



NEWSLETTER
April 30, 2023

Your Story Is Not Over

A LITTLE BACKSTORY: God promised the City of Jericho to the Israelites. But when they got to the exterior of the city, they saw that the residents fortified their city with high walls, as a way of protecting themselves from invaders.

So, Joshua, the leader of the Israelites, sent out two spies to scout inside the city. That's when they stumbled into the house of a prostitute named Rahab.

Rahab was a woman of shame. She was a citizen of Jericho, but I wonder if she really felt like she belonged -- because being a prostitute, she was treated as an outcast.

But her story was not yet over. Later events put Rahab's name among those in the Bible's Hall of Faith.

Why?

Welcome to the continuation of our Feast Talk mini-series, *The Garden*.

Today, we have a Special Talk, an encouragement for many who face life's challenges, assuring that *Your Story Is Not Over*.

Have a hope-filled Feast.



In Him,

Audee Villaraza

WELCOME
to our Special Feast
Today!

Stories About Stories



THIS issue of *The Feast Family* has stories about stories for you.

Fr. Froilan Briones shares stories related to the story of the two disciples walking with someone they did not recognize—until later He broke bread with them, *page 3*.

Bro. Audee Villaraza recalls stories as he introduces the story about a prostitute who later became among the Bible's Hall of Faith, *page 1*.



We heard more stories about stories during last Sunday's Feast from our key preachers, *from left*: as Bro. Audee, Bro. Didoy Lubaton, and Bro. Lep Sumera, as they sat together sharing experiences about the seasons of planting, part of our Feast mini-series, *The Garden*, *pages 19-32*.



And if you've been missing Bro. Bo Sanchez lately, here's good news: He has more stories for you at The Feast next Sunday, May 7, as he starts a new Feast Talk series. Don't miss it!

What about you? What's your story? Share!

All for God's Glory,

Randy Borromeo
Media Ministry
Executive Director





FLASHBACK!

APRIL 23, 2023

Holy Mass



THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

Homily

FR. FROILAN BRIONES

on the Gospel: Luke 24:13-35

On the Road to Emmaus

Excerpts...

BLESSED and good morning to all of us! I'm very happy to be here. Please tell the person beside you, "I am happy you are here."

We start the day full of happiness and thanksgiving to God.

It's good to see many of us smiling. It's a good way to start. Amen.

My dear friends, my reflection for this Sunday, you will agree with me. I'm sure.

The world we live in is a fast and furious world and it can also be furiously fast. Do you agree? Even the instant food—instant noodles, instant coffee, and other instant things that we buy-- are not even fast enough especially when we talk about speed. You know, we are not so much interested in fast cars, in fast food-- but we're more interested in fast Internet connection going at least 1,000 mbps.

Actually, we don't need our cars, our food, to be fast and furious. But we really want our Internet connections to be fast and furious. Why? Because slow Internet connection is worse than no Internet connection.

Because it is such a teaser and we end up shouting at our cellphones, our laptops, "Go faster, go faster!"

We become impatient.



Direction and Purpose

They say that before marrying someone, you should make that person use a laptop or any gadget with a slow Internet connection-- and then you'll see and discover who that person really is. His or her character will show.

But as much as speed is important, there must also be direction and purpose. Many people are going fast but they seem to be going nowhere.

In the Gospel, my dear friends, we heard of the two of the disciples of Jesus who were on their way to a place called Emmaus-- seven miles, about 11 kilometers, from Jerusalem.

You will notice they're not in a hurry. They were taking a slow, heavy walk. They were heading to Emmaus but it may seem to be nowhere beyond that.

They were downcast as their hopes in Jesus were crashed by His crucifixion. In modern times, as if their computers crashed and no recovery was possible.

So, with nothing left to hold on to, they could only walk away-- each with empty mind and empty heart. There was no hurry, no purpose, no direction. There was really nothing to look forward to.

But the good news is this: Remember always, when we are down to nothing, then Jesus can come up with something we do not expect, something that will surprise us.

Misery always needs company and indeed Jesus came up and walked with the two disciples in their journey.

And after listening to them recounting what had happened during the last three days, Jesus had this to say: "Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophet spoke?"

Starting with Moses and going through all the prophets, He explained to them the passages of the Scriptures that are about Himself.

Finally, when He was with them at the table, He took bread and spoke the blessing. Then He broke the bread and handed it to them... And their eyes were opened and they recognized Him.

You know, it's like the reflection of what we do in the celebration of the Eucharist. The same words you will hear later in our celebration and, I hope, you will also open your eyes.



Journey of Faith

We can say that for the two disciples, the journey to Emmaus was actually a journey from nothing to *something*. The journey of the two disciples is also very much like our journey of faith.

It's like our journey of faith. In our fast and furious world, we move in such high speed that sometimes we lose our connection with God. That's why it's so good to be gathered on a Sunday, to slow down, to be with each other, to be with the Light of Jesus Family, to experience the presence of each one but more important, to experience the Presence of Jesus in our life.

But my dear friends, I'd like to challenge you with this question:

Do we experience what the two disciples experienced when they met Jesus?

I think it's always good for us to have that in our heart and mind whenever we join the Eucharist. Do we allow ourselves-- do we open not only our eyes but our heart so that we will recognize Jesus? Do we really recognize Him in the celebration of the Eucharist?



1st Reading – Acts 2:14, 22-33

¹⁴ But Peter standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spoke to them: "You who are Jews, indeed all of you staying in Jerusalem. Let this be known to you, and listen to my words."²² Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him, in the midst of you, as you also know²³ This same being delivered up, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you by the hands of wicked

men have crucified and slain.²⁴ Whom God has raised up, having loosed the sorrows of hell, as it was impossible that he should be holden by it.²⁵ For David said concerning him: I foresaw the Lord before my face: because he is at my right hand, that I may not be moved.²⁶ For this my heart has been glad, and any tongue has rejoiced: moreover my flesh also shall rest in hope.

²⁷ Because you will not leave my soul in hell, nor suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.²⁸ You have made known to me the ways of life: you shall make me full of joy with thy countenance.²⁹ Ye men, brethren, let me freely speak to you of the patriarch David; that he died, and was buried; and his tomb is with us to this present day.³⁰ Whereas therefore he was a prophet, and knew that God has sworn to him with an oath, that of the fruit of his loins one should sit upon his throne.



Reality Check

I'd like to share with you this funny anecdote: The story of a wife who was preparing to go to church on a Sunday morning.

She saw her husband in shorts and watching TV. She asked him why he's not preparing to go to church.

The husband replied, "You know dear, I've been going to Mass every Sunday for 30 long years now and in those times, I have heard something like 1,300 sermons. But for the life of me, I cannot remember a single one of them.

So, I think I'd been wasting my time going to Mass and the priests had also been wasting their time preaching. So, I decided that I am not going to church anymore.

The wife thought for a while and then she said, "You know honey, I have been married to you for 30 years now and those times I have cooked over 32,000 meals for you but you cannot even remember anyone of those meals. So, I think, and I believe, I am also wasting my time cooking for you and you are wasting your time eating. So, I've decided I am not going to cook for you anymore.

And the husband immediately got up and got dressed, and went to church with his wife.

Nangyayari ba 'yan? -- Does that happen in real life? For the wives here, are your husbands with you? Yes. Thank God!

2nd Reading – 1 Peter 1:17-21

¹⁷ Beloved: if you invoke as Father him who, without respect of persons, judges according to everyone's work: converse in fear during the time of your sojourning here.¹⁸ Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold or silver, from your vain conversation of the tradition of your fathers:

¹⁹ But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled,²⁰ Foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but manifested in the last times for you, ²¹ Who through him are faithful in God, who raised him up from the dead, and has given him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God.



Breaking of the Bread

My dear brothers and sisters, most of us have been coming to church for the longest time. Some of us have been coming to church for 10, 20, 30 years, and even more, and we have said countless prayers and received Jesus in Holy Communion till we lost count already. Do we think we are wasting our time? Do we think that coming to Mass is boring and useless? I don't think so.

We may want a fast and furious result, but we may be like the two disciples-- they had to walk that slow seven-mile journey with Jesus and slowly but surely they came to understand the Scriptures before they finally recognize Jesus in the breaking of the bread.



That's why, my dear friends, in every Eucharist, we reenact that Easter Sunday at Emmaus and Jesus reveals Himself to us in our journey. He speaks to our heart in the Scriptures. Then, at the table of the altar, in the person of the priest, He breaks the bread. And the disciples say to Him, "Stay with us, Jesus."

I hope you will also say that later on, as we receive Communion.

Tell Jesus, "Stay with me, Jesus."

Maybe He has vanished from our sight at the Eucharist -- even at Emmaus. But we know Jesus at the breaking of the bread.

So, we, too, need to be patient, as Jesus sows the seeds of His Word in our heart, and to wait for the harvest-- so that each one of us may also be a true disciple of Jesus.

So, let us not be afraid of moving slowly—rather, be afraid of not moving at all. With Jesus, we'll walk slowly *forward* but we will never walk *backward*. May our eyes be open to see Jesus with us-- and also, don't forget, Jesus with others.

Finally, my dear brothers and sisters, are we willing to welcome Jesus in our life? Do we realize that Jesus fulfills His promise to be with us to the end of time-- where He will accompany us, guide us with His Words, and give us His flesh and blood anew in the Eucharist --as our strength and consolation?

May our disposition be like that of the disciples of Emmaus.

Stay with us, Lord, for without You, our life is empty and meaningless. Without You, we work in darkness and despair. But with You, who are our Light and our Joy, with Your Word and real Presence with us, within us, and with our friends, our life is filled with joy and our heart burning from within.

God bless all of us. Amen.



WELCOME HOME



LEP SUMERA:

Good Morning, Easter people! Tell the person beside you, “You look good today.”

Affirm somebody.

Quick chit-chat: Do you know why the weather’s so hot today?

Tell your seatmate: “It’s your fault. Because you’re so hot.”

Ha-ha!

Praise the Lord! Everybody, let’s give Jesus a clap offering. This is a good day, a blessed day! Hallelujah.

Ang init! It’s so hot, right? Usually, we wear our jacket here onstage. But now, it’s not practical.

How are you friends? I hope you’re doing great. Were you blessed by the Holy Mass? Let’s applaud the Lord. I love the message of Fr. Froilan Briones: *Move forward, not backward.* I really love that!

Good morning to everybody who’s watching us online. Can you react on your chatbox with a heart please? And please type: “*Ang init!*”

Thank you so much for joining us and we pray you can come and join us here. Hallelujah!

Who are the first-timers? Raise your hands. There you go...
Wow, many first-timers! Welcome to The Feast!

If they are near you, please give them a high-five. May we just share a bit with the person beside us? Get acquainted with them. We’re a family here. Share quickly--1 minute: What’s your best habit to beat the *heat*?

I’m excited because I believe the Lord will further warm up our gathering today. Because His love is going to be present, His love is here, He is here.



And I believe God will bless us today through His message.

Love Offering

Allow me to quickly share a story to inspire us in *giving*.

When we talk about *mainit*, it's about *discomfort*, right?

Back in the days during our Feast SM Manila, I had this friend who was a volunteer servant in our Feast. Before leaving for the prayer meeting, he looked at his wallet and he saw he had only P200 pesos. He lived somewhere in Quiapo, so he figured he had enough money for his fare going to Feast SM Manila (held at Cinema 4, SM Manila, Natividad Lopez St, Ermita, Manila, about two kilometers from Quiapo Church).



But he remembered he needed money for his tithe: “I need to give my Love Offering to the Lord.”

Again, he looked at his wallet: Still, he had only P200.00. So, he prayed: “*Lord, I’m far from SM Manila. But Lord, I’m going to give my best today... So, if you want to multiply this money now, Lord, you could do so. But Lord, I’m going all in-- I’m going to give this money to you...*”

Since he would have no more money left for his fare, he decided: “*Lord, I’m going to walk from Quiapo to SM Manila and I’m going to serve you with a grateful heart.*”

So, he walked, and when he arrived at our Feast, he was already bathing in sweat.

I asked him, “Saan ka galing? Where have you been? What happened?”

He smiled and replied, “Kuya, Brother, for Jesus.”

I could not understand what he meant. So, he explained his situation.

Amazed by his faith, I told him, “Get ready-- for God will surprise you.”

At the end of The Feast, around 10:00 p. m., he came running to me.

I remembered he gave all his cash to the Love Offering, so he no longer had money for his fare.

So, I was like, “Naku mangungutang into sa akin. He’s gonna borrow money from me!

Well, I happened to have extra cash that day, so I prayed to God, “*Lord, thank You I have some cash to give him.*”

Surprise!

My friend approached me and, grinning from ear to ear, he said, “Kuya, remember my story?”

“Yes, I remember your story.”

“I was blessed by the Lord! You see, a friend in The Feast once borrowed money from me. I already forgot all about it. But a while ago, he paid his debt! I gave as my tithe the entire P200 I had. My friend paid me P500.00!”

I happily congratulated him. But, he was not done yet with his story...

He said, “You know, my friend didn’t have change for his money that day which was P1,000.00. *So, he simply gave me his entire P1,000 cash!*”

I’m going to tell you the same message I told my friend:

Get ready-- because the Lord will surprise you. The Lord will surprise you.

If you’re ready for that surprise, if you’re ready for that blessing, come on, with smile, with generosity in your heart, with gratitude, Everybody, lift up your Love Offering to Jesus.

Please repeat after me:

Jesus, I’m going all in. I’m giving this to You with faithfulness, with gratitude.

Lord, I am ready for Your surprise.

Bless me more so that I can give more. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.



WAYS TO GIVE
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Worship!



KRIZIA OCOMA: Come on!
Why don't you get on your feet?
Because today, we're going
to praise the God who was,
who is, and who continuously chooses
to be with us. Amen.

NICO NARVAEZ: Come on, give Him some praise
this Sunday!

Hallelujah, Jesus!

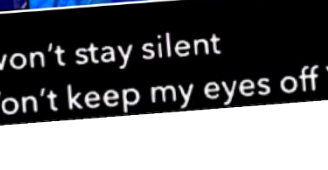
Come on! Don't stop! Give Him praise! Hallelujah!

Thank You, Jesus! Sing this song with us just to remind
us that God is with us all throughout-- even if we don't
feel it. God is here.

Thank You, Jesus!

Come on, if you have some prayers to lift up to Jesus,
lift them up today!





Won't Stay Silent: Words and Music
by Hannah Marie Dela Rosa, Jhonn Robert Javier,
Michael Francis Viñas, and Vanya Fatima Castor

NOVENA TO GOD'S LOVE **DECLARATION OF ABUNDANCE**

DIDOY LUBATON:

Give the Lord a big, big hand,
Everybody. God is faithful. He
will always be. Touch somebody
beside you and remind that person:
You'll never walk alone.

So wonderful. Welcome,
Everybody, to The Feast Bay
Area. This is our Home. You are loved here. And I want you to welcome as many
persons as you can, and say, "Welcome Home!"

Those watching online, Welcome Home! You are one with us. Thank you
for being with us. Oh, so beautiful, Everybody!

Those attending for the first time, we want to greet you. Hi!

Let's pray our favorite prayer in The Feast:

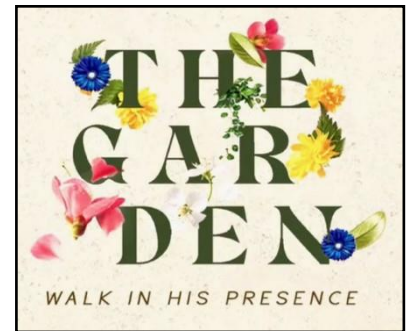
In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit



Today, I receive all of God's love for me.
Today, I open myself to the unbounded, limitless,
overflowing abundance of God's universe.
Today, I open myself to God's blessings, healing and miracles.
Today, Today, I open myself to God's Word, His
So that I become more like Jesus every day.
Today, I proclaim that I am God's beloved!
I am God's servant. I am God's powerful champion.
And because I am blessed, I am blessing the world, in Jesus' Name, Amen.



FLASHBACK!
APRIL 23, 2023



Talk

Talk 2

CONNECT TO THE GARDENER



DIDOY LUBATON: Our Talk today is
Connect to the Gardener.

How would you know that God is moving in your life?

How do you know that it is God working in your life? How do you know that the Holy Spirit is in you and you're living a good beautiful life?

How do you know that is He, God, working in your life? How do you know?

When I was younger—yes, I'm old, aah—I got to know the Lord personally at 13 years old and way, way younger, at seven, six years old, I was with my family, I grew up in a faith community—Bukas Loob sa Diyos Covenant Community—and now my Community is The Feast.

But back then, you would know that the prayer meeting was very effective. How? Back then, how did people know the Holy Spirit moved? During the prayer meetings, when the people didn't stand up, when they did not cry, no Holy Spirit—not effective. The protocol was people must be crying.

Does it have to be that way? Don't get me wrong. The gift of tears is a sign of God moving in us. Sometimes, I really tear up, yes, during The Feast. Sometimes even when I am preaching—there goes Didoy, crying again. Yes, tears are a sign that God is touching you.



Only One Fruit

But is there any other sign – not just tears—that the Holy Spirit is here?

If you ask Jesus, if you really look into the Word, there's only one sign and this is what He said, from Matthew 7:16: “...*you will know them by their fruits.*” (Matthew 7:16 NLT, emphasis mine).

Guys, we're still in *The Garden*—this is the last part of our *Garden* talk—since the Holy Week Retreat. And God is reminding us today: that you will know that it is He—that God is at work, the work of the Holy Spirit is the *fruit* of the Holy Spirit. And what is that fruit?

Paul said in 1 Galatians 5:22, “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.*”

And did you notice? I emphasized the word *is*.

Because there is only one fruit. And that fruit is *love*.

Everything else—*joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control*—those are expressions of love.

That's why you know that it is Jesus, it is God working in your life--you know that it is God working in your career, in your business, in your family—when there is love.

How do we know that we are building the right kind of faith community?

When people feel are loved, when there are people who love to give back, and to serve God this way. This is our Community.

So, today we're going to talk about fruitfulness.



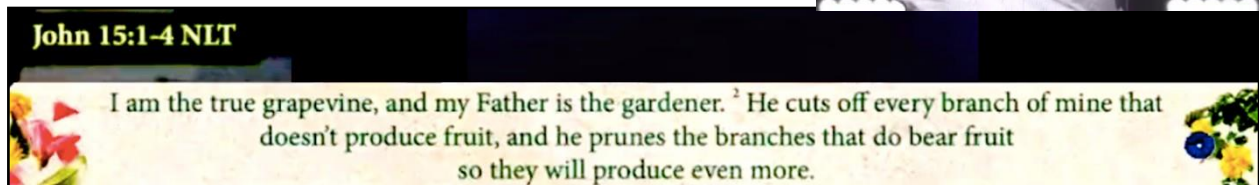
How To Bear Fruit

We cannot be fruitful without the Gardener who's tending the Garden.

And that's what we're going to talk about today: How do you bear fruit? Do you need the right kind of foundation?

How many here want to have a fruitful life? I don't know about you, but I want to have a very, very fruitful life.

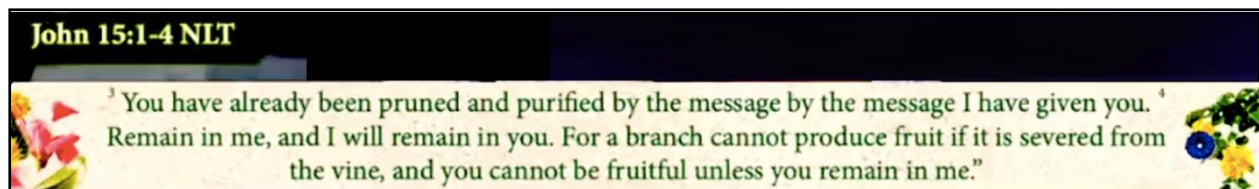
Here's the Word from John 15: 1-4:



Everybody, say "Ouch."

Sometimes, there is cutting—for you to produce even more. Cut the relationship. Cut the bad habit. Cut the debts.

Let's continue:



That is the New Living Translation. The New International Version says:
... *apart from me you can do nothing.*

So, connect to the Gardener. Be in His Garden.

You are actually not alone. It is His faithfulness—it is the reason we still stand, the reason the Community still stands, the reason we are still alive, we are hanging on.

If we are disconnected from Him, we can do nothing. You've got to understand that if you plant—you've got to remember this: you cannot have fruits on your own.

If you're planting, and tending to the world, then you will have worldly fruits. And such worldly fruit is pleasurable. Yes, it's sweet, it's savory, satisfactory. But it will leave you wanting for more, not satisfied. If you are just here for the world, if you just want the fruits of the world, then it will just be an ending journey and you will not be satisfied.



The Flip Side

On the flip side, if you go to the Word, you will be satisfied. If you go for the Word of God, if you remain planted, living in the Word, connected with God, and in His godly principles, you will have godly fruits. You will have peace in your family. You will have healing in your heart. Even in sickness, you'll find purpose there. Even if it's loss, even if it's hard, it still is a life with meaning. Why? Because our satisfaction is there. We don't have to have everything else. We just want to have-- not a thing, not a place, not an achievement—but a person.

Today, I hope you have godly fruits. I hope that we learn lessons from the Gardener.

He called you by name. He has a plan for you. Because He wants to tend your Garden— His Garden in you. Why? Because he is not neglecting you. He is letting you *be*, but He is not neglecting you. He wants you to have a fruitful, vibrant life.

So, how do you grow godly fruits? Let me go to the prophet Jeremiah.

The Prophet Jeremiah says, ⁷ *“But blessed are those who trust in the Lord and have made the Lord their hope and confidence. ⁸ They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green, and they never stop producing fruit.* (Jeremiah 17:7-8 NIV)

Blessed are they who keep their hope in the Lord.

Blessed are they who continue to love and serve the Lord. Blessed are they.

It is Him.

It is not a place, it is not an achievement, it is not anything or everything else. It's Someone in your life.



Anawim Garden by Mat Maderazo



A Moment with the Gardener

Put your hands on your heart. Have a moment with the Gardener now.

Just like in any medical procedure, the Divine Surgeon needs your consent in this moment...

Lord, in this moment, we open up our heart to You. We open up our mind to You, our soul, or life. Do as You will. Touch us. Perform, tend to our Garden. Break what You have to break. Prune what You have to prune. Plant what You have to plant. Cultivate what You have to cultivate.

We are yours. Have Your way. Transform us by Your Love. We remain in You. This is our united prayer, in Jesus' Name. Amen.



*Thy Word is a Lamp unto my feet
And a Light unto my path.*

One big hand for the Lord. He is good, He is faithful. We remain in You Lord. We love You, God. Thank You, Jesus.

I want you to give a big, big hand to all of our servants as well, who have been faithful in serving in The Feast.

Guys, you know who you are. We love you. We thank you.

Three Seasons of Gardening



DIDOY: It's going to be the three of us preaching for you. We are giving to you Three Principles or Three Seasons of Gardening.

Allow me to start with the *Season of Planting*.



Working with the Gardener, remaining in Him, there is a season of Planting.

And I'd like to share some stories.

This is a picture of my company's management team. We visited the Anawim Lay Missions. Anawim is our Mercy Ministry. It's a home for abandoned elderly. These people could have been on the streets, left alone, left to die. But we welcomed them in Anawim. So, we were in the season of the busiest times, we were going through a lot of business growth but I am grateful that I have a management team, with our leadership team, we really went there.



Planting Is a Blessing

We just didn't give stuff the residents needed. We also sang to them—it was fun! The volunteers led us to a tour of the place and we saw they're farming there to have sustainable food for the residents. We saw there were houses there that were damaged, but there are already new houses.

And I learned that it's been 28 years—28 years of faithfulness since they started this Ministry.

My point is, first, you plant really good seeds. I mean, we were just there, we had the chance to do so. But actually, we're the ones blessed when we went there. We were refreshed, we were re-energized, we were re-centered to what matters most, to *who* matters most—because of that opportunity. But I want to honor those who planted the Ministry 28 years ago-- Bro. Bo, Sis. Pilar Sanchez, the whole Community of the Light of Jesus. They spent time, energy, money. They planted with a hope, with the Gardener who tended it.

It actually *is* bearing fruit. You know, they have 70 plus lolos and lolas there. And I'm encouraging you, if you want to do outreaches, consider Anawim. They're open, they *are* in need.

There were good seeds planted in Anawim. That's my first story.

Second: I came from a trip to Almagro Island (in the province of Samar) this week. Our company has a foundation as well which serves the farthest communities—sa laylayan talaga ng lipunan—really way down the edges of society.

Almagro Island is below the 31% poverty incident (level) —defined as those with \$200-monthly income for a family of five. That's P10,000 for a family of five.

What we did there was we also planted seeds. We selected deserving high school students for a four-year college scholarship. These students would not have had even a small chance to go to college.

But it's good we're planting seeds in the younger generation with the hope that they will have better chances to find a job and bring back home not just the money but the technology as well. Eventually, the best way to lift a community out of poverty is through education. We actually already have college graduates—they are already working and giving back to their community. It's beautiful.





Multiply the Seeds

My point there: another good seed planted. They could have been forgotten. No other foundation had gone to Almagro. But God knows, God sends, God provides. There will always be good seeds that can be planted.

And third story: There was a Garden of Abundance during The Feast Holy Week Retreat last Maundy Thursday and Good Friday (*above*).

You go to the garden, and you get anything you wanted that was there. You can get fruits, cabbage, coffee, bread—pan de sal. You can get a copy of *The Feast* magazine. It was beautiful.

Paolo Galia, I remember, the creative director of the Shepherd's Voice Radio and Television (SVRTV) Foundation, and Bro. Bo told the participants, "Mag-garden tayo! — Let's garden!"

I scratched my head, wondering how we could go gardening. But eventually, sponsors came in, funds came in... There were those who gave beauty products, others gave toys, McDonald's products... So many gave donations...

And then we were afraid that the supply would be consumed already on the first day. Particularly on the second day—because the participants already came with bags to put in what they would gather.

But we did not lack provisions. On the second day, people came with plastic bags, boxes, filled with products to give away. We actually had excess supplies. So, we had more to give also to the servants who really deserved to receive gifts from the Garden of Abundance.

Yesterday, my wife Mayi invited the team of servants for a get-together— that was one more part of the Abundance. They are the same servants serving coffee and pan de sal every Feast—down at the lobby.

I honor the team. Let's give a big hand for our servants.

Choose What to Plant

The following Sunday, during the Grand Easter Feast, I was talking with co-servant Sis. Becky Sanchez.

She said, “You know, when The Feast started, it was the idea of Bro. Bo and the leaders to serve food after The Feast session. So, at the first ever Feast, there was food outside—coffee, pan de coco, water. That was many, many years ago (since 1980, 43 years ago, starting with Light of Jesus prayer meetings at the garage of the Sanchez home (juice and cookies), and the transition to The Feast in 1997, 26 years ago. Now we’re getting to do that again.



The good seeds planted then are now being planted again and again.

And the multiplication of bread happens also as multiplication of servants. We had a clear vision—just maybe a clear vision—that it would be good to have coffee and other stuff so that when people go outside, there’s a sense of Community.

Then, we were afraid—not just how we can feed so many people but also will there be people willing to serve... But these guys we showed, these have been just newcomers in The Feast. They are not servants from before. And they just went there, had coffee, and asked: “Can we help? Can we serve?”

And the following week, they showed up wearing aprons, and said, “Okay, we’re here. How can we help?”

They are going to be writing (labels) on the paper cups... It was just a multiplication of fruitfulness by the Lord.

Don’t be afraid of the Planting Season. Just be choosy with what you plant. What are you planting in your daily life? What are you planting in your body? Is it good food or bad food? What are you planting in your relationships? Is it kindness, understanding, patience? What are you planting in your company? In your business? Because good seeds will always bear good fruits.

Sometimes it takes time, sometimes it comes fast. But plant good seeds.

I’m so happy to report this to you—not to brag, but to share with you that in my personal struggles, my difficult times, serving others is my therapy. I hope that you also find your therapy. You also find goodness. And really consider that when you serve, when you serve others, when you give to others, when you plant goodness in other people, that also helps you. Amen.



Trust the Waiting Season

LEP SUMERA: Thank you, Doc Didoy.
Wonderful.

What I will share is about *Repotting*.



It's difficult. Sometimes we don't want to leave where we are.

Two things (requisites) I want to share.

First: Don't rush to re-pot. Because there's this certain time—you said it beautifully, Doc—

that you need to plant and plant that seed. And there's that process that the plant has to go through.

The same with the plant, we, too, have that process that we need to go through. And God is nourishing us in that certain point of our life, and we just need to trust the waiting season.

We don't like the waiting season, but Brothers, one thing I realized, when God said *waiting* season, it's really more of *Trusting Season*.

That we need to trust the Lord when He tells us: "Not yet..."

The plant has to go deeper and grow stronger roots. And I realized as we talk about roots, it's about our faith.

In that process, when God is telling us to *stay*... I think this is the reason Jesus told Peter, "What little faith you have..."

Maybe the Lord is telling Peter, "Grow your roots. You have been with me but your roots are still so *short*— as in *little faith*"

I think it's more of a faith that is resilient, a faith that is really strong.

So, maybe the Lord is telling you, "Not yet. But grow your roots. Grow your faith. Believe in Me."

Second, in repotting, you need to trust the Gardener. Because I don't know about you, guys, during this (Coronavirus Disease) Pandemic, I've been taking care of succulent plants—cactus.

I started doing that and I know when I need to transfer this certain plant – it no longer fits its container. So, the plant needs to trust me that I know what I'm doing. That I am transferring this certain plant to another container because I know it is still able to bear fruits. It can still grow.

And putting that in our case, maybe the reason the Lord wants us repotted, to shift or to transfer, is we've got potential. We don't see it. But the Lord sees it. The Lord sees our potential and that's one thing I want to share.

Trust the Gardener

We need to have this Abundance mindset. Because we have an abundant God. We've been preaching this: that blessings are everywhere. And we agree with that.

But the question is: What are we doing to avail ourselves of those blessings? So, we need to trust the Gardener-- also have this Abundance mindset.



Here, Doc, what do you see?

DIDOY: May I have water? He-he. Okay, I see water. The bottle is half-filled with water.

LEP: Bro. Audee, what do you see?

AUDEE: It's half-full.

LEP: Scarcity mindset will tell us that we don't have much water in the bottle anymore. But if you have an Abundant mindset, you think it's still possible to add water into the bottle.

You don't focus what's left in the bottle. But you focus on the potential.

That's how God sees us. He chooses to re-pot us. We need to trust Him that He knows what He is doing.

Because here's the thing: God is a *God of More Than Enough*-- not barely enough... *is* more than enough. More than enough. There's more. There's really more. There's more.

Remember the Bible story about this widow who approached Elisha? (Kings -2 6:17). This is a beautiful example of the abundance of God.

The widow was asking Elisha, "Help, help, help, we have nothing!"

And Elisha told her, "Look for some jars, then pour in this oil..."

The oil was not the problem. The problem were the jars. The oil kept on pouring but it stopped when it ran out of jars.

That's the message: God will never run out of abundance. All that we need to do is gather jars. We need to continue to trust Him.

AUDEE: You have to have bigger containers—to grow.

LEP: Amen. So, don't settle with, "It's okay already."

God is telling us, "Get out of your comfort zone. You're not meant to be there. That's not My plan for you. Take the risk."

Yes, it's scary. But that's the message: Trust the Gardener. You need to grow.

Final message: You need to *grow* through what you go through.

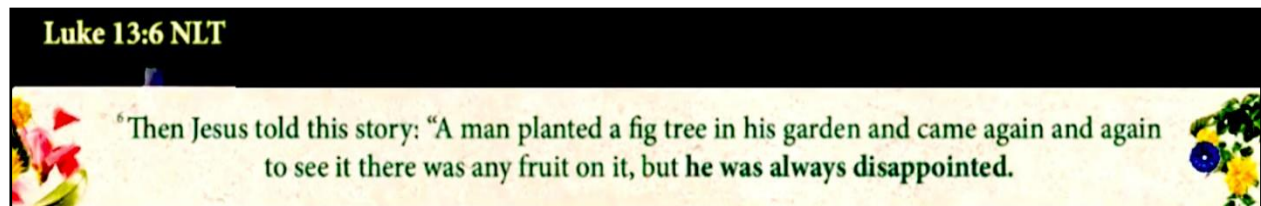


What Does Not Produce Fruit

AUDEE VILLARAZA: Nice one, Lep.
That was so good.
Everybody, say:
Connect to the Gardener.
The last lesson you need to learn
today is *Pruning*.



I'm going to read to you a famous
parable that Jesus narrated in the book
of *Luke*. It's called the
Parable of the Barren Fig Tree.
It's in Luke 13: 6:



Now, one thing that you'll notice in this passage... We said that every time you see the word *garden* in the Bible, that often pertains to the original garden—the Garden of Eden.

And here's a trivia: I know that the first fruit tree in the Garden of Eden was a fig tree. How do I know that? Because the Bible says that when Adam discovered that he was naked, he covered himself with a *fig* leaf.

So, this parable on the barren fig tree is a hyperlink—it connects us to the Garden of Eden.

But it says here in *Luke*, every time the man saw that there was no fruit on the fig tree, he was always disappointed.

You know, Brothers, I truly believe that the greatest reason we get disappointed in life is this: there are things that we plant but they don't produce any fruit.

Isn't it there's disappointment when you planted in a relationship, but it is not required? Or, you planted in a business, but it did not grow?

There's disappointment whenever you plant some things in life but they don't produce any fruit.

Cut It Down

Then, in Verse 7:

Luke 13:7 NLT

Finally, he said to his gardener, 'I've waited three years, and there hasn't been a single fig! Cut it down. It's just **taking up space in the garden.**'

This is a scientific approach of pruning. Have you ever seen a plant thriving – but it has certain branches that are brown? And what you do is you cut those brown branches because you realize they are not receiving nutrients.

It says in this Verse: *Cut it down because it's just taking up space in the garden.*

Question to our two Brothers here... Let me say this first: I'll be very honest. This rarely happens; I am not a breakfast person but I love it every time we go out of town, when we stay in a hotel, because it's the only time we have unlimited breakfast—buffet.

So, question: What's your most favorite dish for breakfast?

LEP: I'm a breakfast person... I love Tapa (dried beef)

DIDOY: I love breakfast in a *hotel*. I love Danggít (dried rabbitfish).

AUDEE: Wow, very local. Audience, ask your seatmate:

What's your favorite breakfast?

The reason I'm sharing about this is my favorite food is bacon. But I don't eat a lot. I love eating bacon only when we're out of town—which is very, very rare.

And don't you just hate it—this never fails—that whenever you're having buffet breakfast in a hotel, you get what's first on the counter—you get rice, egg, bread, fruits. And by the time you reach your favorite food, your plate is already filled up. Your tummy is also already full—because you had to finish what's already on your plate.

My point is very simple: Sometimes, we're expecting God to bless us with the best blessings-- but what we don't realize is that our plate is so full already that we cannot receive anymore blessings.

That's why it says in this Verse: *Cut it down.*

Because it's already taking up too much space. How in the world is God going to give you all the nutrients, if you have so much already taking so much space?



Do You Have Enough?

This is how the parable ends-- in Verse 8:

Luke 13:8-9 NLT

⁸ The gardener answered, 'Sir, give it one more chance. Leave it another year, and I'll give it special attention and plenty of fertilizer.' ⁹ If we get figs next year, fine. If not, then you can cut it down."

I'll raise questions which I believe everybody in this room is asking today:
"Bro. Audee, how will I know that I've given it enough? When is the right time for me to prune something?"



The Verse says: *Leave it another year, and I'll give it special attention and plenty of fertilizer.*

So, question: Is the answer *one year*? Because the Bible says here: *Leave it another year, and I'll give it special attention.*

The answer is:

It's not how long you wait—

**It's not a matter of duration.
It's a matter of attention.**

yes, it says *let's leave it another year*. But then the Gardener says in that year, *"I'll give it special attention and plenty of fertilizer. If we get figs next year, then fine. But if not, let's cut it down."*

I wonder how many things right now that you feel are dead and you're giving them a certain time frame to last... Sometimes, it's not really about how long you keep them and how much time you give them—but it's about the attention you give them.

That's really my point.

God Is in Every Season

DIDOY: That's so good. Let's give a big hand to God for that. Beautiful.

We're a Community and we're not just to be the one talking. Find a partner, please—someone you know, someone you don't know. It's okay.

Just ask this question: What season are you in now: Planting, Repotting, or Pruning — and why...?

We give you a minute to share...

After Sharing:

Hi, Everybody... Now, may we just hold each other's shoulders...

On behalf of the whole Community, also those watching online, let's pray for each other. Let's pray together. Let's just have this moment with our Gardener:

Lord, Thank You for this moment. In whatever season we are in—Planting, Repotting, Pruning—You are good. You are faithful-- and You will always be.

Thank You for this Community. Thank You for this moment of grace. And Thank You for always, always, being there for us—leading us to a fruitful, beautiful, purposeful life. In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.



Thank You, Lord.

Growing the Plants

AUDEE: May we invite everybody to stand as we respond to the Lord.

Were you blessed by our little session today? We want to close this way:

You know the book of John says something very specific in John 1:14: It says that Jesus is full of grace and truth.

That's really who God is. God is full of Justice and Mercy.

And I believe that we need Justice and Mercy. We need Justice because if there is no justice, there will be no consequence to our evil deed, right?

You know, justice is the one that says to every branch in your life that's not working: *'Cut it down.'*

That's justice.

But we need Mercy as well. Because Mercy is the one that saves us.

When there are things that are not working in our life, Mercy is the one that says, *"Let me work on that thing first."*

That's Mercy. I'll park that for a moment.

I'll just share quickly:
My lolo, my Mom's dad,
we fondly call him Tatay.
He died many years ago.

When he was still alive, my
Tatay, he had this unique gift.
Given anything that grows—
like a plant—he will grow that.
He had a green thumb.

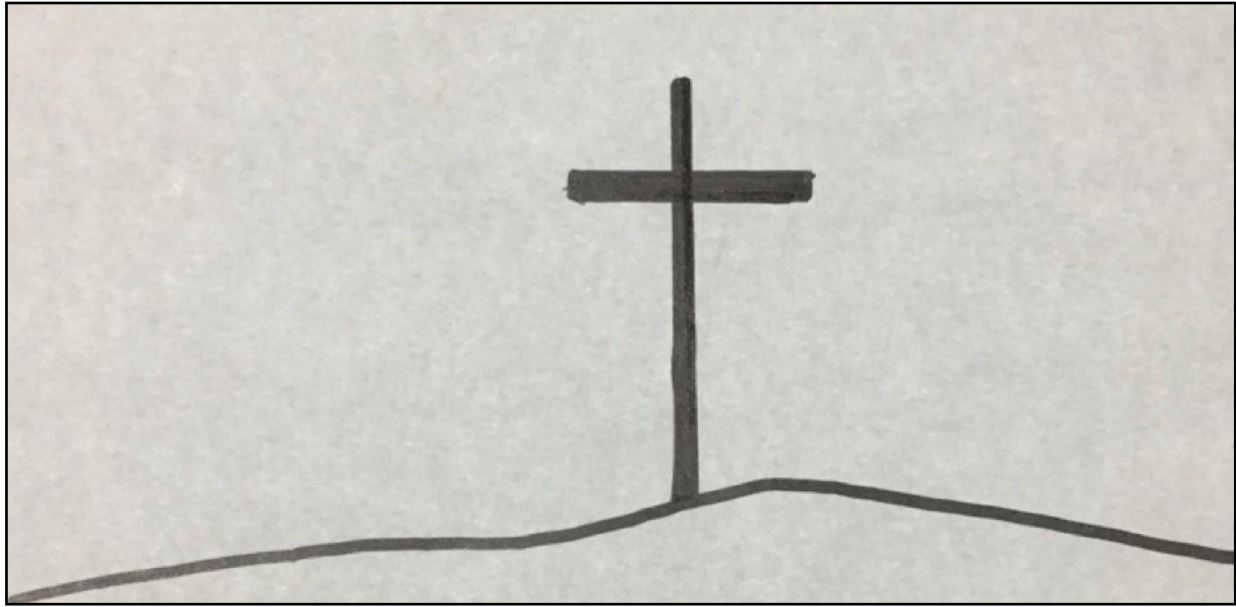
My wife and I, we don't have
green thumb-- we have red thumb.

Anything you give to us—a living plant—we can kill that in less than a week.
We don't know why. You know, we give it water, we give it sunlight, but for some reason it doesn't live long.

We have a neighbor—when our plant dies, we give it to her and she restores it-- back to life. She has that beautiful gift.



<https://pixabay.com/photos/pots-plants-cactus-succulents-716579>



els



Tree of Death, Tree of Life

You know who else has a green thumb?
Jesus.

It's funny -- that Jesus gives this parable in the book of *Luke*, the *Parable of the Barren Fig Tree*, talking about this dead tree that needed to be cut down—because Jesus would also encounter a dead tree. A tree that was so dead that the Romans cut it down and they turned it into a weapon of death. And that's what we know now as the Cross.

But you see, that dead, barren tree, once a symbol of Death, in the hands of Jesus, it became a symbol of Life. That barren tree that once upon a time a symbol of *shame*, in the hands of Jesus, it became a symbol of *salvation*.

Now, what am I trying to say? There are some dead things in your life right now that you think it's right for you to cut it down—because there are grounds for you to quit them. That relationship that has been broken... You've given up on that business-- you've put in all efforts there...

But what I'm trying to say is that you cannot say you've tied everything until you've given everything to the hands of Jesus. Because in the hands of Jesus, He can resurrect dead things. In the hands of Jesus what was once dead can be raised to life.

Moment of Surrender

Now, I'm thinking... All of us have been planted in the Garden of God. So, in a way, you are a plant. And you know how plants lift up their leaves to get the nutrients from the sun...

So are we plants as well that need to lift up our faith and lift up our hands to get our sunlight, our nutrients from the Son—the Son of God.

If that's you—if you think I'm referring to you, I want you to lift up your hands right now. Don't give up on that thing until you've given it to Jesus. Don't ever say it's over until you've really surrendered it to the Lord.

What are those things in your life that have died, that are broken—that you need to surrender to the Son of God right now?

He is in our Presence.

And in Your Presence, Jesus, there is peace. There is hope. There is love. There is healing. And right now, we lift up our hands signifying our surrender, and our complete abandon of all these things.

We surrender, Lord, our life and we surrender all the broken stuff. Because You are our God. And we believe in Your resurrection Power, Jesus. Praise You Jesus.

Right now, this is your moment of surrender. Lift up your hands and let's worship the Lord. Lift them up to Jesus.

In His hands, He can renew dead things. Amen.





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.

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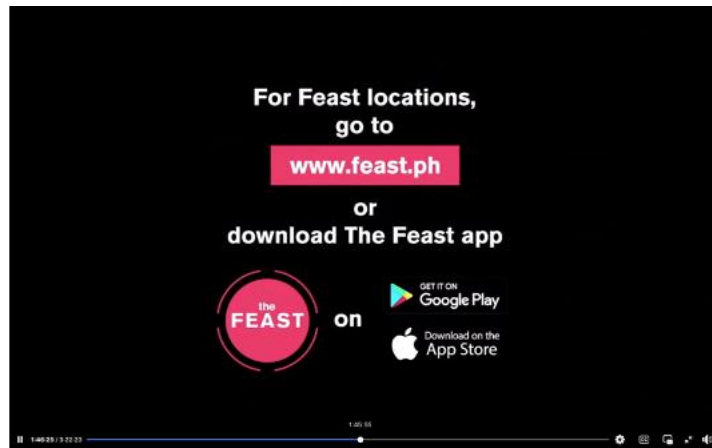
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Go and make disciples of all men.

— Matthew 28:19

