



NEWSLETTER
May 7, 2023

WELCOME to *WILDERNESS*,
our thrilling teaching series
on *Numbers*.

And just in case you're
wondering, it won't be about
Algebra. We're not going to
talk about the Multiplication
Table, which embarrassingly,
I have yet to fully memorize.



Get Ready for a Very Exciting Ride

This series is about the fourth book of the Bible titled *Numbers*.

Why is it called *Numbers*, anyway?

Because two times in this book, in chapters 1 and 26, God commanded Moses to take a census of all the people. *So, literally, the people were numbered.* And when you start reading it, it reminds you of a Statistics textbook with its wearisome list of names and numbers.

Because of this, I haven't heard anyone say, "Bo, I'm now reading *Numbers* and I'm so excited."

What I usually hear is, "Goodness Bo, why is *Numbers* even in the Bible?"

But after this series, I promise you, you'll unearth the great treasure of this book.

Have an amazing, soul-lifting Feast this month!

May your dreams come true,

Bo Sanchez

WELCOME
to our NEW
FEAST TALK
Series:
Wilderness



What Voice Do You Hear?

LAST Sunday was Good Shepherd Sunday. So, in his homily at The Feast, Fr. Albert Garong pointed out that Good Shepherd Sunday reminds us of what we are—sheep. We are sheep. And one ability of sheep that we should have is that sheep recognize the voice of their shepherd.

Now, as the flock of the Good Shepherd, our Lord Jesus, do we recognize His voice? And, do we listen to Him? Answers—or more questions-- on *page 3*.

The Israelites who were out of slavery in Egypt went on a journey to the land God promised them-- that was supposed to take only 11 days. But unlike the sheep who knew—and listened to-- their shepherd, this Israelite flock did not hear or did not heed the Good Shepherd's instructions. So, it took them 40 years to reach the Promised Land.



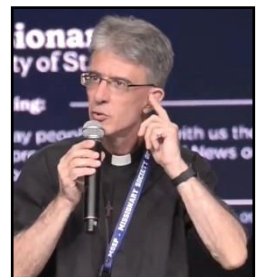
How many were they? Bro. Bo Sanchez says we'll find out in our new Feast Talk series on the Book of *Numbers*, which he introduces on *page 1*.

One who started out as a hopeless case was Rahab, a prostitute living a life of shame. But, as we learned in our Feast Talk last Sunday, her story was not yet over.

Bro. Audee Villarza and Bro. Didoy Lubaton

said if you go through some struggles yourself, listen: *Your Story Is Not Over*, *pages 16-36*.

Last Sunday was also World Day of Prayer for Vocations. And we were blessed to hear a message from our special guest preacher, Fr. Martin Galea of the Missionary Society of St. Paul who pointed out what's really our vocation, *page 9*.



One who inspires with her vocation is Sis. Marina Uy. Learn about how she heard the Lord and listened about her mission in our *Mercy Ministries* section, *page 37*.



So, let's hear the Voice that matters.
And let's listen and listen well.

All for God's Glory,

Randy Borromeo
Media Ministry
Executive Director





FLASHBACK!

APRIL 30, 2023

Holy Mass



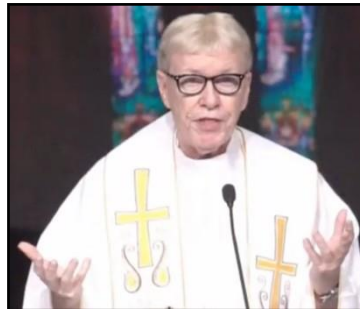
FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Homily

FR. ALBERT GARONG

on the Gospel: John 10:1-10

*The Good Shepherd
and His Sheep*



Concelebrated by

FR. BOB McCONAGHY

Excerpts...

Good Morning, Everyone! Happy Easter, still, to you all!

I wonder how close you were listening to the First Reading.

Question: How many were baptized at the end of Peter's bold speech?

The answer: 3,000. Imagine, in one preaching, 3,000 were baptized!

That's amazing.

And, by the way, that was Peter's first speech-- first homily. What was the context?

The Holy Spirit had just descended on the apostles. It was Pentecost Day. They were in the Upper Room and the Holy Spirit descended on them. And then they started speaking in different tongues.

And the multitudes who were in Jerusalem, from all over various nations, from various cultures and languages, they heard the apostles speaking in tongues and they understood what the apostles were saying.

Peter's Speech

That's where the First Reading begins.

Peter stands up with the 11 and speaks. And so effective was he that 3,000 persons, then and there, were baptized in the Name of Jesus.

But how did that happen? What does the First Reading say?

Did Peter give them arguments? Did he give them evidence—Exhibit A, Exhibit B, Exhibit C?

He got to that later in his speech, but before that, something even more special happened.

The book of *Acts* says that when Peter spoke, the people were cut to the heart—*naantig 'yung kanilang puso*.

Something within them stirred and they recognized that this was not an ordinary preaching-- that there was a power greater at work here. And so powerful was this that they had no choice but to listen. They were cut to the heart.

Have you ever experienced your heart just stirring – but you don't know why?

You're in the middle of something-- maybe you're in your prayer time, maybe somebody says something to you, maybe a gesture by a person. For some reason, such incident had an *impact*. You are stunned...



Reading I: Acts 2:14A, 36-41

^{14A} But Peter standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spoke to them:³⁶ Therefore let all the house of Israel know most certainly, that God has made both Lord and Christ, this same Jesus, whom you have crucified.³⁷ Now when they had heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter, and to the rest of the apostles: What shall we do, men and brethren?³⁸ But Peter said to them: Do penance, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins: and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

³⁹ For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are far off, whomsoever the Lord our God shall call.⁴⁰ And with very many other words did he testify and exhort them, saying: Save yourselves from this perverse generation.

⁴¹ They therefore that received his word, were baptized; and there were added in that day about three thousand souls.



Unintended Vocation

Today is Good Shepherd Sunday. It's also World Day of Prayer for Vocations.

You know, I always get asked, "Father, how did you know that you want to become a priest?"

I can't explain it. I mean, I can give you factors. I can give you reasons. But at the heart of the matter, I don't know.

It's just something that stirred within me, and when I felt that stirring, I could no longer live my life the same way-- knowing that my heart is aching for the seminary.

I was 17 years old, with my life planned ahead of me. I was already going to enroll in my dream school. I reviewed the ASSET Exam (test identifying one's knowledge and skills). I passed the exam. I jumped with joy!

But then there were whispers and stirrings in my heart: "*Seminary... Try the seminary...Seminaryo...*"

I brushed those whispers off. Why? Because people who knew me back then-- it's funny because one of the servants here knew me from childhood and she would always say I was such a big bully growing up-- People would never say that I would be the guy who would enter a seminary.

But then, to cut the story short, I said, "Sige na nga, hindi ko mapigilan, eh. Okay, I can't help it... I will just give the seminary a try. I'll give it a year-- just to pacify my heart."

And then after one year: "Sige pa, konti pa. Hindi pa 'ko satisfied, eh. Baka gusto ko lang maranasan...-- Just some more time...I'm not yet satisfied..."

One more year seminary life... and then one more year...

After 15 years: Fr. Albert Garong, SSP.

And until now, again, I can give you logical reasons for my choice of vocation. But at the very foundation of it, don't ask me why I became a priest-- because I don't know. Only God knows why it's me.

When I told my friends in high school that I would enter the seminary--nobody reacted. They thought it was a joke. But there was no punchline. Some of them are waiting for the punchline until now. I don't know, guys. It's just something that stirred in me.

The Sheep Hears the Shepherd's Voice

Why am I talking about this? Because Good Shepherd Sunday tells us who God is—Good Shepherd, we all know about that. But what I love about Good Shepherd Sunday is it reminds us of what we are—sheep. We are sheep.

That may sound like an insult because in today's world, when you are called sheep, it means you are dumb, you're weak.

But there's one thing about the sheep that I will hope to have. What's that?

Sheep recognize the voice of their shepherd. They know exactly who is calling them.

We can put a sheep here and we can all call out to that sheep. We can call its name, command it-- it won't move. But once its shepherd speaks, it listens.

I don't know about you, guys, but I'd rather have that ability than anything else.

We want so many things in this world, in this life, but if there is something we should all aspire for, it's that ability to recognize the Voice of the Shepherd.

And I'm asking you if you had those moments of stirring, those moments that cut to the heart-- because I want you to remember that we're all sheep. Therefore, deep inside you, every single one of you, we all have that ability, that capacity to hear the Voice of the Good Shepherd. You won't lose that ability.

It might seem only a few can hear the Shepherd, so many come to me, asking: "Father, what did the Lord say?"

I tell them: "Why are you asking me? What did *you* hear?"

We're all sheep-- therefore, we can all *hear* God's voice.

And guess what? He always speaks. He looks at every one of you and me and He's always saying something. He never stops guiding us and giving us messages. It's just a matter of whether we seek out that Voice or we spend our life searching for other voices to listen to.

But don't worry. You won't lose that Voice. At some point in your life, He will cut to the heart. Just give Him even the slightest opportunity to speak to you.

When your defenses are down, He will cut to the heart. You will hear His Voice and you will never be the same. But don't wait for that time.

Let us try to train our ears. Our musicians here, they know that your ears can be trained for music.

In the same way, the ears of your heart can be trained to hear the Voice of the Shepherd, and there are many ways to do it—prayer, sacraments, and so on.





What's Important

But I want to focus on something important: *sacrifice*.

Remember, Peter, who preached in the First Reading about following the Lord, in the Second Reading, he was now writing to a Church-- that is what? Persecuted. A Church that was suffering.

Maybe, the people were saying, "Isn't it, *the Lord is my Shepherd, there is nothing I shall want... (That) in green pastures, you will lead me?* Now, where is that *greener pasture?* We're already suffering."

Ah, there it is. Sometimes, we don't hear the Voice of God because we want to hear only about the good stuff. We want only the greener pasture.

Let us remind ourselves that the Good Shepherd Jesus Christ is not just Shepherd. He is also what? Lamb. He is the perfect Lamb of sacrifice.

That's why Peter told the apostles: "*Remember, the Shepherd you are following also offered Himself up on the Cross, bore your sins because He is Lamb of sacrifice.*"

If we want to become closer to the Shepherd, if we want to *hear* Him better, we must learn to embrace our own cross -- not run away from them.

That when you say, "*I am God's sheep,*" it means that "*I am a lamb of sacrifice. I am a lamb who will offer myself because in that sacrifice, grace comes out.*"



Reading II: 1 Peter 2:20B-25

^{20B} *Beloved: If you are patient when you suffer for doing what is good, this is a grace before God.²¹ For unto this are you called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow his steps.²² Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.²³ Who, when he was reviled, did not revile: when he suffered, he threatened not: but delivered himself*

to him that judged him unjustly.²⁴ Who his own self bore our sins in his body upon the tree: that we, being dead to sins, should live to justice: by whose stripes you were healed.²⁵ For you were as sheep going astray; but you are now converted to the shepherd and bishop of your souls.

One Last Thing about Sheep

A sheep belongs to a flock. Look at us now, we are one big flock. Look at everyone, everyone belongs to this flock.

In today's Gospel passage, Jesus calls Himself the Gate and whoever enters that Gate is the Shepherd. And you know what?

This Gate says *I want everyone. This Gate is open.*

That's where the Pharisees and scribes in the Gospel were arguing.

Remember, the leaders couldn't understand Jesus, they couldn't get what He's saying. To the religious leaders of Israel at that time, God was *their* Shepherd. *Theirs. Only for Israel, chosen people: We are the only flock of the Lord. The others are second-class.*

But Jesus was saying, *I am the gate and I'm declaring the gates are wide open. It's for everyone.*

And we know that only the Lord is the Gate. But sometimes, we act as if we are the gates. We gate-keep. We look at someone in the church wearing a spaghetti strapped blouse, and we roll our eyes...

We gate-keep. When I say, we gate-keep, what I mean is that, you know, we pretend that there are many gates to Jesus Christ.

Today, He says, *I am the only gate and I am wide open, so come. Come. And help others to come to Me.*

Yes, we will correct them, we will guide them to better living, we will guide them to better understanding of the faith. But before all of that, *utang na loob, please, let them come in first into gate.*

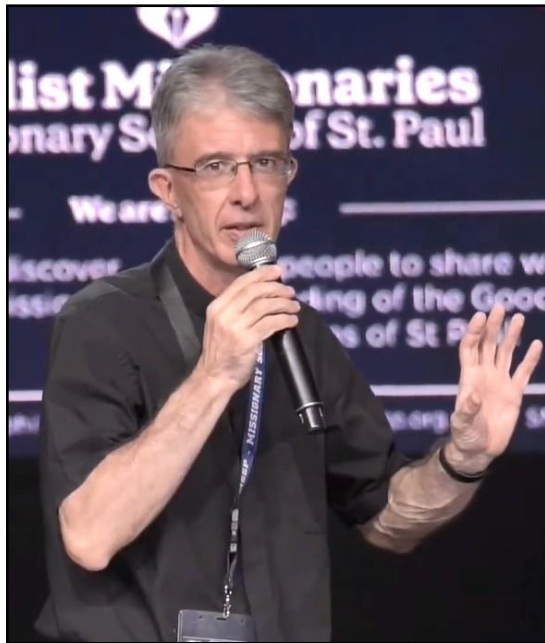
Welcome them first. And then let God's love, felt through this Community, let that change them. We are not the gate. Only Jesus is the gate and He is wide open.

Kaya, lapit tayong lahat at tulungan natin ang isa't isa na makalapit kay Lord.— Let's get close to Him, and let's help others get close to the Lord. Amen.



Message

The Word on Vocation Sunday



FR. MARTIN GALEA
Paulist Missionary
Missionary Society of St. Paul

Good Morning, Everybody!
Thanks for the opportunity.

I just want to share the Word today
being a Vocation Sunday.

It connects very well with the message
that our brothers have been sharing with us
because what we're celebrating today
is basically that our Lord doesn't simply pull
us out of shame. He sends us...

He sends us with a mission.

Even though we feel so unworthy at times-- we feel we are not capable to do anything good-- His love goes so far that He lifts us up from our shame and gives us a mission. This is what we're celebrating today, Vocation Sunday: that all of us here as believers have a mission and it's most important that we allow the Lord to help us discern it, to help us discover it-- because it is the best way how we can live our life. You have listened to the Gospel today. The Lord promises life and life in abundance, and this is how it will be fulfilled.

So, our invitation today for every one of you-- but especially those who maybe are at the crossroads in life, who still don't know what dream God has for them— to really commit to themselves to allow the Lord, as a Shepherd, to lead them so they can really flourish in their life.

That's why we came with a small table outside so that we can share how the Lord also working in our life... I invite you, my dear brothers and sisters, if you're interested. We are outside there (at the lobby) giving you maybe our contact details which can help you understand how God works.

Be sure of this: God needs your hand. God needs your voice. God needs yourself so that you can continue this mission in the world.

May God bless you.



WELCOME HOME



BRO. AUDEE VILLARAZA:

May we put our hands together for Jesus? Come on, put your hands together. Thank you so much for being here today. I want you to turn to as many persons as you can and say, “Thank you for being here.”

It’s so wonderful to be together. My name is Audee Villaraza and I’m one of the servant leaders here.

Just a quick raise of hands: How many are joining us for the first time? Come on, let’s clap our hands for those who are joining us for the first time here today. Welcome to the Family! Thank you so much.

If you’re there online, just type on the chat box: “I’m a newcomer” “I’m a first- timer” “I’m a newbie”.

Is there anybody here coming from out of town? Welcome!

Is there anybody here who has started attending The Feast again after not attending for quite some time? You attended many years ago and then you came back. Welcome back! That’s beautiful!



Love Offering

Many weeks ago, somebody approached me outside. She's one of the regular attendees of The Feast at the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC). The last time she attended The Feast was in 2012. Life got busy and she stopped attending. But then, all of a sudden, after more than a decade, she finally attended The Feast here in Aliw. I saw her outside, and she said that she was glad that she was able to come back to The Feast. But there was also a hint of surprise in her voice.



She was surprised that The Feast is still happening. The Feast was getting big but the Coronavirus Disease (COVID) Pandemic happened, and she thought we were just doing online church.

You know, after that brief chat, I had a little reflection. It was as if God was saying to me that the reality is that people will come and go.

Sometimes, life get busy. Sometimes God will send you to a different location. But the beautiful truth is this: The Church of God will always stand solid. The Church of God will always be here for you who need a Faith Community. It will always be here.

That's our prayer— That our Feasts continue to grow.

And as you think there, “Bro. Audee, where is my giving going to?”

I don't want you to think for a second that we use your giving to pay for our venue, or to pay for the suppliers, or to feed the servants. No.

What you give is actually for sustaining the Ministry -- so that one day, one person that you've never even met would walk to The Feast and be blessed, and be inspired, and be changed-- all because of your giving.

So, I want you to extend your hands, clap for each other. Thank you so much for being one of the ways God blesses our Community, to sustain what God is doing here.

So, if you were blessed by The Feast, it's simply because some people, who came before you, gave to the Ministry.

Thank you so much!



Worship!

EXHORTATION



LIA BALAGOT:

Allow me to share this short story:

A mentor once told me that when you pray, or when you ask Jesus' Presence, or Father God's Presence, and you ask Him to bless you, to fill your heart, you also have to ask for the Holy Spirit's Presence.

The Holy Spirit is your Advocate. He walks alongside you and He is waiting for an invitation. He's just there, ready to offer you His empowering Presence. And brothers and sisters, that's exactly what we will do today.

Are you feeling anxious right now? Come on, let's ask the Holy Spirit to give you peace. Do you feel impatient over a lot of things happening in your life, or people in your life right now—your boss, your kids?

Pray and ask the Holy Spirit for patience, for self-control.

Are you confused which direction to take, the decisions you have to make to move forward? Let the Holy Spirit give you knowledge, wisdom, counsel.

Brothers and sisters, are we ready to worship? Are we ready to feel the Spirit's empowering Presence in our life today? Amen.

Let's come before the Lord... In the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.





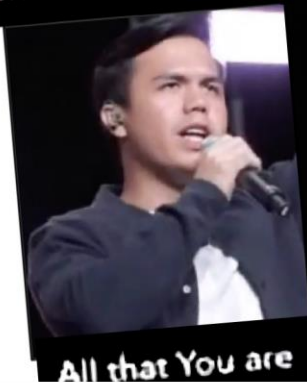
Pour Your Spirit out



**For hearts that burn
With holy fear**



Purified in faith and deed



All that You are

**Let all the redeemed
Prophesy and sing**





AUDEE VILLARAZA: Let's pray. May I ask you to lift up both hands?

In the Presence of the Lord, I want you to know that there is healing, there are miracles, there is power, and there is purpose.

And right in this moment, Father, we just want to thank You. Thank You for the ways that You have put food on our table this week. Thank You, Father, for providing for all our needs. Thank You for using our jobs and our livelihood so that we can provide for our families. And we thank You that while we do that, while we go out of our home, You protect not only us but you protect our family as well.

We pray, Lord, that today, as we stand in Your Presence, we pray that You will speak a word that will set us free, that will liberate us, that will soothe us, that will encourage us. Because, Father, that's what we're here for. We want more of You. We want more of You in our home, more of You in our organizations, more of You in our neighborhood, more of You in our companies, and more of You in our heart.

So, Jesus, come. Holy Spirit, come. Be the conductor of this symphony today and we are fully surrendered. Some here are coming with problems and struggles and difficulties. But today, I declare that Your Word will set them free. Chains will fall off in this place. From bondages that have trapped these people for so long, they will finally be set free. Thank You, Jesus. Even now as we stand and praise You, we thank You in advance. Knowing that You are a good God and that You will deliver.

This is our prayer. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

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

Welcome to The Feast! Welcome to this spiritual gathering in God. I want you to lift up your hands one more time as we say our favorite prayer here at The Feast.



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

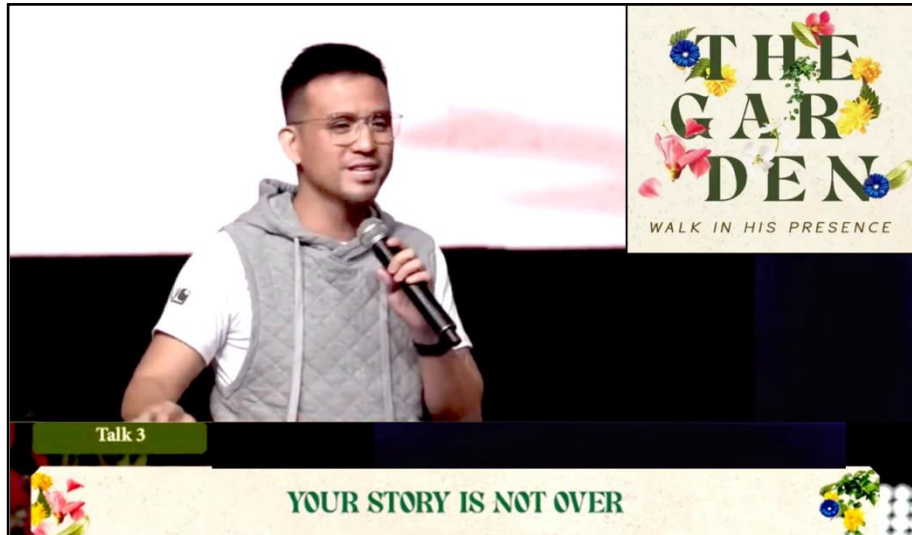




FLASHBACK!

APRIL 30, 2023

Talk



Today, we're going to do something a bit different. I know we have been walking around the different gardens in the Bible.

But today, I thought it would be a prelude when we open the book of *Numbers* next week. I know we said that last week-- that we're going to study a new book today. But we're extending *The Garden* series just a bit. But instead of walking in the Garden, we're going to take you back to the journey in the desert.

We're going to read a very special story in Joshua 11, starting from Verse 11, onwards. And I'm going to introduce to you a character in the Bible who's going to bless you. It says here:

Joshua 2:11 NLT

Then Joshua secretly sent out two spies from the Israelite camp at Acacia Grove. He instructed them, "Scout out the land on the other side of the Jordan River, especially around Jericho."

Joshua 2:11 NLT

So the two men set out and came to the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there that night.

Story of an Outcast

Now, some context: The story in Joshua 2 is the part where God had actually promised the Israelites a land of their own. And on their way to that Promised Land, Jericho was the first city they would cross over. But the problem was that when the Israelites came to the exterior of Jericho, they saw that the city was fortified. It had high walls. And they weren't equipped to defeat Jericho's army. You know, the Israelites were just regular people. And so, what they knew was God promised something.



But what do you do when you believe that God promised you something but then you hit a barrier so big? So that now, you're questioning whether God's promise was really true or not.

The Israelites were in this position. This was also where they met this woman by the name of Rahab.

Now, Rahab was a woman of shame. The Bible says she was a prostitute. Prostitution is not a 21st century invention. It's one of the oldest occupations in history.

At this moment, we're going to find out that although Rahab was a citizen of Jericho, it would seem she was not part of Jericho. Because she would do something in the next verses.

But first, I want to point out that somebody here may feel the same way Rahab felt... You might have the same surname as the people you're living with under the same roof-- but you feel you're an alien in that family. Because you might have a different set of beliefs, or a different set of priorities, different set of values... Or maybe, in that company that you joined, you feel like you're an outcast because you don't do the same things that other people do. I wonder if there's anybody here who feels the same way as Rahab who belonged to the city of Jericho but she was somewhat removed-- because she didn't feel like she belonged... Which makes the next verse quite interesting...

This is how Rahab responded to these two spies who came into her home:

Joshua 2:12-13 NLT

¹² Now swear to me by the Lord that you will be kind to me and my family since I have helped you. Give me some guarantee that ¹³ when Jericho is conquered, you will let me live, along with my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all their families

Rahab's Response

Question: How many of you feel that there's a sense of *certainty* in the voice of Rahab?

This is her first time encountering the God of Israel. Rahab was actually a pagan-- she was a non-believer. But there was a certainty in her response: She said *when* — not *if*-- Jericho would be conquered.

You know, there are a lot of people in our life, people who you've known all your life, and they've been Catholics, and they practice the doctrines and the Sacraments. But you know, sometimes it's hard for us to put our faith into practice.

But there are some people you meet for the first time-- who are non-believers-- yet when they hear about God, all of a sudden, they just believe in Him.

There are some people who are new to the faith and yet they believe in God more than you do. This was Rahab.

And this is my bold declaration for all of us today: that as you sit here and open your heart to the Lord, that God will use this moment to grow your faith more and more. Not just for your behalf, but that others would be saved too.

Just like Rahab. Her family, you will find out, will be saved-- because of what she will do.

That's my prayer. If you believe in that prayer, just shout Amen! Amen
Continue to bask in the Presence of the Lord...

Father, this is Your moment to shine, not mine. And I pray that your army of angels would come and deliver this message together with me. I pray that they would not hear my voice. But they would hear Yours. So, remove me from this platform. Remove the Worship team. We're not here to entertain anybody but we're here to deliver Your message, Lord. And, so I pray for somebody here, Lord, who is in need of this message to be set free and to feel Your Presence.

In Jesus' Name. Amen.

One more time, Everybody:
*Thy Word is a Lamp unto my feet
And a Light unto my path.*





Struggles, Struggles

Can you clap your hands for our servants?
Thank you for serving in the Ministries...

You know, my son Ethan and I, we were sitting backstage and we started talking about Church. He's five years old and I've started telling him all about Jesus Christ. I know that he *struggles* in understanding Jesus.

But one way that I tell him about Jesus is through the Avengers. You know, he loves the Avengers.

So, I tell him, "You know all about our superheroes, right? Jesus is *the* superhero."

And then we started talking about ministries here at The Feast. I started telling him about our ushers who serve and the people here who minister in the Liturgy, and people who sing during the Mass and the Worship, and people who work in the background, and I who preach here, and all the other Feast Builders.

Then I asked him this question: "When you grow up, what kind of ministry do you want to serve in?"

And you know what he said?

"Daddy, you know what I really wanna do? I want to give pan de sal to people outside."

Ha-ha.

The message that we prepared for you today is for somebody who has been *struggling* for quite some time...

You've had some difficulties... Maybe you've been sick for quite some time and you don't know when you're going to get healed. Or maybe you've been having the same heartache again and again, and you experience breakups. Or maybe you've been going job after job and that's been the pattern of your life. Or maybe there's somebody here who's been battling with addiction and you seem to be succeeding but from time to time you backslide.

So, this will be an encouraging message to you. Because you've been asking the Lord, "Is this it? Is this how my life is going to be? Is this how it's always going to be? Am I always going to be broke? Am I always going to be broken? Am I always going to be depressed?"

And maybe that's you, sitting there. So, I pray that this message will encourage you.



I need you to preach this to somebody. I want you to turn to somebody right now, and say, “Friend, if in case that’s you, I want you to know that *your story is not over*.”

Your story is not over. God is not finished with you yet. God is still writing a beautiful script for your life. And so, whether or not you’re struggling in some areas in life, I want you to believe that God is going to reveal to you today that the best is yet to come.

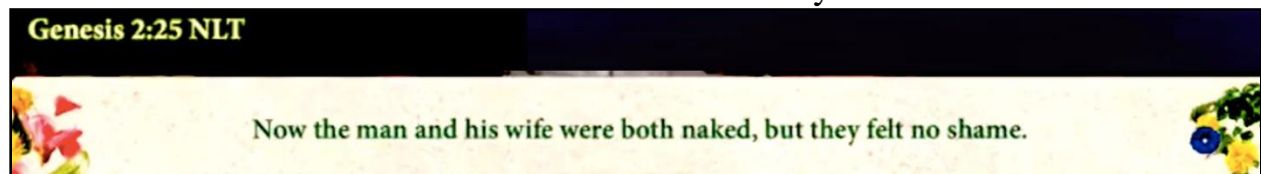
So, like I said, we are going to walk around the desert for a few moments...

We’ve travelled the Garden of Eden, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Garden Tomb, the Garden of Paradise – since the Holy Week. We studied this since we started *Genesis*.

But today, I don’t want to focus on a specific location. I want to focus instead on *disposition*—asking the question:

What was life like for Adam and Eve to have walked in the Garden of Eden? Have you ever wondered that—what life must have looked like for those two people?

In my research this week-- it took me back to Genesis where it reveals to us what life was like for Adam and Eve. Genesis 2:25 says:



Now, take note: This verse is not about physical nudity. Okay? The author’s intention when he wrote this was to show all of us that in the beginning, in the Garden of Eden, where God and man dwelled together, there were no limitations between each other. There was no need for Adam to hide from Eve and Eve to hide from Adam.

First Things First...

I want you to think about this: That in the beginning, God never intended for all of us—for you and me—to be ashamed. There was no shame. They were naked but they felt no shame. And that's really the design of God—that you would not have the need to feel embarrassed, or feel inferior, or feel inadequate.

That was really God's intention.

By the way, shame is a product of sin--

Remember what happened? When Adam and Eve bit the forbidden fruit? Their eyes were opened and when they realized that they were naked, what was the first thing that they did? The first instinct? They sewed together fig leaves and they covered themselves up. Why? Because they were afraid, because they were ashamed.

Now, notice this: The first thing that they did when they felt shame was, they covered themselves with clothes. You want to know what the modern-day version of fig leaves? *Social media*.

Walk with me a bit—this is going to be real talk, okay?

I want you to look at this photo:



I want you to tell me very quickly: What is the first thing that you see when you look at this photo? Loving marriage? Happy couple? Relationship? Yes? Sweetness? Yes. Forever.

There's no right or wrong answer.

We can actually paint a story from this picture. It's a happy loving couple, they're probably retired, the kids have moved out, it's an empty house, but they're not empty deep inside, they're happy.

And notice, they're standing by the *window*.

Isn't it true that in social media, we live in that four-squared *window*? That little window where you show little pictures of your vacation, updates about your family, your kids, and how God is blessing you...

That's how life is lived right now.





Reality Check

But isn't it also true that it's also in that little window where you somehow pretend to be somebody that you're not sometimes? Where you post something, but it's not exactly how you feel about who you are? You may go on vacation but really that vacation that you're posting online—just like that *Tiktok* video, for instance, that you've been following, you see that vacation in Bahamas, and you're so envious...

I want you to know that before that post even made it on the wall of that person, that was edited, cropped, filtered, processed a bunch of times—before it even made it to that wall...

That's why it's social media, right?

How many of you know I'm preaching the truth? That's how life is lived. Social media has given people the control to curate the content that they would put out—so much so that they'll show you only what they want you to see—in that little picture window.

Now, put this in contrast with this: There are lots of windows in the house. But the only way to get through the house is what?

Through a door.

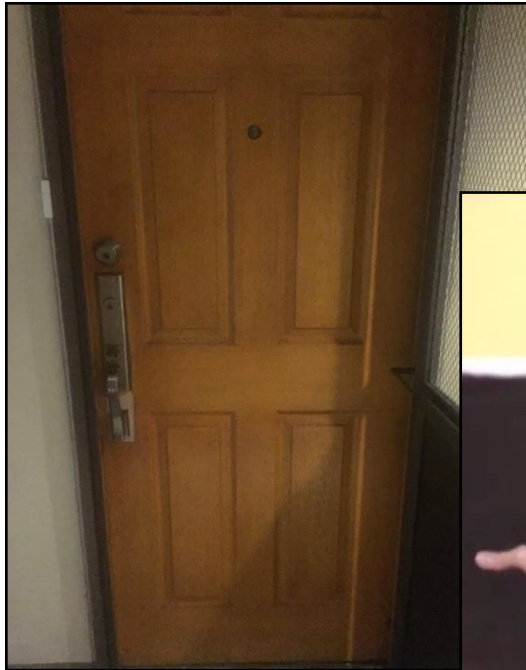
Now, put that window in contrast with the door. A door will show you what windows will never show. Because, you know, in that little picture window you see the little updates of your friends, or your relatives, or your classmates—and you get so envious about everything that they post online. But sometimes, the reason they post that is they're feeling a bit insecure.

And they're so good—we have gotten so good at hiding behind picture windows. But in the meantime, when you open the door, that's where you really see what the life of that person truly is.

And you know, sometimes, people post on social media, that picture window, how on Sunday, they're praising God, and Hallelujah, and Thank You, Jesus...

But then when you actually get to and walk through their door, you see that on Monday, they're cursing their wife. On Tuesday, they're shouting, "Shut up and go to Hell!" – to their kids. And then on Wednesday, they're doing something that you'll never see on social media...

There's a difference between that little picture window --where everything is perfect—and the door.



The Locked Door

Now, some of you, I know, you've gotten so good at closing the door on people that you show only a bit of your life to people. But every now and then, you probably will allow people to enter through that door—especially when you learn how to trust people.

But even then, you will always keep one room locked—where you will keep all your deepest, darkest secrets because you are so afraid and ashamed that if people would ever find out what you did in 1995, they probably will not sit beside you here in church.

Or, some of you might be afraid and ashamed that if your boss would ever find out what you did last week, you will never get promoted. There's that fear of shame – and so you keep it locked in, so nobody would ever find out.

But you know who knows about all that? The Lord knows all about that. And sometimes, you're so ashamed to tell it to the Lord...

So, you don't go to Confession because there's that fear that the priest might judge you. Or the priest might condemn you because once upon a time you went through a Confession and somebody condemned you. Somebody made you feel bad.

I want you to know that God will never make you feel like that. God will never quit on you. God will never say that He hates you. Because God loves you.

What Shame Does

Because of shame, we allow people to see only through the picture window and we never actually let them through the door. But you know what's so deceptive about shame? What is so problematic about shame is this: it manifests in different ways.

Like, I know, shame can manifest through anger. Anger. You're angry at a guy because the person said something about you. But really, you're not angry at that person because he said something about you. You're actually ashamed because he called you out on the truth.

Or, maybe there's another person here who is ashamed because of fear. You don't want to be with certain people because they made fun of you in the past. But you don't really know that you got ashamed now and you've been carrying it in your heart, and in your mind, so now, it's shame that's been planted in you.

One of the most common manifestations of shame is this: It's called insecurity.

One quick story:

True story. Many, many years ago, back when I was still single, young, and handsome—now I'm just handsome—that's the only thing God left behind for me, so please pray for me... Anyway, I was dating this girl in college. I was supposed to fetch her. We were supposed to meet up in a little café in our university. Back in those days, somewhere around the late 1990s-- just in case you're judging what my age is—cellphones were already invented. But technology wasn't that advanced yet.

So, I called her, but she was not answering—her phone just kept on ringing. I called her again, and the phone just kept on ringing. Then, five minutes before I got to the venue, I saw that she was there, sitting at one of the tables outside the café and I noticed she was on her phone but it didn't really occur to me who she was talking to... So, I called her again, still no answer. And then, she went into the café.

I followed her, and I told her, "I've been calling you but you weren't picking up. What's wrong?"

And she said, just candidly, "Oh, my phone was on silent mode, I couldn't hear you."



Real Talk: The Root of Insecurity

Something just didn't feel right. Because some of you might not know this: During the '90s, cellphones didn't have that *Call-Waiting* yet (the icon that lights up notifying that there's someone calling you—yes, *waiting* for you to answer).

So, my question to my friend was: “You were on your phone but I could hear the phone was ringing. It should had been giving me a *busy tone*.”

By this time, she was already laughing.

And she said, “May I be honest? I wasn't actually speaking to anybody. I was pretending to be on the phone—because I was insecure. I was afraid that if people found out I was alone, they might judge me.”

Question: How many of you had ever done that? Raise your hand. Come on, come on. Real talk. Can you just elbow the person beside you, “Admit it.”

No? You'd never done that? Pretended?

Or maybe – just to get into an event, you pretended to be somebody else. Maybe, at one point, you pretended to have all of these things (to make the impression) that you got your life together.

That's another way to look at that. Sometimes, you pretend to be someone – but you're not really that kind of person.

I want you to know that deep inside, insecurity is really rooted in shame. And there are a lot of stories connected to that.

Another story: I had a friend who doesn't like hanging out with people. And she would walk away from friends and relatives -- once their conversation shifted towards the topic of marriage. This person is single.

Why? Because she's so insecure, because her relationships had never gone to the next level (marriage).

I have another friend – he really never likes hanging out with successful people. I know some of you like rubbing elbows with successful people because you learn from them. But this person hates hanging around with successful people because he feels like compared to their accomplishments, he has so little achievements.





The Tool of the Enemy

By the way, I think it would be unfair for me to share the story about that girl I was dating without sharing the context—

She told me afterwards that the reason she was so insecure was once upon a time, prior to us dating, she dated another guy. They were going to a dinner date. The problem was, the guy was late. And he was late not just for 10, 15 minutes. She waited for two hours, and he didn't even show up. The problem was not that he actually was late, or that he didn't show up. The problem was she already ordered dinner—but she didn't have money.

So, imagine: When she realized the guy was not coming, she had to call up her dad, who lived 45 minutes away, to come fetch her and to pay for the bill. That was the most embarrassing moment of her life. And you know what? That created a sense of shame in her. So, every time she's alone eating by herself, she just has to pretend that she is with somebody—talking with the person on her phone. She doesn't like going to the cinemas alone...

Because there's shame-- and the reason I'm saying this is sometimes, you're not aware that when you're angry, or afraid, or insecure, deep inside, that feeling is rooted in a shame that you experienced when you were young.

Maybe, somebody made fun of you, and called you fat, and you've been carrying that ever since, and now, every time people are talking about weight loss-- you know you have a struggle in losing weight—now you feel like you're ashamed. It's really in here inside you-- and that's where the enemy will attack you.

Shame. That's the tool of the enemy.

Now, how do we conquer shame? We're going to take a walk around the life of Rahab. And I'm not going to be the one to do it with you. And I pray that God will use this message to speak, to minister, and to create a shift inside you.

Everybody, clap your hands and say, "Amen."

Please welcome my very, very good friend, Doc Didoy Lubaton. Come on, clap your hands for Didoy.

DIDOY LUBATON:

Be honest with me: How many here have felt shame in their life?

Not just embarrassment, right? But really shameful that, “I cannot face people. I cannot look straight at the person’s eyes.”

Shame because, “I gave my word and yet I wasn’t able to fulfill my part of the agreement, of the commitment.”

I’m so happy we are in this Community because we are in a room full of people who make mistakes. And yet, we still stand. And yet, we can still love.

I’m going to give you:



3 Steps To Conquer Shame

I. Declare God's Sovereignty

Sovereignty means it is His territory. It is God’s territory. Let’s read how Rahab reacted to the spies when they came to her house:

Joshua 2:8-10 NLT

⁸ Before the spies went to sleep that night, Rahab went up on the roof to talk with them. ⁹ “I know the Lord has given you this land,” she told them. “We are all afraid of you. Everyone in the land is living in terror.”

Joshua 2:8-10 NLT

¹⁰ For we have heard how the Lord made a dry path for you through the Red Sea when you left Egypt.

So, there’s a precedent. There’s a story that goes before tales of great happening. That’s what she heard. *Heard*. Just *heard*, not *seen*, not *witnessed*.

But what she said was very good: *This is God’s territory*.

She said: “I know the Lord has given you this land.”

There was no opposition. How could a pagan woman decide that and declare that? It must had been steadfast faith. It must had been an experience.

Rahab Heard and Believed

How could a person declare God's sovereignty on the land?

Even if just a week before, Rahab just overheard some women talking about it—that the Israelite army defeated two powerful kings. She said:



Joshua 2:11-12 NLT

Joshua 2:11-12 NLT

11 No wonder our hearts have melted in fear! No one has the courage to fight after hearing such things. **For the Lord your God is the supreme God of the heavens above the earth below.**

What faith she has! She did it, she declared it, she welcomed the two spies—even if she had not seen what was ahead. Even if she had not seen it herself.

Again, Rahab heard about the stories of the God of the Israelites. And she did not see firsthand evidence of Him. She did not have any confirmation, proof. She did not verify if it was fake news or not. She just believed. She decided to believe.

And guys, *faith*. I'll talk about faith. Hint: This is one way to conquer shame. You listen to God's Word and put your faith in Him.

In Hebrews 11, faith is described as this:

Hebrews 11:1 NLT

Faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

We are hoping for it, we do not see it yet-- but in faith we *know*, we *declare*:
"It is the Lord moving in my life."

Jesus said in Matthew 17:20:

Matthew 17:20 NLT

20 "I tell you the truth, if you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it would move. **Nothing would be impossible.**

Declare God's sovereignty in your life. Declare this is God's territory. Believe in the Lord today and your faith will move mountains for you.



My Declaration

When I was 13 years old, I made that personal declaration: “Lord, my life is Your territory. Do as You will.”

I was single, I was tall, dark, and popular... Just playing with you. Ha-ha.

When I was single, I said, “Lord, use my singlehood for Your glory.”

And I never stopped since.

When I fell in love, committed, fell on my knees, and said, “Lord, I want to be married. My marriage life is Yours. This is Your territory. I don’t know what lies ahead. I don’t know the heartaches, what will happen. I don’t

know if You’re going to provide for us. But my hope and my assurance are Yours. I believe in You.”

And when we got married, it was beautiful. God provided. And when we had children—two kids—I said, “Lord, my children are Yours. We need You to lead us. We need You to provide for us.”

It has been still an ongoing faith journey:

Believe, declare, “Lord, my business is in Your sovereignty.”

As a doctor, I can help as many as I can. But there are patients I cannot really help further (The ailments) are beyond my expertise, beyond what I can do. This is beyond my territory but I know each patient is in God’s territory.

So, believe, believe, have faith.

Declare God’s sovereignty.



Happy, blessed family: Didoy, Mayi and kids Haeli, 6 years old, Hosea, 4.

2. Draw in God's Messengers



The second step to conquer shame is to draw in God's messengers in your life.

If you want to deal with shame, face the shame straightforward.

You know, the night the spies arrived, it was business as usual for Rahab. She was still a prostitute.

The Bible does not mention anything about Rahab's past, etcetera. We are left to think about it, we are left to just assume... But I would imagine that Rahab would had been so shocked that two spies knocked on her door. Foreigners.

She said – in the passage—that they were afraid of them. Two spies, foreigners, battle-tested guys knocked on her door.

And you're a prostitute. How would you feel?

But you know what she did? Instead of rejecting them, she let them in.

There must had been something different about that knock on the door. There must had been something different when she saw them, when she felt their presence. Little did she know that God was doing something in her life. Little did she know that small opening of the door, it would open her life to the goodness and greatness of God. The Presence of God. Not just the spies. But it's the Presence of God coming into her life.

Guys, do you dream of something familiar? You have been stuck in your shame—shameful past, shameful situation, shameful personality, if you will.

But God comes knocking at your door. God sends messengers to your life—speaking hope, speaking goodness, speaking love to you.

Rahab didn't know how to get out of being a prostitute. She didn't know how to get out of her situation day in and day out. She would still live in that ugly shame—until God knocked on her door. She drew in the messengers of God. God came to her because she wouldn't go to Him. She was a pagan. She didn't believe. She didn't know.

I want you to know:

If you're unable to go to God,
He'll be the one to come to you.

Let that be your take-home message today.

Who's There?

If you, in your shame, cannot go to the Lord: “No, Lord, I cannot go to Confession. It’s Fr. Bob McConaghy (in the Confessional box). I’m gonna go bleed.” “Lord, it’s too shameful. It’s too heavy to bear. Lord...”

What you want to do is just open the door of your heart and let God in. Oftentimes, God will even use people for this.

Rahab—what did she do? Nothing much. She did not attend a seminar. She did not do *sacrifice*. At the start, she just opened her door and let God in.

Today, God is knocking on your door. Will you let Him in? Will you get the door opened? How wide do you open it for God to come in?

God is so powerful that when you sincerely allow Him to work in your life, He can make change in you instantly and permanently. When you open your door to God, and you experience God, you’ll never be the same again.

And one thing: Think about those spies. Imagine big burly soldiers as spies knocking on Rahab’s door. They could had been scary. But, they were unlike the other men who went through the door of Rahab’s life.

The spies went in and they did not have anything else. They did not abuse her. They did not take advantage of her. They could have.

They were welcomed in. They did what they had to do in terms of their military strategy. And then they were the only ones who came in through Rahab’s door and did not come out through that door. They went to the other side. And they came out through a window.

Most of Rahab’s clients came in through her door. Had fun, apparently. Then came out the same door. Taking a piece of herself. A piece of her purity with them.

How do you know? How do you distinguish that it is God’s messenger who is knocking on your life? It is God’s message that is said by your brother sister, family, friend, co-Feaster, or officemate? How do you know that they are the messengers that God has sent to you?

Well, No. 1: They’re not takers. They will not take advantage of you. They come into your life not to *receive*, they come into your life to *give*. Every other person who has come and gone through your life usually takes something from you—*away* from you even.

But guys, only Jesus goes into your life and *gives you more* than *taking more*.

So, receive, draw in God’s messengers and ultimately God’s message today. Receive the Lord today.

I hope that you open the door. And let Him in.



3. Display The Lord's Goodness

You want to deal with shame?
You want to recover and face shame,
and not live in shame? You've got to
Display the Lord's Goodness.
I'll deal it from the Word of God,
from Joshua 2:19-20:



Joshua 2:17-18 NLT

¹⁷ Before they left, the men told her, "We will be bound by the oath we have taken only if you follow these instructions.

Joshua 2:17-18 NLT

¹⁸ When we come into the land, you must leave this scarlet rope hanging from the window through which you let us down. And all your family members – your father, mother, brothers and all your relatives – must be here inside the house.

Joshua 2:19-20 NLT

¹⁹ If they go out into the street and are killed, it will not be our fault. But if anyone lays a hand on people inside the house, we will accept the responsibility for their death. ²⁰ If you betray us, however, we are not bound by this oath in any way.

Let me explain:

During ancient times, the way that the prostitutes would advertise their business was they would hang a red or scarlet rope in front of their house, in front of their door and say, "Come in. I'm open."

Red rope. Red light district. That was in the ancient times.

So, Rahab hang a scarlet rope on her door every day. And this way, she was symbolizing her *shame*, her sin, her—you may argue—her profession.

And before the spies left, they instructed her to hang the scarlet rope outside her *window*—not on her *door*.



The Scarlet Rope

The goal of the Israelites was to get inside the city of Jericho, to conquer the city. The spies were there to plan ahead, to strategize (to scout what's inside the city).

Look at this: There was a scarlet rope on the door to show that the prostitute was open for business.

And the spies said, “You put that scarlet rope on the window.”

If you'll notice, Rahab's house was outside the wall of the city.

I want you to imagine with me: Who would be passing by... who would be the ones interested to pass by the street where you'll see a door with a red rope hanging on it?

But the spies said use that scarlet rope, hang it by the window. And if it's going to be outside the wall, everybody would see that that is *our* scarlet rope.

Do you see it?

That's how God works. The scarlet rope was going to be seen by the entire city. It was going to be seen by the whole world.

And check out how God works in very amazing ways. What was once a symbol—the red, scarlet rope—of personal *shame*, became a symbol of *salvation* for the entire, the whole nation.



Shame... and Salvation

Did it change?

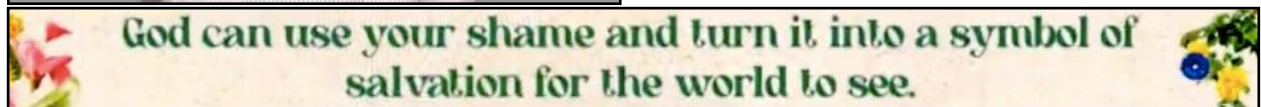
Did the scarlet rope change?

It was still the scarlet rope.

But God can use it differently
and hang it around in a different way.

And instead of showing your shame,
it will show your salvation.

God can use your shame and transform
it into a symbol of salvation for the world
to see.



Just like Audee, I have my past. I still have my present. And I am a sinful person. Like you. And welcome home. This is a house full of sinners. Trying to follow God. In our own, simple ways.

But I kid you not. Even our shamefulnes—God uses to heal others. Even in our weakness, God becomes strong so that this inspires other people.

Let me recap:

Three Steps To Conquer Shame:

Declare God's Sovereignty

Draw in God's Messengers

Display the Lord's Goodness.

Rahab. Rahab's life is an inspiration. Rahab. How many of you it's your first time to hear about Rahab? Raise your hand.

Fantastic. I love The Feast. We get to really dwell with the Bible.

Rahab's life. Rahab was an inspiration. But you know, that wasn't always the case. Once upon a time, society saw her as unclean, sinful, shameful, undeserving sinner. That could had been her sad story.

We, sometimes, are viewed by the world like Rahab. Sinful, unclean, shameful. And yet Rahab's life made a powerful impact...



Hall of Faith

Actually, if you go thousands of years later – I’m not kidding—if you look into the Word from Hebrews 11, you’ll see great examples of faith.

This is the Bible chapter that shows the Hall of Fame—the Hall of Heroes of Faith:

Hebrews 11 NLT

Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah,
Isaac, Joseph, Moses, Rahab...

Hebrews 11:31 NLT

It was by faith that Rahab the prostitute was not destroyed with the people in her city who refused to obey God.

It was faith. It was Rahab’s faith to open the door. It was with faith to welcome them in—even it appeared to be dangerous. Even if it was unfamiliar. Even if it showed her shame.

Faith. Just like all the heroes mentioned. Just like Rahab. It saved her family. It saved her life. It meant the welcoming, that opening of the door saved the entire nation of Israel. Because one person opened her door.

Maybe you will be used by the Lord-- despite your shame. And in your openness, healing would flow in your family. Abundance-- you will be the one who will open the door to your generation, to your clan. That there will be no more poverty. No more negativity. No more hurting. And these will be replaced with blessings, healing, abundance.

Guys, don’t underestimate the power of your faith. It was the most extreme example that the display of God’s love for us was shown. God had faith in us. And He gave us His only Son. He knew He would suffer. He would die. For the love of us.

But in God’s hands, in God’s love, it doesn’t end in death. There is always new life. There’s always a Garden that we will go home to.



Not Yet Over

Your story? It is not yet over.
God's story in your life is not yet over.

So, today, let us applaud God.

And I want you to declare
the goodness of God.

As we come into Worship, I want you to say: *"Lord, I am ready to open the door. Lord, come, change my life. Transform my life. Save me. Save my family. Despite my shame, salvation is in my life-- in our Community, in our country!"*



Your mercy is lifting us up.

Lift your voice, lift your heart to Him! Your whole heart! Your life!

Let's pray together:

We believe. Our hope and our assurance are in you Lord. Our hands raised towards You. These are us, showing our faith. Grace is holding us now. You're lifting us up. Your love is making us whole again. Your Word is healing us. You are Life to us. In our brokenness, You build us up again. You write beautiful stories. And You're not done with us yet. Our story is not over yet because it is Your story in our life. We love You God. We are Yours yesterday, today, and forever. You are God and there is no other. In Jesus' Name. Amen!



MERCY MINISTRIES

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” –Matthew 11:28-30

JESUS CHRIST CARES FOR CANCER PART 5

One Over-Coffee-Talk ...

By MARINA S. UY

IN mid-2015, I had coffee with Bro. Rey Ortega, brainchild of a number of our Mercy Ministries.

That casual over-coffee-talk turned into an official commitment with me signing up as a founding director of the cash aid foundation, of Jesus Christ Cares for Cancer (JCCFC).

I’ve been blessed to be a volunteer servant in Mercy Ministries – the reason I’ve been meeting with Bro. Rey, usually discussing our mission over a cup of coffee.

And I’ve been in these ministries because many years ago I myself needed mercy.

I am third of six children my parents struggled to raise. My father worked as a security guard in a sugar plantation. To help make both ends meet, my mother put up a sari-sari store. As if our daily burdens were not enough, we suffered two major blows.

First, my father was murdered at his workplace — for reasons I am not privy to discuss. I was then only 10 years old.

Then, a few years later, my mother was diagnosed with cancer of the throat.

By this time, I was already 14 years old.

At the time, I was in my final year in high school. After high school, I initially studied at the College of the Holy Spirit in Tarlac for a Bachelor of Science degree, major in Business Administration. But my preferred course, Accounting, was not offered in our school or anywhere in my hometown. So, I decided to continue my college education in Manila. At first, my mother didn’t like the idea, but she eventually blessed my decision—on the condition that I would augment the allowance she provided by being a working student.



Cycles

As often said, life is a cycle of ups and downs. Amid my downs, God has blessed me with ups — blessings I am so grateful for.

One, I finished college. I enrolled at the Philippine School of Business Administration (PSBA Manila) to study Accounting on the third year. I graduated in 1978 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration, major in Accounting. On the same year, I passed the board exam to become a Certified Public Accountant (CPA).

I endeavored to excel in my studies to make my mother proud. The least I could do to make her happy amid her ailment.

I tried the best I could to help ease her ordeal as she battled cancer. For instance, she loved grapes. So, at times, I skipped lunch and saved whatever I earned from my part-time job so I could buy grapes for her and visit her during semestral breaks.

She bravely fought hard but alas, she succumbed to this cruel disease in 1978 — five years after she was diagnosed. I mourned deeply but I am thankful that even in my small ways I'd been able to ease her pain.

Two, I found a fulfilling job at the Sycip Gorres Velayo (SGV) and Company as a junior auditor. Currently, I'm a real estate investor engaged in buying and selling of properties. I also help in our family business as a corporate secretary, treasurer, and finance head at Ford Tractor Phils., Inc., a supplier of agricultural equipment.

Three, I met and married Sam Uy.

I must say this is the best. Because Sam is a godly man, devoted in serving the Lord and His people. We are blessed with three wonderful children and two granddaughters.

Here we are celebrating my 60th birthday five years ago, *from left:* my son-in-law Luigui Guerrero, 40 years old; my daughter Michelle Anne, 40, with my granddaughters Lira, 14, and Vega, 7; At my left side are my husband Sam, and our sons Michael Sean, 38; and Mark Samuel, 36.



Ministries

My husband and I joined the Worldwide Marriage Encounter Philippines in 1990. We have been actively involved in this ministry where we met Bro. Rey Ortega and his wife Sis. Myrna.



This was the start of a beautiful and close friendship between our family and theirs. Especially because we share the same passion for ministering to those in need.

Since Sam and I both experienced that a good education led us to a fairly comfortable life, we are particularly passionate about providing education for children of indigent families as a way of uplifting them from poverty.

In 2008, Sam, together with his elder brother Johnny, set up the Gregorio P. Uy & Lee Peng Scholarship Foundation in Isabela in honor of their parents. I help in any way I can. Today, the foundation has 80 college scholars.

Eventually, we learned that Bro. Rey initiated Mercy Ministries well supported by the Light of Jesus Family – one of them, the Pag-asa ng Pamilya Foundation, which grants scholarships to indigent students.

At right, a batch of scholars enjoying an action song during a Pag-asa discipleship program.

And knowing about our advocacy, Bro. Rey did not waste a second to invite us to initially sponsor two Pag-Asa ng Pamilya Foundation scholars. We were simply happy to be blessed with this ministry.

We were so inspired by their dedication to their scholarship program that we gladly supported them financially.



The Feast

Knowing about the Light of Jesus, I naturally also came to know about its faith gathering, The Feast, which I first attended at the Camp Aguinaldo in 1998.

Since the Coronavirus Disease (COVID) Pandemic, Sam and I have been attending the online Feast Bay Area morning session.

Of late, The Feast is already being held *live*, led by Bro. Bo Sanchez (*above*) and with Bro. Audee Villaraza (*right*) as key preacher.

Thus, aside from the blessings of ministries, we've been receiving grace of spiritual formation.



A plus blessing is the unconditional love of our LOJ Caring Group headed by Bro. Hermie and Sis. Reng Morelos.

Standing, from left: Russel Ferrer, Lito Saura, Domie Fernandez, Hermie, Sam, Mon Toledo, Rudy Mallari I, Jed de Leon. *Seated, from left:* Marie Ferrer, Sol Saura, Perla Fernandez, Reng, Marin, Jojie Toledo, Ofel Mallari, Mayet de Leon.

Wish Come True

With deepening faith, the more we desired to serve God — a wish He soon fulfilled.

In 2019, Bro. Hermie Morelos, LOJ-Feast Mercy Ministries head, offered another blessing to us: Sam as president, and I as board director of Pag-Asa ng Pamilya. Without batting an eyelash, we humbly accepted the assignment.



Here we are with our reward: Our happy K-12 scholars from the St. Peter The Apostle Parish in Paco, Manila.

From there, God led us to a few more steps into the other Light of Jesus Mercy Ministries.



For many years, Sam and I supported the Tahanan ng Pagmamahal orphanage for abandoned children. Sam headed the charity institution as its president, while I served as treasurer.

At left, Bro. Rey and Sis. Myrna attending to Tahanan children.

In the years that followed, Bro. Rey requested us to help lepers and cancer patients under the care of the Healthcare Assistance for the Indigents and Leper of Mary or H.A.I.L. Mary in Abra. We continue to send much needed medicines to H.A.I.L. Mary beneficiaries to this day.



Jesus Cares

Then just as I thought my plate was already full, God had one more blessing for me.

In mid-2015, Bro. Rey introduced to us yet another Light of Jesus Mercy ministry, the Jesus Christ Cares for Cancer, Inc. (JCCFC). A casual over-coffee-talk turned into an official commitment with me signing up as a founding director of the cash aid foundation.



Here we are with our JCCFC team attending the Kerygma Conference 2019, from left: Gil Ramos, Admission and Aid Committee head; Dang Ramos, auditor; Sam, Pag-Asa Ng Pamilya Foundation president; Marin, JCCFC and Pag-Asa Ng Pamilya director; Pearlie Flores; Rowena Cequeña, Finance Team head.

More for God

Bro. Rey didn't have to tell me details about this Ministry for cancer patients.

Remember, I am eye, mind, heart witness of what cancer does. What it did to my Mom. She was constantly in pain, and to make matters worse, at the time, she was already a solo parent, struggling to make both ends meet for our family.

It was pain I wouldn't wish on anyone and yes, it's big blessing that God is now using me to help ease if not totally prevent that pain inflicted on others.

Now I have a chance to help indigent cancer patients through JCCFC.



I'm blessed to have a supportive husband who allows me to extend financial assistance and donate Christmas goodies to JCCFC beneficiaries.

One of the most heartwarming remarks I heard was from a woman suffering from terminal lung cancer to whom we gave financial assistance and Christmas goodies.

She said the pack of cupcakes and other groceries were fiesta to her family: "Maraming salamat po. Paborito po namin ng mga anak ko ang mga binigay ninyo. Makabili man kami, pa isa isa lang, pinagsasaluhan pa. Ngayon fiesta kami!—Thank you very much. What you gave are my children's favorites. If ever we could buy cakes, it was just one piece at a time. And it was like already a feast for us."

Such a comment is indeed inspiring.

Anchored on the Word

"Delight yourself in the Lord and He will grant the desires of your heart."

– Psalm 37:4

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

– Philippians 4:13

These Bible verses, fervent prayers, and my family are my sources of strength and inspiration. They encourage me to do more of God's work ... and to show the world that by His grace, one could triumph over trials.

That may already be a common message. But still, someone may yet need to hear it-- even just during a casual over-the-coffee talk.



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@kerygmfamily.com

Website: <https://kerygmfamily.com> Telephone Numbers: 8725-9999/

Fax 725-1230

Our Partner Beneficiaries

Jeremiah 33 Foundation

is a shelter for girls particularly victims of sexual abuse.

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



He Cares Mission

provides shelter for street children.

Pag-asa ng Pamilya Foundation

gives scholarships to poor students.



Jesus Christ Cares for Cancer

provides financial assistance and pastoral care for indigent cancer patients.

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



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



The Light of Jesus Disaster Recovery Ministry

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

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



LIGHT OF JESUS FAMILY
DISASTER RECOVERY MINISTRY

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.kerygmfamily.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 Shepherd's 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 Shepherd'Ours Voice, 60 Chicago St., Cubao, Quezon City, Philippines 1109

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

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Note: Text, Fax, or email us your name, date and amount of deposit, and the branch of the bank where you deposited your donation, or fax the deposit slip to us. Email us at support@kerygmfamily.com or text us at (63) 922-828-9890/ (63) 998-968-4416 or Fax to (+632) 725-1230



FAMILY ONLINE NEWSMAGAZINE

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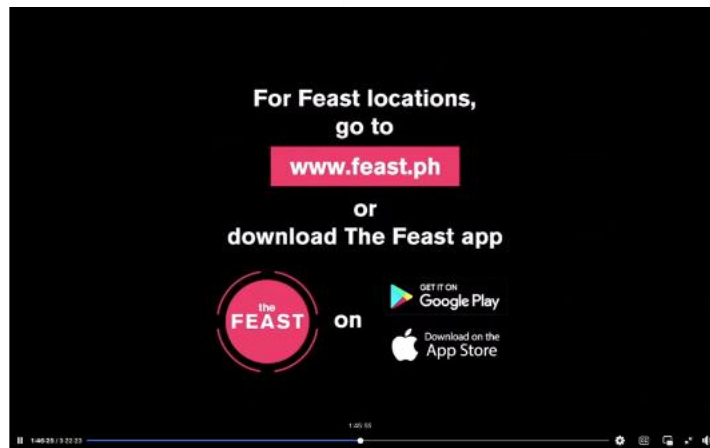
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Go and make disciples of all men.

— Matthew 28:19

