



NEWSLETTER
October 16, 2022



God Will Respect Your Wrong Decisions

THERE are days when it's easy to trust God.

But there are certain days when it's an all-out war between my Self-Will and God's Will. Between what I want versus what God wants. Whenever I let my own desires win, I'm telling God I'm the god of my life.

The insane thing is that God respects our wrong decisions. If we insist on living our life on our terms, He'll allow us-- which is a scary idea! God will let the bad consequences of our wrong choices happen.

And that's what we'll explore today. Welcome back to our Feast Talk series on *Exodus*, titled *Special Delivery: God Will Rescue You*.

We tackle Talk 4: *God Will Provide Mercy*.

Have a heart-changing Feast today!
May your dreams come true,

Bo Sanchez



LETTERS

Thank You!

THE *Thank You!* part of *The Feast Family* is toward the end of the issue. It's still there, *page 33*. But we are saying "Thank You!" now because *Gratitude* was the theme of the Gospel last Sunday, October 9, 2022, which our Feast Mass Priest

Presider Fr. Paolo Asprer well expounded on in this issue's *Flashback* section. Fr. Paolo said being grateful is not simply feeling thankful. It has something to do with being *holy*. Read on, *page 3*.



Of late, we do have big blessings to thank for.

First, the Feast talk today. We don't like committing sins. But God even respects our wrong decisions-- as our founder, Bro. Bo Sanchez points out in



his introduction of Talk 4 our series on *Exodus*, *page 1*.

Second, the touching prayer of our Worship leader, Bro. Audee Villaraza, asking God to restore hope for our lost dreams, *page 10*.

Third, Feast preacher Bro. Didoy Lubaton's enlightening explanation of our Feast Talk 3. When you read the title, *God Is Always with Me*, you may be like, "Oh, I know that already."



But wait, Bro. Didoy gives four

messages we must reflect on, and yes, really thankful for, *pages 12-27*.

And definitely, heartfelt Thank You! for Part 2 of the Grace To Be Born, our featured Ministry in our *Mercy Ministries* section. You will definitely be grateful for the inspiring story of Gloria Sampang, social worker for Grace, *page 28*, and Maria, one of our beneficiaries, *page 31*.



Of course, this will not be a *Thank You!* issue if we do not say Thank You, to our Good God for our Feast Family, and all of you reading our online news magazine.

Thank You, Lord, forever!

Glory,

Randy Borromeo
Media Ministry
Executive Director





FLASHBACK! **OCTOBER 9, 2022**

Holy Mass



FR. PAOLO ASPRER
on the Gospel: Luke 17:11-19

Edited Excerpts:

Peace and blessings!

There's this British newspaper that conducted a survey on who's the happiest, the most blessed, and the most fortunate people on Earth.

On top of the list, No. 1, is a child building sand castles on the seashore. No. 2: a mother bathing her baby. No. 3: a doctor who just revived a dying patient. No. 4: an artist who just finished his obra maestra, an artwork, and he's whistling for a job well done. No. 5: a man who prays in gratitude and thanksgiving.

Grateful people are happy people. Grateful people are not only happy, but they are healthy. people as well. Grateful people are not only happy, healthy, but they are truly holy people.

Even with the Coronavirus Disease (COVID) Pandemic, with all our personal battles and struggles, with the imperfection of the world that we live in, there is something to be grateful for each day.

Gratitude

The theme of gratitude pervades our liturgical readings this 28th Sunday in Ordinary time. The First Reading and the Gospel are about lepers who were healed by God's salvation.

You know, during the Biblical time and the time of Jesus, lepers were considered outcasts—living dead. They were forbidden to worship at the temple. They were forbidden to be with their families. And around their neck, hang a bell to warn people on the streets, that they were approaching, so the people would not go near them-- because they would be rendered ritually unclean.

So, you see how poor, how lowly the situation of the lepers during the time of Jesus, the Biblical times.

Here, in the Gospel Reading, 10 lepers approached the Lord, "Please heal us." And they were healed.

The nine were Jewish people. They went straight to the priests because priests are the ones who certify the lepers were healed and they can already be with their families and worship at the temple.

But there was this Samaritan leper who went straight to our Lord-- because he's not bound by the ritual purity laws.

So, he went straight to Jesus and thanked Him.

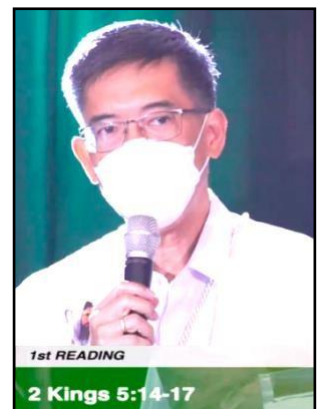


Reading I: 2 Kings 5:14-17

Naaman went down and plunged into the Jordan seven times at the word of Elisha, the man of God. His flesh became again like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean of his leprosy.

Naaman returned with his whole retinue to the man of God. On his arrival he stood before Elisha and said, "Now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel. Please accept a gift from your servant."

Elisha replied, "As the LORD lives whom I serve, I will not take it" and despite Naaman's urging, he still refused. Naaman said: "If you will not accept, please let me, your servant, have two mule-loads of earth, for I will no longer offer holocaust or sacrifice to any other god except to the LORD."



Everything Is a Blessing

In the Second Reading, we have here St. Paul telling us that because of our experience of God's salvation, we are moved to profound gratitude.

And there's the Gospel acclamation, "In all circumstances, give thanks."

Does God need our gratitude? Well, actually, no. Our thanksgiving doesn't add up to the greatness of God nor would it compel Him to give us more.

Our thanksgiving is for us-- for our benefit-- so that we would grow in grace. So that we would remember that everything is a blessing.

Oftentimes, we remember the things we should forget and we forget the things that we should remember-- isn't it?

Kaya nga sabi ni Fr. Mike La Guardia, "Tayong mga Pilipino, mga likas na mga magsasaka—We are by nature farmers, mapagtanim." – Implanting, burying, keeping in the heart the hurts, the painful memories from the past.

You know, gratitude is the lens by which and through which we see that everything is *grace*. Everything is *gift*. Eyes on the sky, feet on the ground.

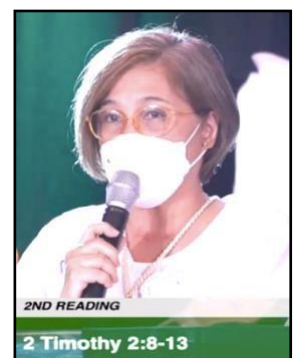


Reading II: 2 Timothy 2:8-13

Beloved: Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendant of David:

such is my gospel, for which I am suffering, even to the point of chains, like a criminal. But the word of God is not chained.

Therefore, I bear with everything for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, together with eternal glory. This saying is trustworthy: If we have died with him we shall also live with him; if we persevere we shall also reign with him. But if we deny him he will deny us. If we are unfaithful he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself.





Be Grateful for the Little Things

My dear friends, with this Pandemic that we've been experiencing, it's really good to begin and end our day with gratitude. We have to be grateful for the little things-- the seemingly insignificant things in our life. Because one day, we would look back and realize that these little things, seemingly trivial and insignificant, these were really the important things in our life.

For example, when you wake up in the morning, you check your pulse. A heart that beats today is not guaranteed to be beating tomorrow.

That's the reality of life, the fragility of life. The little things that we receive from the Lord, we have to be grateful for. We are here in The Feast, we're praising God. We are not in a hospital's intensive care unit (ICU) hooked with all sorts of equipment.

We have to be grateful. Sabi nga nila, pagdating sa biyaya ng Diyos-- as it is often said that. when it comes to God's blessing, there is no such thing as big and small. Actually, it is our mindset, our outlook, our receptivity which is small.

Who among us has the clearest eyesight of all? Are they those with eyeglasses? Are they the accountants and treasurers? Are they with the clearest eyesight?

Grateful people have the clearest eyesight of all.

What was the first sin? The first sin of Adam and Eve was not simply disobedience. The first sin was ingratitude-- forgetfulness. You know, Adam and Eve forgot that the Garden of Eden was a gift from God, not meant to be possessed, to be seized. It was meant to be received as a gift.

We have to be grateful for that gift, of the Garden of Eden.

The moment we seize, we usurp, we possess what is not ours, that's the beginning of our despair, distraction, and death.

Nakalimot si Adan at Eba na ang lahat sa Garden of Eden ay kaloob, ay biyaya.-- Adam and Eve forgot that the Garden of Eden was a gift, a blessing.



The Gift of Gratitude

My dear friends, gratitude is not only beneficial to our soul, but to our body as well —body, soul, and spirit.

When we are grateful, that is one of the best antidotes to toxicity.

Like what? Like envy.

What is envy? Envy is the art of counting another person's blessings while we ignore our own blessings.

I recall this poem, *Desiderata*. It points out that when you compare yourself with another person, you would only become either vain or bitter. There is always someone greater or lesser than you are—greater or lesser in opportunities, in beauty, in wealth, in talents. But when it comes to our dignity and freedom as children of God, we are all equal. We are all sinners in need of God's mercy.

My dear friends, that is the gift and the challenge of our readings today. But truly, may we grow in that gratitude. In growing with that gift of gratitude, mas nakikilala natin ang Diyos-- we get to know God more; mas nakikilala natin kung sino tayo—we get to know who we are. That apart from God's grace, we are all naked-- we are all beggars outside the mercy, the providence of God.

I recall this one mystic who said, "If the only prayer in your life—if the only words in your prayer that you have uttered in your entire life—is "Thank You, Lord. I am sorry, Lord," — then that in itself suffices. Amen.

Worship!

EXHORTATION

ZACH PE: Isaiah 41:10 says, *“Be not afraid for I am with you—for God is with you.”*

You know how sometimes in our life we get to a point where we ask God, “Where are You in my crisis? Where were You during these last two years of the Pandemic? Where were You in my trials in my marriage, in my business, in my work?”

Let me repeat Isaiah 41:10, *“Be not afraid for I am with you.”*

He never left. He never left!

As we continue to worship God ---- even in our confusion, even at this moment that we’re asking Him, “Where were you?” I invite you to come before the Presence of God. He never left... He is here...

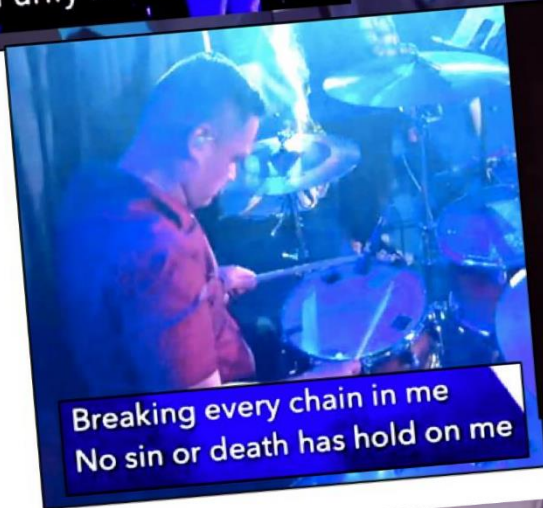
Let’s pray for a moment:

Heavenly Father, we worship You. We come before You today. We bring to You our baggage, all of ourselves, our past, our worries of the future...

As we try to reach out to You, Lord God, we want to feel Your embrace.

We know you’re here.







We stand in the Presence of the One Whom we believe can make things new in our life. We stand in the Presence of our God and we believe He can raise the dead to life. If you are somebody here right now and you've got something in your life that has died, that has been broken, I want you to raise your hands right now in the Presence of Jesus. Let's pray together:

Father, in Your midst right now, we acknowledge that only You have the power to raise the dead back to life. Only You have that ability. And I pray for every person, God, here in this place.

There are those here who have lost something in life—dead dreams, dreams that have been parked and shelved because they've lost hope. They've lost the passion, they've lost the energy.

Father, I pray that in Jesus' Name, You raise that dream back to life. You resurrect that dream in Your proper time.

Here, Lord, there is someone ailing, sick, with a broken body. I pray, Jesus, that in Your Name, by Your Stripes, we are healed. Whatever ailment is here--cancer, diabetes, hypertension—we believe that Your Blood rages through our body. And it's restoring us back to life—new energy, new grace, new breath filling our lungs, and you're also strengthening our bones so that we can stand once again.

Father, I pray for every person here who has a broken relationship with somebody. I pray that You restore that relationship. That forgiveness would reign in our relationships. That unity would reign in our families. Only You can do that, Jesus. We believe in You.

And lastly, I pray for every person here today, Lord. That our relationship with You would be solidified at this moment. We want to believe, and we want to declare, Lord-- and we want to thank You--that You never left, that You never gave up on us, and that You're still here. We want to thank You, Jesus, today.

Thank You that in Your Presence there is peace. In Your Presence there is hope. In Your Presence there is mercy.

Come on, and sing that out, Everybody!



As I worship
You make all things new



So I'll praise you
For all of my days



In your mercy
I'm restored



In your mercy
I'm made whole



In your presence
There is hope



FLASHBACK!

OCTOBER 9, 2022

Talk



Talk 3



IN my work as a holistic doctor, I see the person’s physical illness. I also look into the psychological *unwellness* of the person, sometimes the spiritual dryness – so all areas of the person. I see the person as a whole human being, not just a body.

In the midst of the Coronavirus Disease (COVID) Pandemic, we see an uptick of cases of people going through a lot—just like you and me. Sometimes, I really get to talk about mental health or I get to do some one-on-one sessions with people who really need it.

In my work as a seafarers’ doctor, I see a lot of seafarers going through a lot of dire situations. And the first thing that I do is *reassurance*. I reassure the people that everybody goes through problems. It only depends on how you bear them. But I also help them by sharing three steps, in some way, how to navigate mental illness:

1. Recognize. When you see someone going through that—or if it is you—the first step is *recognize* the ailment. We cannot heal what we do not feel. We need to identify the problem so that we can solve the problem. We identify what we’re feeling. Is it worry, fear, anger, sadness? And acknowledge them.

It’s okay not to be okay.

Because we grew up with the situation that if you’re showing some sadness, people admonish you, “Kaya mo’yan.—You can bear that. Huwag kang iiyak, Huwag kang iiyak. Don’t cry. Don’t cry.”

I advise my patients to allow themselves to feel such emotions in God’s Presence. I sit with them to search for “Why am I feeling this way?”



**Emotions,
especially dark ones
are the windows
of the soul.**

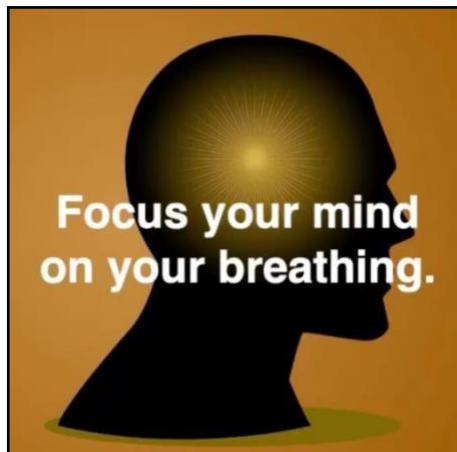


Emotions—especially the dark ones—are the windows of the soul. They reveal our woundedness, our histories. They reveal our desperate need for God’s love.

First, *Recognize*—so that you don’t run away from them. Let these emotions lead you to the doorway to our God, our Healer.

2. Resolve. Gawan mo ng paraan.—Do something about it.

My body, my mind, my responsibility. Ouch. Very important. What I do is take things quietly. I sit down, I relax.



And I just take a deep breath-- inhale, exhale. The best resolution is just to focus on your breathing. You don’t do anything. Just focus on breathing. Because the mind, sometimes, it’s like a monkey—swinging from one thought to another, never stops, never sleeps.

What we encourage is to switch from a *monkey* mind to a *monk* mind—relaxed, still, composed.

And recognize that you are in the Presence of God. Do this—inhale, exhale, meditational prayer time. Just be still and you will be more receptive to God’s Presence.



3. Refer. The third step is *Refer*. You refer your condition to a specialist, to a doctor, yes--someone who can help you and your family—your friend, your therapist.

But I encourage people to refer their situation to God. We always have this declaration in *The Feast*: “*I am completely perfectly loved.*”

One of my favorites, when I am going through *stuff*, is I sit down and my faith declaration is: “*God is with me. God is for me.*”

Say that again and again, and before you know it, you’re already feeling God’s Peace.

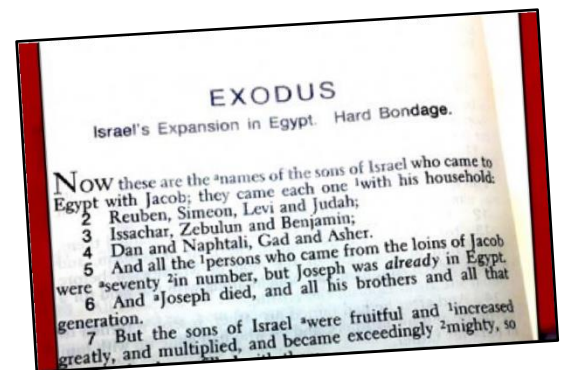
My point, my friend, is: *God is always with you.*

Be reminded that you are in God’s abiding Presence. That whatever you are facing, you can face God and offer it to Him. God was in your past. God is in your present. And God will always be in your future.

And that, my friend, is my one big message today. The one big message for today is: *God is always with me.*

In every Feast, this is our God Encounter.

It’s good to be reminded every Sunday that God is always with us. This is our study – the third talk in our Feast series, *Exodus*. We’ve seen that God has always been with us to this day. We are going to read and be inspired as we reflect on how Moses encountered God in a very special way.



4 MESSAGES of TALK 3



Message 1 **LET GOD BE YOUR FIRE AND FUEL**

This is our declaration, my friends, during our prayer meeting, during our Feast gathering: We will have that nourishment, that God Encounter, and we will be burning with passion for Him. We're not going to be burning out of the stress over the hard truths in Life.

Speaking about fire, this is where it gets very interesting – we're going to talk about the burning bush. Open your Bible to Exodus 3. Let me start it: One day Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian. And Moses led the flock far into the wilderness and came to Sinai, the mountain of God— Here we go:

Exodus 3:2-3 NLT

There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in blazing fire from the middle of a bush. Moses stared in amazement. Though the bush was engulfed in flames, it didn't burn up.

3 "This is amazing," Moses said to himself. "Why isn't that bush burning up? I must go see it."

I'm going to give you four Reflections, four Messages from this talk.

Here's the first message:

Let God be your fire and fuel.



**We're called to be a burning bush:
To burn with love but not be consumed,
because we love with His Love, not ours.**

Just like that burning bush—it was on fire but it wasn't burning out—you sometimes feel that you are so physically tired—even mentally tired. Like, after The Feast, “Oh no, it's going to be Monday tomorrow!”

It may mean that you served very well—it was fulfilling, you did your best. But you're like, “I guess my best wasn't good enough.”

There are times when you are emotionally and even spiritually tired. And sometimes, you don't want to go to The Feast, you don't want to go to church, you don't want to have that prayer time.

I urge you to have a self-reflection today and check what, or even *who* is fueling your life. Saan nangga-galing ang lakas mo.—Where is your strength coming from? Why do you do what you do? Is it out of pride? Is it out of desperation? Is it out of insecurity? Is it your desire just to get the approval of people? To get the crowd to like you, to love you? Is it your fuel—that you have your own little strength?

Or, the alternative: Is your inner fuel, is that Presence of God in your life?

Kayo po, aaminin ko na talaga: Pogi po talaga ako.—That's why, I will already admit it: I'm really handsome. ☺ Because if you look at me, you'll see: Presence of God inside.

More than a thousand years later, the Bible, in the Acts of the Apostles, there was fire there—on Pentecost Day. The Holy Spirit came upon the disciples of Jesus – like tongues of fire. Imagine, every person there was like a burning bush – on fire but not burning out. That is a beautiful illustration.

That same anointing is right here with us as children of God. I believe that we are called to burn with passion. Burn with so much life and thrive to be in the place where we can encounter God-- to burn with His love, not ours.





If you are with someone today—family, friend, say this to that person: To burn with love, not be consumed. Because we love with His love, not ours.

When I was younger, I always said, “Jesus in me, loves you. Because if it’s just me, I hate you.”

Right?

Exodus 3:4 NLT

“When the LORD saw Moses coming to take a closer look, God called to him from the middle of the bush, ‘Moses! Moses!’ ‘Here I am!’ Moses replied.

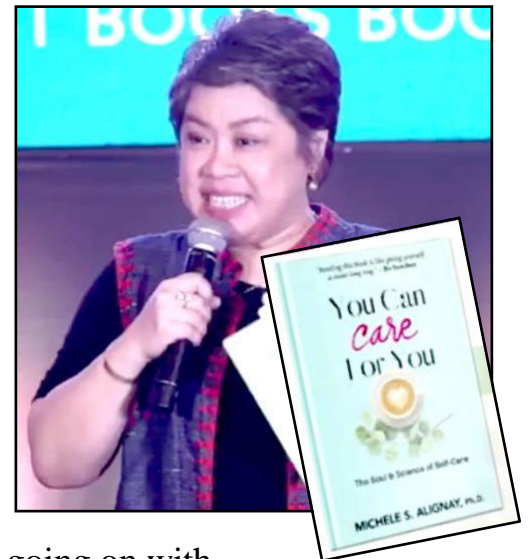
Message No. 2: Here’s the story in Exodus 3:4:

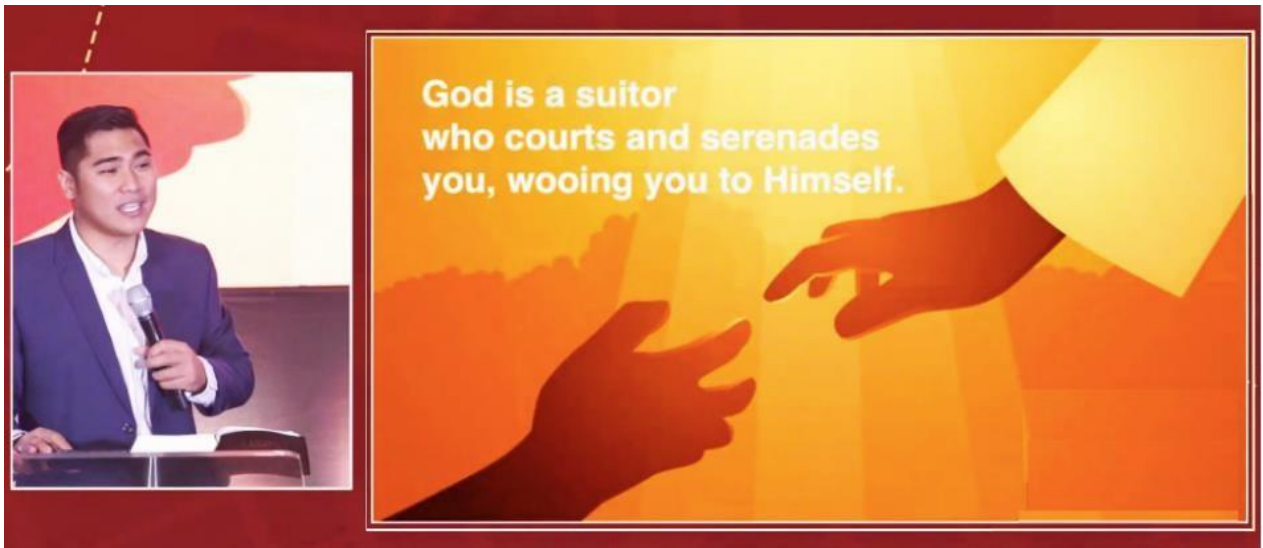
This is God’s second message for all of us today: *God always makes the first move.*

Did you notice in what we just read? God initiated the conversation. God is the initiator of the calling. God draws Moses and calls out his name. God makes the first move. He is the One who is really wanting this relationship. Nililigawan ka ni Lord today. —God is courting you today.

Sometimes, we get this the other way around—this is our image of God, guys—we think God is like Christmas. If you’re naughty or you’re nice—that depends on how God will love you. No! God is not Santa Claus. God is so much, much, much bigger than Santa. God is not a distant God. He’s not aloof. He is not insensitive to what’s going on with your life. He knows your every need. He feels you. He cares for you way beyond you can care for yourself. As Sis. Michele Alignay, head of LOJ Pastoral Care, says in her book she introduced earlier, *You Can Care for You*.

That is the spiritual truth: You can care for *you* because God cares for you. He is our fuel and you know what? Even if you haven’t reached out to God, today, we are reminded God wants you. God is reaching out to you.





If it is your first time coming to The Feast, welcome! God has called you to be one with our family. If you have been coming to The Feast, and you feel like there's nothing going good for you, I don't believe so. I believe God is working in you. Maybe *patience* is what God is working on in you. Maybe the fruitfulness that you are waiting for, it's still happening in your roots. Still happening in your nourishment. It's not yet time for that fruitfulness. I don't know. But I know that God wants you here.

Today, I pray that our image of God changes to that of what we just read. We are reminded that God initiates the conversation. We are reminded that God wants us. May we have that image of God that God is like manliligaw—a suitor—wooing you, courting you to come to Him. Because everything that we need—our health, our happiness, our fullness in life are all with the Lord.





Message No.3: *God sets you apart for Himself.*

That's the truth. You are set apart.

Let's go through Exodus 3:4-6-- when the Lord saw Moses coming to take a closer look, the Lord said:

I love being a Catholic because we're very familiar with the physical expressions of *reverence*. Like, we are so reverent when Communion happens. Because the Eucharist is the real Presence of Jesus. When we go to the Adoration Chapel, we take off our sandals. We kneel before the Blessed Sacrament.

But what does it mean? What does it mean when something is *holy*—when someone, when a place is holy? Sometimes, we think that being holy is being pious, doing charity, doing good works.

We also have that notion—Like people being too churchy, being too religious, saying, “Hindi ako pwede dyan. Masusunog ako dyan.—I am not supposed to be there. I'll burn there.”

And we tell them, “Ang holy mo. Hindi ako maka-relate sa iyo. – You're so holy, I can't relate with you.”

Exodus 3:4-6 NLT

'Do not come any closer,' the LORD warned. 'Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground. ⁶ I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' When Moses heard this, he covered his face because he was afraid to look at God.



Being holy primarily means recognizing that God is present.

When the Bible uses the term *holy*, it means something different. It literally means *set apart*.

There's a passage in the book of *Leviticus* that says:

“holy” = “set apart”

Leviticus 10:10 NRSVCE

“You are to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean.”

Did you notice? The opposite of *holy* is not *evil*. The opposite of *holy* is *common*. Because what is *common* is for *everybody*.

But what is holy is for God.

Let that sink in. You need to own this spiritual truth: God has set you apart for Him.

You come from The Feast, and you go home, right? And you put your shoes on the dining table. It's not supposed to be there. Because the dining table is set apart for what? For eating, for food. Yes? And you do not bring the dishes to your bedroom. Because the bedroom is set apart for sleeping, resting, and for couples, lovemaking. Yes?

The point is, you are set apart. There is nothing special about the ground where Moses was asked to remove his sandals. No. It's not the ground. It's Who is on the ground. It's the Presence of God.

And God is calling you to His Presence. God sets you apart by His Presence.

Again, holy is not being pious or doing some good stuff. When you say *holy*, it primarily means recognizing that God is Present in your life.

Like, that's why when you do your job, you do it for God. Because God is right there – Present in your job. God has called you and set you apart for that job. Because it honors God.



**God is inviting us to open up
to that relationship with Him.**

Again, God is inviting us. We are invited to open up ourselves to that relationship. And that's what God expressed in what we read. He said:

This is saying, "I have a relationship with your forefathers. I called them despite their being broken, wounded, sinful, and messed up. But I love them, anyway. I set them apart, anyway. And I am setting *you* apart, too. And I am calling you too. And I love you too."

And here's what happens next. This is funny. After God says He will rescue His people from the oppressive slavery of Pharaoh in Egypt, He says to Moses:

In *Genesis*, God partnered with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac-- even Jacob. And even though they tried every time to do what God wanted them to do, they still failed. But God did not fail. God doesn't give up. From *Genesis* now even to *Exodus*, God doesn't give up. He now partners with Moses.

Time and time again—even in your generation—even if there have been generations and generations of sins, God still chooses you. That's how God is.

Moses actually protested:

You know, you could imagine Moses is like a Filipino who (gently) says, "Who am I? Bakit ako?—Why me? Bakit ako ang pinili? Why was I the one chosen?"

No, I don't think so. Moses was really (on top of his voice) saying, "Whaaat? Bakit ako? Why me?"

You see the difference? It's Moses actually saying to the Almighty God, "You picked the wrong guy. It shouldn't be me!"

You sense his feeling of unworthiness? You see the hesitation?

Moses was saying to God, "You made a mistake! Hindi ako.—Not me. Huwag ako!—Don't choose me!"

Exodus 3:6a NLT

**"I am the God of your father—
the God of Abraham,
the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."**

Exodus 3:10 NLT

**"Now go, for I am sending you to Pharaoh.
You must lead my people Israel out of
Egypt."**

Exodus 3:11 NLT

**"Who am I to appear before Pharaoh?
Who am I to lead the people of Israel out of
Egypt?"**



It’s hilarious that sometimes we also do that-- when God calls us to do mighty things.

We think, “Sino ba ako? —Who am I? Hindi ko kaya ito.—I can’t do this.”

But here is what God told Moses:

Did you get that? You make a note of that today.

Exodus 3:12 NLT
“I will be with you”

In this entire conversation with God, Moses actually said, “No” five times—multiple times. We can relate with Moses-- when God calls us to do things, when God calls us to build a family, to start a business, when God calls us to go into that unknown territory—right into the Pharaohs of our life, will you say: “No. Why me? Who am I?”

But God said, “I will be with you.”

And here’s Moses’s second rejection:

Exodus 3:13 NLT
 “If I go to the people of Israel and tell them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ they will ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what should I tell them?”

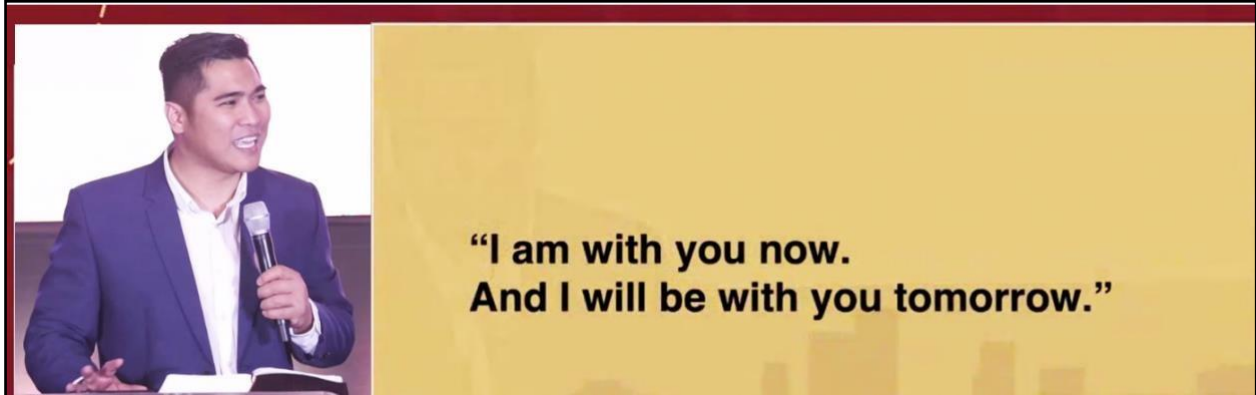
Let’s continue with the fourth message: *God is with you forever.*

God is always with me.

And this is where God introduces Himself. Despite Moses’s “No” to God,

God replies to Moses:

Exodus 3:14-15 NLT
 “God replied to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM. Say this to the people of Israel: I AM has sent me to you.’¹⁵ God also said to Moses, ‘Say this to the people of Israel: Yahweh, the God of your ancestors—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you. This is my eternal name, my name to remember for all generations.’”



In ancient Hebrew, *I am Who I am* means *Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh*.

That phrase is so profound. And it's so deep. Because it means *being present now and being present in the future*.

Eternal Presence.

Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh may also be translated as *I am Who I am*.

But it also means *I will be Who I will be*.

But it also can be translated as

I will be Who I am.

You know, the truth is God is not fickle. He is not flaky. But He is for you.

He is consistent yesterday, today, and forever. He is consistent with Who He is.

Generations upon generations, and centuries later, in the first letter of John, the writer defines God by His nature and His consistent action.

John says, "God is love."


1 John 4:8
"God is love."

Yesterday, today, and forever.
 So, let me go back to that mental note that I asked you to do.

Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh =
"being present now and being present in the future"

Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh
"I am who I am"
"I will be who I will be"
"I will be who I am."

When Moses said, "Who am I to do this? I am a nobody," God told him, "I will be with you."



The LAST WORDS of JESUS

Matthew 28:20b
**“And be sure of this:
 I am with you always,
 even to the end of the age.”**

Actually, if you look into it, really, Moses was a perfect candidate to save the Israelites. He was coming from the household of Pharaoh, he grew up in the wilderness, and he had a lot of credentials.

But Moses was saying, “I am not *that* person. Who am I?”

But God did not say, “Magaling ka naman, Moses.—You’re good. I believe in you. You can do it.”

That’s not the God we serve. When we are doubting ourselves, and we say, “Who am I?”

God said, “*I will be with you.*”

The original Hebrew word used in that statement was also *Ehyeh*. And God was already giving His name. Moses did not know it yet: God’s Name and God’s Nature are the same.

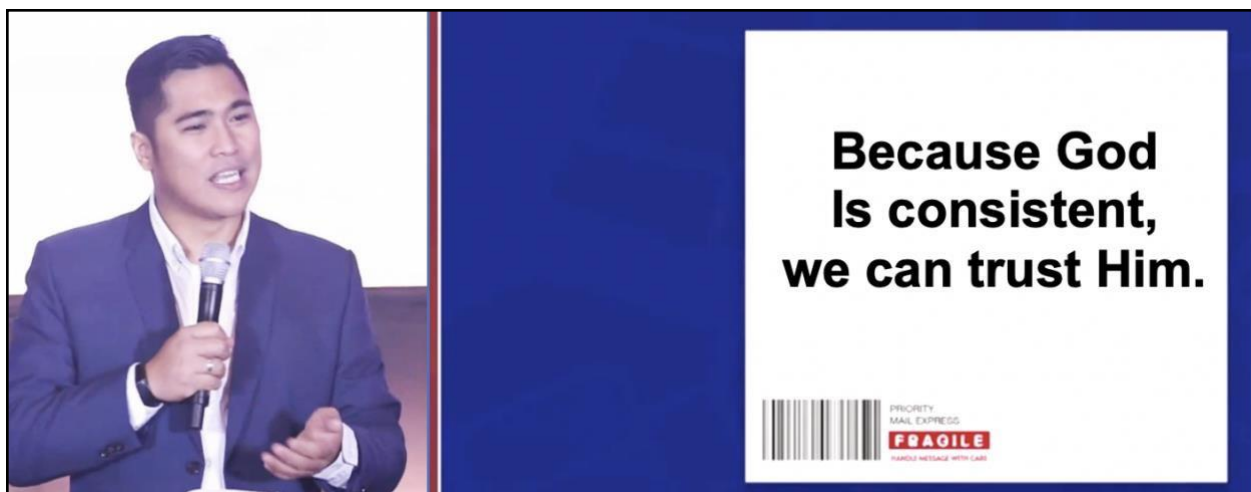
Some of you, my dear friends, need to hear this reminder, this word very badly. Because, perhaps, you’ve come to the *Feast* and yet you’re so hungry—feeling so alone. And afraid. And like Moses, you feel like, “Who am I? I feel like a nobody. I am trash. I am unworthy.”

You feel you’re a failure. And you’re worried about tomorrow. And you may say, “No, No!”

But God is telling you, “Yes, I am with you now. I have been with you. And I will be with you tomorrow.”

Thousands of years later, again, Jesus commissioned His disciples and says these same words-- after saying go into the whole world and preach the Good News. The last few words of Jesus to His disciples – extending it to all of us:

“And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”



Because God is consistent, we can trust Him.

Let's have this point of reflection as we go into worship.

Let's pause for a while and really reflect on this: *God is always with me.*

In social media now, when you open it again, sometimes you see the pictures of the past. Yes? Throwback. Timeline. We are the ones fickle. We are the ones flaky. Sometimes we love God, sometimes, we hate Him.

But God is like a suitor: "Halika na... Love naman kita. — Come on, I love you. I will be with you."

I want you to reflect on this: We're so blessed to have God in our life. We're so blessed that what a mighty God, what a faithful God we serve.

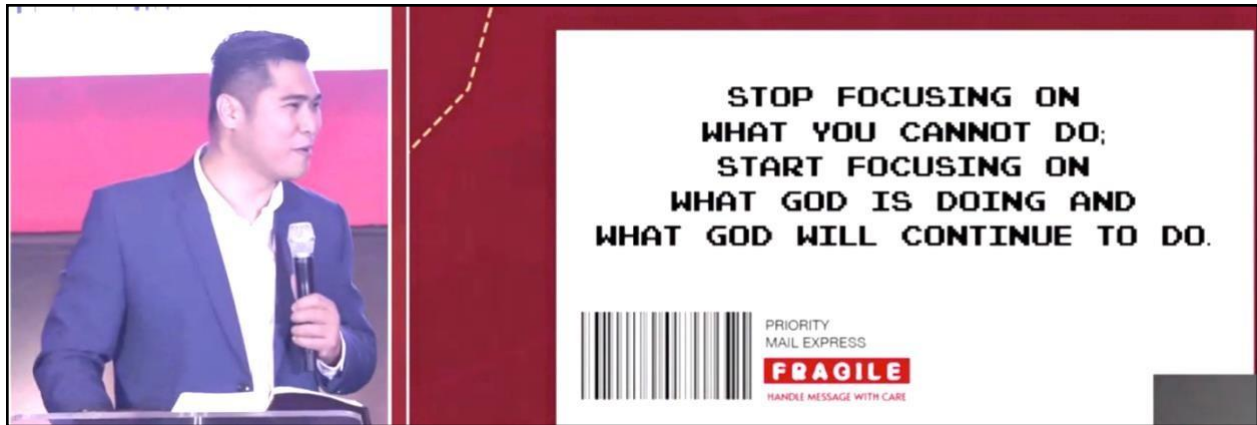
Sometimes, we forget. But I want to give you that evidence today. Go back into your life. *Really.* Go back.

Today is October 2022. If you look at the Timeline, maybe some of you, many years ago, baon sa utang—were deep in debt. But now, konti na lang – already little debts, or already all paid.

Some of you were praying, "Lord, wala akong jowa.—Lord, I don't have a partner." Ngayon, buntis na. — Now, already pregnant!

Some of you may be saying, "Lord, I feel so alone." But now, you are with a spiritual family.





Last year, I fell into depression. Talking about mental health... Because that was a tough year. One of my colleague doctors passed away last April. And then Fr. Mike La Guardia (presiding priest in The Feast) passed away in August. September, October last year, I was in the middle of that very down moment. Nagtatampo ako kay Lord. — Galit ako konti. — I was sulking, a little angry at the Lord.

But you know what? I can say to you and I can preach to you: At that time, God had always been with me—in my crying, in gritting my teeth, in my hurting. To this day, God has always been here.

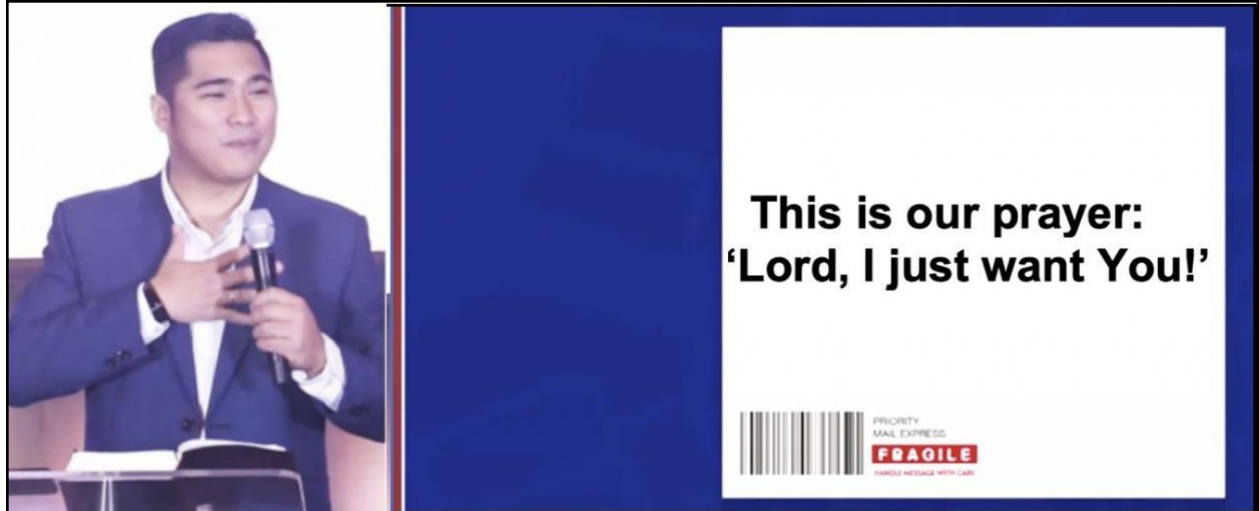
I want you to look into your life. The evidence that God has always been with you is when you really become *grateful*. One day, you will look back and that is one day you will say, “God has been faithful.”

See that He is faithful. That His promises, ever since, have been true, and will always be true. Because that is Who God is: “I am who I am. I will be Who I will be. I will be who I am.”

And that is His Eternal Presence in us. And His Eternal Glory.

If you actually analyze the objections of Moses to God, they were all about what Moses could not do. But today, if you read about the five responses of God to Moses, they were about what God is doing and what God will continually do. And Who God is.

So, my friends, stop focusing on what you cannot do. Start focusing on what God is doing. Start focusing on what God will continue to do. Go back. As we worship today, you can look back at what Jesus had already done for us. He left Heaven, and became man so that He could reserve us for Himself and call us *His*. He is welcoming you home again. He died and rose so that we can be set apart, so that we can be with Him forever.



As we worship, may our response be: “I want to know You more, Lord. I want to be introduced to Who you really are. And I am taking off my pride. I am taking off my fear. I’m taking off my insecurity. And Lord, I just want You!

That’s our prayer as we go because we have been praying for many things, we’re saying to God, “Lord, bakit? — Why? Why did this happen? Or, “Why isn’t it happening?”

Too many prayers. But instead of looking into what we do not have, looking into what we are not, we look at Who He is. Look at God and shift your perspective today.

May I invite you to a prayer time today? Close your eyes, if you will, you can raise your hands in prayer ...

Lord, we recognize that we are fickle. We are broken. We recognize that we are shameful. That we are not enough. We recognize that we are hurt, and we have hurt others.

But we also shift our perspective to recognizing who You are. We look to You. Not what we can do, but what You can do in our life. Not our burdens, but we look to You who is the blessing-giver.

Breathe in us again today, Lord. And may our image of You be not a far, far God who looks down on us, but a loving Father welcoming us. And despite our objections, Lord, You always draw us near to You. And despite our rejecting You are still re-directing us to Your Love, to Your Mercy. Oh, Lord, Jesus, we receive that spiritual truth today: that You are for us, not against us. That You will bless us, not curse us. We receive, You, Jesus. We are Yours.

You are always with me. Amen.



MERCY MINISTRIES

GRACE TO BE BORN PART 2

Opening Blessings Doors

By GLORIA KRISTINA SAMPANG



I AM a nurse at Grace To Be Born. I take care of the young pregnant mothers and the babies-- yes, babies blessed to have the grace to be born.

I am grateful to be able to serve those in need, as I consider this a mission, my way of paying forward blessings I've received, especially since I once also was in need.

Before I found this regular job as a nurse for Grace, my family hadn't had much-- to say the least. My father Danilo was a *padyak* driver-- that is, he was manually driving a sidecar attached to a bicycle, laboriously made to run by pressing on the pedal or *stamping with the feet*-- the translation of the Filipino word *padyak*.

My mother Brigida doesn't work because she stays home to take care of my two younger brothers.

Oftentimes, we lacked money for our needs—which actually was the way I experienced God early in my life. Desperate amid our scarcity, my family and I would just pray to God, and blessing after blessing would come, helping us to survive the day.

Relatives kindly gave my parents money for our school tuition-- even if we didn't ask for it.

There were times I would come home from school hungry-- but there was no food on the table. And I would just cry. But there were days when neighbors would knock on our door and share some food with us.

By the way, my father's sideline was raising roosters for cockfighting and so, when the roosters they bought from him won, his clients kindly shared with us a portion of their wins.

So, when we had money to buy at least one dish, my parents would divide the dish into five. We would just choose which part of the *ulam* we get—soup, vegetables, or meat. What mattered was that we could all eat.

New Door

In 2012, a new door opened for me. That year, I earned a degree in Nursing at PHINMA-University of Pangasinan. I took the board exam in 2013, passed it, and finally got my Nursing license.

And my life turned for the better. Actually, I learned about Grace To Be Born from my aunt, Tita Ivy Sampang. She was a medical technician at the laboratory clinic where Grace's beneficiaries went for their regular medical exam.

And so, in November, of the same year I got my license, I applied to be a nurse at Grace, and by God's Perfect Timing, Grace welcomed me.



As it serves women in crisis, Grace To Be Born also evangelizes the mothers, leading them to a renewed life with Jesus. Thus, during the Catholic New Evangelization Awards in 2019, Grace To Be Born received the Saint John Paul II Award, in recognition of the organization's active service for the promotion, celebration, and defense of family and life.

Above, here is Sis. Ester Palacio, Grace director, as she receives the Award certificate, and with me, happily holding the trophy for her.



Opening Doors for God’s People

Yes, I feel so blessed to be part of Grace, allowing me to pay forward my blessings to the mothers and the babies of Grace.

Above, here I am during my duty hours.

And a bonus I’m deeply grateful for is that I am now able to provide for my family. And now, I’m able to buy the things I want and the food I want.



Here I am with my family, *from left:* my mother Brigida; youngest brother Jayson; yours truly; brother Darren, and father Danilo. Sadly, my father passed on in 2020.

Yes, my family and I would just pray and God’s rescue would come knocking on our door. That’s why my life verse is Matthew 7:7:

“Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened unto you.”

Now, humbly, I’ve been blessed to be God’s instrument in opening doors for His people seeking His grace. My life is a great manifestation of God’s love—that He is reachable and He is the One who reaches out first to His children.



MERCY MINISTRIES BLESSINGS

Learning Respect for Life



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MY favorite book in the Bible is *Genesis*. I am simply amazed at how God created the world. The book has particularly ingrained in me a deep respect for Life.

I learned about the Bible— and yes, *Genesis*-- at Grace To Be Born.

Here's my story...

Just call me Maria. I grew up in Quezon province-- with no parents guiding me.

My mother died when I was just a toddler. And my father-- well, let's just say "he's missing in action."

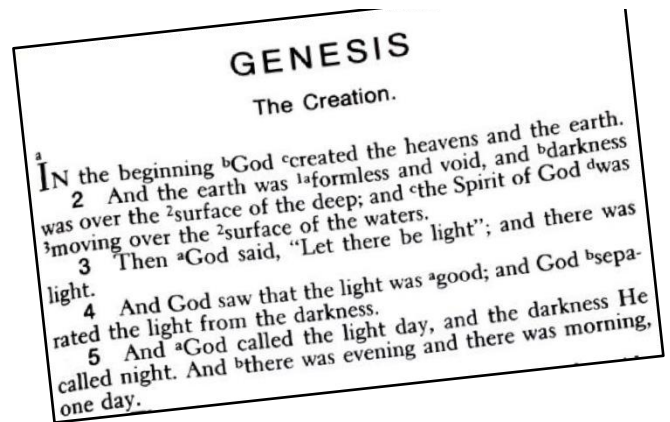
An aunt took care of me, even sent me to elementary school. But she did not have enough money to let me go on to high school.

In 2019, when I was already 14 years old, I went with relatives for a vacation in Manila. I saw there must be *life* in this city, so I ventured to stay-- even though I really didn't have a permanent place to stay in. I stayed mostly with acquaintances who kindly welcomed me-- until they could no longer accommodate me. So, I moved from one place to another.

Then, in March 2021, one of those I met along the way hired me to help in her buy-and-sell business. Let's call her Ate Liezel. I assisted Ate Liezel in selling fruits, vegetables, and ready-to-wear (RTW) clothes.

We became good friends and Ate Liezel welcomed me to her home and treated me like her own family.

Then, I met this guy who became my boyfriend. We'd been careless, and I got pregnant. And then my boyfriend was no longer to be found.





New Home, New Life

There was no way I could fend for the baby in my womb. So, looking for relief, I found out about Bahay Kalinga, a government shelter that takes care of neglected children. Bahay Kalinga then referred me to Grace To Be Born

Grace took me in as a beneficiary on June 22, 2022.

And Grace took good care of me, making sure I was eating right, and that I went through medical checkups so I would be healthy enough to give birth to my baby.

And here, I got to learn about the Light of Jesus Family and The Feast. I attended this faith gathering. I enjoyed the joyful Worship and learned so much from the practical talks, especially the Bible references-- yes, starting with the book of *Genesis*.

Last September, I was not able to attend The Feast because I already gave birth. But I would love to go and attend The Feast again.

It's already October, and soon I would have to go out of Grace – I hope with my baby.

What's in store for us outside of Grace?

I believe that no matter what happens, no matter what life throws at me, my Creator will be with me-- as He has been for all of us since *Genesis*, when He started creating the world and Life. *My* life, and now my baby's life.

God is with us.

-- As told to Cybill P. Bayto





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

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

Jeremiah 33 Foundation

is a shelter for girls particularly victims of sexual abuse.



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



He Cares Mission provides shelter for street children.

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



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

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



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



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

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



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

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FAMILY ONLINE NEWSMAGAZINE

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Go and make disciples of all men.

— Matthew 28:19