

NEWSLETTER February 12, 2023

God Is Not Just Perfume

SOME people think differently. They don't see God as oxygen but as perfume. He's a nice option. Okay to have, but you don't really need Him to survive.

Also, God is just *one* of the perfume brands out there. There are other scents that you can choose. Hmm, you can even create our own perfume.

But today, we proclaim the truth that *without God in our life, we die.*

In this talk, we also ask another question: *How do I experience God?* How do I receive His Presence?



When I had severe Coronavirus Disease

(COVID), I had an oxygen tube attached to my mouth. That little tube saved my life. So, here's a big question: *If God is your oxygen, what is one of the most important oxygen tubes that brings God's Breath into your life?*

The surprising answer from the Bible is *Rituals*. (Huh?)

I know you didn't expect that. But that's what we'll explore today... Have a beautiful Feast today!

May your dreams come true,

Bo Somety

Bo Sanchez



Sweet Scent of

WE savor the scent of Love because this issue of *The Feast Family* comes out this Sunday, February 12, 2023, just two days before Valentine's Day.



For Fr. Bob McConaghy, Love is not simply an aroma.. He is talking, of course, about the Love of our Lord Jesus, so heartfelt that He calls us not just a pleasant whiff but practically the light and salt of the earth, *page 3*.



Bro. Bo Sanchez, introducing his Feast Talk today, points out that indeed, *God Is Not Just Perfume, page 1*. Not the kind ladies will be ecstatic to receive as Valentine gift. All the way from Dubai where he is on a pastoral mission, Bro. Bo reminds us we must follow the Fragrance that lasts Forever, *page, 24*.

page, 24. Bro. Didoy Lubaton (*right*) welcomes us with the scent of giving, *page 15.* He and Bro. Audee Villaraza present the ancient kingdoms' Offerings to their gods. And they also point out what we in this modern world should be offering to *our* God— what we should give Him and to one another not only on Valentine's Day, *pages 18-40.*

For Abby (*not her real name*), God is not just perfume. For she feels His Love in the tender care of the staff and her friends in our Jeremiah Foundation's home for sexually abused girls. Part 2 of our series on Jeremiah starts on *page 41*,

Valentine's Day or not, know that you are loved.



Randy Borromeo Media Ministry Executive Director









FLASHBACK! FEBRUARY 5, 2023

Holy Mass





FR. BOB McCONAGHY on the Gospel: Matthew 5:13-16 *Salt and Light*



Excerpts...

I love this Aliw theater. The acoustics are so wonderful— but I can't see any of you. It's like looking out into the dark. But I know you are there. I can feel your presence.

You notice, Jesus doesn't say you are the light of the world, the salt of the earth. When everything is good, when your finances are in order, when your relationships are solid, when your teacher and your professor affirm you and say, "You have a great future..." and when your family says, "We love you so much."

That's when you can be the light of the world, that's when you can be the salt of the earth.

But just as there's a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit here every Sunday, especially when the preachers preach and the Music Ministry members sing, and everybody's lift up—there's another spirit. Because whenever there's a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit, historically, there's also usually a great outpouring of the evil spirit. The evil spirit is suggesting to you that you are not the light of the world, you are not the salt of the earth.

What Jesus Said

Jesus said we already are the light of the world and the salt of the earth. But the evil spirit is very clever. He's good at telling lies. He's good at temptations. So, he has two missions to keep you from being the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

1. The first way the evil one works is by discouragement: He tells you, "I mean come on, what do you have to give? You're not that holy, you're not certainly all that talented. You could never be up here on stage preaching like Bro. Bo or singing like Bro. Alvin. No, that's not you. You don't have too much to give, I mean, stay where you are. You're not very salty. You don't have too much light to give."



So, he discourages us. He's really good at it too.



Reading I: Isaiah 58:7-10

⁷ Is it not sharing your food with the hungry, and sheltering the homeless poor; if you see someone lacking clothes, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own kin?
⁸ Then your light <u>will</u> blaze out like the dawn and your wound be quickly healed over. Saving justice will go ahead of you and Yahweh's glory come behind you.
⁹ Then you <u>will</u> cry for help and <u>Yahweh will</u> answer; you <u>will</u> call and he will say, 'I am here.' If you do away with the

yoke, the clenched fist and malicious words,

¹⁰ if you deprive yourself for the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, your light <u>will</u> rise in the darkness, and your darkest hour <u>will</u> be like noon.

The Accuser

2. Second, you know what else he does? He accuses.

In the book of *Revelation*, Satan is called the accuser. It says there "the accuser of our brothers and sisters has been shut out, who day and night accuse them before the Lord."

He's very good at accusing you:

"You go to The Feast, you're not very holy, you don't say your prayers too often. Remember those sins? Especially the embarrassing ones, the sins that nobody

knows anything about? Oh, come on... You? Light of the world? Salt of the earth? Talentless person with low self-esteem. You have nothing to give. Nothing!"

And he convinces people because he is the father of lies.

Each one of you right now is the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

Let me tell you about a person that I think who's one of the strongest lights of the world and salts of the earth I've ever met in my entire life— and yet she had many reasons to believe that she was not.

Many, many years ago— I was only two years ordained— and I remember that I was assigned to a parish in a coal mining town in North East Pennsylvania. Every first Friday, I gave Communion to the elderly.

My driver took me into different homes. One time, we pulled up outside this one house, a one-story house.

"Ahh, very sad case, Father," my driver said.

I asked, "What do you mean?"

He said, "You'll see when you go in."

What I saw when I went in, all of my training in the seminary and theology and pastoral practice did not prepare me for the next 10 minutes of my life—and the question that I would be asked.

It was that day that I met a woman, 46 years old, by the name if Marlene. She was on a hospital bed in the corner of the room. What I saw shocked me.

Both of her legs were off up to the hip and her right arm was off up to the elbow. So, when I gave her Communion, she would bless

herself like this:

So, I went over and said, "I'm Father Bob, the new priest."

And I asked her, "Marlene, what happened to you?"

You know what she said?

"Father, give me Communion first."

She had her priorities right. So, I gave her Communion.







'What's the Meaning of My life?'

Giving her Communion and watching her pray was like having a retreat. And she prayed for a good two to three minutes with her eyes closed. Then I saw two big tears running down from her eyes. But then she quickly wiped the tears away and graciously welcomed me to the parish.

She asked me about my family, but then I got to ask what happened to her...

She said, "Well Father, I have this disease it's called Buerger's disease. Your former President has that disease..."

(Note: Buerger's disease (also known as thromboangiitis obliterans) affects blood vessels in the body, most commonly in the arms and legs. Blood vessels swell, which can prevent blood flow, causing clots to form. This can lead to pain, tissue damage, and even gangrene —the death or decay of body tissues...People at the risk for Buerger disease are those who are heavy smokers. — https://www.cdc.gov tips disease buergers-disease.)

But it took a lot more of a toll on her than on the President.

She said, "Eight years ago, I got gangrene in my foot and the doctor said, 'We have to amputate your foot."

So they did.

She said, "I was able to get a special kind of shoe so nobody really noticed... and (through physical therapy), I learned how to walk...But then several months later, the gangrene began to go up my legs."

She added, "Father, you're busy today, so to make the long story short, in the last eight years I've had 27 surgical amputations to get rid of the gangrene. First up my left leg, then the toes, and the foot, and the leg and up the right..."

And then the amputation continued up to her fingers and her hand... the doctors just kept cutting.

I remember she told me: "Father, I used to like to go out to a restaurant or to the mall...But when I do, everybody stares at me and it makes me feel so sad, and I come home feeling depressed...I used to like to cook but now I can't cook anymore because when I'm in the wheelchair I can't keep my balance... I have a wonderful husband, Father... but let's be honest...who would want to make love to something like this?...Father, I'm in constant pain. I pray so hard that

Jesus would take the pain away, but it won't stop..."

And after sharing all of that with me, this is what she said, "Father what's the meaning of my life?"

What to Tell Marlene

Did you ever ask yourself these questions: "What good am I?" "What difference can I make?"

I just couldn't give Marlene what I call the stained glass answer or just quote a piece in Scripture.

I said to her, "I'm going to have some time and pray about that and I'm going to think about that... How about I come up next Tuesday? And we'll have coffee and talk some more?"

She said okay and I gave her a blessing and out I went.

I really, really felt like a complete failure. But then again I wasn't — when I gave her the Eucharist. So, I went back home and said my gosh how can I ever... What should I say? Nothing.

Then, I got a telephone call from a priest down in Arlington, Pennsylvania. He said the priest who was supposed to give a morning Recollection on the Sacraments was sick. And he asked me if I could give the Recollection.

I said, "Okay, I'll come down."

So, I kind of put Marlene out of my mind and began preparing this talk on the Sacraments. I wanted to say there's no such thing as a Sacrament without a sacrifice. Remember last week? The (Feast) preachers were talking about the importance of sacrifice.

Reading II: 1 Corinthians 2:1-5



¹ Now when I came to you, brothers, I did not come with any brilliance of oratory or wise argument to announce to you the mystery of God. ² I was resolved that the only knowledge I would have while I was with you was knowledge of Jesus, and of him as the crucified Christ. ³ I came among you in weakness, in fear and great trembling ⁴ and what I spoke and proclaimed was not meant to convince by philosophical argument, but to demonstrate the convincing power of the Spirit, ⁵ so that your faith should depend not on human wisdom but on the power of God.



God's Answer

So, the Holy Spirit hit me, God's grace hit me. I didn't come up on this on my own:

I called Marlene up on the phone and said, "Marlene, I don't have an answer to your question, but I need you to do something for me tomorrow morning."

She said, "Father, I can't do anything for you. I can't even get out of my bed."

I said, "I know, but I noticed you have your novenas there and you have a rosary there and I know that you're very good at praying. Tomorrow, I'm going to be giving a Recollection for 80 people. Maybe some of them are far away from God, maybe some of them are going through a crisis in their life, maybe they're asking the same question that you asked —*What's the meaning of my life?*



"What I need you to do is for three hours, take everything that you've been experiencing and unite it with the passion of Christ."

Notice I didn't say *offer it up*. I said *unite* it with the passion of Christ, so that powerful grace might be sent to all of those people.

And I asked her, "Can you do that?"

She said, "Yes, I can do that!"

And then I asked her to do the most difficult thing I asked anyone to do in my life.

I said, "Would you pray five minutes, every day, that I'd be a good priest?" She said, "I will."

I gave the Recollection and talked about no such thing as Sacrament without a sacrifice— that's the theology.

Let me tell you what I mean by that— I told her what I just told you.

Afterward, people came up and said, "Can you give us her name and address?" And so I wrote her name and address on the white board.



The Real Meaning of Life

The following Tuesday, I went up to her house as I promised. I knocked on the door and heard this very joyful, "Come in!"

And when I went in, she said, "Father Bob, come over! Look, look at this!"

Her entire bed was covered like a blanket with 80 letters telling her how much her sacrifice meant to the Recollection participants, helping them make a really good Recollection.

And after that, every time I would be asked to give a Recollection, she would do the same thing— and people wrote to her, or called her on the telephone.

She had her own light, her own saltiness— right there on the bed that she couldn't even get out of on her own. And

powerfully, she made a difference in so many people's lives.

Even as anyone without faith would look at her and say, "What a waste..." "How tragic..."

Well, two years later, her husband called me, "She's not good. She has to go to the hospital and she won't go. Would you come up and give her the Sacrament of the Sick and then talk her into going to the hospital?"

Up I went, and told her, "Marlene, you have to go to the hospital." She said, "No, Father, I'm tired."

And then I did something very manipulative—but then it was true.

I said, "Marlene, I'm going to make my own personal retreat all this week... Would you go to the hospital and there pray for me?"

She said, "All right, I'll go, I'll go."

I said I'll come up Friday night. She'll love to have a beer and a cigarette. I said I'll bring a bottle of beer.

She said, "No..."

I said, "Don't worry, they'll let me do it."

She said, "No, you don't understand. I won't be there. I'm going home…" She added, "You remember the question that I asked you two years ago?" I said I'll never forget it.

She said, "Now, I have the answer. Now I know the real meaning of my life. Now I know what it meant to be a disciple and to be in Ministry right there on my bed..."

She gave me a hug and a kiss... And then two days later, I got word from her family, indeed, that she had died.



The Most Important Lesson

Now, if anybody in God's creation would not be held accountable by saying, "I don't believe in God. Where is He?"

She had that reason.

If anybody had a reason to say, "What do I care about other people? They don't care about me..." And turn their back on any kind of discipleship— nobody would have held her accountable. But she did just the opposite.

And little did I know in God's providence that He was preparing me (for a trial)—because my mother would have her leg amputated 15 years later. I don't think I could have handled that— had I not been used to being with Marlene.

And she taught me the most important lesson: There is no such thing as someone who is not the light of the world, who is not the salt of the earth. Each one of you *is*.

Don't be discouraged. Don't be misled. Don't be accused. Rather, realize that nothing that you have ever done in your entire life could make God love you more, and nothing you have done in your entire life can make God love you less.



The just man is a light in darkness to the upright

He loves you just the way you are. But He doesn't want to leave you there. He wants to lift you up to be just like His Son.

Each one of you has a mission as what said on The Feast the other day: If you woke up this morning, God still has a mission for you, and it's going to make you happy. It's going to make you joyous.



Powerful Blessing

Let me close with this... I shared this at the 11 o'clock Mass last week:

Naomi is a Feaster and she was talking about the Ministry that I talked about, sometimes called the Sandwich Ministry.

She said, "Instead of money I always take food with me."

She shared that one time, she stopped at a traffic red light right at the corner of EDSA and Roxas Boulevard.

She related, "I noticed two boys who looked to be 13 and 14 years old. And they looked so hardened, they looked so angry and upset because they had to beg."

So, usually when we see beggars, we give them some money, food or whatever.

Naomi said, "But I stopped, and I rolled down the window and they came over and I asked them, 'Would you like some snacks?'--They said thank you and I asked their names.

They were surprised. Nobody ever asked their names. They told her their names and she said, "I'm Naomi. Do you go to school?"

They said, "No, we don't have enough money. We had to drop out of school. We have to do this— beg."

She said, "I'm going to pray for you that God will find a way of getting you the resources so you can go back to school."

She said their face began to become softer.

She told them, "I'm going to pray for that every day."

And she asked, "Would you do me a favor?"

They said yes.

She requested, "Pray for us. Pray for me."

They said, "Okay, we'll do that."

And so those hardened faces turned into soft faces. And then the traffic light turned green. And as she slowly started to drive on, you know what they said?

"God bless, po!"

That blessing from those two boys are far more powerful than a blessing from the Pope, far more powerful than a blessing from me. Because when you had the poorest of the poor blessing you, it was a very powerful prayer.



Let Your Light Shine!

Nobody walks where you walk every day. Nobody sees the same people that you see every day. But one thing that is most important is this:

More than your prayer, more than your penances, what God really wants from you is for you to actually believe that He really does love you unconditionally.

Do you believe that? If you believe that, then, one day at a time, you can let your light shine. Let it shine as a thousand twelve hundred points of light and you'll become a hero.

Catholics become the heroes— no longer the movie stars. But those of you who are God's stars, be who He has called you to be. Don't let the evil spirit discourage you or accuse you. Tell him, but nobody else, "Go to hell."

God bless! Have a good week.





TISHA CARRO:

We believe God is doing something new this morning. And if you want a new thing, may I see your hands up...

Come on, as we sing, as we lift up our voices, we lift up our hearts to God. So together, let's confess this to God. We sing to the One.







DIDOY LUBATON:

Hi, Everybody, Good Morning! May we give a big, big hand to Fr. Bob McConaghy? What a powerful, powerful sacramental Holy Eucharist.

How are you, Guys? It's the first

Sunday of the month. We're still alive! We still have The Feast. We still have jobs and Life is still ongoing.

I want to greet those attending for the first time. Welcome, welcome! Those watching online, Welcome!

You know, many are watching us also via replay. That's the sign of the times that sometimes, we cannot be fit in one place but there is still connection... Our broadcast is all over the world.

We get to meet people during The Feast on Sunday, and they would say, "Bro. Didoy, we came from Antique, we came from Bicol, we came

from Qatar, Canada..."

And I was like, how awesome the Ministry, what the Lord is doing for us.

I just want to say this to you because you get to be part of this Ministry. You get to contribute to this Feast.









You know, when we begin, we ask you to give. Why? Because : 1. It's good for you most especially; and 2. It's good for the Church that we're building here.

We are in the series on *Leviticus*. So, I was wondering—is there any learning, or is there any teaching from the book of *Leviticus* about tithing?

It says in Leviticus 27: One tenth of produce of the land whether green from the fields or fruits from the tree, belongs to the Lord and must be set apart to Him as Holy.

You know, the spirit of the book is not just a command for us to follow. The spirit of the book of *Leviticus* is for us to get closer to the One who gives us our provisions, the One who gives us the blessings, the one who gives us Life, and the one who makes everything possible. And that it seems like a command, but actually it's good for you.

I was talking to a multi-millionaire... I asked him: "How come you're able to build a company and you are still so generous, and when I talk to people around you, even your employees, they would say good things about you. And you are really successful and rich. How come?"

Everything We Have Is His

And he said something I will never forget.

He said, "Didoy, yung bigay ni Lord, sa Kanya 'yon, e. Kay Lord naman lahat ito. —What God gives is His. Everything comes from Him."

I was like, "Wow, what kind of philosophy! What kind of thinking! What kind of spirit that rich family has."

Because they know what they have is the Lord's. So, that must be the reason he is being blessed by the Lord. Because he knows what he has is not his, but it comes from



the Lord. That's why how big he gives. How greatly generous he is. How greatly he gives jobs, life to many families, and service to many.

I want to become that kind of person. And I'm in the journey of becoming that person. And I hope all of us here, loving children of God— brothers and sisters— we want to have that kind of generous spirit, honoring God even with our finances.

We do not own anything in this world. God owns everything in this world. And we are stewards of His creation.

Let me end with this reflection: How are you as a steward of God's provision? Are you selfish and keeping it to yourself?

Or, on the flip side, to your Church, to God, and to your family, showing an example to your kids, you can say: "I am generous because God is generous." Amen.



Let's pray:

Dear Lord, thank you for blessing me. I give this to you as an offering with my love and dedication. Use this offering to bless others mightily. Thank You for being generous. And I want to be as generous as You, Lord. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Give joyfully to the Lord, and let's celebrate our Feast today!





BRO. DIDOY LUBATON: We are in Talk 3 of our series here in The Feast called *CLOSER*.

Again, the spirit of the book of *Leviticus* is so that we may be closer to Jesus.

Today, our one big message is this:



Talk 3



- 1 Ascension Offering
- 2 Gift Offering
- Peace Offering
- Purification Offering
- 5 Guilt Offering

Who among you has already been courted by someone? Who among you has courted someone? The *hope* for today is this: God *is* courting you. In the first seven chapters of *Leviticus*, God explains the five kinds

of sacrifices that Israel can offer (*above right*).

Two of these sacrifices say to God: "Thank You." Three of these sacrifices say: "I am sorry."



Unique Aspects of Sacrifices

Why are there specific sacrifices for specific reasons? ... There were two unique aspects about these sacrifices.

Israel was not alone in practicing ritual sacrifices. You will see in history that there were Edomites, Moabites, Amonites, Caananites— they were all neighbors of the ancient Israel. They offered sacrifices to their gods. So, it was not just the Israelites who offered sacrifices.

But the Israelite sacrifices were unique in two ways:

1 The focus is different.



You will find it strange that in the seven chapters that explain the five sacrifices, only once— only once— that the word *sacrifice* appeared. Instead of calling

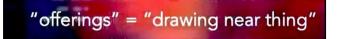
it sacrifice, the author called it offering.

It's like Bo Sanchez writing a book on how to increase your sales, yet he never uses the word *sell* or *sales* in the book. Instead of *sell*, he writes *serve*.

Because in his mind, and in his culture, in his ways, his philosophy is *serving* rather than *selling*.

So, when the author of the *Leviticus* did not use the word *sacrifice*, to explain the sacrifices, it was not an accident. The author was driving a point. Instead of *sacrifices*, the author used *offerings*.

The original Hebrew word translated to *offerings* literally meant a *drawing near thing*. The sacrifices were there, the offerings were there because their main purpose was to *draw the people near to God*.



That's why the title of our series is *Closer*. Talk 1 is *Sacrifice Is Good*. Sacrifice is good because it draws us near to God.



The Purpose of The Feast

In *Leviticus*, the focus was not on the death of the animal, or the death of something. The focus was not on death. The focus was on life. The focus was not on the *process*. The focus was on the *purpose*.

And again and again, the purpose is for us to be drawn near to God.

The purpose of The Feast is not to condemn each and every one of us— "You're not attending Mass," or "You're not listening..." Or the purpose of attending because there is coffee downstairs, or my family forced me to come here, my mother said so, or my boyfriend or girlfriend tagged me along...

The purpose of The Feast, entirely, is for us to be closer to one another and most especially to be closer to God.





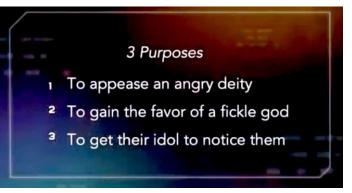
1. So they could appease their angry God: "Sorry God, sorry Lord, we're making this sacrifices because we sinned against You, so that You will not be angry at us.

That's why sacrifices were there in ancient culture.

2 The purpose is different.

The second unique aspect of the sacrifices of the Israelis was the *purpose* was different.

You have to understand that for most of the pagan nations, sacrifices were there for three purposes:



2. To gain the favor of a fickle god. They wanted something from God.

3. To get their idol to notice them. Because they were thinking their god or goddess was aloof, disinterested in their mortal life. For the gods, human beings were nothing but critters on earth. If sacrificing a goat or an animal didn't work, they would go up to the next level: they would self-mutilate with hard rocks or sharp stones—like narrated in the book of *Kings* in the Bible— so that their god would pay them attention. In the showdown with the prophets, you'll hear that Elijah would say in jest, "Perhaps Baal, their god, was in the toilet, so the prophets needed to make loud sounds to get the attention of Baal."

And if the animal sacrifices failed, to get their deity's blessings, they could use their last card: human sacrifices. They would throw babies into a blazing furnace as in the red-hot iron belly of Molek

Actually, Leviticus 8:21 prohibits this.





God's Purpose

So what is *drawing* for us? This is not the God whom we serve and love. This is not the God who loves us.

When there are sacrifices for Yahweh, it's a different story. It's a different focus. It's a different purpose.

Because remember this: God is the One who's trying to get your attention. It is not us trying to get God's attention.

In *Leviticus*, we will understand that it is God who is making the effort. He is the One courting you and me. He is not aloof. He doesn't see us as very small, nothing like critters. No, no. He is making the first move. He's not playing hard-toget. *We* are. He doesn't second-guess on you. He doesn't think if you're good or not.

Remember, in our Bible, in our belief, God is the author of Life. He is also the suitor of His people.

The purpose of the animal sacrifices was to prepare the Israelite's heart for His Presence. He's already totally committed to His people. The purpose was not to gain God's favor. There were already God's favorites. We are already His people.

So, remember this: The purpose of animal sacrifices in *Leviticus* was to prepare the heart of the people for His Presence.

That is why, Guys, I honor you because you showed up.

You said, "Okay, Lord, I woke up early, I dressed up, I commuted, I went through these efforts because I was going to meet my Suitor. I am going to meet my God. I'm going to meet the Author of my life."

Time travel to *now*, in the 21st century... We don't see animal sacrifices. But there are offerings of praise. There are sacrifices of praise. We celebrate the Holy Eucharist, the highest form of Worship. It is the sacrifice of the Mass. We sing love songs to God. We pray the Rosary. We fast. Pray. We offer time, to be in the Blessed Sacrament.

And why do we do all those? Is it because we want to get the attention of God? Is it because we want to say "Sorry" to God? Is it because, "God, I need something from You?"



Here it is: We do those rituals, we Worship God — understanding that He loves us first, that He is committed to us. He is good for us. And Worship is something that we do not do for God — but something that we do for ourselves.

My definition— I learned this from Bro.Bo— Worship is allowing God to love us.

So, when you go to Mass, again, it's never the same anymore. From the Entrance Procession, to the Liturgy of the Word, to the Homily, to the Offering Time, to the Eucharistic Prayers... We sing different songs... up to *The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world*... Then, at Communion time, that's when the Suitor comes closer, and you— and me— meet Him.

That's why I encourage you: Go for Communion. That is the real Presence of God. We are the only ones who believe that. That is the real Presence. That is the gift of our Catholic Church to us. That is real Jesus.

In The Feast, Worship is allowing God to love us. So, in The Feast, there's the Mass— there's the song, the Offering, there's the preaching... But the most important part is yes, we are talking to you through your mind, through your heart, but the most important is this: When we offer in response, when we sing in response to what we just learned, what we just felt. and then when we reach out to God in prayer.

I'm trying to explain to you that is our experience, that is how we believe things are to be. And that is what God is teaching us today.

When you go through the book of *Leviticus*, you will learn it is not God commanding you. It is God loving you.

Bro. Bo is far away, but he has a message for us. Watch the video and enjoy.



BO SANCHEZ: Hi, Feast Bay Area! I am here in the deserts of Dubai. And I am here to visit The Feasts here. We have a number of them all over the Middle East. And we are so grateful that God has opened doors and people are gathering together.

Listen— just a very short message... God is here in this beautiful place. God is there in your life and He will continue to be there. He will continue to bless you.

He will continue to speak to you at this particular Feast that you are in right now. After this, after preaching here, I'll be leading a Holy Land Pilgrimage. So, we'll be going to Israel.

And maybe one day, I hope you can join me. You can plan for it because I go to the Holy Land every year.

God bless you, Everybody! I will see you. Have an amazing time at The Feast today.



In God's Presence AUDEE VILLARAZA:

Good Morning, Everyone! We honor the beautiful, immutable, unchanging and unshakable Word of God:

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

I want you to be immersed in the Presence of God in this moment. You may close your eyes and feel Jesus walking amongst us.

Father in Heaven, we thank You for the time that You have given us this morning. Truly, You are a good God. Thank You for waking us up. And right now, this is Your moment to shine. As we



break open Your good book, let every word pierce each one's heart so that the word will be powerful, it will be personal, and it will change us today. We want every person in this place right now to be leaning in and loving You. This is our prayer, in Jesus' Name. Amen.

One more time, Everybody, lift up those hands...



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



It's so beautiful that we're together....

Say *God is courting you*. I'm going to be teaching you five different ways that the Israelites offered to the Lord. Five different sacrifices.



The first one is the Ascension Offering.

The Ascension Offering was pretty much the most foundational of all types of offerings. Why? Because everybody did it. It was so common that everybody did it twice a day at least— one in the morning and then one at night. And this is the type of offering where they would take an animal, offer that entire animal to the Lord. And then burn the animal and put it on the altar.

What made it unique was that they offered the whole animal— whether it was a bull or a calf. Depending on how wealthy you were back then, that would dictate what kind of offering you would give. If you were middle class you could offer a goat or a lamb or a sheep. But if you were a little financially challenged, you could still offer something. You could offer a dove, or anything that was worth your money— that was unblemished and clean.



Unique Sacrifice

What made this offering unique is that the Israelites offered the whole animal. Think about that for a moment. For Filipinos, that would be difficult because Pinoys eat, finish up an entire dish. We are not supposed to waste, to throw away any part of the dish.

For instance, chicken. We have a dish for every part of the chicken— chicken thigh, leg, feet (even though you never know if they have ingrown nails), wings, even neck, even chicken buttocks, skin, intestines, even the blood.

As for pork: there's Lechon or roasted pig; Sisig or ground flesh of the head, ears, and cheeks; Barbecue or grilled pork; Ramen Noodles with Pork Tendon.

So, when parents see children have leftovers, they are like, "Whoa! Finish your food! Just think: There are many going hungry in Africa..."

Thus, giving away an entire animal as offering — this will not work for Filipinos. But that was what the Israelites did. They offered to their god the whole animal.

And you know what? There's a beautiful spiritual significance when you do that. The significance was when you give to the Lord, you give your all. It was forbidden to be stingy with the Lord.

Sometimes, during the Offering, you hesitate giving to the Lord because your funds are already dwindling... But you know, giving is a beautiful way of worshipping the Lord — that when you surrender to Him, you surrender your entire being. You surrender your whole self.



Identifying with the Sacrifice

That's the Ascension Offering. Hence the word *ascension*— everything goes up to God.

But God gave a specific instruction in Leviticus 1:4: Lay your hand on the animal's head, and the Lord will accept its death in your place to purify you, making you right with him.

Lay your hand on the animal's head...At first, I was thinking, was that a random thought God said? Lay your hand on the animal's head and that will become your offering...

But when God says something, it's always on purpose. When God gives you an instruction, there's always a purpose, a reason attached to that. I want you to think about this: That instruction of *laying your hand on an animal* was not an accident. It was deliberate. Because when you lay your hand on anything, you're actually identifying with it.

So, it's not like you pat a person on the head, and you just say, "Good boy, good girl, thank you for taking one for the team."

That's not what the Israelites were doing. When they were laying their hands on the animal, it was as if they were saying, "Now this animal is *me*."

So, you're offering an animal as a sacrifice—but that animal is a representation of *you* now.

Because they believed that when they sacrifice an animal, the blood covers all of their sins.



You are closest to Christ when you are being broken.

How Do We Identify with Jesus?

When you think about it, we don't really practice animal sacrifice anymore.

I mean, when was the last time you drained blood from an animal and burned the animal and offered offered it to the Lord?

None of us do that. Because we're New Testament people now. We believe that Jesus came and Jesus was the Lamb that was slain to take away every sin in the world. So now, Jesus is the One we need to identify with.

How do we identify with Jesus? I remember there's a story in Luke

44:13 where after Jesus died, two disciples

didn't know what to do. So, they walked away from Jerusalem to a town named Emmaus. Then, somehow, in the journey, Jesus showed up— but the Bible says they did not even recognize Him. So, imagine they were in this journey, talking about Jesus and that Person was actually Jesus but they did not recognize Him... Until, when they were eating, Jesus broke bread and they realized the Person they were talking to was Jesus all along.

How many are you are in a breaking stage right now? And now you're picking yourself up? Here's my point:

You want to be able to identify with Jesus? Guess what: It's in your breaking where you are closest to Christ more than you think you know.

So, praise God if you're going through a breaking right now, or you'd been through a breaking— because that's one way to know that you are able to identify with Jesus. When you carry your cross, you know that Jesus is so close to you.

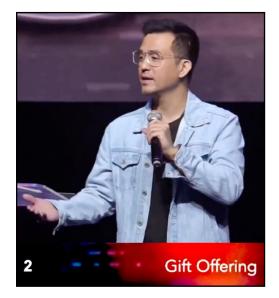
And you know, that process of burning the sacrifice, that's a beautiful process, my friends. Because God's fire is not meant to destroy you. It's meant to refine you. So, if you're feeling like you're "going through Hell" right now, that's a good thing. Because God is removing the things that do not belong to Him. God is wiping all the bad stuff that do not belong to Him. So, welcome that in your life. That's an invitation to welcome the fire in your life.

Giving Even If It Hurts

There's another kind of offering: the Gift Offering. This is very simple. The reason we want to give to the Lord is we want to gift Him with something. We still do this in the Church today. You know, we bring up an offering. We give to the Lord

The Israelites back then gave fruits and vegetables. The poorest of the poor who had no money, you know, they still gave— in the form of grains.

To this day, this is a beautiful way of thanking the Lord for all the blessings that we receive. But you know, sadly, there are people who don't trust the Lord and so they don't give to the Lord as much as you guys



probably do. There are some people who still hesitate in giving God the first fruits of their labor.

Deuteronomy 26 says that the Israelites gave the first fruits of their harvest to the Lord. That's beautiful.

But maybe there's somebody here who's thinking, "I lack money. I even have no money for commuting to home to my job. I don't have allowance for tomorrow. Why would I still give to the Lord?"

Some of you hesitate in giving God the first fruits of your labor. But let me ask you: How many of you have ever experienced that God blessed you abundantly? Has God blessed you abundantly? Has he been providing for you in ways that you could not provide for yourself? Yes?

Then why don't you consider offering to Him praise? Why don't you consider offering Him thanksgiving? Why don't you consider offering Him service? When you know that God has blessed you abundantly.

May we do that now: Ten seconds of praising the Lord... Praising the Lord for He is good— even if sometimes you're not. Praising the Lord if you're not faithful— and He is faithful. Because God will always be good.

Let's always be in the posture of gifting the Lord even if sometimes it hurts us. That's why it is called *sacrifice*. If it doesn't hurt you, it's not a sacrifice. It's surplus. It's extra. Sacrifice is something that will hurt you from within. So, consider offering the Lord praise, service—serving Ministry. I mean we're looking for keyboardists here. If you've got the talent to serve in the Ministry, come join us. Give to the Lord. That's the Gift Offering.



In Hebrew, the word *peace* is *shalom*. That's how they greeted people when they see them for the first time: "*Shalom*, my friend!" And when they bid each other goodbye, they say, "*Shalom*!"

It's a beautiful word: *peace*. But the way that we give peace today is a little different. Because to them, there was a specific instruction that Jesus gave.

Jesus said when you put on a luncheon or a banquet, don't invite just your good friends, brothers, your relatives, your rich neighbors. Instead, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind.

And you know, that was a beautiful way of offering to the Lord.



Dare: Do as Darwin Did

I remember we have this brother, he's a Feast Light Planter. His name is Darwin Susano (*above, in black shirt*). I always mention him here at The Feast. Chances are you probably heard about his story...

At the height of the Coronavirus Decease (COVID) Pandemic in 2020, when there was a lockdown, from his condo in Makati, Bro.Darwin saw jeepney drivers hanging out in an empty parking lot. They could not work because people were not allowed to commute. So, the drivers didn't have money.

So, you know what Darwin did? He went down, talked to the drivers, and he offered them a meal. He cooked for them. He dined with them. And eventually, the group of jeepney drivers became a Feast Light Group.

But you know, the beautiful thing that happened there was that it was a revelation of what God's Garden would actually look like.

God's original design — God's Garden of Eden— looks like this:

Every person, rich or poor, young or old, men or women, they all dwell in harmony. That's what the Garden looks like. Everybody is fed. Everybody is nourished. Everybody is equal in the sense that they all dwell in harmony.

May I dare you to do something radical this week? Or even today. Yes, I want you to pray and then look for opportunities where you can be God's Love to somebody this week. Maybe even today. You're going to have lunch right after The Feast. Some of you are going to a restaurant. Maybe one of you will just need to think: "What if I buy an extra meal and then give it to the first person I see who I know is going hungry?"

That's a radical move. It doesn't have to be monetary in nature— because we all know money is not the only valuable resource that you have.



Ethan's Question

My father-in-law celebrated his birthday recently and then my son Ethan said to me a few days later, "Dad was it really Lolo's birthday?"

I said, "Yes. Why?"

He answered, "Because nobody gave him a toy. Nobody gave him a gift."

Money is not your only valuable resource. What is your other valuable resource? Time. Why? Because the last time I checked, we have only 24 hours a day and seven days a week. Anybody got more time than that?

Time is a valuable resource. So, when you give your time to people, it means that you love them, you care for them. So, maybe, you're caring for people this week and opening for opportunities you can be God's love for them.

Would you be willing to call a friend whom you have not spoken to for so long and then say, "May I pray for you?"

Or maybe meet a stranger and ask, "May I help you?"

Or maybe look around for people whom you may tangibly help.

I believe we do that when we offer peace. We're offering it to the Lord because real peace or real shalom is not the absence of conflict in your life. Real peace is the presence of love within you. When you have love, my friends, you have peace.

That's the Peace Offering.

So, we offer Peace not just to God but to people as well.



The Purification Offering is for people with two intentions:



Did you know that you can sin even if you don't know that that's a sin?

Sin of omission. You don't know it's a sin but you continue to do it because you ignorantly do not know. But that's regarded as a sin. And you need to ask atonement for that. Remember, when Jesus was up on the cross, He said: *Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do*.

Jesus asked for forgiveness in behalf of you and me— for what we do not know we do. Because it's our responsibility to seek the truth and to live in the truth. So, yes, it's a sin. That's why you come to the Lord and ask Him to forgive you for those sins that you do out of ignorance.

Second, it's also for sins done out of weakness.

The second sin the Israelites ask forgiveness for was one done out of weakness.

There are things that you do because you have a weak nature— a sinful nature. You do them. You sin.

For example, you have a bout with temper. You've promised your kids, your wife, your boss, your friends that you will never act out of anger or temper.

But then, one day, somebody triggered your temper. And so, you're shouting at your kids. You're shouting at your employees. You're shouting at your neighbors.

You fell. Why? Because you were weak.

Or another example: You might be battling with porn. And you had been good for four months. But then a thought comes over you...

Or somebody gives you an image and now you are back on the saddle again...

There are things we do out of weakness.

And you know what? I am so glad that we've got a God who provides ways for even weak people like you and me so that we can return in His favor and continue to stand in His grace.

Isn't God good? Even if you're weak, God is strong and God will continue to provide for you so you can live with grace again and again.

So, that's the Purification Offering— where you continue to purify yourself because of those two sins.







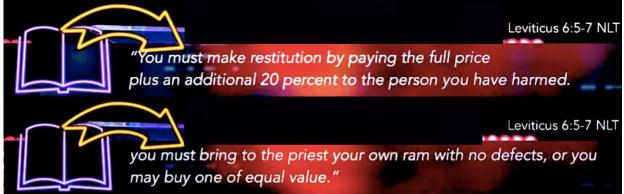
Payback Time

The Guilt Offering is when you approach God with guilt — not only because you hurt God, but because you also hurt others.

When you hurt God, you indirectly hurt people. Because people love God. And when you hurt people,

you hurt God. Because God loves His people.

In Leviticus 6: 5-7, God says this:



This is a little strange. This is an analogy. Let's imagine: You have a debt to the person next to you amounting to P1,000. God says pay for it. So, assuming you paid the amount already. Here's what God is asking: Not only will you give P1,000 back. But you have to give an additional 20 percent which is P200. Not only that. Now, you also have to go to church, to the temple, offer an animal that is of equal value of the amount you owed your friend— which is another P1,000. And then, plus 20 percent or P200. So, how much do you pay back? 240 percent!

Lord, that's so difficult. But what is the point?

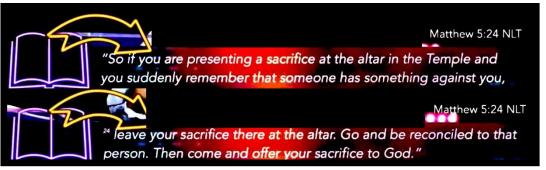
The point is this:

When you're guilty of something, isn't it true that when you come before the Lord, in your guilt, you want to pay back so much more? You want to pay for your past sins. That's what's happening.

Your guilt makes you want to pay back every single centavo, and then even some more.

How It's Possible

Jesus says this in Matthew 5:24:



I know what some of you are thinking: "That's so difficult. Is that even possible?"

I'll tell you how it's possible. Somebody did that. Who? Zacchaeus— the chief tax collector. Remember him? Yes.

He was hated by all of the Jews.Why? Because they knew that every tax collector would always pad the amount they collect— as in make a profit. That's

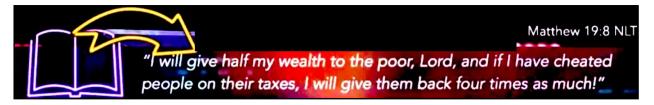
their income. So, everyone hated tax collectors.

But what did Zacchaeus do?

When he heard that this Man named Jesus was going to pass through his town, he made every way to meet Him. But he was so short. So, what did he do? He climbed up a sycamore tree.

And then, from the middle of the crowd, Jesus called him: "Zacchaeus, come down right now. I'm going to dine in your house."

Then what happened? Zacchaeus was transformed. He was converted. He was convicted. And then what did Zacchaeus do? He said:



Hallelujah! Not 240 percent. 400 percent!







What's Possible

It's a hard thing to do, right? Come before the Lord and tell Him, "I want to pay back all the sins that I had done, Lord."

Some of you might say, "That's not even possible. My bank account won't even support the amount I owe you, Lord."

You tell me it's not possible? I just told you about Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus was changed. Why? Because he had an encounter with Jesus.

You tell me it's not possible? I'll tell you all about Paul. Paul was once upon a time the greatest offender of the Church. But because he had an encounter with Jesus, he was changed—from the greatest offender, he became the greatest defender of the Church— of the Faith.

You tell me it's not possible? It's hard to do. But I'll tell you all about my life. I've been doing that because, at the age of 27, the moment I met Jesus, my life has never been the same. I know what it's like to have an encounter with the Lord.

And if you continue to tell me, "It's not possible, Bro. Audee," well I'll tell you this: It's probably you've never really had an encounter with Jesus Christ.

Because when you encounter the Love of Jesus, my God, things will change in your life.

You will be willing to risk it all, to give it all, to turn away from your sin and to say, "Never again!"

That's what it means when you have a real encounter with Jesus. You give everything to Him. You give your all and then some.

You know, today, you have a chance to do it again. Maybe there are things in your life that you haven't really surrendered to the Lord. I don't know what they are. It's between you and your God. But right now, there is a chance for you to do it again. Because Jesus is here. And He's calling you out from the crowd. Because He wants you. He is courting you. He wants to have life with you. But it's really up to you. Will you say Yes to Him? Or will you say No? The choice is yours.



Life Is Messy

I want to end this way:

In 2013 there was this woman who went viral on social media because she wrote a book about how to organize things in your home.

Her name is Marie Kondo.

Then in 2019 she again went really viral because Netflix produced a show for her.

It was called *Tidying Up* with Marie Kondo.

She would basically teach people how to organize stuff in their life, and she's so wonderful, people wanted to do the same thing she's doing how to fold your shirt, how to organize your cabinet... That was wonderful.

But you know, a few days ago, Marie came out with shocking news.

> She said, "My life is a mess." Why? Here's what she said:

realized that with kids, the house is always messy.



Marie Kondo now has three kids. Parents would know this. Marie Kondo







Our Helper

I realized that life will always be messy. No matter how much you try to clean it up, life will always be messy. You clean it up, it gets dirty. The next day, you clean it up, a few hours after, it gets dirty right away. Eventually, you will get tired.

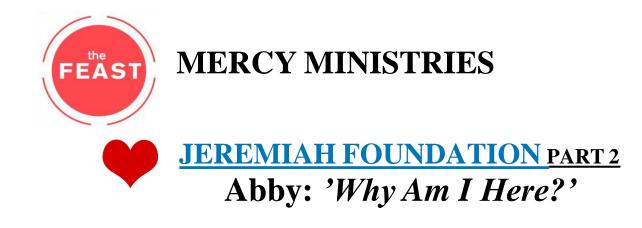
But that's okay.

Why? Because you've got a Helper. Somebody to help you when life gets dirty, when life gets messy, when life gets filthy, you can call on Him. Who is our ever present Helper in times of need? His Name is Jesus.



And today, we are in front of Jesus. And we ask Jesus to clean up our mess:

Clean up the mess, Lord. Clean up our sins. Clean up the dirt in our heart. You are our Helper and with You here, everything becomes possible. Because You are our God. And so, in Your Presence, Jesus, this is how we will respond to You. Look at Your children right now, Lord. They've got sins, they've got baggages. They've got shame in their life. But now, in this moment, we leave no stone unturned and we walk away from our sins now and forever. We will never let our sins keep us away from our Savior. And today, we just declare that You are our God. And You are our Helper. And You are our Friend. And we worship You in Spirit and in Truth. Thank You, Jesus, for loving us the way You do. Thank You, Jesus for being our God. And we just give our all, Lord— body, mind and spirit, with arms raised we sing to You, Jesus!



"BAKIT nasa Jeremiah ako?"

This was one of the questions she asked when we interviewed a child from Jeremiah Foundation, the home for abused girls which we are featuring for this Mercy series in the February issues of *The Feast Family*.



Briefly, Jeremiah Foundation was a brainchild of Bro. Rey Ortega, longtime devoted member of our Light of Jesus Family, who based the name of the Foundation in the story of the Hebrews.

The Story of Jeremiah

According to the Biblical narrative, Abraham, the Hebrews' patriarch, was so faithful to God that He promised Abraham and his generation will live in Canaan.

The Hebrews were called Israelites from Abraham's son Jacob, who was re-named *Israel*, meaning *let God prevail*, because yes, he willingly let God prevail in his life. In time, Israel was divided into two kingdoms: Israel and Judah. Judah, meaning *praised*, was the son of Jacob from whose generation would come the Messiah.

Jerusalem, the capital city of the United Kingdom of Israel, had been attacked, captured, recaptured, destroyed by various tribes or kingdoms.

But God, forever faithful to Israel, promised in Jeremiah 33:6-7: *Nevertheless, the time will come when I will heal Jerusalem's wounds and give it prosperity and true peace. I will restore the fortunes of Judah and Israel and rebuild their towns.*

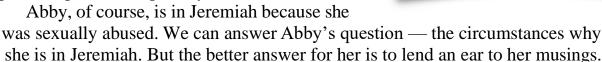
Such a promise would be fulfilled and ancient Canaan is now known as the Levant region of present-day Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Israel.

So, Jeremiah 33:6-7 has often been quoted to give hope for those in despair. Like the abused girls Jeremiah Foundation is now taking care of.

Answer to the 'Whys'

We started our series on the Jeremiah Foundation in our February 5, 2023, issue with the story of Danielle Cabarles (*right*), in-house Center counselor for Jeremiah. That means she gets to live with the girls helping them cope with their day-to-day whys.

Like Abby. As in every article on Jeremiah, we are not disclosing the child's real name nor her photo to protect her privacy.



Abby says she likes to read. She likes ice cream. She likes to play badminton and volleyball, and she likes outdoor activities. She also likes to have conversations. She speaks in beautiful Tagalog, but for mass communication, we translate her words in English.

Even though Abby doesn't understand why things happen, her gratitude overpowers her every why. She is thankful for gifts she received last year.

"I got a human sized teddy bear, shoes, school supplies, and many more," Abby smiled that precious smile we cherish among our Jeremiah girls.

When they came to Jeremiah, the girls hardly smiled. But yes, Abby can smile now.

That's because the Jeremiah counsellors like Danielle Cabarles have been focusing not only on the psycho-social needs of the girls, but also, most important, on the spiritual nourishment the girls badly need— to know about God, have faith in Him, and trust that their dark circumstances do not define their future.

This is the reason she is in Jeremiah.

"Before, I didn't know God. I didn't know much about Him," Abby admits

She adds, "Pero ngayon po madalas na akong magdasal kasi natutunan ko po sa Jeremiah na magdasal araw araw... – But now, I often pray because I've learned in Jeremiah to pray every day..."

So now, she is lifting to the Lord a fervent wish: "I want to finish school." Yes, she has confidence her prayer will be answered.

Like God granted her one ardent wish.

"For my birthday, I wished that my mother would come visit me," she shares. "My mother came and hugged me."

—As told to Cybill P. Bayto



By DANIELLE PATRICIA CABARLES

FEAST

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.







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.

FOR EXISTING DONORS:

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

Be a Feast Family member. Write or call us. Now. Email Address: jocelyn@kerygmafamily.com Website:https://kerygmafamily.com Telephone Numbers: 8725-9999/ Fax 725-1230

Our Partner Beneficiaries

Jeremiah 33 Foundation

is a shelter for girls particularly victims of sexual abuse.



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





He Cares Mission provides shelter for street children.

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





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

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

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







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

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





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

CHOOSE HOW YOU WANT TO GIVE

1. Donate ONLINE (through credit card) Go to www. kerygmafamily.com and click 'DONATE' box Paypal I US Donations.

2. Pick Up from Your House or Office (Metro Manila Only) Cash or Checks Address Checks to Shepherds

Voice Radio and Television Foundation and call Joy at (+632) 725 -9999 loc 112 or text (+63) 922-828-9890 and we'll pick them up from your home or office.

3. Mail 12 Post-Dated Checks to Our Office For US and CANADA: Address Checks to Kerygma Family, 848

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

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Founder: Bo Sanchez

Mercy Ministries Chairman Hermie Morelos **Editor-in-Chief** Cynthia U. Santiago **Chief Photographer** Edmundo L. Santiago

Feast International Region Head Vic Español

Reporter-Writer Cybill P. Bayto **Multimedia Staff** Dylan Anthony A. Santiago

Media Ministries Head Randy Borromeo

Finance Officer Rowena Cequeña **Contributors** The Feast Builders

Publication Consultant Chelle S. Crisanto

Human Resources Manager Erika Ventura



For comments, article contributions, write or call us: Email Address: lojlibrary2819@gmail.com Landline phone numbers: 8725-9999, Fax 725-1230 Mobile phone: 0998-953-0657





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

The FEAST February 5, 2023