



NEWSLETTER
January 15, 2023

New Year Special

ON December 11, 2022, we started a three-Sunday break from our regular Feast talk series and we gave you a special Christmas mini-series, *Unwrap: Receive the True Gift of Christmas*.

We had three talks, unwrapping three gifts: *The Gift of Peace*, December 11, 2022, preached by Bro. JC Libiran; *The Gift of Joy*, December 18, our Grand Christmas Feast, which I delivered together with Bro. Alvin Barcelona; and *The Gift of Hope*, January 8, 2023, our New Year Feast, presented by Bro. Ryan Capitulo.

Today, January 15, 2023, Bro. Alvin Barcelona introduces a Special New Year Talk, *The Power of Purpose*.



Longtime servant leader of our Light of Jesus Family, Bro. Alvin is a strong pillar of our faith community, inspiring thousands with what's been already iconic tagline of his Feast talks: *Mayroong Magandang Mangyayari Sa Iyo— Something Beautiful Will Happen to You*.

Indeed, that's what has blessed us in our LOJ Family as Bro. Alvin remains not only an engaging, encouraging preacher but a true friend, our beloved brother.

Listen and learn more from him.

May your dreams come true,

Bo Sanchez

The POWER of PURPOSE

IN the last few days of my Mom, she asked me, “What else is my purpose? I am already bedridden and dying. Why doesn’t the Lord take me now?”

I replied that because of her, we, her children, and our families, are together more than ever. I also shared that my posts on social media about her continue to inspire and bless thousands of people.

She said, “Thank you.”

A few days later, on January 2, 2023, she passed on.

Today, I will preach to you this important message: *Your Purpose Is Your Reason to Live On.*

Without a clear purpose, or when you think you’ve already accomplished it, you will be giving yourself permission to die. Maybe not literally. But once your sense of purpose becomes hazy, your dreams, your passion, your reason for waking up in the morning also weakens.

Time indeed flies. It’s already half of the first month of the New Year. But it still is a *New Year* and we’re still in the mode of setting our plans and goals for 2023.

Again, however, those plans and goals will be on a shaky and shallow foundation if your PURPOSE is unclear and uncertain.

Romans 8:28 reads, “*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*”

Do you want all things – your dreams for the year, or even your dark past, your failures, pains, and hurts – to work for the good?

Then “Love Him” and “be called according to His Purpose.”

We’ll learn more from our special talk today: *The Power of Purpose.*

Not only will this talk give your goal-setting for the year a mega boost. It will also give you a deeper perspective and direction for your entire life.

Get ready for another life-changing FEAST!

Mayroong Magandang Mangyayari Sa ‘Yo!

Alvin Barcelona



P.S. FOLLOW, LIKE, and SHARE my *M3SY* Live Talks and Videos on Alvin Barcelona Facebook page, Instagram, and *TikTok*. Be Blessed!



*What's Your **Hope** in 2023?*

YES, Year 2023 has just begun. Earlier, you must have already written down your New Year Resolutions, and you are now beginning to check your list— twice— to see if you're already beginning to fulfill your promises.

In his homily at The Feast last Sunday, January 8, 2023, Fr. Paolo Asprer pointed out that whatever our dispositions regarding New Year resolutions, we can learn from the Three Wise Men how to be wiser this 2023, *page 3*.

Bro. Bo Sanchez introduces our Feast Talk speaker today, Bro. Alvin Barcelona who discusses one important way to fulfill not only our New Year resolutions but everything else we hope for: *The Power of Purpose, pages 1-2*.

Speaking of being hopeful, one who really is is Bro. Audee Villaraza who, as he welcomes everyone to The Feast, bravely declares this will be our best year ever, *page 9*.

But as we write, the world remains dim as the Coronavirus Disease refuses to leave us, giving us instead a new variant said to be worse than we've had so far.

Undaunted, another hopeful Feast Builder, Bro. Ryan Capitulo, ended our Feast talks series *Unwrapped: Receive the True Gifts of Christmas*, by unwrapping the gift we need this 2023: the Gift of Hope, *pages 16-28*.

So, let this be our New Year Resolution: Be hopeful.



All for God's Glory,

Randy Borromeo
Media Ministry
Executive Director

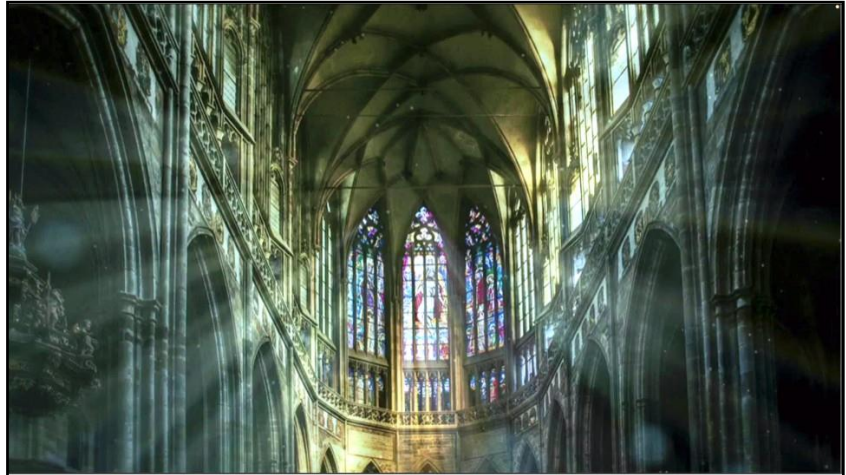




FLASHBACK!

JANUARY 8, 2023

Holy Mass



SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

REV. FR. ANGELO PAOLO ASPRER

on the Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12

The Magi Visit the Messiah

Excerpts...

Good morning my sisters, brother, and friends!

Once again, let's give a warm round of applause to our loving God for the blessings of a new day, life, and New Year, this Feast of the Epiphany. The blessings are overflowing!

Tell the person beside you, "Welcome!" "Happy New Year!" "*Wag kang mawawala*"— "*Don't get lost.*"

Para lamang 'yung song ni Jopay—just like the song *Jopay* from Mayonnaise for those millennials and Gen Z.

We are grateful for the gift of 2022 and at the same time 2023. We did not only endure 2022 with all its blessings, opportunities, challenges, crisis, lessons—we did not only endure 2022, but we embraced 2022 in all its blessings and lessons.

And now, we say this 2023, for all that has been, "Thank You, Lord!"

And for all that will be this 2023, "Yes, Lord!"

New Year Resolution: Listen

Do you still believe in New Year resolutions? And made them? To those who recycled their New Year resolutions —cut and paste, like last year.

For many, they still do their New Year resolutions, isn't it? And they do it **SMARTly** —**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic, and **T**ime-bound.

One speaker, Stephen Covey, the author of *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, said: "People begin with the end in mind."

Perhaps your New Year resolution is *never again*. Never would I overeat again. Never would I over-stress again. Never would I overwork again.

What else? Less and more. Fewer complaints, more gratitude. Less planning, more action. Less talking, more listening. That's why I love the word *listen*—*silent*. The first duty of love is to listen. The word *heart*— what is in the middle of it? *Ear*. Less talking, more listening.



Reading I: Isaiah 60:1-6



¹ Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem! Your light has come, the glory of the Lord shines upon you. ² See, darkness covers the earth, and thick clouds cover the peoples; but upon you the LORD shines, and over you appears his glory. ³ Nations shall walk by your light, and kings by your shining radiance. ⁴ Raise your eyes and look about; they all gather and come to you: your sons come from afar, and your daughters in the arms of their nurses. Then you shall be radiant at what you see, your heart shall throb and overflow, for the riches of the sea shall be emptied out before you, the wealth of nations shall be brought to you. ⁶ Caravans of camels shall fill you, dromedaries from Midian and Ephah; all from Sheba shall come bearing gold and frankincense, and proclaiming the praises of the LORD.



Three Ways To Be Wise

My dear friends, whatever our dispositions regarding New Year resolutions, the Three Wise Men invite us to be wise, to be wiser. *Magkaiba ho 'yung isang wise at intelligent.* What is their difference? They said if you are intelligent, you would analyze a lot of things. But if you are a wise person, you would synthesize.

An intelligent person understands what is said.
A wise person understands what is left unsaid.

An intelligent person leads you to disagreements.
A wise person (leads you) to settlements.

For an intelligent person, everything is relative. For a wise person, everything is related.

So this year, choose to be wise—choose to be wiser. How? Three ways:

1. Look Up

Look up always in gratitude—eyes on Heaven, and feet on the ground. You know, the Wise Men, perhaps they had triple doctorates regarding cosmology—the universe— but they allowed themselves to be guided by the star. Those are the real wise persons— they knew how to listen, they knew how to follow.

We do not learn in life when we think we are always right.

A person who is wise will tell himself, “The more I know, the more I do not know.”

Humility. Let God be God this 2023.

What is the opposite of faith? Fear? On the one hand, yes. But even the holy people in the Bible, they have deep faith but still they experienced fear.

So, my dear friends, the opposite of faith isn't fear— but control.

Are you a control freak?

If you can no longer control, it's time to surrender. Let God be God this 2023. *Matulog ka. Matulog ng mahimbing— Sleep. Sleep tight. Sabi nila kaya daw tayo natutulog dahil nagpapractice na tayo.— They say the reason we sleep is we are already practicing... (to sleep forever).*

Pero ang isang taong may malalim na tulog, may malalim na pananampalataya.— But the person with deep sleep also has deep faith.

Look up in gratitude and surrender.

2. Look Around

Examine your relationships.

What are the best gifts of the Three Wise Men to the Holy Family — to Baby Jesus? Gold— a symbol of royalty; Frankincense—a symbol of divinity; and Myrrh, the one we use to anoint the dead— it’s a symbol of humanity.

But more than their gifts, what’s important is the Gift of Presence. Nurture the gift of persons, the gift of presents. More than presents, Presence.

Examine your relationships. Are you truly present to your loved ones? You know, with that gift of quality time.

I remember a commercial many years ago about a family of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW). The mother and father were abroad.

Their two children said, “Mommy, Daddy, sana ngayong Pasko ay hindi na balikbayan box ‘yung darating sa bahay— kundi kayo na.— Mommy, Daddy, we wish this Christmas, what will arrive home is no longer a Balikbayan box. Instead, you two.”

My dear friends, more than the wrapped gifts, the essence of Christmas, the presents we receive this Christmas, are the arms of family and friends wrapped around each other with that Gift of Presence.



Second Reading

Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6

Reading II: Ephesians 3:2-3A, 5-6

Brothers and sisters:

² You have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for your benefit, ^{3A} namely, that the mystery was made known to me by revelation. ⁵ It was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: ⁶ that the Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

3. Look Within

Discern and decide.

You know, the Three Wise Men, they knew how to discern and decide. What did they see in the manger? Father, mother, baby Jesus, farm animals, shepherds—ordinary people. But the Three Wise Men saw something extraordinary in the ordinary people, in the ordinary events of that first Christmas. They were wise to discern and understand the meaning behind such ordinary encounters. Discernment.

And, of course, decision. They didn't go back to Herod. They shifted gears.

We have to decide to begin anew.

You know, Herod could symbolize many aspects of our life. Herod could be our past hurts, our bitterness. Herod could be our unhealthy dispositions, our habits, our toxic relationships.

We have to decide not to go back to Herod for us to have that grace of a new beginning.



Indeed, take care of yourself, of your body. This 2023, huwag mong parusahan, huwag mong pahirapan ang iyong katawan— Don't punish yourself. Don't let yourself suffer hardships. It's the only body that you have.

Befriend your body in its goodness, in its limitation. Like what? Aging, graying hair and white hair, wrinkles. Befriend your body. Accept your body as it is.

Befriend what is best in you. *Lahat naman tayo nagkakasala.*— We all sin. We all commit mistakes. But the good Lord would choose to see the potential goodness in all of us— for us to become the best and better version of ourselves each day.



Gift of Laughter

And finally, my dear friends, befriend laughter.

When was the last time that you truly laughed at yourself?

You know, the Gift of Laughter is one of the best surviving tools this 2023. When we can laugh at ourselves irrespective of what enslaves us means that we could go beyond, we could transcend what troubles us.

In our family, the last man standing is a woman— my Lola. But she already passed away last December. Yun po kapag siya na ang tumawa, ang lakas lakas.— When she laughed she laughed out loud.

You know life is short. Nobody gets out of life alive. It's true. That's why while you still have teeth, smile! Laughter. That's one of our best-surviving tools this 2023.

So, my dear friends in Christ, three gifts and challenges of the Three Wise Men: Look up—let God be God; Look around—examine your relationships, be truly present with your loved ones and friends; and Look within—discern and decide to become the best and better version of yourself this 2023.

Happy New Year to all!

WELCOME HOME!



Happy New Year, Feast Bay Area District!
Come on, let's give a clap offering
to the Lord! It's so good to be back at The Feast!
Hope is alive in this place.

You know, I get to bring out my vest only once
a year. The last time you saw this was many, many
years ago.

This is the first time we're gathering after
a long Pandemic. But I really wanted to bring out my
vest — because it's a statement and a declaration that I
want to proclaim over your life:

I declare that in Jesus' Name, this will be your best
— your *vest*— year ever. Whatever comes your way, whatever troubles and
struggles and difficulties, this will be your best year! Oh, praise God!

We want to welcome everybody into this beautiful place of God.

Thank you for honoring God with your presence today— the first Feast of 2023.

I pray that this will become a good habit for some of you who are coming
for the first time. Welcome home! Welcome to the Family! We pray that this will
be your habit for the rest of the year— that you will come and draw in the Presence
of God, lean into His Presence all the more, and learn how much He loves you.

We want to invite you to stay after The Feast for a very quick greeting.

We want to meet you, we want to get to know you, and we want to plug you
into this wonderful Community.

We also have special people in the house of God: from the Philippine Army;
Pilgrims who joined the Marian Pilgrimage led by Bro. Bo Sanchez.

Welcome to The Feast. Welcome to the Family. We want you to know
this is your Family. This is your spiritual Community.

You know, it hasn't been an easy year to start off 2023. The year has just come
in, and already, many have already happened to your life.

For me, the start of 2023 hasn't been easy. Bro. Alvin Barcelona, who happens
to be marking his birthday today, isn't here today because his mother, Tita. Aida
Barcelona, recently passed away. She lived a very full life... But we don't know
the kinds of hardship people go through, those who have lost people along the way.

Also, a few days ago, one of our very own servants, the head of the Ministry
that welcomes all the first-timers, Jaro Reyes, he passed away at age 32, died of
cardiac arrest...

Love Offering

I don't mean to sadden the moment because I know you are excited to be here...

I just want to say a word to encourage you... You know one thing that God has been speaking in my life is that life is fragile. At the spur of the moment, the person beside you may not be there anymore.

Life is fragile and may we all agree on this: As long as we are here we declare that we will worship the Lord. Let's agree that we will serve the Lord. That we will appreciate the loved ones that God has entrusted to us.

You know, I attended the wake of Tita Aida and also the wake of Jaro.

Tita Aida lived a full life. She was a catechist all her life. She taught about Jesus.

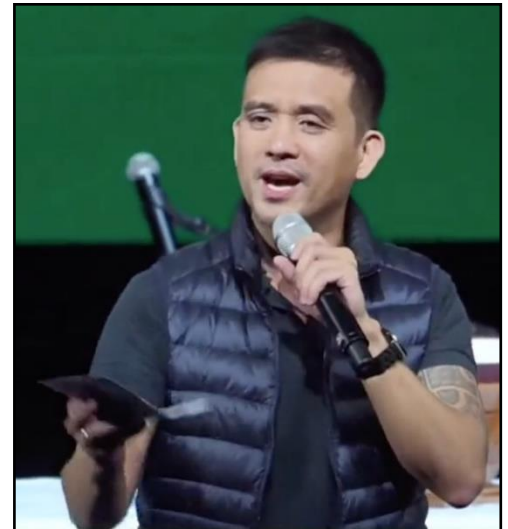
Jaro, he served to the best of his abilities.

That's my encouragement, all of you. I want to challenge you to live, with the best, gifts, talents, and skills that God has given you. Give to His Kingdom your time, your talent, and your treasure in 2023. If you've never given to the Lord, maybe this is the year that you finally give to the God who has been giving to your life year after year, after year.

I want to invite you to join me. You may bring out your Love Offering envelopes. This is the first time that we give the first fruits—literally the first fruits of our labor—to this Community that has been feeding us.

Raise your envelopes. Some of you have different envelopes—a colored one, a white one. It doesn't matter. What matters is what's inside your heart—that we give this out of sacrifice, not out of surplus. Let me just pray:

Father, there is a hand that's raised, a hand that is trusting You this year. We are giving, Lord, not out of excesses but out of sacrifice. We want to give something that will hurt us a bit. Because we know that You are a good God. And we pray that whatever we need this year, Jesus, You've already prepared it. It's already on its way. We declare that this will be our best year ever. Because we trust You, God. Thank You, Jesus. In Your Name, we pray. Amen.



Worship!

EXHORTATION



JHONN JAVIER: Come on! Rise! Happy New Year!

We're going to praise God and celebrate life together. We're so glad that we're gathered here again as a Community. Let us celebrate the fresh beginning that has been given us.

We're going to think about the Good News that this is the day that the Lord has made! This is the year, this is the time, this is the beginning that the Lord has made so let us rejoice and be glad in it!

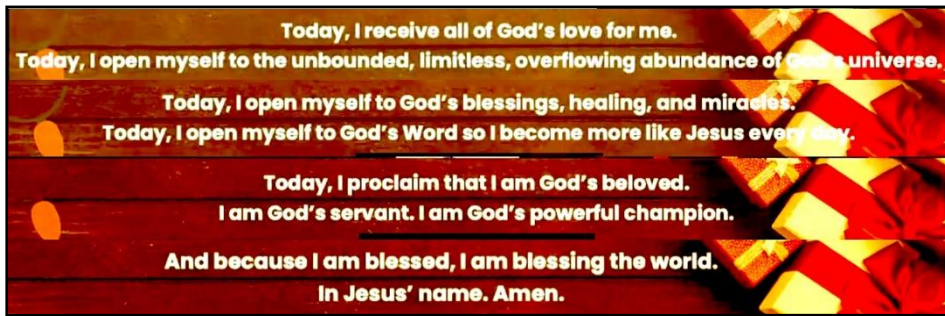
He is worthy! He is good! Hallelujah!





NOVENA TO GOD'S LOVE

BO SANCHEZ: For the first time this year 2023, we say our prayer:



It is the New Year. Happy Valentine's Day!

I want you to hug that person beside you. Just give that person a big embrace, and tell that person, "You're going to have a great year."

And if you think you are about to sit down, banish that thought from your mind. You know, it's the New Year. You want to be standing alert, attentive, leaning in... Plant your feet on the ground, stand up straight, chest out, and believe that the best is yet to come.

I know they've been asking this question a while ago, but how many of you are really excited about 2023?

I've got news for you: God is more excited for your 2023 than you are. A lot of people don't understand that. What should be your posture for 2023?

You know, God has always been excited every time He looks at you. When God created you, do you know that He was excited? In the book of *Genesis*, when God created the light, what did He say?

He said, let there be light. When God created the moon, the stars, the mountains, the hills, the trees, the animals, what did He do? He used His words: "Let there be light. Let there be the sun..." He used His words.

But then when He created you, what did He do? He knelt down, He got soil ... He was hands-on with you. When He created you He was hands-on... Why?...



God Is Excited for You

Do you know where I bought this shirt? Zara. They're not our sponsors...

I walked into a Zara store about nine years ago— that's how old this shirt is— and then I picked this shirt... Do you know that Zara, has thousands of stores all over the world? Do you know that when they made this shirt, it was not meant for me? It was meant for people— like me. People my size, people my height. It was made for millions of people.

But when I go to Adrian Panganiban (my attire consultant), he always has a tape measure in his bag, and he measures the length of my arms, the length of my body and the length of my legs, and the width of my neck, the width of my chest, my waist.

He measures all of them. And then he makes a shirt— just for me.

Do you understand that when God created the sun, the moon, the stars, He was like Zara... But when He came to you, He was hands-on. And He created every single part of you. He created *you*— specifically.

And when He was doing that, He was so excited: “This is my child, whooo! This is *my* child!”

When God created, fashioned you, and shaped you, He said, “You're gonna be beautiful, and you're gonna bless the world. You're gonna be my light, you're gonna be my love in this world. You're gonna be my channel, you're gonna be my miracle, you're gonna be my blessing to the people around you...”



Please understand: When God looks at you, He does not just look at the *problem*. He looks at the *possibility*.

He looks at the miracle for the world. When God looks at you, He's excited. His posture is like this: standing up, chest high, smiling.

And He says, “Son, I'm excited for you!”



Jump!

And guess what? 2023 is still the same...

How many of you, when you were small, and it's New Year, parents told you, your Mommy told you to jump? Why? So that you would grow taller. For some of you, it didn't work...

You want to do that now?

But this time, it's a prayer — you know, you won't grow taller.

But I want you to understand that you are a giant. In the eyes of God, you are a king, a queen. You are a co-ruler. And I want you to believe this.

We're going to jump five times, and we're just going to announce to the world— every time you jump, I want you to shout, "Blessing!"

One, two, three, go!



"Blessing!"



"Blessing!"

"Blessing!"

"Blessing!"

"Blessing!"

Talk

Talk 3:



HAPPY NEW YEAR, Feast Bay Area Family! Welcome to the very first Feast of 2023! You are history-making because you are in our very Feast! How many of you had a wonderful Christmas season? How many of you gained weight like me?

Perhaps by now, you have unwrapped all of your Christmas gifts.

Question: Did you like your gifts? Yes!

Another question: Those edible gifts— are you blaming them for your weight gain? Why on earth food gifts are so trendy?

Did you have Christmas gifts wish lists? Did your friends and family fulfill your wishes? Yes! Great.

I'm sure no matter what happened, we all had a blast. We all had so much fun unwrapping our gifts this Christmas season.

So, let's applaud God. Because our gifts are really wonderful blessings from our family and friends. But here in The Feast, we were able to receive the best gifts this Christmas. We were able to unwrap the best gifts this Christmas season because we had a wonderful mini-series called *Unwrap: Receive the True Gifts of Christmas*.



Unwrapped Gifts

In the First Talk, we unwrapped the Gift of Peace—we learned we should learn from our past, we should live in the present, and we should obey the leading of God wherever He is taking us. That’s when we will achieve Peace.

The second gift we unwrapped was the Gift of Joy. And we learned from Bro. Bo that joy is a feeling and an attitude that we should relish, that we should enjoy. That’s what God wants. To enjoy and relish that feeling no matter what our situation is.



Now, we will be closing this beautiful mini-series and we will be unwrapping the third gift. And we need this gift now more than ever. Now that it is a New Year. Now that we are having a new season. We are having new beginnings. We need to unwrap this gift. And it is the Gift of Hope.

As we unwrap the Gift of Hope, I will be preaching to you this very important message: Hope is our light.



The Word of God in the Bible strengthens our hope in the Lord.

Let us glorify the Lord by singing:

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

Be Patient

And now, we shall read from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans, Chapter 8, Verses 24-25:

ROMANS 8:24-25

"For it was by hope that we were saved; but if we see what we hope for, then it is not really hope. For who of us hopes for something we see? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience."

Next week will be the Miss Universe pageant. If we already know the outcome of the pageant, will we still hope for our Miss Philippines to win? No more.

Next week the Australian Open—the tennis tournament—will start. And our very own Alexandra Eala is playing in that tournament— She might be the first Filipino grand slam winner. Let's pray for her. Now, if we know the outcome of the Australian Open, will we still hope for Alex to win? Maybe, no more.

Single people, now, if you already know the outcome of your love life this year — and you know there's still no one for you— will you still hope to find your one true love? Maybe, no more.

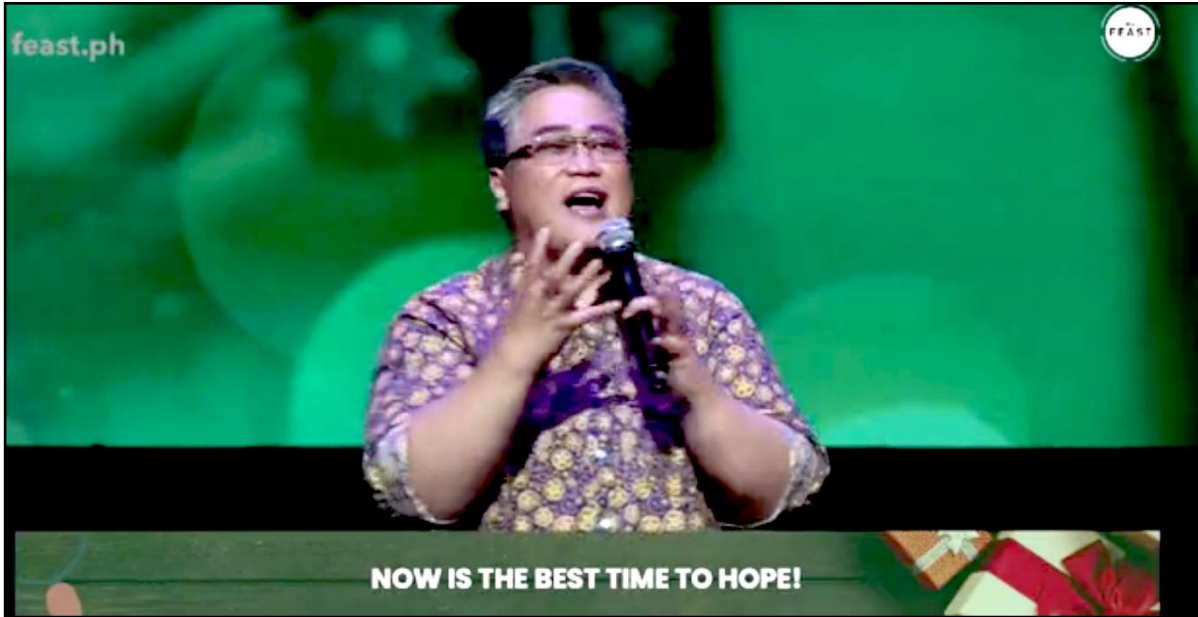
When we say there's already a winner, we already know the outcome. So, we won't hope anymore.

But God is telling us in our Bible passage you hope for those things you cannot see. You hope for those things that are impossible. Those your mind cannot fathom. You hope for those things. And be patient. And I assure you— God assures you you will fulfill those dreams and aspirations and answered prayers.

Let's glorify His Word again by singing:

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





I'm sure even if it's the New Year— even if it's full of hope, full of joy that we are all here— I'm sure some of us are going through something difficult. I'm sure there is some darkness in our life even if we are in the New Year. Maybe sickness in the family or death. Some of you might be suffering from poverty, and unemployment. Some may be already drowning in credit card debts and loans, oppression, brokenness, strained relationships in the family.

Yes, many of us, we are experiencing so many difficulties. So, sometimes, it's difficult to hope. Maybe it's difficult to see that our problems will have solutions. Sometimes, it's difficult to imagine or envision a day when we no longer have these problems.

Don't worry if you feel that way. Because that's what we're talking about. Those are the times you can no longer see solutions to your problems. And I'm telling you now it's the best time to hope— when you're feeling a bit hopeless. Don't be hopeless.

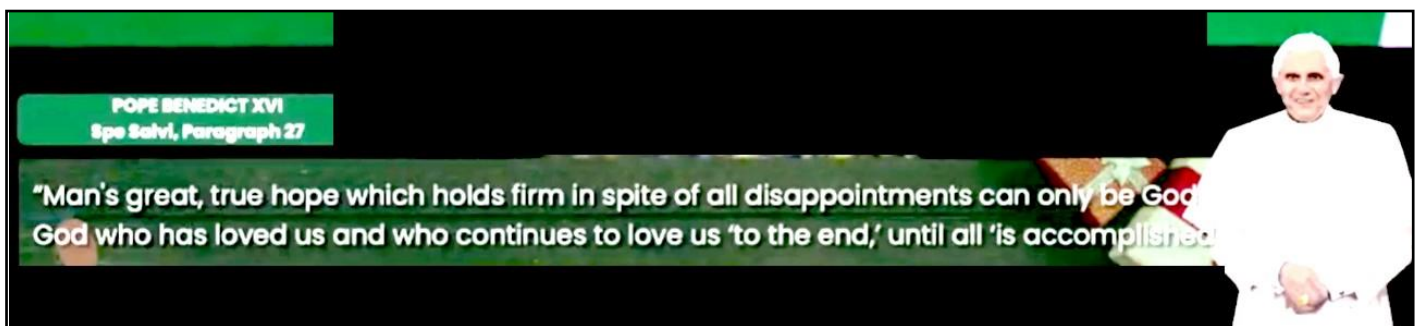
Hope is our light amidst the darkness right now.

A dark green banner with the text "HOPE IS OUR LIGHT AMIDST THE DARKNESS RIGHT NOW!" in white capital letters. To the right of the banner, there is a small image of a gift box with a red ribbon.

Hope is the light that will show us the power of Jesus in our life. Hope is our light that will illuminate our path toward what we cannot see, going to that place, that situation, that time we cannot envision right now. That time when you have achieved your dreams. That time when your prayers have been answered by God. That time when you are successful already. You are debt-free. You are rich — you are a millionaire. You have achieved your dreams. Give the Lord a big hand!



Oh, I love Pope Benedict XVI. Let's continue to pray for his soul. Pope Benedict wrote this beautiful encyclical about hope. It's titled *Spe Salvi* in Latin. In English, *Saved in Hope*. And I love this quotation from this document:



Who among you prepared 12 or 13 round fruits on New Year's Eve? I'm sure those who did believe that these round fruits will give them prosperity. Bro. Bo asked earlier who jumped on New Year's Eve. I have been jumping since I was a kid. It worked for me— I grew vertically and horizontally :)

I was kind of scared earlier when Fr. Paolo Asprer said, "Take care of your body." And he was looking at me...:)

Yes, I'm sure we jumped because we believed we would grow taller. But as Bro. Bo said it didn't work for some.

And how many of you displayed the cat moving its arms up and down— just the arms, not the body? Or the frog being fed with coin. Or the money tree. Did you display these items during New Year's Eve? I'm sure some of us believed these luck-inducing decorations would bring abundance to our households and our families.

Well, I respect all beliefs. I respect all of the cultural practices that we do during the New Year. We also do them in my family. But I believe in what Pope Benedict said: that our great and true hope is God alone.



Two Stories

Let me share with you two stories. About my friends— lady doctors.

One doctor— she's very successful. I love her. She's very kind. She's very bright— she's brilliant, she's intelligent. She's beautiful inside and out. But at age 50, she was still NBSB— No boyfriend since birth. I don't understand. She's not mean. But she's very successful, she's driven.

Perhaps, some men can't level up to her, so no one's courting her. And she is the only child of her parents. So, she's the breadwinner, since she earns well. She's also very generous. She helps her aunts and uncles. She sent some of her nephews and nieces to school.

She consulted me when she turned 50 because she was already undergoing menopause.

Then I asked her, “Do you still want to get married? Do you still want to have a husband— at the age of 50? But you won't have a child anymore. Do you still want to get married?”

She said, “Yes, I am still hoping to get married. I still want to have a family. I can adopt a child.”

You know, at the age of 52, she met an AFAM. For those who do not know, AFAM means A Foreigner Around Manila. She met a 54-year-old AFAM — a caucasian American, a widower with two teenage children. They met online, and that AFAM pursued her here in the Philippines. And long story short, they got married— two years later. My friend was then 54 years old, the AFAM 56 years old. And what's great is the teenage children, they love her! — It's not like the common story where the children bully their stepmother.

So, now she has a family. She was hoping for it. When she turned 50, it seemed impossible. She couldn't imagine it, but she still hoped for it, and she got what she hoped for. Let's applaud the Lord!

Catechesis of Hope

Okay. My other friend. Also a successful doctor — one of those doctors who are few in their kind of specialization. She consulted me, and I diagnosed she was with late-stage ovarian cancer. Late-stage of ovarian cancer— at the peak of her career, at the prime of her life. And she had to undergo extensive surgery—toxic surgery. I thought she would die during the surgery because cancer had already spread in her body. She underwent months of chemotherapy.

Then I was talking to her, we were praying together— she has strong faith in God.

She's also the breadwinner of her family.

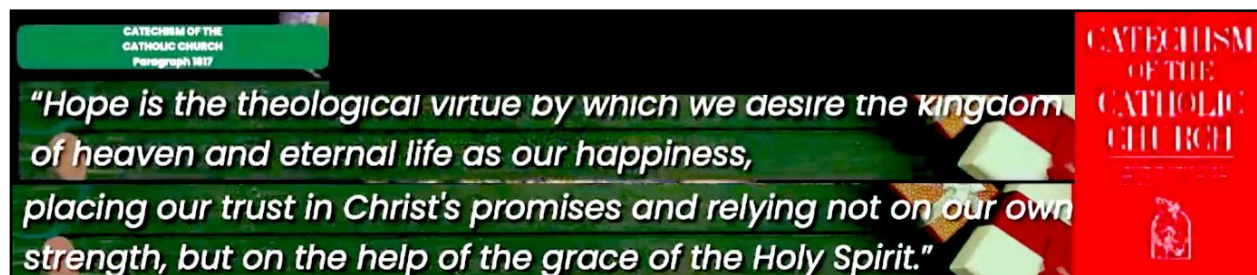
And she said, "I'm still hoping to be healed."

But I knew the prognosis of late-stage ovarian cancer. She's a doctor so she also knew the prognosis. But she hoped against hope that she would be healed.

You know, it's been seven years since that diagnosis. She's still cancer-free. We already reported her case in our medical literature because — very late-stage cancer, still alive to this day.

These two stories are wonderful stories of hope. The lesson is we have to be patient. We have to hope for what we do not see but we have to be patient.

Let me share with you this catechesis of hope:



Sometimes, it's very hard to be hopeful, right? Like, if you're already going through many dire situations, can you still be hopeful? Give me a chance to be hopeless. Because it's so hard to maintain that state of being hopeful. But we can be hopeful all the time because of the grace of the Holy Spirit. That's what the Church is teaching us.



We Remain Hopeful

Let's continue to read:

IT IS OUR FERVENT HOPE IN THE LOVE AND MERCY OF JESUS THAT ENABLES US
TO TOTALLY ENTRUST EVERYTHING TO HIM.

When it seems impossible, Jesus gives us the grace to remain hopeful.

Parents, I'm sure you're doing your best to provide for your kids. I'm sure you are doing your best to be the most loving, the most understanding parent — even when you already feel like pinching your kids.

You are doing your best to raise them well. But still, you pray for your kids, right? But still, you lift your children to God and *hope* that they will be godly and responsible and responsible citizens and that they will be successful.

Yes, after doing everything for them, we still hope for the best for our kids.

Now, are there graduating students here? My niece is graduating from senior high. Isn't it that students, they'll do their best in school — I hope they're doing their best— they're doing their best to study, to adjust to situations. Like, there's no teacher, you're just at home, you have to study on your own.

I'm sure they do their best to develop themselves. But after doing everything right, they still pray. They still *hope* that they will get into their dream college, their dream university— that they will be accepted into their dream course.

Those graduating from college, after doing everything right, they still pray and *hope* that they will get into their dream company, into their dream profession.

My niece is now taking the admission exam in La Salle.

Even if we do everything right, God still gives us the grace to be hopeful, to lift everything to Him.



What We Hope For

Remember our message today:



But still, there is darkness in our life. We thought the COVID Pandemic was already on the wane. How come now, there's another variant? Why is there another surge of COVID cases in China? But we are hopeful that this variant will not reach the Philippines. We are hopeful that we have enough herd immunity already.

Because, by the grace of God, almost 80 million Filipinos are fully vaccinated. 80 million is already 80% of our population — because we are 110 million.

In Med school, our lessons say that 70% means we already have herd immunity. So, we are really hopeful that herd immunity will protect us. We are hopeful that even if there is a surge in cases in other countries, we won't have a surge here. And we will no longer have a lockdown. COVID will just be like the flu— we will no longer be scared of it. It will be only mild. Let's continue to pray for that and be hopeful.

What about the price of onions? We continue to pray that the traders — those controlling the prices— we hope will be touched, we hope they will think of us— instead of their profits. We are hopeful despite the crisis.

When you look at the Internet, when you look at social media accounts why are there many negative news or comments? Why are there so much bashing and hatred? And worse, why is there so much sexual content — just to attract views? Why should posts be sexual in nature? But we are hopeful that when we open the Internet, we will be inspired. We are hopeful that when we browse our social media, it will have a positive impact on our life. That's what we hope for.

So, let's hang on. We should make sure that our hope is our light this year. That the light of hope will burn ever so bright this year.

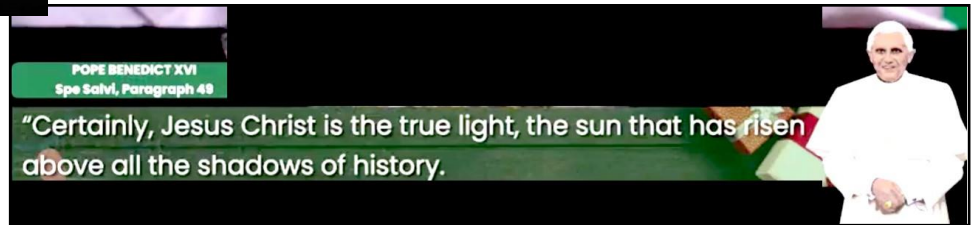


Four Ways To Make the Light of Hope Shine Brightly

We can make the Light of Hope shine brightly through these four ways:



This is what Pope Benedict said:



So that we will not lose hope— despite the darkness around us— hold on to Jesus. This New Year is the best time to ask ourselves: How’s my prayer time? Do I still set aside prime time to pray to Jesus? To talk to Him? Or I do that just when I am in the comfort room because that’s the only time I remember Jesus. I’ll just insert my prayer during that time.

Do you set aside time throughout the day to listen to Jesus? That’s something we can reflect on this New Year. Do we still pray to Him? Do we still talk to Him?

What about your Scripture time?

When we read the Bible, that’s when Jesus talks to us. And the Bible is the manual of our life. So, do we set aside time to read the Bible? Catholics don’t read the Bible so much. Let’s change that. This 2023, reflect on that and make a resolution or a decision to read the Bible every day.



We have many aides in reading the Bible— You might still have no *Didache* (*Daily Bible Reflections for Catholics*) or *Gabay*, the Tagalog version, or *Sabbath* (*Scripture Meditations for Daily Life*). They are now selling at discount prices. Go buy your copies: <https://feastbooks.ph/product-category/2023-devotionals/>

SECOND

HOLD ON TO MAMA MARY

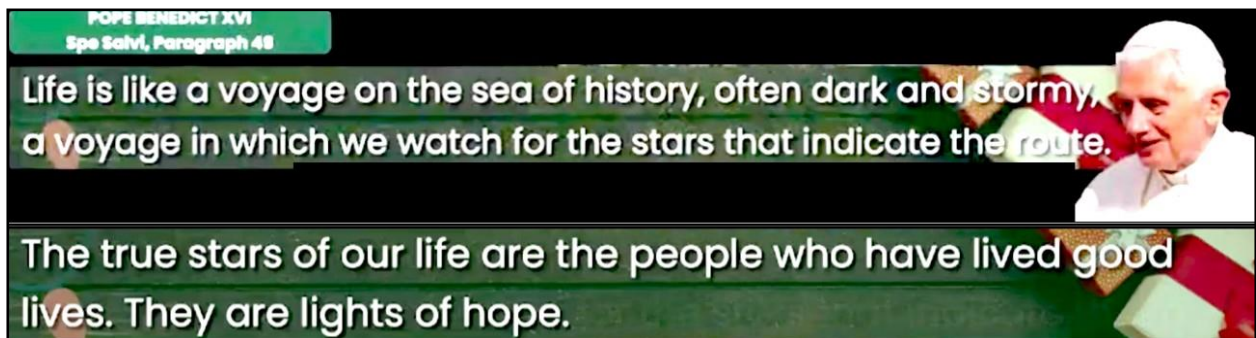
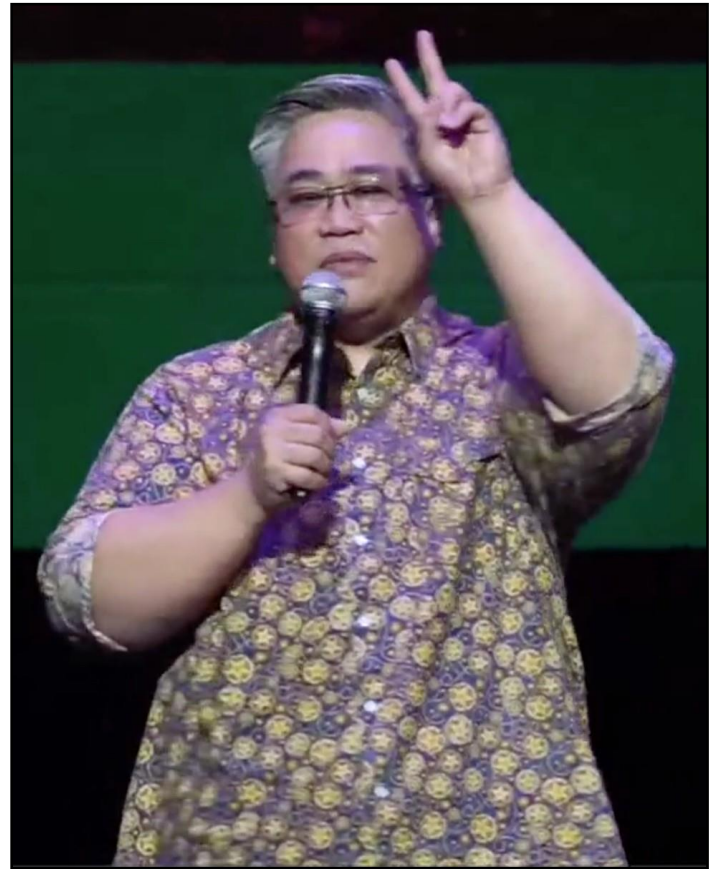
We start the year with the Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Hold on to Mama Mary. Pray to her. She's a very good intercessor.

Whenever I need prayer, what comes to my mind is the Wedding at Cana.

(The wine ran out. Mary asked Jesus to provide wine. And the Lord answered it's not yet His time to make miracles. But He went on with His first miracle: He turned water in the jars into wine— John 2:1-12).

Mary is our No.1 Intercessor. She lifts our prayers directly to her Son. Hold on to her. She has only one goal: To bring us closer to Jesus. That's her primary goal.

Pope Benedict said:



And Mama Mary is the No. 1 Light of Hope. She is the Star of Hope that will guide us like the star in the Epiphany story that will lead us to Jesus.

THIRD

HOLD ON TO THE SAINTS

Let's hold on to the saints. Hold on to the examples of the saints.

Let me tell you the story of St. Josephine Bakhita. She was born in Darfur, Sudan. At the age of 9, she was sold as a slave — five times. And all of her five masters would beat her up— 9 years old to 13 years old— four years. She was beaten up every day, continuously.

What was her only hope?

She wished she'd have a kind master who would not beat her up.

After four years, she was sold to a master who brought her to Italy. And that master was Catholic— a very kind master who introduced her to Jesus Christ.

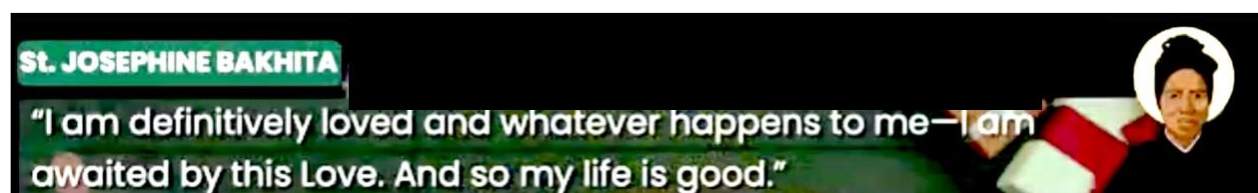
She didn't dream that she would come to know Jesus. Her only hope was to have a kind human master. And then she was introduced to Jesus Christ and she realized there was even higher than a human master.

Jesus is the Master of all. Her Master who won't judge her, who saved her— very kind, very loving, compassionate, merciful, Master of all masters— Jesus Christ.

And Josephine chose to be baptized at the age of 21. She received the Holy Eucharist for the first time. And then a few years after that, she professed her vows already with the Canossian Sisters. And she became a missionary in Italy.

Let's applaud the Lord for the example of St. Josephine Bakhita

And this is what she said— perhaps we also say this always:



Whatever happens to us, our life is good because God is waiting for us. We should be able to say that. We'll follow the example of St. Josephine.

FOURTH
HOLD ON TO OTHERS

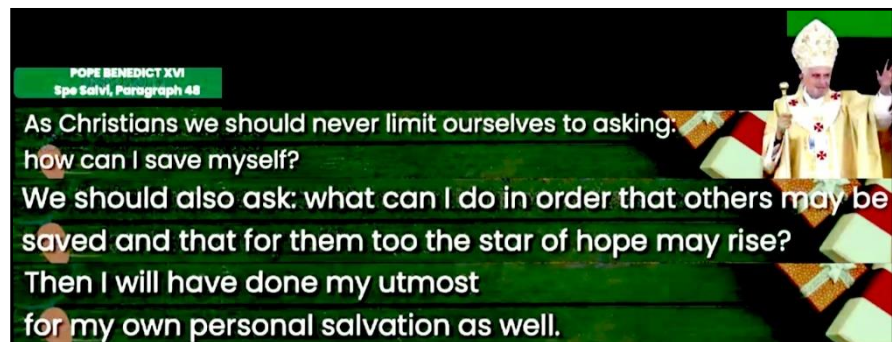


The Fourth Way to keep the Light of Hope burning this year is this: Hold on to Others.

So, my challenge to you:

Let's be hope-givers this 2023.

Pope Benedict said:



So, ask yourself: What can I do to save others? What can I do to give hope to others?

Let's be hope-givers. We don't have to be preachers here onstage to be hope-givers. Let us give hope to others by preaching the Gospel of Jesus to the ends of the Earth. And how do we do that? With the way we live our life. With the way we treat our family. With the way we are with our friends. With the way we treat the lowest in society. With the way, we interact with others. With the way we conduct our relationship with our officemates, with our schoolmates, with our neighbors.

We don't have to preach onstage or anywhere else. That's not our strength or that's not our gift. We will be hope-givers if we will be loving, merciful, compassionate, understanding, patient with others.

My dear wives here, just being patient with your husband, you're already a hope-giver.

Let us remember: *Hope is our light.*

And there is darkness right now. I hope we will be the Light of Hope to others. That's our goal this year. Let us spread the Light of Hope. Let us spread the Light of Jesus to others.

Maraming Salamat, po. Thank you very much.



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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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 Checks to Kerygma Family, 848
Rainbow Blvd # 1937, Las Vegas, NV 89107 For Other Countries/Philippines:
Address Check to Shepherd's Voice Radio and Television Foundation and mail (registered mail) to Shepherds Voice, 60 Chicago St., Cubao, Quezon City, Philippines 1109

4. Directly Deposit to Our Bank Accounts. Deposit to Shepherds Voice Account in any branch of these banks:

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FAMILY ONLINE NEWSMAGAZINE

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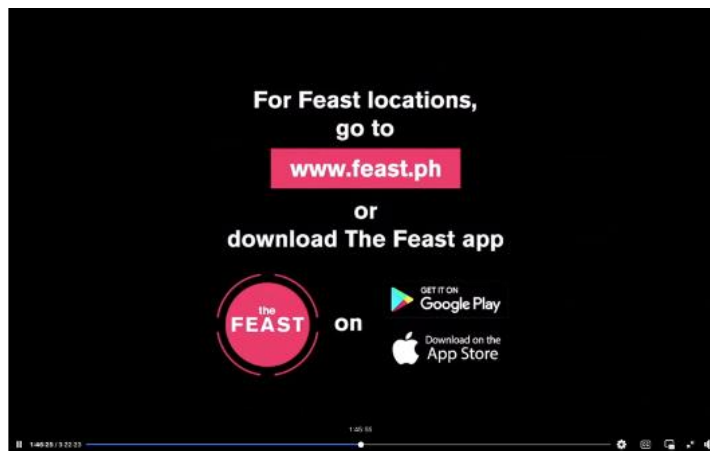
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Go and make disciples of all men.
— Matthew 28:19

