

Magis

Formation for Mission

Stewardship
Simplicity
Sharing
Service

Official Publication of the
Magis Deo Community
September 2022 Issue



A Bridge of Hope

*Prayer to be an instrument and
bridge of hope for others*

ME 133 is Couple Power and Community Power at its Best!

*See the journey and blossoming of this
ME Class through pictures and sharings*

Courage in the Lake

*About hope and receiving the
grace of courage*

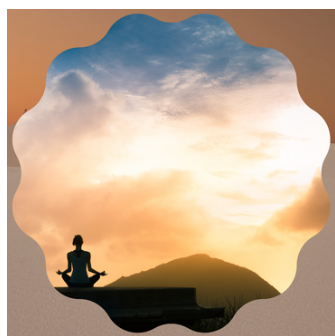
Love Begets Freedom

*How can love lead us to greater freedom
and make us available for our mission?*

The Humanity's Four Great Global Disruptors

*The Book of Revelation tells us of the four
horsemen of the Apocalypse*

ABOUT THE COVER



As we continue to adapt to the new normal, one of the best ways to embrace anxiety & groundlessness during this uncertain time is TO MAKE SPACE for HOPE (by embracing the known and the unknown) and TO SHOW UP with HOPE.

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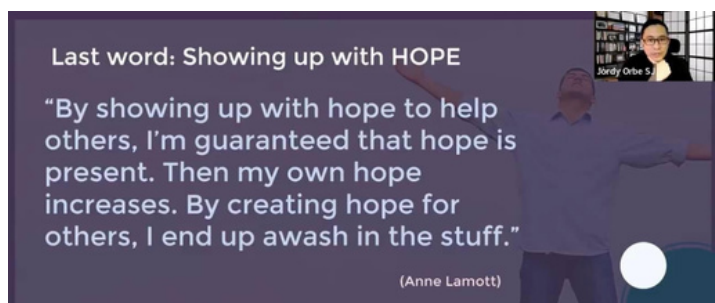
Spiritual Director
Fr. James Gascon, SJ

A BRIDGE OF HOPE



While listening to the talk of Fr. Jordy, I was thinking, depressed, anxious, worried ba ako in any way especially during this pandemic? Perhaps I was a little worried but not to the point that it affected or bothered me a lot. Sometimes I would worry why I'm not worried or depressed while I know of people who are deeply affected emotionally, physically, mentally, financially and spiritually that it has left them hopeless. When I saw the last slide of Fr. Jordy, it answered my question.

This was written on the last slide:



Then as I evaluated and reflected on my life for the past 2 and a half years, I realized that these were the activities that my husband and I were involved in.

1. Feeding the frontliners, the hungry and the poor through our participation in a feeding organization, Kababayanihan-Food for Meds, composed of kind-hearted individuals from all walks of life;



2. Helping, encouraging and sending food and medicines to friends and family who have contracted the Covid-19 virus and even assisting some to find a hospital room during the peak of the pandemic when most hospitals were full;

3. Assisting families or groups of people for their vaccination;

4. Serving Magis Deo as CSM (Community Service Ministry) heads by organizing our monthly online Community Celebration via Zoom and a series of 2 Love Live Fundraising Virtual Concerts;

5. Being Shepherds of our BCGG group, the Samaritans;

6. Soliciting funds for our feeding missions and other outreach activities (for the fire & typhoon victims and bike projects (My husband assembled bicycles to be given to deserving people) by singing live on FB and posting solicitation ads. By doing this, I feel humbled to be a channel of blessings between generous donors and our beneficiaries;



7. Mentoring and helping online entrepreneurs to earn extra income without leaving their homes through our online anti-aging distribution business;
8. Inviting friends and family to join our daily online masses via Puhon Initiative where we get our daily dose of spiritual nutrition;
9. Inviting friends and family to join our Marriage Booster Series and Community Celebration Talks where both our marriage and spiritual lives are nurtured.

A bridge of hope. That's how I see myself during this pandemic. I loved it when Fr. Jordy said, "You are seeing the troubles and yet you can still imagine and see what is possible."

Yes, it is possible to still be able to help, to make a difference and to bring hope to others despite the trying times. Just like what Fr. Jordy mentioned in his talk, I believe that making space for hope is only possible and can only happen when I am able to always remember how God has been faithful to me and how much I trust Him for His providence, love, mercy, generosity and faithfulness.

My prayer is this. Dear Lord, in the midst of darkness and uncertainties, please give me the grace to continue to trust and depend on You because my most important goal in life is to be able to live a life consistent with Your values and to be an instrument and bridge of hope for others and help bring them closer to You. Amen.

COUNCIL CORNER

AT THE SERVICE OF MAGIS DEO COMMUNITY

Ney & Pinky Rosas, Chronicles BCGG / Pastoral Council Overseer of CSM

When we became Council Overseers of Community Services Ministry, we were a bit anxious, thinking our personality would not be suited for a ministry where being outgoing and engaging are seemingly prerequisites to be able to encourage the participation of its members. We are closet introverts and prefer to work in the background. Despite our apprehensions, we embraced this assignment.

We are extremely fortunate to have the charming Ojay and Yang Reantaso as Ministry Heads of CSM. This CSM assignment was our first interaction with them – we didn't really know each other pre-pandemic. However, we felt right at home with Ojay and Yang after our first Zoom meeting where we discussed plans and directions of CSM.

The regular task of CSM is the monthly Community Celebration, mostly online. Ojay and Yang have mastered the process, working with the monthly sponsors, guiding them and meeting with them a few days before the ComCel. We are grateful for the Magis Deo Choir, the Youth Choir and volunteer soloists as music enriches the mass. In June, we had our first face-to-face with simultaneous streaming of the ComCel. It was heartwarming to see members' smiles in person, to hear the kamustahan and volume of happy conversations all around. Then of course, having Fr. Eric Escandor as speaker and celebrator was uplifting. Unfortunately, Covid once again disrupted plans and the ComCel from July to September went back to being purely online. CSM hopes that circumstances will allow another hybrid ComCel and better yet, mark our Family Day this 2022 with real hugs or fist bumps instead of virtual.

The Magis Deo Newsletter goes back to 1988! That's 34 years! Our heartfelt thanks to our forever editor-in-chief, Rufo Dacanay, and to all contributors through the years. The newsletters serve as a good record of people, places and activities of Magis Deo. This year, publication was trimmed from 6 issues a year to quarterly but still quite comprehensive. We hope our audience continues to read our community's magazine which reflects our members dreams, desires and stirrings of the heart. To update and reminisce, just Google "Magis Deo Newsletters."

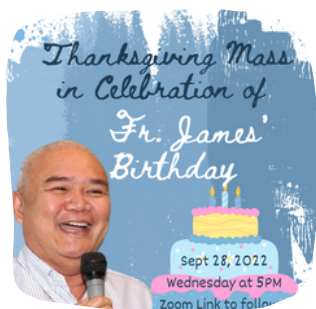
CSM contributes to Magis Deo through fund raising activities. This year we had the very successful "Love Live 2 Concert" which showcased the many talents of our members and families. At the helm were Ojay and Yang, "Mr. & Mrs. Entertainment" with their sunny personality and persuasive powers, matched by their dedicated service to the community. They were at the front, back and center as host, producer, director, recruiter and many more hats. We've had murmurings of the return of another fund-raising activity – a golf tournament. This will likely be at the end of the year or first quarter of 2023. We are sure that this will be supported by our members.

CSM remains at the service of Magis Deo Community. We thank everyone for the sustaining support and participation in all of the ministry's activities.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY FR. JAMES!

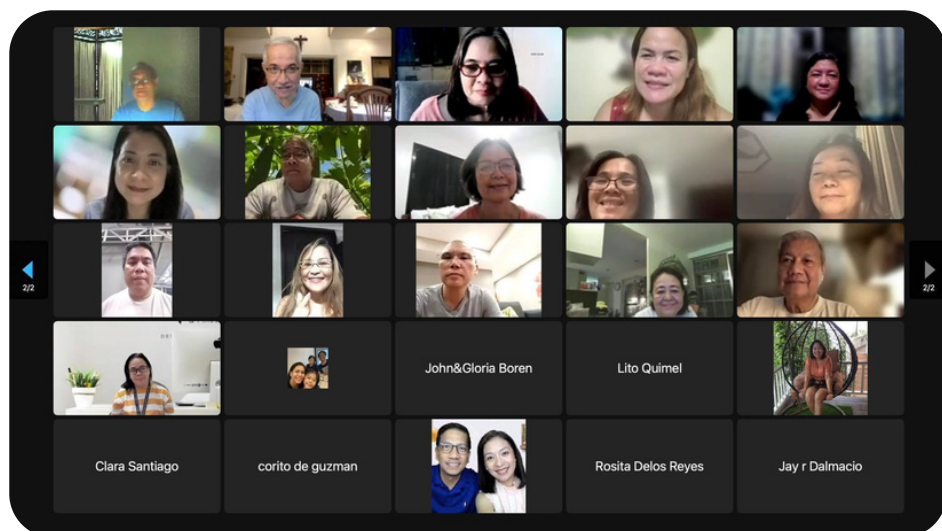
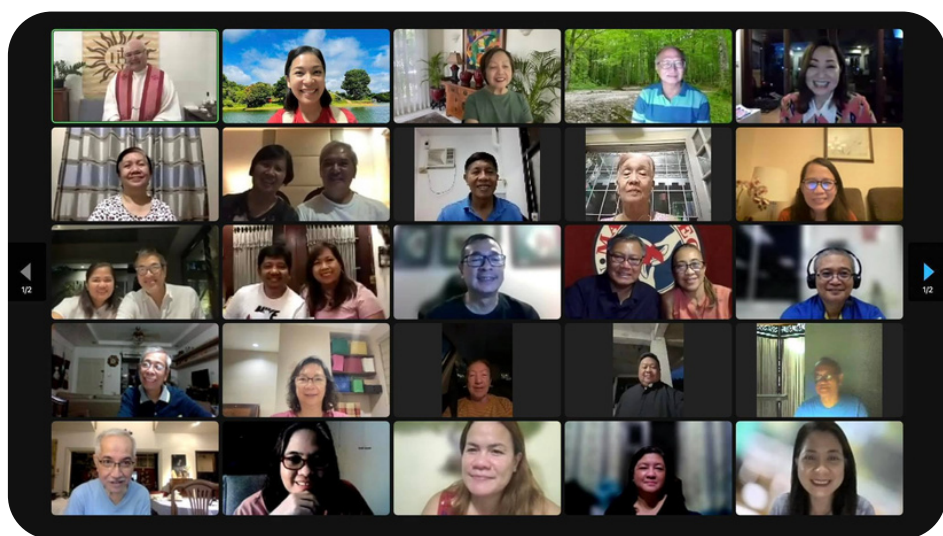
SEPTEMBER 28!



Dear Fr. James,

Happiest and healthiest birthday to you! Thank you for being our spiritual director. You always inspire and encourage us to be good servants of the Lord. May God grant the deepest desires of your heart. Thank you for all you do. We love you!

Love,
Your Magis Deo Community



LOVE BEGETS FREEDOM

Marlyn Angeles, Thessalonians BCGG

How can love lead us to greater freedom and make us available for our mission? This was the central question explored by Fr. Jun G. Bargayo, SJ, at the Community Celebration last August 7, 2022.

Freedom and the vow of married couples to remain one soul and one heart till death appear to be a paradox, particularly when so much focus is given to loving and caring for oneself. And yet the five prison stories Fr. Jun narrated based on his personal experiences, showed that love provides us the freedom to fulfill our vows and be true to our mission. The prison stories demonstrate the different facets of love that make this possible.

I. Incarnational Love

"And the word became Flesh and dwelt among us." These words come to mind whenever I hear of Incarnational love. God, who created all things, who is all-powerful and does not need anything, willingly crossed the enormous chasm between His creation and Himself to become embodied humanity in all its imperfections to make things right. Because of His love for man, he willingly became one of us – vulnerable, weak, and helpless.

Fr. Jun's first experience of a prison riot during his chaplaincy left him numb and helpless. While he did what he had to do as chaplain of the prison, blessing the dead, seeing the ugly and heart-wrenching chaos and death, he felt like a robot doing his job. He cried when he was in his room. He wondered what had happened there. He learned of God's Incarnational Love when he brought this experience to a priest and felt the calling more fervently to be with the people, doing what Jesus would likewise do. When the second prison riot occurred, he felt liberated doing what he had to do because of his love for the Lord who called him for this mission.

Similarly, my marriage vow asks me to make myself available to my partner for his and my good, for our children, and humanity. The pastoral constitution provides a complete theology on Christian Marriage when it says, "Marriage is an intimate union which expresses itself as a mutual self-giving of two persons, shared with future children, demanding total fidelity and unbreakable unity. (G.S. 1:49)

Making myself available entails letting go of my pride and attachments that prevent me from being present for my family and others. Sometimes it can become a struggle.



But when I reflect on and become mindful that this is the mission I said 'yes' to because of my love for God and my husband, I freely and calmly accept what I need to do. And it is possible only by the grace of God, and not because of myself or who I am.

II. Love That Enters the Pain, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus

I often hear the phrase "entering the pain, death, and resurrection of Jesus" in our BCGG prayer meetings. Whenever we find ourselves in situations we would rather not experience because of the pain we have to go through, the phrase gives us the courage and freedom to choose what we face with much faith in the Lord.

A prisoner who felt unjustly incarcerated because he committed a crime in self-defense found it challenging to bear the image of God in the Lord's Prayer when we ask the Lord to "forgive us as we forgive those who trespassed against us."

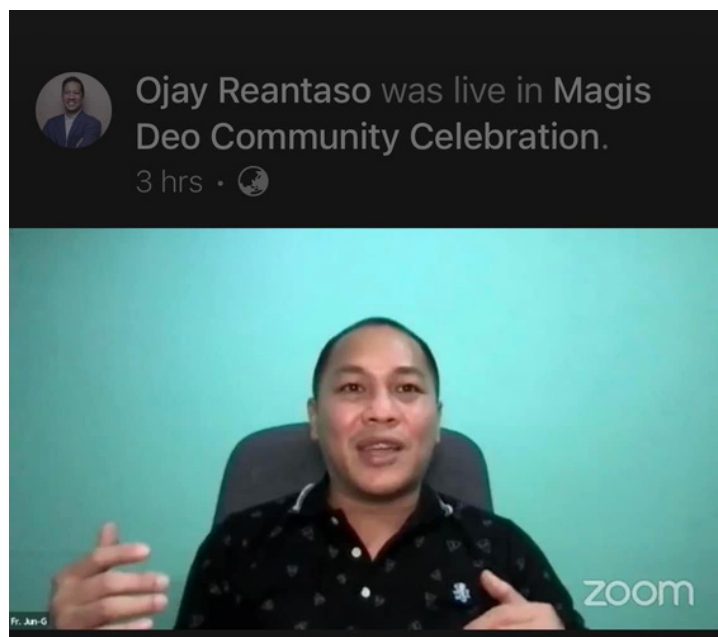
He finally understood what the Lord was asking of him when he felt unfairly treated when someone scolded him for failing to follow an order. He remembered Jesus, whom the Jews wrongly accused, punished, and put to death.

"Forgive them, for they do not know what they do." He took on the pain, entered the vulnerability of the Lord, experienced His pain and suffering, and saw the face of forgiveness.

Love for the Lord and forgiveness gave him the freedom to serve faithfully in masses and to pray unceasingly for his family and children. His prayers were all answered and made possible things he never thought could happen.

He bought a candle, lit it, and prayed daily for freedom. Just when he was about to use up the candle entirely, he received a call for a thumb mark, and liberty. The call was his miracle as he believed that the Lord would always be there whatever happened.

Similarly, Chacho and I entered the pain and suffering of Christ so many times in the more than the forty-five years of our married life. And through it all, we always saw the Lord's mercy and love. Loving the Lord and each other gave us the freedom to rely on the Lord's compassion and promise to help us in our mission.



III. God Hopes and Dreams for Us

We often pray for our hopes and dreams, asking the Lord to grant us this wish. We have heard, too, of the Lord's grand plans for us; all we need to do is follow Him.

One of the prison scholars who recently graduated Cum Laude in Accountancy, pointed to two things she learned while studying in prison.

One was to dream. When she was young, her first dream was to have slippers. After praying and receiving the slippers, she started to dream of bigger things, which grew bigger and bigger until she graduated. Today, she dreams

of her future in ways she could not have imagined when she was young.

The second was that the Lord also has His hopes for her. She is not alone in wanting to reach for her aspirations. The Lord creates ways for her to get them because He, too, has these grand dreams for her.

The story was a refreshing reminder. I have always prayed for my dreams, oblivious of my Father's lofty dreams for me. Being a parent, I too, have high hopes for my children. And I would do anything to help them realize their dreams. I now appreciate my Father's hopes for my family and me. As we say yes to the Lord's invitation, we experience the love of God. Our love for the Lord gives us the freedom to do what inspires us to realize them.

IV. Love as Presence for the Other

As married couples, presence is a gift we can offer each other, especially in times of difficulties and loneliness. Being present for the other strengthens the bond and desire to plod through crisis after crisis together. With love and presence, we have the freedom to choose what is best, not necessarily what is easy and comfortable.

A prisoner who hasn't communicated with his wife for ten years, asked Fr. Jun to bring a letter to his wife at the Correctional for Women. The following day was their wedding anniversary, and the man's gift to his wife was a letter. Since the man could not read or write, Father wrote the letter which the man dictated.

Father asked to see the man's wife at the Correctional the following day. He told her of her husband's letter and read the letter to her upon learning that the wife likewise could not read. As Father read the letter, he saw how the wife's emotions were attuned to her husband, crying when he was sad, smiling, and laughing when he was happy.

The wife answered the letter by asking Father to write what she wanted to say. This went on for two or three times, with Father bringing the letters the spouses asked him to write as they dictated to him their thoughts and feelings for each other.

They sustained their Love for each other through their presence in these letters. The freedom given by love and their presence for each other lifted the limitation that distance would generally put between them. Ultimately, they both gained their liberty and now live together in their own home.

Our presence is a valuable gift we give to our spouses. Sharing and listening to the joys and sorrows of each other, celebrating and commiserating with them, letting them know we are around no matter what may happen. It strengthens our connections and gives us the freedom to present ourselves in love to each other, and to others.

The stories we share in our BCGG are often stories of hope, courage, and strength amidst helplessness and sorrow. The presence of our spouses and other couples gives us the freedom and resolve to continue with our mission in the family ministry.

V. Radical Forgiveness

Forgiveness is one of the most difficult things asked of us Catholics. It is particularly counter to today's emphasis on promoting and protecting the self. It takes much love from us and grace from God to forgive and let go of deep-seated hurts and anger. And when it happens, we are happy we did follow the Lord and even feel good about ourselves.

Have you ever wondered how the forgiven ever feels?

A prisoner who had been crying for two days, went to Father asking for his advice. He received a letter from the complainant saying that he had forgiven the prisoner for his crime. The prisoner did not know what to do since he

did not ask for it and was overwhelmed with the mercy extended to him. Father advised him to savor the moment of forgiveness.

Two weeks later, the prisoner went to Father again, perplexed. The complainant appealed to the authorities to lower the prisoner's punishment, who still had eleven years to finish his sentence. Reacting to the act of mercy shown him, the prisoner expressed his desire to finish his sentence as his way of honoring the mercy extended to him. The love shown to him led to the freedom to choose what the prisoner saw as just and appropriate.

One also recalls when Cherry Pie Picache's mom was brutally murdered and how Cherry Pie told the murderer she forgave him despite her pain. Her love for the Lord was radical and liberating. By forgiving, she let go of the deep pain, anger, and other ugly emotions that she bore until the moment of forgiveness.

We are all called to forgive just as the Father has forgiven us, just as Jesus has shown us. Married couples have their fair share of difficult moments when we must let go of our pain and forgive. What brings us to forgiveness? Love gives us that grace to forgive. At the moment of extreme pain, it is hard to even think of forgiveness. And the most we can do is to plead and pray to even think of it. But incessant prayers bring us the grace to get to the point when we take the first step to forgiveness. And we then begin to feel the freedom to choose and act.



ME 133 IS COUPLE POWER AND COMMUNITY POWER AT ITS BEST!

Winston & Mae Cruz, Matthew BCGG / Pastoral Council Overseer of the ME Ministry

Mae and I are shepherds for ME Class 133 which had their Marriage Encounter Weekend last June 2022. Many of the couples in ME 133 are solid Marriage Booster serial followers and some went through the Marriage Booster Next Level (MBNL) shepherding series to go through the community experience with Magis Deo. With the reunions, we witnessed how their journey has progressed and how they have blossomed as loving couples. Each reunion is a blessing from God to them – of learning, of growing and of loving each other. Guest couples give them a new perspective of learning and an opportunity to meet more of the Magis Deo community. And most of all, the camaraderie and fellowship a community brings has given them a strong and loving support group that they go to time and again, to recalibrate and re-energize their couple power. ME 133 is Couple Power and Community Power at its best!

The next ME Weekend is scheduled for November 25-27, 2022. Invite your married friends so they may also experience couple power in their marriage. Contact Vina Dimanalata or any ME Ministry member for details.

What is the key to a happy and long-lasting marriage?



Unlock your marriage and discover your **COUPLE POWER!!!**

Get ready for a face-to-face
MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER WEEKEND

November 25-27, 2022
BLD Covenant House, Dasmarias Cavite!



Stand by for further details!
Visit the Marriage Encounter Weekend Philippines FB Page!



ME 133 REUNIONS



WALK WITH GOD TO ME

Rod Reyes, ME Class 133

We believe that we were guided by God to attend the ME Weekend. Never an accident that we were introduced by a close couple, Win and Mae to the Marriage Booster seminars during the pandemic and eventually had our own group. We learned to share our stories and likewise pick up lessons and learnings within the session held monthly. These sessions prepared us for a bigger event, the ME Weekend.

Our Experience

In our almost three years being married, we have not attended any spiritual event like the ME Weekend. Magis Deo, meaning More for God is already a good guide for married couples to maintain a healthy relationship.

Highlights

Going away from home for two nights and leaving the familiar and the convenient is already a detachment from what we are used to. We consider this a spiritual detox and focus on the teachings of a very good and inspiring priest moderator, Fr. James.

Couple sharers in the sessions gave us insights of how to approach and address marital issues through dialogues which we never really did. Sometimes, when you hear stories of other couples, they inspire and become a source of learning and and we find ourselves blessed.

The intimate conversations during that weekend made us realize that by just talking, we are able to resolve issues that we think could have become bigger issues if they were not addressed immediately. God blessed us with Magis Deo and our mission is to share our experience and to be a blessing to other couples through this community.



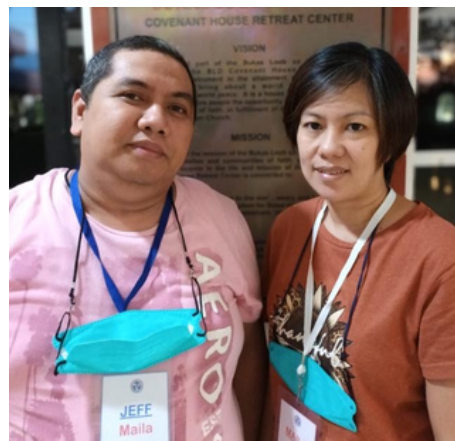
"THE BEST WEEKEND EVER!"

Maila Villas, ME Class 133

Those were the words of my husband, Jeff, after our grand dialogue during the Magis Deo ME Weekend last June 7-9. Honestly, I'm really not sure why he felt that way when, it was just an ordinary gathering. Just kidding! It was indeed one for the books. That weekend was the cherry on top of our amazing journey with the Magis Deo Community. I never thought that attending the first Marriage Booster will lead us to a community who will strengthen our spiritual journey as a couple.

I was always looking forward to Winston's registration email whenever there's a booster session. At that time, I did not even care if Jeff would be attending or not as I was only thinking of my "emotional health." The sessions were like tranquilizers to me. Huge relief after every talk. I felt like someone was listening, like someone knew my life as a wife and as a mother. But I felt incomplete. At the end of the day, I felt like I was physically married but emotionally single.

Then the Marriage Booster Next Level (MBNL) started. The happiness and fulfillment was different as Jeff and I were now attending as a couple. Every session was like God, the author of our love story, was hugging us so tight. The MBNL made me realize that there's no "I" in marriage. That I alone cannot make it perfect, and oh, there's no perfect marriage. I learned to accept and understand my husband and myself too. Praying with and for him made a huge difference in our marriage and our family. Of course we still fight, still have tampo moments and give each other the silent treatment. Like what Fr. Gascon said, marriage without fighting is a dead marriage. But we now handle them with love and respect. We are very much thankful that God gave us a community that will always be there to support and guide us.



KASALAN BAYAN

Rico Lim, Easter BCGG / Outreach Ministry

The Nativity of Our Lady Parish located in Olandes Marikina celebrated last September 17, 2022 at 10:00 AM the "KASALAN BAYAN" where many couples participated in the event. Fr. Christopher Gonzales, the Parish Priest, officiated the wedding and mass wherein 6 of our Magis Deo Olandes Suyuan couples participated and took their vows of marriage in the KASALAN NG BAYAN. Congratulations!



KASALAN BAYAN



A MEANINGFUL SUYUAN RETREAT LAST JULY 2022

Rico Lim, Easter BCGG / Outreach Ministry

A Suyuan Retreat sponsored by the Central Sector was facilitated by BCGGs Thessalonians and Easter at the National Shrine of Saint Michael the Archangel in San Miguel, Manila last July 03, 2022. There were a total of 13 Suyuan Couple Participants. The talks were facilitated by Randy and Cecile Rivera. It was a very touching and meaningful retreat both for the participants and the facilitators.



OUTREACH MINISTRY

SUYUAN RETREAT



TENDING THE SHEEP SERIES QUARTERLY MEMBERS' FORMATION PROGRAM

A REPORT ON THE TALK ON POPE FRANCIS' CHRISTUS VIVIT "CHRIST IS ALIVE" REFLECTING ON OUR YOUNG INSPIRES US ALL BY FR. JAMES WENCESLAO U. GASCON, SJ

Susan Conception, Archangel Gabriel BCGG

Last August 27, 2022, Fr. James Gascon, SJ shared with us Pope Francis' post synodal apostolic exhortation, "Christus Vivit," which was written in response to the 15th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on Young People, Faith, and Discernment, held last October 3-28, 2018. Fr. James' talk was attended by 94 persons from our community.

Christus Vivit is addressed to the youth, young adults and the entire Church. It is composed of 9 chapters that correspond to the pastoral method of "See" (Chapters 1-3), "Judge" (Chapters 4-6), and "Act" (Chapters 7-9). We "see" with our eyes and heart. We "judge" with our intellect and knowledge. And "acting" is the fruit of our judgement and seeing where the Holy Spirit is leading us.

The 9 chapters are briefly described as follows:

Chapter 1 – Scriptural Observations | "Youth in Scripture"

- We look at the youth and young adults in both the Old and New Testaments and see the various roles they played in our salvation history. Among them are Joseph, Gideon, Samuel, King David, Solomon, Jeremiah, Ruth. Even Mary was a young woman around 14-16 years old when she was called.
- Pope Francis tells the young people, "We should never repent of spending our youth being good, opening our heart to the Lord, and living differently (CV17)."

Chapter 2 – Theological Observations | "Jesus, Ever Young"

We look at Jesus, Mary, and the saints as young people. Pope Francis goes back to Jesus' youth and uses scripture to illustrate Christ's early days as his "training" for his mission. He also focuses on the young Mary and her "yes" indicates a willingness to take risks and stake everything she has to be the bearer of a promise. He references many young saints who witness their faith "when they open themselves up to encounter Christ." [CV49]

- The Church should be inspired by the youth and stay young.
- The Church needs to find credibility with young people today. She needs to regain her humility and simply listen because many young people do not see the significance of the Church in their lives.

Chapter 3 – Sociological Observations | "You are the 'Now'"

- The youth are not only the future but also its present, its now.
- We look at the realities and challenges that young people face today as heard in the synodal process – climate change effects, breaking down of societal structures, digital and social media pressures, child abuse.
- The experiences of the youth impact their process of growth and identity and the values of society does not seem to offer any guides and inspiration.

Chapter 4 – Spiritual Assessment | "A Great Message"

- We need to understand the 3 key foundations:
 - God loves you.
 - Jesus saves and suffers with you.
 - Christ is alive.
- The Trinity is present in all situations and we must invoke the Spirit daily.
- The youth need Spiritual Capital and this should be provided by adults, especially parents. Spiritual Capital is the weapon of the youth to face life's challenges.

Chapter 5 – Developmental Assessment | "Paths of Young People"

- We need to understand the transitions and pathways that the youth experience, from the personal to the global.
- We need to accompany the youth in their growth and maturity of mind, body and spirit. Pope Francis recommends the "paths of fraternity," living the faith together through synodality and brotherhood.

- We are all called to be courageous missionaries, witnessing the Gospel, speaking and living the truth especially in an age of fake news.

Chapter 6 – Generational Assessment | “Young People With Roots”

- We need to understand the call to dialogue and co-responsibility across generational lines in the Church and in society.
- It is a call to look at history, the experiences of our elders, and look for the word of God in these experiences and benefit from them.
- It is a call to discerning our response together with the Spirit, rather than simply absorbing and accepting all that is.

Chapter 7 – Pastoral Action | “Ministry With Young People”

- We should adopt new models of pastoral ministry and accompany the youth and the young adults.
 - “Kalakbay” – We journey with the youth; meet them where they are.
 - Accompaniment is the central principle. Youth are not mere passive receivers but companions. We learn from them and they learn from us. It is not merely giving but a mutual giving and learning.

Chapter 8 – Missionary Action | “Vocation”

- We should advance a culture of vocations among young people helping them to see their mission and service to the world.
- Vocation is about God’s call, not only in what you do but in who you become. It is an intersection of talents, needs and one’s meaning. It is not necessarily becoming a priest or religious but contributing to the world, where our work is our way of becoming co-creators of this world.

Chapter 9 – Synodal Action | “Discernment”

- We should practice a mutual listening (synodal) model of discernment in engaging the youth and young adults.
- There should be communal discernment through dialogue/companionship with people who can listen and accompany the one who is discerning, such as friends, priests and religious. (CV283)
- Pope Francis discusses three qualities, or “sensitivities,” that are needed in those who are helping others discern their vocations:
 - The first, he says, is “directed to the individual” and “is a matter of listening to someone who is sharing his very self in what he says.” (CV292)

- The second sensitivity is “marked by discernment” and “tries to grasp exactly where grace or temptation is present.” This sensitivity helps others “distinguish truth from illusions or excuses.” (CV293)
- The third sensitivity is “the ability to perceive what is driving the other person,” seeking to discern “the intention that definitively decides the meaning of their life.” (CV294)

Fr. James also shared the following insights taken from the Synodal Journey and Christus Vivit:

For the Church:

- Taking care of young people is not an optional task but rather is an integral part of the Church’s vocation and mission.
- Choosing the youth as the concern for the synod, demonstrated that the Church considers this mission a pastoral priority in which to invest time, energy and resources.
- The Church should reflect Jesus Christ, humbly acknowledging that some things in the Church need to change. For this change to happen, the Church needs to appreciate the vision and criticism of young people.
- As young people frequently fail to find answers to their concerns and needs in the Church’s programs, there is a need to walk with them with a listening disposition.
- The institutions of the Church should be better equipped to welcome young people. Instead of overwhelming them with rules and obligations, we should invest in their fearlessness and train them to take up responsibilities. The synod called for an inclusive Church with open doors.

For the Young People:

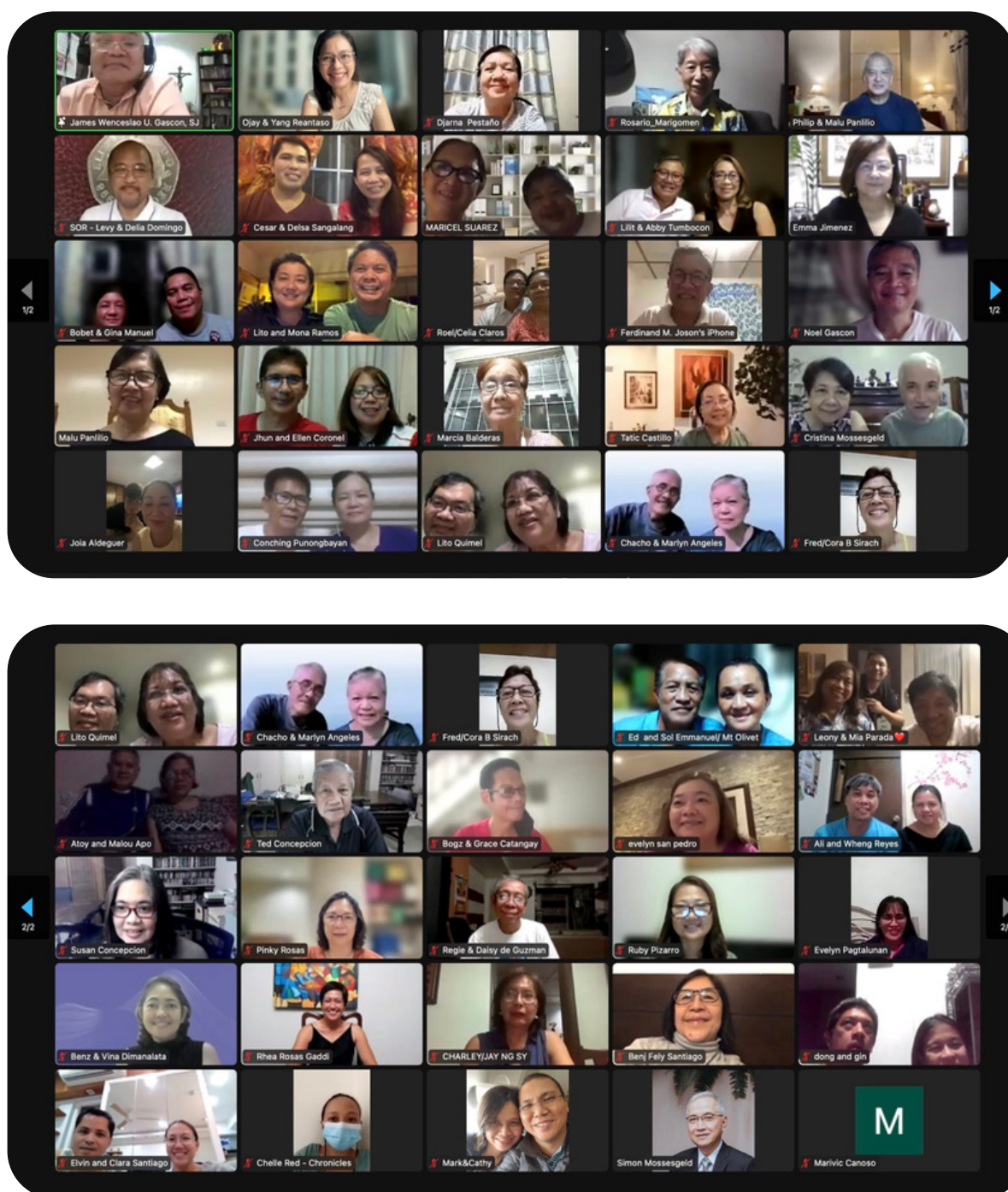
- Young people should not “observe life from the balcony.” Instead, they should “take risks, live their lives, leave their cages, go out and fly.” (CV143)

For the Community:

- The Community plays an important role in accompanying the young. It needs to be accepting, motivating, encouraging and challenging. All should look at young people with understanding, appreciation, affection, and should have a non-judgmental attitude or one that is open to dialogue.
- Ministry with the young should be synodal. It should involve journeying with them through a process of co-responsibility.

Fr. James ended his talk with the following points for reflection:

1. What struck you most in the insights of Pope Francis on the youth?
2. Are you guilty of lording it over the young rather than employing the synodal and accompaniment form of parenting?
3. In dealing with the young, where are you being invited by the spirit as you bring the good news that "Christus vivit"?



A REFLECTION ON THE TALK ON POPE FRANCIS' CHRISTUS VIVIT "CHRIST IS ALIVE"

REFLECTING ON OUR YOUNG INSPIRES US ALL

BY FR. JAMES WENCESLAO U. GASCON, SJ

Maricel Suarez, Tala BCGG

Group members: Djarna Pestano; Regie De Guzman; Joey and Maricel Suarez; Ali and Weng Reyes

The summary of Fr James on Pope Francis article on POST-SYNODAL APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION: CHRISTUS VIVIT was truly a reminder on how important our young people are in the world today. "Christ is Alive and He wants us to be alive!" the Pope said.

It was refreshing to hear that Jesus is young among the young and He gave His life and began His Ministry at the prime of His life. He was a "young adult" when He gave it all till the very end. His entire youth, at every moment, was a precious preparation for His mysterious ending.

In our group sharing, we resonate on the fact that for our children to be "Christ-like", we, their parents (and the adults around them) must play a big role of influence. The youth and young adults are part of our daily lives either via our Ministry, in our workplace or home.

Djarna Pestano said, "nothing beats life experiences." As adults, we are sharing with the youth our God experiences from personal reflection; we are richer in experience and sharing with them how God is so much alive in our lives. Djarn does not only share these in her Ministry but with her grandchildren as well.

Ali and Weng Reyes are young parents of teenagers. "Listening to what they say is very important and we try to balance between listening and giving advice to them." Guiding their children on courses to take up in college and making them realize that it is not only about how much money they will make but it is also about what they can give as a vocation. They set good examples to their children and they thank God for giving them the grace of good parenting and of being loving parents.

Tending the Sheep Series



Quarterly Members' Formation

Pope Francis'

Christus Vivit (Christ is Alive)

Reflecting on Our Young Inspires Us All

by Fr. James U. Gascon, SJ

Reggie De Guzman, as we all know, has been a school Principal and educating the youth has been his personal ministry. In his volunteer with the youth (28 Scholars), he allows them to reason out, to argue, to speak their minds in order to help them express themselves so he can accompany them and lead them to be Christ-like in mission.

Joey and Maricel Suarez on the other hand make sure to give time to their young adult son for career conversations and other concerns to help him make the right choices. "We allow him to make decisions but, as parents, we make sure that we discuss his options to help him make the right one."

Giving time and support to our youth is our way of guiding them to prepare for their great mission in life. We are here to let them know that aside from their parents and mentors, there is God who they need to gaze at for prayers and feel His unconditional love; to know that God is alive in their lives.

Our youth of today are fast and fierce, wise and intelligent; in a hurry for success. Our role as adults is to accompany them in their journey. It is not only about making money and becoming successful but it is also about finding a mission towards Christ! We are here to help them make the most of everything in their "adult-youth." They are only young once. Therefore, we should understand and allow them to make mistakes for lessons to be learned. We should also allow them to shine brightly so that they too can inspire the people around them. They too can bring the youthfulness to the aged!

Truly, Christ is alive!

ACCOMPANYING THE SHEPHERDS SERIES

SELF-CARE FOR SHEPHERDS

BY FR. JAMES WENCESLAO U. GASCON, SJ

Eden Acosta, Song of Ruth BCGG

Fr. James Gascon SJ conducted the workshop "Self-Care for Shepherds" on March 5, 2022 as part of the Accompanying the Shepherds Series. This was attended by 66 BCGG members from 22 BCGGs (out of 25).

The session with Fr James started with exploring how we feel about taking care of ourselves as shepherds.

1. What is self-care for you? Are you conscious of any conflictual feelings about taking care of yourself?

2. What you do for self care? What are your own needs for self-care - physically, intrapersonally (psychologically and emotionally), interpersonally, spiritually? What factors encourage your self-care? When and how? Does your optimal level of self-care entail more time with others (socially), more time for yourself, or some blend of both?

3. What factors restrict your self-care? How do you balance your life between home and demands to help and take care of others? How have your attitudes and behaviors about self-care changed over time?

We need to take good care of ourselves because as caregivers, our most important resource is our SELF. We need to replenish, if we are to share with others. We need to cope with our ministry's inherent responsibilities and stressors.

We need to look inward and ask what is the call for us to be aware, to self-regulate and to balance. These are the three components of self-care.

Self-awareness

Awareness is the seed of change. "Awareness is prelude to regulating our way of life, modifying behaviors as needed." (Coster and Schwebel, 1997). Only when we are aware of our needs and limitations can we consciously weigh our options. Consider personality, life stage, circumstance, and information from external sources, like feedback from others.

Lack of awareness could lead to acting out repressed emotions and needs, because these are unprocessed and unmanaged. These are potentially harmful personally, to our lambs, family members and others.

We may unconsciously or unintentionally neglect those we serve or exploit them to meet our needs, which could often be needs for intimacy, esteem or dominance.

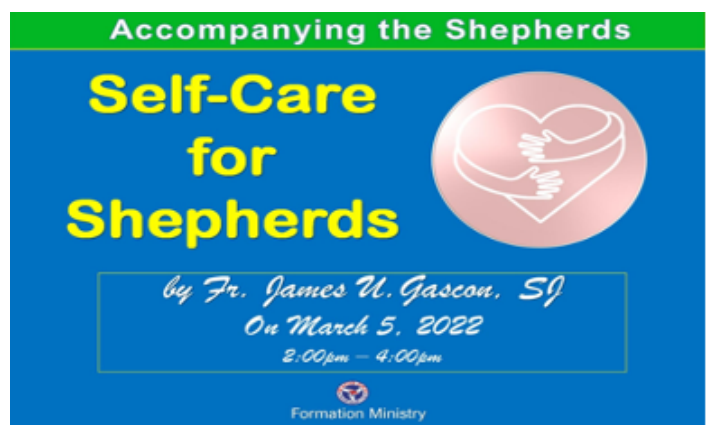
However, being self-aware is not always easy or pleasant. Facing internal conflicts and tensions can sometimes bring forth impulses and feelings that may seem raw, primitive or threatening.

Self-regulation

Self-regulation allows us to manage our physical and emotional impulses, drives and anxieties. Self-regulation includes relaxation, exercise and diversion. Our sense of wellbeing and esteem is closely related to skills in regulating ourselves and controlling impulses.

Difficulties in self-regulation often cause frustration or shame. It is not easy to manage affect, stimulation and energy. We need to learn how to proactively and constructively manage dysphoric affect (feeling unwell, emotional and mental discomfort, e.g. anxiety and depression) and defuse intense emotions to lessen the risk of being overwhelmed.

A helpful step is to manage the stimulation we receive like food, drink, work, family, and friends. There is a fine line between stimulation that is nourishing and stimulation that is overwhelming. We need to find the optimal level that is unique for us, based on our personality, developmental stage and circumstances.



Balance

We consciously and unconsciously balance opposing forces in our lives. Examples are action and rest, doing and being, past and present, routine and variety, work and play. Balance calls for relationships and spirituality as we tend to our core needs of mind, body and spirit; of the self in relation to others.

Value of Self-Care

We need self-care to help us manage stress, resist emotional depletion, offset helper distress, prevent burnout and avert impairment.

Stress responses are stimulated by change both positive and negative, threats, losses, demands, pressures, frustration, conflicts and challenges. We cannot avoid stress in our lives. So the challenge in self-care is managing the negative effects of stress.

As helpers and leaders, we are exposed to a barrage of raw emotions from those we take care of. This could lead to emotional overload and emotional depletion. Helper distress includes having deep concern for the helpee to the point that the helper's eating, sleeping or concentration is affected.

Helper's distress could eventually lead to burnout. Burnout is a depletion of mental and physical resources due to prolonged, yet unsuccessful striving toward unrealistic expectations. (Herbert Freudenberger, 1974). Burnout symptoms include fatigue, frustration, helplessness, stress.

Here are tips to help us take care of ourselves:

- Identify whether you are introvert or extrovert. This influences how you energize yourself.
- Keep boundaries, professional and personal.
- Find time to recreate and rejuvenate.
- Join support groups within and outside your community.
- Go back to rituals that you found generative and fruitful.
- Physically distance yourself from work once in a while.
- Take time off and go on vacation.
- Solitude



ART AND MUSIC AS PATHWAYS TO GOD

Zarah Gagatiga, Emmanuel BCGG

After two postponements, the Magis Deo Youth Art and Music Jam with Mr. Jose "Ouie" Badelles pushed through.

Kuya Val led the group of 18 participants, comprised of four Titas and Tito of Magis Deo, one guest speaker and thirteen members of Magis Deo Teens and Young Adults in the opening song and music jam. Singing to Sunrise by Ben and Ben, Kuya Val kicked off the session on a positive and reassuring note. This was followed by a reflection activity by Tita Zarah on the Examen. As a priming activity to Mr. Badelles' talk, she showed a video presentation about an artist, Makoto Fujimura who found God through art.

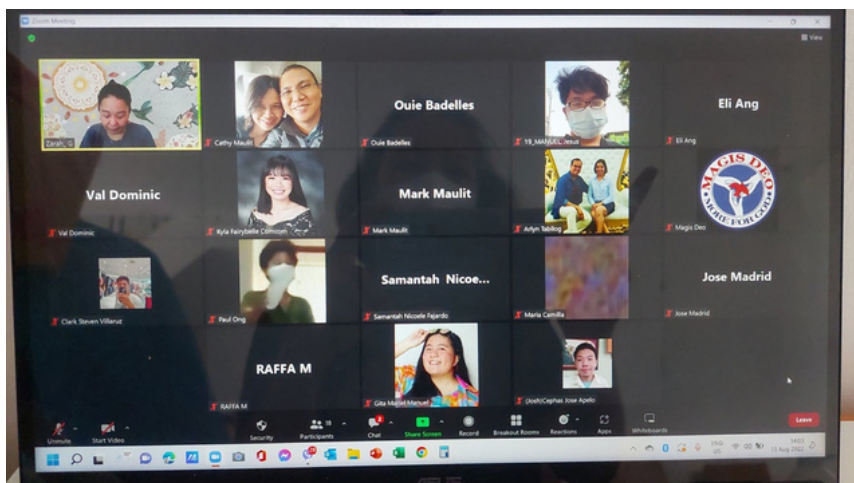
In Mr. Badelles' session, he shared his creative process and the sacred spaces of reflection one can carve out in the act of creation. By doing and demonstrating an art activity to capture feelings and memory, one is able to appreciate living in the moment. He also presented his art journal as a way to nurture the self and express his ideas, feelings and sense of being.

The one-hour session spent listening and watching Mr. Badelles was akin to viewing Bob Ross on YouTube. However, with Mr. Badelles, participants were able to ask questions about his technique, how to identify medium and materials suitable for the artist, how to make a decision to pursue art as a career choice and how to overcome a period of Black Swan - that dryness in an artist's creative journey. He encouraged everyone pursuing a creative endeavor to just keep going. It is in facing one's fears wherein we become better versions of ourselves.



When a Magis Deo Youth participant asked him for a description of the afternoon session and the object he will draw to represent it, he was quick to say "sunshine with clouds dispersing."

Thank you, Mr. Badelles, for being an inspiration to us all! As one Magis Deo Tita said after the session, "art and music are powerful pathways to God!"



Chacho Angeles, Thessalonians BCGG

Tasa ng Aking Puso

Kuyang Hesus,
Tulungan mo akong linisin ang tasa
Ng aking puso, ang loob at labas nito.
Ito'y natambakan ng samu't saring mga
Pasakit, agam-agam, pagmamalaki,
Tampo, madungis na sa kapal ng mga
Pagnanasa ng laman, kasikatan, yaman.
Ang lahat ng ito'y nilalayo lamang ako sa
lyong pusong mahabagin at mapagmahal.
Dasal ko'y mapuno ito ng lyong mga aral,
Kaugalian at pananaw na magdadala sa
Buhay ko sa landas ng pagmamahal sa
Diyos at sa aking kapwa, na hintulad sa
lyong pinakita sa amin noong Ika'y nasa
Mundong ito; upang ang bukod-tangi kong
Layunin ay masunod lamang ang lyong
Kalooban, wala ng iba.
Ikaw Nawa.



Aking Puso

Mahal na tagapaglikha,
Tulungan Nyo ako sa aking pagdarasal upang
Malinis ko sa aking buong kamalayan, katauhan,
Puso, ang lahat ng dungis na di kanais-nais sa Iyo:
Aking mga kahinaan, mga pagnanasa ng laman,
Aking kayabangan, kahambugan at kapalaluan,
Katakawan, kasakiman, pagkamainggitin, at selos,
Kasama na rin ang mga saloobing nagbibigay ng
Dilim sa aking mga ugnayan sa pang-araw-araw,
At mga kaparaanan na aking natutunan mula sa
Lipunang aking kinikilusan, na naglalayo o kaya'y
Nagiging hadlang lamang sa paglapit ko sa Iyo.

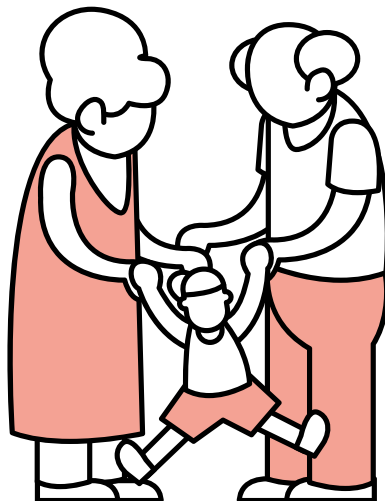


Inaalay ko ang aking buong katauhan sa lyong
Mapagmahal at mapag-arugang puso. Kupkupin
Niyo ako bilang lyong ginigiliw na anak. Punuin
Ang aking pusong tigang, ng nagbibigay buhay na
Mga aral, kasama na ang halimbawa na pinakita
Ng lyong anak, kung papaano Niya minahal ang
Kanyang Ama at ang Kanyang mga kapwa.
Ikaw Nawa.

Aking Apo

Minsan ang aking apo'y madaling pagsabihan,
Minsa'y hindi mapagsabihan, nagmumukmuk;
Minsa'y papayag nguni't naka-abang na, gaya
Pag-umuulan at di siya pinalabas, punta siya sa
Pinto at mag-aantay dun sa pagtila ng ulan;
Minsa'y susunod kunwari, nguni't pagtalikod ko
Gagawin niya yung pinagbabawal na gawin niya.
Siya'y madaling mahirapan, matampuhin,
mainipin,
Nguni't sa kabila ng mga iyan, siya'y malaming,
Mahilig maglaro't kumain kasama ang mga pinsan,
Maalalahanin, madaling magpatawad,
mapagmahal.
Ganoon pa man, ang Lola niya at ako ay natutuwa
Sa musmos na ito, at mahal na mahal namin siya.

Mahal na Diyos, kapareho ko lang yata aking apo,
Merong mga kahinaan, nguni't meron ding mga
Katangiang makatwiran, tapat at mapagmahal,
At nagsusumikap na sumunod sa halimbawa ng
Buhay at mga aral ng Diyos anak na si Hesus.
Dasal ko po na manatiling bukas ang aking puso
Sa lyong kalinga, gabay at pagmamahal upang
Matupad ko ang lyong nais para sa akin, at ang
Mga tungkulin na lyong itinakda para sakin.
Mahalin Niyo po ako ng higit pa sa pagmamahal
Naming mag-asawa sa aming apo.
Ikaw Nawa.



COURAGE IN THE LAKE

Lito Naldo, Samaritans BCGG

"Hope is not optimism... that human expectation that things will get better... nor that the magician god will make all the bad things go away. Hope is COURAGE! The courage to face harsh realities without seeking refuge in illusion. The courage to believe in a God that promises not quick fixes but faithful presence.... who showed us that He is greater than our possibilities and imagination... and third, hope is the courage to continue loving and serving, knowing that love alone is eternal so, no single act of love is ever wasted or fruitless."

- Homily of Fr. Daniel Patrick Huang, SJ during Province Mass on Feast Day of St. Ignatius of Loyola, July 31, 2022.

I saw this hope (as defined by Fr. Daniel) in the lone fisherman I saw on Lumot Lake on our way home last Saturday. It was almost dusk at that time, and I imagined that the fisherman had been there all day, trying to catch whatever edible creature he could bring home to his family, who just like him, have also been waiting the whole day. First, that fisherman had the courage to face his reality; that he had nothing to buy food at the market that day, so even at his old age, (he looked older than me), he had to go out to the lake and cast his net because he had no one else to depend on but himself. He had no spouse, nor son, nor daughter, nor friend, who could help him on his boat that day, he had no one else, but he did it just the same. Second, that fisherman had the courage to believe that sooner or later, in spite of the dying sunlight and the waves that are getting stronger, even when many boats like ours pass by to disturb the fish that are almost biting his bait, he still believes that he's going to catch something. He believed that God will surprise him in spite of the odds stacked against him. Third, that fisherman had the courage to love even in his old age. He continues to work and show his family that he will ever be the same dependable husband and father who could bring home something to eat.

Today, I pray to the Lord that, like that fisherman in Lumot Lake, I too may have hope, and receive that grace of courage. First, the courage to face my own realities such as: the realities of my married life, that Anne and our children are now the priority in my life and not myself; the reality of the unique personalities of Anne and our children that I have to accept and learn to appreciate, even when they are different than mine; the realities of my aging body and mind -- that there are many physical activities and challenging tasks that I can no longer do. Second, I pray for the courage to believe in a God who will be present in the ups and downs of my life when I'm happy singing at the top of my lungs with friends or when I feel sick and alone, just like when I isolated myself when I had COVID. Finally, I pray for the courage to continue to love, in spite of my imperfections, myself, my family, and whoever God puts in front of me. May I always remember that no single act of love is ever wasted. Amen.



Captured by Ojay Reantaso in Lumot Lake, Cavinti, Laguna

THE HUMANITY'S FOUR GREAT GLOBAL DISRUPTORS

Josephus & Emma Jimenez, Cana BCGG, ME Class 14

The Book of the Revelation, 6:1-8, tells us of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse, symbolizing what modern thinkers interpret as today's four great disruptors, namely famine, natural disasters, pestilence and war or terrorism. This was written by John of Palamos who told of a scroll in God's right hand closed with 7 seals. Indeed, nowadays, there are multiple threats and disruptors. There is an impending global famine and food crisis, wars in Ukraine, rumors of war between China and Taiwan, threats of nuclear war between Russia and NATO nations, and relentless flood, hurricanes and earthquakes.

The four horsemen rode on four horses with different colors: white, red, black and a pale color. Many believe that they respectively represent pestilence, war, famine and disasters respectively. Of pestilences, like the Covid 19 pandemic we are currently being troubled with, man is amply warned, the Bible has foretold all these but with assurances of hopes: In Psalm 91: You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. In Luke 21:1-11, it is foretold: There will be great earthquakes, and in various places, famines, and pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven. In 1 Kings 8:37, it is written: If there is famine in the land, or mildew or locust or caterpillar, if their enemies besiege them at their gates, whatever plagues, whatever sickness.



The Bible also warned us about wars. In Ecclesiastes 3:8, the prophets told us of a time of war and a time for peace. In Exodus, 15:3, it is written: The Lord is a man of war. In Deuteronomy 20: 1-4, "When you go out against your enemies and see horses and chariots and an army larger than yours, you shall not be afraid of them for the Lord your God is with you." The Gospel of Matthew, 10:3-4 told of Jesus saying: "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have come not to bring peace but a sword. In Matthew 24: 6-7: "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars" and added "For nation will rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places." In Psalm 144:1, it is written: "Of David, Blessed be the Lord, my rock, who trains my hands for war and my fingers for battle."

Of famine, we had been amply warned by the scriptures. Amos 8:11 foretold: "Behold, the days are coming, declared the Lord, God: I will send famine to the land." In Revelations 6:8, it is written: "I looked and behold an ashen horse, and he who sat on it had the name Death and Hades was following with him. Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth: to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth." In Revelation 18:8, it is warned: "For this reason, in one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine." In Ezequiel 30:12, it was foretold: "I will make the Nile canals dry and give the land to evil men, and I will make the land desolate and all that is in it." In Hosea 13:15, the scriptures warned of fountains and springs drying up and plunder in the treasury and destruction of all things.

Concerning disasters, humanity had been sufficiently warned. In Deuteronomy 28:23-24, it is written: "The heaven which is over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you, iron. The Lord will make the rain of your land powder and dust, from heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed." In Genesis 6:17: "Behold, I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, everything that is on the earth shall perish." In Amos 3:6, "If calamity occurs in a city, has not the Lord done it?" In Revelation 8:7, "And there came hail and fire, mixed with blood and they were thrown into the earth and a third of the earth was burned up, the trees and the grass were burned up." In Matthew 24:29, it is written: "The sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken."

All these are warnings and signs that whatever greed, whatever lusts, whatever sin of man will yield the wrath of God. Now, this moment and not any minute later, is therefore time for all of us to ponder deep and long. We should stop all corruption, all social injustice, all forms of self-righteousness and condescension, pride, arrogance and treacheries, envy, anger and desires for revenge. We should come back to the straight and narrow path and walk towards the city built on the hill, prepare for our day of judgment by purifying our hearts, souls and conscience, by protecting and respecting our bodies, the temple of the Spirit, and prepare to meet the Lord. Unless we do all these, we shall perish by the swords of anyone among the four horsemen of the Apocalypse. And may God have mercy on our souls.



The Magis Deo Community of encountered couples, having tried to live an Ignatian way of spirituality, should start to contemplate on what Fathers Ruben Tanseco, SJ and James Gascon, SJ, and all our spiritual mentors, including Pope Francis, also a Jesuit, have always reminded us: The days of the second coming shall come like a thief in the night. We should not act like the foolish virgins without oil in our lamps. Let us all prepare for the end that may come in the midst of our reckless abandon. If we are caught unprepared, there shall be gnashing of teeth, weeping and wailing.

But if we purify our hearts and souls, we shall welcome the Lord, singing and dancing with the Holy Joy and merriment, for we shall enter the pearly gates and be at the mansion of the Father where the Lord has prepared many rooms for us to dwell in the House of God forever.



GOOD-BYE FACEBOOK

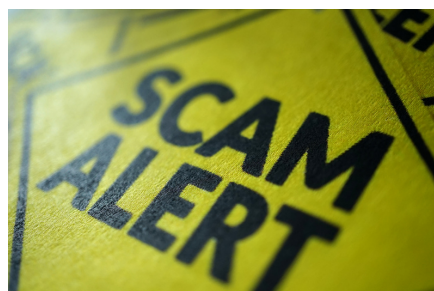
Lito Naldo, Samaritan BCGG

Two weeks ago, after our family was scammed using the social media account of a dear friend, I decided to leave Facebook, Messenger, and other social media platforms as a form of communication. And in my conversation with God that day, I could hear Him say to me... "What took you so long?"

While still listening to God, I realized that I do not need Facebook. It is Facebook that needs me. Facebook monetizes all my personal information, my email address, telephone number, location, devices, who my friends and family are, my activity, the posts I make, read, and like, the people I add as friends, and the items I look at and buy on Marketplace, and "sells" all this information to companies who in turn advertise and promote their products and services to me. No wonder, all sorts of advertisements for products and services appear on my Facebook wall regularly. These same advertisements also appear on my Viber chat, Yahoo mail, and many more. Even Lazada and Shopee know what products and services I look at on Facebook. And after making money from my account information and browsing activities, Facebook could not even protect my family from hackers, who took advantage of our vulnerability, and our desire to help others! Deactivating my account on Facebook is one account less for use by scammers and hackers. I do not want my account used against my family and friends.

In my conversation with God, I realized that all that I needed to communicate with people He already gave me. I have two smartphones, each with post-paid accounts which I could use to call and text all mobile phones and landline phones anywhere in the Philippines, unlimited! I also have five active email addresses; one Gmail, one Yahoo, and two for work, and the email I use for school is still active. Everyone whom I think would possibly want to get in touch with me knows at least one of my mobile phone numbers and email addresses. I also have on my two phones the mobile numbers and email addresses of my family members, most of my friends and relatives, and those who work with me now, and probably up to two decades ago. Truly, anytime I want to reach out, talk or send a message to anyone who I know personally, I can. I could hear God telling me, "You don't need Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Viber, Telegram, or even TikTok to communicate with others. What you need is the time and the willingness to reach out to others because everything you need to communicate with, you already have."

After just a week without Facebook, I feel genuinely relieved and at peace. Now, I no longer feel the obligation to like or comment on people whose FB posts I see on my news feed. Actually, many of these people are not even my close friends. Facebook (for whatever reason) automatically turns on the "Follow" tab, and I have to "Unfollow" several times just to make sure I don't see their posts on my news feed! I also no longer feel the burden of reading and getting updated on the discussions on the numerous group chats on my Messenger app, especially when all of them, except two, I didn't even ask to be included! I could not leave many of these group chats lest I receive a message asking why I left, and I couldn't find the courage to answer with the truth which is "I did not ask to be included in your group in the first place, so please leave me alone!" Now I am at peace, knowing that I receive only the most important messages from the most important people in my life.



In my conversation with God, I realized that I have to forgive my family for getting fooled on Facebook. Scammers do this for a living and are well trained and equipped in finding out passwords, studying personalities, and identifying who are the most vulnerable, the ones they could get money from. It was just a matter of time, and I could have been a victim too. Passwords are very easy to discover, and according to many studies, more than 160,000 accounts on Facebook are hacked each day. No expensive and sophisticated firewall nor the use of the strongest password and frequent changes can stop a determined scammer to hack an account. As I continued to pray, I also realized that I have to forgive myself, for my outrage and anger, when I found out that our family had lost a huge amount of money. I know it is not the money lost that hurts the most, it is the pain of misfortune, of realizing that we have become victims of fraud (regardless of the amount) that hit me hard.



Despite this recent misfortune, I realized however that there is still so much to thank God for. In just the past two months, all five of us in the family contracted Covid-19 and experienced symptoms. But fortunately, none of us were hospitalized, and we are all well and fine now. Since May, my eldest son has been very busy teaching at a flight school. He would sometimes fly as many as 3 instruction flights per day, that is at least 9 hours of flying time in total. But despite the rainy season and the frequent bad weather, he has always come home safely from his flights. Recently, all our children have proudly displayed to us their flourishing love lives, and my wife and I could see that they are all happy and proud of their partners. Based on the loving relationship I have with my wife, I can truly say that nothing is more inspiring than having someone to love and care for. I cannot help but thank the Lord for giving me, and our three children only the best people as companions in this crazy world.

Today I pray again to thank the Lord, for being so gracious and generous to me. His ever-present love continues to support and lead my life and inspires me to continue loving others no matter what. I may be living in a world where "the sun rises on the bad and the good, and rain falls on the just and the unjust" but God said, "at harvest time I will say to the harvesters, "First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles for burning; but gather the wheat into my barn." I pray to see His glory at harvest time. Amen.

