



NEWSLETTER
February 5, 2023

God Is The Suitor

FACT: Israel was not alone in practicing ritual sacrifices.

The Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, Canaanites—all the neighbors of ancient Israel—offered sacrifices to their gods.

For most of these pagan nations, sacrifices were offered to their gods to appease an angry deity, or to gain the favor of a fickle god, or to get their idol to notice them. But this was not the case for YHWH (Yahweh).

In *Leviticus*, we read that it is God who is making the effort to be with His people. He's not aloof. He's making the first move. He's not playing hard to get, waiting for a sacrifice so He can give a half-second glance at a desperate suitor.

In the Bible, God is the suitor.

Be blown away by His powerful message for you today.

Have an amazing Feast!



May your dreams come true,

Bo Sanchez



LETTERS

Life Is Easy

LIFE is difficult... Once we truly know that life is difficult—once we truly understand and accept it— then life is no longer difficult. Because once it is accepted, the fact that life is difficult no longer matters.

That’s according to M. (Morgan) Scott Peck, American psychiatrist and author of the best-seller *The Road Less Travelled*, source of that popular quote.

Fr. Ryan Barrios, however, said in his homily at The Feast last Sunday, life may be difficult— but it does not mean it is impossible to be happy. How? Read on, *page*

Bro. Bo Sanchez agrees that even as life is difficult, we can still fulfill our dreams— because God is our suitor, *page*

Bro. Bo and Bro. Didoy Lubaton indeed say that life is difficult because we go through sacrifices to be close to God. But, they point out, *Sacrifice Is Good*, Talk 2 of our Feast Series, *Closer*. *Flashback* starts on *page 11*.

Bro. Audee Villaraza, welcoming us to The Feast last Sunday, seems not bothered that life is difficult. He shares a sure way to receive blessings amid life’s hardships, *page 7*.

Life had been difficult for Rose (*not her real name*) now in our Jeremiah Foundation’s home for sexually abused girls. Giving her hope for a better life is Center counselor Danielle Cabarles (*left*), *page 34*.

Yes, life is difficult. But this issue of *The Feast Family* is saying life is easy.

Can you easily accept that?



All for God’s Glory,

Randy Borromeo
Media Ministry
Executive Director





FLASHBACK! **JANUARY 29, 2023**

Holy Mass



FR. RYAN BARRIOS

on the Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12

Introduction to the Sermon on the Mount

Excerpts...

A LOT OF PEOPLE are saying already that life is difficult especially during this time. ‘Yung walang kamatayang sibuyas na pinag-uusapan natin.— The endless onion issue we talk about.

A friend of mine was complaining on his Facebook, “Totoo ngang mahal na ang sibuyas kasi ‘yung inorder niyang Sisig mas marami na ‘yung baboy kaysa sa sibuyas.— It’s true that onion is now expensive because in the Sisig (pork dish) we ordered, there are now more pork than onions.”

Life is really difficult— they say. When we reflect on when life is difficult, it seems that it is impossible to be happy. My dear brothers and sisters, the Lord is telling us today how to be happy. The Lord is telling us that it is not impossible to be happy.

You know there are things in life that we think are impossible to exist—but are possible. There are things in life we think that are not true—but really they are.



What's Possible

I read this a few nights ago: If you count from 1 to 999, you can find letter A when you start counting at 1,000— and I was amazed reading that.

Maraming bagay ang akala natin hindi totoo, pero totoo. — There are many things we think are not true, but really are.

For example, our small intestine, they said it's as long as a basketball court — it can fit into our body

According to science, our tongue—if the body is so relaxed— can reach down our belly buttons. Siguro mas mahaba pa kapag marites ka.— Maybe longer if you are a gossip.

Why am I saying this? To tell us that there are things in life that we think are impossible but really are possible. There are trials

and difficulties, and we think that it's difficult for us to be happy— but Christ is telling us it is possible to be happy.

Hearing the beatitudes in the Gospel that we read in this Liturgy, we may think it seems impossible. How could someone poor be blessed? Have you seen on Facebook someone poor posting, “*I'm blessed*”? Have you seen some people mourning and yet still declare they are blessed? Maybe there are— but very few.

But the Lord is telling us we will be happy. The way of the Lord is different from the way of the world. And most of the time, the ways of the Lord contradict the ways of the world.

Reading I: Zephaniah 2:3; 3:12-13

³ Seek the LORD, all you humble of the earth, who have observed his law; seek justice, seek humility; perhaps you may be sheltered on the day of the LORD's anger.¹² But I will leave as a remnant in your midst a people humble and lowly, who shall take refuge in the name of the LORD:¹³ the remnant of Israel. They shall do no wrong and speak no lies; nor shall there be found in their mouths a deceitful tongue; they shall pasture and couch their flocks with none to disturb them



What the Beatitudes Say

If we really reflect on the Beatitudes, we will realize that indeed a poor person could be happy, could be blessed— because a poor person will rely only on the ways of God and nothing else.

It is easy for the poor to recognize God’s grace because they have nothing in life. They can’t hope for nothing else but God’s grace.

It is easy for a person who is sad, who is in sorrow, to rely in God—because a person who is mourning, or in sorrow, will trust no one else but God.

That’s why there are a lot of instances in our life when we don’t rely in God and we don’t recognize His grace— especially if we have enough in life.

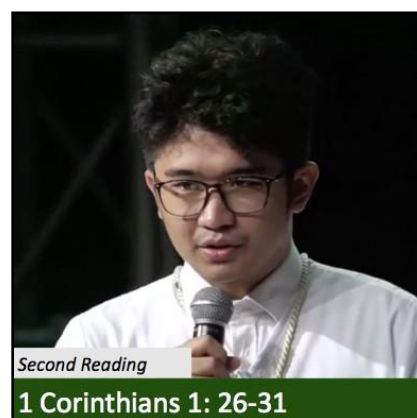
If we have enough, we are tempted to rely only on ourselves and it seems that we believe that everything that we have we gained by ourselves, by our sheer effort.



Reading II: 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

²⁶ Consider your own calling, brothers and sisters. Not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth.

²⁷ Rather, God chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise, and God chose the weak of the world to shame the strong, ²⁸ and God chose the lowly and despised of the world, those who count for nothing, to reduce to nothing those who are something,²⁹ so that no human being might boast before God.³⁰ It is due to him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, as well as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,³¹ so that, as it is written, “Whoever boasts, should boast in the Lord.”





What Is True Happiness

My dear brothers and sisters, Christ is reminding us that true happiness is in our reliance on God's grace. True happiness is based on our trust in God. The world can give us happiness but it is only temporary. It will not bring us to real happiness. It will not bring us to Heaven.

My dear friends, yes there are a lot of trials and difficulties in our life.

Ang hirap ng buhay.— Life is difficult.

But we should continue to live with trust faith in God. Because the Lord is telling us: those who trust and believe in Him —especially in difficult times— will find happiness.

Because in the Gospel we heard, when we rely on God, our reward is great in Heaven.



WELCOME HOME!

AUDEE VILLARAZA: Good Morning, Everyone! It's a Happy Day! Welcome home!

You might be wondering why I have someone here with me. This is our eldest son, his name is Ethan, and I just brought him onstage because I want to share a story that happened three weeks ago.



You see, not every single Sunday my family gets to come with me here at The Feast. We have 20-month-old daughter, her name is Ellie. You know, we are parents— sometimes our children don't get up early to get to The Feast with us.

So, weeks ago, I decided to go by myself to The Feast. I got a call at 11 a.m. from my son.

He said, Dad, why didn't you call me? I wanted to go to The Feast."

And so, I said, "But you were sleeping. I thought you might tired, you needed more time with Mama."

But you know what? A week later, he approached me again and said, "Dad, can you please make sure that next time, you go to The Feast, you bring me along even if I'm sleeping?"

That following Saturday, right before The Feast, he repeated, "Dad, can you please make sure that you bring my pants, my shoes, my shirt, my jacket, and make sure even if I'm sleeping, that I go to The Feast."

I am going to show you what happened last Sunday: Look, he's sleeping in the car. When he got here, he was so excited, he said, "Dad, thank you for bringing me along..."



LOVE OFFERING

I am in front of you this morning, my friends, not as a builder, not as preacher, but as a father. I just want to thank you on behalf of my family for how you are giving to the Community, to this Ministry, because— not many of you know this—you are actually making a sacrifice so that kids like my son can have a safe place to learn about Jesus, to learn about Worship, to learn about what it is, what it looks to actually know about God.

And through your little giving, we're all giving a safe environment for all these children to have that piece of Heaven here on Earth.

Thank you very much. You're giving not just my kid, but many, many more kids who will come to know Jesus simply because of what you are giving. I just want you to know that God sees your giving. And your giving is out of sacrifice, it's not out of surplus. And the God who has blessed you will bless you some more.

I want you to say: *Lord, this my offering. I offer this with my whole heart. I pray that you use this to bless many more. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*



WAYS TO GIVE	The Builder of the Light of Jesus Family Mega Manila Feast Bay Area, Inc. 000-4000-24846	 UnionBank
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Worship!

EXHORTATION



PAULINE GUEVARRA: Psalms 100 says, “Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praises.”

Give Him thanks, praise His Name
for He is good and His love endures forever.

Our God is good and His love endures forever.

Come on, why don't we lift our hands
in praise as a sign of surrender and worship
as we sing this song...



You're full of glory and power



My lord You reign



Let my life be a song that will
Bring You praise



You are perfect in all Your ways
You're gracious God



There's no striving in Your grace
There is favor in Your embrace



Jesus my lord You reign

Talk



BRO. BO SANCHEZ: Praise God!
Hallelujah!

I just came from Cebu. I gave a financial seminar. One of the topics we discussed in that seminar was what prevents someone from getting out of poverty, getting out of one's financial stuckness. And we identified a few reasons — reasons that you already know.

No. 1: Financial Ignorance — not knowing how money works and then going into scams, and all that.

No. 2: Not Having a Good Relationship with Money— seeing money as evil, therefore you avoid it and so you sabotage your progress, and so on.

But there's one thing that I want to emphasize and point to you right now because it is connected to the Talk.

You know, the message today is *Sacrifice is good*.

What makes people remain poor, remain in their financial quagmire, is comfort zone. People are comfortable. And believe you me, I have met the most amazing entrepreneurs who came from poverty, and they became very financially successful. And if you look at their life, it was because they always stepped out of their comfort zone.

Convenience is not very high in their hierarchy of values. No. It's very low. They're willing to give up convenience.

But it's not only in your finances. This works in every other relationships in your life.

Talk 2



About Relationships

Do you want to have a great relationship with your spouse? Do you want to have a great relationship with your son, with your daughter? You want to have a good relationship with your mom and your dad. You know, it's all about getting out of your comfort zone and making a sacrifice. *Sacrifice is good!*

Before turning over the microphone to Audee and Didoy, I just want to say this: I have this one tiny story...

There is this parish priest and he saw this elderly woman going to Mass every day. And every day, Aunt or Tita as she was called, was there. Then one day, she disappeared.

And the parish priest was worried, "Oh no, did she get sick?"

But then a few days later—one week, two weeks later—he was walking on the street and he saw Aunt, and he said, "Tita, you're here!"

And Tita said, "Father!"

Father said, "I was worried. You were not at church. I saw you every day and then all of a sudden you're gone!"

Tita said, "Oh, Father., do you know? I live beside the church. My house is just beside the church. I hear the entire Mass. Remember Father.? You put loudspeakers?"

"Oh, you mean you hear the Readings?"

"I hear the Readings, Father."

"You hear my Homily?"

"Even your jokes, Father."

"But wait, you only *hear*. You don't *see*."

"No, Father. My bedroom window is right beside the door of the church. I open the window, I see right up to the altar. I see you, Father.

"You see, the Consecration?"

"Yes, Father..."

"Ah, wait, wait...Communion?"

"Father, yung bayaw ko, my brother-in-law, is a lay minister. After the Mass, he goes around the village, the barangay, giving Communion. Father, ako una, I am first. He's my bayaw, e. Father, my Mass is complete."

And then the priest said, "Okay... But wait... what about Offertory? Are you giving?"

"No, Father."

"Your Mass is not complete."





What It Is All About

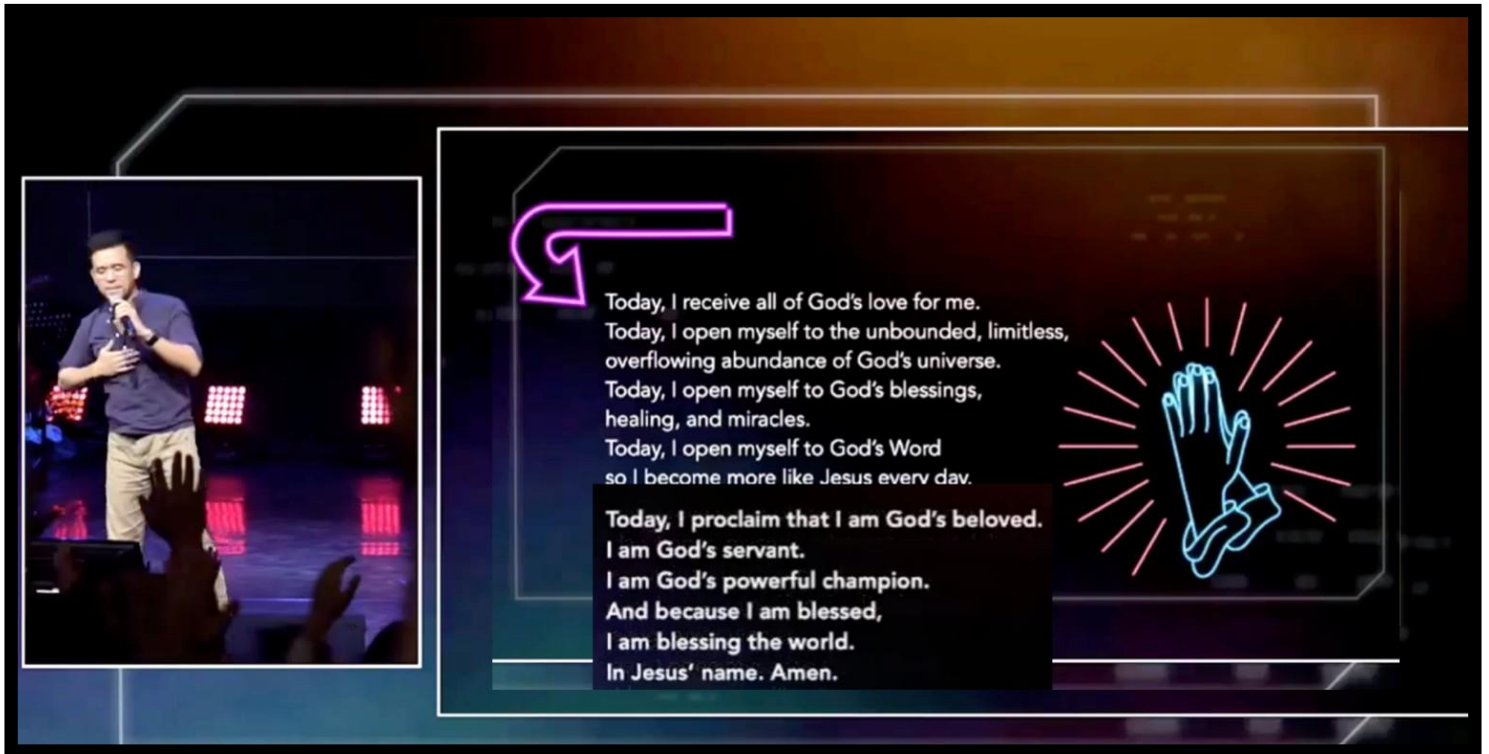
You know, the Mass is about Jesus, sacrificing Himself to us. But it's also *you* sacrificing yourself to the Lord. And in any relationship, or in any area of your life— whether it be family or health— you need to get out of your comfort zone. You need to remove and sacrifice convenience to do what is right. Because that is what will make you win.



My dear friends, enjoy The Feast.
Bro. Audee Villaraza, come on down!

NOVENA TO GOD'S LOVE

AUDEE VILLARAZA: Thank you, Bro. Bo. May I invite Everyone, right now, to lift up both hands in the air as we say our favorite prayer. Say this with me:



We are going to break open the Word later. I want to just say those words that Bro. Bo so eloquently just mentioned: *Sacrifice is good.*

You know, when I think of the word *sacrifice*, I automatically associate it with the word *love*. Because it's practically one and the same thing. You can't have sacrifice without love, you can't have love without sacrifice—they just go together. Like Bo and Marowe, like Star margarine and rice. Like kape't pandesal. Like sorbetes and tasty bread. Like tuyo and champorado.

Love and sacrifice, they just go together.



Sacrifice That Leads to Success

Two aspects about sacrifice that I want to share with you.

1. Sacrifice is powerful. Sacrifice is a wonderful ingredient for success. If you think about it, every successful enterprise, every successful business, every successful marriage, every successful relationship is a product of sacrifice. Sacrifice is a wonderful ingredient for success.

The very fact that you are able to sit down here is because somebody sacrificed for you. Long time ago, once upon a time, who sacrificed to start the very first Feast?



Lolo Gene and Lola Pilar (the parents of Bro. Bo). Thank you so much to them for making that sacrifice. Thank you to the whole Sanchez family for the sacrifice of starting this wonderful Community that we are all a part of right now.



Sanchez sibs,
from left: Chelle;
Tina and husband
Bobby; Bo and
wife Marowe;
Pinky and husband
Abel; Beckie.

Everything that we do, that we sacrifice, is something that will lead to success. The fact that you are able to sit down there right now simply means somebody *gave* once upon a time without even knowing who you are, without even knowing your name. And now you're there. And whenever you give something to the Offering basket, it's for somebody else who will encounter the Lord one day—simply because you keep supporting the Ministry. So, thank you for your giving.

Sacrifice is powerful.



2. Sacrifice is personal. When I think about it, sometimes, sacrifice doesn't make sense, especially if you don't know the backstory.

I remember the story that Matthew and Mark told in their Gospels— about this woman who gave extravagantly to Jesus. She poured oil on his head. It was extravagant because she broke open an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume. To them, during that time, it was precious, it was costly. To those who were around, who saw what she did, they started questioning her because it did not make sense to them.

(Matthew 26: 6-13).

One of the disciples said, “We can sell this oil and give the money to the poor.”

But you know what? Sacrifice often comes with a story. Because what they did not know is this: Mark and Matthew did not bother to give the name of the woman in their Gospels.

But you know, John did. Because John wrote about the story as well and John said that the name of the woman was Mary of Bethany. Mary was the sister of Martha. They happened to be close disciples of Jesus. They were friends of Jesus. They loved Jesus.

One trivia that I love so much is this: they had a brother—Lazarus. Now you're seeing a bit why the sacrifice made sense. Mary was extravagantly sacrificing to Jesus. Why? It was not out of impulse. It was about of indebtedness. Because, remember that Lazarus died and Jesus raised him back to life (John 11:1-44).

So, imagine Mary's gratitude, seeing her brother dead and Jesus raising him back to life. Wouldn't you be grateful if Jesus did something like that for you? So now, it makes sense that Mary sacrificed to give Jesus a costly perfume.



Every Sacrifice Has a Backstory

Sacrifice has a story. I remember this woman I met many, many years ago here at The Feast. She's one of our big givers. And the way she gives, what I saw how she would give every month, it did not make sense to me. I mean, for somebody to give something that much— until I heard her story.

I found out that many months before she started attending The Feast, her son passed away — at a very untimely age. And it was terrible. It broke her heart into million pieces. She kept on asking “Lord, why my son, why my family?” She was looking for an answer and she could not find one— until she walked into The Feast one day. And that's where she felt the uncontainable, intangible love of God— just embracing her and telling her everything is going to be okay.

You know what? She started attending. And little by little, as she started attending regularly, God mended her heart. And though she's still feels the pain of losing her son— that's always going to be there— now she has more hope, more purpose, knowing that God is in control.

Every sacrifice has a story. That's right. God is good.

You will never understand sacrifice nor understand why we do what we do here at The Feast if you're coming here only as a spectator, if you're coming here only to spectate and never to participate. You're always going to wonder, why are they raising their hands? Is there an armed robbery going on? Why are their hands lifted up? You're never going to understand that.

You're never going to understand people like Jonie Manawat. Jonie Manawat serves in our Worship Ministry. You know what time Jonie wakes up? 4:00 a.m. Why? Because he lives all the way in Valenzuela (Bulacan). And he has to make the trip to make the call time here at 6:00 a.m. You're never going to understand his sacrifice if you don't know his story. That he loves the Lord so much that he's willing to make that sacrifice.

If you don't know and don't hear the story of other people like Leah Diego. She serves in our Warmth (Ushers) Ministry. She lives all the way in Batangas but she makes the trip every single time. Why? Because she has found a safe place here for her kids. Beautiful.



***Leviticus* Is about Sacrifice**

There are a lot of people here who make sacrifices and until you learn their story you're never going to know why they sacrifice.

Another person — her name is Aisha Montes. She lives all the way in Mindoro. Oh, my God, do you know how long it takes for her to commute just to attend The Feast? 12 hours. Just to get here to The Feast. Why does she do it? Because she feels like this is home. This is family.



That's what sacrifice is all about, my friends. Every sacrifice has a story. And maybe there's somebody sitting next to you right now that you know the story of. I don't know who they are, but you know who they are. And it's beautiful. Because until you learn the story of that person, their sacrifice will never make sense. Because the sacrifice is personal.

Which brings us to our Reading for today because we're studying the book of *Leviticus*. And *Leviticus* is really a book about sacrifice.

I'll call the next preacher who will talk about sacrifice in *Leviticus*. But let me share just one last thing...

As a preacher, what I love so much whenever I study the Word of God is that I always look for connections— patterns, for instance. What authors in the ancient time would often do is that they would use this design pattern. Whenever they would write, they would use the same pattern. I'll tell you what pattern they use. They would put the most important part in the middle, in the center. And I thought about that... Why would they put the most important part in the middle and not in the end? Some movies do that. They put like credits even at the end. They put the most important part in the end.

Until I had a reflection — and this is just personal reflection. I was playing basketball last Monday. And Ethan, my son, he joined me. Then one random moment, he just said to me this funny thing.

He said, "Dad, when you're 60 years old, does it mean that you can already dunk the ball?"

I could not get the rationale of the question.

So, I said to him, "Ethan, that's not how it happens."

Because he was thinking that as you get older, you grow taller. And I told him it's ironic because the moment you are older, you actually are a bit weaker, right? You can't run as fast, your knees buckle a little, your stamina is not as good. And I thought about that for a moment— because that's really the evolution of man.



The Most Important Is In the Middle

You know, we start as a baby, we can't do anything, we can only crawl. But as you grow a bit older, you get to be stronger, you get a bit wiser. Eventually, when you reach your teens, and when you're young adult, that's when you are a bit strong. I realized that is usually in the middle.

That's the most important in our life. Because it's in the middle where you make your decision of what profession you're going to pursue. It's in the middle of your life where you are at your strongest. Your immune system works the best when you're in the middle of your life. It's in the middle where you make decision who are you going to marry. Or where you're going to settle down. Or what you're going to invest in. It's usually the middle that's the most important.

So, maybe that's what the authors were trying to get at. That the middle is the most important part. Let me ask you this question: In our study of the *Torah* where are we? In the middle.

Five books. We're on the third book. It's a little ironic when you think about that. Because *Genesis* is rather famous. Why? Everybody knows the beginning started in Genesis. Adam and Eve bit the forbidden fruit. That's in *Genesis*.

Everybody also knows *Exodus*. Why? Because of Moses. Whom Charlton Heston made famous in that classic movie, the 1956 movie *The Ten Commandments*. So, everybody knows *Exodus*.

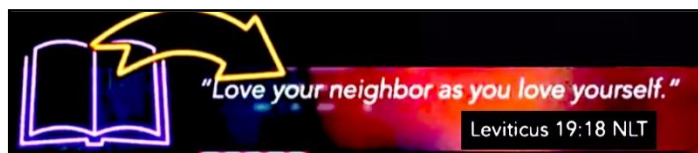
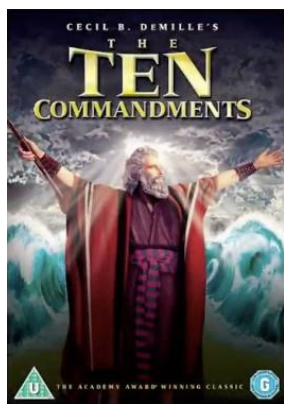
I asked this question last Sunday: How many of you have read the book of *Leviticus*. Three persons raised their hands. Not everybody knows the book. And yet realize this: The core message of the *Torah* is in *Leviticus*.

You want to know how important *Leviticus* is? Let me prove it to you. It was so important to not just the people. But to Jesus Himself— that He quoted the Second Greatest Commandment from *Leviticus*. Leviticus Chapter 19: *Love your neighbor as you love yourself*.

Some of you might still be asking, "Why are we studying Leviticus? It doesn't relate to me."

It does. If Jesus loved the *Torah*, if Jesus loved *Leviticus*, we need to love it too. We need to see it from His perspective. And so I want you to open your heart because this is just the intro. Right now, we're about to get to middle part.

And I'm going to call the next preacher onstage, Bro. Didoy Lubaton.





DIDOY LUBATON:

Powerful, Audee.

This is our tradition at The Feast: we sing *Thy Word* because we are the Light of Jesus Family and the Word gives light to our path.

Together, sing with me:

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

Put your hands on your heart
and just have that moment
with the Lord.

Lord, speak to us, change us, transform us. Most of all, we want to receive Your Love. We want to be closer to you than ever before. This is our Family prayer, in Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.



Two Become One

Today, we are going to learn about atonement.

Atonement requires sacrifice. We just said *sacrifice is good*.

For us to understand that sacrifice is good, we have to understand what it is for, what it means—which is *atonement*.

And *atonement* is not the common word that we use nowadays.

You know, Mayi is here— my beautiful and loving wife. She doesn't like that I mention her. But I thank God that we don't use atonement in relationships now.

I have never heard her saying to me, “Didoy, before I forgive you, you must give me an *atonement*— a 1.5 carat stone on my finger.”

There's no more like that now.

In *Leviticus*, also in the entire Bible study, atonement is an integral part.

The word *atonement* is unique. We have many religious words, and most of them come from Hebrew, Greek languages.

But *atonement* is coming from English.

And *atonement* is very easy to understand.

Atonement means *at-one-ment*.

At one— we, in a relationship, are one.

In modern times, as the Spice Girls, English Girl Group, say, *two become one*.

To *atone* means to make *at one*.

“atone” = “at one.”

As American singer Brian McNight puts it, *back at one*.

It's to *reconcile*. Any relationship is good and better if the two are not apart—but they are *together as one*.

ATONEMENT

Atonement requires sacrifice.





3 Aspects of Atonement

So, when I say,
“I am reconciling with Mayi,”
that is a very important statement.

Because it means three aspects:
The first meaning, when
“I say I am reconciling...” “I am
atonement...” “it means we are in a
relationship.

There *is* a relationship.

1 we’re already in relationship.

and matters— and we, people, we are in a relationship. I have a relationship with you, we have a relationship as Filipinos— we are all in relationships.

Even mathematicians or physicists would say there is always a relationship between things

2 one person hurt the other person—
and that hurt the relationship.

One person — it’s usually me—
who hurt the other person—
that hurt the relationship.

Hence, the need for a reconciliation.

3 something was done to restore
the relationship.

Something was done for
the persons to be reconciled,
for them to be together again.

Something was done to *restore* the relationship.

Like what?

Well, one says, “I made a mistake, I’m sorry. Will you forgive me?”

That’s why, in relationships, in families, even in business, we all make mistakes.



Reconciliation always involves
a sacrifice.

The first thing that gets sacrificed is pride. Pride is first sacrificed if you want your relationship to work. Did you ever experience committing a big sin and someone paid for that sin—and you got off with it? Somebody made a way so that the relationship is restored.

Somebody paid your debt. Somebody said “sorry”—for you. Somebody interceded in your behalf. And that person who covered for you—that’s who we want to become.

As a doctor, I see patients, and many times, some patients would already ask me, “What is my treatment?”

I always ask back: “First, what is the problem?”

Let’s recognize first the problem before we make the solution. And some people have a hard time to get their healing on track because they do not recognize that they have mistakes in their lifestyle.

And as a holistic doctor, I also see that there are physicality's. The problem with our physical is also rooted in our mental and emotional. Yes?

So, sometimes, I ask, “What is your stress? How are your relationships? Is this illness coming from some problem in other areas of your life?”

And many times, I’m not surprised when people say, “No, no. I don’t have a problem, Doc. Just give me the medicine.”

I think there’s some form of pride there when a patient. says, “I am okay. I don’t have a problem. Just give me the medicine, and my illness will go away.”

The problem there is the ailment will never go away. Because of the pride of saying “I’m okay, I don’t have a problem.” It is the one that is making you hurt. That is the one killing you. That is the one hurting your lifestyle.

And in the process, it hurts your relationships. It hurts your mind, the way you talk, your business.



Without sacrifice,
there is no reconciliation.

Even in relationships, it also becomes a problem when I have conversation with a patient like this: I tell him, “Sir, your wife told me you drink a lot.” “Yes, Doc.” Okay, that’s good that he admits he’s an alcoholic. I continue and tell him, “I was told you are womanizing. You are gambling.” He says, “Yes Doc, that’s true.” Okay, so far, so good. He admits he has a problem.

Then the problem arises when he replies, “Doc, if you only knew— my wife, she’s a gossip, she’s a nagger...”

Alcoholism, womanizing, gambling, gossip, nagger wife—
“We’re talking about you, your problem— not about your wife...”

The problem is there’s so much pride out there.
Without sacrifice, there is no reconciliation.

Even in relationships, so that our marriage will work, someone has to take a knee, lower himself or herself down, and propose...

By the way guys, that’s a symbol. If you kneel, you’re saying, “I’m humbling myself. I’m ready to take up my cross and die for you.”

That’s what it means.

So, be careful, be choosy, okay?

Sacrifice is good. Because without sacrifice, there is no reconciliation.

With sacrifice relationships can be restored.

Sacrifice is good because it heals, it restores, it renews— which brings us to the sacrifices mentioned in the book of *Leviticus*.

And this is how to atone, that is, to sacrifice.

Sacrifice is good.
It heals. It restores. It renews.

What Are Needed To Reconcile with God

Why are sacrifices needed to atone and to reconcile with God? The reasons are the same I mentioned earlier. Because restoration means three aspects:

1. God and I are already in a relationship. Yes, we are. You and I are in a relationship with God.

In *Genesis*, God's purpose for creating us is relationship. He made us to have fellowship with Him — in the Garden. And this fellowship was to bear fruit to make a meaningful, a fruitful life.

He told us in Genesis 1:28:



And that means He made us as His co-rulers. He made us as partners to be rulers of His creations.

And we're partners on a mission with Him— to be stewards of His creations. And our partner, God, is special. It's not just a simple partnership.

Think about it: He's the Almighty, the Maker of the Universe. He spoke things into creation. So, in our relationship with, Him, we cannot be dilly-dallying. We cannot be flippant and take our partner for granted.



God Is Both Good and Dangerous

This is the point where I get to introduce this idea with you that is not so common nor popular at this time: God is both good and dangerous.

We like picturing God as our comforter, our healer, our Father loving us tenderly. But when was the last time we thought and had that image of God as dangerous.

Don't get me wrong. Hang in with me. God is dangerous because God is holy.

God is dangerous because He is holy.

When you say *holy*, you picture an old woman, gentle, praying to God, giving food to the poor kids, and loving people.

How in the world can that be dangerous? But in the Bible, you have to understand the context. When you say *holy*, that means He is set apart, He is unique, He is different—above us all. And that is the God whom we are in relationship with.

He is the Source of all Power. He is so powerful that He created the universe. Again, He spoke galaxies into existence. And in the same way, He can destroy everything and anything as He pleases.

It is beautiful that we get to relate to God as a tender, loving Father—even as our close friend. We should.

But as a preacher, I will not let it pass that we also ought not to forget that He is the Almighty One. With reverence, we never take Him for granted. Our relationship with God is all important also in our life. So, don't take light your relationship with God.

God is important in our life. Let's honor God in our words, in our actions.

Is He part of your calendar? Is He part of your agenda?

Because God is good. God is holy and almighty. And we have a relationship with Him. We also ought to do our part to be holy because God is holy.

God is like fire. Fire is both dangerous and good. Fire has many uses. It can cook, it can light up our homes. It provides heat, power. Use it wrongly, you can get destroyed. You can even get killed.

God is like fire.
Fire is both dangerous and good.

So, we have a relationship with God. And we want to honor that relationship.

One's Sin Is Everybody's Problem



Let's admit it: That's what our sin does to us— to our relationship with God: We hurt our relationship with God.

In the ancient times, at the time of *Leviticus*, sin was not a private thing. Sin is everybody's concern.

In their perspective: When I sin, it is not just my problem. When I sin, it becomes the community's problem.

For them, sin was like pollution. It polluted the relationship with God and it also polluted God's Tabernacle. It affected everybody.

Think of an unfaithful person. A guy brings his mistress into the household. Imagine the pollution it does to the family — to the kids, to the relatives, to the uncles, to the nieces, to everyone.

Sin pollutes our relationship with God. Sin pollutes God's good world.

Sin pollutes God's good world.

Think about it. Look at the news. Our world has become dangerous. There's too much injustice, violence, and evil. It's because of sin. It's because our relationship with the Lord is so distant. Something has to cover that relationship. Something has to put us back together. Something has to purify that relationship so that it works. If God's people want to be reconciled, to be *at one* with Him, they must be purified of that pollution.

Here's a huge problem: How can sinners like you and me fellowship with a holy God and not be destroyed.

And the answer, my friends, is:

3. Something was done to restore the relationship.

And what is that something? That is *atonement*. And atonement requires *sacrifice*.

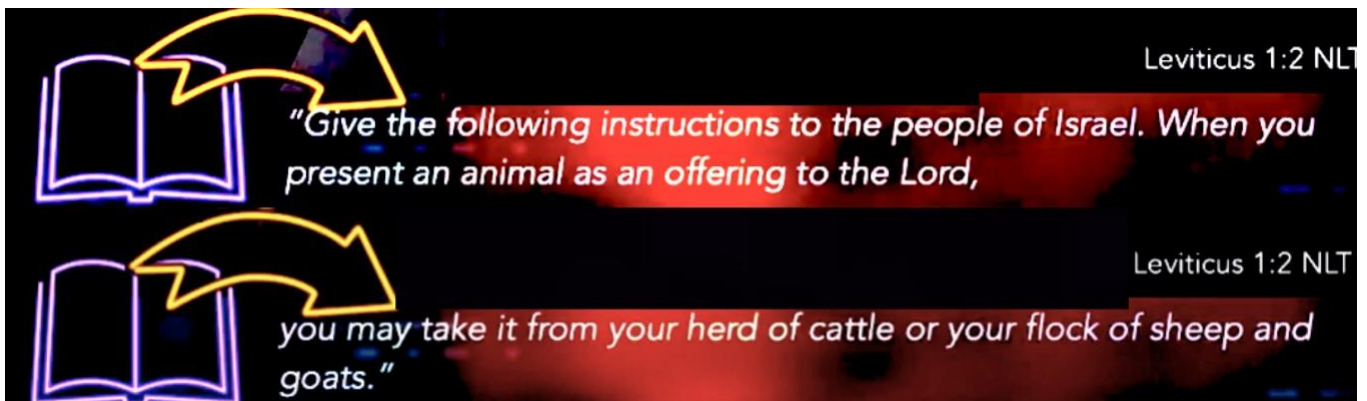


How Sacrifice Brings Us Closer to God

This is where we read the Word of God: Once you see it in perspective, it will now make sense to you.

For the next seven chapters of *Leviticus*, God explains the various sacrifices so that atonement can take place, so that they can be in His Presence and relationships would be restored.

So, let me read Leviticus 1:2:



And that will be the topic of incoming talks of our series, *Closer*. So, stay in tune every single Sunday because we will learn more about that.

Today, we will understand how sacrifice brings us closer to the Presence of the Lord.

Again, *perspective*. The original Hebrew word translated as *atonement* will answer our question. And the Hebrew word is *kippur*. It really means *to cover*.

Kippur was used in two situations in ancient times.

Kippur happens when you:

- 1 pay a debt
- 2 purify something

It's understandable. When you pay a debt, you cover the expenses. You cover the shortcomings.

And it's very logical. In a relationship, you have to pay a debt. That's when you are restored. No more problem.

Pattern for Reconciliation with God

The other meaning of *kippur* is sometimes a bit incomprehensible in our modern world.

During ancient times, when *kippur* was used, it was something to purify. And the only way to purify something was to cover it with blood — the blood of an animal sacrifice. Specifically, of an unblemished animal. Spotless. No deformity. Perfect.

That animal was unblemished and that covered and purified the relationship.

For us, you know, in our modern world— 21st century— we don't do animal sacrifices anymore. We don't cover something with blood anymore. Today, for us to be clean, we use alcohol spray. Blood spray would be yucky.

But —again perspective— in ancient Hebrew culture, it is very important because for them blood is life. Especially pure, unblemished blood. The blood of the blameless, spotless animal can make them clean. It took the place of the dirty heart and mind and actions of a person. That blood of that unblemished animal had cleansing power. And it covered the pollution that was happening in the relationship. Covering the pollution with the blood of the animal created a clean space. Reconciliation could then already take place.

They were spraying the blood on places — even on people to purify them. Those were the ancient times.

But read this with me and chew this with me... Because up until this time, we may not be seeing blood anymore. If you read through the Biblical story— from Cain and Abel, to Noah, to Moses— even up to *Leviticus*, God was establishing a pattern.

God was establishing a pattern—
that the blameless one would offer his life for the many.

What's that pattern? That the blameless One would offer His life for the many. Somebody covers the debt. Somebody helps purify the relationship again.

And that pattern, my friend, is finally fulfilled in Jesus. His sacrifice is good. Jesus is the blameless One who can make that atonement. Jesus is that blameless, spotless Lamb, that One— Jesus who can make us *at one* again with God. He offered His faultless life so we could defeat the power of death, sickness. And healing can happen. The damage can be repaired. The damage to the creation can be repaired. We can be restored and recreated again.

Let me say it again and again: *Sacrifice is good.*





Real Love, Real Sacrifice

When you go to the New Testament, you will note it connects with the Old Testament pattern of reconciliation with God.

In his Gospel, John called Jesus “The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”



Every single Eucharistic celebration now you get to understand the context.

That is the meaning of that spotless Lamb who died for you and me. Took our place, carried the sins of the world, took away our sins.

You will never go through Mass the same way again now understanding this.

As 1 John 4: 10 says:





Following the Sacrificial Lamb

I'll tell you an experience that manifests *Sacrifice is good.*

We exist. We stand here now because of God's sacrifice— Jesus' sacrifice. And everyone else who followed after Him. People— dozens, hundreds, thousands of people before us have followed the sacrificial Lamb and they offered themselves for the world so that our relationship with God will be restored.



You and I stand here because Bo Sanchez and his family preached here many, many times before. Because our leaders, even those who are unnamed now, they made the sacrifice so that we can enjoy this now.

Because people got hurt before and they endured that hurt and they love still despite of their hurting.

An Accident, Real Compassion



There was one time with my family — with my ex-girlfriend, now my wife — I was still young and still young now. Before, when I was so young, I was impulsive, I was overconfident — am still am now.

Ah, but there was the time when Mayi, then my girlfriend, some friends, and I were going to Baguio. We were a convoy of three or four cars at the time. I was the designated driver of one car, with Mayi and our friends at the back.

At the time, the drive to Baguio took long — five to six hours. It was early morning, I came from duty in Med school, so I was drowsy.

At first, on the NLEX, happy chats. Soon, my passengers were already asleep.

Then, in Paniqui, Tarlac, *Boom!*

I crashed into another car. The thing is, the car I was driving was not mine. It was the car of the father of Mayi. It was so bad that the car needed to be towed back to NLEX.

I called up Mayi's father, at the time, respectfully, I called Uncle or Tito: "Tito, sorry po."

I now had a debt I had to pay for. I did something wrong —very expensive, and big mistake.

But you know, the Tito said to me, "Okay lang kayo? Are you all okay? Is someone hurt?"

I replied, "No one, Sir."

And he was like, "Okay, come home now. I'll take care of everything."

Right there and then, I knew already who I would marry. :)

It was a very humbling moment—up until this time, when I remember that Tito —now my Dad—covered my debt. He fixed the car. He helped us come home. I did not pay a thing for that damaged car. And if Tito's reaction had been different, then maybe, I would not have married Mayi.

But what I have now is this: I want to pay back this kindness. Probably not directly, or sometimes directly. But it taught me that *sacrifice is good*.

Imagine, my daughter Haley having the kind of boyfriend that I was... and I will have to pay his debt. My God! God help me!

But somebody did already something like that for me.



So, our response to Jesus' sacrifice is that we get to sacrifice as well.

Because *sacrifice is good*.

Probably, there are people out there who have never experienced that love, that grace... It can be *you* who can bridge that gap between God and that person.

Maybe your company has never seen such loving leadership—and maybe it is you who can bring Jesus into your organization.

Because *sacrifice is good*. It is not convenient. It is actually painful.

And as we come to Worship today, my dear friends, my question is:

Will you sacrifice your life to Him?

He did it first. And I am encouraging you, go ahead. As we encounter God in our Worship time today, experience the Garden again. Experience God's Tabernacle in His heart. That we may surrender everything to Him.

Someone sacrificed for you to be here, and we want to sacrifice as well.

Because His *sacrifice is good*, our *sacrifice is good*.

And there are people who are not yet here. There are people who are not yet in this relationship with the Lord.

The Lord is asking you today: *Will you sacrifice your whole life to Me?*

When you sacrifice your pride, your pain at its core, sacrifice means submission. It means killing your pride on the altar, showing your sinful self and saying, "Lord, here I am. Use me. Bless me so I can bless others."

We join our sacrifices with the sacrifice of Jesus and His sacrifice makes our sacrifice good. How about that?

So come, and bless the Lord. Love the Lord today. Let's be thankful for His sacrifice and let's respond with sacrifice.

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



MERCY MINISTRIES

JEREMIAH FOUNDATION PART 1

My Mom Told Me To Bring My Resume

By **DANIELLE PATRICIA CABARLES**

BEFORE I came to know about the Jeremiah Foundation, I was wondering what would be God's calling for me and how to respond to Him.

I just graduated from the University of Perpetual Help System Dalta, with a Bachelor of Science degree, major in Psychology. So, I had this vision that I would be a part of an organization where I could apply what I studied for.

By God's grace, this vision would be fulfilled. Here's how...

My mother Carina, coming from a background of abuse, feels for girls in the same situation.

In July 2018, Mom and a friend decided to have a joint celebration of their birthday by visiting Bahay Aruga, a free halfway house for pediatric cancer patients run by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in Mandaluyong, Metro Manila.

There, she got acquainted with Rose (*not her real name*). She prayed over Rose. And to make sure they would continue communicating, my mom told Rose that she has a Facebook page and that's where she could reach my mom when Rose comes out of Bahay Aruga.

A few months later, Rose sent my mom a message saying she has been transferred to a different home. She told her the address and we went to visit her there—at Jeremiah Foundation, the Mercy Ministry of our Light of Jesus Family taking care of sexually abused girls.



God's Plan

At right, that's my loving mom with me. Mom, as someone who always helps people around her, told me to bring my resume with me just to "see what happens".

Narcisa Galvez, a housemother at Jeremiah, welcomed us and she confirmed that Rose indeed was transferred there. But we did not see her because she and other Jeremiah girls were in an event.

Then, egged by my mom, I told Ms. Galvez that I had my resume with me and I asked if they were hiring. But I told her I did not know what position to apply for. She said that she'll give my resume instead to the director and social worker in charge so they can consider my application — if ever there was an opening.

True enough, the social worker, Ms. Shaira Andal, called me for an interview, asked me to come on December 3, 2018.

That day, Ms. Andal, together with Ms. Gloria R. Viola, then Jeremiah's executive director, interviewed me and right there and then, decided to hire me as Center counselor, focusing on trauma management and mental health concerns.

So, as I began to serve in-house in Jeremiah, I got to see Rose again. That's one great blessing.

And many more— benefits such as free board and lodging plus food and even toiletries.

Most important, I have learned psycho-spiritual development and co-dependency in Christ as I journey with the girls.

I really did not plan to serve in Jeremiah. But God has kindly fulfilled His promise in my chosen life verse— which has always been Jeremiah 29:11: *"For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future."*





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.

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is a shelter for girls particularly victims of sexual abuse.



Grace To Be Born is a

halfway home for pregnant women in crisis.



He Cares Mission provides shelter for street children.

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



Jesus Christ Cares for Cancer

provides financial assistance and pastoral care for indigent cancer patients.

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



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



The Light of Jesus Disaster Recovery Ministry

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

The Light of Jesus Prison Ministry brings Jesus to the Correctional Institution for Women to give 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.

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FAMILY ONLINE NEWSMAGAZINE

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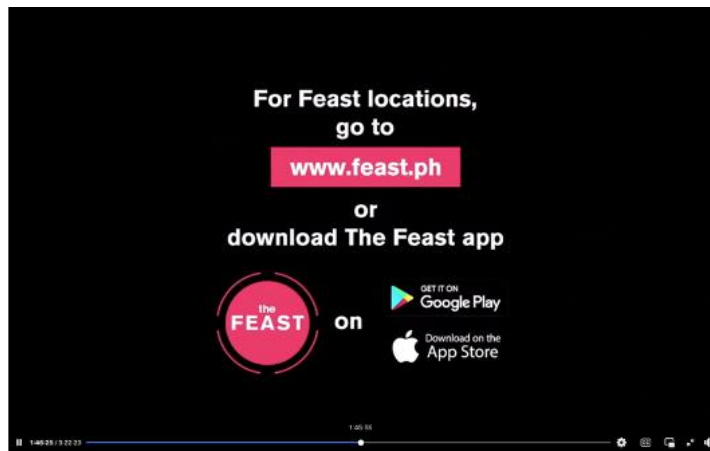
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Go and make disciples of all men.
— Matthew 28:19

