

NEWSLETTER July 16, 2023

GRAND FEAST SPECIAL



Honor Your Body, Honor God

OUR title comes from the letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians:

Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So, you must honor God with your body. -- 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NLT

Yes, you honor God when you take good care of your body.

In our ongoing special Feast talk series, What Matters Most, we already focused on the first two valuable aspects of human life: First, *Faith*, and second, *Family.* Today, we discuss the third: *Fitness.*

And to tackle this issue is the doctor in our Feast Family, Bro. Dr. Didoy Lubaton. Doc Didoy practices general medicine with natural and holistic approach. Yes, since he is a Feast missionary, he focuses not only on physical fitness but balance and wholeness to heal the body, mind, and spirit.

He says, "Yes, you are bought with a high price. You are valuable. You have great worth! Take care of the gift of life, the gift of our body and mind. And you are no ordinary earthen vessel. You are a dwelling place of God! Reserved for royalty, King of Kings, Lord of the Universe! When we fully realize

and embrace this truth, we ought to care for our body and mind. "

That's Fitness, The Feast style. Know more about it today.

All for God's Glory,

AUDEE VILLARAZA Feast Bay Area Builder

WELCOME to the continuation of our Special Feast Series: What Matters Most Talk 3: Fitness



Happy Body, Happy Life



FR. PAOLO ASPRER pointed that out during his homily in our Grand Feast last Sunday, July 9, 2023. To be happy, keep your body happy by having regular time to rest in the Lord. That's the essence of last Sunday's Gospel (Matthew 11:25-30). And Fr. Paolo shared five ways to do that, *page 3*.

Happy body is important if you want a happy family life. That's why our Feast special series, *What Matters Most*, includes *Fitness* in the list

of yes, what should be most valuable for us.

Bro. Didoy Lubaton is preaching the talk on *Fitness*. Why Bro. Didoy? Because he's a doctor. Check out the introduction of Bro. Audee Villaraza, *page 1*.



If you missed Talk 2, about *Family Matters*, last Sunday, *Flashback* by Bro. Audee, Bro. Alvin Barcelona



with son Aio (*left*), and Bro. Bo Sanchez starts on *page 33*.Missing Bro. Bo Sanchez, as our "Cover Boy" on *page 1*?Well, he's resting for a while from being main preacher this month. Because he and his wife Sis. Marowe (*below, extreme*)



right) needed the fitness pause for their very happy events this July, which they shared in last Sunday's Grand Feast Special Conversation with, from left: Bro. JC Libiran, Dr. Ryan Capitulo, Bro. Lep Sumera, and Dr. Michelle Alignay, page 14.



Happy Body, Happy Life happens when you happily care enough to help others to be happy. Learn from Sis. Gladys, carer in our Light of Jesus Family Pastoral Care Center, *pages 52-53*,

The *Grand Feast* last Sunday was, yes, *grand*. So, you get today a jumbo special issue of *The Feast Family*!

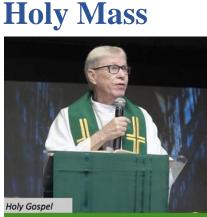
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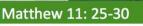
Randy Borromeo Media Ministry Executive Director





FLASHBACK! JULY 9, 2023 GRAND FEAST





Concelebrant: FR. BOB McCONAGHY



FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



Homily FR. PAOLO ASPRER on the Cospel Matthew 11: 25

on the Gospel Matthew 11: 25-30

Good Morning, Brothers and Sisters in Christ! A blessed and a fruitful Sunday to everyone! Who among you here are feeling tired? Who among you here are really and truly tired? Who among you here are dead tired?

Who are low-batt? Empty batt? Drained battery?

My dear friends in Christ, Welcome. Welcome home! This is the Good News: The Feast is not just simply a gathering of grateful, happy, successful people. But The Feast, above all, is a gathering of worn out, wounded, wasted people like

us. Let's give a warm of applause to the Lord for gathering us in this fellowship of faith, of hope, of love, of new beginnings, of healing.

Rest in the Eucharist

My dear friends in Christ, in every Eucharistic celebration in every Mass, ultimate love happens. God gives Himself to us in the form of bread and wine. And in the same way, we also give, we also offer, we also surrender-not only our blessed life but more so our broken life.

And in giving to the Lord, in offering



to the Lord, in surrendering to the Lord—we receive the ultimate love of God for us. Self-love happens. Self-respect happens because when we receive Jesus, that is the ultimate self-love—self-rest.

My dear friends in Christ, ano ang kinapapaguran ninyo sa buhay? What makes you tired?

Maybe, some are saying, "God, I'm in the middle. I'm tired but I can move forward." *Pagod na ako pero kaya ko pa*.

"Father, pagod na akong sabihing okay lang ako. Pagod na akong magpanggap na okay lang ako.—I'm tired of saying "I'm okay."

"Father, pagod na akong umintindi. Sana ako naman ang iniintindi.—I'm tired of being understanding. I wish someone would understand me."

Can you relate? Iba-iba ang klase ang pagod ng tao. There are various kinds of tiredness. There's what we call physical tiredness, emotional tiredness, spiritual tiredness, mental tiredness, existential tiredness.

A good friend of mine said, "You know what Father, please pray for me because I am paralyzed."

I looked at his legs and they seem okay.

Yun pala pera-lyzed. Broke. Spiritual tiredness.

I have a friend who said, "Father, burnout is real, tiredness is real, but *Judith* is more real!"

Judith means due date-- due date of payment for electricity, for tuition fee.

What kind of tiredness do we feel? You know, we live in a velocity driven society. It's a rat race. All of our life, we are practically running, isn't it? Even in our sleep, we are running. That is why sometimes when we wake up, we still feel tired because even in our dreams, we are running. Meron tayong tinatakasan.

—We are escaping from something.

Time To Take a Rest

We live in a velocity driven society. It's a rat race. Why? Because society tends to divide us into winners and losers. That is why we have to perform-- and with that performance we want to be significant, to be relevant. There's that tendency to outdo, outsmart, outachieve, outhustle, outwit each other.

Nakakapagod, tiresome, isn't it?

Now, you take away what you have, what you are, what you do-- and what's left? We equate the meaning, the dignity with what we do and not who we really are, and *whose* we are.

My dear friends in Christ, how comforting, how consoling the words of our Lord Jesus.



Simple words but profound: "Come to me. Rest in me."

Rest on me, I will rest in you. Let us rest together. It's not just simply a lifestyle suggestion. It's a divine invitation, a divine commandment.

You know, when we get tired, there's a tendency to suffer burnout. And with that feeling of tiredness, a lot of feelings as well-- emptiness, restlessness, meaninglessness, loneliness, bitterness.

My dear Feasters, the burnout that we feel sometimes, it's not caused by a lack of rest, a lack of sleep. But the burnout we feel is actually caused by a lack of love, a lack of focus on what truly is essential in our life.

So, our Lord Jesus tells us, "Rest."

Time to recharge, time to recalibrate, time to refocus, time to rekindle, time to remember, time to receive. Ang buhay natin ay hindi lamang 'yung bigay ng bigay. Life should not be always just giving and giving. We should also be humble enough to receive, to rest.

In the world we live in, the path leads always forward. Move forward, no time to go backward, no time to look upward, no time to look inward---now we are called to pause, to rest.

5 P's on How To Rest in the Lord



My dear friends in Christ, here are five P's how we can truly rest in the Lord:

Prayer

You know, I've been more than five years in the priestly ministry. I really feel the tiredness. But there's a kind of tiredness that requires just a good night sleep. And there's a kind of tiredness that requires deeper connection. There's a kind of tiredness that at the end of it all, you feel angry, you feel bitter, you feel judgmental, you feel uncharitable *kahit na binigay mo na ang lahat—even you've given everything you've got,*

But there's a kind of tiredness where you feel joy,

fulfillment, rest. It is only possible when we surrender in prayer.

You know, I have this prayer mantra:

Every time I wake up in the morning, I say, "Lord, it's You not me."

Every time I experience a trial, temptation, tribulation, toils in my ministry, that's my mantra: *Lord, it's You not me*.

Every time I go to bed in the evening, when I'm so tired I am like, "Lord, pardon me, I cannot read the breviary (official prayer of the Church)."

And then I just say, "Lord, it's You, not me. Lord, thank You. Lord, I am sorry." Surrender.

Reading I: Zechariah 9:9-10

⁹ Rejoice heart and soul, daughter of Zion! Shout for joy, daughter of Jerusalem! Look, your king is approaching, he is vindicated and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.¹⁰ He will banish chariots from Ephraim and horses from Jerusalem; the bow of war will be banished. He will proclaim peace to the nations, his empire will stretch from sea to sea, from the River to the limits of the earth.



Pause

Who among you here has a complete hour of sleep? 7 hours? 8 hours? 24 hours? Like a convenient store, right? All day long you're asleep.

People say when you have complete sleep, you're practicing for the inevitable. Scary, right? The dead just looks like in deep slumber.

Actually, if you have deep sleep, it's a sign of deep faith.

You know, in one of the Gospel episodes, Jesus is with the apostles on a journey, on a mission, riding on a boat. Suddenly, there's a violent storm, strong winds



rocking the boat. The apostles cower in fear while Jesus is sleeping like a baby. From whom he inherited that? From his father--Sleeping St. Joseph.

But actually, before he made a crucial decision whether to divorce Mary or not, what did Joseph do? He slept, and in his dream, the plan of God was revealed. A person with deep sleep has deep faith.

You know, sleep is elusive at the moment, nowadays, because it's a velocity driven society.

Buddha said, "Sleep is the best meditation."

When we sleep, we allow God to be God. Why? Because when we sleep, we are stripped off of our ultimate delusion. And what is our ultimate delusion? Omnipotence. Control. We like to control our life, people, our surroundings.

When we sleep, we allow God to be God. Even God, on the seventh day of Creation, He rested.

I wonder who doesn't sleep? As singer Gary V's song goes: *Natutulog ba angDiyos— Is God sleeping*? Of course, He's always awake, He's also asleep.

But there is someone who truly does not sleep. It's the devil-- Satan. Why? Because he wants to be like God. He wants to overpower God so, he works double time, triple time.

Pause. A well-rested field produces a healthy and bountiful harvest. The Third Commandment says, "Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day." It's not simply a lifestyle suggestion. It is a Divine Commandment like "Thou shall not steal," "Thou shall not commit adultery."

Sleep. Pause.



Passion

St. Augustine would say, "We are what we love."

When we work for something that we don't care about, what do you call that?

Stress.

But when we work hard for something that we care for, that's what we call passion.

I have another friend who says, "You know what, in my stage of life, I don't only chase my pension, I chase my passion."

Life is not about length, it's about depth. It's not about speed, it's about substance. Fullness of life—passion.

Priorities

Every one of us is busy. We say, "But it's all about priorities."

We have to say that painful *No* to the many good things, for us to say *Yes* to the better opportunities, brighter opportunities, and deeper opportunities in life.

Priority has something to do with finding balance in our daily life action and contemplation, work ministry and silence, discernment and listening.

At the end of the day, it's not about what we have done-- but actually it's what God continues to do and accomplish through us unworthy servants.

Reading II: Romans 8:9, 11-13

⁹ You, however, live not by your natural inclinations, but by the Spirit, since the Spirit of God has made a home in you. Indeed, anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.¹¹ and if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead has made his home in you, then he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your own mortal bodies through his Spirit living in you.¹² So then, my brothers, we have



no obligation to human nature to be dominated by it.¹³ If you do live in that way, you are doomed to die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the habits originating in the body, you will have life.



Peace

What is peace for you? Peace is not just simply the absence of war and conflict. Peace is when our relationships are aright. Right with God, with people, with our deepest self, our deepest core and identity.

Peace has something to do with forgiveness. Forgive and forget or forgive and remember?

Fr. Michael Laguardia said, "*Tayo daw mga Pilipino mga likas na mga magsasaka mapagtanim.*—We Filipinos are farmers in nature we plant resentments.

Well, actually that's the irony, isn't it? We remember the things that we should forget and we forget the things that we should remember.

My dear friends, perhaps the reason we are restless is that *napakahirap naman talaga* magpatawad—it's so hard to forgive. Because it doesn't happen overnight. It's above all, a grace from God, it's a process, it's a journey. Sometimes, the healing process is more painful than the wound itself.

We can forgive. But to trust again that person is a different story. We can move forward with or without the person.

But again, true peace can only come from forgiveness. We ask forgiveness from God, we ask forgiveness from people who we hurt. And also, we receive the forgiveness from people who hurt us.

Of course, it doesn't happen overnight. It's, above all, grace, a process, a journey.

My dear friends in Christ, our Lord Jesus invites us not only to "Rest in Me." "Rest on Me. I will rest on You as well. But let's rest together."

My dear friends, more than knowing the Lord, we are actually known by the Lord. We have nothing to prove. More than seeking the Lord, we are sought by the Lord. More than we serving the Lord, the Lord serves us. And more than loving the Lord, we are actually loved by the Lord. Amen.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 145:1-2, 8-9, 10-11, 13-14

¹ [Hymn of Praise of David] I shall praise you to the heights, God my King, I shall bless your name forever and ever.





BRO. JOHN BEN RODRIGUEZ:

Good Morning, Brothers and Sisters!

Welcome to The Feast Bay Are where you are

loved! Are there first-timers here? Can you raise your

hands? Can you give a hand to them? If there's a first timer beside you, I want you to smile at that person, and we hope that you first timers make this your spiritual home. We hope that we see you every single week and later don't go home yet! We have a very special gift for you. We'll invite you to come forward and we'll pray for you.



Love Offering

Since it's already mid-year, who among you here have achieved goals at this time?

A big hand to God, please! Thank you so much.

Time flies. We're already in the second half of the year!

Who among you here are still in the process of achieving their goals for this year-- and you're gaining progress? Hallelujah!



May you look at the person beside you? Is that person fitter now? The dress fits better now? Is that person happier now? Is that person better now?

I want to share with you something inspiring. We got news from our greeters today that one attendee found a Love Offering envelope on the floor and when the attendee opened the envelope, there was money inside. So, the attendee gave it to the greeter and the greeter told us about it so we can drop it in the Offering bag.

That is good news for two persons. For the first person who lost your envelope, know that what you intended to give to God will surely go to Him. And for the person who picked up the envelope and returned it here, we want to thank you because you followed God. God will bless you.

I was so inspired by that. Because I believe that what we intend to give to God will always go to God. Whatever money that goes to God, goes to building His Kingdom and bringing blessing to more people.

Why is that concept powerful? It's powerful because you might be telling God, "Lord, wala po yung mga dreams ko. Lord, bakit ganito? —Lord, I have yet to receive what I dream for. Lord, why is it like this?"

I claim in bold confidence today that whatever good blessing God declared and intended for your life, will happen this year, in Jesus' Name! Because the God who

intended blessings for you will make those blessings to happen in your life.

That's why we continue to encourage you to give and have this habit of giving. You want to know why? Because giving to God is always opening yourself to His will and His grace. Do you want His grace in your life? Do you want blessings to flow in your life? Then make it a habit to give.



Worship! EXHORTATION



BRO. TONY VALENZUELA:

Happy Sunday, Feast Bay Area family! May I hear some noise for Jesus in this place? May I invite you to all stand up?

And as you stand up, may you greet the person beside you, "Happy July!" *Grabe, July na*. It's the second half of the year. It's that time of the year where we take a pause in this series. Let's reflect, let's contemplate, "Where are we now?

And I'm sure many of us are asking: "Lord, where is the blessing that You promised?" "Lord, where is the business opportunity?" "Lord, where is the love life You promised me?" "Lord!"

And I know some of you, just like me, are asking right now, "Lord, where are we going with this? Where are we heading to? What have you prepared for me? What's in store for me? Lord, I'm listening but You're so silent. I'm giving my best shot but the fruits are not coming out. Lord, where are You?

There's an answer to that: God is not finished yet.

He is just getting started. He is working on a miracle behind the scenes. He is prepping things up. He is building up something for you that you have yet to imagine and it is so good that today in our Gospel God says, "All who labor and are burdened, I will give you rest."







BRO. DR. DIDOY LUBATON:

Welcome Home! This is our Light of Jesus Family. This is The Feast where we are loved by God. Welcome home to The Feast Bay Area.

Love kayo ni Lord! And I want you to raise your right hand, please, and high-five as many persons as you can, shake hands, and tell them, *Welcome Home!* Welcome to the Family! This our Church, our Catholic Home! Those watching online, Welcome, Welcome!

And again, those, attending for the first time, Welcome!

This is our Grand Feast. It's a beautiful time, and we have a beautiful Feast that will be served to us today.

Today, we are going to have a beautiful discussion about *What Matters Most*. This is going to be our third talk. And I hope that this series will really bless you --practical and yet aligned and rooted in our spirituality and our faith.

So, to facilitate the discussion may you please give a big hand to Bro. JC Libiran.





GRAND FEAST SPECIAL PART 2 Special Conversation: *Family Matters*



BRO. JC LIBIRAN: Thank you, Doc Didoy. This is a special part – *Usapang Family*... Yes, we are the Light of Jesus Family but we are a family of families.

We want to discuss various concerns, common experiences, but also possible we may not discuss all, but what's beautiful about simply chatting, it's not necessary to be complete. What's important is we start the conversation and we are inviting to continue that, when you go back home, or after this Grand Feast, it's an opportunity for us to just talk.

We have a special guest, a family psychologist and she has written numerous books, and definitely we will be blessed by her, Dr.

Michele 'Ichel' Alignay. Let's give her a round of applause.

We also have Bro. Bo Sanchez and Sis. Marowe. We also have with us Dr. Ryan Capitulo, and Bro. Lep Sumera.

Let's begin right away. Sis. Marowe, share with us biggest secrets, lessons, in your 25 years of a happy and healthy married life with Bro. Bo.

SIS. MAROWE: Actually, they are not secrets because we have been very open and sharing what we do in our marriage... Twenty-five years... in two days (July 11) **BRO. BO:** We thought of giving you a lunch treat but PICC does not allow bringing in food here... ☺



Secrets to a Happy Marriage



SIS. MAROWE: So, maybe, I'll give three secrets/lessons...

1. Deliberate Date.

First, definitely it's having deliberate couple time together. Because in our case, most of the time, we're always together in the house—because he works from home, and I used to homeschool. So, we're just in the house.

But I'm sure couples experience this—when you do your daily living you tend to forget how to be loving, little irritations would be there.

So, of course, if you really set a deliberate time to just be together – whether just a simple dinner, or watching a movie—it's your time, something sacred for the two of you. That has helped our marriage be what it is today. Correct, Bo?

BRO. BO: Well, I'm not irritated with you...

SIS. MAROWE: Oh, I'd been digging out letters... you do have irritations about me before. I'll reveal those... Joke. O

So, first, have your weekly dates. If weekly is not possible, do it twice a month—just have that date. It's important that you have it. To reconnect with each other and really talk—not through cell phone.

2. Honesty

Second is, of course, honesty. I say honesty because we always say we should not be mind-readers. Honesty is what we really recommend for couples.

I know, it's romantic, like "If he knew what I wanted..." Isn't it, we have such fantasy... Ladies, we all know very well what we want, but when you are asked, if we like this or that, you say "No." But gusto mo pala—you want it.

Like, your husband would say, "May I go to this place...?"

And you would say, Sige, okay, you may go..."

But you really don't want him to go there...

Tell It as It Is

So, that's No. 2. You really have to tell each other what you like, what you want, what you need, right? Because it really takes out guess-work, unnecessary misunderstanding. Get rid of, "I like it to be romantic... He should know what I want..."

We are not like that. Early on, he did try (to be romantic) but it was super hit-and-miss. Like, one super miss: He went to the Holy Land. Then, he came home excited, bringing a gift for me.

He said, "Here, I bought this for you... a pendant..."

I looked at it... Hey, it looked like a key chain – more than a pendant.

So, in denial (of my disappointment) I just said, "Yes, it's a beautiful pendant..."

I just inhaled, because it looked like there were insects inside the "pendant."

So, he told me, "Okay, when it's your birthday, or Christmas, or Anniversary, you buy the gift you want, then show it to me and say, "Thank you for the gift." ③



So, you're happy. He is also happy. Everybody happy. Instead of, he's so excited to give you a gift... which turns out to be a measly key chain...

No more third secret... the first two are already enough: Dates, Honesty. Thank you.



Harmony

BRO. JC. Thank you, Sis. Marowe.

Bro. Bo it's your turn: How do you balance family life with everything else on your plate?

So, the question is *balance*. Well, you know, there is a better word than *balance*. I really think balance connotes 50 percent work-50 percent family, 30 percent health, 30 percent spiritual—all of that...

But life is not static. Life meanders to different seasons. And each season has different demands.

So, after 25 years, I realized, that the better word that describes what we want in a marriage and in a family is not *balance* but *harmony*.



I remember I posted on social media my morning routine. I said that I meditate, I do my breathing exercises, after that I bike, then after that I read in a coffee shop, and then after that I write and plan, I do my social media, pray with people in my Prayer Room through Facebook... You know, I just go through all those...

And then, there was this person who PMed me (sent a Personal Message) asking a good question: "Bro. Bo, what can you advise for someone with a baby—with a new baby?"

Meaning: When you had a baby, were you able to do your morning routine?

That was a great question. And it reminded me... I'm in a different season in my life-- where *harmony* for me is having that morning routine. Waking up really early in the morning and doing that exercise, and biking, and then having that alone-time in the coffee shop where I can read, and pray, and plan. And spend time with my wife—and you know, we've got these vacations...

But when Bene and Francis were babies, it was impossible. I could not do those. My exercise, I just squeezed it in what I had to do for that day, because I lacked sleep.

Relationship 'Living Thermometer'

So, you know, I just realized, you have to understand what season you are in. Do not aim for balance, aim for harmony—where, in that particular season, you actually say to yourself: What is essential at this particular time?

So, for us, it was time together. But, when the baby is sick, how in the world can you have a weekly date? So, you have to make do with certain situations. There were times when I was building my business—it was still very young, I was giving so much time to it.



You know, I remember going home at 12 midnight -- because we were setting up this and that... then the business failed. It was not a total failure because I learned so many skills...

But in all of those, I really believe the harmony works when you always go home and you make a decision that family is first priority-- when you understand that relationships come first.

Let me end with this: I think, husbands, generally, we don't know if the marriage is hot or cold. Manhid tayo. We are numb. We really don't know if the



relationship is doing well or not.

Thanks be to God, God has given us, in marriage, a wonderful, living thermometer and that is the woman. And what husbands need to do—and this is what I do: You know, I've asked my wife – in the past 25 years— "How's our relationship?"

Even if I think the relationship is amazing, if she says, "We lack time for each other—you are so busy, you no longer have time for us..."

That's the truth. Because she is the God-ordained thermometer of the relationship. And I need to doubt my perspective because she's just wired—God wired her brain to be the thermometer of the relationship.

So, when she says that, what do I do? I adjust, I say, "Sorry. Let's spend more time together."

Thank you.



The Barometer DR. MICHELE ALIGNAY: I'll add to that: The wives are the family thermometer, according to Bro. Bo. I agree with that.

A renowned psychologist, Dr. Lourdes Carandang, said the children are the family barometer. Okay. Connected. Because if the mom is not okay—especially for families here, who have young children, check the temperament of your kids. If they're acting out, if they're doing something irrational, it's actually

not about the kids. Most of the time, it's about the marriage. Because the children are absorbing a lot of the things that are not assumed, not spoken, not talked about in the family.

So, when your kids are acting out-- even for teenagers, families of teenagers always check your marriage. I believe in what Bro. Bo is saying: it's about harmony, there are different seasons—season in the life of your children, season of your life-- developmentally, we are changing,

We cannot say, "My love will never change."

No. We change. Our families are supposed to change and evolve. And in the process, you have a different season because your children are still young -- I have teens like Bo and Marowe-- we have different seasons, so, we all should adjust.

Because at the end of the day-- I will go back to what Marowe said: it's a deliberate intent, whatever season it is, what is important in this season. And, that template for harmony—I love that word *harmony*—also changes. Family life is not about Excel file that's formulated. It's about PowerPoint template—you may change it, depending on the season you are in. There's a template but you work within that template—try to change it.

So, I will end with this: Marriage is about you and God first. There is a different role of parents as a couple—you have a different relationship as a couple from your relationship as parents. So, never ever merge those two roles. What we vowed before the altar was to be a spouse, not to be a parent of a child. If you change the ball game, the marriage will be problematic. Because when we are already in our retirement years, you might not recognize your spouse anymore because you're so consumed by work, parenting. So, there are many failed marriages later at mid-life because they no longer recognize each other, and many no longer recognize themselves: Who am I? What am I for?

So, never forget to take care of yourself, take care of your marriage deliberately so that you can be the best parents for your children, whatever season it may be.

Happy Birthday, Happy Anniversary!

BRO. JC: Amen. God bless our marriages.

Bro. Bo and Sis. Marowe are celebrating not just their 25th Wedding Anniversary. They are also celebrating their birthdays—Sis Marowe, July 3, and Bro. Bo, July 11.

We have something special for them. We would like to call Bro. Alvin Barcelona, some of our Builders, Bene and Francis Sanchez—to pray for Bo and Marowe and to honor them.







BRO. ALVIN BARCELONA: Let us extend our hands to Bo and Marowe, as we pray: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: Father in Heaven, we give you praise and thanks for such beautiful gifts, precious gifts to all of us, and to all of humanity, in the life and person

of Bro. Bo and Sis. Marowe. Their selflessness, their service, their generosity have truly inspired millions. And above all, their love for one another has modeled to us – couples and families—their love for their children, Bene and Francis, and their love for Your people.

We pray, dear Father, that You continue to pour out blessings of health, of happiness, of wealth that is flowed out to many. We pray for more joy, and peace, and harmony in their life.

Thank You, dear Lord, for the gift of Bro. Bo and Sis. Marowe. This we lift up in the mighty Name of Jesus. Amen.

Let us also applaud other July birthday celebrators: Bro. John Ben Rodriguez and Bro. Adrian Panganiban.

OFW Families

BRO. JC: Now, I'll go in sharing. I am a family of OFWs (Overseas Filipino Workers). My father worked abroad, my siblings as well. So, if you look at our family pictures, we don't have a single photo where we are complete.



I'm heavy in picture-taking. That's Coach JC taking a we-fie picture. So, the title of our family photo is *Maala-ala Mo Kaya— Will You Ever Remember?—* Because we have no family photo. And I wish we would have one.

So, how did I deal with it? I believe it's also a hit-and-miss-- getting lost, encountering misfortunes. But I'm very grateful because I got into the Light of Jesus Family. I got to know Bro. Bo, *Kerygma* magazine, and I was led into the Community.

So, sometimes, when you're looking for your family, you look for another family that would somehow fill the gap. So, I'm very blessed because I got to join The Feast of our Light of Jesus Family when I was in college. And since then, my spiritual journey has continued. As you can see on the photo, my father is not there, because he already passed away. But somehow, who are still here, we're the ones giving importance to each other. But it's not too late for us to be complete.... We're passing on to our kids, nephews and nieces that even as our family is not complete—because some have to work overseas—there are ways we can still be together.

So, let's take this opportunity to applaud our OFWs—if you're joining us online, thank you very much. At least we know that apart from our family, we can always come home to The Feast.

So, Welcome Home to The Feast Bay Area where you are loved.

Challenge to Parents

DR. MICHELE ALIGNAY: You know, you are blessed. With the generation now, another term for OFWs is migrant families or transnational families. They no longer have an excuse today not to communicate with their families—because of the advent of technology.

During the Coronavirus Disease (COVID) lockdown, I would give Parenting sessions in various schools all over the Philippines, and even abroad for Filipino families. Even families in the Middle East would attend the Parenting sessions.



And they said that it's easier now to monitor their kids, it's easier to connect with their kids.

So, that's my challenge. Because sometimes, even we are complete here physically—we're not emotionally connected. So, sometimes, the transnational families are the ones closer to each other because they are more consistent – I borrow Sis. Marowe's word—more *deliberate* in being together.

We have to be deliberate in our intentions: at this time, we pray, at this time, we call each other.

It's not about just asking, "Do you have a school allowance; do you still have money?" "Mother, may I have money?"

I think that's the concern of many parents.

But you have to, sometimes, just be there for your children, especially the teenagers—that's their concern. If your children are still small, if you can bear to leave them to a trusted adult, make sure that you be present—but not automatic (spur of the moment). You need to continually spend time with them.

And, this is the warning: I think you did well. But many they fill up their absence with material gifts. That's what I heard when I just came back from a session abroad.

What happens is that the parents are like Vendo machines. When the children ask for something, because of their guilt for not being with their kids, the parents give it. But sometimes, that's all that's needed – you may be physically distant— is for you to be emotionally and spiritually connected with your children. That's more important now. And it's possible because of technology.



The Black Sheep

BRO. JC. Amen. Let's applaud the Lord. From OFW, we now go to the black sheep.Bro. Lep Sumera, we know you are a powerful minister to young people.

But relate to us how you overcame being black sheep, and some

issues in your family as well.

BRO. LEP SUMERA: Maybe, I want to present two sides.

My first question is: Bro. Bo, how is the key chain? Kidding aside, my first question is: Is there someone in your family who is unlovable? Someone who is difficult to love. Someone who is toxic.



Please be careful about labeling them right away as black sheep. Because it's a strong negative identity or label.

If there's someone in the family who is difficult, unlovable, toxic, so difficult to understand, I just want to say, in behalf of this unlovable person, I'm sorry.

In behalf of this member of your family, who you feel so difficult to fathom, so difficult to bear, that you just want to throw him away, I want to say thank you for continuously loving *us*. Thank you for continuously understanding us, no matter how difficult to do it. Thank you, thank you. And we're sorry.

I want to talk to those like me who became black sheep:

I know you're just empty. There's just this emptiness within that you've been searching and actually asking to fill up.

It's connected to what Sis. Marowe was saying – that you need to be deliberate to be honest. It's the same with us who are feeling this emptiness. We also need to speak up.

To say, "I'm not okay."

Sometimes, even in the family—Dr. Ichel, you could back upback me up here—it's difficult to speak up.

How Black Turns to White

DR. MICHELLE: Sometimes, it's more difficult to be honest in the family because they are "judges" there. **BRO. LEP:** It's difficult to open up. They will just say, "I went through that too."

DR. MICHELLE: They will say, "Mahal naman kita, a.— I do love you…"



BRO. LEP: It's really difficult. But again, I want to talk to you: you feel this unlovable person, and you're so



empty I just need you to treat your family as your tahanan, your home. Just cry to your family, open up, express your feeling: because what I did was wrong—that I looked for help outside my family. That's why the more I went astray. That's why I got lost.

But what's beautiful here-- JC, you're asking me how I overcame my difficulty—it's not I who overcame.

My family made a way so that I could overcome.

They were Jesus to me and they were the ones who looked for this one lost sheep. I was so lost for a long time. But my mom is my personal St. Monica. She never stopped praying, she never stopped believing. And I just want to say that she didn't like that I was a black sheep. She didn't regard me as a black sheep.

Every time I would call myself a black sheep-- for instance, when we're having dinner-- she would say, "You were not actually a black sheep."

All throughout those times she regarded me as: "You're my child."

It's Jesus in the family. Because I believe if it was just my mom, if it was just my sibling who encouraged me, they would not be enough to really change me.

But it is Jesus who is holding us together, saying, "No. You cannot go astray. No. Come here. Stay with Me."

Jesus is the mighty bond. He really didn't want me to get lost. Because Jesus values families. And he's a Good Shepherd. And speaking of the black sheep, He is the one who continues wiping out the black until such time the sheep would become white again. Maybe it's really grace, and the team work of the family and Jesus in that family.

DR. MICHELLE: Thank you, Lep. That's a very vulnerable sharing. After this, I challenge every one of you, let us not use the term *black sheep* in the family. That's too old. That's too '80s and '70s. What I mean is, because we are here already. That is actually a very toxic Filipino culture. The culture of comparing, the culture of favoritism.

Oh, may I be blunt with you, parents? The reason there are black sheep is you preferred somebody else other than your child. The reason there are black sheep is some of us adults are so full of our own issues that our children are actually the ones absorbing our baggage that we did not resolve.



So, if we are older and our child is old already, and we're calling him black sheep, it's high time that we reflect: "Did I compare this child with someone else, did I judge him? Am I always giving him what he wants to the point that he becomes spoiled. Did he lack attention?"

But from whom should come attention when we were growing up? Because that's a reflection of patterns—which are not bad, but are not of help. That's what we should remember.

Because a favorite question of Pinoys is "Masama ba? Is it bad?"

It is not actually bad. But we are talking about seasons, right? At one point, it's okay, at another point, it's no longer healthy.

So, those with children already in college, don't bring them to--and fetch them from school every day. Then, you even give them baby powder. You know what I mean... Because there are points in our life as parents, as family members, when we need to withhold love—because that's the way to love.

You know what I mean? To us Pinoys, it's about pity: "I pity him... So, I will stop at a certain point ... I always capture what Bro. Bo is saying: "Love from a distance."

But there is a time – like what Tita Cristy, the mom of Lep, did—for fervent prayers. Lep, I'm sure your mom did not give you everything. Because, her business might had failed had she given you everything. She did not give you financial resources. But the prayers, and love, and acceptance she gave you. So, she withheld some and then she supported you with some. And we praise God how you have become, Lep.

But there are many more who suffer and I'll take note of what your mom said: "Anak, kita. You are my child."

We are all children of God. And each one is God's work in progress. Even us. And this is my personal take as parents of adolescents. I have two teenagers.

Our teenagers, even our adult children, are mirrors of our own issues. So, if we do not accept our own issues, it's going to be fireworks at home. So, look at it as a point of reflection at this season of your life.

Good News

BRO. JC: Amen. It's a blessing. Which brings us to... Lep, there's good news you want to share with them?

BRO. LEP: Yes, thank you, JC. And as we talk about the young people, we are going to relaunch The Feast SM Manila on July 28. That's the voice of the young people and we're excited; *At Last, At Last!*

It's also our 14th Founding Anniversary. With the theme: *Return Home, and Recount What God Has Done for You* – *Luke 8:39.*





So, it's going to be at SM Manila Cinema 9, July 28, 6:30 p.m.

We are looking for generous people who will help us. You know, not just the youth who attend this Feast. So, at least, we receive loose changes like P20.00. We're The Feast of Twenties ⁽²⁾.

So, we are really looking for generous people who will help fund our operations. We'll be honest-- the fund we raised is just enough for our operations for only three Fridays. So, we're looking for people to help us because we don't want to stop. We want to go on and on because there are many young persons who need a second home – that's our Feast where they will experience the love of Jesus and the love of a family. So, pray for us, my beloved friends.

Family Loss

BRO. JC: Amen. Let's applaud the Lord. Let's support our young people – the next generation.

And this is now the last of our Conversation. Doc Ryan, we had a beautiful sharing, then suddenly, I'll be asking you about *Family Loss*. How did you deal with your family loss—most especially, as we remember your parents...





DR. RYAN CAPITULO: Yes, actually, I am still dealing with it. I don't think it will stop. It is a continuous process for me.

But I remember...

Some of you may not know: I lost my parents in a span of four and a half months. Both of them – my Dad on September 20, 2021, and then my Mom on February 2022.

No. I wasn't affected much when my father died because he already had heart failure. You know, it was a bonus for the family that he survived 12 years after his by-pass.

But I was really affected by the loss of my Mom because she was healthy. She was just praying her morning novenas and then she lost consciousness.

My Dad died in his sleep.

Yeah. How did I deal with it?

Well, first, at the start, I just allowed myself to be sad. I just allowed myself to cry and cry, and be sad. I had to take a leave from work, from my ministry. And in the process of just feeling all the sadness, allowing myself to be sad, I allowed God to embrace me, actually, during those times, as well.

And then, after that phase, I allowed myself to be loved by my family and by my friends. So, I really opened up to them about my feelings. I cried in front of them. I wouldn't hold myself. If I was feeling sad, I'm missing my parents, I would just tell them.

Trauma

Then I realized later on—I think, Ichel, I had PTSD—Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. I was traumatized by the experience because, you know, when my Dad died in his sleep, my Mom was shouting. And I tried to revive my Dad.

And then when my Mom lost consciousness when she was praying, my niece was shouting.

So now, every time I hear loud sounds, my heart would jump and I would really feel everything



again—what I felt when I attended to my Mom and my Dad, when I tried to revive them.

Now, one way of dealing with it, I'm consulting my friend psychiatrist because I really think I have PSTD because of it.

What I'm saying is, you know, if you suffer a loss in your family, you will deal with it forever, I think. You will deal with it in your heart for the rest of your life. And yeah, I think it's okay, because eventually, it will be easier. Right? Eventually. But you just have to go through that process. And don't let that hinder you from being productive, being fruitful, and doing your mission in life.



Healthy Grieving

DR. MICHELLE: Doc Ry, we're giving you hugs. So, Everyone, don't shout when Doc Ryan is around. He might think it's all happening again.

But that's what's said: that you do not move on right away.

I just remember, my Mom-in-law just passed away and then somebody happened to just pass by, after a month, and asked me, "Have you moved on?"

The truth is, we often ask that. But we don't *move on*. We *move forward* with the



grief. It's already part of life and that's called *healthy grieving*. There's such a thing as healthy grieving.

What you did, Doc Ryan, you've become vulnerable. You tell your sister, or your family, "I'm not okay."

You have to admit it. And don't think of what others will think. That's our roadblock. But they are not part of our grief experience. So, you have to-- as we always say—*feel it to heal it.*

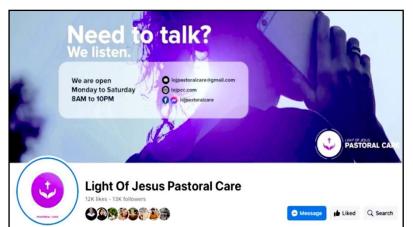
Because that's the way to grief. The more you deny it, the more it will go to other parts of your body. And it will become... other forms. Sadly, grief will turn into sickness.

So, Doc Ryan, it's good that we want to take care of you—in your healthy grieving.

So, friends, it's good that you become vulnerable and allow God to be where you are. That's the way to healthy grief. Feel it to heal it and become vulnerable. And the help of the Community is very crucial.

Moving Forward

BRO. JC: How can people move forward?
DR. MICHELLE: How do you move forward?
Well, it's really different ball games for each one.
But just to share with you the good news, the formerly
Light of Jesus Counselling Center, it's still around now
as the Light of Jesus Pastoral Care Center. Not in the Lighthouse,
but we are online, Monday to Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.



You may just send message via Messenger, and I guarantee you, within the day, somebody, a pastoral carer, is behind that Messenger, on duty. They can pray for you. You may schedule a chat session or a call session.

We don't use mobile phones anymore. We use Google Meet. I'm just happy to share with you

the LOJ Pastoral Care ministry which was turned over to me last year by the director, Sis. Ditas Español, we're celebrating our 30th Founding Anniversary this coming week. This is one of the most silent ministries that's not vlogged or shouted out (to protect the privacy of beneficiaries). So, if you want to share the good news to people, and if you want to support people who are suffering, you can actually fund the Pastoral Care ministry. Just send us a message. And I just would like to share: 30 percent of the people seeking help—monthly—their issues are about family. Not depression, not anxiety—that's at the lower end—but it's family.

So, let's take care of the family. We are God's Church. Thank you.

BRO. JC: To close this part, remember the word *family*, the Lord is telling us whatever you are going through in your family-- *FamLIY*-- the Lord is saying, *Family*, *I Love You*.

Fr. Bob McConaghy will now pray for us...



Blessing FR. BOB McCONAGHY: Everybody here is a member of a family. So, all stand, let us pray:

Heavenly Father, any foreigner who comes to the Philippines learns very quickly that one of the most precious values in the Philippines is the value of family. We see this particularly in the OFWs and the Seafarers who sacrifice so much for their

family. We pray for them today as well.

And we pray for the families gathered here. We pray especially for those who are going through hard times—either financially, emotionally, or spiritually.

But we ask You to send Your

providential care, You knew that they would meet but they would see each other's eyes that they would notice each other, that they would fall in love with each other. Then more than falling in love, they would be willing, when Jesus became a third party in their marriage, to love the way He does—sacrificially for one another and for their children.

And so, we ask You to bless the children—whether the children are babies. grade schoolers, high schoolers, in college, out in the workforce, in offices, or around the world—we ask You to bless the children. And particularly, we ask that they will always be grateful for the sacrifices of their mom and dad. That no matter what, to stay close to family members—to be easily forgiving, to not hold grudges.

So then, as you leave here as families today, may our Lord Jesus be with you to protect you, go before you to guide you, stand behind you, to give you strength, and walk along with you on this journey toward eternal life.

And to that end, I bless each of your families in the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

blessing first of all, upon the parents--whether it was a year ago or 55 years ago, or like Bro. Bo and Sis. Marowe 25 years ago—we know that from all eternity and Your





NOVENA TO GOD'S LOVE DECLARATION OF ABUNDANCE

AUDEE VILLARAZA:

Good Morning, Everyone! Praise God for bringing family together. Are you ready to declare God's abundance in your life?

Let's all come, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Everybody, raise your hands and say this with me:

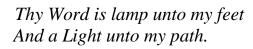




Today, I receive all of God's love for me. Today, I open myself to the unbounded, limitless, overflowing abundance of God's universe. Today, I open myself to God's blessings, healing, and miracles. Today, I open myself to God's Word so that I become more like Jesus everyday. Today, I proclaim that I'm God's beloved, I'm God's servant, I'm God's powerful champion.And because I am blessed, I am blessing the world. In Jesus' name. Amen.

May I invite you to lift up your hands even if you're online-- stand up and give honor and reverence to the Word of God as we sing:











The message that we have prepared for you today is so good. Because we're talking about Family.

Every Filipino family would probably practice this. How many can agree with me when I say that Filipinos are masters when it comes to hospitality?

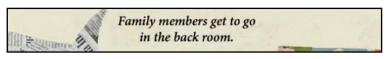
Like, we're very hospitable people. You know this: When a visitor is coming, the house changes a bit. Mommy turns the house into a little design showcase. The house smells good.

But when there's no visitor, when it's just family, you just do the regular thing. The glass you use is the bottle of Blend 45 coffee. The spoon you use is no longer curved—it's already straight, like it's a shovel. Your fork already lacks teeth.

But when there's a visitor, what happens? Mommy brings out the good china. She brings out the good silverware—those not yet used... No scratches yet.

The house is beautiful and smells good when there's a visitor. How do you differentiate between a family member and visitor?

When a visitor comes, he is brought to the best room in the house. But when the



family is there, the family goes in the backroom where all the mess is, where all the clutter is.

Families usually do that. Family gets to see everything— the garbage, the smelly stuff.

The Difficult Stuff



Bellumon \$

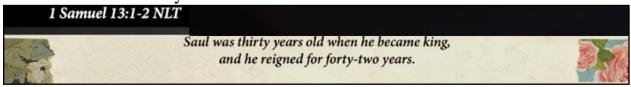
How many of you will agree with me when I say The Feast is a family? And as a family we need also to be able to talk about the hard stuff, the difficult stuff.

The Feast is a family. And as a family, we talk about the hard stuff.



And that's what we are going to do today. I'm going to take a page from the book of *Samuel*. It's a story that not many people would probably know about. But if you've heard a character in the Bible—King Saul—then, I'll give you an idea who he is.

1 Samuel 13: 1-2 says:



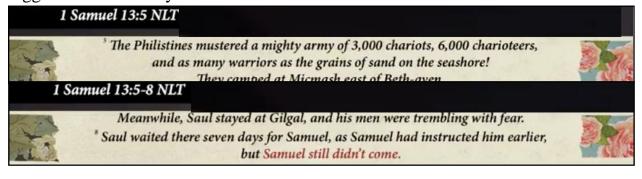
Saul is the predecessor of King David—one of the greatest kings of Israel. During this time, Israel was at war with the Philistines.

Verse 2 says:

1 Samuel 13:1-2 NLT

² Saul selected 3,000 special troops from the army of Israel and sent the rest of the men home. He took 2,000 of the chosen men with him to Micmash and the hill country of Bethel. The other 1,000 went with Saul's son Jonathan to Gibeah in the land of Benjamin

But, here's the climax: The army of the enemy, the Philistines, they were much bigger. Verses 5-8 say:



Saul's Destiny

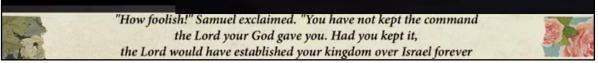
So, here's what happened because of that: Saul did something that would change the trajectory of his destiny forever.



1 Samuel 13:9-14 NLT	
Saul realized that his troops were rapidly slipping away. So he demanded, "Bring me the burnt offering and the peace offerings!" And Saul sacrificed the burnt offering himself.	De la
1 Samuel 13:9-14 NLT	
Just as Saul was finishing with the burnt offering, Samuel arrived. Saul went out to meet and welcome him, I but Samuel said, "What is this you have done?"	DZ
1 Samuel 13:9-14 NLT	
Saul replied, "I saw my men scattering from me, and you didn't arrive when you said you would, and the Philistines are at Micmash ready for battle. I So I said,	D M
1 Samuel 13:9-14 NLT	
"The Philistines are ready to march against us at Gilgal, and I haven't even asked for the LORD's help! So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering myself before you came."	D

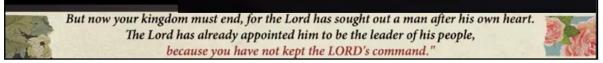
And Samuel says:

1 Samuel 13:9-14 NLT



Then he says the harshest words:

1 Samuel 13:9-14 NLT



This is the message that we want you to bring home:

"Make God the head of your household"

Father, this is Your Word. It's not just a lie but it's also active. We hear this Word until we put this into practice in our family life, nothing changes and we don't want that. We want this Word to be applied in our daily living, in our personal life, and in our relationship with every family member. This is our prayer. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

One more time, Everybody, lift up your hands. Let's sing:

Thy Word is lamp unto my feet And a Light unto my path.



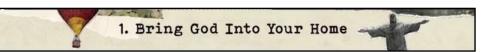




Four Lessons for Families

We want to give you four valuable sub-messages from this story.

And these are lessons that I believe you can apply in your daily family life. Here's Lesson No. 1:

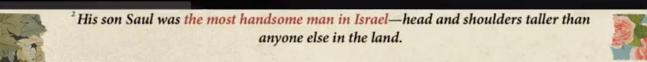


You want to know how King Saul was chosen to be king? It's kind of funny story:

1 Samuel 9:1-2 NLT

There was a wealthy, influential man named Kish from the tribe of Benjamin. He was the son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Becorath, son of Aphiah, of the tribe of Benjamin.

1 Samuel 9:1-2 NLT



It's like, a friend of Saul asks, "How did you get the job?"

Saul says, "Well, my parents are wealthy. We've got influence, and I'm like the tallest man in the land, and I'm also the most handsome, by the way."

That's how he was chosen. If this was an audition for a role in a Hollywood movie, he would certainly fit the part, right?

I mean, Saul's like, talk, dark, handsome, influential, has the right last name. But how come in the story that we read just a while ago, we see the fall of Saul. Down the line of the leadership of Saul, he loses his leadership. It's now passed on to David.



What Saul Didn't Have

Although Saul had the right ingredients to be a leader, there was one missing ingredient that was so valuable.

You want to know what that ingredient was? I mean, he had the right exterior look, physically fit. He had the right attributes. He had the right social influences. He was connected with certain people.

But the one thing that he lacked was a spiritual connection.

Because, if you notice, the author says Saul was wealthy, he was influential, he comes from the tribe of Benjamin. He was the most handsome, he was the tallest, his head and

shoulders were so big. But the problem was, the author doesn't even make mention about his relationship with God. You are supposed to be the leader of the nation of Israel, God's people, and yet there was no mention about his relationship with the God of Israel.

What is the lesson here?

A successful family life happens when God is part of the family.

Every success that you will enjoy in your family life will depend on the foundation that your family is built on. If God is not part of your family... I mean, how many of you know this: that you've experienced successes and wins in your family-- but then because the family members don't have the right relationship with God, there are a lot of problems.

No matter how many wins and successes that you have as a family, if your family members don't have the right relationship with the Lord, eventually relationships crumble.

So, that's why the lesson here is don't focus on the external attributes – but focus on the internal attributes when it comes to your family.



What You Have

How many here are attending The Feast by yourself? You know what your job is? Come to The Feast. Yes. Be planted and be rooted in God's Word.

But your responsibility is you get discipled, is you need to go home and you need to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to your family members. That's your job.

And I know it's difficult because you've got family members who have so many excuses for not attending The Feast.

Or maybe some family members belong to a different religion. I know that. Some families are like that. One is Catholic, one is Muslim, one Iglesia. When they go on a holiday, a reunion, it's chaotic. Because they have different religious beliefs.

But it can work. How? You continue to pray for them. You just continue to walk with Jesus and the day will come-- and I've seen this—they will see the change that Jesus is doing in you and they will want the same thing.

So, you walk with Jesus and bring Jesus into your home.

Bring God into your home.

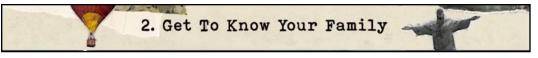
Don't just focus on getting the right image for your family. You may have a beautiful family name, but God is not in your life...

Happy families depend on whether God is part of the family.

So, make God part of your family. Bring God into your home.

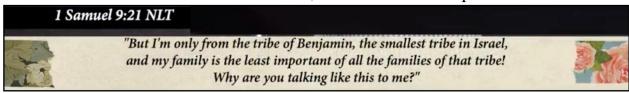


Here's the Second Lesson for Families:

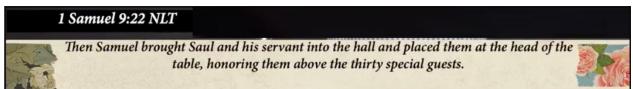


How many of you are with your family right now? May I ask you: Do you really know your family members? Do you really know who they are? Do you know their story? Yes? Okay. Let's continue the story. This is how Saul was chosen to be king again.

When Samuel chose Saul to be his heir, here is how Saul replied:



Saul is asking, "Why are you talking to me? Why me?" What happens next is even more shocking:



Saul didn't even want to be there in the first place. And yet, he's now at the center of the table.

Reluctant King

Now, here's what happens the very next day:

1 Samuel 9:20-23 NLT

²⁰ Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel before the Lord, and the tribe of Benjamin was chosen by lot. ²¹ Then he brought each family of the tribe of Benjamin before the Lord, and the family of the Matrites was chosen.

1 Samuel 9:20-23 NLT

And finally Saul, son of Kish, was chosen from among them. But when they looked for him, he had disappeared!

Check this out: He disappeared. So, they asked the Lord...

1 Samuel 9:20-23 NLT

²² So they asked the Lord, "Where is he?" And the Lord replied, "He is hiding among the baggage." ²³ So they found him and brought him out, and he stood head and shoulders above anyone else.

What was Saul doing? He was playing hide-and-seek. Was he trying to play a joke by hiding in the baggage? Did he want to surprise them, and say, "Surprise!"

No. He didn't want to be there in the first place

Now, what am I trying to get at?

Before you look at Saul as a king, you have to first look at him as a 13-year-old boy who is so insecure that he was being chosen to be king.



My Dad

I'll tell you a little story:

My Dad, he was 62 years old when he passed away. Very young. But one of the biggest regrets of my life was that I never really got to know my Dad. I got to know him only from the perspective of my Mom's stories.

See, we grew up in a very strict household. My dad was very old-fashion in disciplining us. And he really disciplined us with a belt, slippers-- and it was the oldfashion way of being disciplined.



But I only found out from my Mom when my Dad passed away, that my Dad had his fair share of insecurities. Because when my Dad was growing up, his Godsized dream was to become a doctor, And he was in pre-Med until an insecurity crept in him. Because my Dad, he had only one good eye. He was handicapped. When he was two years old, one eye was shot. It was an accident. By some miracle he survived and he lived all his life with just one good eye.

So, when he was in pre-Med, he was thinking, if he eventually become a doctor, he was afraid that patients would not come to him. Because who would want o be operated on by a one-eyed doctor? I mean, let's just be honest. Would you want to have an appointment with a one-eyed doctor? You know, he's going to perform surgery on you. It's difficult.

So, he changed his course to earn a degree as Bachelor of Science in Zoology. And that's the way he graduated. Along the way, for some reason, one thing led to another... His first career, he was selling lab equipment, still related a bit to medicine. He went into Medical Technology. Hnd eventually, he dropped the dream. He became an insurance broker and it was good because he provided for our family.

But my Mom said that job wasn't his dream. And eventually, the insecurities started showing in his parenting. My Dad was a very loving parent. But his insecurities in life showed in the way that he handled his kids. He brought it upon us.

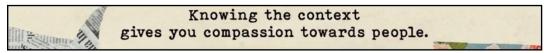
Grace for Sensitivity

Again, my biggest regret is I never had the chance to know that part of my Dad's life. I never got the chance to sit down with him, and hear his stories,

It's just that when you think about families, and you don't really know the context of what your parents and children, and siblings are going through,



my prayer is that you will start doing this: that you would pray to the Lord for his grace. Because you would be amazed that grace will give you a certain amount of sensitivity when you hear the context of a person to give you that sense of compassion for people because you now know their stories.



So, my advice to somebody here – parents—maybe after The Feast, what you can do—I don't know-- if your children are grownups, talk to them, sit down with them, ask them how they are. Don't just ask them about their schedule, what they're doing in life. Ask them how they *really* are. Get to know them. Get to know the context of their story.

Children, raise your hands. If your parents are still alive, when you're big enough, sit down with your parents. Ask them how their life was. Because when you know the context of their life, it will give you more compassion to understand who they really are.

And married people, just like what Bro. Bo and Sis. Marowe shared, get to know your spouse. Don't just settle for the surface but dig deeper. Because your spouse is a mystery. You will continue to discover things about your spouse that you've never realize. Get to know your family. Tell somebody beside you, get to know your family. Or even better, get to know me.

To preach Lesson No. 3, I'm going to call on one of our builders and leaders. Please welcome, Everybody, Bro. Alvin Barcelona.



BRO. ALVIN BARCELONA:

Lesson No. 3:

3. Our Decisions Affect The Whole Family

In our story of the tragedy of King Saul, his indecisions – wrong decisions –his disobedience to God had fatal consequences for the entire Israel.

The Israelites were forced to flee, even hide in caves, and many fell dead—including Saul himself and his sons.

If I may borrow from Saint Paul's discourse in 1 Corinthians 12, he says we are one body with many parts. And this is so applicable to families. He says that if one part of the body is honored, the entire body is honored. And if one part of the body suffers, the entire body suffers.

My parents separated when I was just in Grade 4. (About 20 years ago O Lying also has fatal consequences.)

But I am not the only leader of the products of broken families.

Bro. John Ben Rodriguez who's celebrating his birthday this month —I asked his permission if I may share this—is also product of a broken family. Actually, he said, "Bro. Alvin, tell them I am son of a mistress."

Bro. Adrian Panganiban, who's also celebrating his birthday this month, also told me to share that his parents also separated.

And in our stories, there are long stories of painful consequences, especially among the siblings. But this is what I want to say: the suffering needs not be permanent. As we learned in our past talks, the curse can be turned into blessings.

Actually, it looks like John Ben, Adrian, and I seem to have turned out okay.

Before my Mom passed last January, we siblings were already okay na okay na. It's not a perfect relationship. But we are very much better now.

I'm assigned to tell a story about family—especially of brokenness. But what I will relate is not my story. Just a short story and I would like to relate this in Tagalog so it may reach many more here. (Since *The Feast Family* is for mass communication, posted online, we are translating the story in English.—*Ed*.)

Renniel's Story

Last week, I was in Cagayan de Oro City, with my brothers and Aio, my son, for our weekly Worship events at the The Atrium, Limketkai Center, CDO, for The Feast Provincial. On our way back to our hotel, we passed by a boy who was doing his school work on the sidewalk.

He is Renniel Jabagat.

Obviously, he's working on his assignments on the sidewalk where there is a lamppost, near a 7-11 convenient store, because there is no electricity in their house.

So, I started chatting with him: "Kumusta ka? Ano ang pangalan mo? Bakit gumagawa ka ng assignment dito? --How are you? What's your name? Why are you making your assignment here?"

He was so confident. You won't hear a single piteous sound in his voice.

He said, "Siyempre, tatapusin ko ang pag-aaral ko, dahil gusto kong maging sundalo. At ga-graduate na ako.—Of course, I will finish my studies because I want to be a soldier. And I'm already graduating."

So confident in declaring his dreams. I asked why he's working on the sidewalk.

He said, "E, kasi bukod sa merong ilaw dito, e, nagbabantay ako ng mga sasakyan para yung binabayad nila sa akin, 'yan ang pinangbubuhay ko sa amin. – Because aside from the available light here, I watch vehicles (serving as watchyour-car boy). So, I have source of income."

I asked, "Bakit? Nasaan ang mga magulang mo? – Why? Where are your parents?"

"Binayaan na kami. Ang nanay ko nang-lalaki. Ang tatay ko nang- babae."

They were abandoned. The mother ran away with a boyfriend. The father, with a mistress.

This is not gossip. It's true. I asked who are with him in their house. He said initially, his grandmother, but she already passed away.

"Kaya kailangan kong magtrabaho para sa amin. – So, I have to work for us." "Sinong amin? --Who are *us*?"







Lost...And Found

Renniel pointed to his younger brother— Angel, six years old.

Their parents abandoned them when Angel was only three years old. And for three years now, Renniel has been the one fending for him.

I felt my heart break into pieces. I fished out some cash from my wallet – just a few--and gave the money to him.

And he even asked, "Para saan ito? —What is this for?"

"Para pagkain ninyo—pang isang lingo. –For your food—at least for a week." "Salamat. -- Thank you."

We went back to our hotel. But my brothers, Aio, and I were convicted, feeling we should do more for Renniel. And I knew what I would do. The next day, in our event, attended by 3,000 participants, in my talk, my last story was about Renniel. I knew something beautiful would happen after my talk.

After the event – it was already evening-- as we went back to our hotel, we saw Renniel was still on the sidewalk by the 7-11 store.

We were like, "Raniel, kumusta ka na? How have you been?"

"Ang daming mga amigo mo, pinuntahan ako, Kuya Alvin. -- So many of your friends came to me, Bro. Alvin," he said.

I had not told him my name so, I was surprised that he already knew my name: "Kilala mo na ako?"

"Oo, mga amigo mo, ikinuwento mo raw ako sa kanila."

He told me my friends—about 10 of them-- gave him food, money.

And he continued chatting: "Kasi, matatapos na ako.—I am graduating."

He was about to graduate from junior high school— with honors.

So, he added, he really had to finish his work because he was using a computer only borrowed from a neighbor. I asked him, doesn't he have a cell phone?

"Paano ako mag-kaka-cell phone?—How can I ever have a cell phone?"

And the Lord whispered to me, "Give him a phone."

Not my I-Phone! So, again, I took my wallet from my pocket and asked him what sort of cell phone he wanted.

"Yung mga tig-ten thousand. —Something costing P10,000."

"No. There's something cheaper. Look for it."

"May tag-P8,000. tag P6,000, tag-P3,500."

"Yun. P3,500. That's a good one." 😳

Leading from the Spirit

I gave him the cash and told him to buy a phone. And we had our photo taken in front of 7-11.

This is a promo for 7-11-- it should donate to our ministry. $\textcircled{\odot}$

Ah, I remembered to ask him: "Nagdadasal ka ba? – Are you praying?"

"Ay, siyempre. Nagbabasa ako ng Bible. May dalawa ako. Gusto mo, bigay ko sa iyo yung isa, para magbasa ka rin...- Of course. I even read the Bible. I have two. You want, I'll give you one, so, you'll read the Bible too?"

I thought I was ministering to him... he was ministering to me. Big-time.



I gave him a condition for the money I gave him for the cell phone. I told him the first one he would text should be me. At the back of my mind, so that I would know that he'd really spend the money for a cell phone. You see, I'd helped so many who just simply disappeared...

But I just felt the Spirit telling me to help him.

Soon, we all went back to Manila. One day, no one texting me. Second day, no text. Third day, midnight, a text: "Hi, Kuya Alvin, si Renniel ito. Na-submit ko



na lahat ng homeworks ko dahil may cell phone na ako... By the way, nanonood ako ng YouTube mo. Preacher ka pala.— Bro. Alvin, I was able to submit all my homeworks because I already have a cell phone. By the way, I am watching you on YouTube. I found out you're a preacher."

He added he is graduating in July (this month): "Kuya Alvin, wala akong tatay o nanay na magsasabit ng medalya ko, o maglalakad sa akin papunta sa stage. Pwede ba, ikaw ang maglakad kasama ko? —Bro. Alvin, I have no father, nor mother. No one will hang my medal to me, or walk me up the stage. May you be the one?"

I was like, "Another expense." 😳

What God Is Telling Us

So, I promptly texted -- the Feasters in Cagayan de Oro... And what do you know, they met with him, they bought him his graduation outfit.

And tomorrow (July 10), to his graduation, I will fly – round trip—because the following day, I am attending a 25th year Wedding Anniversary...

Round trip—just to let this boy know that even as he was left by his parents, there are some persons standing beside him.

Because this boy was abandoned-- but he did not abandon his brother.

And I believe, in his decision, not only his life would change, not only his brother's life would change, it is changing many who are listening to this story.

Let me end by praying with you this song which I hope will tell you that this is

what God is telling you: this is what we parents should be singing to our kids. That no matter what happens tomorrow morning, when you wake up, and the sun does not appear, for Renniel, for us, God is saying: *I will be here*...

I Will Be Here

Song by Steven Curtis Chapman

Tomorrow morning if you wake up, And the sun does not appear I, I will be here If in the dark we lose sight of love, Hold my hand, and have no fear Cause I, I will be here I will be here when you feel like being quiet When you need to speak your mind, I will listen and I will be here when the laughter turns to crvin' Through the winning, losing and tryin' We'll be together 'cause I will be here Tomorrow morning if you wake up, And the future is unclear II will be here As sure as seasons are made for change, Our lifetimes are made for years So, I I will be here I will be here and you can cry on my shoulder, When the mirror tells us we're older, I will hold you and *I* will be here to watch you grow in beauty And tell you all the things you are to me I will be here



IN TUNE: Bro. Alvin with son Aio

I will be true to the promise I have made To you and to the One who gave you to me I I will be here And just as sure as seasons are made for change Our lifetimes are made for years So, I I will be here we'll be together I will be here

Source: LyricFind Songwriters: Steven Curtis Chapman I Will Be Here lyrics © Capitol Christian Music Group, Capitol CMG Publishing, Universal Music Publishing Group **BRO. BO SANCHEZ:** It is my privilege to close The Feast with the last lesson. It is a prayer that we start a new cycle of blessing.

4. Start A New Cycle of Blessing

You see, Saul, his story ended in tragedy. But then there was hope. Because he had a son named Jonathan. And Jonathan, he was supposed to succeed King



Saul. Jonathan was supposed to be the next king.

Yes. He lived in the palace. He was part of the royal family. Everyone who talked to him would say, "You're going to be the next king. You're going to go after your father. When your father leaves, you're going to be the next king. But you see, his father failed God. His father faltered. His father stumbled.

And how many of you here in this room, your parents were not perfect. And they fumbled. And they did not obey the Lord. Yes, or no? Yes.

I want you to understand this: You have a choice. Jonathan had a choice. He was supposed to either say, "Lord, it was my father's fault. Not mine. My father was the one who failed You. Why am I suffering because of the sins of my father?

Not all of you, some of you, you come from a broken family like Alvin was saying. And you're suffering because of their failure.

Maybe your parents are gambling addicts.

I remember after The Feast I went down the stage. This man came up to me crying, telling me, "My mom is a gambling addict. Every day, you know, we receive calls from creditors. My siblings and I, we cannot even leave our cell phone, our wallet, our bag at home unattended. Because it will be gone. And then when we confront our mother, because it happens again and again, and again.

"My mother would say, 'Ay, may pumasok na magnanakaw. – A thief came inside.' But we know the thief is in the house."

My dear friends, sometimes, it's your mom who is stealing the joy from you. Because of her issues, because of her addictions. Because there are fathers who are thieves-they have stolen your security. They have stolen your self-esteem. You are suffering not because of your own sins. You are like Jonathan. You are suffering because of the sins of your parents.



Breaking the Cycle of Curse

Jonathan, he did not become king. Not because of his fault—but because of his father's fault. But what did he do?

You read the Bible: Jonathan decides to still follow God.

"My father may have failed God. But I will still follow God.

And this is what happened. You know what,

he sided with King David.

He said, "I will support you. My father failed. God, I will support You." And David, he promised Jonathan: "I promise you, I will be true

to your family."

Jonathan, you read in Scripture, had a son – Mephibosheth—crippled. David said, "I'll take care of you."

You see, what Jonathan did was he broke the cycle of curse. He started a new cycle of blessing for his family.

And it is a decision you have to make. You were wronged by your parents. You carry, right now, the curse, the difficulties you are experiencing right now, the consequences because of their failures. You can make a decision and say, "That curse will continue for the rest of the next generation."

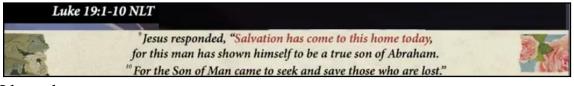
Or, you can say, "No, it stops. Because I'm following the Lord. It stops because I'm following Jesus."

And King David, he was a foreshadowing of King Jesus. Because what King Jesus does is He says, "Come and follow Me."

And if you do that, you start a new cycle of blessing for your family. Do you want to do that right now?

We have a prayer. I want you to say this prayer. It's from the experience of Zacchaeus, the tax collector, the big sinner. He repents.

And I love what Jesus said to Zacchaeus. When Zacchaeus repented, He said "Salvation has come to this household."



I love that.



A New Cycle of Blessing

Did the wife of Zacchaeus repent? Did the children repent? No. The story is that Zacchaeus, the head of the household, followed Jesus. When the head of the household follows Jesus, the household receives blessing. The whole household is blessed because actions lead to consequences. That's how the universe works. Good actions, good consequences, bad actions, bad consequences.

If you follow Jesus, you can start a new cycle of blessing.

When you make a decision to follow Jesus, you say, "Lord, this is it. I want my household to be under the Lordship of Jesus."

Are you ready to do that today?

In the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Put your hands over your chest. I want you to pray with me. Will you follow Jesus, my dear friend? Will you start a new cycle of blessing?

Everybody, say: Jesus, I want to follow You all the days of my life.

I want to start a new cycle of blessing for my family. From now on, I want You to be the head of my household. Be the head of my family.

Thank You, Father God, You are doing this. You are making this happen right now, my family is receiving your Salvation. My house is receiving Your blessing.



Everybody, say this with me:

My house is blessed. My house is blessed. My family is blessed. My house follows King Jesus. Amen and Amen.



MERCY MINISTRIES

"Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward them for what they have done." -Proverbs 19:17

LIGHT OF JESUS PASTORAL CARE CENTER PART 3

Journey to Caring

THE Light of Jesus Pastoral Care Center ministers to the emotionally wounded. Yes *care* – not simply to counsel or give advice.

So, instead of "counselors," we have *carers* conducting *Care Sessions*—one on one sessions with those who come to us for help. Carers are available for *live* (face-to-face), or online chat, audio call, or even 24/7 phone call.

One of our carers is Sis. Gladys, going through a journey that clearly has been Divine Design.

Finding Light of Jesus

First, Sis. Gladys was employed at the National Computer Center (NCC), now called Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT).

It happened that Sis. Gladys's co-employee in NCC was Tina.

sister of our LOJ founder, Bro. Bo Sanchez.

Tina then led a prayer group at NCC. Sis. Gladys was invited to join the LOJ prayer group. She joined in 1991, and a few months after, she was already training to become a servant of LOJ.

Sis. Gladys became a part of the LOJ Singles group conducting prayer meetings in offices. In time, Sis. Gladys moved to an office in Makati. So, she continued her ministry in Makati offices as well. She also attended the Cubao chapter of the Singles group that time.





Pastoral Caring

Second, as a servant, Sis. Gladys also became part of a Caring Group, the equivalent of what we now call the Light Group.

Her group head, Lalyn Trio, joined the then LOJ Counseling Center first, now the LOJ Pastoral Care Center, then she invited the rest of the members, including Sis. Gladys, to also join the Ministry.

In 1998, Sis. Gladys took a sabbatical from work and began to freelance as Information Technology (IT) consultant. As a freelancer, she's been able to have more time for her service for LOJ. She became part of the LOJ Counseling Center Training Batch 6 in 1999.

After the training, Sis Gladys went through an on-the-job training and then was let loose in the service.

Before the Coronavirus Disease (COVID) Pandemic, Sis Gladys was serving at the Pastoral Care Center office on the night shift thrice a week.

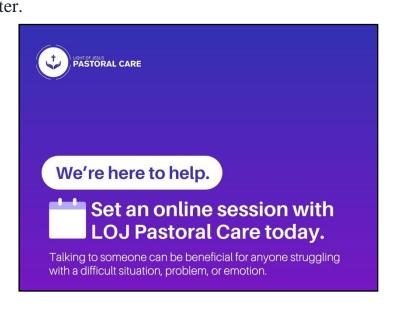
When the COVID crisis hit, lockdowns or quarantines were imposed to prevent the spread of the disease. So, the Ministry began to serve online and continues to do so as the Pandemic goes on to this day.

Today, Sis Gladys works on her projects to earn a living. But she reserves her Saturdays to serve those who come for help in the LOJ Pastoral Care Center.

Need to Talk?

Here are the links to set an online caring session with the

LOJ Pastoral Care Center. <u>#LOJPastoralCare</u> <u>#FeastMercyMinistries</u> <u>#OnlineCareSession</u>





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.

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Our Partner Beneficiaries

Jeremiah 33 Foundation is a shelter for minor girls particularly victims of sexual abuse.



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





He Cares Mission provides shelter and pastoral care for street children.

within 8–10 years.

Pag-asa ng Pamilya Foundation

grants scholarships to indigent 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.

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



H.A.I.L. MARY INC Healthcare Assistance for Indigent Leper



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

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





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



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