible.

On behalf of the Outreach Ministry, we would like to express our gratitude for your continuous support and willingness to share.

# Our Chronicle on Chronicles

Gina Manuel, Chronicles BCGG



**J**une 19 - 21, 2015 marked the beginning of our Magis Deo life when we attended the Marriage Encounter Weekend at the BLD Covenant and Retreat House in Cavite.

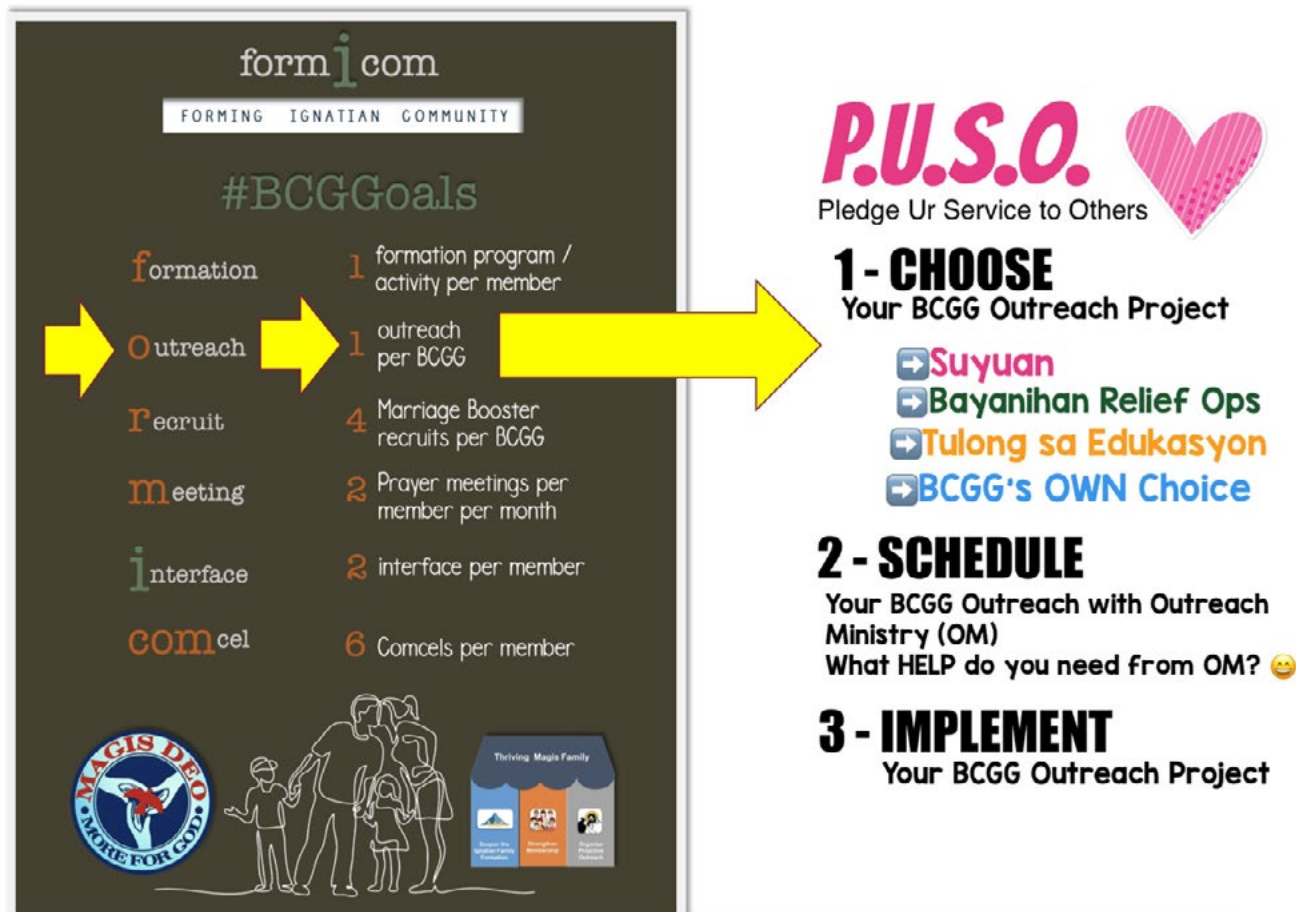
This ME Weekend was a very fruitful and memorable experience for us and made a significant impact on our marriage. A year later, it was our turn to sponsor and facilitate an ME Class. It was a challenging and fun experience; we enjoyed our tasks as auxiliaries hence we continued to assist in succeeding ME Weekends, as a couple who didn't belong to any BCGG at that time. Then in 2017, our beloved shepherds, Jojo and Jane Aldeguez, warmly and openly welcomed us into Chronicles BCGG.

Among the many things we learned in Magis Deo is: **Chronicles is not just a BCGG, it is a family.** Our bond as a family continues to be cemented by many activities, especially regular faith sharings where we discover things not only as a couple but as a group as well. We learned to develop an active prayer life, and value couple dialogue. In addition to the wisdom and knowledge from reading the Bible at our regular BCGG meetings, the sharings inspire us to reflect deeply. These sharings are filled with drama, comedy, action, romance, suspense, much like movies that come to life. We found a support group and a safe space to be with one another; a place where we can truly express ourselves without feeling insecure or scared of being judged. The prayer meetings have become a

haven and a bond, allowing us to accept each others' strengths and weaknesses, love each other, and develop ourselves, as we bring each other closer to God. We are not constrained by distance nor by different time zones: a couple who went to Canada for work continues to faithfully attend the faith sharings. And despite the pandemic, last year we welcomed to the Chronicles family two new couples from another ME Class.

As a family that supports and helps each member's activities, we believe that Service stood out the most from the practice of the 4 S's (Sharing, Simplicity, Service, and Stewardship); therefore, we call ourselves “Marthas.” We see this from Ney and Pinky Rosas, who leveled up to join the Magis Pastoral Council, and from our children who are very active in the Magis Deo Youth. With the constant guidance and support of our shepherds, we were entrusted to be alternate shepherds, tasked with facilitating the virtual BCGG meetings, and recently, to assist in the Marriage Booster Next Level group prayer meetings. As a new experience for us, we found this difficult at first, but with our shepherd's mentoring and assistance, we adjusted well.

In everything we do, we remember to do it in service to others and to God. We are sure other BCGGs feel the same. As we continue with our journey in Chronicles, we hope more couples will find their own Chronicles in Magis Deo, **not just a BCGG but a family.**





## VP Leni as the Good Samaritan

Josephus & Emma Jimenez, Cana BCGG



**O**ur discernment as a Magis couple, molded in Ignatian spirituality, led us to an awareness that the Magis Deo community today is at a crossroad, facing a difficult moral question. And in resolving it, we are torn between two options: one, should the community remain silent, uninvolved and stay apolitical, given the raging social, economic, and political issues confronting our nation? And second, should we stand up, and define our moral and ethical position, considering that our country is going to make a very crucial political decision that has very serious and far-reaching consequences and implications?

We should reflect deeply and go through the process of Ignatian contemplation and discernment. I hope we all did. In our own consultation with the Holy Spirit, the proddings we received as a Magis couple, were largely inspired by the Holy Father, Pope Francis (a Jesuit, by the way, and also very Ignatian in principles and values), in his encyclical letter, *Fratelli Tutti*, on the feast of Saint Francis of Assisi on October 3, 2020, where he retold the Parable of the Good Samaritan as written by the evangelist St. Luke (Chapter 10, verses 25 to 37).

Our nation today, based on our discernment as a couple, is like the traveler from Jericho to Jerusalem, who was ambushed and robbed. By analogy, the current dispensation is not unlike the highway brigands who stripped him and mauled him black and blue, and abandoned him half dead. Our nation is being robbed of its dignity and rights. Our freedom and

democracy are being assaulted and attacked. And if the Magis Deo community would refuse to help, we shall be likened to the priest and a Levite who both went on the other way and ignored the man who was about to die. Our nation is dying economically, socially, and politically. And we cannot afford to abandon it.

Here comes a Samaritan from Naga City, a widow at that, a solo parent, poorer than the priest and the Levite, who are her political opponents. But, after a long and painstaking reflection, the lady, Leni Robredo, has made a choice to give up her comfort, risk her life and even her security, to save a nation in distress. Magis Deo is one of the inns, but the Good Samaritan has chosen it and we, the members of the community, are the innkeepers and the helpers at the inns. Should we choose not to help and take refuge under our comfort zones?

It is very easy to argue that taking sides may divide our community and may distract us from our core purpose, which is spirituality. But what is spirituality? Pope Francis, like Saint Pope John Paul II, and even St. Ignatius of Loyola would ask: Does it not include being in the frontline of battles, when our human rights, human dignity, our honor, and decency as a people are being besieged with unabated abuses, massive dishonesty, notorious negligence, ineptitude, and incompetence? When our life, liberty, and freedom are in grave and imminent danger, is it not our moral duty to stand up in defense of our own rights as a people?



Had VP Leni not entered the arena, my wife and I would have stayed away from the polls, because the choices would be limited to the trying-hard-to-look-good, the somehow good, the not-so-good, the one pretending to be good, and the last option who is downright bad. But when VP Leni declared, it is as if the Lord has sent a new Moses to liberate the Israelites from the obnoxious and tyrannical rule of the Pharaohs. And so, her coming and offering herself as a lamb should be a summon on all of us to help.

Evil triumphs when good men do nothing. In his immortal Divine Comedy, Dante Alighieri warned that the hottest place in hell is reserved for those who are neutral. When our Christian values and our Ignatian four S's are in danger, we cannot remain unperturbed in our ivory towers. The Magis Deo community is either for Him or against Him. There is no in-between. Of course, the majority should be mindful not to offend, much less alienate the minority. But the minority should also respect the will of the majority. *Vox populi, vox Dei*. The voice of the majority is the voice of God.

We should help the Good Samaritan, Leni Robredo, or our badly wounded nationhood shall ultimately perish. This is a moral choice. This is an Ignatian choice. This is a Magis choice. And this is our choice as a Cana BCGG couple. And we shall stand by it until the end.

Note: Atty. Josephus B. Jimenez was arrested and detained in 1972 as a student activist and urban community organizer in Cebu. He left the comfort of his executive position in the corporate world in 2003, to obey the call of Fr. Ruben Tanseco, SJ, to serve as a Labor Attaché in the Middle East and helped the OFWs, victims of abuses, injustice, and neglect. Emma served as a volunteer spiritual and psychological counselor to the abused domestic helpers abroad, with no compensation, in a life of Ignatian spirituality.



Accompanying the Shepherds Series:  
Understanding Psychological Issues  
Affecting the Sheep I – Common Mood Problems

When My Lambs are Feeling Blue: FAQs on Mood Disorders

Eden Acosta, Song of Ruth BCGG

**L**ambs go to their shepherd when they have problems, some of which may involve mood disorders. Fr James conducted a talk on 4 September 2021 before 135 members representing 24 BCGGs to help shepherds answer this question: How can I help lambs deal with this predicament?

The goal is not to treat but to help us become familiar with these conditions. This could help avoid the response to spiritualize, and instead be present to the person by listening to what is happening to him/her.

“Normal” Depression

Sometimes we are sad and that is okay. This is part of the meaning-making of our lives. This is not a disorder but can be a warning sign that something is happening in our psyche. It is usually transient, lasting for minutes to a few days. It is not disabling, to the point that you can no longer do your regular activities.

There is no precise dividing line between ordinary sadness and clinical depression. It is a continuum and falls on a spectrum.

Clinical Depression

How can you tell if a person is clinically depressed and not just sad? Find out if the following are experienced for more than two weeks: (1) persistent depressed mood – feeling sad, down, or miserable most of the time; or (2) loss of interest or pleasure in most of the person’s usual activities.

In addition, at least four of the following conditions are present: significant weight loss or gain (increase/decrease in appetite), insomnia or excessive sleep, agitation or retardation, fatigue or loss of energy, feeling worthless or excessive guilt, indecisiveness, diminished ability to think/concentrate, or recurrent thoughts on death and suicide.

Impaired functioning is an important characteristic. The person is unable to cope with the ordinary demands of living, like working or studying. Personal relationships are affected, including the day-to-day challenges of family life and lack of focus in prayer.

Breaking the depression cycle involves psychological treatment to increase the capability to cope, and drug treatment to address brain chemistry. Treatment varies from one person to another. The most important thing is to find a treatment that works for the person.

The shepherd could help the lamb debunk myths about medication such as the need for it, the duration of treatment,

whether it is addictive, etc. Medical research has shown that depression is associated with specific changes in the chemical message system of the brain. This requires a chemical solution in the form of anti-depressants. Medication can help relieve poor sleep, anxiety, tiredness, poor appetite, poor concentration, and agitation.

Mental health medication can take several weeks to have optimal effect. The key is to consult a doctor when starting or stopping medication because the dosage needs to be titrated. Anti-depressants are not addictive. These are usually prescribed for a long time after symptoms have stopped to prevent relapse.

Concerns about side effects should consider that untreated depression has even more negative effects on physical health. If not addressed properly, depression could contribute to poor physical health due to decreased physical activity, changes in immune response and hormone levels, slowed gut movement, and increase in smoking and drinking.

Bipolar Disorder

This condition involves alternating episodes of mania and depression. Mania involves feeling overly energetic, all powerful, decreased need for sleep without feeling tired, talking more than usual, racing thoughts, easily distracted, restlessness, and excessive pursuit of pleasure without regard for consequences.

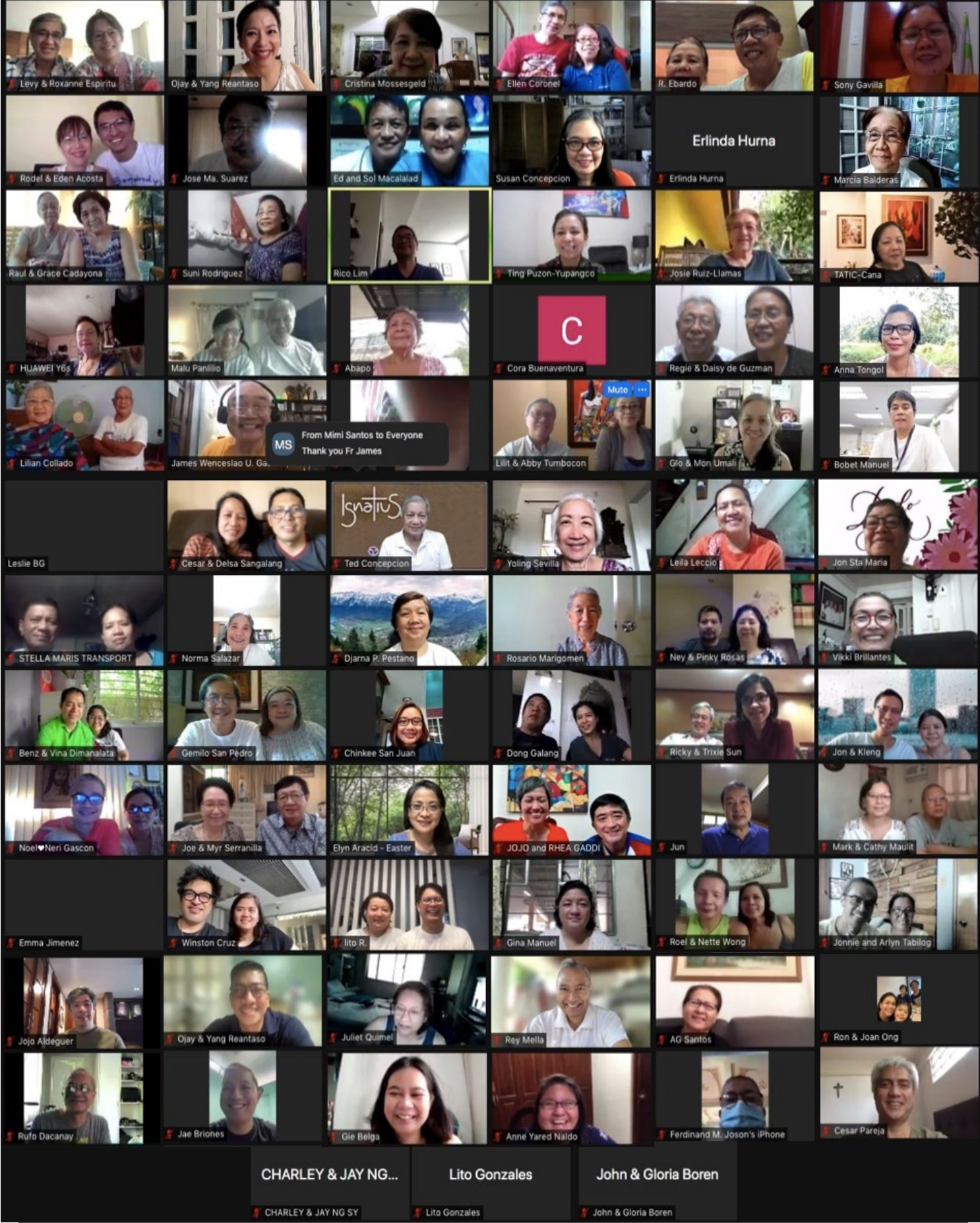
How is bipolar different from ordinary mood swings? Consider intensity, length, and interference with life. Symptoms are usually more severe. Mania lasts for weeks or months, with alternating episodes of depression. The stable mood does not return for a long period of time. This interferes with day-to-day living and can cause serious problems such as days without sleep, suicide, loss of work, foolish spending, divorce/separation.

After Fr. James’ talk, participants went to breakout rooms to reflect and share insights on the role of the shepherd on this topic.

The goal of this talk is to increase awareness of mood disorders. Being informed can allow the shepherd to give an appropriate response to the concerns and reservations of the lamb about seeking diagnosis and treatment.

This is a time for the shepherd to listen and be present to the lamb. We cannot diagnose because we are not competent to do so.


Instead let the person consult a psychiatrist, doctor or professional who can make a diagnosis. One of the organizations to contact is RMT-CEFAM at 84264289, text through Viber 09278639346, or go to the website <https://www.cefam.ph>.





Accompanying the Shepherds Series

Finding God in Shared Prayer  
(Sensing God Active in Group Sharing)



by Fr. James Gascon, SJ

On August 7, 2:00 – 4:00pm

Dear BCGG Shepherds,

Kindly inform your members and advise Malu &/or Susan who are attending.

Thank you.

Formation Ministry

Cesar & Marivic Pareja  
Council Overseer: Formation Ministry / Prodigal 102 BCGG

Last August 7, 2021 our Spiritual Director, Fr. James Gascon, SJ, facilitated another webinar in our on-going Shepherding Series. He emphasized the need to study, speak, pray, and live out Ignatian Spirituality if we want the gifts and charism of St. Ignatius. Fr. Mon’s talk focused on the Venice experience of St. Ignatius and the First Companions. One hundred thirty-four Magis members from 22 BCGGs (out of 23 BCGGs) attended the talk

Entitled “Finding God in Shared Prayer”, this focused on reviewing what BCGG Heads should concentrate on and be more aware of during Prayer Meetings. A total of 149 BCGG members attended, with all BCGGs represented.

At the outset, Fr. James announced that the webinar would be held “Town Hall Meeting” style, with interactions welcome. Now is the time for the speaker to listen; and the question-and-answer part of the meeting would be at the end of the exercise.

Fr. James began by stating that Prayer Meetings are basically Prayer Sessions; our main purpose is to pray together and observe (feel) the movement of the Holy Spirit in the small unit of the community. We must all be willing and ready to listen to each other and learn from one another.

He asked the participants to start by reflecting on two important questions:

- 1. As a shepherd of my BCGG, what can I consider my most important treasure or blessing?
- 2. As a shepherd of my BCGG, what is the source of my greatest challenge or struggle?

Fr. James then asked for volunteers to give inputs for discussion.

These are our Lights and Shadows.

Lights

Sharing God’s Word; bringing members closer to God

Learning from each other

Being able to open oneself without fear of being judged, finding real friends

Being able to do God’s work through outreach, retreats, seminars, etc.

Getting different perspectives from similar events/situations

Applying Praxis in everyday life

Getting lambs to realize the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives

Encounter with God through the sharings of others

Getting closer to each other; developing deeper friendships

Seeing the spiritual growth of lambs

Shadows

Dealing with incorrigibles

Difficulty in training alternates or successors to be able to move on to a different calling or to fall back and just be a regular member of the BCGG (to let others shine)

Mis-appreciation of data to and from the lamb to the community (and vice-versa)

Lack of lamb’s participation in ComCels and BCGG meetings

Prioritizing other meetings/activities

Journal writing

How to determine if members are growing spiritually

Promoting self-space for sharing faith experiences; encouraging greater and deeper participation in prayer meetings.

Preliminary Points

Fr. James reminded the participants that Being a Shepherd is a Vocation, not a job. There are no “Job Descriptions.” As Shepherds, you can do everything for your lambs. Discernment is the key when you have to give care, and to give spiritual growth.

Being Shepherds, you should consider Your Own Spiritual Growth – don’t just focus on the spiritual growth of your lambs; you should grow with your lambs.

- More than personal growth – you develop a true and personal friendship
- Wider Perspective – see the greater scheme of things

But every shepherd must also be aware of the challenge of human dynamics - every BCGG is unique, and each lamb is different. Just do your best and leave the rest to God!

Fr. James then proceeded to lead the group in reviewing one of the main tasks of a Shepherd: facilitating prayer meetings. He showed the structure that we observe for Prayer Meetings.

The BCGG Prayer Meeting Structure

1. Prepare the place: we use an icon, Bible, or candle.
2. When all is ready, we light the candle; someone leads the opening prayer.
3. The assigned leader for the day reads ‘Something to Think About and Pray’ from Sacred Space, followed by quieting down.

- a. Presence of God
- b. Freedom
- c. Consciousness

4. The reading for the day, based on Sacred Space, is read followed by reflection questions from Sacred Space and from the assigned leader, followed by a moment of silence.

5. First Round of Sharing: how was I struck by the reading? Or by any other matters (God experience) from the previous week?

6. Second Round: How have I been impacted by what I heard from others? From what I heard, where did I resonate with or what touched me deeply?

7. Third Round: The leader finds some common or shared graces or invitations from God.

8. Final Prayer: includes some intercessory prayers

9. Can end with a song before extinguishing the candle.

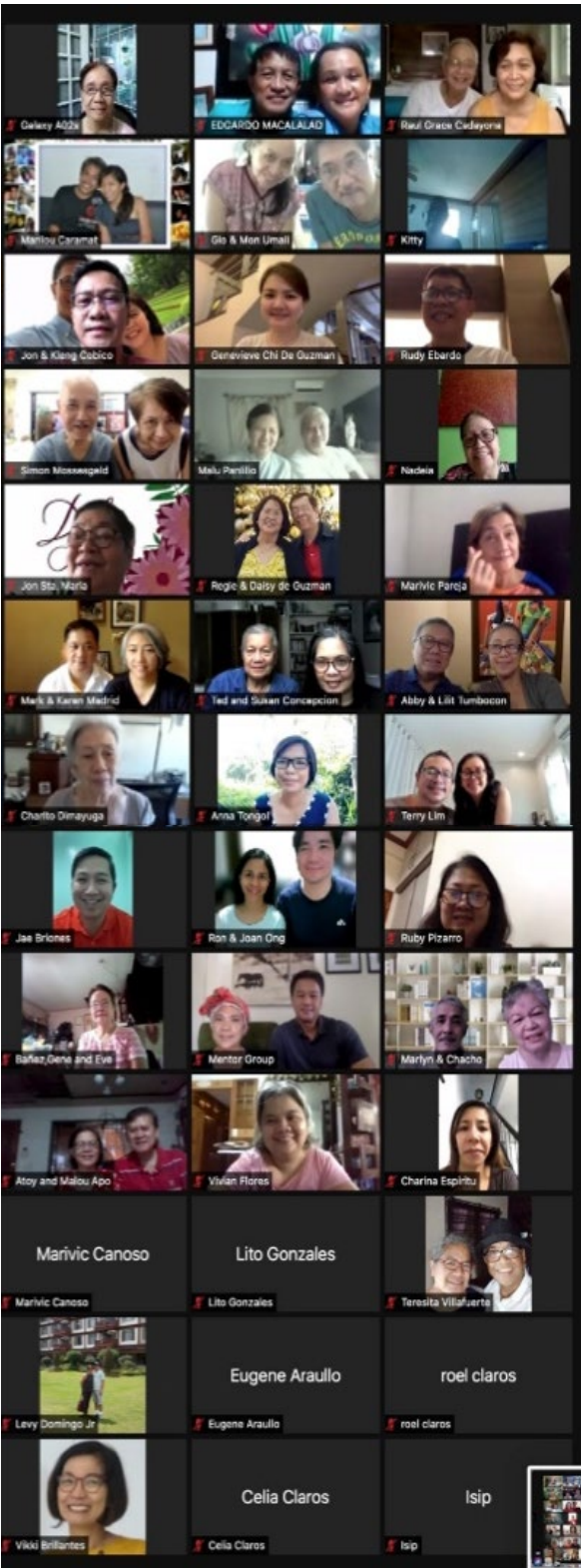
At this point, Fr. James gave some important reminders for shepherds:

The Shepherd’s role as a facilitator is crucial in making the Prayer Meeting orderly. But everyone was requested to allow for some digressions. Adaptation is one of the important Ignatian principles. In short: be flexible, don’t be O.C.

Our ultimate aim in prayer meetings is sensitivity to the presence of the Holy Spirit.







**ATSM – As the Spirit Moves**

Shepherds should only allow people to share only what they are ready to share at the moment. Do not pressure any lamb to self-disclose when one is not ready.

**Listening** is a very important skill. **Clarificatory** questions or interventions should only be done during the 2nd round. This is just to help the lamb focus. The main rule is to “be able to connect the ‘movement’ to one’s ordinary or day-to-day life. If the person is not able, for any reason, to connect, LET GO! He/she is not yet ready OR it is not yet the will of the Spirit at this time to catch the grace. Remember **KAIROS!**

**Sensitivity** is a skill to learn. Shepherds should be sensitive – sensitive to self, to the Spirit, to the other, to the group. The Ignatian term for this is **noticing** or **awareness**.

**Compassion** is expected from the Shepherd. People are not on the same level of spirituality; we must accept others as they are. **Respect is part of compassion.** Much as the Shepherd may want their lambs to grow or deepen spiritually, but they are not ready, it is not the Shepherd’s personal project. Let God do the work in His time (Kairos). **Ignatius gave the exercises to people according to where they are coming from.** Making progress is according to one’s context.

**Avoid counseling** during prayer meetings. A Shepherd should avoid putting persons on the spot. Only when intervention is sought should the Shepherd counsel a member. Even when sought by a spouse-member, the shepherd must be sensitive to how this will impact the other spouse.

If some members indicate the need for further deepening, they can be referred to the Center for Ignatian Spirituality (CIS) for additional interventions like Spiritual Direction or home retreats. These are purely personal initiatives and depend on the readiness of the person. It is a personal intervention from the Spirit.

**Open Forum**

The open forum was a very lively sharing of best practices as shepherds. A common insight is: we Shepherds must strive be good role models, to live one’s life as a good example to our lambs. This is where the phrase **“Walk the Talk”** comes in.

**Final Note:**

Before closing the workshop, Fr. James advised the Shepherds that there should be an addendum, **a new No. 10** for the BCGG Prayer Meeting Structure:

10. On my way home, I will reflect on this question: **How did God speak to me through the Prayer Meeting?** Ano ang PM (Private Message) ni Lord sa akin? I will try to share this with my spouse through a word, a phrase, a sentence. No explanations needed.

**FORMATION**

**Participating in Christ’s Self-Kenosis**  
**An Annual Ignatian Retreat on Weeks 3 & 4**  
**of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius**

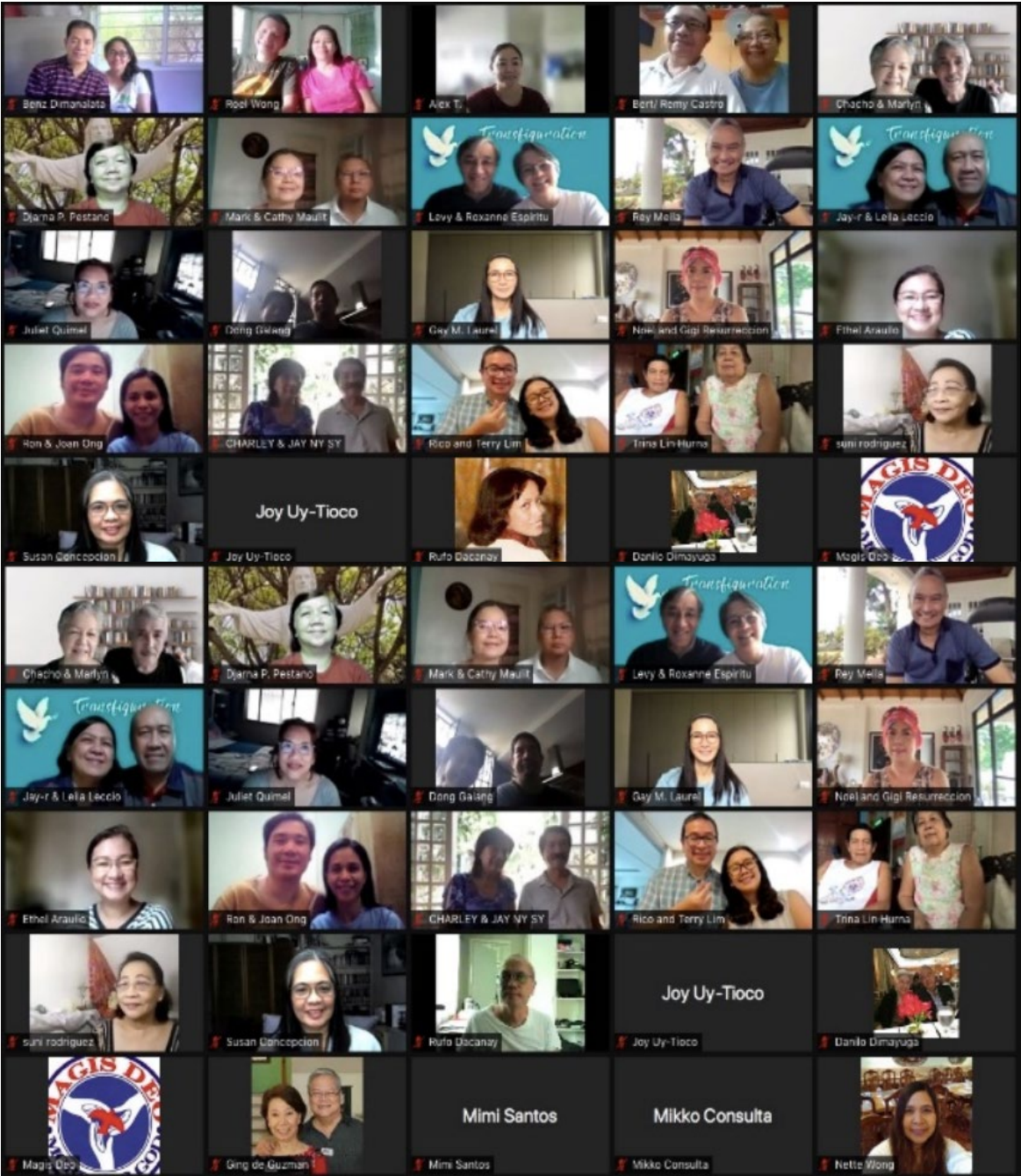
**27 - 29 August 2021**

Philip & Malu Panlilio, Formation Ministry / Mustard Seed BCGG

**In inner silence, we (85 retreatants), accompanied by God through Fr. Bob Buenconsejo, SJ,**

- ...braved our personal dark night of the soul
- ...empathized and loved deeply the Lord in His passion
- ...embraced our sufferings as self-kenosis in union with Jesus’

- ...ended with our hearts gladdened by the gifts of resurrection (redeeming the time, hope, joy, discerned service)
- ...re-committed to our homes as domestic monasteries during this pandemic.





Reflections on AIR

## Call It Grace

Fely Santiago, Sirach BCGG



**T**his morning of the AIR retreat, I prayed on my personal dark night of the soul. I had my first morning outdoor walk exercise 27 days after that dreadful near-death experience. I kept thanking the Lord this morning. It's pure grace. I thought 3 weeks ago I would never be able to walk long distance again. I love the outdoors. I love to travel, and it requires long walks!

Last August 2, 2021, I was rushed to the hospital because I could not walk straight anymore. My left hand could not hold my cellphone. It kept dropping from my hand. I was limping when I walked, and when unassisted, I would fall. My family decided to bring me to Makati Med immediately also because of slurred speech.

**First miracle:** When we arrived in Makati Med, I was immediately attended to at the Emergency Room. This was more than a week after Covid cases surged and the ERs in most hospitals are full of Covid patients.

**Second miracle:** I was still conscious! They asked for my complete name and birthday, the name of my husband, and the name of my children, all of which I enumerated correctly! My BP was over 200 so the attending doctor immediately requested an MRI.

While I was being wheeled to the MRI many thoughts came to my mind. Lord, is this my time? I immediately recited the Act of Contrition. I asked forgiveness for all my sins and forgave all the people who have hurt me, especially the person in the Admin office of our condo who really stressed me out and caused my elevated BP!

While in the MRI tube, I kept praying to Jesus and Mama Mary. I sang the Anima Christi. I prayed The Memorare and continued talking to God. Lord, is this my time? Am I going to meet you already? But Lord, can I make a request? *Pwede huwag muna ngayon Lord?* If it be Your will, I want to bring my 2 children to the altar on their wedding day and I also want to see my apo from them! Sana huwag muna, Lord, but not my will but Your will be done. Then I tried to reach for my nose using my left hand, I could not! I then prayed the Rosary using my right-hand fingers.

Literally I was really "high blood" with the Admin person in our condo! The past few weeks had really been stressful because we were preparing to move to a new home in Las Piñas with all the finishing works, some delays, and the impending lockdown! I made sure we could move in before the lockdown! But there I was, locked down in Makati Med!

**Third miracle:** the MRI revealed a mild stroke, and bleeding in my brain that did not require surgery nor staying in the ICU! I was brought to the isolation room with Benj while waiting for the Covid test results.

**Fourth miracle:** Benj and I were tested for Covid, and the results were NEGATIVE! I could not imagine being a stroke *and* a Covid patient!!!

I made good progress. After 3 days I could lift my left and right arms together with eyes closed. I could also lift my left and right legs together. This is their test on my progress because when I was admitted, I could not lift my arms or legs...

*Continued on page 17*

Reflections on AIR

## Participating in God's Self-Kenosis: God's Nature to Save

Gigi Resurreccion, John BCGG

John 3:16  
For God so loved that He gave us His only son.

Mark 15  
Anima Christi  
Within thy wounds, hide me.

**T**he journey of getting sick, being weak, losing control is a journey on Kenosis. Like Peter, I tell the Lord, "Where else can we go? You have the words of eternal life." When in pain or suffering, I often find myself reciting: "Lord have mercy on me" and "Within thy wounds, hide me." I unite myself with Christ's sufferings not because I seek to be holy. Rather, I beg the Father to recognize my humanity and, bearing the wounds of Christ, to have pity on me. As Fr. Bob said, it is man's nature to sin. Even in my deepest, darkest despair, I offer my sufferings to alleviate the pain and suffering of others, to cover and protect my children, my household, our means of living, for the poor souls in purgatory, and for the conversion of sinners. This is because I recognize His mercy and His desire to save me. Hence, to honor my suffering as it is united to Christ.

### Reflections on AIR: Call It Grace, continued from page 16

The dark clouds came in on the fourth day. I thought I was making good progress and and could be discharged already. But my BP went up again to 170! I suddenly felt desolation. I was so down and had mental struggles. I wanted to give up. What a shame to the Lord really. I asked forgiveness when I came to my senses and realized how blessed I am! So many people are suffering and here I am complaining. I started to offer my pain and suffering to the Lord as my share in His passion and death and offered it for the forgiveness of my sins and conversion of all sinners. So, every pain I felt from the reinsertion of the IV, I offered to God, and it gave me consolation.

**Fifth miracle:** On the fifth day I was able to walk on my own again. I could walk to the toilet, to the window, without



### My prayer

Lord, free me from pain. I desire this because I have suffered enough from it. Free me from pain because I cannot pray when I experience it. Free me from pain because it makes everyone around me suffer because of it. Free me from pain because I grow despondent over it. And yet Lord, because I know you love me and know that your will is always perfect for me, I will trust you. I will unite my pain with you. I will allow you to work through it and with it. I will wait patiently so you can make something beautiful and perfect from it. I know you will carry me, deliver me, and comfort me. For it is your very nature to save me.

*Ponme con tu hijo mi madre santa, porque sin el, no tengo vida, solo muerte.*

the assistance of my husband Benj. While looking out my room's window I watched the people walking on the street and I wondered if I could still walk long distances again, because I love walking as exercise.

The **Sixth miracle** came on the 6th day, a Sunday! Resurrection Day! The doctor advised that I could already be discharged! My BP was stable, I could move my hands and my feet, and everything went back to normal as if nothing had happened to me. I survived a near-death experience of a stroke! And I can only attribute it to PURE GRACE from God! My second life is truly a gift from the Lord. I have nothing but GRATITUDE. Thank you, thank you, thank you Lord. And to God be the Glory!!



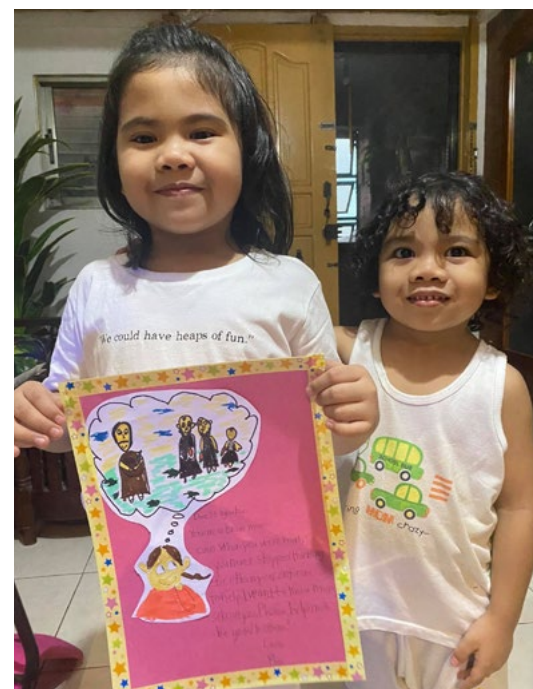
## Audacious Ignatius

Karen Patricia R. Madrid, John BCGG, Alternate Head, Youth Ministry

**O**ur 41 Magis Deo Kids had their session about St. Ignatius entitled **Audacious Ignatius** last August 21, 2021.

St. Ignatius of Loyola is very inspirational. He taught us to find God in all things, contemplate, examen your day, and pray to God with your whole heart. In teaching the kids about his life and how to do this kind of prayer, I had them watch the short clip about Saint Ignatius and I used the storybook "Audacious Ignatius." This book was created by two long time Jesuit educators, a brother-sister team: author Paul Mitchell, and illustrator Katie Mitchell Broussard. The book points toward the depth of Ignatian spirituality with playful rhymes and colorful illustrations. It caught the attention of the kids and gave them a glimpse of who St. Ignatius is. I then segued to talking about the daily examen and taught this to young kids.

I talked about the "5 Finger-Daily Examen." The first is Breathe – as simple as reminding yourself to breathe in God's love, and then, breathe out all the unpleasant things. Then Be Grateful – remind yourself to think about the specific joys and delights of the day, the moments you are most grateful for. Feel – think about what you felt at specific moments: joy, frustration, boredom, anger, compassion. And what God might be saying through those feelings. Pray – remind yourself to ask the Holy Spirit to guide you, to pray about whatever it is that God thinks is particularly important. And last, Look Ahead – ask yourself: when I think about tomorrow what joys or challenges come to mind?



This is very timely and relevant now in the time of a pandemic. We are stuck at home and children cannot go to school. This can be very difficult for them; they don't get to see and play with their friends. Praying and using the daily examen will help them control their emotions and ask God to help them with whatever they are feeling. My goal was to help equip each child on how they can pray and contemplate on their days.

The following are some reflections of the youth who listened to Tita Karen:

“My takeaway on ‘Audacious Ignatius’ is that he was a very hard-working man. He was very loyal and was willing to serve people. It all changed when he was injured because of a war. While he was healing, he read about God and was amazed at the works Jesus has done. Because of this he swore that when he was healed, he would give everything he had to the needy and no longer live for himself; he would live for God. And he did. I admire his determination to serve God and I wish to do the same.”

— Garieth Jayne, daughter of Doc and Cat Geslani, James Brother of John BCGG

“Wag puro salita, dapat may gawa” and “Just tell the truth, wag mag hesitate to ask at wag magsinungaling.”

— Sam Lorrenz, son of Elmer and Meg Fajardo, James Brother of John BCGG



## Magis Deo Youth Ministry

Stewardship. Simplicity. Sharing. Service.

### AUDACIOUS IGNATIUS



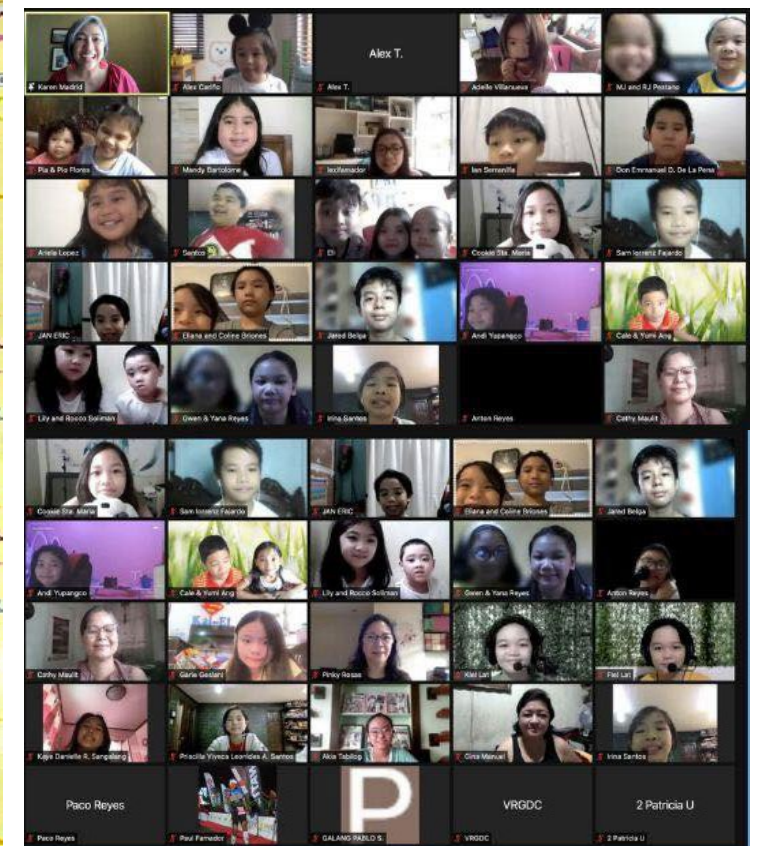
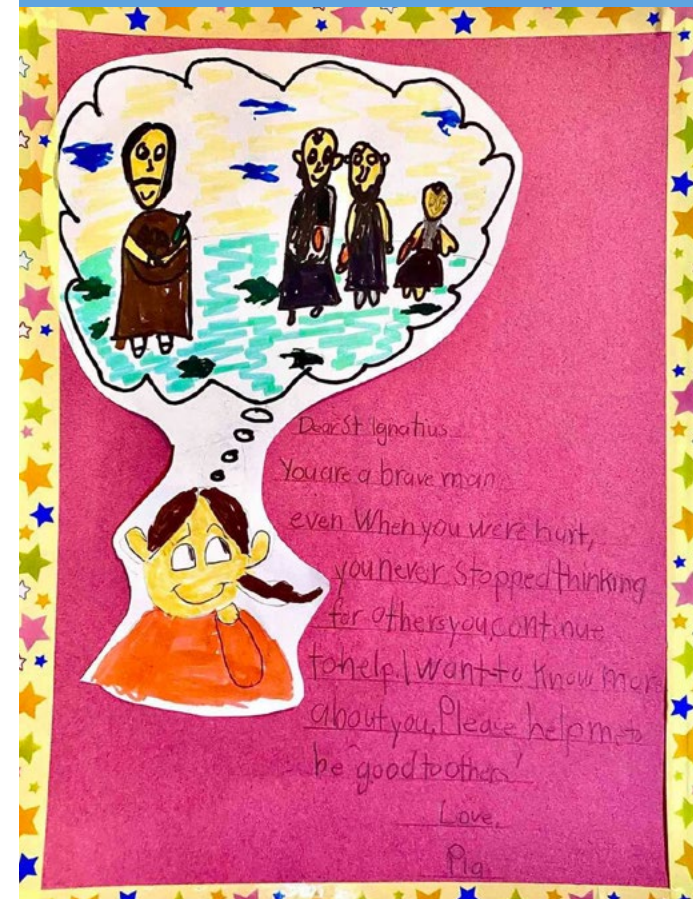
August 21, 2021

41 kids attendees



Tita Karen Madrid

*Igniting the fire of St. Ignatius  
in the hearts of our Magis kids.*





Chacho Angeles, Thessalonians BCGG

(1) Ang Dalaw

Masaya ang tagpuan ng magpinsan,  
puno ng galak dahil kapwa silang  
pinagpala ng Ama sa pagbigay sa kanilang  
dalawa ng anak na parehong kakaiba, banal  
at pinili upang tuparin ang Kanyang pangako  
ng pagmamahal sa sanlibutan.

Kalugod-lugod ang tagpuang ito sapagka't ang  
Kanilang presensya ng isa sa isa'y tanda ng  
pag-aaruga at pagmamahalan nila, at ng  
pakikiisa sa kanilang pagtangkilik at pagtalima sa  
kalooban ng Ama, na buong puso at kababaang  
loob nilang tinanggap, sa presensya sa kanilang  
sinapupunan ng mahal na Banal na Espiritu.

Hindi nila alam kung ano mangyayari sa kanila at  
sa kanilang mga anak, at anong tuwa o sama ng  
loob ang mararanasan nila sa kanilang pagtugon  
sa tawag ng Ama.

Nguni't sila'y hindi bunitaw at sila'y nagtiyaga  
sa tawag sa kanila ng Ama hanggang matupad  
ang plano Niya, mga huwaran para sa akin, sa  
pagwari ko ng misyon na iniatas sa akin ng Ama,  
sa matiyaga, maayos at maligayang pagtupad  
ko nito, upang maibahagi ko sa kapwa ko ang  
pagmamahal ng Ama sa akin.

(2) Banal na Espiritu

Ang daang tinatahak ko sa pagtupad ng aking tungkulin  
bilang Kristiano at alagad ni Hesus sa mundo, ay  
paikot-ikot, mabato, paakyat at pababa, mainit,  
maputik, masukal at minsa'y maaliwalas at maginhawa.

Nguni't kinalaunan, bagama't mahirap ang paglalakbay,  
natanto ko na sa kabila ng lahat, ito ay isang byaheng  
kalugod-lugod dahil kasama ko ang mahabagin at  
madamaying puso ni Hesus, at dahil na rin sa ako'y  
isang sanga na nakakabit sa puno na si Hesus, at kung  
saan iisang dakta o katas ang dumadaloy sa aming  
mga ugat, isang dugo, isang buhay.

Sa paglalakbay na ito, at sa pag-usbong, pagtubo ng  
buhay ko bilang sanga na hitik sa mga bunga,  
ako'y ginagabayan at tinutulungan ng Banal na  
Espiritu, sa pamamagitan ng mga biyayang bigay  
Niya: liwanag ng araw upang makita ang aking  
landas; liwanag na siya ring nagbibigay ng lakas at  
sustansya na dumadaloy sa aking mga ugat; simoy,  
lawiswis at hagayhay ng hanging espiritu, pumapawi  
ng pagod, kinakalat ang hangin ng buhay na mula  
sa mga dahon sa aking sanga,



Ang Diyos ay isang hiwaga; ang aking buhay, ang aking  
tungkulin, ang pagmamahal ng Diyos sa akin, ang  
pagmamahal ko sa kanya at sa aking kapwa, lahat ng  
mga ito, ay mga hiwaga din. Araw-araw, sa bawat  
kong paghinga, ay sinusubukan kong isabuhay ang  
mga hiwagang ito, upang tupdin ang misyong sa  
aki'y pinaubaya ni Hesus, misyon ng pagmamahal,  
misyon ng buhay.

(3)

Banal na Espiritu, mapagmahal na parakleto,  
sa tatlong persona ng Banal na Trinidad, Ikaw  
ang pinakahuling pumapasok sa aking kamalayan,  
maaaring dahil sa Iyong imahe, halimbawa na lang  
ay ang kalapati, dila ng apoy o ihip ng hangin, na  
kumpara sa Amang mapagmahal at Anak na duguan  
sa krus, namatay at nabuhay muli, ay wala gaanong  
tama sa puso at di makapukaw damdamin.

Nguni't ganun pa man, alam ko na Ikaw ang presensya ng  
Ama at Anak ngayon dito sa aking buhay, nagbibigay  
inspirasyon sa lahat ng gawain ng aking isip, puso at  
kamay, lakas sa aking dibdib upang tupdin ang mga  
tungkuling iniatas sa akin ni Hesus bilang Kanyang  
alagad, gabay sa aking pakikipag-ugnay sa lahat ng  
tao at sa Diyos, nguni't higit sa lahat, Ika'y isang  
mahinay na simoy ng hangin at lawiswis ng kawayan  
na pumapawi sa init at alinsangang bumabalot sa aking  
katauhan, noon pa at lalo na ngayong may pandemya.

Ganun pa man, ang pagmamahal ko sa Ama at Anak  
ay pagmamahal ko rin sa Iyo dahil Kayo ay kaisa at  
nasa nagmamahalang ugnayan, at nais Niyo lamang  
ibahagi sa akin dito sa mundo ang pagmamahalang ito,  
upang maibahagi ko ito sa iba, at matutupad ko lang  
ang tungkuling ito kung Ika'y nasa tabi ko, umaalalay  
at bumubulong araw-araw. Maari ba Kita tawaging  
Ate?

(4)

Mahal na Ate,  
Kaisa ka sa mapagmahal na Ama at mapaglingkod na  
Kuyang Hesus, at naatasang presensya at kinatawan  
ng Banal na Trinidad dito sa aming sandaigdigan.

Ako'y taos pusong nagpapasalamat sa Iyong pag-aruga  
sa akin at sa maraming nagdurusang kapatid dahil  
sa pandemya at sa samu't-saring mga kadahilanan;  
sa mga pira-pirasong biyaya at kasagutan sa mga  
katanungang sumusulpot araw-araw; sa inspirasyong  
bumubuhay sa aking puso, maliit at malaki; sa tuwa,  
galak at aliw na umiihip at nagpapaghinawa sa minsa'y  
mainit at nayayamot kong kaisipan; sa paglilinaw sa  
minsanang kong pagkalito't pagkataranta.

Nagsusumamo ako na huwag Mo akong iwanang nag-iisa  
sa pagharap ko sa mga pasakit, lungkot, sama ng loob  
na kaakibat ng buhay ko sa mundong ito, at tulungan  
mo akong gawing gawain ng pagmamahal ang mga ito,  
kagaya ng ginawa Hesus sa Kanyang pasakit sa krus  
ng kamatayan.

At higit sa lahat, tulungan Mo ako upang sa lahat ng aking  
pagkilos sa buhay ko, maaaninag ang pagmamahalan ng  
mahabaging Ama, mapagmalasakit na si Kuyang Hesus  
at ng matulungin at mapagginhawang Ateng banal.  
Ikawnawa.



(5)

As pure as the spring waters from the heart of the earth,  
may my heart be empty of greed for wealth and power,  
for status and influence, for myself or my family;  
may it be free of pride and the self-esteem, of the  
desire to be obeyed and followed by everyone,  
that I may have clarity to see and meet God  
and I may have room only in my heart for Him.

As placid as a pond, accepting all creatures,  
quenching their thirst for that deepest desire;  
providing cooling comfort and companionship  
in hot, stressful, troubled times, gently caressed  
our loving Holy Spirit, Holy breath.

As determined as a river rushing to the sea through  
the countryside, hurtling and tumbling over cliffs,  
rocks, obstacles but staying on course till it reaches  
its home and source, the open, waiting and loving  
arms of God. My heart.

