



NEWSLETTER
March 6, 2022



THERE'S so much darkness around us.

Look what's happening in Europe today.

The bloodiest battles—World War I and II—were fought in the 20th century. But just when we thought the world already said, “Never again!”-- here is war again, rearing up its ugly head.

And we don't have to look far for darkness.

Look at our country. Why is there still so much corruption? Injustice? Poverty? While thieves in suits steal the money of the people, according to the most recent statistics, 4.2 million Filipinos still go hungry.

Today, we see the world blanketed by the blackest night.

But on this, the first Sunday of March, our Feast Talk, Talk 8 of our series *Fulfilled*, is titled *Resurrected*—yes, focusing on the Gospel about the Resurrection-- our Lord Jesus rising from death and coming out of His dark tomb.

In the middle of this darkness, the Gospel proclaims: *our story is not yet over...*

May your dreams come true,

Bo Sanchez

Let There Be Light!

WE prepare this March 6, 2022, issue of *The Feast Family* amid our dark world, as our founder, Bro. Bo Sanchez, points out in his introduction of The Feast Talk 8, *page 1*. Russia and Ukraine battle over territorial rights, gripping us with fears over a looming Third World War. But, as Bro. Bo points out, our story is not yet over,

Amid this darkness, we are looking for Light. And we see Light in the stories in this issue.



Fr. Albert Garong sees Light in living a fruitful life—that is, living for others, *page 3*.

Bro. Bo and Feast builder and preacher Bro. Audee Villaraza also see Light in loving and serving others.

Because *God wants to love through*

you— the key message of last week’s Feast Talk, *pages 7-26*.



Girls who lived under the darkness of abuse see Light through the donors of our Jeremiah 33 Foundation for sexually abused minor girls, *page 27*.

And Paula Belen, house mother in the Jeremiah shelter, lives a bright life as she also

serves as coordinator in our Jesus Christ Cares for Cancer Foundation, *page 29*.

Are we afraid of war? Of death? Of darkness? Now is the time to remember that on Day 1 of Creation, God dispelled the darkness with just one powerful declaration: *Let there be Light!*

And then He sent us His Son who said: *‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.’* -John 8:12



All for God’s Glory,
Randy Borrromeo
Media Ministry
Executive Directo





FLASHBACK!

FEBRUARY 27, 2022

Holy Mass

FR. ALBERT GARONG

on the Gospel: Luke 6:39-45

A Tree and its Fruit

Excerpts...

OUR Readings give us two beautiful promises. Promises that entice us and really makes us want Jesus to be part of our life.

The First Promise is about Fruitfulness. Two times we hear the Readings talk about the image of trees and fruits because we recognize that life is not just about existing or breathing or passing time but we all want to live a life that is fruitful-- that has borne fruit not just for ourselves but for others.



1st Reading – Sirach 27:4-7

The fruit of a tree shows the care it has had; so too does one's speech disclose the bent of one's mind.

Praise no one before he speaks, for it is then that people are tested.



Another promise, from the Second Reading, is related to Fruitfulness. Because the Christian faith promises us not only eternal life but also that we live a life so fruitful that eternal death no longer scares us. Because the people who are afraid of death are those who are empty and have meaningless life. But if we live a life full of fruit, we find ourselves ready anytime to go back to the Lord.

2nd Reading – Sirach 27:4-7

When this which is corruptible clothes itself with incorruptibility and this which is mortal clothes itself with immortality, then the word that is written shall come about:

Death is swallowed up in victory.
Where, O death, is your victory?
Where, O death, is your sting?

*The sting of death is sin,
and the power of sin is the law. But
thanks be to God who gives us
the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*



*Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters,
be firm, steadfast, always fully devoted to the work of the Lord,
knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.*

Three Keys

With these two promises in mind, our Gospel actually gives us three important keys to unlock these promises.

1. Call to Self-reflection. It is always necessary for us to look into ourselves and not be hypocrites.

You know, *hypocrites* in Greek is not actually a bad or deregulatory term. It simply means *actors* who wore masks because at that time, the actors did not have speaking lines. They only wore masks and acted out whatever role they had to play.

But that was a very telling image of what is *hypocrisy*-- when we wear masks, instead of revealing our truest selves to other people and we wonder why do we do that... *Bakit ba tayo mahilig magtago* behind layers upon layers of masks instead of just being genuine and honest to other people?

Perhaps, the deep reason is this: When we look inside ourselves, what we see are the things we do not like. When we look at ourselves, we see our sinfulness, our shortcomings. We see how broken we are-- that's why we resort to wearing masks *para yung makita ng tao yung* most presentable part of ourselves, while we hide our woundedness.

But if that is the case, why does God call us to self-reflection? *Kung ma-de-depress lang naman tayo, kung malulungkot lang naman tayo,* why would Jesus lead us deeper into ourselves?

Because underneath all that sinfulness, all that dirt and ugliness that we first see, once we are tested, underneath all those is a more fundamental truth and that is our identity as children of God.

Do you know this singer called Nightbirde? She recently passed away and one of her most beautiful quotes that I would always remember is something to the effect that *many times we don't find God because we don't look low enough.*

So, we have to look lower. In our journey within ourselves, what we first see are the bad things and that's why we stop and we run the opposite direction, and we resort to a life of hypocrisy.

But Jesus invites us to go deeper because, in a sense, He says: "What awaits you is My own image in which I have made and created you full of love and mercy."

And this now becomes the basis, the start of living again-- the promise of a fruitful life that is not afraid of death-- this understanding *na kailangan nating tanggapin* that we are worthy of love and that the source of all love, the Source of Perfect Love, has showered us with His love and blessings-- unconditionally.

And now that we see that, now that we know we are loved, we can go to the second key.



2. Turn to Good Teachers. In our Gospel, Jesus presents Himself as the only True Teacher-- and everyone else is not leading to the path of life.

As Christians, we are given this gift. *Sigurado tayo na itinuturo sa atin ng Diyos, ni Jesus, ng Simbahan, na ang Kanyang Katawan ay tama at totoo.* We have received the fullness of God's revelation and if we stick to this path, we will see that it is true and it will lead us to salvation.

So, every other teacher that we have, every other mentor, *pati si Father na nasa harapan ninyo*, we can only be considered good teachers if we also follow the One True Teacher.

This journey is never done alone, and that is the third key.

3. Leading a Fruitful Life. This means that we have to help each other.

That is why Jesus built a Church. When He was with the apostles, He taught them in Communion because He always meant, He always designed, our faith to be a communal faith. It's meant to be lived in community and never in isolation. It will always draw you to the Body of Christ and not make you go to your own path. *Pero yan yung mahirap eh.*

Once we start meddling with each other's life...When we listen to the Gospel, I am sure we hear what stands out is this quote of Jesus: *"How dare you remove the splinter in your brother's eye but you do not even notice the plank in your own eye."*

My dear brothers and sisters, we cannot *not* judge. It is part of our being human that we have to evaluate our actions, our decisions, as well as the decisions of those around us-- especially when those decisions affect the life of many people and never just ourselves. The worst kind of blindness isn't natural blindness which you cannot help having. The worst kind of blindness is the one we choose to have *dahil ayaw nating pasukin ang buhay ng ibang tao, ayaw natin magkaroon ng pakialam.* And so we just say, "Don't judge so you won't be judged."

That is not the path of us, Christians. We are called to evaluate, and judge ourselves and each other-- but always in the context of all of us being beloved children of God. Before we pronounce judgements on people -- because we have to do it-- we have to make sure that our intention, our desire, is *Love*. Our desire for the good of the other. Our Reading today is connected to the Reading last Sunday: *Love your enemies*. If we love our enemies, we want what's good for them, regardless of what we feel about them. We desire what is good. If

you want the goodness of everyone else, you will judge-- but always out of love.



Worship!

EXHORTATION

MHADZ PAMAONG: We're going to sing a new song today. It's titled *New Thing*.

This might be a new song but still

I encourage everyone that wherever you are, just lay down all your dreams that God has planted in your heart and expect that He will work all things together for your good.

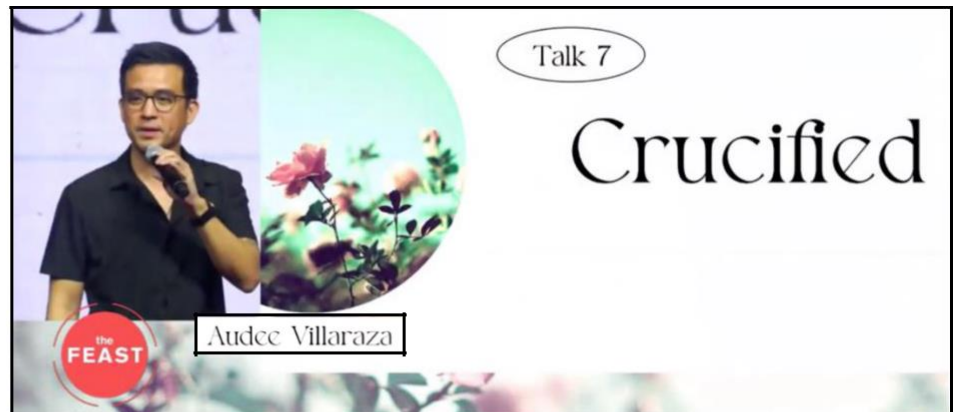




FLASHBACK!

FEBRUARY 27, 2022

Talk



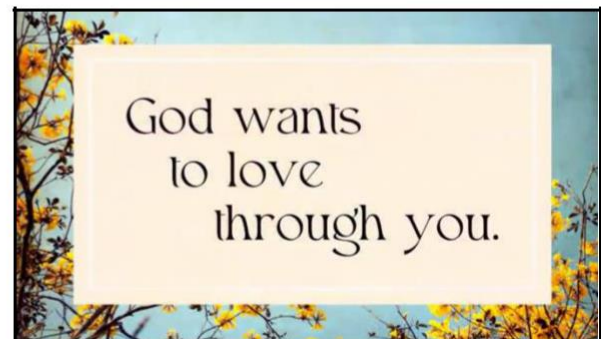
OPEN your heart to the way that the Holy Spirit is going to speak to you loud and clear today. Let me give you our big message and I want you to preach this to somebody near you. Say this: *God wants to love through you.*

Isn't it amazing? We have been studying the book of Matthew for over two years and through the Pandemic. We have been studying the Book of Matthew verse by verse, line by line-- and it's really blessing us. Thank you, St. Matthew, for enriching our walk with Jesus.

And you know, what better way to culminate this series, to end this whole series, by talking about what's so relevant right now.

We're going to revisit in the next few weeks the death of Jesus. As we are about to end studying the Gospel of Matthew, we are going in and journey with Jesus step-by-step towards Calvary. But you know, one thing I got to say is that nothing happens by accident in God's Kingdom. Everything is divinely appointed by God. God orchestrates the blessing that He gives into your life. And so, in good godly timing, you know, Holy Week is just around the corner.

So, there's no accident in God's Kingdom. We're talking about the death of Jesus, and then Holy Week comes. We get to experience and encounter Jesus—suffering Jesus, giving His life.



Holy Week Traditions

Speaking of Holy Week—just a little quick sharing.

I remember, when I was in my teenager years—about 10 years ago. No, okay, 15 years ago. That sounds better, right?

So, I remember, I loved Holy Week—because of the Station of the Cross. I lived in a small town in Taytay, Rizal, and we had a very old-school Catholic tradition. Our Station of the Cross meant that we should go around-- in the middle of the hot day-- we would pray each Station in one house after the other. And then we followed by what we called *Pabasa* (sung-through story of the Passion of Christ) from Friday, 3 p.m., all the way to Saturday, 3 p.m. We would be singing the Psalms in Tagalog, and it was amazing.

But before some of you might say, “Wow, ang religious mo pala, Bro. Audee...” listen to me...

I loved Holy Week but not because I was religious-- far from it. The reason I loved Holy Week was the Station of the Cross meant everybody would be joining—including my crush...

It's strange when you're young to experience Holy Week. Because there were a lot you didn't understand, a lot you could not do. Like, you couldn't watch action movies, comedies, romance—at least not in my family. The only movie we were allowed to watch was the re-run of the never-ending *The Ten Commandments*, the old film by Cecil B. DeMille, which takes 16 hours to watch.

You couldn't go out-- you couldn't go biking, you couldn't play basketball, you couldn't go swimming, you couldn't go skateboarding ... Nowadays it's a little different-- people go out of town, to the beach...

Also, back then, you were not allowed to eat good food...

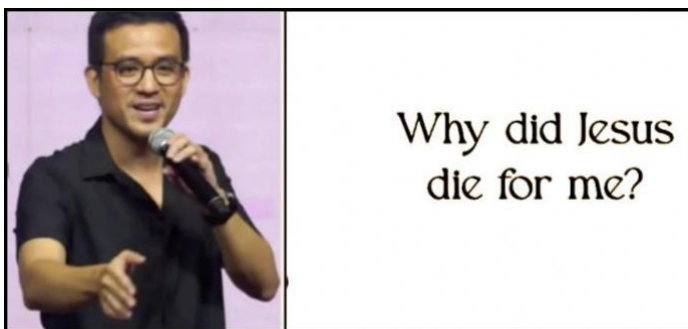
Your parents were like, “You cannot have fun because Jesus is suffering.”

So, you had to suffer too.

And as a kid, you struggled understanding that.

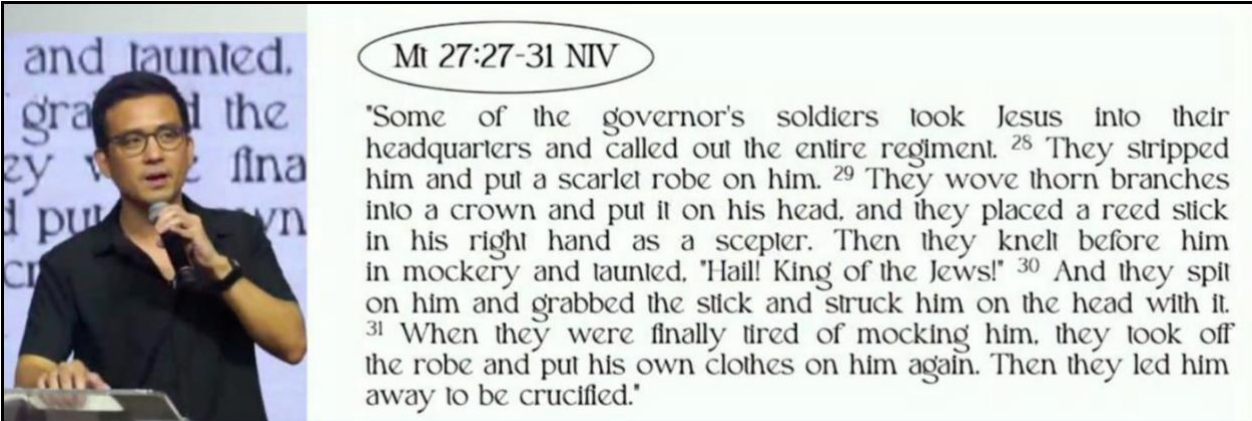
But there was one question that we all asked—and this is a question, I believe, that some of you might still be asking now. And this is our goal for today: at the end of this session, we hope to be able to answer this question:

Why did Jesus die for me?



Why did Jesus suffer for you?

That's the question we want to ask and we'll find the answer with the Reading that we're going to study today in the Book of Matthew, Chapter 27. I want you to read this with me with fresh new eyes. Some of you have already read this passage many, many years ago, and many times. I want you to read this now with a fresh, new perspective:



Let's pray. Bow and feel God all over this place...

Father, we thank you for this Word. We believe that it's alive and active right now and we believe that once you plant this Word in our heart, it will stir something inside of us that will not just inspire us, not just give us good vibes, but it will move us into action-- because that's what we really want. If we don't act on Your Word, Father, it's meaningless. It doesn't have a point. But we want to be not just a listener. We want to become a doer. And so, move in us right now, Jesus, as we feast on Your wisdom today. This is our prayer, in the Name of Jesus. And all of God's people say, Amen.

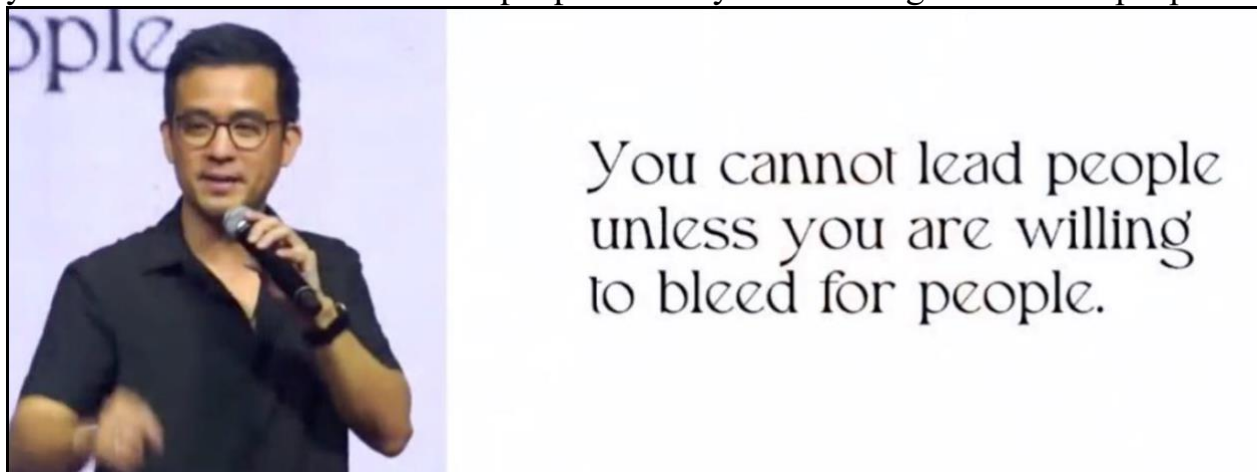
One more time, say this to somebody: ***God wants to love through you.***

So, we are visiting this part of the story where we're experiencing what Jesus is experiencing. And you know, in everything that they were doing at this point, they had one goal. When they stripped Jesus down, and put a robe on Him, put a crown of thorns over His head, and gave Him this reed as a scepter—they had one goal: It was to mock Him. It was to humiliate Jesus and to call Him, somehow, a phony king...

But you know what, there was nothing kingly about this whole situation. Because, I mean, think about it for a moment... A king is loved by his subjects. A king is respected by his people. A king is protected by his nation. All nations in the world will do anything to protect their leader-- to protect their President, their Emperor, their Prime Minister. People love protecting their King.

But there's something different about this King of the Jews-- in the sense that instead of being loved, He was hated. Instead of being celebrated, and appreciated, He was humiliated.

What was Jesus doing? Why was Jesus allowing this? You want to know why? Here's my little theory: I believe that Jesus was showing the whole world-- and He's still doing this right now—Jesus is showing you and me what a real king looks like. A real king will protect his people. Whether they are loyal or disloyal to him, it doesn't matter. A real king is willing to sacrifice. A real king is willing to sacrifice his comfort, his convenience, and ultimately, his life for his subjects. If you want to be a real king, a real leader, at least in your own right, here's what you need to do: You cannot lead people unless you're willing to bleed for people.

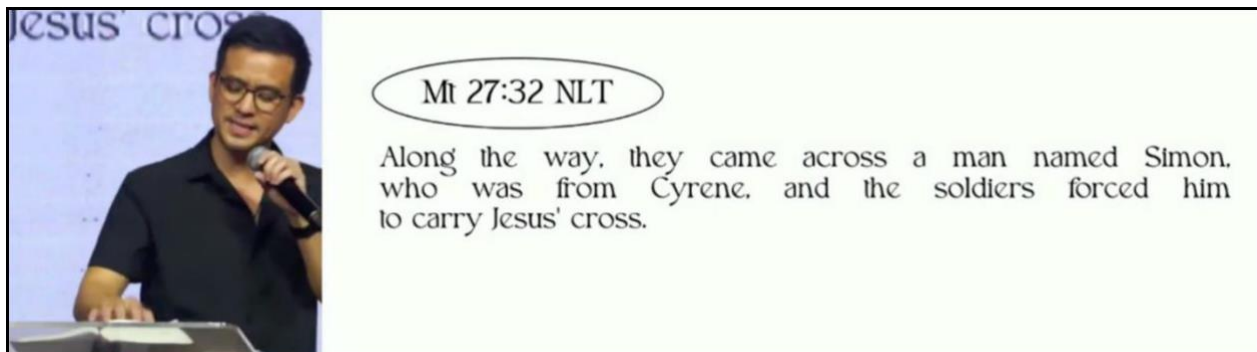


So, Jesus, in a way, is teaching us. We're in a teaching mode right now. He's showing you and me what a real leader looks like. And make no mistake: A real leader leads by example.

Right now, we are on a very relevant time where we're looking for leaders in our country. I want you to know that a real leader does not excuse himself or herself from carrying the Cross. If anything, a real leader will be the first one to carry the Cross. When I studied the life of Jesus, I noted He was never about control and coercion. Jesus never coerced anybody to pray 24 hours a day. Jesus never asked you to do certain things that He did. What did He do? Jesus was all about example and invitation. He set the path. He paved the way. And then He said, "Follow Me."

You want joy? You want peace? You want love? You want purpose? Jesus said, "Come follow me."
But Jesus never coerced anybody to do that.

Let's continue...So, something happened while Jesus was carrying the Cross. In Verse 27:32, it says:



Now, I want you to know that Simon was a tourist. How do I know that? Because he's Simon from Cyrene, not Simon of Jerusalem. He was visiting Jerusalem because it was the Passover (Feast). So, he was just passing by.

But he came across this man, the condemned man named Jesus, and you know, I can imagine if I were Simon, I wouldn't want to be associated with somebody who was condemned-- somebody carrying a cross. I would want to stay away from him. But you know the Romans had their way. They coerced him, they forced him, and eventually Simon helped Jesus.

Do you see the connection? Let me give you the connection. Note that now, we have two Simons in the New Testament. There's Simon Peter who, once upon a time, a few Chapters before this, said that he was going to be there the moment Jesus needed him the most. But we all know how that part ended. And then now, we're introduced to Simon of Cyrene who was actually there when Jesus needed somebody the most.

Listen to me. In this world, there are two kinds of Simon. In the Gospel, there was the Simon who liked to make big, loud, noisy promises. But when it really mattered the most, he was nowhere to be seen. He ran away.

But thank God, in the Gospel, there was another kind of Simon. A Simon who was insecure. A Simon who was afraid. But in the end, he was the one who actually ended up carrying the Cross.

What kind of Simon
am I?

Now, I want you to ask yourself this question: Which Simon am I? Are you the Simon who liked to make promises but never kept his promises? Or are you the kind of Simon who didn't have any plan, said "No," but eventually did what he was called to do?

Parable of the Two Sons

I want you to remember there is this parable that Jesus preached—the Parable of the Two Sons. The master of the field told his two sons to go to the vineyard.

The first son said, “No, I don’t want to. I got some plans, Dad.” But eventually, he did what the dad said.

The second son said, “Yeah, I will do it.”

But he didn’t.

So, which one are you?

What’s common with the story of Simon and the story of the Two Sons? Okay, let me just simplify. The first Simon and the first son liked to show off. You know people like that who like to show off? They make promises in public but they don’t deliver?



The first Simon liked to show off but the second Simon was the one who actually showed up.

Sometimes, the bravest thing you can do in this world is to show up-- even if you’re unsure, even if you’re afraid. A real leader will show up.

Are there parents here? Real parents know how to show up even if they’re insecure-- even if they don’t know what they’re doing.

Also, a real friend knows how to show up even if it is inconvenient. Show up.

Let me end with a story. I’d been praying if I should tell you the story but the Spirit of the Lord compelled me to do this, and I hope you take this with the grace of God.

Many months ago, I was talking to a group of friends—good friends. And we started talking about politics.

You know politics is a hard subject to talk about nowadays. And let me suggest this: If you’re going to talk politics with friends, make sure that you know how to respect people. You can disagree without hating each other as long as you have respect.

So, I was with this group and we started talking about our candidates – who you should vote for. And there was this one guy who passionately started proclaiming who we should vote for-- named points, and inputs, and insights.

And we were just listening, giving our own inputs as well.

Then, the conversation turned a little differently when one of our friends asked a question-- randomly.

He said, “So where are you voting? What precinct are you registered in?”

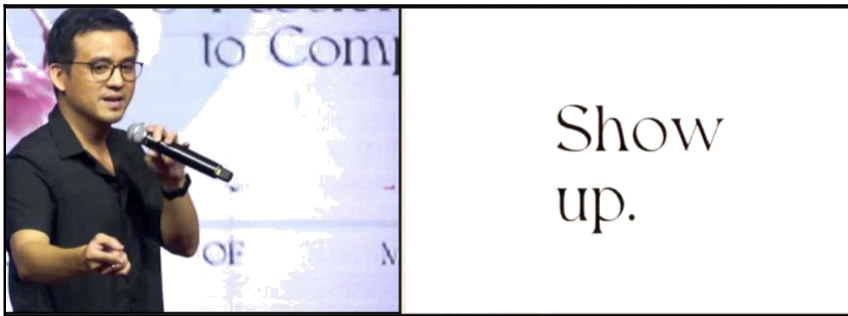
And this friend of ours who was passionate about his candidate, was like, “I’m not registered.”

And we were like, “You’re not registered?”

He repeated, “No, no, no, I’m not voting.”

And one of our friends said, “You mean after all this time you’d been talking about this candidate, you’re not even going to vote for him? Why in the world are we even listening to you?”

To paraphrase this-- this might sound a little un-Christian, a little un-loving, but it’s got good wisdom. So, what our friend was saying: If you’re not even going to show up, you might as well just shut up.




Okay, before anything...let me preach this: If all you do is just complain, and bad-mouth, and comment, and back-stab but without actually doing anything, not even to change yourself and ask

God to change you from the inside out...

Let me tell you this: If we’re like that, we’re not part of the solution. We’re part of the problem.


Do you want to follow Jesus? Then show up. Show up in your relationship. Show up in your marriage. Show up in your kid’s life. Show up in your organization. Show up in the ministries that God has called you into. Show up in the places where God tells you to do. Or else, just shut up. Somebody say, “Amen.”

Verses 39-54:




Mt 27:45-46 NLT

⁴⁵ At noon, darkness fell across the whole land until three o'clock.
⁴⁶ At about three o'clock, Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli lema sabachthani?" which means "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"




Mt 27:39-40 NLT

³⁹ The people passing by shouted abuse, shaking their heads in mockery. ⁴⁰ "Look at you now!" they yelled at him. "You said you were going to destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days. Well then, if you are the Son of God, save yourself and come down from the cross!"



Mt 27:50-52 NLT

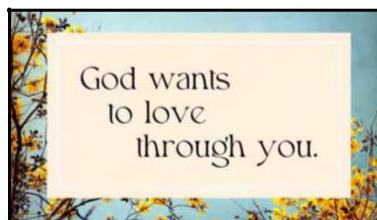
⁵⁰ Then Jesus shouted out again, and he released his spirit.
⁵¹ At that moment the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, rocks split apart. ⁵² and tombs opened. The bodies of many godly men and women who had died were raised from the dead.



Mt 27:54 NLT

⁵⁴ The Roman officer and the other soldiers at the crucifixion were terrified by the earthquake and all that had happened. They said, "This man truly was the Son of God!"

Say it one more time:



I'VE never done this before. I recorded my talk—the major part of the talk. The reason is this: I could not fit everything I wanted to do, everything I wanted to say, if I would just stand here and give the talk *live*.

So, I recorded the talk-- you're going to hear the major part. You're going to understand why I did this while you're watching the video, and then I'm going to come back onstage and close the talk with some personal stories.



May I Do Some Theology with You?

With your permission, I want to do some Theology with you.

And my heart is burning inside. I must do this. Because what is at stake here is your picture of God.

I love saying this: *You become who you worship.*

Have you noticed?

There are some who've been religious for years, yet they are the most judgmental? They look down on others. They condemn others. They actually hate a lot of people in God's name.

Many times, the root cause is their picture of God. It's distorted. ***And when you have a distorted image of God, you live a distorted life.***

Another reason I'm doing Theology with you? Because you can handle this. **The Feast is a thinking community.**

Today, we'll answer these hard questions:

- ***"I don't understand how Jesus died for my sins."***
- ***"Can't God just forgive me without Jesus dying on the Cross?"***
- ***"How can you follow a God who kills His own Son?"***



3 Models of Understanding The Crucifixion

If you look at our 2000-year history, you'll see many models trying to explain why Jesus had to die. Let me share with you the three major ones.

All three models agree on one thing:
The Crucifixion is God's most eloquent expression of His love for us. If you ask God, "How much do you love me?", God will stretch out His arms and tell you, "This much."

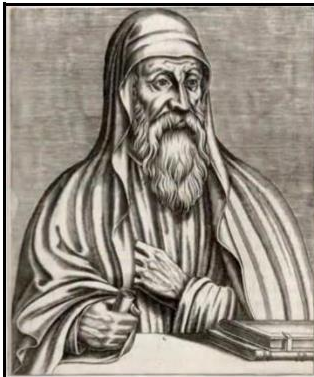
But why did He have to die?



The Crucifixion is
God's most eloquent expression
of His love for us.



1st Model
Ransom



Origen
184-253 AD

The guy who wrote more about this was Origen (184-253 AD), a brilliant Bible Scholar and Church Father.

In Theology, this is called the Ransom Theory.

Let me try to explain this model in a few words: Because we sinned against God, we sold ourselves to the Devil.

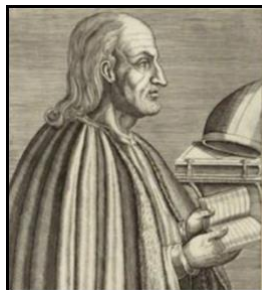
So, the Devil owned us. He held the certificate of ownership of our soul. And the Devil asked God, "If you want your people back, buy them back by your death!"

And God bought us back with the death of Jesus on the Cross.

For a thousand years, this was the predominant theory-- until another one came along...



2nd Model
Exchange



Anselm of
Canterbury
1033-1109 AD

Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109 AD) came along and said (I'm paraphrasing, of course), "You guys are wrong. The Devil could not have owned us. You're giving him too much credit. He's a defeated foe. No, the payment wasn't to the Devil. The payment was to God the Father..."

Two Versions of this Exchange Model

Exchange 1
Satisfaction Theory

Here's the gist: When we sin, we don't honor God, so we owe God honor. *Jesus honored God so much by His obedience on the Cross, His surplus paid for our deficit.*

In the Ransom Model, the death of Jesus was a payment to the Devil.

In the Exchange Model, the death of Jesus was a payment to the Father.

What's the difference between the Escape Model and the Exchange Model? In the Escape Model, the death of Jesus was a payment to the Devil. In the Exchange Model, the death of Jesus was a payment to the Father.

Jesus honored God so much by his obedience on the cross. His surplus paid for our deficit.

This is the predominant model used in the Catholic Church today—the Satisfaction Model. It's so simple. And powerful.

But 500 years later, this model took on a more punitive orientation.

The next one is the predominant model used in most Protestant, Evangelical, and Born Again Churches today...

Exchange ?
Penal Substitution



John Calvin
1509-1564

John Calvin (1509-1564), one of the pioneers of Protestantism, was the first guy who wrote extensively about this model. To this day, you find it written in those little pamphlets titled *4 Spiritual Laws*.

It starts this way: All men have sinned. (Romans 3:23) And the payment of sin is death. (Romans 6:23) According to this theory, all sin is equal because every sin is against God.

Rom 3:23	All men have sinned.
Rom 6:23	The payment of sin is death.
Rom 5:8	Jesus died in my place.

For example, if I slap my neighbor, I'll probably get a slap back. But if I walk up to the Chief of Police and ask, "Are you the Chief of Police?" and when he says "Yes", I slap him on the face, I bet I'll get more than a slap. Because his rank is higher. Now, what if I go to the President of the United States, walk into the White House, and say, "Mr. President, good morning!" and I slap him. What do you think will happen to me? I'll probably stay in jail for a year or longer.

Why different punishments? Because I disrespected a higher rank or position. According to this model, every sin is a slap against God.

Because He's an eternal Being, the punishment is eternal death.



According to this model, God *must* punish sin. His justice requires it. So, He can't forgive us with just a snap of a finger. *Someone has to pay.*

And that someone has to be another Eternal Being to pay an Eternal Sin. That Eternal Being is Jesus.

So, He dies in my place— so that I don't have to die.

This Model Is Problematic

I'm bothered by this analogy.

Does God's justice really demand the death of His Son?

Some preachers even say, "God's wrath has to be satisfied."

It reminds me too much of Molech, the pagan god of the Canaanites. It was an idol made of iron, its belly a fiery oven, its arms flaming red, stretched out, ready to receive child sacrifices. Worshippers throw their babies to this idol, burning them to death. The Torah condemned the horrors of this idolatry.

For years, I kept this nagging question to myself. I asked myself, "If I stopped believing in this model, will I still be Catholic?"

So, you can just imagine my relief when Pope Benedict himself—the man who for 24 years was Vatican's Doctrinal Gatekeeper—also questioned this model in his book, *Introduction to Christianity*. He wrote:

*It is an unworthy concept of God to imagine a **God who demands the slaughter of his Son to pacify his wrath**. God must not be thought of in this way. Such a concept of God has nothing to do with the idea of God to be found in the New Testament.* --Pope Benedict (emphasis mine)

The Penal Substitution Model seems to get its inspiration from the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament, where an animal had to die, for God to forgive. But was this really what the Bible was saying?

Because in the Old Testament itself, the Psalms say, ***You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.***

(Psalms 51:16 NIV, emphasis mine)

Again, look at Jesus. When Jesus was confronted with the adulteress woman, He forgave her. On the spot. No substitution required. Same thing with the Samaritan Woman, the paralyzed man, and Zacchaeus.

Jesus declared, "Salvation has come to this household." (Luke 19:9)

And in the story of the Prodigal Son, did the father ask for a substitute before he forgave and welcomed back his son? No.

Jesus also asks us to forgive seven times seventy-seven. (Matthew 18:22). No punishment or substitution — because He doesn't require any.

Does God's justice really demand the death of His Son?



Can God forgive us for our sins without dying on the cross?

Three Languages of Love

Here's my most important point: *All three models are languages of love.* They're our human attempts to capture the uncapturable, to comprehend the incomprehensible. *All three models are trying to express in feeble, awkward human language the depth, height, weight of God's Love.*

If they're languages of love, *you must not take them too literally.*

When I tell Marowe, "I'll give you the moon, the sun, and the stars," that doesn't mean I'll become an astronaut, ride a rocket, fly to space, and with the help of Elon Musk, gift-wrap the moon, the sun, and the stars...



All three models are languages of love.

All three models are trying to express in feeble, awkward human language the depth, height, weight of God's Love.

If they're languages of love, you must not take them too literally.

Problem

When legalists try to explain poetry.



In Theology, the problem comes when *Legalists try to explain Poetry.*

So, all these previous models are valid images of the death of Jesus. We can pray with passion, "Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world," and "Thank You, Jesus, for dying for my sins," provided one doesn't take the Penal Substitution model too literally.



3rd Model
Calling

By the way, there’s one more model, and I believe it’s what we need to hear in our modern times. But it’s not new. This model was *the earliest understanding of the death of Jesus*. Christians in the first and second centuries saw the death of Jesus in this very simple way...

Many Christians in the first 300 years didn’t see the Crucifixion of Jesus as Penal Substitution. They saw the crucifixion as a “Call to Discipleship”—to live their life in the exact same way that Jesus lived and died— *To also lay down their life for God and others.*

The Crucifixion must push us to lay down our life for others.

The Cross is a Call of Discipleship.

1st Word
"I love you, I'm willing to die for you."

2nd Word
Imitate Me.

In the Cross, they hear two messages.
First, they hear God say, “I love you, *I’m willing to die for you.*”
Second, they hear God say, “Imitate Me.”

The Cross and the Broken Bread say the same message. “Do this in memory of me” is not ONLY telling us to celebrate Mass, but for each one to actually break one's self like bread and feed the hungry.

How does all this apply in daily life?

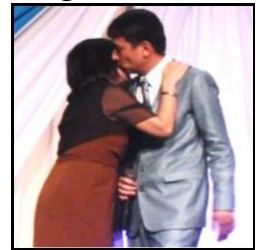
The Cross Is Very Practical



Jesus is calling us
to daily martyrdom.

After being married for 23 years, I now have my definition of a great husband: *A great husband is someone who apologizes to his wife when he does something wrong, and apologizes to his wife when she does something wrong.* I'm joking. But just a little bit. Because if you hurt your wife, you apologize, period. You do not argue with her emotions.

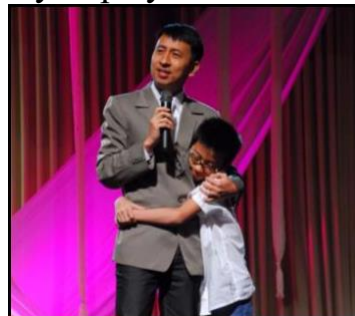
A great husband is a dead husband. He dies each day to his own needs for his beloved.



Parenting is the same. Some of the happiest moments of my life were when my sons were tiny munchkins. I'd go home from work extremely tired and all I wanted to do was crash on my soft bed.

But the little guys would ask, "Daddy, can you play with me?" So, we'd sit on the floor and play *Pokemon* for an hour. After that, will they let me go? No. I have to read them a bedtime story, and most often hearing them say this line a few times: "Daddy, one more story, pleeeeeeease?"

Great parents are martyrs.



Family Affair

At The Feast when the kids were still youngsters.

We Die Especially for Those Who Are Suffering

At The Feast, I'm surrounded by wonderful martyrs.
Let me introduce you to a few of them.



During the Omicron surge, drugstores ran out of paracetamol and other basic drugs. My friend Monching Bueno was able to get a stash from a pharma company. Wearing two face masks plus a helmet, carrying a big bottle of alcohol, he rode around the city on his motorbike, giving medicines away to sick Feasters.



Joie Cabrillas is head nurse of Anawim, our Home for Abandoned Elderly. Each week, she and her husband Obet drive through the muddy roads to Anawim to serve the *lolas* and *lolos*. When we were giving her a salary, she said, "No need. Serving them is my blessing."



I had to threaten her with God's wrath so now, she accepts her allowance.

Jason Vergara is our missionary who loves going to unreachable places. To date, he has already built 70 Feast Lights among the poor, especially poor children. And this year, he's aiming to build 16 more.

Dr. Didoy Lubaton was my doctor when I had COVID. He would monitor me every day, every hour. Weeks later, I learned he's been caring for hundreds of other Feasters who have COVID.

I don't know how this guy does it, but I'm sure it has taken a lot of dying to himself. His wife Mayi has to die to herself too. From taking care of COVID patients, Didoy comes home to Mayi and they have two kids there. Still, she supports her husband as he does his dangerous work of love.



My friend Jon Escoto expanded our Prison Ministry. We have hundreds of Feast Lights all over Luzon. Through them, 4,500+ prisoners receive God's Love. Jon and his team of Feast Planters obey Jesus—literally—when He said, “Visit the prisoners.”



Hermie Morelos, 65 years old, recently stepped down (officially retired) from all that he was doing for the Light of Jesus. We thanked him.

And then he tells me, “Bro. Bo, I still want to serve. Don't pay me anything. I just want to serve until I die.” And so, I told Hermie, sige, I'll give you a small job. Can you oversee all our ministries for the poor—Anawim, Grace To Be Born, Jeremiah, Pag-asa ng Pamilya...” And that's what he is doing.

Believe me, there are thousands of beautiful martyrs in The Feast.

I know you're one of them.

You've given so much to serve others!

The Big Why of Jesus

Today, I want you to think about Jesus on the Cross. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Make that Sign of the Cross Again. Every time you make the Sign of the Cross, you're thinking of Jesus dying on the Cross for you.

This Jesus says to you, "I love you. I love you. And I died for you. My mission required to build the Kingdom in this world. The world did not want it. And it put me to death. But still I went on with my mission because I wanted to tell you that I love you. And now, I call you: Come, follow Me. Through you, I will build my Kingdom in this world. Through you, I will love. Will you say Yes?"

Jesus is here, and as we come into Worship, I invite you to let Jesus come in. Make Him the Lord of your life. He is the Lamb of God who takes away our sin. He is the One who buys us, purchases us from the Devil. He is the One who sacrifices and obeys with so much surplus. He transfers His credits and gives them to the Father. And He is the One who sheds His Blood so that our sins will be washed and forgiven.

May I invite you to lift up your hands as a symbol that you are accepting Jesus as your Lord and Savior. And everybody say, *Jesus I receive You into my heart. Take over, be my King, be my Lord, from this day forth, I will follow You all the days of my life. Forgive me for all my sins. Transform me. Change me. Give me a new life.*

In Jesus' Name. Amen and amen. Thank You, Lord.





MERCY MINISTRY

HIS MERCY NEVER CEASES!

*The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases
his mercies never come to an end; they
are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness, Oh Lord!*

--Lamentations 3:22-23

English Standard Version (ESV)

INDEED, the Mercy of God never ceases!

Jeremiah 33 Foundation, our ministry for minor girls who are victims of sexual abuse, has been blessed with generous donors.

Amid the Coronavirus Quarantine Alerts, supporters have found ways to give Love to our beneficiaries...

From Jeremiah's Facebook page, here are some of them and their heartwarming messages...

**Thank you,
Jewels Feast Ortigas
District with Bing
Francisco-Ericta**

“A Blessed Saturday
morning at the Jeremiah
Foundation.”

[#jewelsoutreach2019](#)

[#jeremiahfoundation](#)



Thank you, Vivien Fernan Hernandez, with Vanya Castor and JPaul Hernandez

“We felt an obligation to support and fight for young girls who have fallen victims to sexual abuse.

“At the Jeremiah Foundation, these girls are provided protection, education, rehabilitation, and hope for a brighter future.

“This is personal for us. The truth is, we (@vivfernanhernandez and JPaul Hernandez) were victims of molestation during our childhood. Although our stories are nothing compared to the ones these girls have experienced, we do understand and feel for them.

“What survivors need is to be seen and heard. Yes, this issue is sensitive and overwhelming. Your care and support is so valuable. It confirms for us the truth that abuse is never the fault of the victim.

“It is not our fault.

“Thank you for allowing us to bring awareness to this issue and to provide us with the opportunity to help.”

Blessings and Love,
Viv and JPaul



Thank you, Feast Books and Kring Talladen, Sonny Tiu Balanguit, with SepJo Balbino and Lyn Mendoza

“At the end, it’s not about what you have or even what you’ve accomplished. It’s about who you’ve lifted up... Who you’ve made better. It’s about what you’ve given back.

— Denzel Washington

“Blessings and success need to be shared to those who are in need-- even through our simple way of giving. Such a little time and effort to make others feel better.”





BLESSINGS

Nothing Too Hard for God

I AM a volunteer coordinator in one of the Mercy Ministries of Light of Jesus Family, Jesus Christ Cares for Cancer (JCCFC) where we help indigents and other people suffering from cancer.

I have also been a full-time house mother in Jeremiah Foundation since September 2014.

I found out about JCCFC because of its founder, Bro. Rey Ortega. He asked me if I wanted to serve there while **By PAULA BELEN** working at Jeremiah Foundation.



As one of JCCFC's coordinators, I am in charge of interviewing cancer patients applying for financial assistance, helping compile required documents, and informing beneficiaries regarding new announcements or concern from the Board of JCCFC.

My first beneficiary passed away on 2017 after several years of suffering from breast cancer. I met her because she was a friend of my sister-in-law.

I learned a lot from my experiences in JCCFC. The best is I learned that you can give more than you think by serving other people. And because of what I've learned, my way of living also changed. Now, I'm more open-minded about the needs of people around me.

For me, everything is a blessing but if I'll be specific, I think these would be 1. My family; 2. My good health; 3. I'm still serving with JCCFC and Jeremiah Foundation.

Trials and Lessons

First trial, I am now a widow. In 2017, my husband died. I almost gave up on life. But I kept fighting because of the people around me who never left me-- especially my family, my Jeremiah family, and my JCCFC family. I am grateful because of their wisdom and encouragement.

As house mother for Jeremiah, I stay with the beneficiaries in our shelter for them. And I struggle against longing for my family. My mother is old and I worry about her.

Second, the COVID Crisis. The Pandemic has affected my life so much especially my Mercy ministries. My visits to our beneficiaries became limited-- for everybody's safety.

By God's grace, on better days, I still meet with our Jeremiah girls such as on this day (*right*) when I conduct a session on values and personal hygiene for the girls.



Pre-COVID, JCCFC held General Assemblies (*left*) to bond with beneficiaries and attend to their concerns.

Sadly, assemblies are also now on hold. I miss those times when we gathered together, served the Lord and each other.

These, indeed, are difficult times. The ordeal has made me realize that everything can suddenly change. But I am comforted by the truth that we can hold on to God who will never change. He is our hope.

Because, as my favorite verse, Jeremiah 32: 17, puts it: *Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by Thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for Thee.*

*It's your turn! Share your blessings and be a blessing to others to glorify God.
Email now your story to library2819@gmail.com.*



Thank You!

The Feast Family, now organized as the **Feast Mercy Ministries**, is a spin-off ministry of the Light of Jesus Family founded by Bro. Bo Sanchez, earlier named as Kerygma Family, a unique online, non-physical, borderless, international community of friends who support each other's personal growth.

Partner beneficiaries of the Feast Mercy Ministries flourish because of your generous support.

Thank you for being with us. We pray that you find your daily source of inspiration from the resources that we send to you. We pray too that you may consider giving to The Feast Family. No gift is too small.

Thank you very much in advance for your gift. Our prayer is that God will continue to reward you as you give.

FOR EXISTING DONORS:

Thank you for the Love. Your monthly donation helps us continue extending support to our Light of Jesus spin-off organizations, including our partner beneficiaries. Your gift will sustain our operations and, we hope, help us reach out to the persons our Lord has called us to make disciples and give them renewed hope.

Be a Feast Family member. Write or call us. Now.

Email Address: jocelyn@kerygmfamily.com

Website: <https://kerygmfamily.com>

Telephone Numbers: 8725-9999/ Fax 725-1230

Our Partner Beneficiaries

Email Address: mercyministries@feast.ph Website: www.feastmercyministries.com

Jeremiah 33 Foundation is a shelter for girls particularly victims of sexual abuse.



Grace To Be Born is a halfway home for pregnant women in crisis.



He Cares Mission provides shelter for street children.

Pag-asa ng Pamilya Foundation gives scholarships to poor students.



Jesus Christ Cares for Cancer provides financial assistance and pastoral care for indigent cancer patients.

The Light of Jesus Pastoral Care Center ministers to those who are emotionally and spiritually wounded.



H.A.I.L. MARY is acronym for Healthcare Assistance for Indigents and Lepers of Mary, adopting the Blessed Mother as the patroness of its mission to eradicate leprosy in Abra within 8–10 years.



The Light of Jesus Disaster Recovery Ministry provides evacuation assistance, relief goods, financial aid, and other needs of calamity victims.



LIGHT OF JESUS FAMILY
DISASTER RECOVERY MINISTRY

The Light of Jesus Prison Ministry brings Jesus to the Correctional Institution for Women to give the women hope for a new life of dignity.



Anawim Lay Missions Foundation provides a home for poor elderly who have been abandoned by their family and have nowhere else to go.

CHOOSE HOW YOU WANT TO GIVE

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FAMILY ONLINE NEWSMAGAZINE

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Go and make disciples of all men.

— Matthew 28:19