



NEWSLETTER
March 13, 2022

Be Still

LAST Sunday, March 6, 2022, we discussed the last of our series of Feast talks based on the Gospel according to Matthew.

We will have a new series next Sunday, March 20, 2022.

Today, we take a breather from the Feast talks, and give you a Special Talk.

And since this is a *pause*, we're going to study one of the most powerful habits of our Lord Jesus. It's called *Silence*.

The Greek word for *silence* is *eremos*. It means a solitary place, a deserted place, a desolate place, a lonely place, a quiet place, and my most favorite description, coined by Bro. Bo Sanchez *a surrendered place*.

If there's one who understood the power of silence more than anyone, it was Jesus. He used it every chance He could get. He found pockets of silence during the day. He even used silence as a weapon against those who persecuted Him.

But make no mistake. Silence is not a weakness. There were many times when Jesus chose to stay silent instead of answering or making a comment. But it didn't mean He was weak.

Today, I'd like to preach on the message: *Be still*.

All for God's Glory,

Audee Villaraza

Builder and Preacher

Feast Philippine International

Convention Center (PICC)





Lent and Women

THIS March, these are the prominent issues: the Lenten Season and Women's Month. Two different issues that don't have anything in common? Let's see...



We have the Lenten Season where we take a pause from our worldly cares, keep quiet, reflect on the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ leading to His Crucifixion.

Fr. Bob McConaghy points out Jesus was the first one to have a Lenten season where He stayed alone in the desert, kept quiet, prepared Himself for His mission, *page 3*.

Speaking of being silent, Bro. Bo Sanchez and Bro. Didoy Lubaton point out that in Asian culture, women were designated



to be at home. They were supposed to be silent in affairs. Yet, Jesus brought in women to become His disciples. This Lenten season, we will see that Peter and the apostles dared not go out, afraid that after the Roman soldiers put Jesus to death, they would be after Jesus' followers next. On the other hand, the women, led by Mary Magdalene, courageously went out to go on with the burial rites for Jesus,

pages 11-22.

Since this month is Women's Month, for our Mercy Ministries section, we feature Grace To Be Born, which takes care of unwed pregnant women.



This Lenten Season, we reflect on the death of Jesus. Grace To Be Born is also about death—of babies dying because of abortion. The climax of the Lenten Season

is the Good News of New Life--the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead. By taking care of the women in crisis, Grace To Be Born is also about New Life—as it gives babies the chance to be born, *page 23*.

All for God's Glory,

Randy Borromeo
Media Ministry
Executive Director





FLASHBACK!

MARCH 6, 2022

Holy Mass



FR. BOB McCONAGHY on
the Gospel: Luke 4:1-13 *Jesus Is
Tested in the Wilderness*

Excerpts...

BEFORE this scene in today's Gospel, we have to remember that Jesus lived in a small town for 30 years. Joseph probably died when Jesus was about 18 or 19 years old-- historians suggest. And so, imagine what it was like when Jesus was 24-- six more years to wait, and he was filled with the Holy Spirit. He really wanted to get out on mission, I would think-- but He obeyed to wait.

Then, finally, when He was 30, He must have said, "Now I can go out and do my mission for the Father."

And He goes to Jordan and get baptized. He must be ready to go now because He is already filled with the Holy Spirit. Yet, what did the Holy Spirit do? Did He already send him out on mission? No. He led Jesus out into the desert.

I wonder if Jesus suspected that He would be the first one to make a Lenten Season-- because you see, there were some places that Jesus had to learn about to be completely human. He had never experienced being alone in the desert at night -- when there was no moon, where he heard strange noises.

Temptations of Jesus

As the apostle Paul would say in his letters, if Jesus was human in every way that we are-- also tempted in every way-- He must have felt frightened. He couldn't see two meters in front of him. He was afraid.

Not only that. During that time, the Devil tempted Him. Just as you and I, Jesus went through a Lenten Season. But He learned through that. Like, when He would meet blind people, He would have a human experience of blindness. When He would meet hungry people, He would know what that was like-- because Mama Mary always made Him His meals.

He was also used to being with His friends. Now, He was lonely. He would meet lonely, frightened people and He would be moved to heal them during His ministry.

But here, we have these three temptations at the end of this Lenten Season and what they show is the time that Jesus spent in the desert is His most important preparation time. And so the Devil comes to Him, offers Him three shortcuts from the Cross.

The First, the Devil says, "You see those stones there? They look like Jewish pieces of bread. You want people to follow you? They will make you king. Solve world hunger. Change all rocks into bread. The people will love you and make you their king."

Jesus knew He would multiply the bread and that would not solve the problem. That would not fulfill the mission that He would send His apostles on.

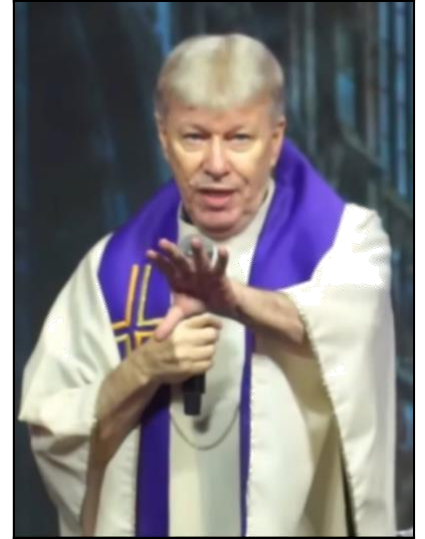
And then, the Second: For the first time in his existence, Satan tells the truth. He says, "You see all those kingdoms out there? They all belong to me. You want to get people follow you? Get into politics. I can help you there, because all of those kingdoms are mine."

Jesus turns down popularity, the second temptation.

And then, the Third, the Devil sets him on the parapet of the Temple-- that's a long dive down the ground.

The Devil says, "Jump off! Because Scripture says that the angels will absolutely carry you and you won't fall and hit the ground. People would love to see you do that. You give them a show, and they'll follow you. Give them a thrill, but not a Cross..."

All three temptations Jesus immediately rejected because He went through Lenten Season. He was in the quiet, completely alone. Nobody around disturbed Him.



Summoned to Your Surrender Place

You might say that Jesus went to His surrendered place.

Bro. Bo Sanchez has written a book titled *Find Your Surrendered Place* because he had an experience of almost dying and through that, he learned so many lessons. And in his book, he tells you how to detach from 15 distractions in your life that are making you fearful, upset, nervous, worried about the future.

We are having in The Feast, starting tomorrow, something like that. Although we don't call it a *surrendered* place-- we dropped the *ed* and said that this will be called *Summoned to Your Surrender Place*.

What's a summons? A summons is a call in obedience. For example, you get a summons to go to a trial, you don't have a choice. You must obey. So, also, being summoned to your surrendered place is an invitation of obedience from Jesus to go to your inner room. And there, you will begin to discover your surrendered place.

The First 10 Minutes: Do Nothing

So, we are having a half-hour service and it starts at 6:00 a.m. Monday to Friday online via Zoom. For all other Feasters, it is available on Facebook *live* starting at 6 a.m.

You might say, "Well I have to go to work at five."

Fine, you can do it at night. It's not going to be people interacting with one another. It's going to be you being alone, summoned to, in obedience, your surrender place.

And when you're there, you're going to do only three things. You're going to pray for yourself and pray for others, and pray for the Church.

Now, remember I told you a couple of weeks ago, this is particularly important at the beginning of Lent. Jesus said to go to your room, and when you get there, to realize what God the Father wants from you-- more than your prayers, more than your penances. What He wants from you is the belief that He actually does love you.



Responsorial Psalm, Psalms 91:1-2, 10-11, 12-13, 14-15

- 1 *You who live in the secret place of Elyon, spend
your nights in the shelter of Shaddai,*
2 *saying to Yahweh, 'My refuge, my fortress, my God in whom I
trust!'*
10 *No disaster can overtake you, no plague come near your tent;*
11 *he has given his angels orders about you to
guard you wherever you go...*



The biggest challenge for any priest and preacher -- they will tell you if they're really honest-- is the most difficult task of convincing people that they really are loved by God. Because when you embrace that as the absolute truth, nothing will ever take you away from pure hope.

So, this is how it works: The first thing that we do in the private room, they're going to have a prayer-- after the prayer it's just you. You can do this

in the morning or at night. The first 10 minutes, what you will do is *nothing*. You will say nothing. You will pray nothing.

It's what Fr. Thomas Greene, the great Jesuit, called wasting time with the Lord. And how do you do it? By realizing during those 10 minutes that you don't have to produce anything.

A lot of times we're evaluated through what we produce. God doesn't evaluate us that way. Nothing that you can produce, can make God love you more. And nothing that you ever don't produce that's good can make Him love you less.

God loves you just the way you are-- but He does not want to leave you there. He wants to lift you up to become just like His Son. Just like His mother. And He makes the first move in doing it.

And so, during those first 10 minutes of a half an hour, that's all it's going to be-- a half an hour that you just be quiet. Be still and know that He is God. And He will begin -- to the extent that you open your heart will begin-- to accomplish something in you, that will change you and transform you.

You might say, "How do I feel afterward?"

You might feel different because you're trusting that something very mysterious is being accomplished in you-- and that is the grace to embrace the fact that He actually does love you. You don't have to prove anything to Him. You can sit in a comfortable chair-- so just be silent.

And it's hard to be silent because we're around so much noise. But every time a thought occurs to you-- and that happens about every five seconds at the beginning of this-- simply choose your prayer word-- not sentences—just *word*.

For example, you can have your word be *Jesus* or *mercy* or *Mama Mary*. Anything that the Holy Spirit lays on you. So, before tomorrow, or when you begin this, ask the Holy Spirit to lay on your heart a prayer *word*. And when a thought comes to your mind when you want to be still, that thought will not go away when you do not talk out loud but simply whisper that *word*.

So, you sit in the quiet and just be, as a page that aches for a word that speaks on a theme that is timeless and the one God will make for your day. That's the first 10-minute period.

The Second 10 Minutes: Pray for Others, for Yourself

In the second 10 minutes, now you're going to speak. It's intercessory prayer for others. You might want to write down -- before your day begins or your evening ends—names of several people whom you want to pray for. That can be anyone.

Now, the most important in your prayer of petition: Pray for yourself.

I'm amazed that when I ask people that question, "Do you ever pray for yourself?" many answer, "No, I pray for others."

Pray for yourself.

And then in the final 10 minutes, you're going to do something maybe that you've never done before. I'm not trying to sell anything, but to do this on your phone if you would download iBreviary. Once you download it and you open it up, you'll have choices and the one at the top says *Bravery*. Click *Bravery* and it's going to take you either to morning prayer-- if you're up in the morning-- or night prayer which is at the end of the day.

There, you'll have the Psalms. We rarely pray the Psalms, but you know what, when you do morning prayer, or night prayer, you know who you're really praying for? You're praying for the whole Church. The entire Church throughout the world. The Church suffering in places like China, North Korea, in Ukraine, where churches are being destroyed. So, you're praying the prayer of the Church.

And that's all. Just one half hour of your day.

First, to begin your day or end your day, you are being summoned, called by name in obedience to have a half hour with the Lord before you're with anyone else. And during that half hour, during the first 10 minutes, you realize how much God loves you, that you are His beloved son, you are His beloved daughter in whom He is well pleased.

Second, praying for others and yourself.



The Third 10 Minutes: Pray for the Church

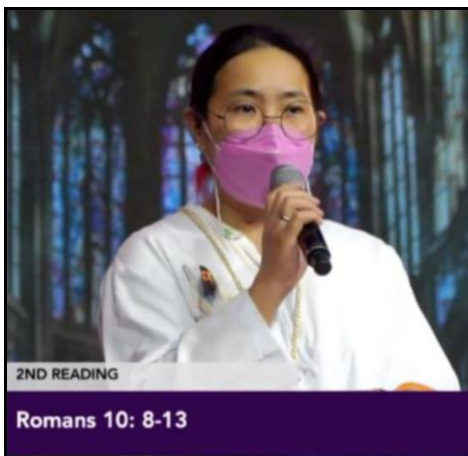
And finally, Third, the prayer of the Church. Praying the beautiful Psalms, you'll find --if you begin and end your day that way without doing anything else-- by the end of Lent, if you really stick with it and start tomorrow, there will be 34 days left in Lent.



It is said that what you do for 30 days in a row becomes a habit. So, the summons to your surrender place becomes an important, vital part of your day-- just as eating breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

So, it starts then tomorrow morning, 6:00 a.m., available anytime on replay during the day. And ask yourself at the Eucharist: Is the Lord calling me to that. Is He summoning me to that? May He give you the grace each day to go to your inner room and surrender.

Say, "I give my will to God so that I can learn His will for me."



2nd Reading – Romans 10:8-13

Brothers and sisters:

⁸ What does Scripture say? The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart – that is, the word of faith that we preach

⁹ for, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

¹⁰ For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved.

¹¹ For the Scripture says, No one who believes in him will be put to shame.

¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all, enriching all who call upon him.

¹³ For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Worship!

EXHORTATIONS



BRO. AUDEE VILLARAZA: In the stillness and in the quiet in this moment, not a person moving in this place-- whether you're online or offline or the other side of the screen-- I want you to just be still and breathe. Come on, and breathe. Let the love of God penetrate the recesses of your life, the places where darkness has filled in the corners of your heart, in the corners of your mind, every space, let God's love just flow right into your life just breathing in... Fresh wind. Fresh grace. Fresh love. Fresh anointing.

VANYA CASTOR: In Isaiah 58, it says, "Yahweh will guide you always and give you relief in desert places. He will strengthen your bones; He will make you as a watered garden, like a spring of water whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins will be rebuilt, the age old foundations will be raised. You will be called the Breach-mender, and the Restorer of the ruined houses."

Today, I want to invite you to keep going before our God. Our God who doesn't stop rebuilding, restoring everything that we feel and think that has been ruined in our life. Our God is not stopping. Our God is not stopping! Come on, raise up your praises! Our God is not stopping and neither should we! So come on, let's worship. Keep going! Keep going, come on!



JHONN JAVIER: It's so good to be in the moment of Worship again. Let's not take this for granted.

Let's pray: Father in heaven, we invite your Holy Spirit to be in this place. We pray that you renew our faith.

Reignite the fire in our heart and give us Your peace. The world needs Your peace God. And so, we pray that You pour out Your Spirit upon us today and move in our praise.

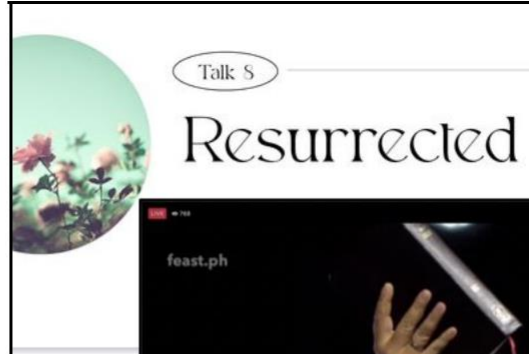






FLASHBACK! **MARCH 6, 2022**

Talk



LET'S sing:
Speak to us Lord, we're listening.
Let's give the Lord a big, big hand.



Today is our last day
of our study of the Book
of Matthew. Could you imagine: 26 months!

And it has been such a journey through the Pandemic
and today.

Just in case you won't notice, we're ending our 26-month
long series.

How about we give a big, big hand for that season. We really
studied, dove in, and wow, it has been beautiful.

And we need to move forward.



I think it's God's call for us to move forward today.

But you know, the more we know about God through the Gospel of Matthew, the more that I feel also anxious. Why? Because I realized, the more that I'm so far from the Lord. The more that I know more about it, the more that I feel... Hmm, there's so much work with you Didoy, and I'm so far away from God's heart.



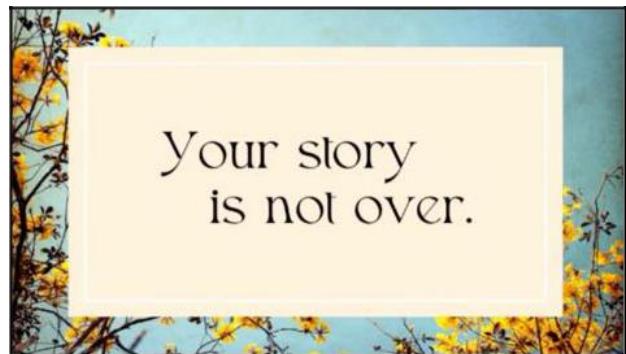
But I think of the greatest distance -- from here (in the mind) the message needs to travel to here (in the heart).

What am I trying to say?
The goal of this Bible study is not to know more but to love more.

So, take a pause today. You've been attending The Feast online, or now *live*? Has it brought you to love more people? Did it make you love yourself more? Not just about our religious practices but our relationships?

Today, we're going to talk about the greatest event that happened in the history of human kind and that is the Resurrection of Jesus. And the big message today is: *Your story is not over.*

Before we go there, which is the second part of the Talk, try to notice that Jesus included specific people—groups of people in the movement, in this gathering, in this faith that we have. The followers of Jesus are very, very different.





① The Kingdom includes women.

Mt 27:55-56 NLT

And many women who had come from Galilee with Jesus to care for him were watching from a distance.
⁵⁶ Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary (the mother of James and Joseph), and the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee.

The first thing we would like to reflect on is that the Kingdom of Jesus includes women. Women in the house make some noise, please.

During the time of Jesus, there were many other Rabbis (Teachers) like Him. Too many teachers actually. But there's a big difference with Jesus. Because the other rabbis, the other teachers, had male followers.

Jesus was CO-ED. He was open to have followers who are women. Because in Asian culture, women were designated to be at home. They were supposed to be silent in affairs. They were supposed to be just taking care of the children, managing the household. It was very, very radical that Jesus brought in women to become His disciples. Jesus saw them as equals—as God bearers, God carriers. And remember, the followers of Jesus, they were Jesus saw them as God Bearers. there, throughout the journey of Jesus' ministry.

They saw Him preach. The women saw Him perform miracles.

But they also saw Jesus die. They also saw how painful it was.

To see your teacher, your rabbi crucified-- and you cannot do anything about it.

And who were there—*after*? Who were there at the tomb? Not the men—but the women. Where were the boys? While the apostles were fearful, the women were faithful. Peter wasn't there. James and John were not there. But their mom was. Mary Magdalene was.

Women are sometimes, if not in many times, braver than men. I confess to that—yes. The Feasts all around the world are much, much better because of our servants who are women... You know, we can be preaching here but the women are preaching in the way they serve—quietly, silently but quite effectively, and faithfully. A big hand again to our female servants.

You want some proof why I think women are braver than men? Childbirth. As a doctor, I have helped women give birth – actually from my nursing career, through my med school. Childbirth-- I wouldn't wish to do it myself. Man, there was one time—the first time I saw a woman giving birth-- I was just observing. And the one who was supposed to catch the baby, he was saying, “Okay, mommy, please push, please push, push, please push, push, push. And he (fainted). He was the one whom we caught, not the baby.



I want to show you a picture of my mom—Dr. Cynthia Lubaton. Seven kids. I could imagine how she carried us all to term for nine months— all normal childbirth. I'm the sixth out of the seven. And maybe during my time, she was already an expert in just, poof... But it wasn't easy for her...

Women, mothers, I honor you. Because it's not just carrying the baby. The harder one, nursing the baby, raising the child. And you are the one supposed to be in charge of it. You took it upon yourself to be responsible for this task. And now my mom is also still raising us seven kids.

And one by one of us get sick too. My sister, Dra. Cheryl Anne (Chichi) Lubaton-Sacro, was diagnosed with cancer recently. You know, my Mom, she was still there. She *is* still there-- and the bravest of us all.

She has never stopped praying for us. She taught us how to pray. I will not be preaching here today, I will not be part of a faith community today were it not for my Mom who was very brave and ever faithful to serve and be in community to love the Lord with all her heart, with all her mind, with all her strength.

Mama, if you're listening to this—I know you are—I love you and I thank you for being faithful to the Lord.

Women, thank you.



Next is a picture of my wife. Of course, I will not get this chance again, so, I'd like to honor you, Mayi. It's so hard to be married to me. And you put up so much bravery and love to marry a doctor and a preacher, and a speaker, and so many things that I want to do in my life. And you are raising with me two wonderful kids—Haile and Hosea. And it's not just that. You're also working as manager in your financial company, and you are a friend to many.

And again, I honor you because you are ever-faithful to the Lord. Please be faithful to the Lord than be faithful to me. I want you to love the Lord. I love you because you love the Lord more than me—and that's a safe place to be. Sometimes, I'm not always right. Mayi, I love you. I know you're also listening online. I love you. Thank you.



To the dear women in the house and those watching online, on March 8, it's International Women's Day. Congratulations! I greet you in advance. Happy International Women's Day. You are recognized. You are part of the

Kingdom. You are an essential part. And we wouldn't have this without you. I take so much time here because we don't have a lot of time that we recognize the women of the house serving the Lord.

And Bro Bo, you mentioned last week—and you did not ask my permission—that you told the Feasters that I am your doctor. But I want to tell to everybody, yes, I'm the doctor. I was the one who visited Bro. Bo and his family in their house. And it's so hard to see our leader in distress.



I gave the prescriptions. I gave the medications. But I have to honor here Sis. Marowe (*right*, with Bro. Bo). She, COVID-positive herself, was the one who took care of the household. She was the one who updated me every single hour to make sure that nobody in her household goes in further distress. And what do you know, we're still here. And we get to still have Bro. Bo and his family.

Thank you, Sis. Marowe, for your faithfulness to Jesus. And thank you for your faithfulness in supporting Bro. Bo. That's why we still have him.



② The Kingdom includes the rich.

Mt 27:57-61 NLT

As evening approached, Joseph, a rich man from Arimathea who had become a follower of Jesus,⁵⁵ went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. And Pilate issued an order to release it to him.⁵⁹ Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a long sheet of clean linen cloth.⁶⁰ He placed it in his own new tomb, which had been carved out of the rock. Then he rolled a great stone across the entrance and left.⁶¹ Both Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting across from the tomb and watching.

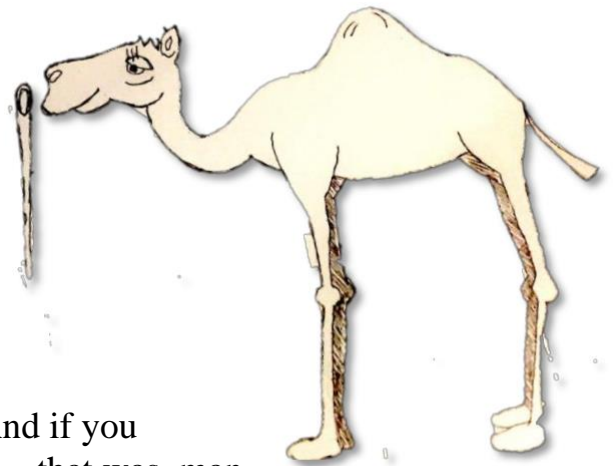
Remember, there was a time in the Bible that Jesus told these disciples that it's more difficult for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God than for a camel to enter into the eye of a needle?

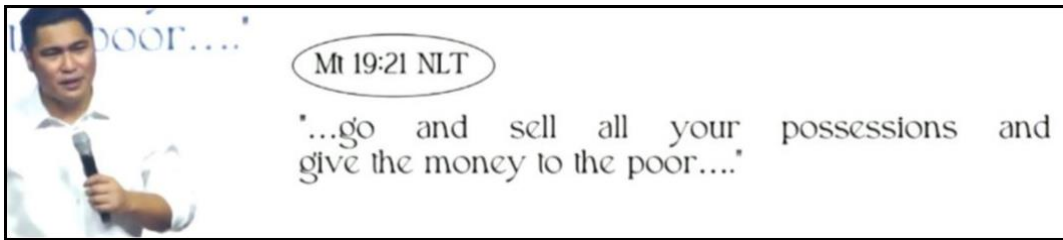
Well, well, well, he, Joseph of Arimathea, is an example of the camel. Because Matthew says Joseph *“was a follower of Jesus”*. (v.57)

During that ancient period, history tells us that 90% of the population were poor. And there was a very thin margin between the poor and the middle class-- they were the tax collectors, some were merchants, craftsmen. And fewer still in the top 1% of that society—they enjoyed the abundant political, religious power.

Joseph of Arimathea was one of those 1%. And if you owned—what it says here, *a new tomb out of rock* -- that was, man, real property. You must really be wealthy to have that property.

Also, you have to look into the context as it was written in the Gospel. The Gospel of Luke says Joseph was a member of the Sanhedrin. And that is the group of people who made the decision to condemn Jesus—that was the Council. And Joseph was part of it. But it was written also in the Gospel that he didn't agree with the Council.





Remember how Jesus called the rich young man and told him:
“...go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor....?”
(Matthew 19:21 NLT)

But if Joseph sold everything, he wouldn't have that tomb.
What we are trying to say here?

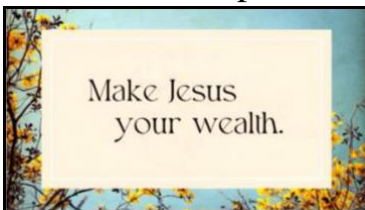
God calls each person in different ways,
depending on our situation and season.

What is God calling you to do?
In what season? Or in what
situation are you in?

Flourish where you are planted. Grow your faith where you are.

And just a little more note. Giving to Jesus this precious, expensive tomb was a dangerous decision for Joseph. Not only was it one giant gift to Jesus and His disciples. It also meant not being one with his Council members in their decision of condemning Jesus.

You know what that means? Joseph of Arimathea was willing enough to surrender his political situation, his political power, his influence. Because Jesus was more important than his wealth. Jesus was more important than his political structure.



And, I think, what is the importance, what is the point of our discipleship? Why are we doing this? It's because we make Jesus our wealth. And as we close this, I hope we seek first the Kingdom of God and everything else shall follow unto us. Make Jesus your wealth.

It is not the wealth that is the goal but it is that rich life, that abundant life with Jesus that we are after. Your life is not over. God is not over with us yet. If you're a woman. If you're a rich man. Or whatever season you are in, your story is not over.

Your story
is not over.

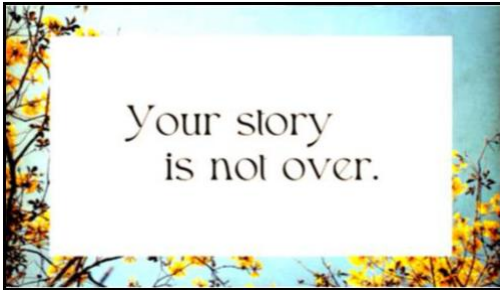
Can you put your hand on your chest? Just pause for a minute and have a reflection. Are you a woman? God calls you to be a part of the Kingdom. Or are you a rich man, or trying to become one? God calls you to be part of the Kingdom.

And whatever situation and season we are in, we declare, “Jesus, You are our wealth!” You are our everything and we will follow You till the end of our days-- and more, as we go to Heaven, sometime in the future.

We love You, Lord. Thank You, Jesus.

The Greatest Miracle in the World

Everybody, say it again:



Every morning, as my exercise, I walk around my village.

I love it because I'm surrounded by nature. As I walk, I see gorgeous flowers, lovely trees, malnourished dogs with rabies, poop of the dogs...

And there was a time when there was this beautiful tree that's really special. Don't ask me what kind of tree. I think the scientific name is *lakipuno parangtao-titis*. Because it has two branches like raised arms that were worshipping God.

But one fateful day, while walking, as I turned around the corner, I blurted out, "Oh my ghaaad...." The tree was gone!

In its place was a stump.

A short dead ugly stump.

Someone cut down my tree!

Okay, it wasn't exactly my tree.

It was everybody's tree. But I saw it every day. And I loved looking at it.

Do you know how I felt?

Like my pet died.

I asked, "Who killed my pet?"

Do you know what made it worse? I saw that stump every day.

Because it was always in my walking route. Each morning, I saw that grotesque figure again and again—that dead ugly stump.

It was a constant reminder that once upon a time, there was this healthy tree that waved its arms to praise God—and in a blink of an eye, it was gone.



Three months later, a strange thing happened.

While walking, I turned around the corner, and I saw again the dead ugly stump. But this time, something caught my eye. On its left side, I saw something. I saw a tiny green shoot breaking out of its hard bark.



Was this for real? That meant only one thing. The tree was *alive*.

Months later, I saw that green shoot became a small branch, and that small branch became a big branch.

Six years later—today-- the tree is even bigger before it was chopped down.

This story reminds me of our reading today:

Tombs Are Not Nice

Just to give you a feel of what they saw, let me show pictures of what tombs looked like during the time of Jesus.

This is the tomb that King Herod built for his family:

Here's another tomb—the tomb of the High Priest Anas:



MT 28:1 NLT

Early on Sunday morning, as the new day was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went out to visit the tomb.

Tombs are not nice.
You know what a tomb is?
It's a dead ugly stump.

So, imagine yourself in the sandals of Mary Magdalene and the other Mary that Sunday morn. Imagine what they were feeling—the pain, the sorrow, the confusion.

For the past three years, these women traveled with Jesus, listened to Jesus, ate with Jesus, laughed with Jesus.

And together, they began to dream of a different world where the poor are loved, the hungry are fed, the sick are healed, the sinners are forgiven. In this new Kingdom, you did not have to worry because God takes care of the birds of the air and the lilies of the field.

But then Jesus died.

Why didn't God take care of His Son?



The World Is in a Dark Tomb

Friend, *isn't the tomb a snapshot of our dark world?*

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 in the middle of this darkness, the Gospel proclaims...

Mt 28:1-7 NLT

*Suddenly there was a great earthquake! For an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled aside the stone, and sat on it. ³ His face shone like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow. ⁴ The guards shook with fear when they saw him, and they fell into a dead faint.

Mt 28:1-7 NLT

⁵ Then the angel spoke to the women. 'Don't be afraid!' he said. ⁶ 'I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He isn't here! He is risen from the dead, just as he said would happen. Come, see where his body was lying.' ⁷ And now, go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and he is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there. Remember what I have told you.'

This is the audacious claim of Christianity: That a certain guy walked out of a tomb. Someone came back from the dead. Jesus is alive!

Mt 28:8-9 NLT

'The women ran quickly from the tomb. They were very frightened but also filled with great joy, and they rushed to give the disciples the angel's message. ⁹ And as they went, Jesus met them and greeted them.'

How did He greet them? The original word used by Matthew is the most casual form in Greek.

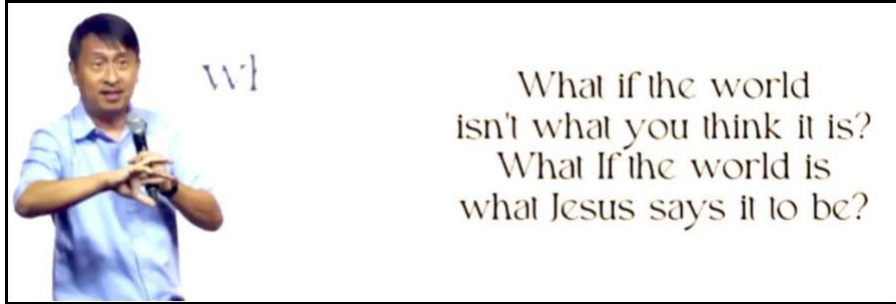
So, Jesus must have simply said, “Hiiiiiii!”

Can you imagine their terror and joy?



Mt 28:9-10 NLT

'And they ran to him, grasped his feet, and worshiped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, 'Don't be afraid! Go tell my brothers to leave for Galilee, and they will see me there.'



The World Isn't What You Think It Is

Here's the message of the Resurrection: *What if the world isn't what you think it is? What If the world is what Jesus says it to be?*

It may appear that evil is winning today, but the Risen Jesus says that evil is a defeated foe.

Injustice seems to be ruling today, but the Risen Jesus says that behind the scenes, justice is flowing like a river.

In small pockets and hidden places, kindness is conquering the world. And the Kingdom of God will cover the face of the Earth.

You're Not Who You Think You Are

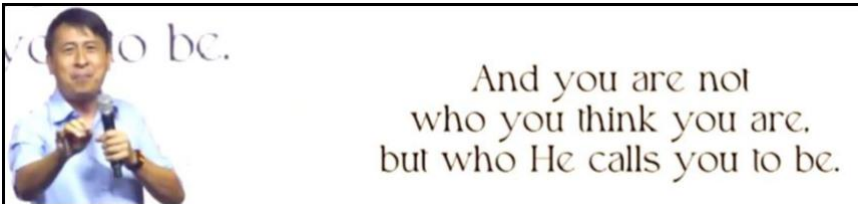
Dear friend, maybe you walked into today's Feast feeling discouraged because you feel that nothing has changed in your life.

You've attended for many years, but your life is still the same.

You pray a lot, but you've had so much failure in your life.

You're committing the same sins over and over again.

And you're tempted to think, "This is who I am."



I repeat: The world isn't what you think it is, but what Jesus says it is. *And you are not who you think you are, but who He calls you to be.*

Your Story Is Not Over

God is declaring to you today: *Your story is not over.*

That even though it's very dark in your life right now, shafts of light are piercing through—in your relationships, in your home, in your job.

Your crisis is not a period, it's a comma.

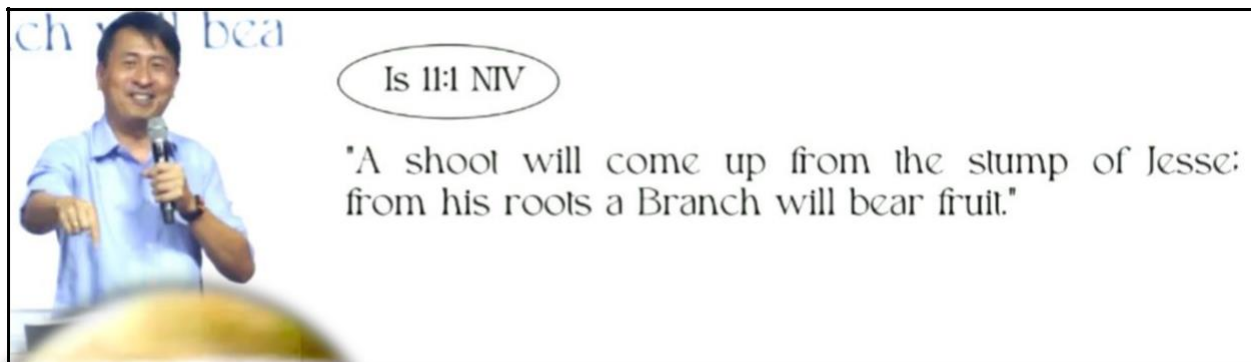
Your trial is not the end, it's the beginning.

God is not finished with you yet.

Your story
is not over.

God is
not finished
with you yet.

The Branch Is Here



Let me end by reading how the Prophet Isaiah pointed to Jesus.

He said, *“A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.”*

Friend, do you sometimes feel that there’s a dead ugly stump in your life? As we enter into Worship, present that dead ugly stump to God. Present that issue, behavior, or relationship, that doesn’t seem to change. Open up your life to the greatest power of the universe—the power that raised Jesus from the dead.



Here’s why:
The Branch is in your life.
His name is Jesus.
Jesus is the Branch that will bear fruit in your life.
Your story is not over.

Your story
is not over.



MERCY MINISTRIES

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)

GRACE TO BE BORN

Saving Women from the Pains of Abortion



MARCH being Women's Month, we focus on our Mercy Ministry serving women— Grace To Be Born.

Grace To Born maintains a Maternity Home, a shelter serving unwed pregnant mothers to save them from resorting to abortion, plus a Nursery for the babies born there.

Why zero in on abortion?

Our Light of Jesus Family well supports our Catholic Church's stand against abortion.

That's because abortion is considered murder, as it goes against the Fifth of The Ten Commandments: *Thou shalt not kill* (Exodus 20:13).

[Catholic view on abortion - The origin and value of human life](https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/revision)
[https://www.bbc.co.uk > bitesize > guides > revision](https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/revision)

Our Lord Jesus emphasized this stand as we read in Matthew 19: 16-18.

At the time, Jesus was preaching in Judea, beyond the Jordan. One of His followers asked: "*Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?*"

Jesus answered: "*If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.*"

The follower asked: "*Which ones?*"

And Jesus first mentioned the Fifth Commandment, saying, *You shall not commit murder*, and then He went on and enumerated the rest of the Ten Commandments.

On the Facebook page of Grace To Be Born, we see a quote from Pope Francis emphasizing our responsibility to obey the Fifth Commandment:

Abortion is a sin.

And it is painful.

Google the full meaning of abortion and you'll see this is the definition from <https://www.merriam-webster.com>: "The termination of a pregnancy after, accompanied by, resulting in, or closely followed by the death of the embryo or fetus: **a**: spontaneous expulsion of a human fetus during the first 12 weeks of gestation; **b**: induced expulsion of a human fetus.



Q and A

Here are answers to questions about abortion:

What happens during an abortion? Here's a quote from the website <https://www.plannedparenthood.org>:

Having an abortion feels different for everyone — it can be super painful or just a little uncomfortable. Your level of discomfort can depend on the medications you get, how far into your pregnancy you are, and how much cramping and pain you have. For most people, it feels like strong period cramps.

What are the side effects of an abortion?

Side effects of this abortion procedure include: cramping, pelvic pain, uterine damage, injury to the bowel, bladder, or cervix, heavy bleeding, or more serious complications. Blood loss, damage to the uterus, and infection are the most common side effects.

Side Effects of Abortion - Colorado Springs Pregnancy Center
<https://www.cspregnancycenter.com > side-effects-of-abor...>

Mercy for Our Women



Out of compassion for our women, our founder, Bro. Bo Sanchez, has included Grace To Be Born among our important LOJ Mercy Ministries, under the watch of its chairman, Bro. Hermie Morelos, and Sis. Esther Palacio as Grace executive director.



Bro. Bo continues to personally oversee the Ministry.

Above, he leads the recent inauguration of Grace To Be Born in Pampanga.

He has presented the ill effects of abortion in his Feast talks and his articles.

In an article he wrote for the *Kerygma Family Report*, the original version of our *The Feast Family* online newsmagazine, he recalled the beginnings of Grace To Be Born.

Bro. Bo wrote that in August 2008, he preached about the evils of abortion at The Feast, our Sunday faith gathering which at the time we held at the Valle Verde Country Club in Pasig City.

That talk would lead to Grace To Be Born.



Volunteer Organizers



One of The Feast attendees at the time was Bro. Bo's friend, Bro. Rey Ortega (*left*). He was so moved by Bro. Bo's talk that he sent him an email the following day—asking if he would approve organizing a new ministry on saving the unborn from abortion.

"Of course, I agreed right there and then," Bro. Bo pointed out.

Bro. Bo, with Bro. Rey, then held meetings on the establishment of the Grace shelter. By God's grace, Betty Roxas Chua, directress of Rosary for Life, and beloved friend of Bro. Bo, stepped forward to support the Ministry. She and her

husband Sebastian offered their building in Pasig, *gratis*, to be the site of the Grace shelter.

In April 2009, Bro. Bo then organized a meeting to set the inauguration of Grace To Be Born. Along with Bro. Rey, and Sis. Betty, present during the meeting were two more supportive leader – Bro. Gil Ramiscal and Sis. Ditas Español.

They proposed various dates in April for the inaugural blessing of the shelter. But they kept postponing the date because their schedules just won't jibe. Until they finally settled on May 8, 2009— just because that was when all five were free.

Bro. added, "I smiled and said, "*Ha-ha-ha, that's the birthday of my mom....*"

And so, on May 8, 2009, the group inaugurated Grace To Be Born, with Bro. Bo's mom Pilar Sanchez, staunch supporter of our Light of Jesus mission, as the special guest of honor— a tribute to her not only because it was her birthday, but also because the following Sunday, May 10, happened to be Mother's Day.

Indeed, God's great gift too for mothers who would then be beneficiaries of the Ministry and the babies to be given the Grace to be born.





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.

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**FAMILY
ONLINE
NEWSMAGAZINE**

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Go and make disciples of all men.

— Matthew 28:19