



NEWSLETTER
July 24, 2022

You Never Graduate from Trusting God

WHEN it comes to trusting God, there is no future point in your life when you can say, “Been there, done that. Trusting God is kindergarten. *Expert na ako dyan.* I’m now learning advanced lessons in my spiritual life. Today, I’m learning contemplation with levitation and bilocation.”

There’s no such thing. I don’t care if you’ve been following God for the past 300 years. Or you have four doctorate degrees in Theology from Rome. *You’ll never graduate from learning how to trust God more.*

Why is trust so important? Because our obedience depends on it. I keep saying this: *We don’t obey God because we don’t trust Him.*

An obedience problem is a trust problem.

May you have a heart-changing Feast today!



May your dreams come true,

Bo Sanchez



LETTERS

Pandemic! Pandemic!



NO, not the Coronavirus Disease Pandemic.

In his homily at last Sunday's Mass at The Feast, Fr. Martin Galea focused on the Pandemic of Anxiety—which keeps raging for many years, *page 3*.

And the root of anxiety? Simple: lack of trust in God. And sorry, you never graduate from it—topic of today's Feast. Intro of our founder, Bro. Bo Sanchez, on *page 1*.

Bro. Bo and Feast Builder and Preacher Bro. Audee Villaraza said that was the problem of the people of Babel. And they attempted to solve it by building *that* tower. Problem solved?

Check out *Flashback* on last Sunday's Feast talk, *pages 10-30*.



So, if there's no graduation, how do you cope? Well, we've been telling you all about it in our *Mercy Ministries* series on the Light of Jesus Pastoral Care. Part 4 starts on *page 31*.



Glory,

Randy Borromeo
Media Ministry
Executive Director

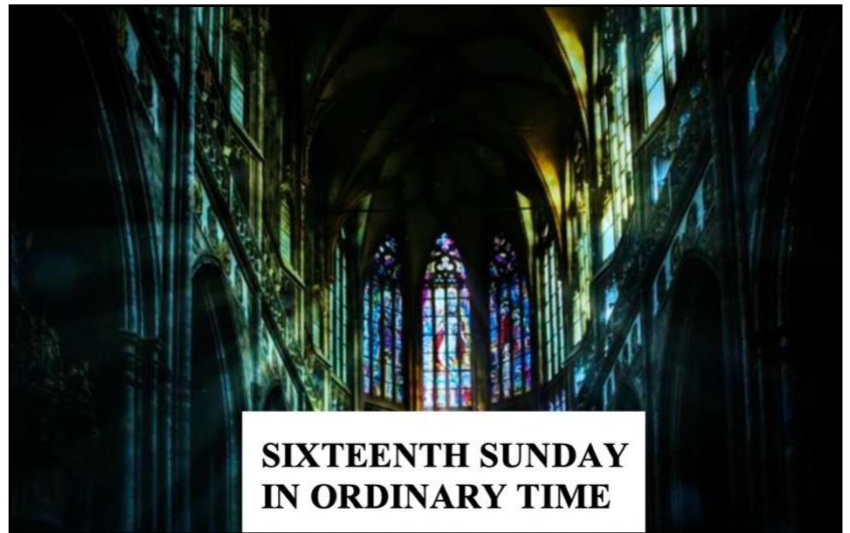




FLASHBACK!

JULY 17, 2022

Holy Mass



FR. MARTIN GALEA

on the Gospel: Luke 10:38-42 *At the Home of Martha and Mary*

Excerpts...

WE thank the Lord today for this particular Gospel because I think it is very needed. I hope we have been overcoming now the Coronavirus Disease (COVID) Pandemic...

I think one of the pandemics that keeps raging for many years is the Pandemic of Anxiety. We are an anxious generation.

It seems that the more that we have facilities, the more that we have technologies, the more that we have opportunities, the more anxious we become.

I don't know if you agree with me but sometimes, I myself struggle with an anxious life. That's why the words of Jesus hit me and are supposed to hit you.

We could replace the name of Martha, like: "Martin, Martin, you are anxious and worried about many things. But there is only one thing that's needed."

What's this *one* thing that really can help us live a much calmer, peaceful life? That *one* thing is very simple: To want what God wants. To listen to what He's saying-- and follow it.

All He Wants Is Listen to Him

Let me give a practical exam to know how this would work out...

Let's say I'm coming here to celebrate this Mass and I left home quite early and I get caught in traffic.

Time passes by and I start getting anxious: "I won't make it on time. What will happen if I didn't make it?"

What if I say this instead: "Look, if the Lord wants me to be on time, He will make me come on time. If He doesn't, I won't be on time-- and so what?"

What will happen? Yes, people might judge me that I'm late...

The problem is that we are anxious over how we're going to be judged, over what's our image, what will people say about us, what will be the consequences...

If we just truly trust that the Lord is the Lord of history, of what happens-- and if we just listen to what He's telling us through circumstances—He speaks with circumstances—and we enter into His will-- then we will find our calmness if we really want one thing.

The problem is that we are torn among lots of expectations-- of each one of us.

We absorb them: "I should be like this. I should be like that. This is what should happen. This is how I should behave..."

We absorb all these: how we should appear, how we should be a friend, the things that we should own. These expectations coming in.



Reading I: Genesis 18:1-10A

¹ The LORD appeared to Abraham by the terebinth of Mamre, as he sat in the entrance of his tent, while the day was growing hot.² ⁶ Abraham hastened into the tent and told Sarah, "Quick, three measures of fine flour! Knead it and make rolls."⁷ He ran to the herd, picked out a tender, choice steer, and gave it to a servant, who quickly prepared it...⁹ They asked Abraham, "Where is your wife Sarah?" He replied, "There in the tent. ^{10A} One of them said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah will then have a son."



The Source of Anxiety

(We must) allow that *one* thing to be the center of our life-- and that means, “Listening to what the Lord is telling me in these circumstances...”

Our source of anxiety is fragmentation. We are not centered around something. We are torn apart by so many things. That’s why the invitation today really is to sit at the feet of Jesus and be guided by what He is showing us.

It was said in the beginning: When we welcome strangers, they don’t need to be fed only. One of the greatest things that they need is to be listened to.

And this applies even more so to Jesus. When we welcome Him in our life, He doesn’t want us to do many things for Him and in His Name.

But primarily, He wants us to listen to Him. And He speaks to us in many ways.

I believe you are here this morning because you have the thirst to listen to His voice, to become more open for Him. And that is a very good thing. And we thank God for that because He has put this thirst in you.

Basically, I come here to listen to God’s voice so that I listen to His voice in my life—in the circumstances that I’ve gone through. This attitude of listening that we have in this Gospel must continue...



Reading II: Colossians 1:24-28

Brothers and sisters:

²⁴ Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the church,

²⁵ of which I am a minister in accordance with God’s stewardship given to me to bring to completion for you the word of God,²⁶ the mystery hidden from ages and from generations past. But now it has been manifested to his holy ones,²⁷ to whom God chose to make known the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; it is Christ in you, the hope for glory.²⁸ It is he whom we proclaim, admonishing everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.





Blessings of Hospitality

Yes, I come here, I sit at Jesus' feet, I sit into His Eucharist, in His Word—but then I do my best to remain at His feet throughout the rest of the week. What a great way to be!

For example, on a particular day, giving our time to the Lord and the way He's going to meet us-- through circumstances, through the people that we meet... Like Martha welcomes Him whenever He comes. We could recognize Him as a distinguished visitor. We could allow Him into our life... We could participate more in the lives of a small community...

Here, today, the readings speak of hospitality. The Gospel particularly speaks of the blessings that come in hospitality...

Gospel: Luke 10:38-42³⁸ *Jesus entered a village where a woman whose name was Martha welcomed him.*³⁹ *She had a sister named Mary who sat beside the Lord at his feet listening to him speak.*⁴⁰ *Martha, burdened with much serving, came to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving? Tell her to help me."*⁴¹ *The Lord said to her in reply, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things.*⁴² *There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her."*

It is the value of the Jewish people to really welcome someone-- because God can be hidden in that someone. And this is also what I've observed about the Filipino culture—how people welcome you.

But I want to invite you to a much deeper kind of hospitality: "To let people enter not only into my house but also into my heart—that I allow people to know me from the inside."

Of course, there's a fear there that if I allow people to know me, to let them in my sacred spaces, they might judge me, they might refuse me, they might try to change their impression of me. But there's no other way for us to grow in our faith.

Let's Center Our Eyes On the Lord

...Allow our environment to remove those covers—"Those images that protect me—and allow people to see me in my own vulnerability. That's the only way I can grow..."

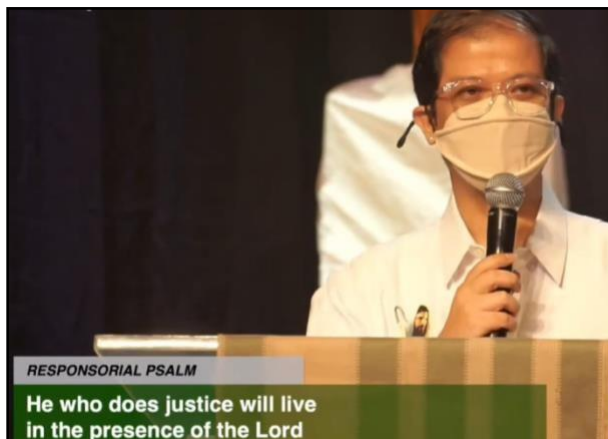
We can only do it here, in small groups--
"In small places where I can feel safe, I can feel loved, where I can overcome the fear of being judged."

Ask the Lord, "Lord, help me find that place where I can truly be myself and allow others to see me as I am and through them, I could allow the blessings that You want to give me."

Like Abraham. God promised him a child after so many years that he didn't have one. And finally, it came true...

So, let's continue to ask the Lord how to do it: What are the steps to take--so the blessings would continue to flow...

Let's overcome our fears and center our eyes on Him as the Lord of our life.



Worship!

EXHORTATION

MHADZ PAMAONG: Let's give praises to the King! He deserves it! Come on! Hallelujah! I know that those hallelujahs that we just sang earlier came from different situations, different heart postures, different seasons. And sometimes, those situations can make us even think that we are alone.

That's why I encourage you today with a Scripture in Deuteronomy 1:8: *"The Lord himself will go before you, he will be with you, he will not leave you nor abandon you."*

You may not feel like it and sometimes we can easily dismiss that simple-sounding truth--but there's nothing more powerful than declaring right now who He says He is and that He can do all things that He says He can do!

So, as we sing today, Brothers and Sisters, know that to rejoice is a choice...

In the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit...

Jesus, thank You for reminding us that we are not alone and that we can do anything-- in Your Name..."





Hallelujah



Your mighty name Jesus
Your name is salvation



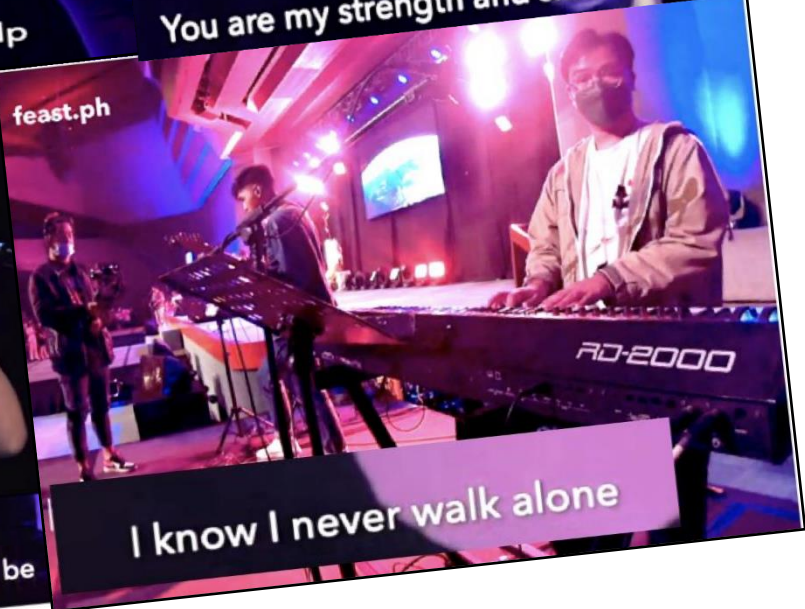
In You I find help



You are my strength and shield



You are faithful
and You always will be



I know I never walk alone

Talk



Talk 4: *Blessed To Be a Blessing*



BO SANCHEZ: Everybody say, “I’m blessed to be a blessing.”

Just in case there are some here-- and I know that there are -- who do not know my backstory, here’s a summary:

I’ve been a missionary for 43 years. I’m ancient. But within those 43 years, the first 18 years were the years when I had a distorted theology of money. I did not like money during that era of my life. I was allergic to it. In my mind, I saw money as evil. Business was bad and I remember one day, during that time, there was this one person who came up to me, handed me a thick envelope. I opened it— P50,000. This was during a time when P50,000 was P50,000.

And I remember he told me, “Bro. Bo, this is not for Ministry. I want to give this to you. I felt God wanted me to give this to you for your needs.”

I said, “Thank you very much.”

Two hours later, I was giving that envelope to a friend that I knew had a desperate need. Two hours after. I did not want money to be in my hands longer than two hours. It’s like, I didn’t like it. But during those 18 years, I remember, my heart was torn almost every day because I would see people with financial needs.

Grinding Pain

Some of those who were in a dire situation were my fellow missionaries.

They would tell me, “You know, Bro. Bo. Wala kaming pang-tuition para sa aming mga anak. – We have no money for tuition fee of our children.”

You know, they were married, they have kids.

One of them told me, “Yung Nanay ko nasa ospital. – My mother is in a hospital. We have no money to bring her out.”

You know, again and again, these were what people would tell me... And you know what... Ah, how I would compare it? Like my heart was going through a blender, a grinder. Every single day, I would feel their pain.

And you know, when you feel pain-- *this* massive-- you would think crazy thoughts. And I started entertaining “heretical” thoughts—at least during that time: What if I earned as much as I can so that I could give as much as I can.

Those were days when I started thinking: What if the ultimate purpose of money was to love people?

You know, today, people who have been attending The Feast, you’ve heard me say that again and again.

But during that time, whoa, they were like, “Gosh, is this coming from the Lord?”

I had so many doubts. But then as the years went by, I began to change my beliefs. When you change your beliefs, you know what happens? Usually, your behavior changes. When your beliefs change, your behavior changes.

And then my life began to change. And my finances began to change, and I began to grow in financial abundance. And so, I started the Truly Rich Club. And for the past 16 years, we’ve been helping thousands upon thousands of people grow in their finances.





I just want to share this with you. I want to make this very clear: I believe money is a blessing But *blessing* is so much bigger than money. And I believe that our biggest blessing is life with a blesser. That you have a life and a relationship with the One who is the source of every blessing-- life, joy, peace, and love.

When I say that, what do I mean? I have met people who have a lot of money but they're very poor. Have you met people like that? These are people who one day woke up to realize that all their wealth stole from them their joy, their peace, their marriage, their family, their kids, their health.

That's what happens. When money becomes their only blessing.

No. Money is a blessing. But the blessing that God wants to give you is so much bigger. Blessing means a life with Him. Do you want that? When you look at blessing, at its very core, and you study it-- you analyze, you look at its DNA-- what you realize is that God designed a blessing to be scattered.

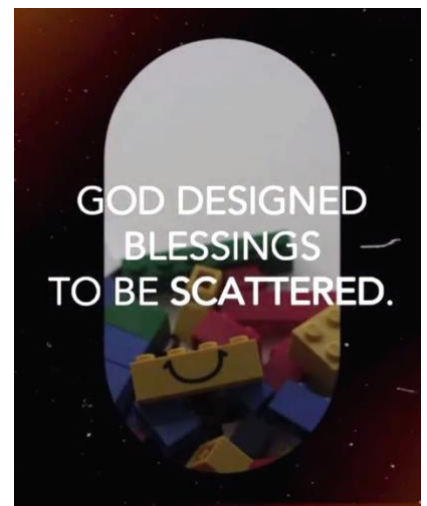
Here's an analogy...:

In August 2020, there was this massive explosion in Lebanon. It was so massive, it was like— hundreds of people died, thousands of people were injured. What kind of bomb did they use? People were thinking, you know, nuclear bomb? But there was no bomb. They found out that there was this warehouse in the port and it was filled with chemicals used in fertilizers. It's been there for six years—sitting in a warehouse-- and then finally, Boom!—exploded.

Friends, think about it: Fertilizer. Fertilizer, you spread it and scatter it on a field, it will create a wonderful harvest. But you store it, and you keep it... Guess what: it becomes dangerous and it destroys.

That's what happens to a blessing. A blessing is designed to be scattered. But if you keep it and make it a selfish project, what happens is it becomes dangerous to you and to the people around you.

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Put your hand on your chest and say, “I’m blessed to be a blessing.”

Why am I sharing the Lebanon story with you? Because today we continue our *Genesis* series, and we are in Talk 4.

Let’s backtrack a bit... For the past three talks, we were talking about how God wanted to partner with humans. But humans said, “No.”

God was giving them the tree of blessing, and what they did was instead of partnering with God, they began to partner with this deceptive creature that was giving them another tree – the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which was a symbol of taking the blessing on their terms, for themselves, apart from God.

God was giving the blessing but they said, “No, we’re going to take the blessing on our terms, for ourselves, apart from God.

TREE OF KNOWING GOOD AND BAD	=	GRABBING BLESSINGS ON OUR TERMS, APART FROM GOD.
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So, this is what’s God’s plan. God’s plan was: humans multiply and fill the Earth with abundance.

And the man said, “I’m going to multiply and I’m going to do it without You.”

So, what happens is they fill the Earth with violence.

That was the world of the Tower of Babel.

I want you to be honest with me. Do you have even a slight recall of this story called the Tower of Babel? Like, “Yeah, kind of like heard about that in school.”

Okay, let's read:

Genesis 11:1-4 NLT

At one time all the people of the world spoke the same language and used the same words.
² As the people migrated to the east, they found a plain in the land of Babylonia and settled there. ³ They began saying to each other, "Let's make bricks and harden them with fire." (In this region bricks were used instead of stone, and tar was used for mortar.) ⁴ Then they said, "Come, let's build a great city for ourselves with a tower that reaches into the sky. This will make us famous and keep us from being scattered all over the world."



Genesis 11:5-9 NLT

⁵ But the LORD came down to look at the city and the tower they were building. ⁶ "Look!" he said. "The people are united, and they all speak the same language. After this, nothing they set out to do will be impossible for them! ⁷ Come, let's go down and confuse the people with different languages. Then they won't be able to understand each other." ⁸ In that way, the LORD scattered them all over the world, and they stopped building the city. ⁹ That is why the city was called Babel, because that is where the LORD confused the people with different languages. In this way he scattered them all over the world.



Why Babel?

Just to give you a little background: Why Babel? Where does it come from? Here it is: Babel is Babylon.

If you've been attending The Feast for quite a while, you kind of like say, "Babylon, Babylon. You know, that name keeps on coming up..."

Absolutely. In the mind of the biblical authors, Babylon is the ultimate bad boy. Why? Because the book of *Genesis* and the Pentateuch—the first five books of the Bible -- were written during the Babylonian exile.

In the year 597 BC – 2,500 years ago—the Babylonian soldiers conquered Jerusalem. And they basically destroyed everything there. And then they put in chains all healthy Jews and then they marched them for 2,000 miles to Babylon. And the Jews lived in the land of their oppressors as slaves for 70 years.

I want you to know, when you think about it, for the Jews at that particular time, who could be worse? Who could be the symbol of the worst evil than Babylon?

So, they write the story of a group of people who, yeah, *Tower of Babel!*

And this is the funny thing: If you use modern eyes, you read the text, and you say, "Si Lord, insecure."

At that time, the people were organizing, they wanted to build a city. Oh, ang ganda di ba? Beautiful, right?

But you think, "Si Lord naman, na-threaten. --God is threatened."

That's modern-eyes seeing and modern-mind thinking. This is a text that's 2,000, almost 3,000 years old. Please do not use modern eyes and modern thinking when you read it. Think of the people there and why they wrote it.



And Here's the Inspiration...

Let's read:

Verse 1: *At one time, all the people of the world spoke the same language and used the same words.*

This is Chapter 11. You know what Chapter 10 said? That people were already speaking different languages. In Verse 20, Verse 30 of Chapter 10, people were already speaking in different tongues. And then, all of a sudden, in Chapter 11, Verse 1, they were speaking in only *one* language. Huh?

Again, if you're reading with modern eyes, you don't get this. But here's the thing: Do not read the Bible literally. I will probably say that in every talk-- for the whole part of *Genesis*.

I'll give you another basic example: Genesis 1 and Genesis 2, do you know that those are two Creation stories? Two. Not one—two Creation stories in *Genesis*. And they're different. In Genesis 1, God created animals before humans. In Genesis 2, God created humans first and then animals. Why the conflict? Because the authors of *Genesis*, their intention—they were okay with the conflicts. Why? They were not writing a Science textbook. They were writing a faith book. They were writing about their faith. They were writing Theology. They were writing about their relationship with God.

And so, here's the thing: Respect the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit inspired the *Genesis* authors to write it in this way. In their mind, they were not writing a history book when they wrote Genesis 1, 2, 3, 5, 11. No. They were writing how they looked at life and how they looked at God and how they looked at themselves. So, we need to respect that.

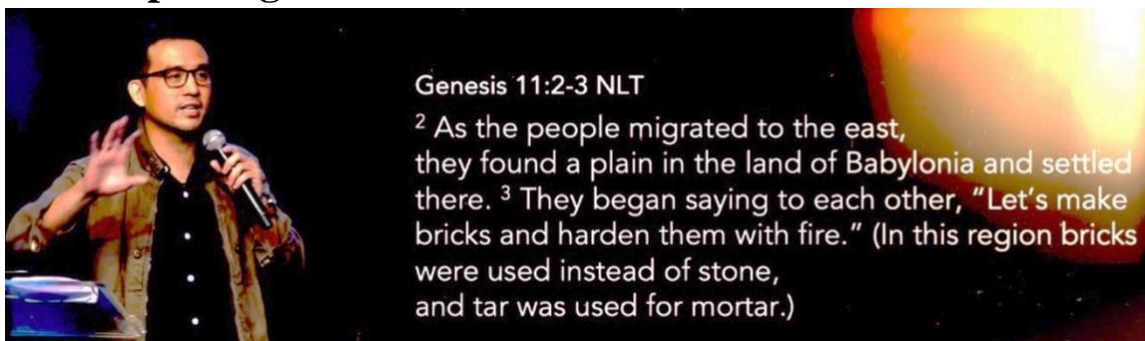
If you read the Bible literally, in this section, you're not respecting the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit inspired them to do that.

Let's follow.



The People Began To Build the Tower



AUDEE VILLARAZA: Everybody say, “I’m blessed to be a blessing.”
Tell somebody beside you, “So, share your blessing.”

We’re going to continue studying this passage in the book of *Genesis*.

So, what happens next? It says in Verse 2 (*Read above*).

You know, this was ingenious of them during that time. Let me explain...

To us, this looks a bit primitive. Because, you know, with our high-tech gadgets, our electronic cars, our 5-G network, our Netflix, this is like caveman talk. But using this technology enabled the people during that time to accomplish two goals:

No.1: They solidified the tower that they were building. It was strong, it had good foundation.

No.2. They waterproofed the tower. Scientists believe that Noah used the same technique in building the Ark. Anticipating the Great Flood, he waterproofed the Ark using big bricks and asphalt, joining them together. And even the mother of Moses—scientists believe that she used the same method.*

*According to the book of *Exodus*, Joseph, the son of Jacob, could interpret dreams. Joseph was adopted by the Pharaoh of Egypt—and based on a dream of the Pharaoh-- Joseph was able to discern that there would be a drought and, consequently, famine in the whole world.

Impressed, the Pharaoh appointed Joseph as Viceroy, meaning, the second in command in Egypt, to store food in preparation for the famine-- which indeed happened from 1250 to 1100 B.C.

Hearing that there was food in Egypt, the Israelites—Jacob and his clan-- who lived in Canaan (later known as Israel) transferred to Egypt, and eventually, Joseph took care of them.

Fast forward 430 years later, the reigning Pharaoh at this time saw the Israelites, whose population had bloated to some 3 million, had well prospered and he feared the Israelites might be becoming powerful. So, the Pharaoh ordered midwives to kill Israelite babies that they deliver from Israelite women.

Jochebed, an Israelite slave, saved her baby, Moses, by putting him in a basket – which, as scientists say, she waterproofed-- and let it float on the Nile River. Moses’ sister Miriam watched over him from a distance, until she saw an Egyptian princess found Moses. The princess had no children, so she adopted Moses who would then become a prince in Egypt and eventually would lead the Israelites to freedom.

<https://www.google.com/search?q=moses+floating+down+the+river>

They Did Not Trust God

So, to put up the Tower of Babel, the people used bricks and asphalt technology to solidify the tower-- but also at the same time waterproofed it. And you know, when you read the text-- it's not explicitly said-- but when you actually think about it, this is somehow an indication that the people of Babel did not trust God. Why?

Remember what happened in the event before the Tower of Babel? God flooded the world. So, in a way, in their sense, they were saying, "God is going to kill us again. We might as well fortify our tower—so we can have a place to stay in."

They were saying, "We don't really trust that God would not destroy the world anymore."



And They Became Arrogant

God said, "No longer will I destroy the world."

But the people didn't believe Him. So, they waterproofed the tower. That's one thing.

This was a huge leap in terms of advancement during their time. It was so high-tech-- baking bricks and putting them together using asphalt. And you know what? In their advancement—and this usually still happens even up to today—they became arrogant. They became stubborn.

And you know that happens in life? Sometimes, you advance in your life, and you become arrogant. You become proud. You feel like everybody who is below you is not worth your time-- you know. Anybody like that? They advance in life, they become abundant and all of a sudden they become proud. The people they used to hang out with are no longer their friends – because they feel that those people are beneath them.

I remember a story – I hope this is okay-- I'm going to say this in Tagalog...



Pedro's Story

Here is a translation for the non-Tagalogs:

Mang Pedro used to have a simple life. He was not rich, but he was not poor either.

But one day, he became rich.

He planted pineapple and eventually had a beautiful, beautiful hacienda, a farm.

But you know, Mang Pedro changed.

He became too proud.

One day, Juan, his friend he had not seen for a long time, arrived.

And their conversation went this way:

JUAN: “Pedro, I heard you became rich. I’m hungry. May I have even a little pineapple?”

PEDRO, glaring at Juan: “Why? Where were you when I was planting here under the heat of the sun? Under rain, storm. Where were you when I was tilling the soil? Where were you when I was plowing the field? The pineapples, I was carrying them, while I was pushing away snakes—where were you?”

JUAN: “Sorry, Pedro. I was jailed.”

PEDRO: “Huh, why were you jailed?”

JUAN: “I killed somebody.”

PEDRO: “Who? Where?”

JUAN: “A guy. There, in the other village.”

PEDRO: “Why did you kill him?”

JUAN: “Because he was so greedy!”

PEDRO: Oh...? Oh, here, I have plenty of pineapples. Get all you can.

I also have santol. Do you like them?”

Problem: When Your Ego Gets So Big

That story of Pedro is not a true story, by the way. But you know, that happens. Sometimes, you advance in life – if you get it well. And sometimes, you reach fame and fortune—and what happens? You forget the very people who were with you when you were still broke, poor, and unpopular.



Or you get so good at what you do in life – you earn Master’s and Ph. D., doctorate degrees, and all of a sudden, you reject the feedback of people.

You don’t like being criticized because you’re like, “Who in the world are they to tell me that I’m wrong?”

Confession

May I confess something? I have to watch it sometimes, especially I, being a leader, or being a person of the Lord... that I never get to a place where people can no longer criticize what I do. Because I know when I arrive in that place and time, I know that it’s all about me now—no longer what God is doing through me.

I have to be very careful. You know, sometimes, when people give criticism, I feel offended. Has that ever happened to you?

You know your heart is pure, your intention is good but you feel offended. That’s when I know that it’s no longer, you know, that God’s side of me. It’s my ego that is talking.

The ego is a good thing, my friends, because your ego will protect you – from being harmed, from getting hurt. But when your ego gets so big, what happens? You start making it all about you. And then you’re no longer open for people’s correction.

You know, God’s correction is also His affection. Sometimes, the only way that God can correct you is by allowing you to be humiliated—allowing you to be embarrassed. Because how in the world can God kill your pride if you never fall in life?

Solution: Go to the Cross

So, that's what happened. The people of Babel became so arrogant.

And sometimes, when that happens, when you become arrogant, the actual blessing becomes a curse. What God meant to bless you with, the enemy is now using to destroy you. Now, how do you solve this? I've got a simple answer.

You want to know how to solve this—you want to make a name for yourself and you think that it's all about you? How? Simple:

Go to the Cross. Why? Because only at the Cross will your self-inflated version of yourself will be reduced to the proper size. Because, man, when you look at the Cross, you realize-- you think that you're all that. But then you see what Jesus did. You see that He's all great, and He's all-powerful. It reduces you to the proper size of your ego.

Only at the Cross where you realize, "My gosh, even if I'm so imperfect, even if I'm so limited, I am completely and deeply loved by this God!" Can we clap our hands for the love of God? So, live at the Cross.

Check out what happens next:



The NIV version says :

Genesis 11:4 NLT

⁴ Then they said, "Come, let's build a great city for ourselves with a tower that reaches into the sky. This will make us famous and keep us from being scattered all over the world."

Genesis 11:4 NIV

"let us make a name for ourselves"

This is a picture of our arrogance. How we like to erect monuments in our name. We like to glorify ourselves because we love receiving medals, we love to have achievements, and trophies—all these. And that's good. We celebrate all those victories.

But the moment these start getting into your head and into your heart, what happens? Your head becomes so big that you try to make a name for yourself.

What They Really Wanted

But here's the thing: The *Genesis* author is saying that the people of Babel wanted fame, right?

We want to become famous. But if you study the Bible-- and this is the reason the Bible is amazing—you've got to really sit down and study the Bible.

The text says, *Come, let's build a great city for ourselves with a tower that reaches—into where? —the sky.*

In the Jewish language, *sky* represents that place where God is *divine*—that place where only God can occupy.

So, not only were they saying, "We want to be famous."

You know what they really wanted?

They wanted to be God.

Isn't this pointing us somewhere? Little *déjà vu*-- overly familiar: Adam and Eve. Instead of just being satisfied with being God's image, they wanted to be God.

And this is a problem with a lot of us. We're not content with who we are. We want more. We want to become God in our sense. We want to make a name for ourselves.

That's what's happening to the people of Babel. They wanted a name for themselves.

So, what did God do? God scattered them. God divided them. And it says here:



Genesis 11:5-9 NLT

⁵ But the LORD came down to look at the city and the tower they were building. ⁶ "Look!" he said. "The people are united, and they all speak the same language.

After this, nothing they set out to do will be impossible for them!

⁷ Come, let's go down and confuse the people with different languages. Then they won't be able to understand each other."

⁸ In that way, the LORD scattered them all over the world, and they stopped building the city. ⁹

That is why the city was called Babel, because that is where the LORD confused the people with different languages. In this way he scattered them all over the world.



Trials Make You Stronger

There's nobody who will ever say that. We don't like having trials.

But here's the thing: trials can be your greatest blessing. Why?

Isn't it true: that the reason you are strong today-- that you can enjoy your strength today-- is you endured the struggle yesterday? If you never went to a season of being hungry, you'll never know what it feels like to be filled up. If you have never gone through a heartbreak, you'll never know that God can easily bandage your wounds and heal your soul. If you never went through a single miracle in your life, you will never know that God can accomplish immeasurably more than whatever you can ask for or imagine.

It's the trials that make you stronger. It's the trials that make you wiser, that make you lean in on God all the more. And so, whenever we sin, we have to face the consequences. We have to be judged by God. But here's the good news you need to hear today. When you come before the Lord every single day, every single time, with a contrite heart, you know what happens? God's judgement becomes His mercy.

Let me explain this...

Think about it: If God allowed the people of Babel to just continue doing what they were doing—building a tower. God did not stop them. Let's say they succeeded. Guess what would have happened? They would have completely destroyed themselves. And so, God dispersed them. So, in a way, you could see God's judgement. But you could also see God's mercy.

If God did not allow you to go through that downward spiral in your life, you would have completely destroyed yourself. You would have completely consumed yourself. So, by allowing you to go through that struggle, God was judging you--yes. But He was also saving you. He was also rescuing you. So, God's judgement is actually the blessing that you don't want—but desperately need in your life.

So, praise God for His judgement. But we really praise Him for His mercy.



HIS JUDGEMENT IS ALSO HIS MERCY



Man's Plan... God's Promise

What is judgement and what is mercy?

Judgement is for all the things that you did wrong against the Lord-- you need to be punished for it, right? That's God's judgement. But instead of punishing you for it, what did God do? He forgave you. That's mercy.

I'm grateful for God's justice—we need it. But what I really need is God's mercy. And we praise Him for He's got mercy. Praise God.

What happens next?

We move now to a different part of the story. And this is strange. You know, the Bible sometimes is strange.

Like in this chapter-- Chapter 11-- the author talks about an entire race. Like, you know, the people of Babylon. And then all of a sudden, he shifts gears. He starts talking about one man—and if this were a Hollywood movie, you'd probably, you know, judge this wrongly.

Like, this would get poor mixed reviews. Because you're talking about this, and then all of a sudden you swing here.

Check it out: It says in Chapter 11, the guy was talking about the whole race.

But then in Chapter 12, the author talks about one guy.

Who is Abram? You probably know him as Abraham? But before Abraham became the father of all nations, he was first known as Abram, this no-name guy.

Did you catch that part? In Verse 2, God says to Abram, *“And I will make you a great nation and I will bless you and make your name great....”*

Genesis 11:2-3 NLT

² As the people migrated to the east, they found a plain in the land of Babylonia and settled there. ³ They began saying to each other, “Let's make bricks and harden them with fire.” (In this region bricks were used instead of stone, and tar was used for mortar.)

Genesis 12:1-3 RSV

Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Everything Is a Gift

In Chapter 11, the author is talking about the plans of man: “What are we going to do? We’re going to build a tower so high that it reaches the sky.”

But then in Chapter 12, it’s no longer the plan of man—it’s about the promises of God.

The Bible says, *“Many are the plans in a man’s heart but it’s the Lord’s purpose that prevails.”* – Proverbs 19:21

So, I praise God that His purpose is prevailing. His promises prevail.

In Chapter 11, the people wanted a blessing from the Lord. That’s what Bro. Bo Sanchez preached: They wanted to grab a blessing.

But in Chapter 12, God is giving a blessing to somebody who didn’t even want it in the first place.

So, what is the Lord trying to tell us? God wants somebody here to know: You need to stop grasping at things that God would give freely.

Stop at grabbing at things that you know God can freely give to you. I mean, everything in life is a gift. Your life is a gift. Your breath is a gift. Your feet are a gift. Your relationships are gifts. Everything is a gift. So, when you begin to understand that, hey, you’re going to stop stealing, and stepping, and fighting, and clawing, and grabbing.

You see, the culture of the world is this: “If I want to ascend in life, what I’m going to do is I’m going to step on people to go up, to go a little bit higher.”

That’s the culture of the world.

But remember that Jesus reminds us, in the book of *Matthew*, that whoever exalts himself shall be humbled. And whoever humbles himself shall be exalted. So, Jesus is telling us: If you want to ascend in life, don’t step on people. You know what you need to do? You need to descend. You need to lower yourself. You humble yourself and you serve people. And then, He will make your name great.

Your job is not greatness, my friend. Our job is obedience, it’s humility, it’s service. It’s all these because God’s job is greatness.



Turning Point

So, we know that God chose Abraham to be a blessing—he and his family. But, you know, if you read the Bible chapter after chapter, you will realize that it didn't happen. Instead of being a blessing, they became a curse.

And this is a pattern that happens throughout Scripture. But *not* just in Scripture – even in life itself. How sometimes we choose to be the curse instead of the blessing.

Cain was blessed with a family. But instead of being a blessing, he became a curse. Adam and Eve—they were blessed with the garden-- they became a curse.

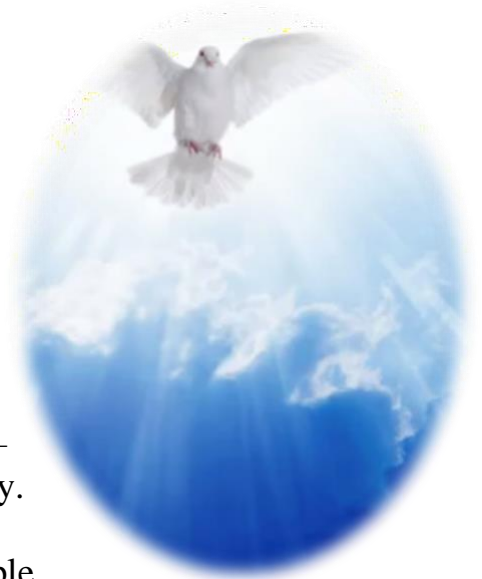
Even Abraham and his family. This is a tragic pattern. The people of Babel, they were blessed. Instead, what happened? They chose to be a curse.

But you know, I thank God that man doesn't have the last word. God has the final word. Because this event was not the event that shaped history. There was another event that became the turning point of Christianity.

What event am I talking about? I'm talking about Pentecost.

Remember, at Babel, people wanted to reach the sky—to be on the same level as God. They wanted to reach the sky. But at Pentecost, God was the one who came down -- because He wanted to be at the level of man. At Babel, people gathered themselves to make a name for themselves—to exalt one another. But at Pentecost, God actually united everybody to exalt the Name above every other Name. The Name of Jesus.

At Babel, people wanted to get the blessing. But at Pentecost God was the One who came down to give the blessing.





What *Blessing*?

In the book of *Luke*, Jesus gives an instruction to His disciples.

He says: *Stay here in the city, until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven.*

I know that you know that we like the blessing in our time. When we're in need of a miracle, we want the miracle right here, right now. We want to be blessed by God. The truth is, that's who we are. Sometimes, we don't trust God in the timing-- that we want the blessing right now.

But what is Jesus saying? There's no need for you to grab every blessing out there. There's no need for you to steal and be depressed if you feel that you're not blessed. Because Jesus is saying, you don't have to struggle. What you need to do, sometimes, is just stay.

Fr. Martin said it so beautifully earlier. He said to remain at the feet of Jesus. Jesus said, "Remain in me and I remain in you."

IF YOU WANT THE "LIFE WITH THE BLESSER"
YOU DON'T HAVE TO STRUGGLE,
YOU JUST HAVE TO STAY.

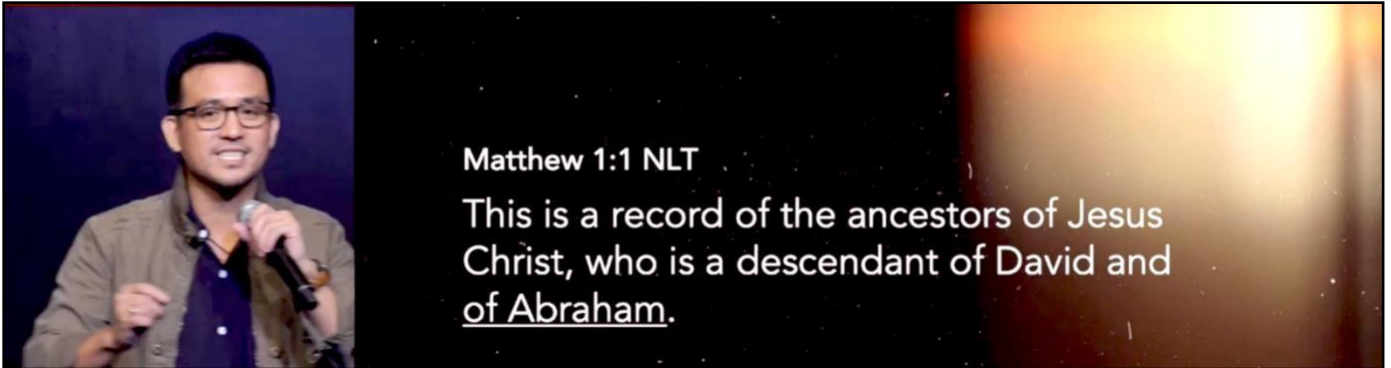
Stay. Stay in the house of God. Stay in God's favor. Stay in His love. Stay. All you got to do is just wait for the blessing. And the blessing will come.

But what blessing am I talking about?

Bro. Bo hinted at this a little earlier. But let me just close this with his message. In Verse 3, God said to Abram:

Genesis 12:3 ESV
in you all the families of the earth
shall be blessed."

What blessing are we talking about? Is it a blessing of wealth? Is it a blessing of long life? Is it a blessing of prosperity? What blessing is this?



Matthew gives us the answer. Because Matthew starts his chapter with the genealogy of Jesus—the record of the ancestors of Jesus, the origin of Jesus.

From the bloodline of Abraham came the greatest blessing that the world had ever known: Jesus Christ.

So, you see, the blessing is actually not *a* blessing—it's *the* Blesser.

Like Bro. Bo said: It's having life with the Blesser.

Because when you have the life of Jesus within you, guess what: He will be the One to make your name great. He will be the One to lift your name in places where man-made towers will never ever reach. He will be the One to mention your name in rooms where your feet have not walked into yet. He will make your name great. Because that's who He is.

But here's the promise:

Genesis 12:3 ESV
in you all the families of the earth
shall be blessed."

The blessing will not fall just on you-- but it will fall in your home. Salvation shall come to your house. Your children will be blessed. Your children's children will be blessed.

Because you follow Jesus. He will make your name great. It's not your job to make your name great. Your job is to follow Jesus. And He will be the One to make you great.

We exalt Him because He's the Name above every other name. But we want to proclaim the blessing of God in this place-- that blessing will come in the form of Jesus. He will be the One to bless you. He will be the One to bless your marriage. He will be the One to bless your finances. He'll be the One to bless your health. He'll be the One to bless your household.



Receive the Bountiful Blessings!

So, let's open our arms right now to receive these bountiful blessings that only God can bestow on us.

Jesus, look at Your children right now as we lift up our hands towards You. Know that we're in full surrender. We acknowledge that we can't do it alone. The power that You have given to us is limited by our strength. But we thank You that we don't have to walk in weakness. We can walk in Your strength.

Father, come to us right now. We proclaim that the blessing that You have bestowed on Abraham that day is still in effect with us right now. That once the blessing flows, we don't want it to flow on closed hands but with open arms so that it could continuously flow into our life for us to share to every person. We are blessed to be a blessing. And we just declare this abundance that You will send in our life in the form of Your Son, Jesus Christ.

In the mighty Name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.



We Say Yes!

I remember, a few years ago, I went to visit my mom and my sister-- in our family home in the building my mom owns... And I saw they had a guest. Later, when he already left, I had to ask my mom, who was the guy.

My mom just said he owns a company. Curious, I googled his name and I found out he's the 25th richest man in the Philippines. I wouldn't have guessed because he was wearing just a casual shirt and jogging pants. And later, I also found out he doesn't even want his staff to call him "Sir."

Anyway, this man has become one of our very generous donors to our mission.

He would always tell me, "It's a privilege to help -- because God blessed me... Everything I have is the Lord's...I'm just a steward of His blessings."

Imagine if we can all be like him. Instead of making a name for ourselves, we can make a name for Jesus. Because we know it's the Lord who will make us great.

I know you have a lot of plans. Yes, you've got plans. Yes, you've got dreams. Yes, you've got goals.

But here's my message: I want you to focus yourself not just on your plans but on the Lord's purpose. Because at the end of your life, it is His purpose that will prevail. Stop chasing blessings after blessings, after blessings, and just stay where you are and God will be the One to bless you.

The word *Amen* means we say *Yes*. We say *Yes* to His purpose. We say *Yes* to His will. We say *Yes* to His love.



Lord, wherever You will send us, we say Amen to that. Whoever You will call us to love, we say Amen to that. However You want to use us in Your Kingdom, we say Amen to that. Amen!



MERCY MINISTRIES

*I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful; I know that full well. ---Psalm 139:14*

LIGHT OF JESUS PASTORAL CARE CENTER Part 4

Giving Peace a Chance

By EMS

*“You are not alone. I hear you. I’m here to listen
and journey with you.”*

Hello, I am Ems from the Light of Jesus Pastoral Care (LOJPC) Ministry.

I serve as *pastoral carer*—our term for volunteers like me who minister to individuals who come to us for support as they struggle through emotional and spiritual difficulties.



Volunteers like me are trained in Psychological First Aid. Through our Care Sessions, we hope to help individuals reduce their emotional stress, empower them to gain some insights to better handle their situation and see the light of Jesus amid their concerns.

My journey to becoming a pastoral carer is one that fills my heart with so much joy and gratefulness. It is a testament of God’s goodness and faithfulness to His promises in my life and the amazing way that He invites me to co-author with Him the story of my life.

My Plan

Prior to joining the LOJ Pastoral Care Ministry, I was with the government supporting the work on the Philippine peace processes. While working at the national government, I wanted to do more and be at the center of the actions where I could help transform conflicts and build peace.

It was there that I also developed an interest in Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). I had a bit of training on this and desired to undergo further studies to later volunteer for this initiative that provides parties in conflict an alternative to filing cases in courts.

Serving as an ADR volunteer didn't materialize though. I later explored the opportunity to join an organization that conducts community-based conflict resolution. That didn't push through, either.

I felt disheartened when my plans didn't work out. I felt quite certain that I wanted to help bridge people, mend broken relationships, build peace.

In a way, I was doing that through my work-- but I longed to also touch base directly with individuals and groups torn by conflicts. Disappointed and sad that I failed in my attempts, I just surrendered them all to the Lord.



God's Plan

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart; and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight.” --Proverbs 3:5-6

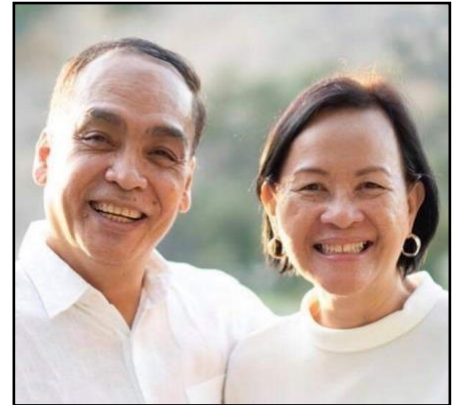
When I thought I had failed in my quests, little did I know the Lord already had something special planned for me. Later, I realized that He wanted me to work for *peace in a more intimate way*—as a channel of His healing and compassion to His wounded people, through the LOJPC.

He was leading me to this path all these years, but I didn't have a clue. I was already attending The Feast two decades before, when it was still being held at Camp Aguinaldo in Cubao, Quezon City. A friend invited me. Then, later, I attended Feasts in various key areas in Metro Manila and the annual inspirational learning event, Kerygma (now Feast) Conference. I wasn't very consistent, but The Feast has always been there through the highs and lows of my adult life.

Perfect Timing

I believe that in God's perfect timing, God's beautiful plan for us will unfold. While attending the Feasts, I saw there was always an invitation for everyone to serve at the Feast ministries. I suppose in the earlier days I wasn't ready yet as the Lord was still working on a lot of things in me. I think that gradually, the Lord had been planting in my heart the desire to serve-- as He also orchestrated other aspects of my life to be in sync with everything that I needed to get ready for my mission as a pastoral carer.

It was in 2016, while attending The Feast in Ortigas, Pasig City, that I felt the burning desire to serve. I got really interested in pastoral care, so at one Feast gathering, I approached our Feast Builder, Bro. Vic Español. He then introduced me to his wife, Sis. Ditas, who also happened to be the directress of the Light of Jesus Pastoral Care Center at that time. Sis. Ditas invited me to go through a series of training on pastoral care.



In May 2017, I attended the Journey to Personal Growth, the first of the series of three training courses on pastoral care. It was during this training that I realized how every pain and struggle in my past is part of God's divine plan for me. I realized how everything made sense – my God-given abilities, my strengths and weaknesses, values, personality and proclivities, my identity in Christ, and even my past.

Oh, I was so overjoyed. It was like a eureka, connect-the-dots moment for me! As I said yes to helping heal other people, I found myself being healed as well.

I then completed two more trainings and started my practicum towards the end of 2017. Then, it happened that my dad fell ill and passed away in 2018. I was grieving and needed time to heal. I eventually resumed my practicum and began serving as a pastoral carer in July 2019.

My initial years working as a pastoral carer had been challenging, exciting and rewarding. The COVID-19 Pandemic threw us curveballs that challenged us in many ways, including our mental health. LOJPC persisted in its mission. We shifted to offering online sessions and prayers. I then heeded the call to serve as a frontliner during this time of Pandemic to serve the growing number of people who are experiencing mental distress.

Journey to Blessings

To this day, I am still a work in progress, but I am progressing each day and looking forward to an amazing journey. Indeed, all we need is to put our complete trust in the Lord as He is writing a beautiful story for us. As He said, *“For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”* --Jeremiah 29:11

When I said yes and yielded happily to the author of my life, I was blessed even more. To this day, He heals me and fills me with His love so that I may also find the strength and courage to follow His lead. In every step of my journey with the Lord, with much respect, He also invites me to co-write this story.

I gladly respond to this calling by nurturing the gifts He has given me with support from my LOJPC mentors and my CEFAM teachers. I am currently taking up the Professional Diploma on Family Ministries at the Ruben M. Tanseco, S.J. Center for Family Ministries (RMT-CEFAM) to reinforce my formation and training at LOJPC. I surrender to God’s graces and mercy as He heals me and molds me to become a better version of myself. I strive to work in synergy with the Holy Spirit to manifest His wisdom and compassion in my every encounter with our clients.

I feel so blessed and energized to be serving in this helping ministry. I find every encounter with our clients as a divine appointment that allows me to humbly serve and respond to God’s calling to be His heart today—a channel of His healing and compassion.

To help relieve one’s suffering and be God’s bearer of hope when one has none is such a challenging yet profound calling. It touches me every time the person I guide through pastoral care feels comforted and hopeful. It means that I am able to help build peace—one soul at a time for the Lord’s Kingdom.



the FEAST BLESSINGS

I Love — Through Listening By GELO

I ATTEND The Feast and in one gathering at Valle Verde, Pasig City, I came to know about the Light of Jesus Pastoral Care-- through a one-fourth size bond paper flier invitation about the Ministry's Journey to Personal Growth (JPG) seminar. I inquired about the seminar but I was told that the event was postponed.

Months after, I saw an update on the event on The Feast's Facebook page. So, I did sign up and I was able to attend the two-day JPG live-in seminar in a retreat house in Taytay, Rizal.



I then continued to attend the next seminars and workshops on basic facilitating and counseling skills. I also accepted the invitation to further be trained in Pastoral Care led by our directress, Sis. Ditas Español (*left*).

I have a day job and because of time constraints in my work, I could not commit 100 percent to the Ministry. But I made it a point to be present in the weekend activities at the LOJ Pastoral Care Center.

On March 16, 2020—my birthday—the LOJPCC office had to be closed to follow lockdown protocols to prevent the spread of Coronavirus Disease (COVID). So, that day was the last day of my training on face-to-face pastoral care.

But one day, Sis. Ditas called for a meeting announcing that we would continue the Ministry—by transitioning from face-to-face to online meetings.

Amid the COVID onslaught, there has been a greater need for pastoral carers as people reeled with anxiety, stress, varied emotional roller coasters, and other uncertainties as the Pandemic continues to this day.

By God's grace, I finally became an official pastoral carer right on the LOJ Pastoral Care anniversary in July 2020.

Called Through The Feast

In hindsight, I believe God has mercifully called me to be a pastoral carer -- through The Feast.

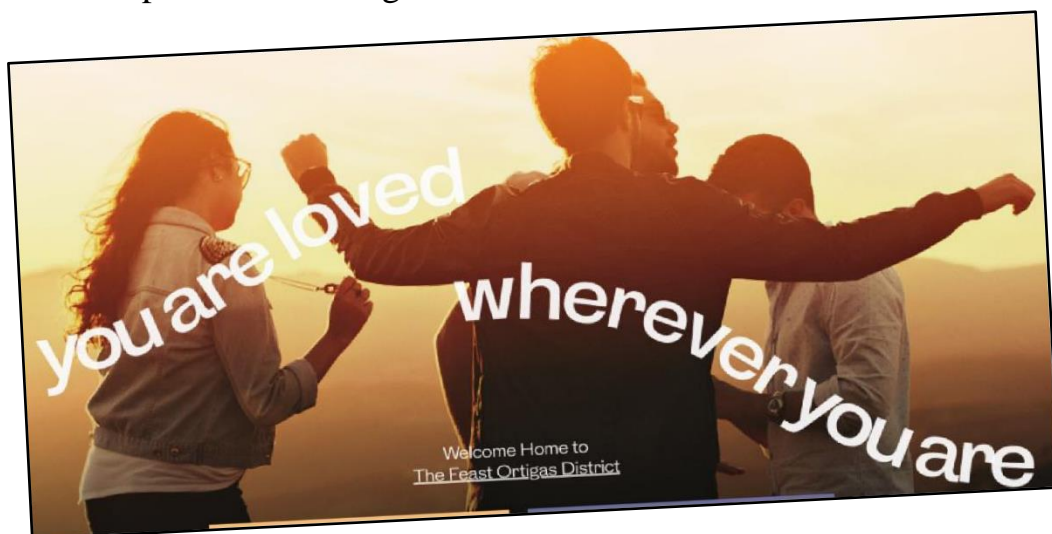
I learned about The Feast through my professor in graduate school. She's a Feaster, and she shared in our class about the excellent talks and sessions we can attend-- for free-- at the world-class venue, the Philippine International Convention Center. But I simply forgot all about it.

After about a year, I accidentally saw on Facebook about The Feast, tagged as *The Happiest Place on Earth*.

Curious, I searched for details about it through The Feast website. I found out the nearest Feast where I live is at Bluewave, Marikina. I got interested, and as the jargon goes, the rest is history.

Depending on where I am based and my time schedule, I've kept on attending Feasts, hopping from one venue to another-- at Sta. Lucia East, Robinsons Galleria, and Valle Verde.

Before the Pandemic lockdown, I was also a regular attendee at The Feast Light Araneta in Gateway Mall, Cubao, every Thursday night. There were already plans for the launching of a full-blown *live* Feast Cubao in Gateway. I was already supposed to be part of a Feast Ministry but unfortunately, COVID-19 put the launching on hold.



But again, by the grace of God, I'm now a regular attendee at The Feast Ortigas at Novotel Hotel.

Passing Through Stopovers

I believe that being in Pastoral Care--for me to be able to fully serve-- there were many stopovers that I passed through. But then, the right and the perfect time came for me to dedicate the best I can to this Ministry.

The world has a great need for listening ears especially amid the Pandemic.

I myself have had to grapple with my own issues -- especially since I was just starting living a solo life.

It wasn't easy. It was lonely. It was fearful. It was sad. But the Ministry I'm in has also sustained my sanity. That despite all these struggles, my imperfections, and weaknesses, and my not feeling qualified—just obeying God will put things in place.

Just be willing to invest the little capital you have. I know that through my service, I also have become an extension of the love, care, and mercy of the Father, especially to His broken and wounded children.

I am simply also allowing God to let His grace flow in my cracks and brokenness.

There are also times—if not many times—that I wanted to stop serving, and I feel I can't bear the burden.

Listening is difficult and tiring.

Sometimes, I doubt myself-- if what I'm doing is going anywhere. And besides, there are so many who are more qualified for the Ministry.

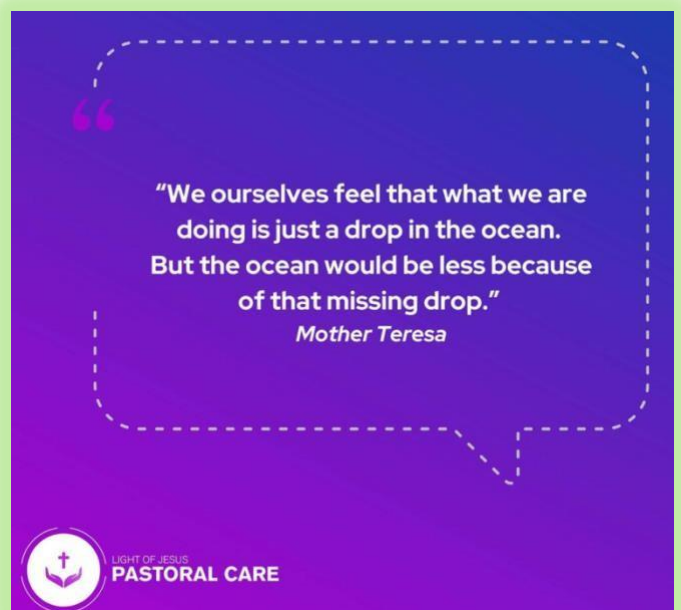
I honestly want to say, “*No more, Lord!*”

But service and ministry are going beyond one's comfort zone. It's giving your commitment to the Lord—with what you have, and what you can offer.

I just tell myself to say, “*Here I am Lord!*”

So, when I enter into the suffering of the other person through listening ears, and with great attentiveness, I also encounter the great love of God-- He who suffered for us. That love is really profound when you are there being present, and suffering with another person.

That love—is really something worth suffering for.





FAMILY

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

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 them 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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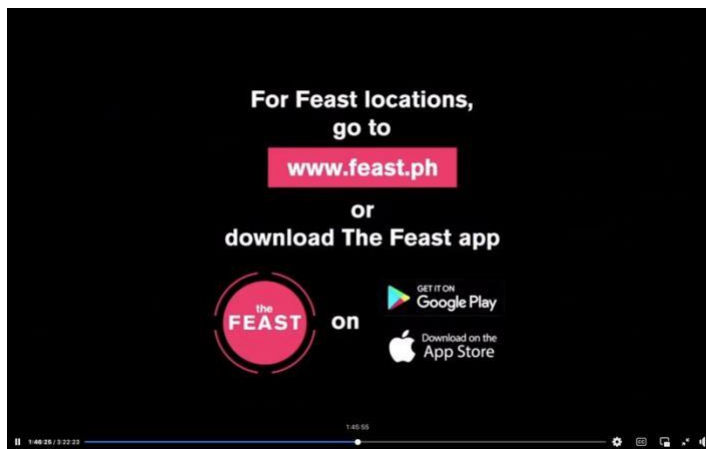
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Go and make disciples of all men.

— Matthew 28:19