



NEWSLETTER
November 6, 2022



Something Else Is Burning

WELCOME back to our study of the book of *Exodus*—our Feast Talk series from September 25 to November 27, 2022, dubbed *SPECIAL DELIVERY: God Will Rescue You*.

Today, we'll unpack one of the most momentous events in the Biblical story—God's Covenant with Israel. And this Covenant was going to take place on top of Mt. Sinai.

Does that name ring a bell? You bet. That was the same mountain where Moses encountered God for the first time. That was where God revealed Himself through a burning bush. But this time around, when the Israelites got there, they found something else burning... (suspense!).

Today, I want to preach the powerful message: *Come up the mountain*.

Discover what's up in God's mountain today.

May your dreams come true,

Bo Sanchez

Change Is Good

WALANG kasabi-sabi, biglang nagbago lahat. — Without any warning, everything changed.

Thus, Fr. Albert Garong described life for us last week, *page 4*. That’s when severe tropical storm Paeng, our 16th tropical cyclone, hit us on October 29, 2022.



Even amid the storm, our founder, Bro. Bo Sanchez, promptly sent us his introduction for the Feast Talk today, which is about a big, big change for the Israelites— and for all of us— when Moses climbed a mountain to see God, *page 1*.

Here, at right, you see our Feast Preachers Bro. Didoy Lubaton and Bro. Audee Villaraza outdoors— a sudden change of The Feast venue last Sunday. Why?



To keep everyone safe and protected from the storm, the *live* Feast was cancelled, and instead, we had a *live* online Feast at Home. *Flashback on pages* “Change is good,” Bro. Didoy, and he announced a bigger, exciting change for The Feast, *page 3*.



We also have a change in our *Mercy Ministries* section. After our Grace To Be Born series, we are starting this issue a new feature series— on Jesus Christ Cares for Cancer Foundation. Bro. Gary Puno, JCCCF director, shares also a big change in his life since he answered God’s call to serve in this Ministry, *page 31*.

Bro. Audee posed a challenge to us: to have a different kind of perspective, as we go through the changes in The Feast.

Who’s ready to accept the challenge?

All for God’s Glory,

Randy Borrromeo
Media Ministry
Executive Director



Welcome!

DIDOY LUBATON: Hi, Everybody, Welcome to our Feast at Home today!

First, we pray for those affected by the typhoon. We know of the deaths, the injuries, and the damages. We, as the whole Feast Bay Area Family and the Light of Jesus Family, pray for all those affected, and may God keep us protected and help us recover from the storm.

We also believe that through the storms of life, God strengthens us and keeps us all together.

And yes, special thanks to Fr. Albert Garong and his place. We get to do this together with our onsite servants—Mayi and Zach, and our online servants, thank you. Because we make this our home still. And you and I, and all of us are still connected as one big family.

And yes, this is our part of our Love Offering. We give because it is good—not just because we feel good.

Exciting News: We are moving to a new place starting November 27. That's after the Feast Conference. And we are going to a new, better nakaaliw na lugar—entertaining place—and that is the Aliw Theater, starting November 27. We are going to have three sessions: 8:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., and 2:00 p.m. sessions for our Feast Bay Area Family.

I want you to be excited because we're going to keep on posting details and we're going to refresh, rebuild, and reconnect with the Lord and so much more, and so, please hang in there...

Last night, we were seeing the storm ravaging the country and yet here we are today, still connecting online, still trying to build our Family together. We can still *feast* on the love and the Word and the goodness of our God. And this is our Family—the Feast Bay Area Family, the Light of Jesus Family. Welcome Home, Everybody, and thank you very much for being one with us.

Thank you, on behalf of our founder Bro. Bo Sanchez, Bro. Alvin Barcelona, our Feast Bay Area District Builder, and all the Builders, all the servants, all of us in The Feast Bay Area. Thank you for being one with us! ...Our Worship song is our battle cry, we will always say Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! Hallelujah! Sing praise to the Lord today. God bless you!





FLASHBACK!

Holy Mass



FR. ALBERT GARONG
on the Gospel: Luke 19:1-10
Zacchaeus the Tax Collector

Excerpts...

Good day, Everyone! I hope and pray that you are all safe and dry as you are participating in our Holy Mass today.

I know this is a difficult time for many of us. *Ilang beses nag-alert ang inyong mga phones. 'Diba, bigla nalang siyang magbubuzz giving us warnings and asking us to be safe and to even evacuate.-- How many times has your phone buzzed Alert!?*

Sometimes, those messages that we receive during this time of the typhoon are a little scary-- we must admit that. In a way, see, now we are doing this *live* at home. Our plans for today have changed very quickly. *Walang kasabi-sabi, biglang nagbago lahat.*

As much as this is difficult-- and we understand that it's hard for everyone-- it's also a reminder for us of how little we truly are, how inconsequential we are in the face of more powerful forces around us.



A 'Little' Person

Sometimes, we are tempted to feel that we are sufficient, that everything that we do is fixed and irrevocable-- but one simple event like this reminds us that that is not true. We are basing ourselves on powerful forces around us, yet in fact, we are small, we are little.

In today's Gospel, we find a person who is also little—physically, yes, but also spiritually little: Zacchaeus who is ostracized by his community because of his line of work. He is not considered a good person and no one wants to be around him and to be friends with him because of what he does.

He is little in the sense that no one loves him and no one cares for him. But it is also in this littleness that he finds an opportunity for grace and hope.

You know, I have a friend who-- although we have been friends for many, many years, even decades actually, and knowing him for a long time-- is a dear friend.

But he is an atheist. He does not believe in God, and I've always wondered, *kabawasan ba 'yun sa akin?*-- Is that a minus point?

I always ask myself, "Here I am, a priest and one of my good friends does not believe in God to whom I have offered my entire life.

Of course, he is still my friend-- because, you know, I'd known him long before I even had an idea I would become a priest. And I love him dearly.

But still, at the back of my mind, I always mused, "I hope someday I can bring him back to the faith and even to the Catholic Church and make him part of our community.

But alas, every time I see an opportunity to invite him back, he is not receptive, anyway. And of course, I don't want to turn my friend into a project. He is my friend. I don't base our friendship on whether he believes in the same thing that I believe in.

But a few months ago, we were together. We had a gathering with our other friends and he talked to me.

We went to the side and he looked at me, smiling and said, "*Bert, okay na.*"

I said, "*Anong okay na?-- What's okay?*"

He said, "*Okay na, bati na kami ni Lord.-- It's already okay. I've reconciled with the Lord.*"

And of course, he told me the details, but I won't share that anymore.

Affirmation of God's Love

You know what, my favorite part of that story is, wala akong naging ambag sa kanyang pagbalik sa pananampalataya.-- I didn't have to do anything for him to come back to the faith.

I always thought that I would be the one who would convert him, that I would be the one to actively bring him back home-- but I wasn't.

And it was a powerful reminder to me, first of all, that God is faithful to each one of us, that to every single soul, He has planted His seed, and He nourishes that, and in His own time, it will blossom.

Look at Zacchaeus. No one bothered correcting him, no one bothered loving him. No one bothered to even help him see Jesus-- that's why he had to climb a tree because no one wanted to help him. But then we find that God is faithful to him too. God has been attracting him, bringing him back home-- and in the right moment, he found grace, he found faith.

Our First Reading says to us exactly that. If you have time, read it again on your own. It's a beautiful, beautiful affirmation of God's love for each and every one of us. It starts by telling us that we are nothing but specks of dust. We are worthless, but God loves us anyway, and that is pure love. Love at its most unadulterated-- because we humans, when we love, as much as we try to make it selfless, there's always a shade of selfishness in it.

But not God. He doesn't need us at all. He gains nothing from this relationship. All He gets to do is to spread that love that He has. It is purely a love that is given to another person.

Reading I: Wisdom 11: 22, 12: 2

22 For the whole world before thee is as the least grain of the balance, and as a drop of the morning dew, that falls down upon the earth: 23 But thou hast mercy upon all, because thou canst do all things, and overlooks the sins of men for the sake of repentance. 24 For thou loves all things that are, and hates none of the things which thou hast made: for thou didst not appoint, or make anything hating it. 25 And how could any thing endure, if thou wouldst not? or be preserved, if not called by thee. 26 But thou sparest all: because they are thine, O Lord, who loves souls. 12:1 O how good and sweet is thy spirit, O Lord, in all things! 2 And therefore thou chastises them that err, by little and little: and admonishes them, and speaks to them, concerning the things wherein they offend: that leaving their wickedness, they may believe in thee, O Lord.



People We Turn into ‘Zacchaeus’

Today, we also celebrate Prison Awareness Sunday. It is such a beautiful occasion-- because there are so many people whom we have turned into a Zacchaeus, people that we have said, “*Wala nang pagasa yan.*” “*Naku, hindi ko na 'yan problema, kasi ginawa ko na lahat ng kaya kong gawin, ayaw niyang makinig.*” -- He is hopeless. I'd done everything to change him, but he won't listen.” We have dismissed them. We have said, “Hindi ko na ‘yan trabaho, iba na yan.” -- That's no longer my job. Let others do it.”



But we are reminded that to God, that never happens.

It never reaches a point where God says, “*Okay na, wala na akong magagawa sa 'yo.*” -- *It's okay. There's nothing more I can do for you.*”

You know, He always keeps on bringing us home. He always attracts us to go back to Him in one way or another. You just give Him the slightest opening and He will get that and take you back to His love.

So, does that mean that we can just rest? God is at work anyway-- we don't need to make an effort.

Of course, not. Because at the end of the day, for those who were around Jesus, who claimed to follow Jesus, to love Him, to adore Him-- but didn't find time to help someone see Jesus that he had to climb his own tree-- *kabawasan sa kanila 'yun.-- this was a minus point for them.* Because there they were--yes, they were loving Jesus for themselves but they could not be bothered to help another person to see Jesus.

It is our hope, my dear brothers and sisters, that what we do here, that what we practice, that our faith does not just benefit ourselves—but that we become the trees that other people can climb onto so that they will also see Jesus.

Reading II: [2 Thessalonians 1: 11 – 2: 2](#)

11 Wherefore also we pray always for you; that our God would make you worthy of his vocation, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness and the work of faith in power; 12 That the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ. 2:1 And we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of our gathering together unto him 2 That you be not easily moved from your sense, nor be terrified, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by epistle, as sent from us, as if the day of the Lord were at hand.



Surrendering Our ‘Littleness’

Our Responsorial Psalm says that we must praise the name of the Lord forever, and that praise is the vocation of every single one of us. It is our hope that everyone discovers the joy, and the peace, and the contentment that come with praising the Lord-- and that praising is not just with our lips, but by our actions, by the change in our lives.

At the end of the Gospel, Jesus says that Zacchaeus is saved. Was it because he donated his money away? Was it because he paid back his debts-- as if we can earn our salvation? Not quite.

But because Zacchaeus did all of that, Jesus knew that the encounter had truly changed him.

We always say this, my dear brothers and sisters, I always say this: You cannot claim to love Jesus if you are not changed by Him. It must come to a point of no return. What does that mean? That you claim to love Jesus, that you claim to have met him-- and that will color everything that you do in your life automatically. It just has to be that way.

It's not even a conscious decision. You just learn to love God and that changes how you think about yourself, how you think of others, how you spend your money, your time-- it changes everything. It has to be that-- and it all begins by accepting our littleness, by accepting our need to be saved, by accepting our own weaknesses and failures.

So, my dear brothers and sisters, we come to this Mass humbly before the Lord, surrendering to Him, acknowledging that we are not the master of our life, that we are not the master of the world-- but that we shouldn't worry because He is the Master of everything and that this Master loves us dearly and is faithful to each and every one of us. Amen.



Worship!

EXHORTATION

AUDEE VILLARAZA: You know, I believe that there is one person here today who still doubts whether God can use you in a great way simply because you've had a sinful past, you've had a broken life, you've had your shame, you've had things that you are not proud of. But I want you to know that God is merciful.

The Bible says that His mercy is new every morning. It was new yesterday, it's still new today, and it will be new tomorrow. I want you to believe that.

Also, God is good! God loves you! He has a good heart. He is for you, He's not against you, and so all you gotta do is acknowledge in His Presence that He is your Lord and Savior.

The Bible says you are saved by the grace of God. You are saved and there are also people who've been doing this with us for the nth time-- acknowledging the Lord! Thank you for doing this with us.

Today, I want to invite you to do the same thing because we believe that loving Him means also loving His people. This is a daily decision that you need to do—loving your spouse, loving your children, loving your family, loving God's people. That's something that you do every single day. You decide to love people.

So, we're going to decide to love God again today, all right? I want you to open your hands, this is a simple act of surrender, an act of humility.

Say this with me: "Dear Jesus, I am a sinner. You know all the sins that I've committed, all the shortcomings, the evil that's in my thoughts, in my words... I ask for Your mercy. I ask for Your forgiveness. I believe that Your mercy is enough to wash away all my sins, Lord.

So, I call unto You now to be my Lord and to be my Savior, to save me from all my sins, Lord, and to protect me from here on so that I can live a full life just the way you want me to live...

Jesus, I believe that with You in my life, You can exceed every expectation I have. I believe that You know what is best for me. So, even if some of my prayers are not answered, I believe that it's because You have something better in store for me. I put my trust in You because you are sovereign, You are in charge. I love You, I honor You, and I worship You. In Your Name, I pray. Amen."





WE LEAVE NO ROOM FOR THE ENEMY



THEY BEAR THEIR SWORDS WE FIGHT WITH SLINGS AND STONES



NOT FOR DEFEAT BUT VICTORY



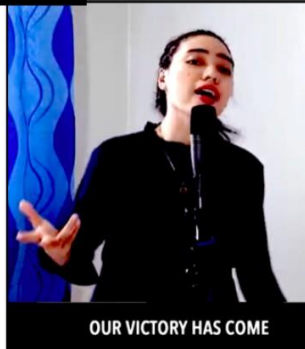
FOR IN OUR WEAKNESS HE WILL BE REVEALED



FOR THE ONE WHO'S OVERCOME



FOR THIS BATTLE HAS BEEN WON NOW



OUR VICTORY HAS COME



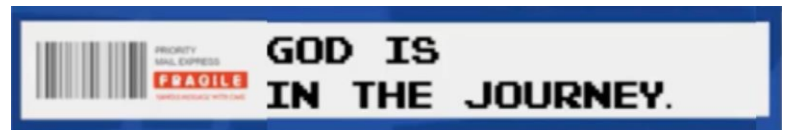
SO WE SING HALLELUJAH



SO WE SING HALLELUJAH

Talk

Talk 6



AUDEE VILLARAZA: We are in Talk 6. We have been reading the book of *Exodus* for six Sundays now and mind you, this is something that spoke to me over the last few weeks as we have been studying this long story. When you watch *The Ten Commandments*, it's a very long movie. But right now, after six Sundays that we have been reading the passages, we are now in the part of the story where the Israelites had already walked away from Egypt. They were going to the Promised Land. And they recently just went through and walked across the Red Sea.



And you would think that it's such a short time— six Sundays, we were able to cross that journey. But did you know that it wasn't just six weeks for the Israelites back then? How long did it take them to cross the entire wilderness? And how long did it take them to actually endure slavery? Did you know that they were slaves in Egypt for 440 years? Imagine that. And yet we're covering it in just six weeks.

You know what that tells me? Sometimes in life, you look at a certain detail about a person and then you make a judgment based on that one thing that person did thinking that you can already give a label or a description of what's happening to the person. But actually, you realize that you cannot judge a person based on just one detail. Actually, you can't really judge people because it's the Lord who judges people.

You Can't Judge People

I want to show you this picture right now of our livestream— it's a screenshot of Fr. Albert. That's our livestream of our Mass earlier. You see the very clean background, beautiful plants...



But let me show the picture of what was really happening (*below*). See that? Wires here, a microphone there, Zach with his guitar there...

Sometimes, you will make a final opinion about something that you saw somebody tweeted, or posted online.

And you deliberate... here's your view of the person... not knowing that there are really details you need to learn about the person.

I had a classmate when I was in Elementary school. We gave him such a hard time because whenever he would come to school, he would often smell — his clothes had this foul smell... And I'm not talking about, you know, at the end of the day, when you ride the school bus... there are kids there and they smell like rotten egg. But this guy, he would show up in the morning, and for some reason, he would often smell bad. So much so that everybody gave him a nickname: Boy Bantot— Foul-Smelling Boy. But you know, one day we found out the reason he smelled bad in the morning was that his family was actually going through financial difficulty. And you know when people wash their clothes they would rinse the clothes three times. But this guy's family rinses clothes only once— they were being thrifty because they did not have enough money.



Know the Story First

You know, I truly believe this: When you know the context, it will result in compassion because compassion comes from knowing the background of the person.

So, before you even give an opinion about people when you do not even know what they're going through, think again... Know their story first. Know their background before you actually give an opinion.

That's Word for somebody today.

That's what's happening in the Exodus story. The story in the book of *Exodus* is so long and we're seeing just little details of what was happening. But did you actually know every detail, every suffering, every pain that the Israelites were going through before you jumped to conclusions? Know their story first.

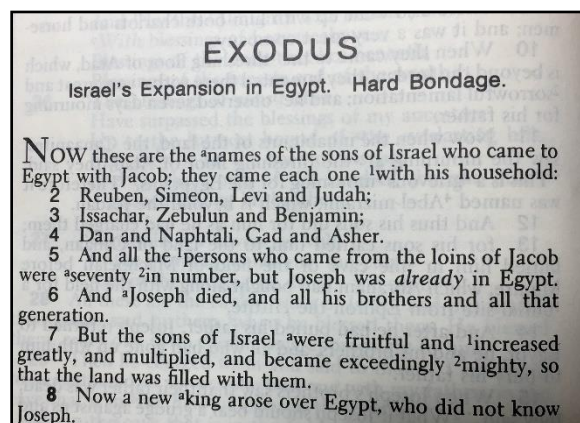


Appreciate the Journey

Another reflection that I had here: You know, in life, sometimes, you feel like life is so long, the years are long, you go through a lot of problems ...

And then you wake up, Boom! You're already 44 years old. Or you're already senior. You already have grandkids. You're already in your exit season. And you realize Life had passed you by.

What you would probably remember are only the significant parts—the little details, the highlights you read in the Bible right now in the book of *Exodus*. Things that are so meaty that the author put in because they are significant. And they truly teach us to really appreciate the journey, to appreciate every moment that happens in your life. To make the moments matter.



The End Is the Beginning

The journey is so long that sometimes—you're reading the book of *Exodus*—Didoy preached about it—the Israelites just recently crossed the Red Sea. But if this were a Hollywood movie, this would be the perfect time to roll down the credits — happy ending, good ending. But Actually, it's not yet the ending. How do I know that? Because we're still just in Chapter 15. The book of *Exodus* ends in Chapter 40. So, we still have a long way to go.

If you read the next books after *Exodus*—*Leviticus*, *Numbers*, *Deuteronomy*— did you know that the journey in the wilderness is just about to begin for the Israelites?

So, what does this teach us? That the end of a journey is really the beginning of another journey. So, don't worry, don't be afraid, don't be depressed if the journey that you are in feels like you're losing some battles. It doesn't mean that it's the end of a journey. If you've lost some things in your life right now, I guarantee you it's because it's the beginning of another beautiful journey in your life.— which brings me to our big message for today: *God is in the journey.*

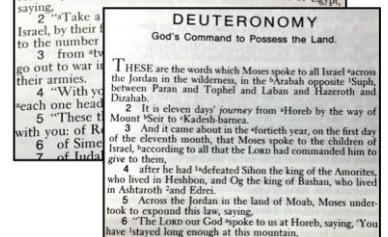
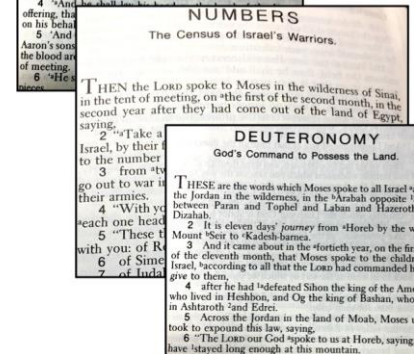
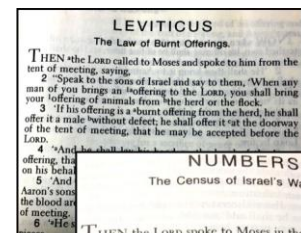
Whatever journey you are going through— whether it's rainy season, whether it's a sunny season, I want you to know that God is on the journey.

What I'm going to do today is I'm going to teach you four messages. I'm going to read you first the Scripture— this is after the Israelites crossed the Red Sea:

EXODUS 15:22 NLT Then Moses led the people of Israel away from the Red Sea, and they moved out into the desert of Shur.

This is actually the New Living Translation (NLT) version. There is another version that I like: the English Standard Version (ESV):

EXODUS 15:22 ESV Then Moses made Israel set out from the Red Sea, and they went into the wilderness of Shur.



No Shortcuts

Notice the change in the word: from *desert* to *wilderness*. The other word for *desert* is *wilderness*.

I try to imagine this as a first-time reader back in the day when they published this book. It must have been a shock for the first-time reader to know that the Israelites — they endured slavery for 400 and 40 years. They went through unimaginable pain and suffering that none of us probably can ever experience in our entire lifetime. And now, they're free. They just walked away from Egypt. They just walked away from Pharaoh and Egyptian abusers — only to wind up in the wilderness?

Isn't life like that, sometimes? You feel like you've been going through two years of a big struggle in the Pandemic. You lost your job. You lost a loved one. You lost a relationship. You lost some opportunities. You lost a bit of your health. And now that you're finally back on your feet, and you feel like you're able to take your steps again, all of a sudden, there's another problem. Like for those who were affected by the storm in Mindanao. I cannot imagine how some of them are still just recovering, and then all of a sudden a calamity falls.

Isn't life like that sometimes? You're trying to swim and then all of a sudden new water comes in....

You're now cancer-free, for instance, you're now in remission. The chemotherapy worked! And then a week after, you find out that the cancer is back— and now it's in full force.

Or, another example— you're finally debt-free. And then the next day, you were scammed. All your savings wiped out.

Why does that happen? If there's anything that we can learn from this point is this: Exiting your Egypt or that place of hardship doesn't automatically mean that you're already inside your Promised Land. It doesn't automatically mean that you're already in that land of abundance. Some of us want the shortcuts, sometimes. We want a quick fix. We want a miracle right away.





I remember, one time, my son Ethan, my wife, and I were traveling along EDSA. And then he noticed there was a beautiful motorcycle beside us—a big bike.

And he told us, “Mom, Dad, can you buy me a motorcycle?”

Just like that ...as if we’re rich.

I told him, “Okay, maybe when you’re older, if you work hard enough, and if you learn to be responsible, if you’re safe in riding a motorcycle, then maybe—maybe— you can buy one for yourself.”

And then there was silence. He did not say anything. After 10 seconds, you know what he said?

He said, “Dad, am I older now?”

Sometimes, we are in a hurry. We want it right away, right here, right now: “I want to make it happen, Lord.”

But you know, I’ve realized... after living in this world for 44 years, you know what I found out? I found out — the hard way— that if the Lord will give you the blessing right away, and you’re not ready for that, blessing, you know what’s gonna happen? You will end up breaking that blessing. Instead of being a breakthrough, it will break you. You’ll drown in so many blessings because you’re not ready. Or you’re immature. So, I praise God that He knows the exact timing of when to send the blessing. When we are ready. And praise God for allowing us to go through the wilderness. Why?

Here’s the first message: *Before you get to the Promised Land, you need to go through the wilderness.* Because it’s in the wilderness where God will change you. It’s in the wilderness where God will refine you. Maturity happens in the wilderness. For instance, you know, you have that relationship but you’re not ready for that relationship, what’s going to happen? You’ll eventually be going to break up. If you have that business but you’re not ready to handle that business, and God gives you the blessing— that business— what will happen is that you will eventually break that business. Sayang— What a waste.



So, praise God for the times that He allows us to go through the desert because it's in the desert where He helps us to become mature. He refines our character. refines our personality.

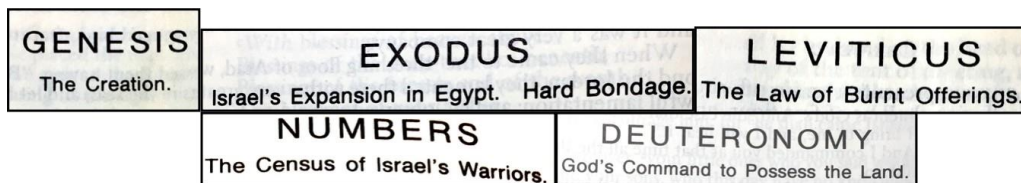
Praise God. If you're in the desert right now, praise the Lord for that because that's in the moment where He actually is trying to remove some of the things that He doesn't want you to take into the Promised Land. Because if that happens, what will happen in the Promised Land is that you will not be happy where God will take you.

If you are in the wilderness right now, here's what you need to do: and this is Message No. 2: *You worship in the wilderness.*

What happens next:

EXODUS 15:22 NLT	They traveled in this desert for <u>three days</u> without finding any water.
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I made sure that I underline those words —*three days*. Because this is a hyperlink Remember, the same author of *Genesis*, the same author of *Deuteronomy*, of *Exodus*, of *Leviticus*— he likes hyperlinks. He likes pointing to different events and those words— three days— are actually hyperlinks— of what?



Choices

Ten chapters earlier— Moses and Aaron were talking to the Pharaoh and they were telling the Pharaoh, “*Can you please let the people go.*” Why? “*So that we can all take a three-day journey into the wilderness*” For what purpose? “*So that we can offer sacrifices to the Lord*”



**EXODUS
5:3 NLT**

**“take a three-day journey into the wilderness
so we can offer sacrifices to the Lord our God.”**

Question: Did they actually do it— now that they’re already in the wilderness? Did they actually offer sacrifices?

Sometimes, we negotiate with the Lord— we offer promises. Have you ever negotiated with the Lord even once in your life? Like, “Lord, if you give me this promotion, if you give me this boyfriend, if you give me this girlfriend, if you give me this blessing, Lord, I promise You, I will never ever commit sin again. I will never ever lie again. I will never do this.”

Were you like that with the Lord? I remember when I had a final exam in college, I was like, “Lord, if you let me pass this exam, promise, I will already study.”

Sometimes, we make negotiations with the Lord that are so lofty, sometimes, we end up breaking that promise. So, I can imagine the Lord listening to that negotiation, “Lord, if you only give me this, I will already change my life.

I can hear the Lord, saying, “R-R-Right.”

Because God knows we are creatures who are imperfect. We end up breaking our promises. And that’s exactly what happened to the Israelites.

Moses and Aaron said to the Pharaoh, “We want to go to the wilderness. Let us go. So we can offer sacrifices to the Lord.”

You know what they did? Instead of offering sacrifices, they started complaining. The people started complaining to Moses. They started grumbling.

In the wilderness right now— or whenever you find yourself in that hard place, you have a choice, actually: You can either grumble or be grateful. What will you choose? Will you thank the Lord that you are in this mess?

Or, will you complain to the Lord, “Lord, and ba naman, buwisit na buhay ito. Ang dami kong problema.— This is a bad life. I have so many problems.”



You know, one thing that I've realized is that the enemy cannot stop God from being good. Because God will always be good. God is good all the time. You cannot change that fact. God will always be good.

So, if the enemy cannot stop God from being good, you know what he is going to do? He's going to stop you from being grateful. Because when you stop being grateful, what happens is that you become miserable. You remove yourself from the Presence of the Lord. Then everything in your life, you're just looking at toxic stuff negativity.

You don't remember the Lord when you are ungrateful. That's why the enemy loves it when you're not grateful. Because gratitude unlocks all the good stuff from Heaven— joy, peace, love, hope— all the good ingredients from Heaven.

You know, what the enemy wants you to do? He wants you to start complaining, to start feeling miserable. He wants you to be bitter about life.

And that is exactly what's going to happen next with the Israelites:

EXODUS 15:23-24 NLT ²³ When they came to the oasis of Marah, the water was too bitter to drink. So they called the place Marah (which means "bitter").

EXODUS 15:23-24 NLT ²⁴ Then the people complained and turned against Moses. "What are we going to drink?" they demanded.

So, you see what I mean? Now it's turning bitter to them.

Here's Message No. 3: *God will use the wilderness to change you.*

God will use the wilderness to actually change you. So, you see it, right? What happens is they start complaining to Moses and to Aaron: "Why did you bring us to this place so that we can suffer even more?"

Is Evil Following You?

I mean, it's a little ironic, to begin with. The Israelites suffered greatly in Egypt. Now, they're free. And then all of a sudden... What a way to kick people when they're already down. They come to a place thirsty. They've been at this for a month now. And now, they are thirsty... Only to find an oasis—a body of water — but they cannot even drink the water because it's too bitter.



Is it possible that the bitterness is actually following them?

Is it possible— I wonder— that there are some sins and some evil that are still following you even up to this day that's why you experience hardship in your life?

You know, one thing that you need to know, my dear friend, is that just because you've left your place of sin. Just because you've left that hard place, it doesn't mean that *that* thing can't follow you.

I mean, look at this: the Israelites already left Egypt, not knowing that Egypt was still inside of them. That's what the Lord is trying to do in the wilderness— allowing them to go through the desert. And mind you, they are going to be there for 40 years. A whole generation will pass by. And they're going to be in the desert. Why?

Once upon a time, the Israelites enjoyed freedom. When? Throughout the time of Joseph. For Joseph and his family, there was freedom, there was hope, there was abundance in Egypt. But then, when you go back, if you go back all the way to the first chapter of *Exodus*, you'll see:

**EXODUS
1:6 NLT**

"Joseph and all of his brothers died, ending that entire generation."

So, now we're talking about who? The new generation— the new generation of slaves who never saw freedom in their life. This is what they grow up with. They were born when their father was a slave, their grandfather was a slave, and they become slaves too. So, imagine: All they've known all their life is slavery. All they've ever known is bondage to the Pharaoh and the leaders.

Being Human Again

God allowing the Israelites to go through the wilderness was actually an act of teaching them how to be human again. They were dehumanized for so long under the Pharaoh. They did not know how to be human again.

And you know what? This is a very relevant topic right now. We can learn something from this. We live right now where there's so much canceled culture, hate culture. People are very divisive right now. People are judging one another, other people are walking away from relationships because of a post. I know people who walked away from their Light Group because of political differences during the elections. And that was what? Many, many months ago. They're still not friends even today.

We have learned how to be lesser human. I believe that in this wilderness that we are in right now, God is teaching us how to be human again. We have forgotten how to treat others with dignity and respect.

And you know, this is the reason I love congregational worship— whenever we come together to worship the Lord. Why? Because you can be with people — sitting beside them, or standing beside them—not knowing what their background is, what their political alliance is, what their beliefs are. And you can worship together. Beautiful.

I know two persons who during the elections, did not like each other. I do not want to use the word *hate*, but it's close to that word how they were feeling for each other. But you know what happened? They saw one another in PICC and they started worshipping together as if nothing untoward happened between them.

That's what happens when Jesus is in the middle. Jesus unites all of us under the banner of His love.

We suddenly realize that, hey, we can have differences but we certainly are together on the same boat. You might have a different problem than mine. But you realize that all of us are also struggling and we all need the Lord. No one is exempted from needing the Lord. Because we're all sinners— in need of a Savior. That's why I love Worship. I love that God can humanize us again and we start thinking: "I may not know this person and we may have different surnames, different backgrounds, different sets of beliefs, but we're one and the same. We all need to be saved by the grace of the Lord.





The Reality

It's in the wilderness where God wants to change you— where God is making you more and more human. That's the reality. That's the purpose of the wilderness — that's where God is molding you so that you can be more and more human. Which leads me to the last message...

Let's read what happens next. The Israelites start complaining again to Moses and they said:

**EXODUS
16:3 NLT**

"If only the Lord had killed us back in Egypt," they moaned. "There we sat around pots filled with meat and ate all the bread we wanted.

**EXODUS
16:3 NLT**

But now you have brought us into this wilderness to starve us all to death."

When I was reading this, it certainly affected me this way... Imagine this: I would certainly understand the Israelites. They started complaining after a year of being in the desert. They started complaining when they were seeing their families and their friends, and their classmates die from starvation, or even die from malnutrition. But this was just a month after they left Egypt. And now they're starting to complain. Why were they complaining in the first place?

The reason they were complaining was they were hungry. There was a desperate need. Did you know, my friend, that when you have a desperate need in your life, you are capable of the most atrocious complaints?

Bad Trade

I've known people— good people, great people, holy people— who got hungry just once, and they started walking away from their place of abundance or place of blessing. They started giving up something that was so priceless.

Do you remember what happened with Jacob and Esau? One day, Esau was so hungry that he traded his birthright for Jacob's bowl of soup.

We're capable of doing that.

Judas. He was offered 30 pieces of silver to trade for his Master Jesus. And he took the offer— something that was so, so temporary.

I always like to say this: We trade our treasure for temporary pleasure.

I remember the story of two men. They were friends, but they hadn't seen each other for a long time.

Then one day, he noticed his friend was very sad. He asked him: "Why are you so sad?"

The guy replied, "You know, just two weeks ago, I lost my cousin to dengue. But you know, he left me with P50, 000."

The friend was like, "That's so sad. Condolences. But you know, that's also a blessing— that he left you with something."

"That's not the end of the story," the guy said. "Because a week after his death, you know my other cousin died, and he left me with P100,000."

The friend was like, "Wow. Again, condolences. But that's a blessing — that he still left you with something."

The guy said, "No. You're not listening to my story. Because just last week, my grandfather died and he left me with P1 million."

And by now, the friend was already scratching his head, saying, "Again, my friend, I offer my deepest condolences. But that's a blessing also— that he left you with something."

And the guy said, "No. The problem — and the reason I am sad— is this week, nobody has died yet."



Fixated on One Problem

Whenever you have a desperate need, what happens is that you look only at that one need. That's all you see. That one problem. Meanwhile, God has blessed you with so much. But you don't see the blessings because you're focused on that one need. That one desperate need. You're looking only at one provision.

You've got a good marriage, you've got a good career, you've got a good family who loves you, but because God is not blessing you with a child, "Lord, why do you love others more than me?"

All of a sudden you start complaining about that one thing that you do not have in your life.

This is the story of Adam and Eve. It's a hyperlink, my friends. God blessed them with a whole Garden filled with fruits— let's say a thousand fruit trees. But you cannot eat from one fruit tree. Do you mean to tell me that you will focus on that one tree, and not thank God for the 999 fruit trees that you have? And still just choose that forbidden fruit?

That's what we are. When we have a need, that we think it's big, we focus on that one need and then we start forgetting the ways God has blessed us.

What are the ways God has blessed you this week? But because you have this one problem you're so fixated on that problem you feel like God has left you all of a sudden. You start complaining. Not too long ago you were praising God for the ways that He had healed you, and the ways that He rescued you, the ways He has blessed everything in your life. But because now you've got this one problem, you've forgotten all about God. You've forgotten to praise Him.

I hope this is speaking to you. You know, there is this behaviour the psychologists call homing instinct. Homing instinct is a psychological term that describes, for instance, there are children who are abused when they grow up, did you know that some of them will try to recreate a traumatic part of their childhood to have a semblance of comfort in the past? It happens— kids who have been abused would recreate the abuse, not knowing that because they felt comfortable with the glimpse of their old life. And that's what their view of family. They will try to recreate that.



Amnesia

This is the reason there are some people who go back to their abusive exes — people who were abused physically, emotionally, or verbally— they go back to their exes even if there would be abuse in that relationship again.

This is the reason people go back to their addiction—to gambling, to lying, to cheating — because they feel that it gives them a semblance of comfort. Did you know this?

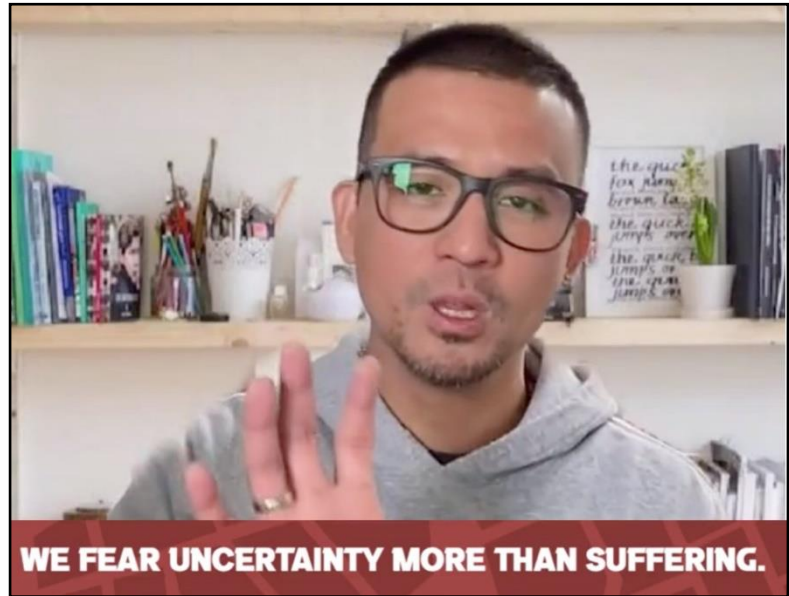
This is a staggering fact.

Statistically, in the United States, among people who are released from prison — and this is scary— 70% of them, after five years, end up back in prison. Because some of them deliberately or unconsciously commit another crime so that they can go back to prison.

And why do they do that? Because they were afraid of the outside world now. They got so used to life in prison that the outside world scares them even more. So, what they'll do is they'll try to go back to prison. They'll go back to that sin, to that crime, to that evil deed so that they can go back to that place of comfort.

This is what happens to us. Sometimes, we're so afraid, of uncertainty, of stepping out of our comfort zone, that we want to suffer even in that place of comfort. Because we're afraid of uncertainty more than suffering.

That's what's happening to the Israelites. They'd rather go back to Egypt.



**NUMBERS
14:4 NLT**

**“Then they plotted among themselves,
‘Let’s choose a new leader and go back to Egypt!’”**

Not too long ago, my friends, the Israelites wanted to be freed from Egypt. And now, they want to go back to Egypt.

We forget. We suffer from amnesia. How can you encourage people — people who are afraid of the future— how can you encourage people who lost their faith and trust because they'd forgotten? One way: I want you to know that if you're that person and you're afraid of what the future holds and you'd rather stick to that place of comfort,

Don't Be Afraid

I want to encourage you or guarantee you that God walks ahead of you in the wilderness. Wherever you're going, my friend, God is already there. He has already prepared every provision. He has already prepared every resource. He has already orchestrated every blessing to where you're going.

I don't want you to be afraid. You have been going back, returning to the same place that God already rescued you from.

Come on. Stop going to the same prison that God rescued you from. Stop putting back the chain that God already broke for you.

It's a message for somebody to know that God is walking ahead of you. Wherever you're going, God is already there. He's already led everything to that place. So, stop, stop, stop going back to that same place. Stop going back to the same sin—because you feel that is your comfort. It's a prison. The enemy wants you there. It's time to walk away from your prison.

I want to end the talk with this: If there's One Person who can understand us... The truth is, you know, you will have your family, you will have your friends, you will have your best friend, but there's only one person who will understand you. And he will never walk away from you. Because if there's One Person who also experienced being in the wilderness, guess what? It's Jesus.



The First Temptation

Once upon a time, Jesus was also led into the wilderness. The book of *Matthew* says that. He was led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit, mind you.

**MATTHEW
4:8 NLT**

**“Then Jesus was led by the Spirit
into the wilderness...”**



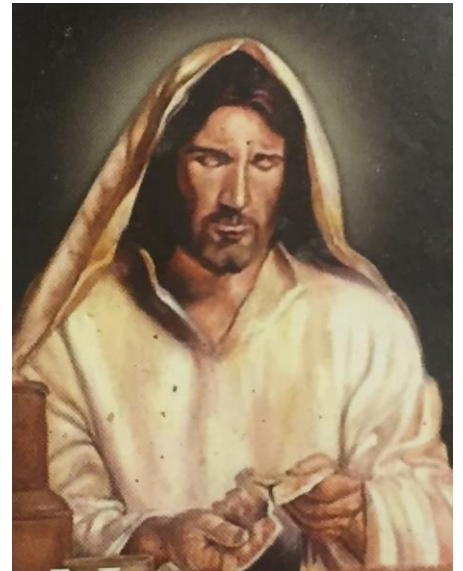
And you know what? In the wilderness, He was tempted. The first temptation was also the same temptation for the Israelites. It was hunger. You know, the enemy knows where to tempt us. It's always hunger. We always have a hunger for a need—whether it's a physical need, an emotional need, a need for attention, a need for love, or a need for affirmation. We will always have a need in our heart. And if the enemy can grab you by that temptation, to get you, to fulfil that need with a worldly, material thing, he will win in your life.

But the way to overcome the temptation is the way that Jesus overcame it.

You know what Jesus said? And this will preach to you today. Jesus said to the devil in the desert:

**MATTHEW
4:4 NLT**

“People do not live by bread alone...”



How To Overcome the Temptation

I want to break your mentality about the hashtag—#Bread Is Life. Yes, physical bread is good. But when you say #Bread is Life, you need to be talking about Jesus. He's the Bread who will give us Life.

And you know how Jesus was able to overcome the temptation? Two reasons.

No. 1: Because of the Body of Christ. What do I mean when I say the Body of Christ? You know one way that I'm able to overcome all the temptations of Life... You know there are so many temptations that I could have walked away from the Light of Jesus Family, from The Feast.

Do you know my story? Let me tell you before we end. My story is this:

When I started serving at The Feast— not even serving, just attending Feast Valle Verde— after three months, I said, “I want to serve at The Feast.”

And I joined the Music Ministry. It was difficult, but by God's grace, I passed the audition. Praise God, I was able to experience ministry for the first time in my life. But you know, that ministry life ended abruptly— after one month. I stopped attending. I stopped serving. Why? Because I felt like I had no friend — I was not part of the Ministry. I would come, be part of the rehearsals, the people who were there, you know, they had their own set of friends... They've been friends for a long time... And here I was, new guy walking in... I did not have an idea who they were. The only one I knew back then was Anne Relova who invited me. I felt like an outsider.

And I had one friend — Bro. Sonny, a senior. He was the only one who would sit beside me. One day, Bro. Sonny was called by the Lord back to Heaven. My only friend, still taken by the Lord. So, I stopped attending.

But after about two months, I got a call from a guy named Paolo Payawal who happened to be the nephew of one of our leaders in the Community and he said, “Bro., I noticed you're no longer attending. But you know, my uncle, Bro. Adrian Panganiban, he wants to form this group — something like the Kerygma 5— and he wants to invite you to join the group.”



I'm Still Here

So, one day, I walked into the Lighthouse (headquarters of the Light of Jesus Family). Then I met all of these brothers... For the first time, I opened my life to them. Every week, we would have a fellowship at the Lighthouse— no fail— Monday nights, 8:00. And then eventually we had music lessons under Simon Santos, also one of our leaders at The Feast. After the fellowship, at 1 a.m., we were still together— we would read the Bible, and eat chicharon bulaklak.

After an entire year, we all opened our lives to one another— and little did I know, that I was actually letting people into my life. And fast forward, to today, I'm still here in Community — 12 years later.

I'm still here. I haven't walked away. Why? Because of the people. I've met so many people that I have done Life with. I've changed different leadership roles —

I had new friends when I became Worship leader, I had new friends when I was in the music Ministry, I had new friends when I became Ministry head, and now as Feast Builder. But one thing is for sure: all the people who I've journeyed with have helped me grow to become the person that I am today.

The one reason you have not walked away from Community and you will not walk away from the journey is the Body of Christ— the people you walk with. Just small groups—it doesn't have to be a group of a lot of people. Can be one, can be two— you can call your lifelong friend. People who will become best men in your wedding, people who will become the godfathers of your children, people who will be there when you are down. Those are the people you cherish, who will journey with you.

That's the first reason Jesus was able to overcome all the temptations— because He had the 12 apostles surrounding Him. The 12 band of brothers.



No More Hunger and Thirst

No. 2. The second reason Jesus was able to overcome the temptations— Very simple: Because He was the Bread of Life.

You know, whenever we go to Mass to receive the Holy Eucharist, we receive the Body and Blood of Jesus. And so He becomes the Food for our journey in this world.



When was the last time you received Jesus— as your Food? Last week? Last month? Last year? Or maybe 10 years ago. I don't know. But I want to invite you, I want to welcome you right now, receive Jesus. He's the Food in the journey. He said once upon a time, that you will always be thirsty, you will always be hungry for things. But you will never know the kind of satisfaction and nourishment when you receive Jesus. Because you will never thirst, you will never hunger again when you've got Jesus in your life. I want you to receive that.

You are on a journey right now, my friend. There are so many things that you might be questioning: "Where are you taking me, Lord?" "Where are you bringing me to?"

You know, it doesn't take faith to follow God— if you have all the details of where you're going. Praise God, that He doesn't give us all the details because it takes faith to take that step every single time, every single day — especially if you don't know where you're going.

I want you to start trusting the Lord because He knows where He's taking you on this journey. It's a long journey but if you take it with the Lord, I promise you, my friend, it will be a wonderful, wonderful journey.

I want to invite you now to prayer, as we worship the Lord:

Lord, I trust you. I may not every detail of where You want to take me, but Lord, I know, and I believe, that it will be a good journey, a wonderful journey, a journey filled with blessings, a journey filled with love, and laughter, and Life because You are with me. I trust in You, Lord. Thank You, Jesus.



MERCY MINISTRIES

JESUS CHRIST CARES for CANCER FOUNDATION PART 1

Continuing the Ministry

By GARY PUNO

I SERVE as a Board director of Jesus Christ Cares for Cancer Foundation.

Before JCCCF, I served in another Mercy Ministry of the Light of Jesus Family— the Tahanan ng Pagmamahal, actively supporting the Ministry with my family. Here we are, *from left*: yours truly; eldest daughter Ginny; youngest, Geri; and my wife Gigi.

Tahanan serves abandoned, neglected foundlings and surrendered children.



It's at Tahanan that I met Bro. Rey Ortega, JCCCF founder, and his wife, Myrna.

The individual stories of the orphans were too heartbreaking but these never broke their hearts. Instead, I felt their determination to study.

Being a believer that education is a great equalizer in our society, my family and I have pledged a monthly contribution to JCCCF, which was used to provide education for the orphans and whatever Tahanan needed then.

My family, particularly my kids, were also in charge of fulfilling the Christmas wish list of the orphans.



Calling

Sir Rey exposed me to the other LOJ Mercy Ministries.

One, the Pag-asa ng Pamilya which provides scholarships to youth in need. Bro. Rey invited me to give a talk to the scholars and their families. *Above, here* we are with a batch of our scholars and their parents: Sir Rey (*back row, extreme left*) and Bro JC Libiran (*beside him*) who also gave a talk.

Sir Rey also asked me to assist him with some of the activities for H.A.I.L. Mary (Healthcare Assistance for the Indigents and Lepers of Mary) and Jeremiah 33: 6-7 Foundation, our shelter for abused minor girls.

Sadly, Sir Rey suffered cancer and this led him to establish Jesus Christ Cares for Cancer Foundation.

I will never forget that day I was walking in a mall, when Sir Rey called me on my mobile phone. He apologized because he said he had kept something from me— that he was diagnosed with cancer.

People who saw me walking in the mall then must have thought I was going through something really bad— because I was crying like hell.

Then, Bro. Rey asked me, “Can you be one of the founding directors of JCCCF?”

Without even understanding the responsibilities of a founding director, I gladly said, “Yes!”

In hindsight, that somehow stopped my emotional outburst.

Why? Honestly, I had no idea. Did I just run out of tears then? Probably.

Bro. Rey passed away on July 1, 2017, after a brave battle with cancer. He was 70 years old.



Serving My 'Idols'

When Sir Rey was still alive and was actively leading JCCCF, I merely followed what the group agreed to do then—aside from fulfilling my family’s monthly pledge to the Ministry. That was our way of giving forward.

It was when Sir Rey left us that I got more actively involved with JCCCF. I wanted his selfless legacy to help cancer victims among the poorest of the poor to be alive – even if he was already gone.

On November 21, 2018, I was invited to give a short inspirational talk to my idols (*above*). Yes, I call the JCCCF beneficiaries my “idols” just like the orphans at Tahanan ng Pagmamahal and the scholars at Pag-asa ng Pamilya.

I was jittery because I never met any of them before. My close relatives and friends know that I’m a weakling when it comes to seeing people with medical conditions— I faint at the sight of blood. That’s why I wasn’t able to fulfill my late dad’s dream for me of becoming a doctor

Fortunately, the JCCCF audience made me feel very comfortable during my talk. That was definitely one of my most memorable talks. I know my voice cracked several times because I was trying to hold back my tears— yes, I’m such a cry baby!— when I saw the smiles, the extra twinkle in their eyes, and their eagerness to find out what I was about to say next. Those were more than enough for a speaker to feel so fulfilled.

But, wait. There’s more! After my talk, some of them approached me to personally thank me for giving them an extra boost to go on with whatever they were going through. One of them even wrote a poem about what I shared with them. I was humbled.



It's Better To Give...

I felt the appreciation shown by the JCCCF beneficiaries was just too much. For what? For just sharing some personal stories with them for a few minutes. That's all! Anyone can do that. It wasn't such a big deal but for the beneficiaries, it was a big thing!

A big thing for me is this blessing: keeping alive Bro. Rey's Ministry for the least, the lost, the last.

I feel this is a big grace—I am deeply grateful for the privilege of serving with the indefatigable JCCCF Board members with no less than Bro. Hermie Morelos, chairman of the LOJ Mercy Ministries and who also serves as JCCCF vice chair.

Above, here we are during a Board lunch meeting hosted by JCCCF Chairman Bro. Alo Gelano at the Lyon's Café in Shangri-la Plaza, *from left*: Gil Ramos, head, Admission and Aid Committee; his wife, Dang, auditor; Maritess Cordero, secretary; Hermie Morelos; yours truly as Board director; and Alo Gelano.

Being with my JCCCF idols, I remembered that the saying, "It's better to give than to receive," was not only applicable in boxing.

Try going out of your way to serve the less fortunate. Or try sharing His blessings – your time, talent, and treasure – with them. Or try simply putting a smile on a beneficiary's face. Believe me, you won't regret it!



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, The Feast Family is 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 Mercy Ministries. No gift is too small.

Thank you very much in advance for your gift. Our prayer is that God will continue to reward you as you give.

FOR EXISTING DONORS:

Thank you for the Love. Your monthly donation helps us continue extending support to our Light of Jesus spin-off organizations, including our partner beneficiaries. Your gift will sustain our operations and, we hope, help us reach out to the persons our Lord has called us to make disciples and give them renewed hope.

Be a Feast Family member. Write or call us. Now.

Email Address: jocelyn@kerygmfamily.com

Website: <https://kerygmfamily.com> Telephone Numbers: 8725-9999/

Fax 725-1230

Our Partner Beneficiaries

Jeremiah 33 Foundation

is a shelter for girls particularly victims of sexual abuse.



Grace To Be Born is a

halfway home for pregnant women in crisis.



He Cares Mission provides shelter for street children.

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



Jesus Christ Cares for Cancer

provides financial assistance and pastoral care for indigent cancer patients.

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



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



The Light of Jesus Disaster Recovery Ministry

provides evacuation assistance, relief goods, financial aid, and other needs of calamity victims.

LIGHT OF JESUS FAMILY
DISASTER RECOVERY MINISTRY

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



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

CHOOSE HOW YOU WANT TO GIVE

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2. Pick Up from Your House or Office (Metro Manila Only) Cash or Checks
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Voice Radio and Television Foundation and call Joy at (+632) 725 -9999 loc 112 or text (+63) 922-828-9890 and we'll pick them up from your home or office.

3. Mail 12 Post-Dated Checks to Our Office For US and CANADA: Address
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Rainbow Blvd # 1937, Las Vegas, NV 89107 For Other Countries/Philippines:
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**FAMILY
ONLINE
NEWSMAGAZINE**

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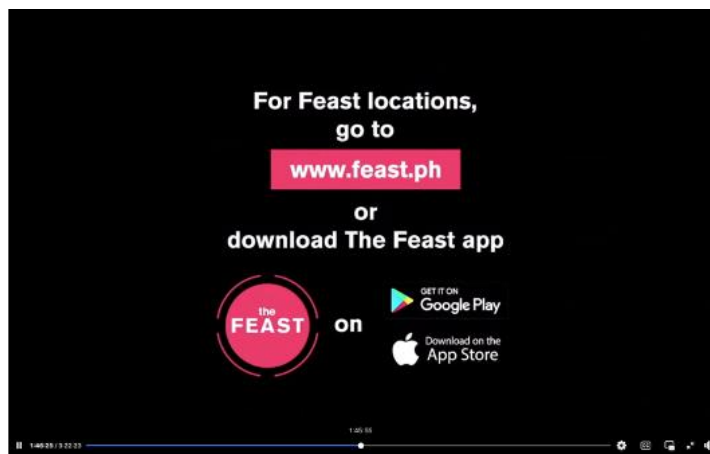
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Go and make disciples of all men.
— Matthew 28:19

