



NEWSLETTER
January 22, 2023

How Our 2023 Should Go



HERE, I am pointing at four words all starting with the letter *P*.

They are the four *P*'s of Life's Purpose which Bro. Alvin Barcelona, our Feast Bay Area District Builder and. main Preacher for the afternoon sessions, explained so well in his talk, *The Power of Purpose*, our Special New Year issue last Sunday, January 15.

He shared touching, inspiring experiences about how each *Purpose*

became so real when his mother Aida suffered terminal cancer and passed on early this January We share with you the *Flashback* starting on *Page 12*.

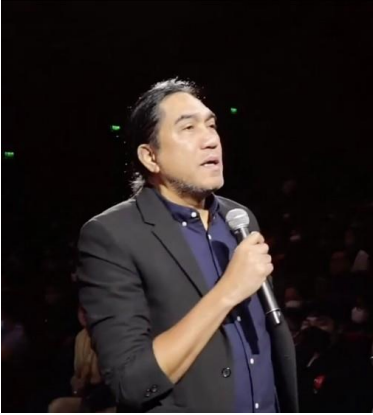
On *Page 2* of this issue, Bro. Alvin introduces our new Feast Talk series starting today, January 22, 2023. This talk is based on *Leviticus*, the book of the Bible many want to skip. Why?

Well, be at The Feast so you don't miss this powerful message which we all need to know to have a clear direction on how our life in 2023 should go.

May your dreams come true,

Bo Sanchez

‘Huwag Kang Mangamba’



Huwag kang mangamba di ka nag-iisa
Sasamahan kita saan man magpunta
Ika'y mahalaga sa aking mga mata
Minamahal kita, minamahal kita

Tinawag kita sa 'yong pangalan
Ikaw ay akin magpakailanman
Ako ang Panginoon mo at Diyos
Tagapagligtas mo at taga tubos

Huwag kang mangamba 'di ka nag-iisa
Sasamahan kita saan man magpunta
Ika'y mahalaga sa aking mga mata
Minamahal kita, minamahal kita...

THIS song will now always have one significant memory for me. It was the song I sang at my Mom's burial.

Sorry, I'm still talking about my Mom. It has only been weeks since she passed, and she continues to teach me even after her death.

You see, my Mom was afraid to die. Who isn't? But that was when she was stronger, and she still wanted to do many things.

But when she got weaker, she started surrendering to God, especially when she had confession, Masses inside her room, and she received the last Sacraments.

She started to have more peace, more faith, more trust. She still had so many plans in mind, but then again, she eventually entrusted everything to us, her children, and to the Lord.

That's why on the day she breathed her last, there was not much struggle. She had a Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) Will. She specified in her will not to bring her to the hospital anymore. She simply wanted to die in the arms of her children. And that's how she passed, peacefully.

I believe, by the grace and mercy of God, my Mom is with the Lord now.

Today, we start a brand new series on *Leviticus*, and with Talk 1 titled *Go Back to the Garden*. *Leviticus* is a book in the Bible many want to skip. It seems boring and too "technically religious" with lots and lots of rules on holiness.

But the big message is this: *You become holy not by doing holy things, but by being with the Holy One.*

You become holy by "Going Back to the Garden" – of God's heart!

I believe my Mom went "Back to the Garden"— to God's heart. And not because she was holy— but because she was with the Holy One.

Get ready for another life-changing FEAST Series!

God be with us all!

Alvin Barcelona

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



LETTERS

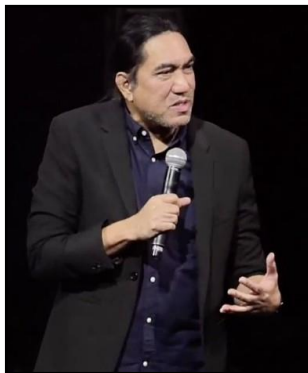
Dare!



IF you heard the homily of Fr. Mark Demanuele at The Feast last Sunday, January 15, and you dared accept his challenge, you are now sitting with someone you recruited to join The Feast with you.

Last Sunday, as we celebrated the Feast of the Sto. Niño, the Child Jesus, Fr. Mark said one of the traits of children is that they are daring, *page 3*. So, he challenged us to be childlike, be daring.

He said, “I dare you next Sunday, bring someone else here with you to the Aliw Theater.”



Bringing people to The Feast, to God, actually, was also the challenge of Bro. Bo Sanchez and Bro. Alvin Barcelona as they discussed the Special New Year Feast Talk last Sunday on *The Power of Purpose*, *page 12*.

Bro. Didoy Lubaton also posed a challenge to us particularly in determining what or who should be our priority when it comes to sharing our resources, *page 8*.

Dare: Continue to accept challenges to make your 2023 a daring year!



All for God's Glory,

Randy Borrromeo
Media Ministry
Executive Director





FLASHBACK!

JANUARY 15, 2023

Holy Mass

FR. MARK DEMANUELE

on the Gospel: Matthew 18: 1-5, 10

Excerpts...

I HAVE to admit something that happened to me eight years ago. Actually, eight years ago today was the first homily I did in the Philippines

— as it was the time when I came, and they told me, “Next Sunday, we will be celebrating Santo Nino.”

And I thought *San Antonio*. So, I prepared a homily about St. Anthony.

Thank God, we were eating on a Saturday evening and one of the priests told me, “What are you going to say about Santo Niño tomorrow?”

And I said, “Yes, San Antonio... St. Anthony, yes.”

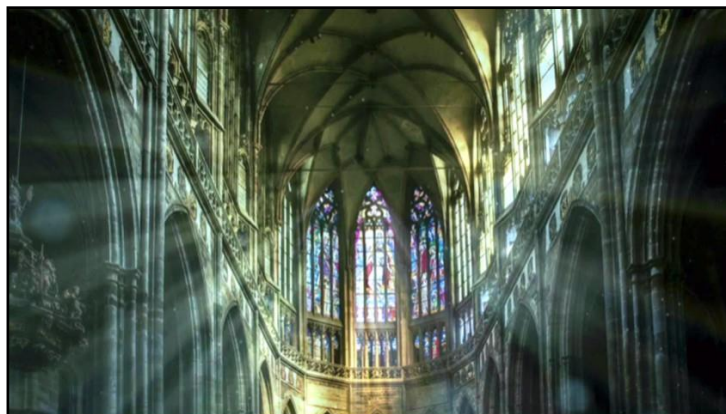
He told me, “St. Anthony? No, Santo Niño is the child Jesus!”

Anyway, do you ever realize how God is so loving? And in a way so mysterious that He called a great nation of the Philippines to Christianity through a simple small statue of the little Child Jesus. Unbelievable! How can God think about such things?

But yes, that’s the baptism of this beautiful country. And up to today, 500 years and counting, we thank God that faith is still part of our lives, and this is the joy of The Feast of today.

I am so blessed that I am sharing this with you. Now, obviously, we know that the faith is not the same as in many other countries— falling slowly and slowly.

We have a great mission. We are called to be the new missionaries and with the new Santo Niño to so many of our brothers and sisters. Let’s bring them back!



SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



FR. MARK DEMANUELE



We Are God's Children

Do you know that sadly enough, in the last practically 19 to 20 years, the attendance (of the people going to church) went down from 6% out of 10, to 3 out of 10?

I wish to share with you some beautiful thoughts that make us happy to realize from the Readings of today— why we celebrate the infancy of Jesus.

First of all, in the Second Reading (*below*), Paul confirms to us something which is important that we understand many times. He tells us we are the adopted children of God. We are God's children and that's because Christ, in His omnipotence, He becomes a little child in the midst of us— and redeemed us.

Jesus, as Paul said, did not despise us but He came in the midst of us like a little child so that nobody would be afraid of God. And that's an important reason that today is a special day.

Paul is confirming to us: We are the family of God. We are God's children— and that's very special for us. Now, this was made possible because God became man and became a child.

A few months ago, we had the opportunity to join a pilgrimage to the place of St. Therese of Lucia. It's a beautiful place.

St. Therese said, "We are called to spiritual childhood."

We, adults, are called to spiritual childhood. And how are we going to do this?

She said, "Like children, like toddlers, we are called to possess or we must re-acquire the traits and practices of a child in us."



Reading II: 1 Corinthians 1:1-3

¹ Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and Sosthenes, our brother, ² to the church of God in Corinth, to those who have been consecrated in Christ Jesus and called to be God's holy people, with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord as well as ours.

³ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.



Traits of a Child

A child has so many beautiful traits. I wish to speak of three of these traits.

A Child is Humble

The one that Jesus Himself told us: If you are not humble, you will never enter the Kingdom of God.

What is humbleness? It's not humiliation, guys—be careful. Humble of heart means that you realize, that you depend on God, that you can't do it on your own.

Look at a child. If he has to do something, what does he do? He goes to his parents, “Ma, Pa, can you help me?”

That's humbleness. Accepting myself, my weaknesses, my restrictions, I turn to God and ask Him, “Lord, my God, my Father, help me.”

That is humbleness of heart. We don't try to do it on our own. Let's not be so proud. Instead, be aware that slowly, the more you become humble, depending on God, the more God is going to help you.

A Child is Simple

Simplicity means that in the complicated life that we are living around us, we are getting complex in our lifestyle, we are forgetting to look at the flowers and smell them, or look at the sky, and thank God for all that the Lord is doing for us.

Look at a child in his simple way.

Sometimes when we give a child something, for the whole day, he will be so happy. He will be playing with it, knowing almost all the parts and corners of that thing. Because he is that way— a simple person, not complex.

So, the second important thing is simplicity in my life, to be aware of what God is doing for me.

Like a child—the mama gives him a plate and simply, he will eat slowly—or the mother will help him to taste the good food.

A Child is Daring

Daring means that sometimes, a child doesn't think twice about what he wants to do.

If you tell him, "Jump from here to the other and somebody will be there to catch you."

He won't think twice about it. He will simply jump.

I remember myself being a child. I was in Malta with my father. We were at the sea and my father told me to jump. I didn't know how to swim, yet I just jumped— knowing that my father was there. I was daring— and because of that, I learned how to swim.

Being daring is when God asks me (to do) something— and because I know that God is there, and God will be the one to catch me, to help me, to teach me, to guide me, I will be able to do it.



Reading I: Isaiah 49:3, 5-6

³ He said to me, 'Israel, you are my servant, through whom I shall manifest my glory.'⁵ And now Yahweh has spoken, who formed me in the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him and to re-unite Israel to him; -I shall be honored in Yahweh's eyes, and my God has been my strength.⁶ He said, 'It is not enough for you to be my servant, to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back the survivors of Israel; I shall make you a light to the nations so that my salvation may reach the remotest parts of earth.'





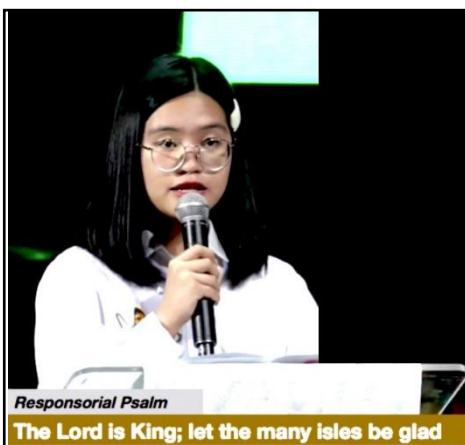
Dare!

And you know what is daring for us at the moment?

I dare you, next Sunday, bring someone else here with you to the Aliw Theater. Don't be afraid to speak about Jesus. Don't be afraid to make the Sign of the Cross in front of others.

In front of everyone, God is with you. But I am challenging you to give witness to that.

And the Sto. Niño, a small statue, is helping us to be God's witnesses, and God wants that this great nation of the Philippines will never disappear or will never fade from its faith.



So that's our mission and that's what we need to do.

We, as God's children, are called to help each other to return back to the child because the child is waiting for all of us. Amen.

WELCOME HOME! 

BRO. DIDOY LUBATON:

Okay, Good Morning, Everybody.
Let's applaud the Lord!

How are you?

I'm looking at the people here.
I love the energy. I love the Mass
celebration with our Feast priest. Thank
you, Fr. Demanuele.

And we appreciate how family-
oriented we are. Thank you for bringing
along your kids.

I want to greet and welcome everybody to The Feast. If it's your first time,
know that this is our Family— Light of Jesus Family is our Community, and our
faith gathering is called The Feast. We are all together in this Community.
And this is where we hope that you feel you are loved.

Everybody shout it out: Welcome Home!

Announcement: We make the Sacrament of Reconciliation available for all
of us. So, it's not too far to have that repentance time and reconciliation with the
Lord. Just ask the ushers and they will direct you to the place where you can have
the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Guys, it's already January 15.

I have a question: How is your New Year Resolution?

I remember, December 31, going into the New Year, we had a Mass celebration
in a little Chapel near our home in Las Piñas— that's where I grew up. It was
a beautiful time because I was with my family— my Mom was there, and I saw
my childhood friends, neighbors... Wow.

During the Mass, I was reminded that that was the Chapel where I learned how
to give. I remember my Mom highlighted it. How did I learn to give? I was seven or eight
years old. It was Christmas, we attended Mass, and then my Godmother, part of the
neighborhood, gave me an envelope with P200.00. My Mom was so happy— because the
money would go to her. Then came the Offertory Time. I took P100.00 from the envelope
and put it into the Love Offering basket.

And my Mom was like, "Oh-oh, why are you giving the money away?"

Ha-ha. I'm exaggerating.

My Mom actually said to me, "Son, you're so generous."





LOVE OFFERING

Imagine: I was just a kid. I remember what it is to be childlike— when I could give freely, cheerfully.

Then I grew up, and I thought the world so harsh, I could not 'give anymore because I didn't even have enough for my needs.

But today, I am reminded that I can be a cheerful giver, be childlike, and, as Fr. Demanuele said— be daring.

I just want to give you a Word about giving. I hope that we grow in our giving. I asked about your New Year Resolution...Do you want to be rich this year? It's not just about earning more. If you want to achieve your goals this year— especially for the abundance of your provisions, probably ask not just what is the *goal*.

Ask what is the *growth* behind the goal.

Ask, “*Who* am I becoming.” Instead of “*What* am I achieving?”

Ask, “Am I growing in my discipline, when I get my salary— particularly since it's the 15th day of the month— what will be the first: paying your credit card debts?”

Let's make the Lord the first. As a church, we cannot miss preaching to you about giving. Why? Because we have an abundant God. We have a God who gives. We have a God who is generous.

And this is not Prosperity Gospel. It is the Gospel that we know of God giving what we need. And we partake in that generosity.

From 2 Corinthians 9:6. NLT: *Remember this--a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop.*

And Feast Bay Area Family, are you one with me? No pressure but give generously, plant generously, and all of us will be reaping and sharing with one another.

Say:

Dear Jesus, dear God of the Universe, thank You for blessing me. Thank You that I have work I have business, I have cash flow. Thank You, Lord, I have. the opportunity to give.

We pray that You bless this giving. Use this according to Your Will. Generously we received. So, generously we will give. We pray that. You bless us more so we can love, serve, and give more. In Jesus' Name, we pray. Amen.

Worship!

EXHORTATION



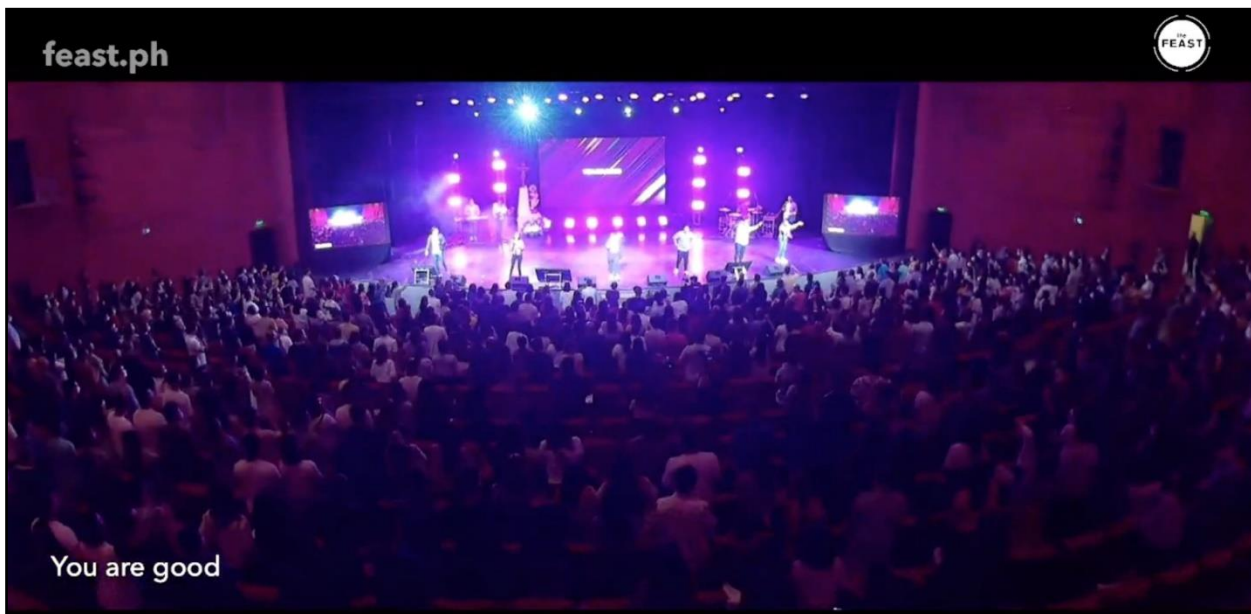
VANYA CASTOR: The Word of God says,
“For a child is born to us: a Son is given. The royal ornament is laid upon His shoulder and His name is proclaimed: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.—Isaiah 9:6

Isn't it beautiful? This is the God that we worship here today and every Sunday. And the more we get to know Him, the more we discover that He is all of these: Wonderful Counselor, Forever Father, Prince of Peace.

And the Good News is the more we know Him, the more we know that He purposely created us. He has a purpose for every single person here in this room. Come on, just clap for our Father!

He has a purpose that is specific and unique to every single child that He loves. Isn't that amazing?

So, let's just respond to that love. Let's respond to our Heavenly Father's love. We sing...





Let the King of my heart
Be the wind inside my sails



The anchor in the waves
He is my song



Praise the Father
Praise the Son



Praise the Spirit
Three in one



God of glory
Majesty

Let the King of my heart
Be the fire inside my veins



Praise forever
To the King of Kings

NOVENA TO GOD'S LOVE

BO SANCHEZ: So good, so good.
Let's pray our favorite prayer at The Feast.
Let's do it:

Today, I receive all of God's love for me.

**Today, I open myself to the unbounded, limitless,
overflowing abundance of God's universe**

**Today, I open myself to God's blessings, healing and
miracles.**

**Today, I open myself to God's Word so that I become
more like Jesus every day.**

**Today, I proclaim that I'm God's Beloved, I'm God's
Servant, I'm God's Powerful Champion,**

**And because I am blessed, I am blessing the world,
In Jesus' Name, Amen!**



I'm not going to be the main preacher today. I'm going to call on Alvin Barcelona in a while.

But I was just thinking, you know, since it's the start of the year, I need to remind you that God is an abundant God. That every blessing that you need is already available to you. Every blessing that you need is there in God's supply room. And I believe that there will come a time when you and I, we go home to the Lord — not right away, not tomorrow, not next week, and we hope not many, many years from now. When you go home to the Lord, you will see His supply room.

And then when you enter the supply room, you will say, "Oh, they're here... The blessings that I needed, they're here. Why didn't they arrive to me?"

And God will smile and say, "You didn't get them."

Seeds of Blessings

I believe that God plants seeds— so many seeds in our life. And sometimes we don't see the seeds because we expect fruits.

You pray for fruits and what God does is He gives you seeds.

Now what He wants you to do is plant each seed. And He wants you to water the seed. And He wants you to do a lot of work. But the moment the seed grows, it will bear fruits. And every blessing that you need will be there.

And then we complain that God is not blessing us.

God has given you a lot of seeds— so many seeds, an abundance of seeds.

So, are you ready in 2023 to work? Are you ready to work on your relationships? Are you ready to work with your family? Are you ready to work on your health? Are you ready to work on your finances?

A lot of people say money does not make you happy. And it's true. Money itself will never make you happy. In the same way that marriage will not make you happy. And children will not make you happy.

How many of you have met married people who are very unhappy? I meet them every day.

A wife would tell me, "Bro. Bo, may I return to sender my husband?"

No!

So, it's not marriage that makes you happy. It's the right relationship— in the marriage— that makes you happy. It's not children that make you happy. It's when you have a *good* relationship with your child.

How many of you have a good— not perfect— but good relationship with your nephew, with your niece? Yes? It's wonderful.

My dear friends, money will not make you happy. But the right relationship with money will make you happy.

Now, one might say, "Bro. Bo, that's scandalous. Money will not make me happy...?"

It's the right relationship. You see, you can relate to money in three ways.





What's Your Purpose?

You can relate to money as God.

And believe you me, that will not make you happy. Because money cannot be the absolute in your life— not the highest priority in your life. Money as God is a monster. It will destroy you. It really will.

Now you can relate to money as the Devil. And that's why a lot of people don't like money because they think money is the Devil. No. The Devil is the devil and money is money. They are two separate things. The Devil can use money— in the same way that the Devil can use anything, right?

No, money is not the Devil. So do not run away from it. Do not be frightened by it. And some people *are*.

If money is not God and money is not the Devil, what kind of relationship should we have with money? Here's the answer: Look at purpose. What is the purpose of money? What?

What is your purpose? What is *your* purpose? Why did God create you? You can go on a 40-day retreat, meditate on it... But I'll tell you, anyway.

Your purpose is to love. Your purpose is to be a blessing. Your purpose is to serve. That's your purpose.

Receive Abundant Blessings

And so, what's the purpose of money? The purpose of money is also to love and to serve, and to be a blessing.

So, my dear friends, I call you: Do not relate to money as God. Do not relate to money as the Devil. Relate to money as a servant. And so treat that servant well. The more servants, the better. So that you can continue to serve the purpose of God—which will be what Alvin will talk about today.

Purpose.

Let's end with a prayer. I want you to imagine that this place is raining with blessings. And many of those blessings are just seeds. That's why we don't recognize them. They're all seeds. But I want you to receive all the blessings.

Say, "Lord, I receive every blessing that You want to give to me. You are an abundant God. This is an abundant universe. Every blessing I need I receive today. Thank You, Lord, that You will empower me to work on those seeds and to make them grow and bear fruit. In Jesus' Name.

Let me pray for you:

Father, I pray for every blessing—health, strength, beautiful relationships, deep family love, this 2023. And I pray for finances—financial prosperity for everyone. That they have a healthy relationship with money—a healthy relationship, not to worship it, not to be afraid of it, but to multiply it for the purpose of God. I pray for job promotion, I pray for better jobs, I pray for blessings for their businesses, I pray for new businesses, I pray for new income streams, I pray for investments. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Hug a person and say, "Abundance is here. Abundance is here. Abundance is here."

Alvin Barcelona, please come...



Talk

ALVIN BARCELONA:

Happy New Year! Happy New Dreams!

What are your dreams for? If you know why you continue to dream, and for what are your dreams, the more your dreams will be fulfilled and will have sense.

Many of you must know now the story of my Mom. How she battled cancer for three months, how I brought her (from Australia where she was based) back here to the Philippines, and brought her home, we cared for her, and we did everything to extend her life a little more, and made her happy.

My Mom joined the Lord last January 2 — the day after New Year. And we laid her to rest— to her final rest— just last Sunday (January 8, 2023). Exactly a week ago— the day of my birthday.



When my Mom was a little stronger— she was already at home— I would read her the Bible every day — one chapter a day. And because my Mom had been a catechist, to the last years of her life, she would engage me in discussions about the Bible. She would ask me about the characters, the message. And I would enjoy our conversations.

But in my last reading with her, she had a different question— no longer about the Bible.

She said, “Guy (that’s how she called me), why isn’t the Lord taking me yet? I’m already bedridden. What else is my purpose in life?”

And so I told my Mom my favorite answer to such a question: “Mom, I don’t know. But this is what I know: even when you’re already here, bedridden, you unite us. We, your children— one came from

Mindanao, another one from Bacolod— and your grandchildren are together more than ever

— for more than a month—every day. And

because you allow me to, I post online your photos and videos every day— since we were in

Sydney— and these posts have been blessing thousands of people every day. Even you’re here sick, your life continues to bless thousands, inspiring people to love their families more.”

She smiled, “Thank you.”

That was probably the last of our conversations because afterward, she could no longer speak, she could hardly carry a conversation. And a few days more, she breathed her last. Because probably she thought that her purpose was done already. Her mission was done. She gave herself permission to die.

This is what I learned: While you’re still alive, while your purpose is still clear to you, you won’t die yet. Not yet. That’s why it should be clear to you why you continue living.

That’s my one big message today: Your purpose is your reason to live.

If you don’t know the answer to why you wake up in the morning, you will start giving yourself permission to die. Maybe not literally. But your dreams will start dying. Or your passion will start dying.

Again: Once you lose your purpose, or think you’ve done it already, you are gradually giving yourself permission to stop living. You must continue to know your purpose and *fuel* your life with it.

How will I know, Bro. Alvin, if I’ve already done my purpose?

One of my favorite authors, Richard Bach, said, “Here is a test to find whether your mission on Earth is finished: If you’re alive, it isn’t.”

**YOUR PURPOSE
IS YOUR REASON
TO LIVE ON.**



“Here is a test to see if your mission in life is over. If you’re still alive it isn’t.”

RICHARD BACH



God's Purpose

The beginning of Bro. Bo's talk was very beautiful. You dream this year, it's already half of the first month of the year — how time flies. But we're still in goal-setting. I just gave a talk to a company setting its goals for the year. That's needed. We need to have a plan.

But I'm telling you: Your dreams, your plans, your goals will be on a shaky and shallow foundation if your purpose is unclear and uncertain.

So, let's read the Word of God—
In the name of the Father, of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit, as we sing:

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

One verse that says it all.
From Romans 8:28:

Do you want all things in your life to work for good? Not just your dream or your plans or your goals. But even your dark past, your failures, your hurts, your pains— they can work for the good. But there are qualifiers here. We learn big-time from this message. How will they work for the good? You've got to love Him. And you've got to be called according to His purpose.

So, it's clear now that when we talk of *purpose*, it's not just about *your* purpose for your life. You've got to live *His* purpose for your life.

Now, how will you know if you're living His purpose for your life?
It's also in the verse.

No. 1: Love Him. So that when you have a deep personal relationship, you will know.

No. 2: "I'm doing His purpose for my life."

—Or if you're off-track.

Again, this is a talk not just about your purpose. It's a talk about God's purpose in your life. And about loving Him and having a deeper personal relationship with Him. So that you know His beautiful plan for you.



"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."

ROMANS 8:28

Your Bigger Purpose
is God's Purpose for you.

Your Goal

I'm going to modify my big message a while ago that your purpose is your reason to live. I'm going to add these important words: Your *bigger* purpose is your *bigger* reason to live. Because if it's only *your own* purpose it will be a short-lived one.

I have another favorite author named Bob Buford who wrote *Half Time, Finishing Well, Game Plan, Moving from Success to Significance*.

And in his book, he wrote this story about race dogs and how their masters train them—cruel. The master locks his race dogs in a cage and does not feed them. When the dogs are already famished, the master puts a rabbit in front of the dogs.

Then the master turns the dogs loose who then run after the rabbit. The dogs do not catch the rabbit because this rabbit is a robot—programmed to run faster than any of the fastest dogs. That's how the dogs learn to run fast. Cruel. Crazy.

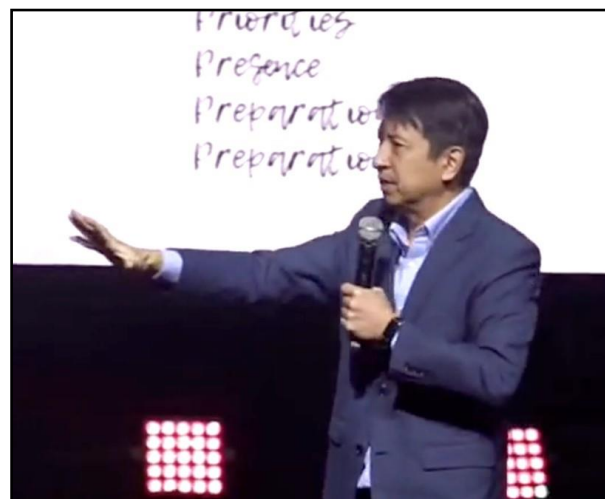
But one day, the robot rabbit malfunctions. It stops. And so the dogs catch the rabbit and realize it's not real. It's fake. So the dogs just run around, some of them keep howling.

Buford says that's what happens when we chase goals that are not of God's. We may actually run faster, we may actually catch this goal. We're happy. But sooner or later, we start discovering it's not the goal we should run after. It's fake. It's not the ultimate prize that we want to have.

Of course, it's good that in his talk, Bro. Bo qualified that there are important goals we must pursue—like having a good job, good health, wealth... But time and again we hear stories of people who already reached their goals—big time—but still felt empty.



**YOUR BIGGER PURPOSE IS YOUR
BIGGER REASON TO LIVE ON.**
If it's only your own purpose it will
be a short-lived one.



The Bigger Purpose

Michael Phelps— the most decorated Olympian of all time— American swimmer, broke 39 world records, 28 medals— 23 golds, 3 silvers, 2 bronzes, net worth of \$100 million.

He has everything. But in 2014, he almost committed suicide. He got depressed. Stayed in his room for two weeks.

And people asked, “Why? He’s got everything!”

That’s what is difficult. When you’ve caught everything, what else will you run after?

Until you find out, there are more— aside from the medals.

It’s not bad to be a bemedaled Olympian. But why did he become depressed?

But the better question:

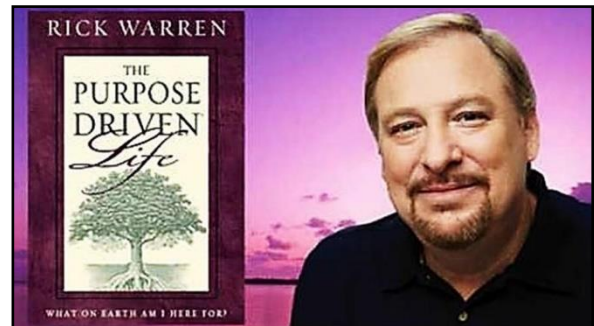
How did he recover?

Somebody gave him a book titled *The Purpose-Driven Life* by Rick Warren. And in 2016, he gave testimony. He said this *Purpose-Driven Life* book saved him from suicide.

He found a deeper purpose for living on.

Did he stop competing? No. He continued to win medals.

But he knew it was more than about the medals...



Later, he already lost a swimming competition. He was defeated by a younger competitor. But it’s okay. He knew there was a deeper victory in life.

Because again, you will discover, sooner or later, that your bigger purpose is God’s purpose— for you.

4 P's of Life's Purpose



1. Priorities

I'm going to share with you four Ps that I learned from the daily Masses during the five-day wake of my Mom— three days in Manila, two days in Bulacan.

On the first day, Fr. Paolo Asprer, our Feast Bay Area priest, who celebrated the Mass spoke about *priorities*.

Fr. Pao said our Mom was really a teacher...

Actually, she was. Even before I was born, she was already a teacher. And until the last years of her life, she was still teaching.

Fr. Pao told us, "Until the last days of her life, she was teaching you about what is more essential in life: Priorities."

I bet this is also your experience. We're too busy for our parents — especially when they are old already. But once they get sick— I hope not— but when they are already bedridden, that's when we let go of our concerns so that we could have time for our parents.

And that's what happened. I started re-learning what is truly important in life. What is truly *essential*.

We were taking care of my Mom during the busiest and craziest season of the year. Christmas season — parties left and right, events left and right. But we started dropping them in favor of taking care of my Mom.

But my Mom was not selfish. I was supposed to be a speaker at The Feast Conference in Davao. But I begged off. And the organizers understood.

But my Mom knew about my schedule and she said, "Aren't you supposed to be a speaker at the Feast Conference in Davao?"

I said, "Oh, yes, Mom. But I'm here for you."

She said, "Why are you here? Go there. Go where you are needed..."

My Mom also knew what should be my priorities.

She said, "Go there, I'm not dying yet. I will wait for you. Just come back to me."

So, I flew to Davao.

Even my Mom knew the priorities, the urgency of things.

That's what we should ask when we are planning this Year 2023: What should first take place in our heart? What are the levels of priorities? What are your dreams that you should attend to first? What is your non-negotiable? What is urgent? What is important? And what is essential? These are very, very crucial questions that you ask.

The Bible says in Matthew 16: 21: *Where your treasure is, there your heart will also be.*

You see clearly. Because how you set your priorities is how you will live your life.

Your life is defined by your priorities.

**Where your treasure is,
there your heart will also be.**

—Matthew 16:21



2. Presence

The second night of the wake, the priest who celebrated the Mass was Fr. Albert Garong. And Fr. Albert spoke about *Presence*.

The Gospel then was about *Emmanuel* — *God is with us.* —Matthew 1:22-23

Christmas season, thinking of gifts. This is what I realized: What is the best gift to give when someone's dying? Jewelry? Shoes? Car? House? They are no longer valuable.

Fr. Albert told us: "You gave her the best gift: Your Presence."

And my siblings also thanked me that I brought home my Mom— because I was able to give the best gift to my Mom: Their Presence. As my Mom was giving her best gift to us as well: her presence in the last days of her life.

You want to know what is one of God's most important purposes for you? It's to be present to people whom God gave you— mainly your family and people who need you the most. Never skip that essential purpose for the more important ones.

You know, what comes to my mind is the parable of the Good Samaritan. He was a merchant. He was going to an important appointment. But he stopped for what is essential— gave his presence, gave his time, gave his resources, gave his service to someone in need. — Luke 10: 25-37.

I'm going to tell you again: What we do is important — but never skip the more essential things. You should test your dreams, your goals, your plans, your preoccupation if they indeed lead you to loving and serving others more — especially your family.

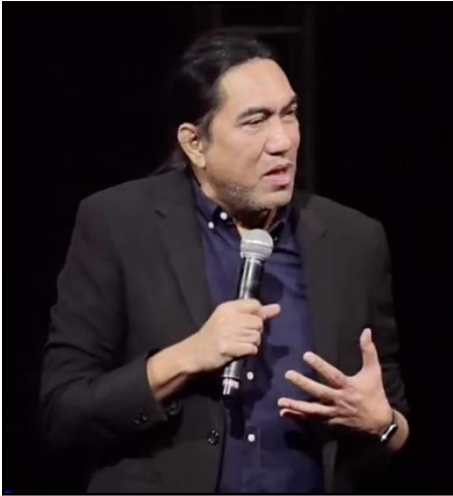
That's what we often hear. Why do we work and work? Work is important. I'm not saying don't do it. But we do it for family. Sometimes we get too busy with work — the children have grown, they no longer know us, no more time for them.

Then when we're about to go back to them, they will say, " We thought you're working for our sake, but we lost you already."

When you're about to make up for your absence, it's already too late. Their children are now already too busy working to be with them.

Last night, I heard at the wake— about a child, who got too busy working, he no longer had time for his family.

That's why, ask: Is your being present to what you're being more busy now leading you to your ultimate purpose? Because your purpose should manifest in your presence.



3. Preparation

On the fourth night of the wake, it was Fr. Ritz Resuello, adviser of The Feast North Luzon Builders, who celebrated the Mass for my Mom in Bulacan. And he spoke about *Preparation*.

Of course, he said we should prepare for the coming of the Lord. That was the Gospel that day.

And we learn here at The Feast that everything is about Preparation. If you think about it, your ultimate purpose is to prepare yourself and help others prepare themselves to be with God forever.

This New Year, I read many social media posts: I want to be healthier. I want to be wealthier. I want to put up a new business. I want to go abroad. All of these are great. Please pursue those dreams.

But you've got to ask: Why do I want to be healthier? Why do I want to be wealthier? Why do I want to expand my business? Like what Bro. Bo said earlier.

Because once you hit your purpose, there should be something else...

I remember when Bro. Bo and I gave talks in *Go Negosyo*, we always asked: Who wants to get rich?

Of course, all raise their hands. Of course, Bro. Bo said don't dodge getting rich. We need wealth.

Now, my next question is *Why?* You should know. Do you want to get rich just to be rich? Do you want long life just to have a long life? Why?

So, you check the motives, the purpose behind your wanting to be healthier, wealthier, or become more successful. Because these should prepare you for your bigger purpose.

You know what I remember about this? The miracle of the big catch. When Jesus first called the fishermen to be his disciples, including Simon who became Peter. What happened? They were able to catch the biggest catch in their life. What happened? When they pulled their boats up on the shore, they left everything and followed Him. Crazy. Did they get a big catch, just to leave it? Why?

They saw the bigger catch: Jesus. The ultimate catch.

But this is the question: Since they would leave their catch anyway, why did Jesus still tell them to catch fish? Why?

Preparation. Jesus was preparing each one's mind and heart to learn how to leave behind smaller catches— for the bigger catch. Why?

Because your Preparation will clarify your Purpose.

4. Presentation

Finally, on the last night of the wake for my Mom—the fifth night—the one who celebrated the Mass was Fr. Benny Justiniano, spiritual adviser of Feast Bulacan. He spoke about *Presentation*.

Because the day was the Eve of the Epiphany — when the Child Jesus presented Himself to mankind, represented by the Three Wise Men.

Interestingly, because that was the last day of the wake for my Mom, her students gathered — batches spanning decades— four, five decades. And they *presented*— they spoke about how my Mom touched their life, influenced their life.

I was happy, I cried. Because the more I heard what my Mom had done for them.

That reminded me of what Stephen Covey said: *Begin with the end in mind*.

So, since the Year 2023 is just beginning, it might be good to advance it to December. Like, if you're thinking you're going to build a business, see your business already flourishing.

I just gave a talk for a company that was trying to hit this goal —P100 million, for example. So, advance to December, and see the company hitting the goal.

If your goal is to be slim, you must already hear in December people telling you, “Uy, you're already slim!”

Visualize it. Begin with the end in mind.

But while we're at that, advance your vision further on to the end— in your own wake.

When you're already laid in your coffin: What do you think people will say about you?

That's what I heard from my Mom. Will the people say, “That person is successful. He's intelligent. He's rich. He has lots of money. But he is selfish. He is mean.”

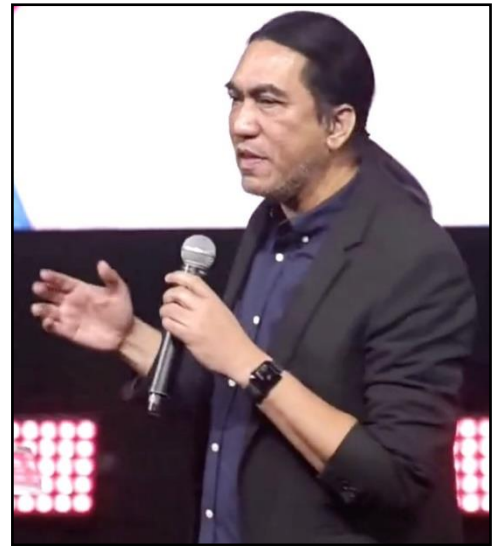
We don't want that. In the end, what we want to hear is: “That person is helpful, caring, loving, giving.”

Do this exercise. You see yourself lying in your coffin... What will people be saying about you?

You might be saying, “Bro. Alvin is so morbid. The year is just beginning and he's already talking about death.”

But isn't that what happened to us, my family? The New Year had just opened, yet we were attending the wake...

And it's a fact that every January there are already many problems— because of the toxic combination of over-drinking, overeating, lack of sleep.





Another P—

But again, even the Bible tells us:

In your wake, what do you want people to present to you?

The ultimate purpose— again— is to live a life of significance so that when you leave this world, your life had made the life of others better.

Think of this: What’s our ultimate purpose? To be with God.

But why were we made to still pass by the Earth? When we were created, we should have stayed in Heaven. What are we doing here?

Another P— *Practice*.

You see, in Heaven, we will love each other forever. So, we were made to pass by Earth so that we can already practice loving one another.

So, Bro Bo said, all that you are going to do should be leading to Love. So that when you’re presented in Heaven, you are already ready to love forever.

I was supposed to say that your Presentation culminates your Purpose. But you must have noticed in my talk I skipped the third night for the wake of my Mom. The Mass was celebrated by Fr. Joel Jason. And he spoke about *Purpose*— in the center of my Mom’s wake, in the middle of her wake.

And Fr. Joel spoke about my Mom’s purpose— making up, inventing, a story about my Mom.

He said Aida, when she died and faced St. Peter, St Peter asked her name. My Mommy said her name: Aida Perez Barcelona Aguilos Wilson.

St. Peter then said, “Your name is very long, a.”

And Fr. Joel kidded about the colorful life of my mother— that’s why she had three surnames. I won’t tell you the story. It’s already gossip.

But Fr. Joel said, St. Peter was looking for my mother’s name in the. Book of the Dead — it was not there.

He asked, “What did you do when you were alive?”

My mother said, “I was a teacher all my life.”

St. Peter gasped, “You were a teacher? That’s why your name is not in the Book of the Dead. Because your name is in the Book of Life. Because teachers never die. They live on in the heart and mind of each of the people they touch.

You Are His Purpose

You want to live on forever? You will— with God in Heaven. But you're on Earth. You can live on— with the love that you give to people. You know, time flies. Next month, it's already February. Before February ends, guess what, it's already Lenten season. And it all leads to that: from the Cross to the Crib. From the Manger to Mount Calvary.

And what does Jesus remind us here? All His life He lived purposefully. Doing His Father's Purpose. And why did He give up His life? Why did He offer His life?

For you. You were His purpose.

From the joyful Christmas to the glorious Easter, it was all about a purpose-driven life.

So, I pray this New Year and all the rest of our life, God's purpose gives us the reason to live on— here on Earth and in Heaven.



Let's come before the Lord— in His Presence, for His Purpose.



FAMILY

Thank You!

The Feast Family, now organized as the Feast Mercy Ministries, is a spin-off ministry of the Light of Jesus Family founded by Bro. Bo Sanchez. Earlier named as Kerygma Family, 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.

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

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

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FAMILY ONLINE NEWSMAGAZINE

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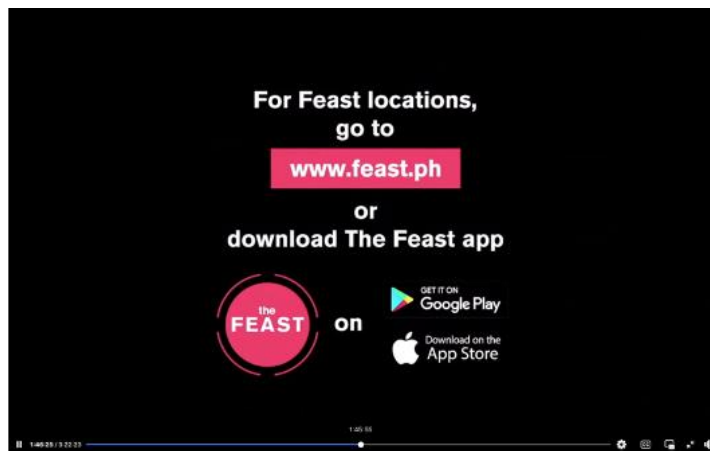
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Go and make disciples of all men.
— Matthew 28:19

