



NEWSLETTER
Special Big Day
April 24, 2022

An Endless Loop

DID you catch the first movie of *Dr. Strange*? I'm assuming that majority would've seen it already so I can share with you how the movie ends.

Towards the end, Dr. Strange learns the power of controlling time. He uses this power against Dormammu, a supernatural foe who seemed impossible to beat.

How did Dr. Strange win?

He looped time.

So, even if Dormammu violently killed Dr. Strange, he just looped back to the starting point of their encounter, again, and again, and again. Endlessly.

Sometimes, that's how I feel when I wake up. There are moments when I wake up and think about the same things I need to do, and then I feel tired already.

I wonder if that's how the apostle Peter felt like before he became a disciple of Jesus.

Today, The Feast Special Big Day, we take a time machine and go back to a very special time before Jesus officially began His ministry, as He recruits apostles such as the fisherman Peter and his co-fishermen

Peter thought that catching enough fish was the solution to all of his problems. But Jesus gave him a new way to address his problems.

Today, we will learn what, indeed, is the solution to Peter's problems — to *our* problems.

Have a great Feast Special Big Day!

All for Jesus,

Audee Villaraza





LETTERS

Inhale, Exhale

HANGOVER! Perhaps that's what's happening to us! Inhale, Exhale!

We did that a lot last week, during our four-day Holy Week Retreat, from April 14- April 17, 2022, centering on the theme *Breathe!*

So, we breathed, and breathed, and breathed!

And we never felt so much better!

We're sure those who attended the Retreat, even online, and breathed, and breathed, and breathed, are also feeling so much better now.

The Retreat peaked with our celebration of Resurrection Day in our Grand Easter Feast held *live* at the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC) on April 17.

Yes! Amid the Coronavirus Disease (COVID) Pandemic, we had to put on hold our *live* gathering and went online, our Feast-at-Home! So, you can just imagine how ecstatic we were to meet again— face-to-face!

Yes, we are *live*, we live again on Resurrection Day— the Feast of Feasts, as Bishop Teodoro Bacani Jr. declared during our Grand Easter Feast!

So, as we give gifts on Christmas Day, we also give you a big gift on Resurrection Day: *The Feast Family Special Issue*— a *Flashback Special Report* on powerlines from *Breathe!*

Everybody now: Inhale, Exhale!



Randy Borrromeo
Media Ministry
Executive Director





FLASHBACK SPECIAL REPORT



ARE you tired? Two years! Pandemic. You went through it.

It was difficult. Like you were given one blow after another blow—your finances, your job, your career—all sorts of difficulties. Some of you lost loved ones. You yourself got sick. If you, right now, are carrying so heavy a burden on your shoulder, this Holy Week Retreat will be perfect for you. And I believe there are no accidents. You are here because God wants you to be here. This is a Divine Appointment.

Today, Holy Week Retreat 2022 is all about *Breathe*. Can you inhale? Can you exhale? Do you not feel good about it?

Last year, I had COVID—pretty severe. My oximeter—you know, that little gadget where you insert your finger (A device for measuring the degree of oxygen saturation of circulating blood or tissue region. Usually, the normal level of oxygen is 95% or higher). My oxygen level went from 98, to 95, then 94, then 88... OMG!

In Hebrew, for the words *breath*, and *spirit*, and *wind* there's only one word: *ruach*. What does it mean? That right now, the Holy Spirit is actually the Source of your life. And in this Holy Week Retreat—four days!—let the Holy Spirit be your breath. Let the Holy Spirit be the one that you inhale and exhale. Let the Holy Spirit bring Life to everything that is dead within you. Let us pray:

Lord Jesus, I submit myself to you. Let these next four days be a beautiful encounter between my heart and You. Breathe unto me power, life, joy, peace, healing, transformation. Breathe unto me and touch the areas of my life that need oxygen, that need life—that is already dying—but by Your power let it rise today. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

TALK 1

CHRIST'S AGONY
IN THE GARDEN



Peace and blessings to everyone! I hope and pray that you're having a meaningful, and a Spirit-filled Lenten journey. Today, we reflect on Jesus' Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane -- the First Sorrowful Mystery of the Rosary which is found in Luke 22, Matthew 26, and Mark 14.

The word *agony* comes from the Greek word *agonia* which is *sweat* — of Greek athletes as they warm up during their training and Olympic games.

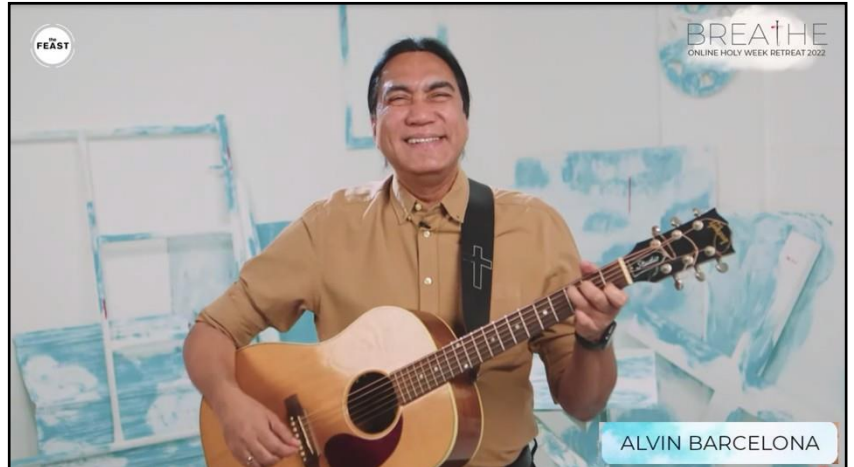
Jesus' agony in the garden is the warm up, the readying of the greater mission or self-giving...

In Hebrew and Aramaic, *Gethsemane* means *oil press*. Gethsemane was an olive orchard—and many believe that such garden was a natural place for Jesus to rest and reflect, as it was owned by a friend or believer of Jesus. If you have to make olive oil, the olive tree must be beaten to have the olives fall to the ground, then the fruits would have to be crushed and pressed.

Well, the same thing happened to Jesus as He was under immense pressure and was crushed for our sins. The same thing happens to us as well as we face life's trials, tribulations, and even temptations...

Our Gethsemanes are situations where we find zero strength to *believe* because our heart is groaning deep. Yet, praise God-- God prays with us in Jesus. God weeps with us in Jesus. God suffers for us in Jesus. We are not alone. Through the cries, tears of Jesus, He brings us before God and Jesus brings God in our midst...

Only if on Earth God's will is done... We are free only if on Earth God's will is done. We are free only if we stand in the truth of our being – if we are united with our Creator, with God. And then we become truly *like* God. Not by resisting God. Not by eliminating Him. Not by denying Him. But by fully surrendering our mind, our heart, our will, our body to Him. At that moment of surrender, submission, and self-emptying, the angel comes to Jesus. The angel, grace, comes to us. Freedom, deeper love. *A new breath* is given to us.



Genesis 2:7 reads: *Then the Lord formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathe into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living being, a living soul.*

Man was formed by God out of dust of the ground. The name *Adam* is Hebrew for *man* or *humankind*, derived from the Hebrew word *adama* which means *ground*... Being identified or being one with the ground is not at all totally demeaning or degrading... God creating us from the earth makes us one with the earth, with all of creation and making all men equal— all of who came from the earth and whose bodily remains will go back to be part of the earth...

From the very beginning, we humans were taught *humility* because we are *humus – soil*-- so that we should not think of ourself higher than anyone. We are all equally made and formed by God. Yet, man formed from the dust is more than just dirt because from the ordinary dirt from the ground, God scooped us, formed us, *breathed into us*, and filled us.

***Lupa**

Nagmula sa lupa

Your life came from the dust of the ground

Magbabalik na kusa

And to dust it shall return

Ang buhay mong sa lupa nagmula

Your life that came from the earth

Bago mo linisin

Before you clean

Ang dungis ng 'yong kapwa

The filth of your neighbor

Hugasan ang 'yong putik sa mukha

Wash first your mud off your face...

Sa mundo ang buhay

In the world is life

Ay mayroong hangganan

There is a limit

Dahil tayo ay lupa lamang

Because we are only earth

Kaya't pilitin mong ika'y magbago

So force yourself to change

Habang may panahon, ika'y magbago

While there's still time, you change

Pagmamahal sa kapwa ay isipin mo

Think of loving others

*Lupa - Rico J Puno (Lyrics) - YouTube <https://www.youtube.com>



Jesus said, 28 “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your soul. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

—Matthew 11:28-30 ESV...

A yoke is a piece of wood attached to two big animals – cow or carabao—and you connect that wood to these two animals so that when one of the animals becomes weak or gets sick, the other stronger animal starts now to pull the weight

for both of them... There are moments in your life when you feel like you’re tired, you’re gasping for breath... Jesus says, you are connected to Me and because you are connected to me, the burden I give to you is light...

So, come before Jesus every day and ask Him to walk with you. Ask Him to carry your weight with you—not for you, but *with* you.

When I was about eight years old, I had asthma. When you’re having an asthma attack, you can’t breathe... A doctor taught me to breathe in and out in a paper bag... and I realized I was getting calmer... Sometimes, when we experience life and we’re panicking... we’re afraid... Pause, take a deep breath, and then you realize that God is actually in that breath. God is breathing with you... A single breath means you’re already blessed... Take a deep breath right now. You’re blessed.



You are formed, filled, to flow... God formed man, breathe into Him, making Him a living soul, according to His image and likeness. God’s likeness means *Love*. God is Love, and if you are God’s image, you too should be Love. And what is Love—God’s Love, that is? It’s giving of oneself, sharing the breath of life that you received and flowing this life to others.

This is what we commemorate today: Maundy Thursday. *Maundy* is derived from the Latin word *mandatum*—*mandate, command*. And on the Last Supper, our Lord Jesus gave the new commandment: Love one another. As I have loved you,

so you must love one another. You are loved—you love, you receive, you give. You are not just formed into a *living* soul, you are formed into a *giving* soul.



Hi, Everybody! Welcome to *Breathe* Holy Week Retreat Day 2.

How have you been? I'm sure you were very blessed with our Day 1.

And now, Day 2, Good Friday. *Biyernes Santo*.

When you look sad, frowning, don't people tell you, "*Bakit mukhang Biyerness Santo ka? Why do you look like Good Friday?*"



Of course, we have to be appropriate. We observe the solemnity of this day. But that doesn't necessarily mean we wallow in sorrow or dwell in it. Because this day is filled with hope, with love, with peace, and with joy in our heart.

So, this day, we will breathe once again.

Breathe in, breathe in the love of God—His joy, His peace, His hope.

Let us pray:

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

Father in Heaven we thank You for this Holy Week Retreat wherein we are given this blessed opportunity to breathe. Thank You, dear Father, for granting us the grace to open more our mind, our heart, and our spirit to see You more, to love You more, and to follow You more—so that we can love even more as You did on the Cross of Calvary on Good Friday. This we pray, in the mighty Name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

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



What is Crucifixion? Why is it unacceptable to the Jews and to the Greeks, and to many others who today, Good Friday, are presented a crucified Savior?

The historian Josephus, witnessing the Crucifixion during the siege of Jerusalem, defined *crucifixion* as the *most wretched of deaths*. It was considered the supreme penalty for the Romans. It was reserved for barbarians, for traitors, for criminals...

One who dies by crucifixion suffers a long drawn death which can actually last for three days. And then worse, in public display. It was meant to humiliate somebody... We see Jesus always with something wrapped around Him. No. During that time, you were crucified naked. And after you die on the cross, many times, your body will not be taken away immediately. You remain there hanging dead in all of your raw nakedness...

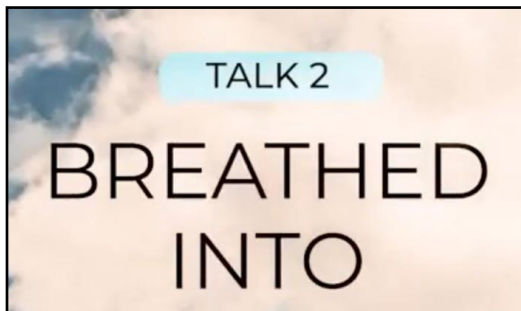
Death by Crucifixion was terrible in the sense that it was a slow death. They would call it the Dance of Death. Because a person who hangs on the cross, at a certain point, because of the weight of his body, begins to restrict his breathing. And at a certain point, as air is not going to the heart, water fills it up and asphyxiation, suffocation, heart attack happen.

To break the legs of somebody hanging on the cross was actually a merciful act because the person dies quickly—for otherwise, your natural reaction would be, if you have something to step on, is to push yourself up to be able to breathe...

On Good Friday, we will not only look at the Cross. We will kneel before the Cross and recognize in that symbol: love, victory, triumph..

Today, we declare: "Sin, behold what you have done. Love, behold what you have done."

May the Cross of Jesus be always for you this: *You are so loved*. Amen.



There are three meanings about breathing that are very important.

1. While there is breath, there is *life*... What is this breath? It's the Holy Spirit... The Holy Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead is in you. And that is how powerful you are. **2.** While there is breath there is *hope*. You have more courage in you than the danger ahead of you. Why? Because the Holy Spirit, the Breath of God, is in you. **3.** While there is breath there is more to *give*. My deepest prayer is that when God calls me home, Jesus will see me drained and empty—because I gave everything I have here on Earth. He will just embrace me and *refresh* me...

Our stories don't end when we do. Because the Holy Spirit, the Breath of God, is in us. The Breath of God is in you for eternity.



While you still have breath, my friend, you still have a mission. What is this mission? To love.

Three reflections: **1.** Jesus embraced His mission. He kept breathing life to other people.

2. Jesus expressed His love. My wife Angela and I lost our baby in miscarriage. All I thought about was the pain, about *me*. But look at Jesus. While He was crucified on the Cross, He continued to love. He looked at His mom, and His disciple John. His concern was not Himself—rather, those He loved. Allow God to embrace

you and to encourage you today that He loves you so much.

3. Jesus entrusted everything to His Father. Trust Him during your Good Fridays—that whatever suffering you might be experiencing now, this suffering, His death, is not the end of the story. As we wait for Easter, let us continue to love. Not because the other person will love us in return. We love because we are created out of love.



Hello, everybody, welcome back!

This is Day 3 of our Holy Week Retreat *Breathe*...

We are here in Black Saturday or what we call the Holy Saturday. This day, what is God teaching us? Very simple: That you should not put a period where God has placed a comma.



Maybe, during the time of Christ, many thought that Good Friday, the death of Jesus, was the period already. But you know the apostles, and our Mother Mary, during that Saturday, were in vigil—praying, anticipating the promise of Jesus. They were waiting. Everybody else thought, period already. But for them, it's only a comma.

God is telling you the same message today. That what is happening to you (your dire situation) is not the end—don't put a period there. It's just a comma.

There is still a continuation. There is still tomorrow. There is still Sunday. And while you are waiting for your Easter—because you're in Holy Saturday—wait with hope. Listen to Him.

Today, the Lord will continue to speak to you. The Lord will continue to encourage you and lift you up.

So, as you wait for God's promise to you, for your blessing, for your miracle—as you wait, wait with hope, wait with expectation. Listen to Him. He will continue to talk to you. He will continue to touch you. God will continue to embrace you.

So, let us start with a prayer:

Lord, we are ready. We are ready to continue the story that You have written in our life. And we believe this is not yet the end. We are expecting greater things will happen to us. Your miracles, we will receive today in Your Name. In Jesus' mighty Name. Amen.



Coming into Holy Saturday. Silence is the characteristic of the Jewish Shabbat—Sabbath Day, rest day...

Imagine yourself in the shoes of the disciples of Jesus. Jesus whom they have seen endure the rigors of His passion, crossing the winding roads of the old city Jerusalem...

Let's enter the realm of the Mother (who was present throughout Jesus's passion and His burial). In the fourth Gospel, she was never known by her name. She was known as His mother, the mother of Jesus... She was known to be *woman*. And *woman* has a very pregnant meaning. Knowing her history, her people's tradition, we note that *woman* means *Eve—the mother of all the living...* In that silence, and having heard the word *woman* as one of the last words of her Son on the Cross, and she was taken to be the new Eve, to be the mother of all the living—represented by the beloved disciple—how was Mary in the silence of Saturday? If you were in her shoes, what would you do in this span of time, in this space of rest...

... If you would imagine the Blessed Mother on the first Holy Saturday of Christian memory, you know, after pondering, after realizing the import of the desire of her own Son, the desire of God, you know what she said?

She said, "Let it be done to me according to Your Word."

... And today she is known as the Mother of Christ, the Mother of God, the Mother of the Church, and the Mother of all the Living.

May this Holy Saturday, its silence, allow you to know your place in the greater scheme of things—beyond Pandemic, beyond elections, beyond whatever troubles the world... May the pondering of the love of Jesus for you, entrusting you to His mother, make you say today a prayer of commitment:

"Let it be done to me according to what you say."



Placed into. In Genesis 2:8, we read: *And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the East, and there He put the man whom he formed.*

Eden means pleasurable place. But where does God really place us? God planted a garden—a place of blessings, a fertile ground where we will experience His love.

I remember this when Anya, our first born, and Pio, our youngest, were born. We really prepared at home. And it was very cute, it was very exciting, small shirts, tiny socks and shoes, we were preparing a place for them—where they will sleep, eat, play...

This Lent, I pray that wherever we are right now, you begin to receive, accept, and always choose to live in that garden where God is placing us... And maybe in your life, you realize that God is placing you in your garden, or at times, God is asking you to be a garden to others.



Black Saturday—the moment of waiting. Waiting is inevitable. It is necessary. To make waiting beautifully:

1. Waiting makes us see clearly. Charles could not fulfill his dream to be a missionary in Africa. But his wife was weak. As he waited, he took over a business making grape juice... His full name: Charles Welch—he grew the Welch grape juice for churches.

2. Win daily. After his very first day of schooling, my son Joseph didn't want to go back to school. That school thing, I made it one day at a time. The same with Joseph. He is graduating from college this July.

3. Love generously. I was diagnosed with multiple nodules in the thyroid and the doctor's forecast was grim... I had to go through biopsy. When you're faced with your mortality, you have a choice: to receive the grace, to see each day as a gift. And the only way to transform the fear is to love generously. I've been loving my family, but I decided to love them much more... I am waiting for Easter to come. And how do I do this? I want to see clearly, I want to win daily, and I want to love generously.



Holy Mass



Bishop TEODORO BACANI JR,
on the Gospel John 20:1-9
The Empty Tomb

Excerpts...

HAPPY FEAST to all of you!

Nothing, not even the Pandemic,
can stop us celebrating today!

This is the greatest Feast of all!
The Feast of all Feasts. The beginning
of all Christian Feasts— the day
of the Resurrection of the Lord!

But surprisingly, the Gospel makes us pause a little. Today’s Gospel, for example, tells us that the apostles did not yet understand that He had to rise from the dead. Imagine —after three prophecies when the Lord said that He would suffer and die and then rise again from the dead— they couldn’t understand.

Remember, those of you who are at the Vigil Mass last night, when the woman came to the apostles with the news, that the tomb was empty and the Lord has risen, you know the reaction of the apostles, “*Marites lang yan,*” “*Fake news ‘yan!*”

But it is not fake news. This is the Good News! Without it, there would be no Church. Without it, there would be no news on Christmas: Today in the house of David, a Savior has been born to you who is Christ the Lord. Without it, Jesus would have been history, memory, but finished. *Lagot na, tapos na, wala na.*

But because Jesus rose from the dead, you are here to celebrate. Because Jesus rose from the dead, we are at church. Because Jesus rose from the dead, He does not only live— you, I, all of us live!



What *kind of life* does Christ say?

He says, “When I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.”

You know, the beauty of what happened when Christ died and rose again, God made Him a magnet, attracting all things...so that man could no longer live for himself but live for the Lord, and his fellowmen. Pope Benedict XVI calls it Evolutionary Leap.

That word is very striking but you know, the Bible says it more beautifully— not just evolutionary leap.

Listen to this: “*If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.*”

I don’t know how many billion years ago— people say 4.7 billion years ago— there was a Big Bang. Before the Big Bang, however, there was that infinitesimally — small, infinite— dense matter which exploded.

When it began? We don’t know. But when the Big Bang happened, everything changed. It was visibly *creation* exploding.

This time (of the Resurrection) the explosion was not so loud but the event was even more important. There was Creation before, and now there is a New Creation. A New Creation in Christ. This is greater than the first creation. This is a new beginning for you and me. And how do we know that this is a new beginning?

We get a hint from the Gospel of today. The Gospel is so beautiful today but surprisingly, the *star* here in the Gospel is Mary Magdalene. She was the first to see— she said that the Body of Christ was no longer there. Then the beloved disciple saw and believed. But who was the first to bring the Good News? Can you imagine? Mary Magdalene.

First, *woman*. Did you know back then, women were not credible? When there is a witness, if it is a woman, the judges will say, “It doesn't matter, it's just gossip. You know women are like that.”

That's how they looked at women.

Second, *women are not the same as men*. To make you understand equality in ancient times, do you remember the story of the adulterous woman who was caught in the act? And they dragged the woman.

The man, where was he? He was free. The woman was dragged away, the man was released. The man was different, and I mean, before the Jewish courts of law, the word of the women didn’t count. They were second-class citizens.



We Choose To Love

Mary Magdalene wasn't a second-class citizen. Listen to this: it is said twice in the Bible, so we know it's not a rumor. Luke and Mark tell us that from Mary Magdalene, seven devils had been driven away.

Do you know what it means like when you have devils in you? In Jesus' time, when you have a devil in you, it means you're crazy. When we say *seven*, it's perfect. You're too crazy.

Another meaning is, you are a bad person. When you have seven devils, it means you are really a terrible person. This was whom Jesus chose to be His first witness. This was the change in the view of fellow human beings.

When we look at our fellowman, we look at his past, present—and based on them, we will love. We will choose to love or not love. That's how we are.

When you apply to an employment agency or a business, you need to present a resume. After the resume, you will be interviewed. Why? To know what your past and your present are. If your record was so bad in the past, and now you are still like that, you will definitely not be accepted.

Jesus is different. When Jesus looks at man, He is not looking only at history. He is not looking only at the present. What He looks at is the *potential* of each person. When He looks at you and me, He doesn't just say, "What did you do?" "Oh, that's so bad!" "Oh, are you still like that?!"

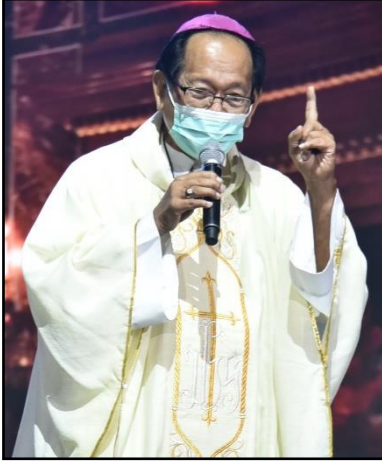
Jesus sees your future. Your future is in God, and you are called — not to death, not to fall into sin and remain there. But, in Jesus' view, you have the *potential*—what God will do for you and what you can do through God's grace.

This is what brings joy— Mary Magdalene, from whom seven devils were driven away, is now St. Mary Magdalene. She was the first bringer of the Good News to the apostles. That's what Jesus saw.

When He saw Mary, He didn't say, "This woman is crazy!"

Instead, He saw this: This woman, if she loves, she will not abandon me. This woman who, when my disciple has fled, will still follow me to the Cross. This is the woman, who when I am dead, she will bury me with my dear mother. This is the woman who, first of all, will go to my grave when the opportunity arises.

And that is what Jesus sees in each of you, in each of us, and in all of us. The greatness within, the future unseen, the beautiful future that God wants for you and me.



Jesus Risen is the Source of Our Hope

Jesus sees that if we unite ourselves to Him— what does the second letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians say? *“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.”*

If you used to be a thief, not anymore. If something is stolen, it will be returned. If you used to be a gossiper, now you’ll tell only good news and truth. If you were corrupt before, you’ll be generous and compassionate now. If you had three wives before, now there is only one. It's different now.

Yung dati, luma na, out of style na yun. There is a new style now. The style of Christ: godly and humane— and each of us are called that way.

How We See People Is How We Love Them

And then, it’s not only a way of looking. It is a way of loving. Again, when we look at people, we scan them. We look at not only a man’s appearance but also his pocket, and our love depends on our assessment of the person.

People say, “I will love you if...” “I love you because...”

But the beautiful thing about Christ is, “I love you in spite of...”

We’ll say, “I am a sinful man.”

But Jesus will say, “I love you in spite of your sins. That’s why I came— to seek and to save what was lost. That is why I, as Divine Healer, came to cure you of your sins and of your disease. I love you in spite of...”

What St. Augustine said when he was converted was so beautiful.

He said to God, “Because you have loved me, you have made me lovable.”

What makes us beautiful is the love of God, the love of Christ. So, no one should be afraid to approach him.

Charles De Foucauld was a playboy. He brought his girlfriend in a camp— against all regulations.

But when he had a reflection he said, “Lord, if you exist, then make Yourself known to me.”

He was approached by a priest, “Why are you here?”

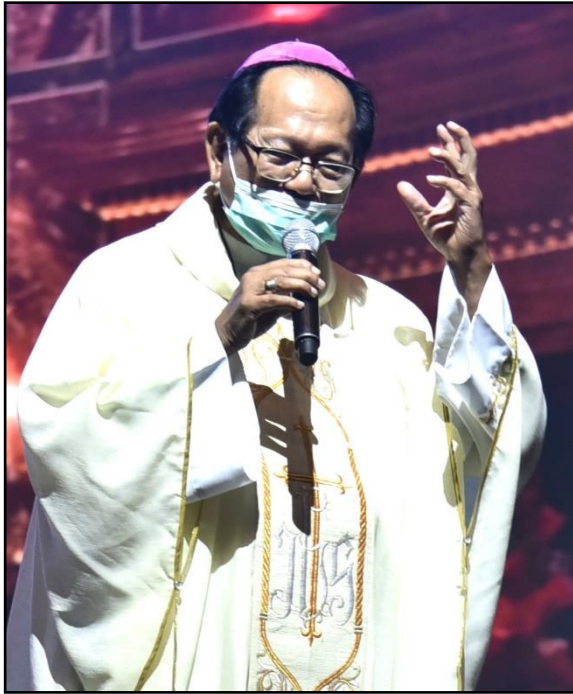
“Well, I was just praying.”

“Since when did you make your last confession?”

“Eight years ago.” “Come, confess.”

And then he did confess and he changed.

He became *Blessed* Charles de Foucauld.



Jesus Makes You Ready

There is no one who is not ready when Christ calls, He will say, “I will make you ready. If you’re not beautiful, I will make you beautiful.”

And that is the kind of love that He wants us to show one another.

I have a story for you. When we were on our way here, my assistant forgot to bring my skull cap. Alas, we would be late.

My driver said, “Let’s go back.”

“Will I be back on time?” I said.

“Yes, I will try,” he said.

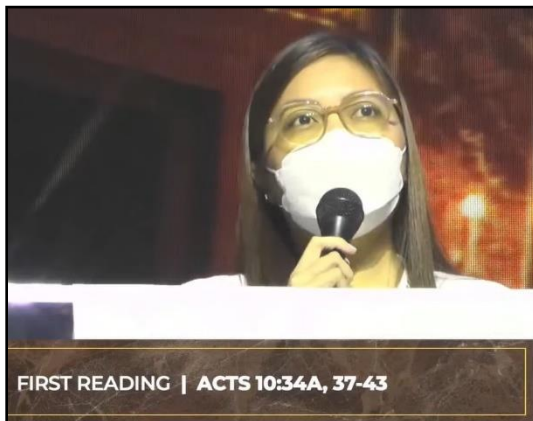
I was angry with my assistant but I said in my mind, “It’s Easter Sunday.”

Change the way you love. That is what our Lord wants: “Love still, even...”

That is a very difficult love, but that is what makes a person beautiful. That is what changes a person— when he finds out that he is still loved no matter what he has done.

Reading I: Acts 10:34A, 37-43

...They put him to death by hanging him on a tree. This man God raised [on] the third day and granted that he be visible, not to all the people, but to us, the witnesses chosen by God in advance, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commissioned us to preach to the people and testify that he is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness, that everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name.





Let's Celebrate!

So, let's celebrate today and be a new person. A new creation, a new way of seeing, a new way of loving, and hence, a new way of acting.

Now is the time of Easter, especially when we increase our efforts to improve. Lent is the preparation, now is the fulfillment. Don't say, Lent is over. We can do it again...

Like Christ, let us continue to ascend to our Father.

Let's make things beautiful for ourselves, for our country.

And let me mention this: You, young people, think of our country when you vote. Think of the kind of leader that you'll choose— not for your family, not for yourself — but for your country.

Think of the people who you can look up to and imitate, who live a new life and are not content with the old way of doing things— lying, buying votes, all of those things. How terrible it is that in this country celebrating 500 years of Christianity, we should be deluged by a Pandemic, not of COVID-19— but a Pandemic of lies.

During this time, think before God. Think what is for God. Think what is for your fellowmen and think of the person whom you wish to represent you as a true Christian, living for God and for our people.



Happy Feast!

**Remain you, remain new.
We are new! We are like Christ!
We are risen with Him! Amen.**

Worship!

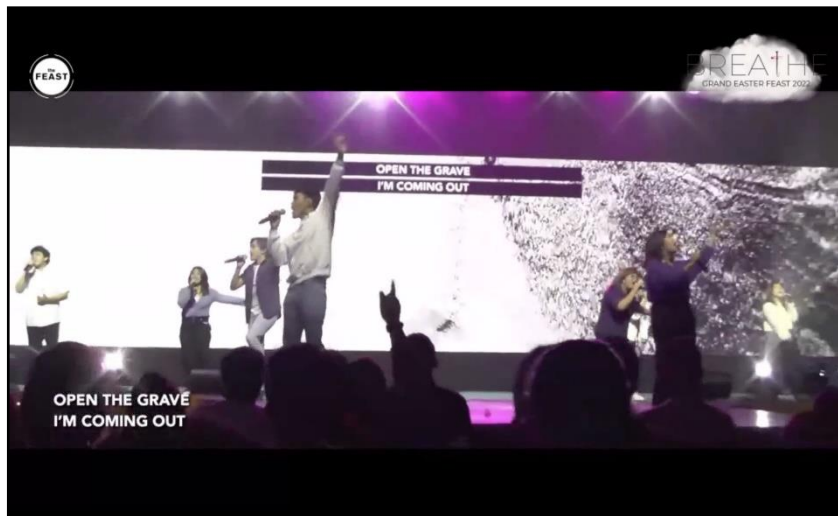
EXHORTATIONS

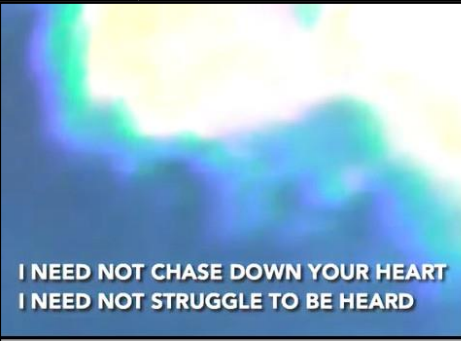


MHADZ PAMAONG: Let us believe that though things are difficult, it isn't impossible to live. Amen!
And what a better way to live this life than to be with Jesus?

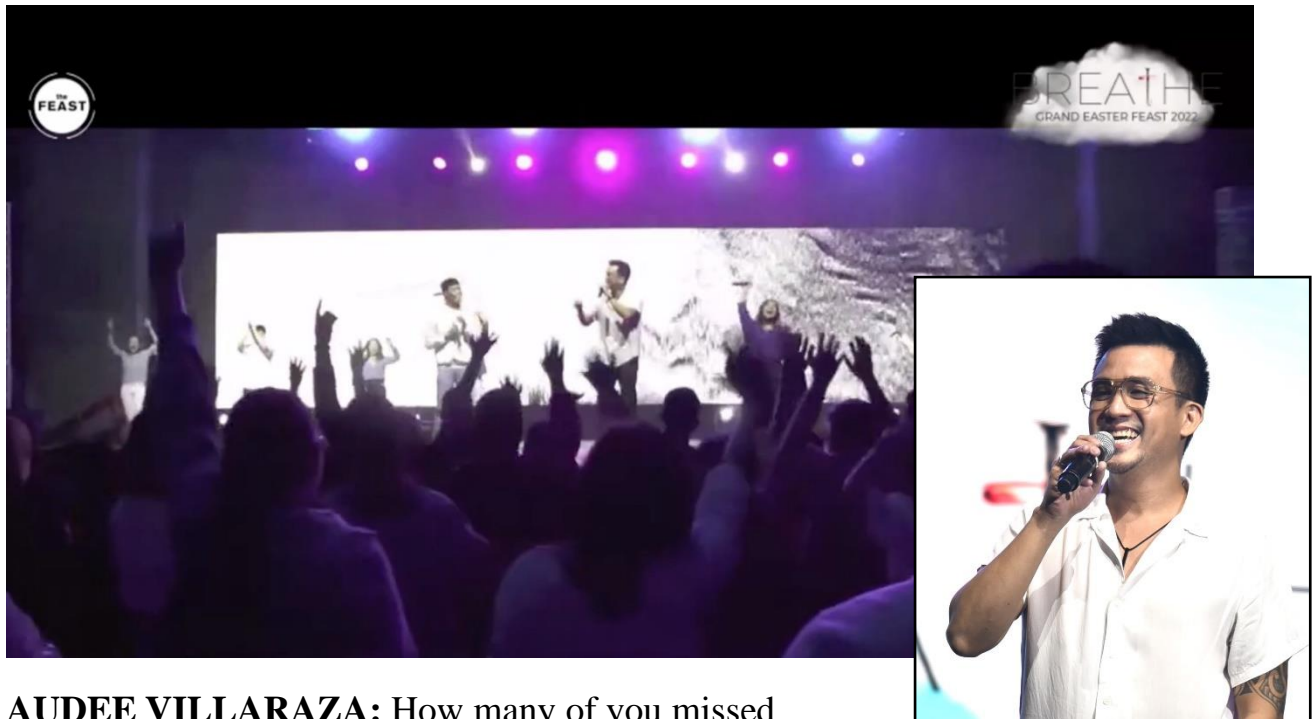
JHONN JAVIER: There is no better place than being in Your Presence, God. As one Feast, as one family, we gather again in this venue to give praise and honor to our risen King, to our Resurrected Lord. Hallelujah!

We're going to fill this place with the sound of Worship. Lift a sound of praise to our Risen Lord! We're going to sing like never before. We're going to sing louder than ever! We missed this church! So, come on, if you're ready, give praise to Jesus! Come on, lift your voice! Clap your hands! Hallelujah!





Welcome!



AUDEE VILLARAZA: How many of you missed this actual moment to be in the presence of Jesus?

It's amazing. I was talking with my friend, Doc Didoy Lubaton, backstage and we just happened to talk about the truth that we could not imagine what this moment would be like after two long years of not being together.

I mean, we've lost some good people along the way—they're not here with us. But I think we owe it to them to praise God for the life we still have.

I want to see the hands of those joining us for the first time ever.

Come on, lift your hands. I don't mean to embarrass you or that you would feel weirded out—because I want you to know this: that you might notice that there will be people around you—a bother or a sister-- and you might think, "They're OA—overacting singing the worship song—out of tune, doesn't even know the lyrics."

Let me give you the context: There are some persons here, you did not know their story. That they struggled, and they struggled, but God rescued them. You did not know that somebody here who had her heart broken, but God mended her heart. You don't know the kind of things that they swim through—just to be able to say, "I'm still standing."

So, I hope you don't mind that they raise their voices a little bit today. I hope you don't mind that they raise their hands a little bit higher today. Because all they want to do is say, "Thank You, Jesus! Thank You Jesus! Thank You Jesus!"



BO SANCHEZ: So good. Thank you, Audee. Give a big hand to the man who leads us. Most of you know that I'm a member like you, and I follow his lead and we are blessed by him. Give him another big hand. He deserves it.

I'm going to say two words. Two words. And they mean so much to me. And I know they can mean so much to you... Two words: *"I'm alive!"*

Last year, I thought I would not say those two words. Last year, I thought that I would not be able to stand here anymore. Last year, I thought that I would not be able to speak to you again here in PICC. And so, I stand before you, again here in PICC.

So, I stand before you to say, "I'm alive. I'm alive." And so, while I have breath, I will praise the Lord.

How many of you had COVID during the last two years? You know that feeling. You know that fear that grips your heart. How many of you know of somebody who had COVID—in your home, in your family, in your office. And to understand that while we have breath, we will praise the Lord. Amen. And my dear friends, I just want to say, thank you. Thank you for the past two years.

And you know what? We can tell one another, "Welcome back." Right? But we're not moving back. We're moving forward. We're going to continue to follow the Lord.

In my introduction in *The Feast* bulletin, I said that, you know, this place, they're going to renovate it. So, we need to move again. Just want you to know that that's okay.

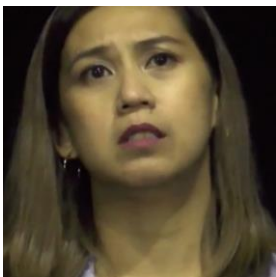
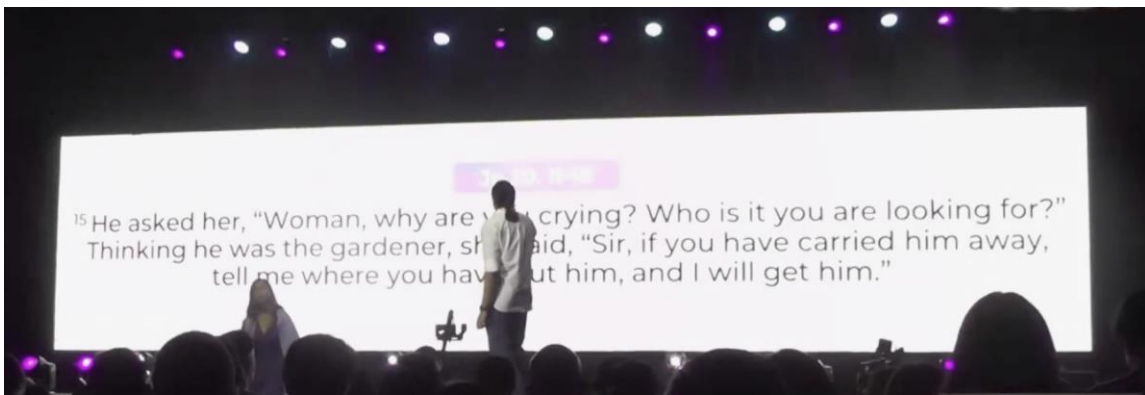
As long as I have breath, I will serve the Lord. Amen.

Talks

ALVIN BARCELONA: I'm going to read to you the Gospel verses that followed after the verses read in the Mass. From John 20:11-18:

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

10 But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. 12 And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. 13 They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."



14 Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). 17 Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" 18 Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"—and that he had said these things to her.—John 20:11-18 ESV

Big Question: Do You Want To See Jesus?

Of course. But let's learn from Mary Magdalene as we had already learned from Bishop Ted a while ago.

Three important secrets:

First Secret of why Mary Magdalene saw Jesus: She was present. You want to see Jesus?

No. 1:

BE PRESENT.



Mary Magdalene was the first to go to the tomb of Jesus to anoint the Body of the Lord—after the Sabbath. He died on Friday. (The following day was Saturday, the Sabbath, and according to Jewish custom, the anointment ritual should not be done on the Sabbath because it was rest day, away from the cares of the world, a time of silence with God).

Mary saw the tomb was empty. So, she ran to the apostles, specifically to Peter, and to the disciples whom Jesus loved.



And then, they ran. The Gospel said that the disciple whom Jesus loved ran first.

But it was Peter who went inside the tomb and saw the linen cloth. And then the disciple followed.



But still, they did not see the Body. When they saw nothing, they already left.



Tinge of Hope

Mary Magdalene was left.
Mary stayed. She was not just present,
she stayed on.

I know some who were present—
just showed up, so their names would be
checked on the attendance list, then went
home already.

But Mary stayed. Why? Maybe out
of confusion, or despair. Remember this was the same Mary Magdalene who saw
Jesus being nailed to the Cross, and hanging, and dying on the Cross. Presumably,
we know she was there until the burial. She saw Jesus die, buried—and the tomb
was even covered with a big rock. Then she would see there was no one in the
tomb? There must be so much confusion.

But couldn't it be that she stayed behind because there was a tinge of *hope*.
That she must be thinking, “Even as I couldn't fathom what happened, *Mayroon
Pa Ring Magandang Mangyayari*—something beautiful would happen.”

This Pandemic stole many things from us— and left so much damage.
But it also gave us many gifts. One gift was all of us were made *present*
to the persons important to us. We were made present in our home. Like for those
loving their family members, this lockdown was *heaven*. Actually, they are sad it's
over. But those who don't like each other were like, “When will this ever end?”

Even in our faith community, our spiritual family, the Light of Jesus, when
we had to put on hold our *live* gathering, we were very sad. But we discovered
something different: Presence. Even virtual (as we had instead our online Feast-at-
Home), suddenly, we saw each other on screen...

In truth, we are excited to see you all again. But we had a little concern:
Because when we were separated, there emerged smaller groups, the Light Groups,
Feast Lights. Bro. Bo even coined a phrase for it: *ATM Discipleship*. Not the kind
you withdraw disciples from your Automatic Teller Machine.

What we have been having is *At the Moment Discipleship*. The one-on-one
online chats: “*Kumusta ka? How are you?*”

It's like a beautiful happening. We became present for each other.
Nevertheless, we had a little apprehension that if we have a big, *live* gathering
again, we'd say, “It's fun, but I might not know anyone on the third row, and those
in the balcony I could hardly see...”

By the way, in the next Sunday gatherings, we will no longer require you to
register online, ahead of the day of our meeting. Why? Because there were those
who registered but did not show up. They are not present here.

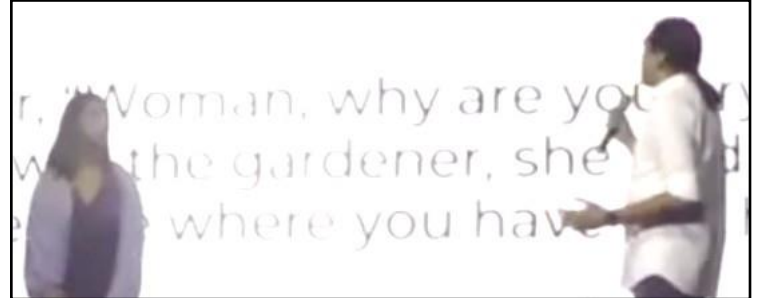


So, here's the second secret why Mary Magdalene saw Jesus.
You want to see Jesus?

No. 2:

BE PERSONAL.

Let's go back to our Reading:
15 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away."



How did Jesus first address Mary Magdalene? He said, **Woman**.

Bishop Ted earlier told us that that was a most respectful way of addressing a lady. But it's a generic term. I can call anyone here *Woman*.

So, Mary Magdalene, thinking that He was the gardener, she answered, "Sir..." – very respectful. But generic. I can call you *Sir*, with all respect.

So, Mary Magdalene did not recognize Jesus.

14 ...Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away."

Then, suddenly, Jesus said to her: 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary."

Mary... First name.

Then...*She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabboni!"*

Her response, *Rabboni*, is an endearing word: *Teacher*.

I am a teacher, so I know there's a difference between *Sir* and *Teacher*. The latter indicates there is already a *relationship* (student-teacher).

So, that was the time she recognized Jesus.

So, I told you when I give talks online, before I start my talk, I greet my audience one by one—when there were just 30 persons. But not anymore when there were already 200 persons...

Remember Jesus called her by her name? Turn to the persons beside you and ask their names. And calling a person by name may already start something. Like you may start to have a Light Group or a Feast Light.

Here's the third secret how to see Jesus.

No. 3:

BE PARDONED.



Jesus could have appeared first to Peter—he's the leader among the apostles.

Or, Jesus could have appeared first to His Mother.

By the way, our Easter morning ritual where we reenact the meeting of Jesus and Mary, has a basis—from the teachings of St. Ignatius, St. Vincent, up to St. Pope John Paul II.

Anyway, the Bible says Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene.

Let's read in Mark 16:9:

Now after he had risen early on the first day, of the week, he first appeared to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons.

And Bishop Ted said the number 7 means perfect. So, she was perfectly demonic. So, why did the Lord appear first to Mary Magdalene? And the verse added *7 demons*...

As Bishop Ted said, 7 means demonic. So, Mary was perfectly demonic.

So, why did He appear first to Mary? The answer, as we said, to give you, you, me, *hope*. That even how dark my past had been, even as all sorts of demons entered my life, the Lord Jesus is able to appear to me.

I guess, if Jesus showed Himself to a holy person—well, Mama Mary was the exception—our preaching today would be like this:

“You have to be holy and perfect so Jesus will go near you.”

The standard is so high, many would back out.

But when Jesus appeared to a woman who had a very dark past, we are able to breathe with relief and each one of us can say, “I still have hope to see Jesus in my life.”

So, no matter how dark your past had been— or even your present— if you are in the darkness of fear, of confusion, of sin, of helplessness and hopelessness, you have hope.

Look up to Jesus. He will take your hands, He will pull you up—even you are muddy, even if you are deep in mud, look at Jesus, so He can pull you up.

I have a bonus for you, how you will find the true meaning of seeing Jesus. When you see Jesus...

No. 4: Be Prepared to Show Jesus to Others.

If you were overjoyed when you saw Jesus, you just can't keep Him to yourself. You've got tell the world of your encounter with Him.

Bishop Ted is correct. Jesus appeared first appeared to Mary Magdalene. You know she was the patron of women, right? She's the patron of gossips—if you tell something to a woman, she will reveal it right away, she will talk about it.

But as Bishop Ted said, in the case of Mary Magdalene, it was just right to spread it because it's not fake— this is the greatest news the world has ever heard, and that the world continues to need to hear.

So, I repeat: You want to see Jesus? You will see Him, and be prepared to talk about Him throughout the world —like what Mary Magdalene did:



Tell the world,
"I HAVE SEEN THE LORD!"



Reflection

DIDOY LUBATON: It's a family event...

Say, "Welcome home to the family!"

For the past three days, those who joined the Holy Week Retreat took part in several guided reflections. We prayed, we meditated intimately in the Presence of God. Today, we will be doing that again to complete the process. Use these few minutes to quiet your mind. Let's begin...

Close your eyes. Quiet down your mind.

Be in the Presence of God. Take a slow, deep breath. Let it fill you. And again, another breath, slowly, and deeply. A breath which makes you lighter, and lighter, and lighter. Continue deep breathing when you feel weightless, exhale the air slowly, silently, letting the air propel you back in time, far away in the distance, to the time of Jesus Christ.

It is Easter Sunday morning. And you are there at the tomb. Before daybreak. And you are allowed to experience the Resurrection. You are lying down on the same tomb, but the Father and the Spirit come to raise you from the dead. They are experiencing great loss. Jesus is dead. And they miss Him. The angel rolls away the stone, and they enter the tomb.

The Father proclaims, "Death, you are defeated. Death, you are broken."

The Spirit breathes life into your body. The Trinity unwraps the grave clothes from your body. You open your eyes, you sit up, you feel new life in your veins. Death leaves your body. You are filled with joy. The Trinity embraces you with joy. Together again. Separated no more. All the pain and suffering and injury are healed in you. Leaving only scars. And you are filled with love. Love for your people. Love everywhere. You have conquered death. You have won the victory.

Now, you see Jesus in all His Resurrected Glory approach you.

He says, "You have accompanied Me in my passion and death. You died with me. Now, receive new life with me."

You run to Him and you embrace.

He says, "It is so good to see you again. It is so good to be alive and to be with you again."

Suddenly, you are filled and overwhelmed with joy. His joy fills and overflows you. Everything is good. You stand there for a long time. Just being together with Jesus. Your heart is filled with peace, reunited with Jesus. Take some time now to talk with Jesus. Say what's in your heart and mind. ...

Now, open your eyes. Breathe. Inhale. Exhale.



Love Offering

DR. RYAN CAPITULO: Happy Easter, my dear Feast Family!

It's truly great to be here—to see each other face-to-face.

Let me tell you why and how we should worship God. We worship Jesus because He gave His best for us. When He suffered and died on the Cross, He gave everything—His life for us. And by giving His best, Jesus ensured that we will receive the best blessings, the best graces, the best healing.

And that is the reason we should give out the best when we worship the Lord. When we worship Jesus in the Mass, we give the best attention, participation, meditation, and prayer. When we praise God in our communal Worship, we give our best singing, even we're out of tune. We give our best dancing. Even if our body is stiff, our moves have no rhythm.

When we worship God, we give our best effort—to be a follower of Jesus and be His disciple.

My dear brothers and sisters, I know, and you know that our tithes, our love offering, they are also forms of Worship to the Lord.

In Philippians 4:18, St. Paul said that our offerings, they are a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice pleasing to God. And so, I challenge all of you to give your best love offering to God. And I assure you: the offering that you hold in your hand is a fragrant aroma, that will rise to Heaven. I challenge you, give your best to God. And I assure you that offering you are holding is an acceptable sacrifice pleasing to God.



Lift your offering with me and say this with me:

*With my word,
my thoughts, with my
actions, with my life,
and with my love offering
this is my best for now.*

*Bless me more,
so I can give more.*

In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Grand Easter Feast Message

Embrace the Pain

BO SANCHEZ: Father, we thank you that today is the day that you brought us through the deadend of our life. Deadends are doorways to Your Presence.

So, here we are. We thank you that you have shown the way.

In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

I'd like to give you one last message and it's a message that I want you to, first of all, say it with me: *Embrace the Pain*.

This short talk will have two parts.

The first part, two stories. And then after that, I'll unpack the Word.

You might be thinking, "*Bro. Bo, parang hindi naman bagay yung message mo*—It seems your message, *Embrace the Pain*, does not fit the occasion: Easter!"

But I'm telling you, it totally fits.

First story:

A young woman comes to me, bawling her eyes out, a waterfall of tears cascading down her cheeks.

Her first statement to me was, "Bro. Bo, I'm angry at God!"

And then she just shared and shared and cried and cried in front of me. She was talking about two business failures.

Then, she said this: "*Bro. Bo, bakit ganyan si Lord*—Why is God like that? He gave me a dream. And then He gives me obstacles-- so that the dream does not come true."

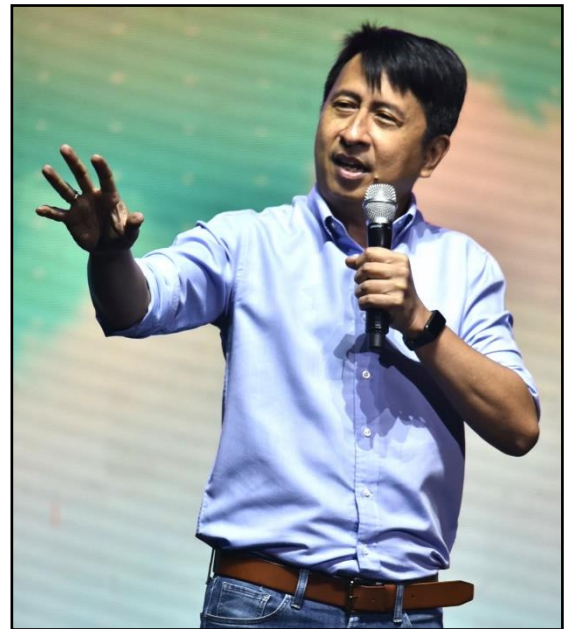
You know, when people do that in front of me— start sharing their story, and cry and cry— I just I let them speak. And usually, what happens—I don't know if this is an experience that you have—at the end, they feel better. Yes or no? They actually feel better.

And there are those hilarious moments when the person tells me, after crying and sharing the story, "Bro. Bo, thank you so much. I feel so good. Thank you for your wisdom."

Wala naman akong sinabi. I actually didn't say anything.

But in this one moment, after this person shared her story, I said—and I really felt that she was ready to listen—"May I share my story?"

She nodded, and I told her my story.



Only Two Choices

When I was 12 years old, I gave my life to God. And then what happened was at 13, I began to serve Him. I really gave all out. You know— tried celibacy, lived in a *bodega* – warehouse—with other missionaries, and we slept on the floor.

All out, 100 percent, dedicated to God.

And after 13 years, I was 30 years old, I decided I was going to get married. And I decided I needed a business to support my family. And that's what I did— set up a business.

I told her, “Just like you, I failed. Second business, it failed.”

Then I looked at her, and I said, “Last count, I failed in 18 businesses. If there is one person that can demand, ‘Lord, bless my business,’ that’s me. “Lord, I gave my whole life to you—100 percent. *Please*, bless me!”

But no. 18 businesses. I tried everything: concerts with foreign artists, products from China, imported to sell. I tried investing in clinics, restaurants —they all failed. And every failure was painful.

But today, I have two profitable businesses, 200 employees. God is good.

She said, “Bro. Bo, you’re telling me never to give up—until I succeed.”

I told her, “No. I’m telling you to redefine *success*.”

I told her this, and I’m telling you now: “I want you to get rid of this fantasy in your mind—that just because you’re praying, just because you’re following the Lord, you will be exempted from problems and from pain.”

Get rid of that hallucination. The earlier you can get rid of that, the better for you. I told her there is no such thing as a painless life.

You have only Two Choices in this World:

No. 1. A life of pain with God.

No. 2. A life of pain without God.

There are only two choices. You know what success is? Success is embracing your pain—with God beside you. That is success.

And I told her, “Today I have two profitable businesses. Do you think I don’t have problems? Any entrepreneur will tell you the bigger the business, the more the problems.”

Am I talking to somebody here? That I would eat problems— breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

No, there is no such thing as a life without pain, and a life without problems.

But that’s my point: Success is embracing your pain, right now— with God right there beside you. That is success.



You have only two choices in this world.
No. 1. A life of pain with God.
No. 2. A life of pain without God.

The Day My Life Changed

My second story:

I remember, my first child, when he was still a small baby— like all other babies. That baby is already playing the keyboard here somewhere. He's an adult now.

When he was a baby, I was trying to put up my business. I didn't know how to sell. And any entrepreneur should know how to sell.

I signed up to a networking company—to get free training on selling. And I told myself, I can do this. I am speaker—and selling is talking. Oh, my gosh. How wrong I was! Selling was brutal. Nine out of 10 tries, I would get rejected. One bought because he just pitied me. It was so painful because, you know, when you're a new sales person, every rejection is not a rejection of your product. They're rejecting you. And you take it personally.

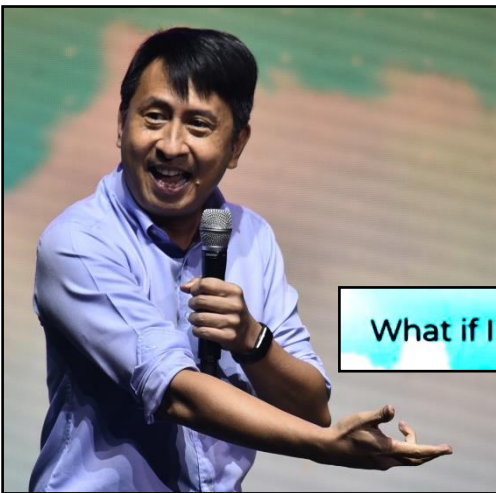
I remember one night, I had to do a sales presentation – three hours away, even through traffic jams. No one bought. Not a single sale. And I went home so dejected. It was midnight. I was so tired. No one bought. And in my mind, I had only one thought: "I'll give up this craziness."

But a few minutes later, I was lying on bed, I looked at my baby, at my wife, and I knew I had no choice.

And then a thought: an idea entered my mind. I said, "What if I just accept that this is normal? This pain, this rejection, it's just a part of life. Accept it."

I was staring at the ceiling and at the corner of my eye I was looking at my little baby, his chest heaving up and down.

And I said, "*Tanggapin ko na lang*. I'll just accept it. *Masakit talaga ang buhay*. Life is really painful. There is rejection."



What if I embraced pain as a normal part of life?

The moment I became comfortable with pain, I became unstoppable.

That day was the day that changed my life. Because after that, I'm telling you, when you become comfortable with pain, you become unstoppable.

In the next 12 months, I sold a million-peso worth of products. After that, I put up my own business, went through so much more pain-- until today, I'm earning 100 times more.

Both Sides Now

This is not about sales. This message is not about business. This is about *life*. This is about *all of life*. You want to have a great marriage? Be ready for massive pain. You want to raise up great kids,? Be ready for massive amounts of pain.

Is anybody listening to me here? You want to grow spiritually? And follow Jesus? Oh, man, you got to get ready for massive amounts of pain. Be comfortable with pain. And you will achieve what God wants you to achieve.



You know, there is this beautiful song by Joni Mitchell. She was 17, 18 years old, she got pregnant out of wedlock, and she realized she could not afford to raise her child. And she gave it up for adoption. That was so painful. And, one time, as a young woman, she was riding a plane, looked through the window, and she saw clouds. And how beautiful the clouds were. And she wrote the first stanza of the song

Both Sides Now...

*Rows and flows of angel's hair, and ice cream castles in the air,
and feathered canyons everywhere, I looked at clouds that way...*

But there are days when clouds are not pretty— they're ugly.

But now they only block the sun, they rain and snow on everyone...

So many things I would have done, but clouds got in the way...

And isn't life just like clouds? Sometimes, it's pretty, and sometimes it's ugly...

But what you need to do is to look at both and embrace both —the pain and the prize...

*I look at clouds from both sides now, from win and lose, but still somehow,
it's life's illusions I recall. I really don't know life, at all...*



New Humans

In John 20—we've been reading it from the Mass, and then Alvin talked about it...

21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit." —John 20:21-22 ESV

In verse 22, Jesus, He did this to His apostles: He breathed on them, the Holy Spirit, that's what it says, John 20. We do not see the verse in plain English because in Hebrew, there's only one word for *breath*, and *air*, and *wind*, and *spirit*. It's *ruach*.

Where does it come from? And I want you to understand that Jesus, He *knew* — He was referencing Genesis 2:7 ESV:

7 then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

— Genesis 2:7 ESV

That's how He created the world. That's how He created us. He got soil and He breathed upon it. And Adam and Eve came forth.

Friends, on Resurrection Day, when Jesus breathed upon His disciples, what was He doing? He was recreating new humans. He was recreating new humans.

What kind of humans?

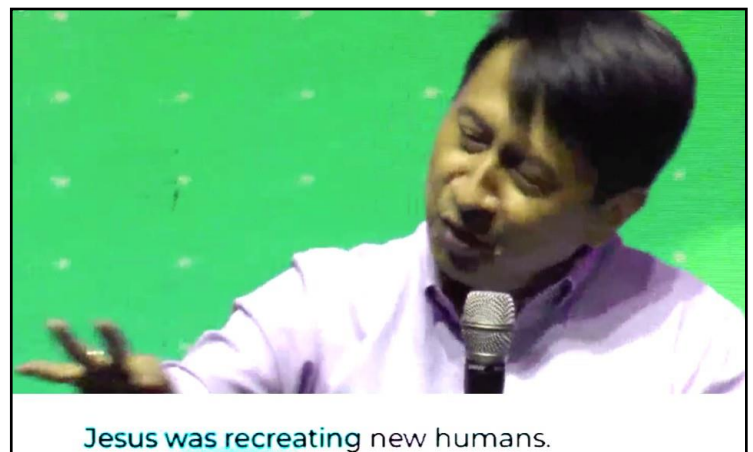
In Matthew 28, the last appearance of the Risen Jesus, before He ascended to Heaven, verse 16 says:

16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.— Matthew 28:16 ESV

Going to the mountain, the 11 disciples left for Galilee. The mountain was in Galilee. So, from Jerusalem, to Galilee. Mountain, Galilee. Does that ring a bell?

My dear Feasters, for two years, we unpacked Matthew. Two years during the Pandemic—verse, by verse, by verse. And if there's something that I want you to remember, there was a mountain in Galilee. In Chapter 5, where Jesus inaugurated His Kingdom, the greatest sermon was preached on a mountain—in Galilee.

And so, Matthew had that to tell you—that this is what's going to happen: The first thing Jesus talked about His Kingdom on a mountain in Galilee was the *Beatitudes*: *Happy are the poor in spirit...Happy are those who mourn...*



People To Love

We were saying that The Beatitudes — and a lot of people think this way, in fact, books written about The Beatitudes refer to it— The Beatitudes as *attitudes*. And it's nice because the words rhyme.

But that's not the primary meaning of The Beatitudes. They are not just attitudes to have— but *people to love*.

The Beatitudes —we kept on saying it over and over again for the past two years while we studied Matthew— they are the VIP list of the Kingdom. And when you think about... Okay, Bro. Bo, I still don't get it.

I'll give you an example. In verse 6, Chapter 5, the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus said one of the Beatitudes— one of the 8— this: *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.*

My dear friends, ever since I was a kid, I would understand this verse as *yung mga tao na gustong magpakabait*— people who want to be good: *Blessed are the people who hunger and thirst for righteousness.*

That was wrong.

Do you know what this verse means? Blessed are those who are going through injustice, and who are suffering— and they are hungry and thirsty that God would right the wrong that is happening. They are hungry and thirsty for the God of Justice— to give them Justice. Because they are suffering from injustice.

The entire Beatitudes are people who are suffering, who are poor, who are grieving, and mourning. The people in the periphery of society.

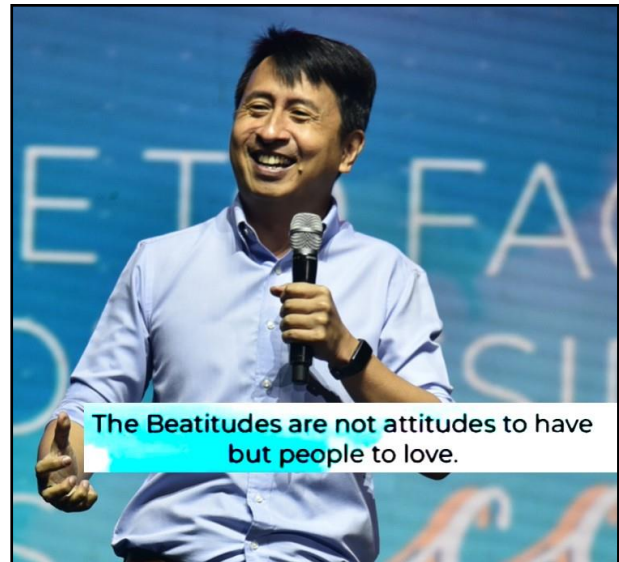
Jesus is saying, *"This is the kind of Kingdom that I want. They are my VIPS. And if you want to follow Me, and if you want to be part of my Kingdom..."*

Do you want to be part of the Kingdom? Do you want to report to King Jesus?

"...You've got to make them your VIP as well. The suffering, the poor, those going through injustice, the oppressed, the people giving going through brokenness and pain."

I began my talk by saying *Embrace the Pain*.

But if you want to follow Jesus, you don't only embrace your pain. You embrace the pain of the people around you. But actually, your pain— you don't want to embrace. So, how can you ever embrace the pain of others?



God's VIP

A lot of people, they are looking for a fairy tale. They are looking for a painless life. But what God is telling you today, embrace your pain, and then you go out, ask people around you, what is the pain that they are going through?

“Arvin, *kumusta?* How are you?
And what is your pain?”

“My family, *may pneumonia ang anak ko—* my child has pneumonia.”

“You have four children. Nag-i-stock market ka, di ba?”

“Opo.”

“Ilang taon ka na sa Feast?”

“15 years na po.”



If I want to follow the Kingdom of Jesus, if I want to report to King Jesus, people like Arvin and his pain, they become my pain. Not just my pain. I must embrace his pain.

Already 15 years working with us. And every single day, I need to make this decision: I'm not going to live for myself. I'm going to make him a VIP of my heart.

Thank you, Arvin.

Let us pray:

*In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.*

Oh, Lord, we got it all wrong. Here we are, trying to look for that painless life. How wrong we are! When what you want is that we embrace our pain and the of the pain of those around us... Make their suffering my suffering. Make their brokenness my brokenness. Lord, ang layo ko sa gusto Mo— I'm so far from what You want. I want my life to be comfortable. I want my life to be convenient. If there's something wrong, something doesn't go my way, reklamo ako—I complain.

Oh, God, I am so far away... I need Breath that comes from You. I need that Spirit. Make me a new human being— please! Change my life. I want to report to King Jesus.

My dear friends, if you're ready to report to King Jesus, to embrace your pain, and the pain of the people around you, may I invite you to plant one knee or two knees on the ground and report to King Jesus. And say this after me:

Jesus, help me. Breathe into me Your Spirit. Recreate a new human being in me. In Jesus Name. Amen.





Mercy Ministries

*Come to me, all you that labor and are heavy laden
and I will give you rest. —Matthew 11:28*

PAG-ASA NG PAMILYA Part 4

Feast of Hope

THE Pag-asa ng Pamilya Scholarship Foundation has given me education – both academic and spiritual.

We are a family of modest means. My father Roberto and mother Michelle are caretakers in a resort, earning for the basic needs of my sister Shelbert and me. Yes, just the *basics*—hardly nothing more for our education.

Sounds like a jargon already, but I am here to attest that *God is good*.

By His grace, I have a cousin, Camille Alday, who happens to be a godchild of my grandmother, Lola Ching Certeza. And Lola Ching just happens to know about the Pag-asa program.

Learning about it, I got excited and ventured to apply for the scholarship. And again, by God’s grace, I was accepted! I became a scholar when I was in Grade 12 at the Janosa National High in Binangonan, Rizal.

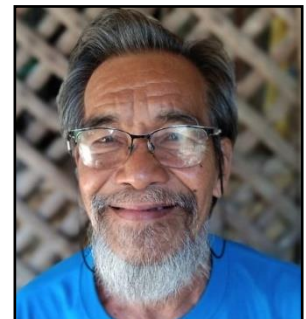
Here, at right, is my class photo, Grade 11 in Janosa High.

With the Pag-asa grant, I now worry less about my school needs. Like, before, I didn’t have a mobile phone. So, I used to borrow one from my Lolo Domingo Alday (*right*).

But now, I have my own. I’m so thankful. Especially, because of the Coronavirus Disease (COVID) quarantines we have to do School-From-Home, so, I need a phone for the online classes.



By **HERSHEY ALDAY**



Spiritual Home

I am grateful that I have a grant for my academics—for this led to a bigger, priceless blessing: The Feast!

Sis. Rowena Cequeña, a board member of Pagasa, introduced to us scholars The Feast online— called The Feast-at-Home-- sharing the link to our group chat.

I first attended The Feast-at-Home in December 2021. And, this poster on the site welcomed me home! Yes, my spiritual home. What a joy!

You see, I used to be a lector in our church in Bangad, Talim Island, in Binangonan, Rizal where my family and I used to live. There, I attended church every Sunday. But we moved to Cavite, so I stopped serving, especially when I started college.

Through The Feast, I felt the Lord calling me back to know Him more, to serve Him. Because at The Feast I am learning not only about religious matters but practical lessons on how to be a true disciple of our Lord Jesus.

The Feast has helped me face life with courage, as I learned here my now favorite Bible verse, Isaiah 41:10: *“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”*

I am so grateful, that even online, our Pag-asa leaders are kindly taking care of us. *Above right* is a screenshot during our Zoom meeting with Pag-asa scholars and directors, *from left*: me, Mr. Samuel Uy, president of Pag-asa, his wife, Sis. Marina Uy, and Ma’am Sis. Rowena Cequeña.

I’m currently in first year college at Amable M. Aguiluz College (AMA), working on a degree as Bachelor of Science in Business Administration Major in Marketing. There are times when I find studying hard because I prefer the face-to-face interaction classes. I understand the lessons better that way. Still, I get motivated to do well because my priority now are my studies. I want to graduate and find a job so I can help my family.

Though we still have our day-to-day problems, I always find comfort and security knowing that the Lord is my strength. Indeed, as I learned in The Feast another promise of God, in Exodus 15:2: *“The Lord is my strength and my song; he has given me victory. Whenever you feel weak, always remember that there’s a God who’s always with you to lift you up, don’t lose hope because he gives you strength and he’s not abandoning you.”*





Blessings

From Stall to School



I'M Edelyn, 22 years old.

In this photo for this, my sharing, I am smiling confidently, and I'm in my best school outfit.

Like life is good.

But it wasn't at all in the past.

My parents separated. Now, my mother Letecia, my two sisters, Eleanor and Emily, and I live in San Antonio Gerona, Tarlac.

To fend for us, my mother works as a cook.

By EDELYN CUARTEROS



I am the eldest, so, early on, I knew I had to help out to ease my mother's burden—and to be able to afford school. I worked on odd jobs—as domestic helper, waitress, cashier, ice cream vendor, cook in a food stall.

Yup, *at left*, that's me in my working shirt and jeans, cooking *lugaw* (porridge) and *mami* (noodle soup) in the stall.

Quite a contrast from my photo above.

Transition

How did I transition from stall to school?

The Lord sent us a good man—Sir Rey Ortega (*right*, with very supportive wife Myrna), founder of Pag-asa ng Pamilya Scholarship Foundation. We met him through my mother's employer who was a friend of Sir Rey. Finding about our dire situation, Sir Rey just saw to it that I get a Pag-asa grant.



Possible Dream

In photo *at right*, that's me (*2nd from right*) with my classmates at my alma mater, Corazon C. Aquino High School, during a competition— Kasaysayan ng Daigdig 2017, *from left*: Ellen Agacite, Christine Niel Dizon, Andrea Lou Rosas, Cherie Evangelista, Cristina Diamzon, Hanna Gonzales, May Ann Belen, Rogelio Dela Cruz, me, and Hazel Parazo.



And here I am with my Mama Letecia, outside our house in Tarlac. It was the day I graduated from high school.

I became a beneficiary of Pag-asa in 2015, starting when I was in high school.

And I am a Pag-asa scholar until now at the Tarlac State University

At right, here I am with my classmates during face-to-face Midterm Examination in Tarlac State University during our second semester in college, *from left*: Mary Joy De Guzman, Mikee Mercado, Katherine Asio, me, and Ahrwen Derije.



Shortly after I got the Pag-asa scholarship, sadly, Sir Rey passed on. He is gone now, but I know in my heart that he is peacefully resting in the home of our God. I hope he will not get tired of watching over my family and me.

I can say that we still have our ups and downs in our family, but really, life has been much better since I became a scholar of Pag-asa.

My mother's dream is for me to have a college degree. She always says that education is a treasure for us to keep no matter what we go through in life. And her dream will soon come true. I'm not a working student anymore, as I am now focusing more in my studies-- since I am graduating soon with a degree as Bachelor of Public Administration and Governance.

This is one big achievement for us as a family.

We are very, very grateful -- to Sir Rey, to Pag-asa, and above all, to God.

Indeed, just as what my favorite Bible verse, Matthew 19:26, says, "*With God, all things are possible.*"



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.

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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

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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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Go and make disciples of all men.

— Matthew 28:19