



NEWSLETTER
May 29, 2022

Do This Short Mental Exercise (Warning: Unpleasant)

THINK of someone who has hurt you. Insulted you. Destroyed your reputation through fake news. Wrecked your life.

Or think of someone who stole from you. A scammer who ran away with your hard-earned money.

Hey, it doesn't have to be big. How about a friend who voted for the candidate you hated in the last elections.

Do you feel rising anger within you?
Seething rage?

Okay. *Imagine now God loving that person, blessing that person, and embracing that person.*

Is there something in you that wants to scream, "Nooooooooooooo!"

That's exactly what Jonah felt. And God asked the prophet, *"Is it right for you to be angry about this?"*

That's the same question God is asking you now.

Have a life-altering Feast today!



May your dreams come true,

Bo Sanchez

Bo Sanchez



LETTERS

Challenge: Exercise!

LAST week, *The Feast Family* challenged you to *love again*—that is, to love those loved ones who turned out to be unlovable. Really difficult.

Today, we have another challenge, in one word: *Exercise!* Which can be more difficult than loving again the unlovable, right?



In his homily in last week's Feast, Fr. Albert Garong shared a funny exercise in serving at the Papal Mass at the Vatican, *page 3*.

Bro. Bo Sanchez challenges us to a mental exercise. Easier? He warns it can be unpleasant, *page 1*.

Bro. Audee Villaraza announced we are flexing some muscles for this is what he calls Season of Stretching at The Feast, *page 12*.

Bro. Audee welcomed Feast Builder and Preacher Bro. Didoy Lubaton who, starting last Sunday, is now a regular preacher in The Feast PICC. With Bro. Bo, Bro. Didoy



tackled how the prophet Jonah had to flex not his muscles but his will against what God wanted him to do. Lessons on *pages 15-32*.

Our *Mercy Ministries* section continues our series on Grace To Be Born, this time as beneficiary of the Jewels Conference, a learning event with a challenge to women: to exercise their will and faith to empower especially women in need, *page 33*.

And in our *Blessings* section, Merry Joy Reyes shares how she does it—like her name says, with *joy*, of course, *page 36*.



Glory to God!

Randy Borromeo
Media Ministry
Executive Director





FLASHBACK!

MAY 22, 2022

Holy Mass



SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

FR. ALBERT GARONG

on the Gospel: John 14: 23-29

Excerpts...

GOOD MORNING, everyone! I would like to share one of my favorite experiences in my 24 years of existence. *Weh, 24?* Okay, not 24 but 36 years of existence.

One of my favorite moments in my life that I want to be in my mind forever: I was not yet a priest but I was studying to be in Rome. It was when I got to shake the hand of Pope Francis. My mind was on full photographic memory mode. It was just a few seconds but, you know, it was such an incredible experience that I can talk about it for hours. This happened because we served in one of the Pope's Masses.



Black and White

When you are given this chance to serve in the Papal Mass, part of it is you get to meet the Pope and even get to help him put on his vestments.

We priests here in the Philippines, we wear white -- our collar is white, our cassocks are white... But in Rome, in the Vatican, everyone wears black. Everyone. No one is allowed to wear white-- except the Pope. The Pope-- and me, apparently.

I didn't know that we were supposed to be wearing black. So, in my white cassock, I tried to hide at the back of the altar ...

Then the master of the ceremony told me, "Oh, don't worry, Brother. We'll look for a black cassock for you."

But they couldn't find one. So, they just let me wear my white cassock.

I was so embarrassed. I was trying to make myself as small as possible. It was in St. Peter's. It was closed because it's in the morning-- there were no tourists inside. It was just us. So, I was being teased by my brothers (for standing out) in my white getup.

At one point, I had to go to the restroom... When I was about to enter the restroom, out of a corner came a Cardinal. Maybe he saw someone wearing white and he immediately said, "Santo Padre."

I wanted the earth to just open and swallow me! You see, if a Cardinal is living in the Vatican, it means he is one of the highest authorities in the Church-- he must be heading some major institution. (Since I was wearing white, he must have thought I was the Pope!) And so, he bowed to me!

I wanted to say, "*Ako lang ito*. It's just me."

And that's not even the peak (of my awkward situation). Servers form two parallel lines, carrying candles. Usually, a server is tasked to carry the cross to the altar—the one standing out in the line of servers.

Because I was wearing white (among all the servers wearing black), the servers said, "So, since you're wearing white, you do the cross."

Well, okay, no problem.



Me? Pope Francis?

Now, before the actual Mass, we practiced our formation-- without carrying the cross, or the candles. We just practiced how we would enter St. Peter's Cathedral. It was meticulous. It was a Papal Mass—it had to be perfect.

So, just imagine this with me: The St. Peter's Cathedral was still closed. But in the Vatican, there were already pilgrims outside waiting for hours to see Pope Francis. Now, as we practiced, all of a sudden, the huge door of St. Peter's opened.

So, the pilgrims saw two servers in black, followed by another two in black, then another two in black. And then, at the middle of the line came out someone in white.

You know, when I stepped out, I could feel the wave of commotion among the pilgrims, among the hundreds of people there. Because for a split second, everyone thought I was the Pope!

Imagine, I was just gripped with shame. I just wanted to turn around and hide anywhere I could hide myself. Me? Pope Francis? It's like comparing chocolate to calamansi. It's so far. It was such a hilarious experience.



<https://depositphotos.com/109476804/stock-photo-pilgrims-gathered-at-saint-peters.html>



Feeling of Unworthiness

So, why am I sharing this with you, guys? There are a couple of lessons I want to pick up from my experience that I want to share with you now.

First, the feeling of unworthiness. That feeling of being so unworthy of being compared to someone holy, someone we all look up to...

Worthiness is a question addressed in our Readings today, especially on our First Reading. Because when the apostles were discussing among the elders of the early Church, their question was: "Who is going to be saved?" Who is worthy to be called Christians and will be saved?

Because at that point, everyone was sure. Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is the Way to salvation. But they were arguing: How do we get there? And the Jews were insisting that everyone who wanted to reach Jesus had to follow the traditions of Judaism -- because Jesus was a Jew. The apostles, they were all Jews. They had to fulfill these requirements. They had to be circumcised and what not, so that they would be able to say that they were truly Christians.

But St. Paul, Barnabas, and the others would say, "No, all of those things are not necessary anymore." Eventually, that's what they decided.



Reading I: Acts 15:1-2, 22-29

¹ Some who had come down from Judea were instructing the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the Mosaic practice, you cannot be saved."² Because there arose no little dissension and debate by Paul and Barnabas with them, it was decided that Paul, Barnabas, and some of the others should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders about this question...²⁴ Since we have heard that some of our number who went out without any mandate from us have upset you with their teachings and disturbed your peace of mind,²⁵ we have with one accord decided

to choose representatives and to send them to you along with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,²⁶ who have dedicated their lives to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What We Need To Be Able To Follow Jesus

What you need to be able to follow Jesus is simply the *desire to follow*-- to *want* to go to be with Jesus. And that's it. Full stop.

If we ask who is worthy to come before Jesus, Jesus says to us, "Everyone."

Our Second Reading affirms that with the vision of Heaven-- the new Heaven. And there were people from all nations there.

You don't have to be a Jew. You don't have to belong to a certain bloodline or tribe, or have a certain gene in your body. No. Everyone who wants to love Jesus, who wants to be with Jesus, is welcome here. Everyone can be saved-- regardless of your past, whatever you had done before, no matter how many faults you had committed. We are all made worthy to be servants of Jesus.

The Lord comes to us. Everyone who has come here who wants to receive Him is made worthy.



Reading II: Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23

¹⁰ The angel took me in spirit to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.

¹¹ It gleamed with the splendor of God. Its radiance was like that of a precious stone, like a jasper, clear as crystal. ¹² It had a massive, high wall, with twelve gates where twelve angels were stationed and on which names were inscribed, the names of the twelve tribes of the Israelites. ¹³ There were three gates facing east, three north, three south, and three west. ¹⁴ The wall of the city had twelve courses of stones as its foundation, on which were inscribed the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. ²² I saw no temple in the city

for its temple is the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb. ²³ The city had no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gave it light, and its lamp was the Lamb.



A New Identity

Now, the second thing that I want to pick up from my story earlier is that what made people think I was Pope Francis. It was the white cassock.

In the same way, coming to Jesus is being given a new identity.

We are made to be the temple of the Holy Spirit. We are being given new life, new identity in Christ, and that is crucial. If you look at the First Reading again, how did the apostles, how did the elders make that crucial decision for everyone? They did it with the Holy Spirit. The Church and the Holy Spirit acting in perfect

union with each other. The Body and the Spirit acting as one to determine what will happen next.

The Holy Spirit is the one that empowers us. We cannot be holy by our own power. Receiving Jesus means being given a new identity.

Our Gospel last Sunday gave us huge demands: to love as God loves, to keep the Word of Jesus. All those are call demands impossible to fulfill without the Holy Spirit. That's why God empowers us, gives us the Spirit to live inside us so we can do what is not possible by ourselves.



Prayers of the Faithful

Be gracious to us, Lord



Surrender

Especially these days, it's so hard. We are still grieving from the elections. I don't know about you guys but I'm still there.

You know what, Tuesday morning, I was doing Mass at 6:50 in the morning, I was wrecked. I didn't want to do Mass. Specially the Mass was to be live-streamed and, you know, I felt that people would be wondering what the priest would say --after everything-- and I didn't feel empowered. I didn't feel like I would be able to do it.

But the Lord told me, "Stand up, your people need you. Your flock needs you at this moment."

So, I did and I asked the Holy Spirit to just work double for me.

My dear brothers and sisters, you might be going through something that requires you to have extra faith, extra trust, extra surrender.

Think about that in this moment. What is God asking you that feels impossible? *May mga nasira ba kayong relationships? May mga na-unfriend ba kayo? May mga hindi ba kayo kinakausap? Meron ba si Lord hinihinging service that you feel you are not qualified for? – Have you broken relationships? Did somebody un-friended you? Someone doesn't want to talk to you anymore? Is the Lord asking you for a service you feel you are not qualified for?*

...Lift them all up to God and tell Him, "Lord, it's not about me. It's about You. It's about Your power. It's about my surrender to You." Amen.

Worship!

EXHORTATION



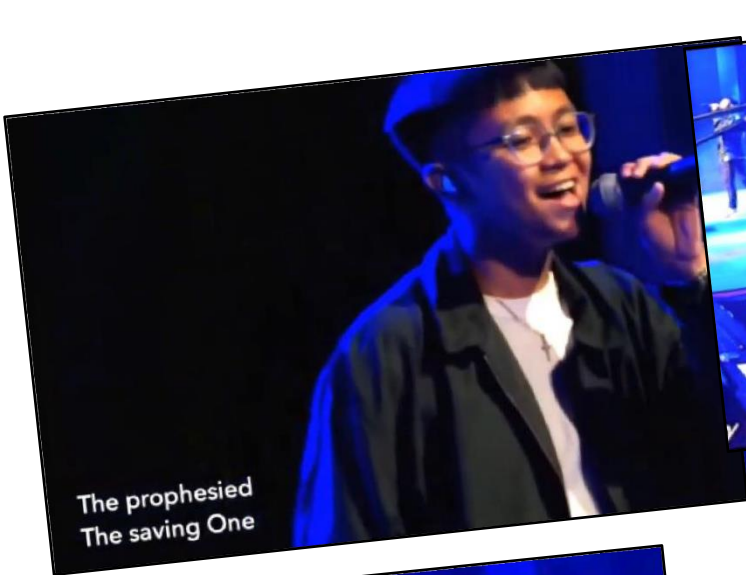
MHADZ PAMAONG: In Numbers 6:24-26, the Lord said that this is how we should bless others :
“The Lord bless you and keep you. Make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.”

Today, I encourage everyone to hold on to God’s promise as we sing this song and declare this over our life today.

These Words, these Scriptures straight from the heart of the Father and the Name that is above every other name-- the Name worthy to be praised.

The name of Jesus. Amen! In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. This is the promise of God to us, His children.

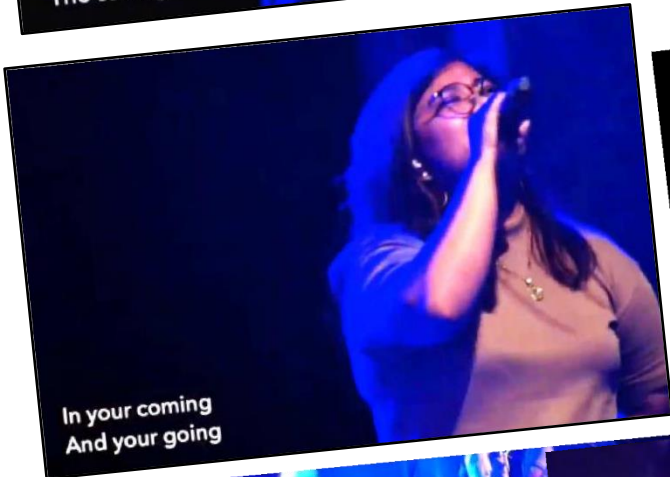




The prophesied
The saving One



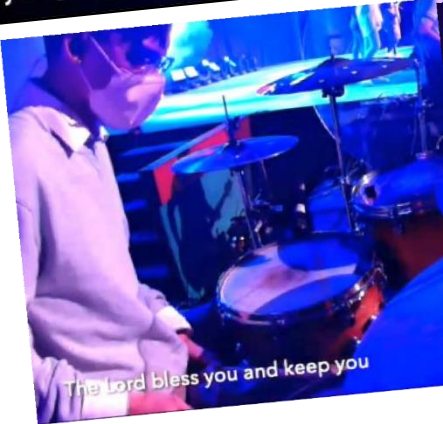
The Lord turn His face toward you



In your coming
And your going



May His favor be upon you
And a thousand generations



The Lord bless you and keep you



And give you peace
Amen

Welcome!

AUDEE VILLARAZA :

We praise the Lord because
He is worthy of our praise.
We thank Him for all
the blessings that received
this week.

How many of you are
blessed this week? In spite of all
the things that you're going
through, you feel blessed?
You feel loved? Do you feel
saved, right now? All because
of Jesus. One more time, we praise our good, good God!

First-timers, welcome home. From now on this is your spiritual home.
We have a lot of people here at the Philippine International Convention Center
(PICC) Plenary Hall. It is a blessing that we are all together today. We will give
you a special gift after our session.

You know, there are many who are not able to join us here and so, it's a
blessing that we are here. We do not take for granted for even a single minute that
we get to do what God is doing here in PICC.

Hey, for those of you also watching online, we welcome you. If you're
a first-timer, give us a visual hand up. We'd love to give you a special gift right
after this. If you can, also join us in our *Zumustahan* which follows right after
this session.



Season of Stretching

I have a very important announcement. This is a season of stretching. Can you do this very quickly with me? Just stretch your arms like this:

You feel that tension? Loosening up? I learned this long time ago when I started going to the gym, about more than a decade ago. And my trainer taught me this: One of the secrets of growing your muscles is that you learn how to stretch. Because if you just keep on pumping iron and you don't stretch, your muscles don't expand...

Stretching means that you don't break—you grow. And so, I'm believing in faith that this the season where we are in—where we are being stretched by God, not to the point of being broken, but to the point of being grown...

If you've noticed, for the past few Sundays, we haven't been able to fill up PICC. We've been praying to the Lord and we're continuing to believe that God will fill this place up. Because it's His job to bring in the people. It's our job to organize the event... So, we're going to have again two sessions in the morning—one at 8:00 a.m. and another one at 10:45.

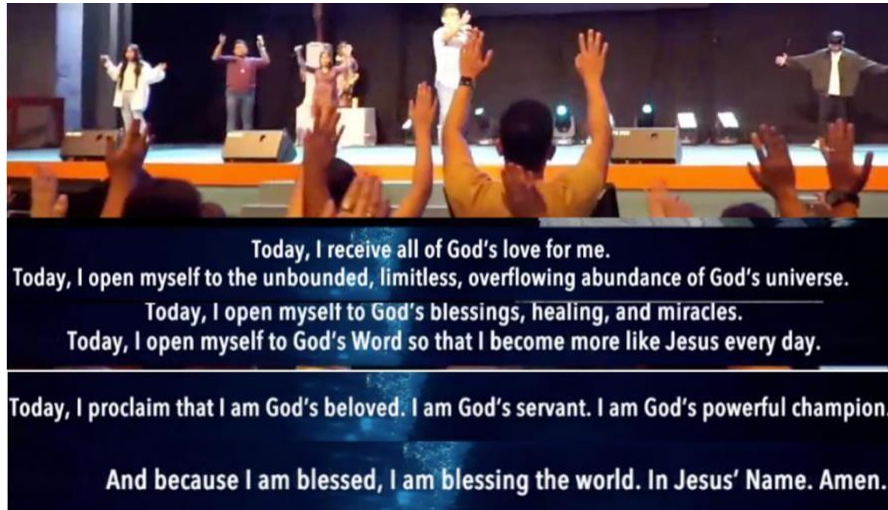
This is happening starting on June 5-- which happens to be Pentecost Sunday. It's a beautiful way to celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit.

But here's the most important news. We are going to shift-- again, our venue. And I'd like to thank you for being extra flexible with us in this season. We're still going to be here in PICC but the best part, we're going to smaller venue—now in Meeting Room No. 1. So, can you imagine the kind of stretch we still need to grow into?

I want to thank you for your support. The best part is it's a smaller group. The preachers can actually go down and then be able to greet everybody!



So, let us start by praying our favorite prayer here at The Feast:



Our Victorious Candidate

Before we sing in honor and reverence to God's Word, let me just say this: This is an echo of what Bro. Bo said last week. I want you to be encouraged by this and to remember that hey, here in The Feast, not just in PICC, but in any Feast, we recognize no political color.

We are all children of One God. We are all part of the Body of Christ. And so, the person standing beside you, that's your brother, that's your sister-- regardless the candidate they follow. We all have one candidate and His name is Jesus—and He's already won. He doesn't need an election because He's already King in our life.

And, so I want you to treat people not as a people who support that candidate or this person who supports the other candidate. I want you to see that person as a beautiful creation of the Lord because at the end of the day, that's really who they are.

God created each one of you wonderfully. God loves you. God loves the Philippines. And everybody here. We're not called to change people but we are called to love people!

So now, let's sing in honor and reverence to God's Word:

*Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet
And a light unto my path.*



Talk

Talk 4: *Reluctant Preaching vs. Repentant People*



BO SANCHEZ: Jonah 3:1 says:

JONAH 3:1-4 NLT Then the Lord spoke to Jonah a second time: ² "Get up and go to the great city of Nineveh, and deliver the message I have given you."
JONAH 3:1-4 NLT ³ This time Jonah obeyed the Lord's command and went to Nineveh, a city so large that it took three days to see it all. ⁴ On the day Jonah entered the city, he shouted to the crowds: "Forty days from now Nineveh will be destroyed!"



Put your hand over your chest.
Everybody say:
Jesus, speak to me.
Thank You for Your Word.
I will change because of Your Word.
I'm claiming it. I'm receiving it.

The Word is powerful.
Today, I want to preach the Word:

GOD CAN TURN YOUR BAD INTO GOOD

Motives

How many of you can tell me that in your life, bad things have happened?
How many of you can admit that you yourself had done some bad things
in the past?

Now, this talk may not apply to you if you're a very holy person. So, if that person beside you is very holy, just tell that person this talk may not apply to you.

I want you to know that I am a semi-old man and one of the gifts, one of the jewels of being my age is I can look back at the past and really have *perspective* – the breadth of wisdom that I have. I love looking back at the past and looking at the lessons that I learned.

Now, I want you to know that The Feast is 42 years old. Long time!

And so, just looking back, and appreciating all that had happened, I realized -- and this is confession time :



Yes, I preached, yes, I wrote lots of books, yes, I pioneered ministries...
I did lots, and lots, and lots of stuff—good stuff.
But they were not always done with pure motives. I am a person who stands before
you as a mixed bag of good and bad.

So, this talk is for me.

Fans Club

You know, when I was a young preacher, I had a growing fans club—predominantly female. Because I was single. And my wife Marowe knows this. Before she became my wife, she was my secretary. And so, she received my mails. And she would go through them. And no, we were not in any kind of relationship. No.



She was just my secretary, and she would come up to me and she would say, “Bro. Bo, maraming nagsusulat sa iyo ng mga love letters—Many are writing you love letters.”

And she could not stand it. Not that she could not stand it... But she could not understand because she was not attracted to me at all. She would put the letters in front of me-- some of them were scented, folded in heart shape... And on occasions, I would receive wedding proposals.

I remember distinctly one time, after my talk, a beauty queen —somebody who won the local beauty pageant-- came up to me.

She says, Bro. Bo, can you pray for me?”

I said, “Yes.”

She said, “ Because I had a dream and I don’t know what the dream meant. I dreamt that I was getting married. But , Bro. Bo, I’m so embarrassed to say this, but you were the groom in my dream. What do you think is God saying —to us?”

You know, those were the kinds of questions that you could ... I don’t care if you’re the most intelligent person in the world —you just don’t know what to say.

You just say, “He-he.”

She was this gorgeous woman, you know, with model anatomy... And then I, yeah, was like, “Let’s pray for that.”



Broken Guys

Anyway, I just want you to know that I began to examine myself. And there I caught myself ... During all those early years—just catching myself -- I have to say this in Tagalog: “Bakit ko ginagalingan mag-preach?—Why am I trying to give my best in preaching.”

Then, I caught myself saying, “Hmm, I preach because of the Word, because I love God, because I love people — but also because I want my fans to be happy.”

And I began to admit that to myself. And I think it worsened. This whole situation worsened because...

You know, I was molested as a kid. I was eight years old , 13 years old. I was molested as a child. And so, I hated myself.

One of the unfortunate results of being molested is that you don't like yourself—you hate yourself, you blame yourself irrationally for what happened. And because of that, I needed people to like me. I needed people to love me. And I would bend over backwards so that people would like me. So, there I was trying to gain the love of people. That's what happened.

My dear friends, what you have in front of you is a guy who's very successful in Ministry, but who was very broken.

And that's exactly the guy that we are preaching about. This prophet, named Jonah, was a very broken human being. And yet being presented in this story . Yet, I want to tell you this: Despite my brokenness, God blessed the work of my hands-- over these 42 years.



A Veeeeery Lame Five-Word Sermon

God can turn our bad into good.
And that's exactly what happened here.

So, we read this point in the story...Remember, Jonah runs away from God when God told him to go to Nineveh. Then he gets thrown out from the boat. Then a sea monster swallows him up. He prays-- nice prayer, from the book of *Psalms*, every line from different psalms—but no repentance. Then he gets spat out on the beach. And God gives him a second chance...

And so, this is where our story picks up:

Then the Lord spoke to Jonah a second time: ² “Get up and go to the great city of Nineveh, and deliver the message I have given you.” ³ This time Jonah obeyed the Lord’s command, sort of. -- Sort of – I’ll tell you why....

And he went to Nineveh, a city so large that it took three days for him to see it all.

Meaning to say, the city was so large that you have to walk for three days to reach from one end to the other... And then, it says here:

⁴ On the day Jonah entered the city, he shouted to the crowds...

It's not very clear in this version, but in other versions, if you look at the original Hebrew, they show that Jonah preached only for one day. Now, how big was the city? How many days you have to walk into city to go from one end to the other? Three days. But Jonah preached only for one day.

In Tagalog, ang tipid naman.—How stingy.



Passive-Aggressive Obedience

This is what Jonah preached—he shouted:

“Forty days from now Nineveh will be destroyed!” (Jonah 3:1-4 NLT)

A total 8 words in English. But in the original Hebrew, only 5 words. It was a five-word sermon.

Again, I have to ask in Tagalog: Bakit ang tipid?—Why so stingy?

Because Jonah did not want to be there. He did not want to obey God.

Jonah was secretly hoping his preaching won't work.



The author, the brilliant author of this book, was trying to tell you: This guy, he was obeying *sort of*. And if a psychologist today will look at the story, he would point out this was *passive-aggressive behavior*—an indirect way to show your reluctance through procrastination, or through being sullen, or through being stubborn.

And when I read that, it reminded me of my nine-year-old self—really.

When I was nine years old, my definition of happiness was sitting in front of the television, watching cartoons, eating cheese curls, and beside me, a tall glass of iced Coke-- you know, Coke with lots and lots of ice cubes.

That, for me, was happiness. It rarely happened, by the way, because my allowance was very small, could not afford those things.

‘Paradise’

There was this one day when the stars aligned, and I was able to save up for my cheeze curls. So, from school, I went home with cheeze curls.

Then, low and behold, the impossible happened. My sister, one of them, had leftover Coke in the fridge. Very little. I poured it into a glass—filled just almost half of the glass. No problem. Five ice cubes. Ahhh...

I walked in front of the TV, propped up my feet on the little couch, put the glass and the cheeze curls (on a side table), and then, I turned on the television .

Voltes V! Tatoe arashi ga hukou tomo, Tatoe oonami areru tomo...

Wow! I was in paradise.



During recent birthday of Bro. Bo, Feasters dress up as characters in *Voltes V*, Bro. Bo’s all-time favorite.

The ‘Worst’

Then, the worst happened. The worst ever.

My mom, from the kitchen: “Bo, quick, buy baking soda.”

“Moom, I’m having my moment here.”

You know what, today, no problem. Why? You can pause Netflix. But 46 years ago, no such thing.

So, here was my plan: 2 minutes: Run to Aling Puring’s sari-sari;

1 minute: Get and pay for baking soda; 2 minutes: Run back.

Total: 5 minutes. That’s one commercial break. *Kaya ko ito.* — I can do this.

So, I ran to the store like the *Flash!* But midway, I realized I forgot to bring the money. I ran back for it, got the cash, ran back to the store.

And Aling Puring tells me, “Walang baking soda, iho.”

You know, when she said *none*, honestly, in my heart, I was happy.

Because I really didn’t want to give her that baking soda. How dare she disturb my moment of ecstasy.

I mean, hello, in my mind, I said, “Buti nga—Serves her right!”

So, I ran back to Mom and told her, with a smile—that’s what you call passive-aggressive behavior: Outwardly, “Mom, they don’t have baking soda. Sorry.” You know, but inside, “Buti nga.”

Then, as I was about to watch my *Voltes V*, you know what my Mom said?

She asked, “What store did you go to?”

“Aling Puring’s store,” I said.

Then she asked, “You didn’t go to Aling Tekla? The store is just a few more minutes from Aling Puring...”

It didn’t cross my mind. Why? I didn’t want to obey. Oh, my gush!

And so, I ran to Aling Tekla. And there, Aling Tekla had baking soda.

So. I went back home, gave the baking soda to my Mom, and then I went back to the TV...

Tatoe arashi ga hukou tomo, Tatoe oonami areru tomo...

Closing credits!





May I say this to you? That's exactly who we are sometimes to God. That God tells us to do something and we don't want to do it for **different reasons**—we'll tell you more next week about why Jonah didn't want to obey—but that's what we are.

And guess what: God still works. Because even if Jonah preached only a five-word sermon, and even if he talked for only for one day, instead of three days, it worked. Nineveh repented.

God can turn our bad into good.

God Is Still In Charge

DIDOY LUBATON:

God is still in charge. I am thankful that God is still in charge. Oh, yes, He is still in charge. Even when we're not. Even if we do not agree with what's happening. Even if many persons are still hurting.

Welcome to the Family,
my dear friends.

Let's continue with our study of the book of *Jonah*. Let's read from Jonah 3:5-9:



JONAH	3:5-6	NLT	The people of Nineveh believed God's message, and from the greatest to the least, they declared a fast and put on burlap to show their sorrow.
JONAH	3:5-6	NLT	⁶ When the king of Nineveh heard what Jonah was saying, he stepped down from his throne and took off his royal robes. He dressed himself in burlap and sat on a heap of ashes.
JONAH	3:7-9	NLT	⁷ Then the king and his nobles sent this decree throughout the city: "No one, not even the animals from your herds and flocks, may eat or drink anything at all.
JONAH	3:7-9	NLT	⁸ People and animals alike must wear garments of mourning, and everyone must pray earnestly to God. They must turn from their evil ways and stop all their violence. ⁹ Who can tell? Perhaps even yet God will change his mind and hold back his fierce anger from destroying us."

Who can tell? In other versions of the Bible, they say, *Who knows?* That's very cool line... *Who knows? Who can tell?* A very reluctant prophet. He was in a different intention. He prayed or, I think, in the passive-aggressive tone, he wished that his preaching would not work. He did not go around Nineveh for three days-- he just went around for one day and just preached a very short sermon. And yet, the Ninevites repented.



Nineveh, you can compare it to Sodom and Gomorrah-- in *Genesis*. Very cruel nation, very sinful, very far away from God. They would have been very evil people. And yet, again, they listened. The king put out a decree, the people repented. The king said not just the people, but also the animals. Imagine, the animals who knew nothing, also had to fast. For 40 days. I don't know how they did it.

But remember, this is not a historical book—it's a satire. What are we learning here? The sovereignty of God – He is still in control.

Jonah wanted to sabotage God's plan. And yet God was still in control. God worked miracles through Jonah's partial obedience.

Have you ever had a time when you did not want to, but yet you obeyed? And God showed beauty, great things out of your partial obedience? Maybe today you woke up, you didn't want to go to church. And yet, you got up, you dressed up, broke through the traffic, the parking—and yet, you're still here. Kasi pinilit ako ng asawa ko—My spouse forced me.

God can turn our bad into good.

His Very Imperfect Act of Obedience Fed the Multitudes

Jonah's intention was malicious—so that God's Will cannot save. Jonah was hoping that Nineveh would eventually be destroyed. But why not? Because it's so evil. But Jonah didn't want God to show mercy to the Ninevites.

But God is different. God is so good. God can take what was meant to be evil and turn it into good. Just like what happened in Joseph the Dreamer's story. It was so beautiful.

The Bible is a collection of books. It's not just one book. It's a collection of different books and I'm happy to see that it's all interconnected. There are hyperlinks from one over the other.

In Genesis 50:20, we read that what was meant for evil God can turn it into good.

Many centuries later, St. Paul said that also in Romans 8:28:

All things will work for good to those who love God.

So, again, God can turn our bad into good.

But how does God do it? Does He force us? He just allowed Jonah to go ahead—be passive-aggressive. But still, there was enough obedience in the mix.

Guys, is God calling you to obey His Will? Even just little, even if nagrereklamo ka—you are complaining. Sige lang—it's okay, go ahead and obey—no matter how small the obedience.

Just like in the story of the five loaves and two fishes—they fed multitudes.

Jonah's imperfect act of obedience fed the multitudes. It saved the city of Nineveh from destruction.

Want to save a country? Obey the Lord. You want to save your organization? Your family? Even if sometimes it hurts you, or you are not so into it, obey God.



Can God Really Change His Mind?

God can do great things—even out of the little we offer Him, even out of our little obedience. We like searching for the bad in the good. We, imperfect people, we like searching for the bad things. But God is showing us in this story that God is different. He always looks for good—even in the bad.

How many here are in a bad situation? God will turn it into good. Believe in Him. Believe in the Lord.

So, let's go to the ending of this Chapter. Can God really change His mind?

Let's read the Verse:



JONAH 3:10 NLT

When God saw what they had done and how they had put a stop to their evil ways, he changed his mind and did not carry out the destruction he had threatened.

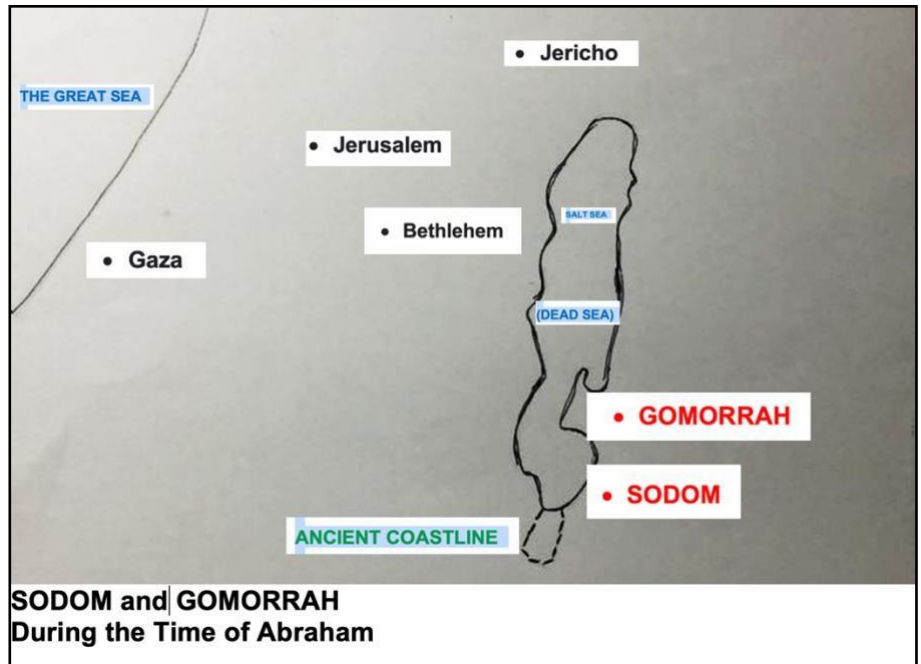
So, did God really change His mind? It's a crazy thing to imagine. God, who knows everything, who knows the depths of our heart, who knows our sins, who knows the passive-aggressive tone of Jonah...

Does God change His mind?

Well, this actually gives us an idea about our intercessory prayers: Pray for someone. Pray for something. Yes, continue to pray.

In the other Bible stories—again, hyperlinks from one book of the Bible to another—the other Bible stories hinted about this...

For example, the story of Abraham, when he kind of negotiated with God the number of good people needed for God to show mercy to Sodom and Gomorrah. He said, how about 50 good, righteous persons, will You not destroy it?



And God said, sure.

How about 45—will You not destroy it? Sure.

And it goes to 40. Sure. How about 30? Sure. 20?

Eventually it went into 10.

And God did not change His tone. God did not change His plan.

He said, “Sure—if you can find 10 persons, it will not be destroyed.”

But if you go and look through it, Abraham stopped at 10.

What if Abraham asked, “What if there’s only 1?”

Would God had said Yes? Would He allow it?

Maybe. We wouldn’t know.

One more example of God’s mercy was when Moses interceded that God have mercy for the people of Israel — after they worshipped the Golden Calf.

Many stories of intercession, many stories of God seemed to be changing His mind. And these stories, plus the story of Jonah, maybe they say about convincing God to be consistent. With what? With His character of mercy.



I think it's not so much about God changing His mind – but it is, in a very mysterious way, *God inviting us to be part of the journey, to be part of His decision-making.* That by praying, we realize the depths of His love, the depths of His mercy. We begin to see who God really is, how merciful He is, how loving He is. And it is learning, seeing, experiencing His mercy.

Do you remember Jonah's five-word sermon? He said:

“Forty days from now Nineveh will be destroyed!”

In the original Hebrew version, the word translated to *destroy* is *habak*. But that word is more accurately translated as *overturn*.

I want you to see the miracle here: Instead of God overturning Nineveh into rubble, to be destroyed, God decided to overturn the hearts of people towards Him. He did not overturn the stones of the city into rubble, He overturned the hearts of stone to come to Him.-- to see His mercy.

Do you feel sinful? Do you feel so depressed? Do you feel so down? Come and see Jesus...

My friend, my question: What kind of overturning do you want God to do today? Because as we are learning, God *will* – God will do so. God's mercy is available. He asks us today: Do you want it or not? He will not force His Will to you-- because He gave us free will.

Today, we can decide that even with a little obedience, God can turn bad to good today.



Reluctant Preacher

I'd like to end today by saying I'm a reluctant preacher today.

You know, I got to know the Lord when I was 13 years old. Personally.

My dad and mom brought us siblings to a faith community, a youth community (different from the Light of Jesus) way, way before when we were young. Like 7 -8 years old. And yeah, we loved it.

But at 13, years old, I made a personal relationship with the Lord—through that youth community.

And 23 years later, I'm still here. You do the math.

At 13 years old-- I need to confess to you-- what made me stay in the faith community was not actually the Lord. It was food, yeah. And there were girls. You know, we live in a very small place in Las Piñas. And in community there were girls -- from Quezon City, Makati, Manila.

But I started serving, I kept on showing up—week, after week, after week. One tear over the other every Worship song. And I did not stop.

And I was called-- by the Lord-- to serve anywhere that I was asked to serve. I started as part of the Registration team, eventually becoming part of the Music team, eventually becoming a Worship leader. And then, you know, my mentor was Bro. George Gabriel (Feast builder and preacher). And I'm thanking the Lord for him.

Bro. George invited me, "Want to serve in The Feast? You will get to meet Bo Sanchez.

Sure, of course. Many, many people there. Yes, of course

So, I, of course, am human. May I be personal to you today?

Yes, sometimes, we don't feel like preaching. Sometimes, we also have our reluctance. Sometimes, we also have those, you now, impure intentions.

Overturn

When Bro. Audee said to me, “Didoy, we’re going to call you more and more every single Sunday...”

I was like, “Oh, I’m okay serving at the background.”

And he said, “No, no. We trust you and we believe in you.”

I said--well, impure thoughts— “Who doesn’t want to be with Bro. Bo onstage, right?”

But I also had that feeling of unworthiness and I really felt I could not preach like Bo. And I am not as pogi, handsome, and mas maporma like Bro. Audee.

But I still said, “Yes”.

What kind of overturning do I want? If God trusts me through my leaders -- called me to do one thing -- even if I am reluctant -- I don’t feel like it, I don’t feel worthy, I don’t feel I can do a good job-- I’ll take it from the story of Jonah.

God can turn my bad preaching into good.

And I look at Abraham: Lord , if at least 50 persons would be blessed through my preaching in The Feast today, I’ll be happy. Can it be just 45? Even just 40. Even if just 10. Even if just 1 person who will get to know You more, get to see Your mercy, get to love You more today, I will continue to say Yes, and Yes, wherever you call me to.

How many here are ready for God’s mercy today? We all need His mercy. My friend, sometimes we feel like we’re Jonah. A mix of good and bad.

And I also see people, a lot of people who do not like themselves -- who feel that their weakness, their sins, make them so far away from God and make them afraid that God will not show them mercy ...



The Good News

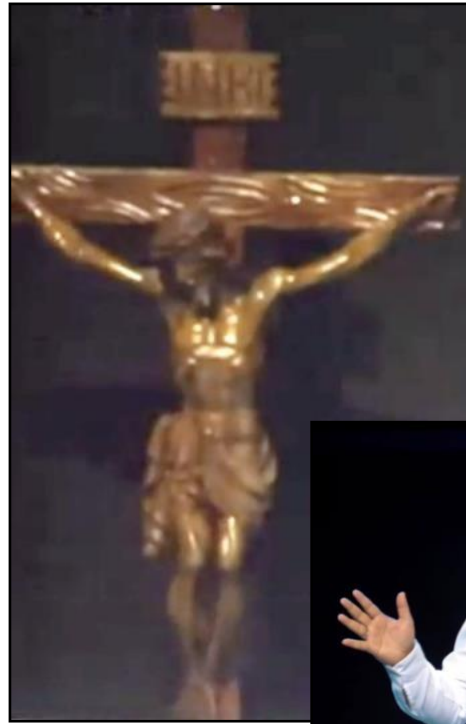
I've got good news for you. I'm thankful that we do not have Jonah as our intercessor, as our prophet -- he was reluctant

Who do we have?

We have Jesus. And I'm very grateful that the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the One Savior, the One Who went through suffering, and resurrection is the one praying for us.

Remember, when he was on the Cross, He said to God:

*Father, forgive them
for they don't know what they do.*



And what a comforting thought, my dear friends-- that through His death and resurrection, God can bring us from death to life, from death to abundance, from hurting to healing, from blindness to our seeing today.

Come into worship to God and just experience His mercy. He's just waiting for you. He wants you. He intended for you to listen to this message. He intended to save you today. Welcome you back home. He intended to heal you today. Even partially, will you listen to Him? Even partially, will you obey His call to you?

Come. Now dear friends, dear Feast family, even those who are watching online... I want you to pray this prayer with me:

Dear Lord. I am like Jonah. A mix of good and bad. Thank You for showing Your mercy to me. I receive it today. Dear Jesus, thank You because by Your death and resurrection, You are bringing me from death to life. I receive Your mercy. I receive your grace. And wherever you call me to, I trust You. I trust in You. I trust in You. In Your Name. Amen.



Mercy Ministries

*God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved:
God shall help her, and that right early. —Psalm 46:5*

GRACE TO BE BORN PART 3

Jewels as Disciples



ON July 2, 2022, our Light of Jesus Family is mounting the Jewels Conference, an inspirational learning event focusing on yes, women as gems shining with their valuable role, in the spiritual awakening and renewal, especially of women in need, and deepening their faith, empowering them as disciples of our Lord Jesus.

Aptly, the beneficiary of the Jewels Conference is our Grace To Be Born Ministry for unwed pregnant women in crisis.

Milestones for Women

Grace To Be Born provides a home for these women-- usually still in their teens, some abused, rejected, unwanted by their family, usually ostracized by society.

Grace maintains a nursery for the babies. On the wall of the nursery is this inspiring Biblical verse: *¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.*

--Psalm 139:14



Here, the psalmist expresses his appreciation of God's omnipresence, especially His Presence everywhere for everyone. Psalm 139:14 thus reminds our young mothers that they are not alone in their crisis—for God is ever present for them.

Jewels Conference 2022 aptly centers on the theme *Rise*-- indeed, to uplift women as our Lord Jesus well demonstrated during His time.

Jewish culture during the time of Jesus was dominantly patriarchal—the men placed above women on the social ladder.

For example, women may not enter the courts in the temple which was not just a place of Worship, but also of social gathering.

So, the women hardly had access to teaching, the way women today enjoy.

Things changed when Jesus came. He respected women, and even encouraged them to speak up about their concerns.

In the Bible, we read that milestones in Jesus' Ministry involved women: Jesus' first miracle -- John 2:1-11; the first news of incarnation -- Luke 1: 35; the first Samaritan convert -- John 4:39-42; the first person to whom Jesus told that He is the Messiah -- John 4:26.

Empowering Event



Yes, Jesus demonstrated He well valued women. And He taught us just the same.

Thus, we have the Jewels Conference, an annual inspirational learning event for women.

Images of Jewels Conference 2021, *from left:* Bro. Bo Sanchez and his wife Sis. Marowe inviting participants to the Conference; Sis. Rissa Singson - Kawpeng leading forum; and during fervent Worship .



Jewels Conference 2022 is packed with empowering learning opportunities: three Plenary Sessions; 15 Master Classes on practical applications of our Christian teachings; Reflection Rooms; Girl Talks; Afternoon Socials; and Worship. Plus, a Special Message by Bro. Bo Sanchez.

There are two options to join— on-site and online. We can buy tickets online

at <https://jewelsconference.com/#tickets> .

Proceeds of the ticket sales will be shared to Grace To Be Born to sustain our home for women in need and the nursery for the babies.

Yes, ladies, sisters in Christ, check out the Jewels Conference, and help give babies the grace to be born.



Blessings

Joyfully Learning



I HAVE a somehow normal, maybe a bit pampered life. I am the eldest among three children. My father is a seafarer while my mother is a hands-on housewife. Our parents have worked hard to support the family and give us a comfortable life.

I first took up Nursing, earning the degree as Bachelor of Science in Nursing at Manila Doctors College.

But I was not sure that was really the career for me. So, I decided to take up another course-- Social Work at the Philippine Christian University (PCU) where I found a sense of belonging.

By MERRY JOY REYES

Not long after graduation from PCU, I got into Grace To Be Born.

One of my high school friends informed me that Grace was looking for a social worker. So, I took the chance to apply and I was accepted. I joined Grace on July 2014.

I am still doing what I can to be of help to Grace. I find that there is still a lot to learn-- about myself and others, and the various aspects of our mission.

I am struggling with time management. There's so much to do and so little time and I am still trying to cope with these challenges.



Grace at The Feast

My friend who introduced Grace To Be Born to me attends The Feast. So, by God's grace, I've been attending The Feast too.

Before the Coronavirus Pandemic, I was attending Feast Southwoods being held at Southwoods Mall in Biñan, Laguna.



Then just recently, I also attended Feast Alabang being held at Bellevue Hotel in Alabang, Muntinlupa, Rizal.

Yes, there's so much to do. There are times that I feel anxious over those that are beyond my control.

My name is Joy, so, yes, I am joyfully learning about living for and serving God. A Biblical verse I have learned at The Feast helps me focus on my everyday work and reminds me to find joy in each moment. It's now my favorite verse from Matthew 6:34:

“Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

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8:00am - Holy Mass | 9:00am - Feast Session 1
10:40am - Feast Session 2 | 12:00pm - Holy Mass

Afternoon Session:
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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.

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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.

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