



## FAMILY

SEPTEMBER 10, 2023



### ***God Sides with The Little Ones***

TODAY, our key message is  
*God sides with the little ones.*

God stands by the underdog. Which is a disturbing message if you're the top dog. But if you're the little guy, the misfit, the outcast, God tells you, "I'm on your side."

Last week, in Talk 5, we read how *Deuteronomy* allowed divorce, and down through the centuries, people assumed the Bible supported divorce for any cause. But that's a misreading of *Deuteronomy*.

We need to read the Bible the way Jesus read His Bible.

*Jesus didn't just read the Law, He read the heart behind the law. He saw the purpose of the divorce law in Deuteronomy: It was not to permit divorce but to protect the most vulnerable—the women.*

Through that Gospel story, we get a huge gift: *We see how Jesus understood all the laws of Deuteronomy.*

And what a radical view it is.

In Jesus' mind, these laws have one goal: *to side with the little ones.* To love the last, the least, and the lost. To help the weak, protect the vulnerable, and defend the innocent.

In a very powerful way, *Deuteronomy reveals to us God's innermost heart.* In every law, we'll hear the heartbeat of the God of the universe—that He stands by the underdog.

May your dreams come true,

**Bo Sanchez**

**WELCOME**  
**to Talk 6**  
**of our Feast Series**  
***Dear Prodigals,***  
**our study of the**  
***Book of Deuteronomy.***



# LETTERS

## *Taking Sides*

“WHEN we take up our cross daily, no matter what it is, and whatever we’re going through, *Still, I will praise.*”



In his Homily last Sunday’s Feast, Fr. Bob McConaghy posed that statement as a choice we make to manifest that we are on the side of God, of righteous Christian living, *page 3.*

Bro. Bo Sanchez points out in the Feast Talk for this Sunday God is on our side, specifying that *God Sides with the Little Ones, page 1.*



Bro. Bo is out of the country so, our preachers this Sunday Feast are, *from left:* Bro. Audee Villaraza and Bro. Didoy Lubaton, at 8 a.m.; Bro. John Ben Rodriguez, 11 a.m.; Bro. Alvin Barcelona and Bro. Tony Valenzuela, 2 p.m.

Last Feast Sunday, Bro. Audee and Bro. Alvin pointed out a decision we have to make every day: to be on the side of God -- or someone or something else. Their advice: *Go Back to the Father’s Heart*—Talk 6 of our ongoing series, *Dear Prodigals*, our study on the book of *Deuteronomy. Flashback on page 18.*

Bro. Bo, Bro. Didoy Lubaton, and Bro. Tony Valenzuela also posed another decision we have to make now: To attend The Feast Conference 2023, *page 15.*

Bro. JC Libiran simply presents what clearly shows that we are on God’s side: our Love Offering envelope, *page 10.*

This season of typhoons, immersed in the flood of relief operations is Sis. Cheryl Tiongson, Admin head of LOJ Dagupan, right on the side of The Feast Little Acts of Love team, *page 42.*

Yes, amid Life’s challenges, we stay on the side of *Still, I will praise!*



All for God’s Glory,

**Randy Borromeo**  
Media Ministry  
Executive Director





## ***FLASHBACK!***

September 3, 2023

### **Holy Mass**



TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



**FR. LEM CAMACHO**  
Concelebrant

### **Homily**

**FR. BOB McCONAGHY**

on the Gospel: Matthew 16:21-27

*Jesus Predicts His Death*

LAST week, Peter was topnotch. He was the only one who passed the exam and then he was rewarded: “Blessed are you, Simon, son of John.”

Then Jesus said to Peter: “You’ll be rock.”

And then He gave him the keys to Heaven.

Two minutes later, He calls him *Satan*. Why would He call him Satan?

Because Jesus was getting another shortcut from the Cross offered by Peter: “I’ll see to it that this doesn’t happen, that you’ll never be crucified.”

## ‘Take Up Your Cross’

Peter’s comment reminded Jesus of what Satan said: “Jump off the parapet of the temple. People would love to see that... You can solve world hunger. Just take those stones and turn them into bread and all those kingdoms out there, you’ll be king. I’ll give them to you because I own them.”

So, when Peter said, “I’ll see to it that you don’t die”-- that’s the very reason Jesus came into the world.

You and I came into the world to live. Jesus came into the world to die. And so, Peter offered Him a shortcut.

So, Jesus rightly called Peter *Satan*. And then Jesus said something very powerful and very important.

He said, “If you really want to be my follower, take up your cross, daily, and follow Me.”

It’s very important to understand that God does not send crosses. Life sends us crosses. Family sends us crosses. Our economic situation can be a big cross. EDSA gives us crosses. The LRT gives us crosses. Our bosses give us crosses.

Not God. But He does give something to us: the cross that is very much part of who we are. The cross is an instrument of suffering, but Jesus turned around and made an instrument of sacrificial, unconditional, total self-giving love—and that’s what people are looking for one another.

But you know, sometimes those crosses are too heavy. Some of those crosses last a long time. And what do we do with them then? What do we do with the suffering?



### Reading I: Jeremiah 20:7-9

*<sup>7</sup> “You have led me away, O Lord, and I have been led away. You have been stronger than I, and you have prevailed. I have become a derision all day long; everyone mocks me.<sup>8</sup> For I speak now as I have long spoken: crying out against iniquity and proclaiming devastation.*

*And the word of the Lord has been made into a reproach against me and a derision, all day long.<sup>9</sup> Then I said: I will not call him to mind, nor will I speak any longer in his name. And my heart became like a raging fire, enclosed within my bones. And I became weary of continuing to bear it.*



## Why? Why?

Now I'm going to tell you a true story.

I told this story at the Mall of Asia Arena back in 2017 on Good Friday. I'd like to share it with you again because it brings the cross to the point of a question that people always ask of God. They always ask: "Why?"

Renee Bondi is one of the finest singers on the West Coast. She was the choir director of Mission San Juan Capistrano, a very famous church in California. She had a magnificent voice. If she went on to *The Voice* today, she'll go in very easily.

But she had a wonderful night.

She and her boyfriend Michael went out to dinner, and at that dinner, Michael gave her the engagement ring. It was the happiest night of her life, and she went home, and she was very excited, and she couldn't sleep until finally, in the dormitory, she fell asleep.

They don't know how it happened, but sometime during the night, she fell out of bed, her head and neck landing first, and she became a quadriplegic—feeling nothing from the head all the way down to the feet, totally paralyzed. And she was in extensive care for a month.

What happened with Michael? He married her. And eventually, they had a son. That son is now 22 years old.

But she asked God, "Why?"

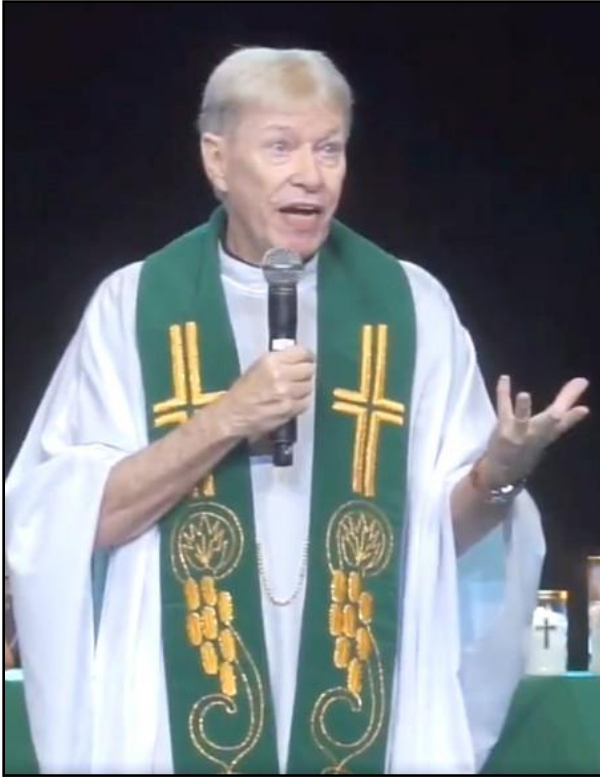
Why doesn't He heal her of paralysis?

And so then, she continued to be the choir director and the kids said to her, "You can lead us with your eyes, you don't have to use your hands. She was on a wheelchair which is different from most wheelchairs. Her wheelchair is one of which the back has to get down about halfway toward being a bed --and that's the way she was.



### Reading II: Romans 12:1-2

*<sup>1</sup> And so, I beg you, brothers, by the mercy of God, that you offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, with the subservience of your mind.<sup>2</sup> And do not choose to be conformed to this age, but instead choose to be reformed in the newness of your mind, so that you may demonstrate what is the will of God: what is good, and what is well-pleasing, and what is perfect.*



## **Ooops, God Does Not Answer...**

Renee wrote a book-- *The Last Dance but Not the Last Song*. And it was all about that cross that she had to pick up.

One day, God did not send her— but an accident did.

Oh well, 20 years later, she was invited to Bethlehem on Christmas Eve, and at the church of the Nativity, she sang a magnificent version of *O, Holy Night*. It was one of the greatest experiences of her life and she was an inspiration to everyone there that Christmas Eve.

But then the next day was the one she was really looking forward to. Because the next day, she would go to the pool of Bethesda where that man was healed of paralysis so many centuries ago.

All the pool had dried up. Because it was Christmas Day, only Renee, Michael, and a priest were there.

And she said this prayer: “Lord, if you would heal me now, I promise I will be a witness to your power, love, and healing to so many people. I’ll be able to do things that I haven’t been able to do for the past 20 years. I’ll be able to go to the comfort room without having someone to clean me. I’ll be able to comb and brush my own hair. I’ll be able to get dressed by myself. I’ll be able to go to the beach and play volleyball. I’ll be able to drive my son back to college. So, Lord, please heal me now.”

Michael put his hands on her shoulders and they waited-- one minute, two minutes, but nothing happened.

Everything within her must have wanted to cry out, “Why me?! Why all these 20 years?!”

Whenever we ask God why, He never answers. Even when Jesus asked that question: “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?”

## ***Still, I Will Praise***

Renee must have felt abandoned after singing *O, Holy Night*. But this was her prayer, in the midst of a prayer unanswered, “*Still, I will praise!*”

When we take up our cross daily, no matter what it is, and whatever we’re going through, *Still, I will praise.*

If you’re out of work during the Pandemic and haven’t found a job yet, *Still, I will praise!*

If you’re having difficulties in your marriage and you don’t know if you’re able to work it through, *Still, I will praise!*

If you’re same-sex attracted and you wish that you weren’t, but you are, and you realize that God loves you as much as He loves anyone -- He doesn’t make junk. In the midst of somebody making fun of you, not welcoming you, you’re feeling as though people need to hurt you.

In the midst of all of those, *Lord, Still, I will praise!*

If your finances are in shambles, if you have a whole lot of bills, *Still, I will praise!* If your father has a second family and your family is torn by it, in the midst of your anger, *Still, I will praise!*

When you receive a cross, and the message from our Lord and His Cross is this: Don’t waste your pain... The pain that He went through is not wasted because it was the way through which we were redeemed of unconditional love.

When He suffered like that, He knew what it was like to be you. He knew what it was like to be me. Don’t waste your pain.

You visit somebody in the hospital and they have a nasal gastric tube down their throat and they’re very uncomfortable, or there is a lot of pain.

Unite the next 10 minutes of your suffering with the Cross of Jesus because we’re always offering Jesus to the Father at the Mass as a sacrifice.



## Unite with Jesus' Sacrifice

St. Paul said, "You and I are called to make up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ. Did He not suffer enough? Yes. But He has chosen us to be part of the redemption of others."

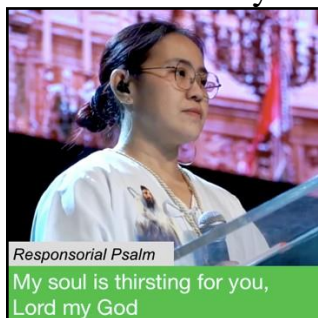
And so, when that person in the hospital bed takes their pain for 10 or 15 minutes and says, "Lord, I offer this and unite it with Your sacrifice that You send powerful grace to someone who is going into surgery right now or is united for the nurses and the doctors are so filled with compassion and want me to get well.

I unite this next time and it's for them."

Or maybe if you know the chaplet of the Divine Mercy, when you're there in the hospital bed, unite it with Jesus' sacrifice to the Father to send powerful graces to those who have hardened their hearts. And right at the moment of death, St. Faustina says, that when we do that, it melts the most hardened of hearts.

Don't waste your pain-- whether it's physical, emotional, or spiritual. When we unite that with Jesus' sacrifice, it makes a huge difference in somebody else's life.

Don't waste your pain.



Responsorial Psalm

My soul is thirsting for you,  
Lord my God

### Responsorial Psalm – Psalms 63:2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9

**R. (2b) My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.**

<sup>2</sup> O God, you are my God whom I seek;  
for you my flesh pines and my soul thirsts  
like the earth, parched, lifeless and without water.

**R. My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.**

<sup>3</sup> Thus have I gazed toward you in the sanctuary  
to see your power and your glory,

<sup>4</sup> for your kindness is a greater good than life;  
my lips shall glorify you.

**R. My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.**

<sup>5</sup> Thus will I bless you while I live;  
lifting up my hands, I will call upon your name.

<sup>6</sup> As with the riches of a banquet shall my soul be satisfied,  
and with exultant lips my mouth shall praise you.

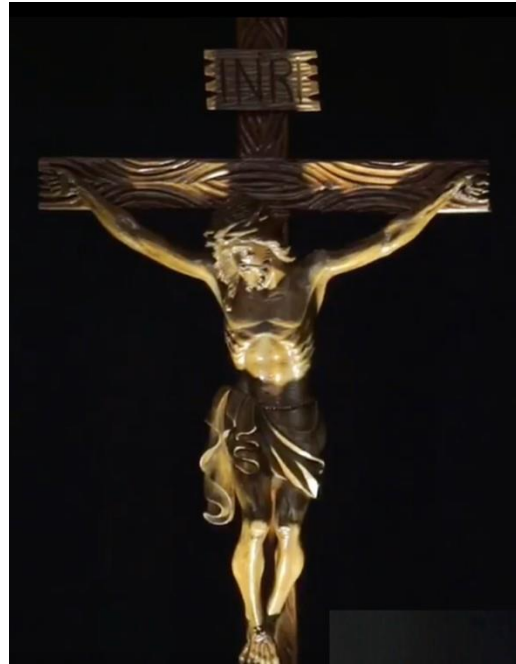
**R. My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.**

<sup>8</sup> You are my help,  
and in the shadow of your wings I shout for joy.

<sup>9</sup> My soul clings fast to you;  
your right hand upholds me.

**R. My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.**





### **His Cross...Our Cross**

Jesus took up the Cross because  
He knew that life would give us crosses.

And sometimes, like with Renee, those  
crosses last a long time. And you get really depressed, begin to lose your faith  
and begin to give up.

Our Lord says up close, during those times, "I'm going to carry you by My love  
and the love of your friends, and the people of The Feast. You will get through this  
no matter how long it lasts."

So, we don't take any shortcuts to Heaven. There's no easy way, but don't  
waste your pain.

Not all the crosses are on hills against the crimson sky.

Not all the ribs or hands are pierced— nor are all the pierced hearts die.

We faced a thousand little deaths that none may see or guess.

What scarring wounds do we hide beneath our body's loveliness?

The little song that missed its way, love, patient, and unclaimed...

Old scornful words whose memories still turn us sick with shame...

The smile that wisped a scorpion's lash...

Gray eyes that did not heed a friend, relied and led upon, who failed us  
in our need.

No, not all the crosses are on hills, but God keeps those inside...

Who comes back down from their own Calvary with hands unscarred  
and white?

So, as you take up your cross daily, always remember the powerful prayer:  
*"Still, I will praise."*



**JC LIBIRAN:**

Happy Grand Feast, Everyone! And I want you to greet the person beside you *Merry Christmas!* Of course, for us Filipinos, as early as we enter the *ber* months-- September. It's not just the Christmas carols and everything but we bring that Christmas feel to everyone.

How many are blessed to be part of the Grand Feast today? Let's give our Lord a big hand!



## Love Offering



Friends, when you give, you help not only our Feast operations but also our Mercy Ministries— for those in need, from womb to tomb.

So, thank you very much.

Make sure that you write on your Love Offering envelope your prayer requests. In a while, we will pray for your petitions. Also, write answered prayers you are thankful for. To those of you who are joining us online, we're flashing on screen how you can partner with us, how you can give. Thank you very much.

As you prepare your best gift to God, I want to ask those who are celebrating their birthday this month of September to stand up. Let us applaud them!

I share this celebration with you because this month of September, I'm turning 40 years old!

My wife Milen and I were talking about this... Like she asked, "What would you like to do or how would you like to celebrate your birthday?"

I told her, "Everything I've wished for is already with me. Especially you, Milen, our daughter Yanna, and, of course, my Light of Jesus Family and The Feast Bay Area. I don't have to look for anything more."

What are the things that you will be grateful for? You don't need to wait until your 40<sup>th</sup> birthday. You don't need to wait for a Grand Feast. You need not wait for a big event to thank God because I really believe, my friends, that Life begins today.





## Why We Give









We have a lot of reasons to celebrate.

I remember the Gospel story about 10 lepers.

Of course, we know all of them were healed by our Lord Jesus. And they rejoiced as they went back to their own life. But there was this one leper who came back to say *Thank You* to the Lord.

I believe we can learn so much from this Gospel story. We're reminded today that we're going to honor God through our giving because of the many great things that God has done in our life. We don't give because we expect something in return. We give because God has been faithful to us!



  <p><i>Ways to Give</i></p>	<p>For GCash, Debit &amp; Credit Card Giving visit:  GCash  <a href="http://www.TheFeastPICCAM.com/Commit">www.TheFeastPICCAM.com/Commit</a></p> 
 <p><i>Ways to Give</i></p>	<p>Light of Jesus Family Mega Manila, Inc.          003970143807</p> 
 <p><i>Ways to Give</i></p>	<p>The Builder of the Light of Jesus Family          Mega Manila Feast Bay Area, Inc.          000-4000-24846</p> 



# Worship!

## EXHORTATIONS

### **BRO. JHON JAVIER:**

Good Morning, Feast!

Welcome to our Grand Feast!

Tell the person beside you, “I’m glad you are here!”

I know the weather is crazy. It’s raining outside. But this is still a day that the Lord has made!

The book of Psalms says, *This is the day that the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it* (Psalm 118:24). And *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. From the house of the Lord, we bless you.* (Psalm 118:26).

Hallelujah!



### **AMBRY RAMOS:**

Thank You, Jesus!

You want to know more of the Good News of God?

For the ones who are weary and for the hearts that are exhausted, for the ones who can’t understand what’s in front of them, you don’t have to fight anymore!

The Cross is powerful. And our weapon amid every war is *praise*. Our weapon amid every war is *God’s love*.

And the Good News is, God has never lost a battle—and He never will.

And so, Father, as a declaration of Your might, as a declaration of Your love, and a declaration of Your victory, we sing and worship You today!



**GOOD NEWS**

Produced by  
 Vernon Lim and Feast Music  
 Written by  
 Aio Barcelona, Hannah Dela Rosa  
 and Jorel Borromeo  
 Vocals by  
 Aio Barcelona and Vanya Castor



### **BRO. DIDOY LUBATON:**

How many here have storms in life? There is a storm raging outside. Yes? It's been raining. It was so hard to come here. But you showed up.

And in the same way, I want to declare to all of you: those who have storms in their life-- in their health, finances, relationships, career, businesses—when you sing to God, when you raise your hands to God today, that is God showing up in your life...

Hallelujah! That is the prescription of the Divine Healer for us today... For every storm in your life, for every battle you may be in, all you're saying today is Hallelujah! Praise to the Lord! Hallelujah!

Everybody, shout Hallelujah!

On behalf of all the leaders in the Community, we want to honor you for showing up. Your presence is so appreciated. I myself had a hard time coming here, and I was like, "Are thousands of people going to show up?"

And here you are! Thank you so much!

And those watching online, thank you also for tuning in. And if you don't catch this *live*, the same blessing, the same healing, the same love flow to you, and to all of us here. *Maraming-maraming Salamat po.*

I also want to honor all the servants, all of you – from Production, Music, Worship, Security, our Warmth Team, Kids Ministry, Intercessory Prayer, Medical... As early as 6 a.m., there are people in the "kitchen" putting these all together so that we can all have The Feast. *Maraming-maraming Salamat.*

As we start The Feast, I just have three practicalities to share:

No. 1: We have the Sacrament of Confession – up on the second floor. So, if God calls you, and you feel that you want to come home to God through this Sacrament, go upstairs.

No. 2: For those with kids, there's a Kids' Area, there's a television there, with *live* streaming of The Feast—a service added for our Family, so people in any season of Life can attend The Feast.

No. 3: I know it's difficult to pay for parking. So now, there's a booth right at the lobby so you can quickly pay there.

And we have a special announcement on **The Feast Conference 2023**. For our first-timers, The Feast Conference is our biggest conference of the year. Our Feast Family members from all over the Philippines, from all over the world come together for this event -- and we're launching it today.



**BRO. TONY VALENZUELA:**

“It’s a Special Sunday!”

Today, we are officially launching our annual Feast Conference 2023!



For those who have not yet attended, Dids, what’s your experience so far with Feast Conference?



**BRO. DIDOY:** Fifteen years ago, my Dad passed away. That was in 2008. In 2009, as a whole family, we attended the Feast Conference. And that really brought a lot of healing for all us.

It was a Welcome Home-Back to God, after some resentment over our loss... But, I realized, God can bear our burden that we lift to Him. God really shows up and welcomes us home.

We also got refreshed not just by the speakers but the whole sense of Community... we are not alone... That was really beautiful for our family.

**BRO. TONY:** Actually, I remember one specific line Bro. Bo said in the FEASTCON class (on marriage) he conducted with his wife Sis. Marowe.

Bro. Bo’s advice for husbands—it’s etched in my mind and really hit the heart: “Husbands, just die for your wife.”

I was like, “Grabe naman itong si Bro. Bo... He’s too much...”

But that was one moment, one inspiration from one FEASTCON class...Imagine if you’re attending the entire three days on November 24-26, you will receive many blessings.



**BRO. BO SANCHEZ:**

GOD wants you at His Divine Appointment. God wants you at that place where you encounter Him and receive His Presence, His Word that will transform your life. Because this is what God is doing in your life. He is creating something new, something fresh.



Receive the blessing of God and the miracle that He wants for you... You can be part of that powerful encounter where God will be there, visiting you and doing something brand new in your life.

Feast Conference 2023. New Promise. See you there!



# Talk

## INTRODUCTION

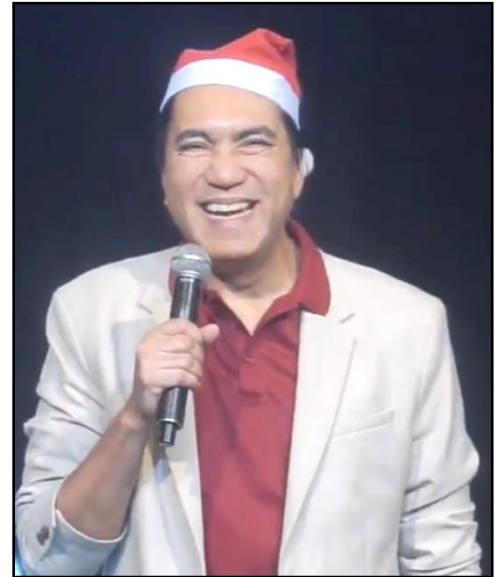
### **BRO. ALVIN BARCELONA:**

Happy *ber* Months! Merry Christmas!  
Only in the Philippines—it's only September but we are already greeting each other *Merry Christmas!*

We Filipinos are indeed extreme. I teach Filipino culture and yes, we tend to express everything to extremes.

For example, we lost in the recent FIBA Basketball World Cup games three consecutive times—the entire nation mourned. Then, suddenly we won against China. Wooow! We now own West Philippine Sea! Wooow!  
Joke, joke 😊

Welcome to our Grand Feast, here at the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC) Plenary Hall. Thank you that despite the bad weather, you are here.

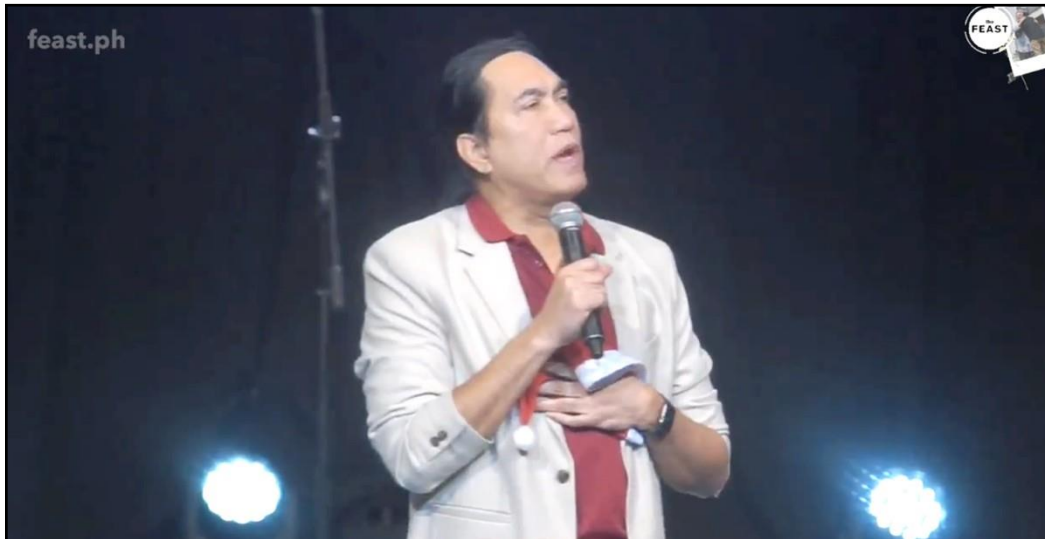


By the way, to our online viewers, *Merry Christmas!* And for the first-timers, Welcome! I'm Bro. Bo Sanchez, the Taglish version 😊




Bro. Bo is out of the country. I'm just giving the intro of the Feast talk today. Bro. Audee Villaraza will be giving the main talk.



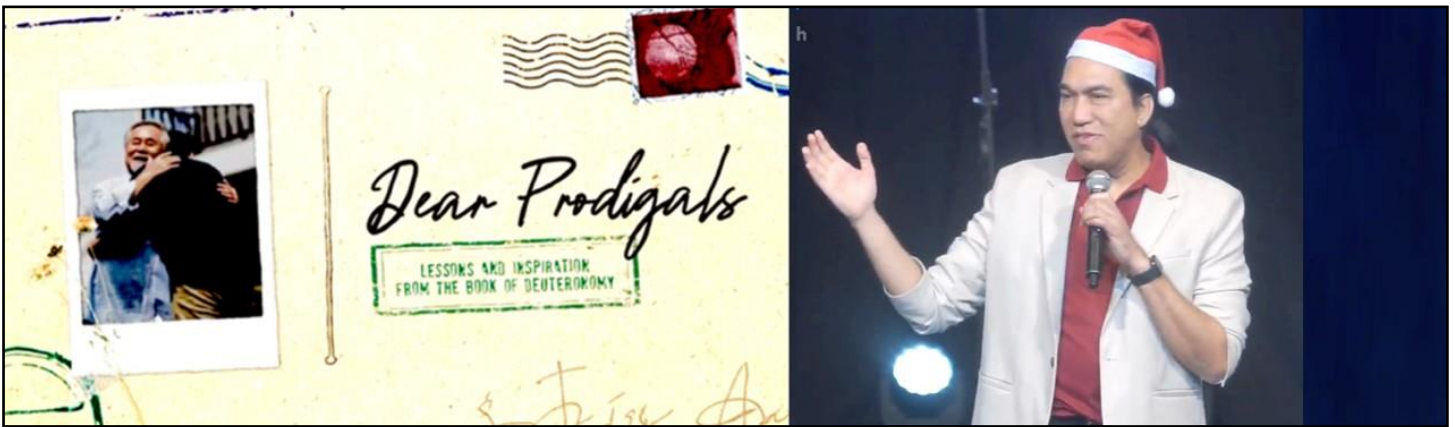
# NOVENA TO GOD'S LOVE DECLARATION OF ABUNDANCE



I invite you to stand up to pray our favorite prayer here at The Feast.  
In the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit...

	Today, I receive all of God's love for me. Today, I open myself to the unbounded, limitless, overflowing abundance of God's universe. Today, I open myself to God's blessings, healing, and miracles.
	Today, I open myself to God's Word so I become more like Jesus every day. Today, I proclaim that I am God's Beloved. I am God's Servant. I am God's Powerful Champion.
	And because I am blessed, I am blessing the world. In Jesus' name. Amen.





Welcome to our continuing series, *Dear Prodigals* – Blessings and Inspiration from the book of *Deuteronomy*.

The big message today:



That's why I said, it's only September but we are already celebrating Christmas. But we have to be sure we know the meaning of the celebration.

Even Jose Mari Chan, popular for his Christmas songs, is saying Christmas is not about him. He pointed out his very name is about the real Personages of Christmas: Jose—Joseph; Mari—Mary; and Chan—which sounds like *tiyan*, the Tagalog for *stomach*—and it means Who's inside: the Baby Jesus. He is the real One we are waiting for.

Yes, going back to Jesus, going back to God's heart-- because this is the second message that we want you to bring home: *God is a designer*.



When God creates something, every atom, every cell, every being, every fiber of anything that He makes is for a purpose. I teach that in my Philosophy classes. I teach that everything is designed for something. Everything should function according to its end.

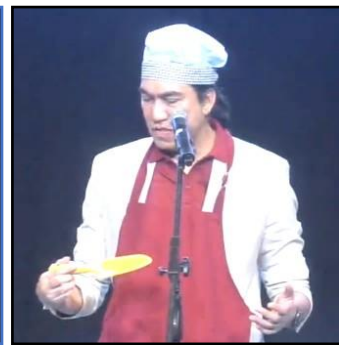
**20** The FEAST FAMILY September 10, 2023







If you're a cook, to look clean, you wear an apron and hair net so your hair will not fall on the dish you're cooking.



You use a *ladle*...  
Not a *label*

What about this...?

This is for gardening...



Just go back to your original getup: Santa Claus.  
It's magic: All you wish will be granted...

See, even the perception of Christmas is wrong...

Christmas is a miracle:  
The One we are waiting for  
--He is Jesus.

## Our Design

Okay, let's applaud  
Bro. Christian for this skit...

This skit demonstrates that  
most of our problems stem  
from not using the right tool.  
Or if you do not function  
according to your purpose.

That's when you destroy  
others and you destroy yourself.

You must respect this God-  
birthed design in you, or you  
endanger your very existence.



Notice that there is a gap in our heart. Fortune, fame, power can never fill that gap. You know why? It's only God Who can complete you, who can fully satisfy your soul, your being.

Why?

That's our design. We are designed to go back to God.

Our purpose is to be one with Him forever. That's why every time we do things that veer away from God, we get into trouble. But every time we do things that draw us closer to God, that's when we have true peace, joy, and meaning in our life.

Go back to the Father's heart.

*Go Back To The Father's Heart*

We are designed for that.

And you know what? This can be applied to marriage.

My talk is just an introduction to the Talk today—the part in *Deuteronomy* about marriage.

Please welcome Bro. Audee Villaraza!



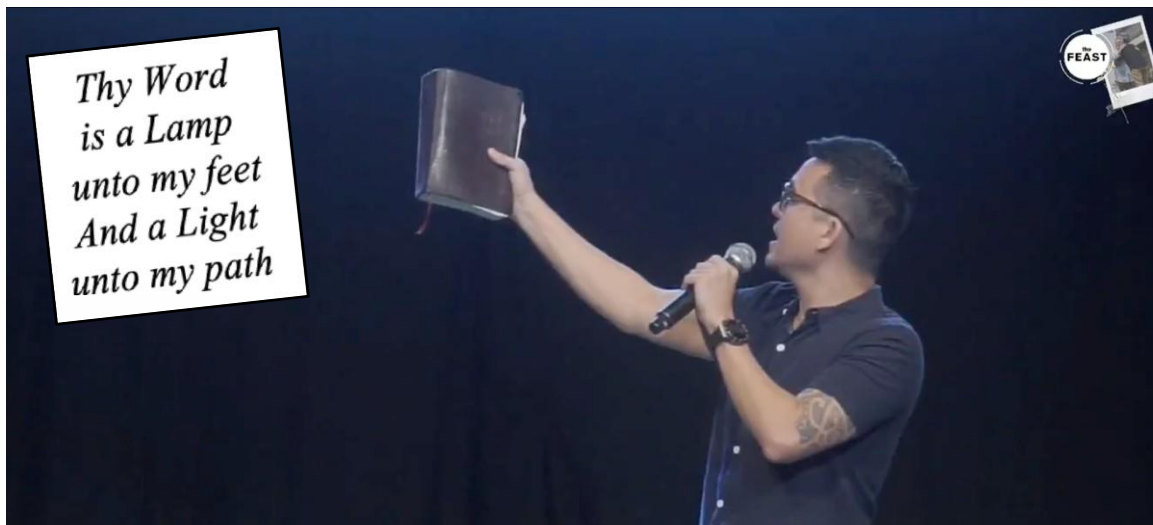
**AUDEE VILLARAZA:**

Everybody say, “Thank you, Bro. Alvin.”

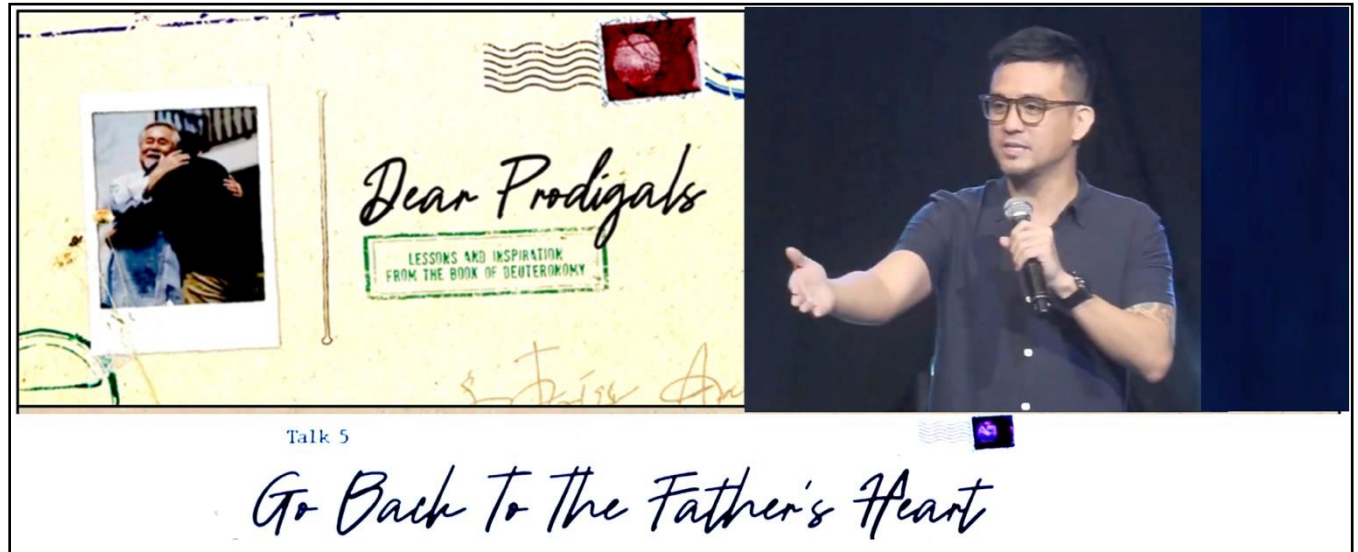
Who says Church can’t be fun?

May I invite everybody to stand up. How many of you believe that we serve and worship not just a loving God but a happy God—a cheerful God, a fun-loving God?

So, we break-open His Word today. Give honor and reverence to the Word of God...



# Talk



Before I open the passage assigned to us today, may I confess something?

I had a very difficult time studying our passage for today-- not because I have not experienced this myself-- but because it's so important that we deliver this because it's such a valuable topic.

The topic for today is marriage and just in case you are single, this talk is still for you-- and you'll find out why later.

But we're going to go and travel towards an issue called *divorce*. This is a topic, I'm sure, that people wonder about. It's a very controversial topic and if you will notice, it takes grace to understand the passage we will read -- God's grace that enables us to understand His wisdom.

And my prayer for all of us today is we would have the grace to learn from God's wisdom today.

We're going to talk about *Deuteronomy's* laws on how couples are supposed to relate to each other-- and it usually starts with marriage.

So, just a fair warning to all of you: the passage that we're going to read is not going to inspire you. Actually, it will confuse you.

Married people, this will make you ask questions. But I believe that God's wisdom is going to pour into this place.



So, let's go to Deuteronomy 24:1:

"If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house.."

That's the passage that we're going to study today and I hope that we're going to lean in on God's Word. Just bow and let's welcome the Presence of God.

*Lord Jesus, this is Your Word. Heavenly Father, we are limited in the way of understanding it-- but because we know that you can work through this text, we believe that you can take this down to the level of our understanding so that we can find ways to apply this in our daily life. Lord, it might be difficult for us to hear but with your grace, there will be wisdom, there will be embrace, and there will be appreciation for this Word. Thank you so much for speaking to us. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

I'll read it to you one more time, in case you didn't catch that.

Deuteronomy 24:1, and Moses says: *If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and then he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her, and sends her from his house, divorce can happen.*

Now, it's very simple. You don't need a Master's degree in Theology. It simply means that a man can divorce his wife for absolutely any reason whatsoever that he finds displeasing about her.

For instance, if she has bad breath, divorce her. She talks too loud that the entire barangay can hear her, divorce her. She takes too long in the shower, divorce her. She watches too many Korean dramas, my goodness, divorce her.

That's what the passage is saying. This is the problem, my dear friends: We might be reading this ancient text with modern eyes. You don't do that. Because if you do that, you try to make it literal according to your situation now. It's very dangerous. You can actually commit a sin and then credit that as a command from the Lord. So dangerous.



## Relationship Problems

But let me get serious.

Relationship problems have been there since the time of Moses. It is not a modern-day invention. It wasn't invented in the 21st century or the 20th century. It's been there since time immemorial. Actually, I'd like to believe that Adam and Eve had relationship problems.

In a pirated version of the Bible, it says that when God created the world, God rested afterward. You know this story, right? It's actually after God created man that he rested. And then God created woman and since then, God and man have not rested.

Ha-ha :) I don't like that joke too much. But that's the pirated version of the Bible.

Relationship problems have always been there. Even Jesus had to struggle with this topic. Let me show you--we're going to go to the New Testament now.

In Matthew 19 something happens that Jesus and the Pharisees have this dialogue about divorce. The verse says that some Pharisees came and tried to trap Jesus with this question: "Should a man be allowed to divorce his wife for just any reason?"

I want to show you how Jesus responds to this. This is the genius of Jesus.

He says,

"Haven't you read the Scriptures?... They record that from the beginning, God made them male and female... And "For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh."



Some Pharisees came and tried to trap him with this question: "Should a man be allowed to divorce his wife for just any reason?"

MATTHEW  
19:3 NLT

"Haven't you read the Scriptures?" Jesus replied, "They record that from the beginning 'God made them male and female.'" <sup>5</sup> And he said, "This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. <sup>6</sup> Since they are no longer two but one, let no one split apart what God has joined together.

MATTHEW  
19:4-6 NLT

## Go Back to the Original Design

To understand any piece of Scripture, here's the advice:

You go back to the beginning.

Jesus went back to *Genesis*. He went back to the original design.

That is, He went back to the Father's heart.

That's a hermeneutical lesson, by the way.

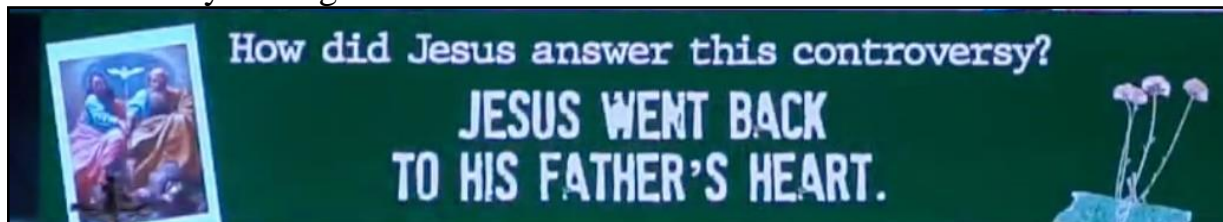
Again, if there's anything that confuses you about Scripture, what you need to do is you need to go back and ask this question: What did God intend this for? What was the original design. You know that's a principle you can practice in life.

Whenever you get lost in getting to your destination, what's a good advice? You go back to the place where you started to lose your way—back to the starting point.

Do you have a certain thing in your house that you always lose all the time? Maybe not in your house, maybe in your office. For some of you, it might be your phone. Or maybe, for some of you, your keys—car keys, house keys. To me, what I always lose—never fails—the remote control of our television. The weirdest place where I found our remote control was in the refrigerator. I have no idea who was thinking of putting a remote control in the ref. It happens. But what's good advice for you to find that item—especially if you know that you were the last one to use it: Go back. Retrace your steps, right? That's good advice.

Whenever you get lost in the Bible—you're reading a piece of Scripture, you don't know what it means—you go back to the original design of what God intended that for.

That's why Jesus goes back to *Genesis*.



## Two Schools of Thought

Going back to the topic of divorce—again I’ve never experienced it—this is a hard topic for me. But divorce—you need to know this—is a very controversial topic even during the time of Jesus.

We all know that even up to today, divorce is a controversial topic.

The Philippines, our country—we’re one of the few countries left who still subscribe to the notion that there is no divorce because of our Catholic ways, our Catholic beliefs-- everywhere around the world, they’re cancelling divorce left and right.



I want you to know this: Because of the context of the Israelites-- the Jews during the time of Jesus-- divorce is such a hot topic for them. It’s because they believed that marriage was a sacred tradition. It was sacred for all people.

Listen to this: During their time, if you were over 20 years old and you were still single, you were sinning against God-- because you were clearly disobeying the command of the Lord to be fruitful and multiply.

That’s why they regarded marriage as a sacred act.

There were two schools of thought during that time: By Rabbi Shammai; and by Rabbi Hillel.

Now, let me tell you the difference between these two rabbis.

Rabbi Shammai was a little conservative. He taught that divorce could only be possible if the wife committed adultery-- if there was unfaithfulness, if there was infidelity.

On the other hand, Rabbi Hillel was a little more radical. Because he subscribed very closely to the concept of the Mosaic law: that the husband can divorce his wife for any reason that displeases him.

So, question: Guess who had more fans in his club? Rabbi Hillel obviously, right? They had all of these sayings about what a bad wife is.

They said this: That any man who has a bad wife will go straight to Heaven when he dies-- because he already suffered Hell on Earth. That’s horrible, right?

But that’s what they believed in.





## Don't Go Historical

I remember this story about a couple.

The wife says, "Hon, it's already our Silver Anniversary-- we've been married for 25 years! What's your gift to me?"

The husband replies, "I will bring you to Africa."

The wife goes, "Wow, how sweet of you! On our Golden Anniversary, what will be your gift to me?"

Husband quips, "I will already fetch you."

Ha-ha! He left her in Africa for 25 years!

Divorce was such a hot topic for the Israelites. And let me tell you this: In the time of Jesus, it was something that they really struggled with.

But I want to point out what Jesus says. The Pharisees are not even done yet. They are still attacking Jesus.

They say to Jesus, "Why did Moses say in the law (now they're pointing to Deuteronomy 24) that a man could give his wife a written notice of divorce and then send her away?"

So, now they're going historical. They're backtracking to *Deuteronomy*.

Little free marriage advice to all married people: Should you ever go hysterical about any issue or any argument in your marriage, never go historical. Don't go poking at old wounds. Because if you've truly forgiven your spouse, the past won't matter anymore. You let pass what happened in the past.

I want to show you how Jesus answers the Pharisees. This is the meat I want to share with you.

In verse 8, the Pharisees ask, "What did Moses say in the law?"

Jesus says, "Moses permitted divorce *only* as a concession to your hard hearts but it was not what God had originally intended."

Oh, my goodness, I love this. Moses permitted divorce-- that much we get. But he permitted divorce only as a concession for their hardened heart!

So, it is like Jesus is saying that when God instituted the sacrament of marriage, there was a design, and to God that was the ideal.

But here's the thing: Because of sin, because of our hardened hearts, we cannot obtain the ideal. So, God says, "This much I will permit."

## God Is for Marriage

Now let me make it practical: God's heart is for marriage.

That's the original design.

God's heart is for marriage!

But here's something you did not know: God's heart is also for those who have messed up in marriage!

God's heart is also for those who have been abused because of marriage! God's heart is also for those who have been broken because of a messy relationship!

That's why divorce is actually a pastoral solution to a messy situation.

So, what are we trying to say? Yes, God is for marriage. He's for the unity of two persons: That what God has put together, let no one separate that.

But God realizes that there is sin -- and because sin has hardened the heart of some people.

And if you're listening to this and you've been abused in that marriage, I pray that this message speaks to you-- because God's heart is for you.

But on the other side of the spectrum, if you are the abuser, I pray that you also listen to this message-- because the Good News is that God's heart is also for you and God wants to change you. God wants you to repent and to draw close to His heart. That's the Good News!

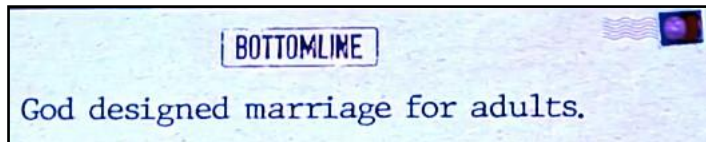
The more I read about this, the more I realize that I do not understand how God loves us. That God would love the person who was abused, just as much as he loves the abuser? Doesn't make sense. But such is the mercy and the grace of the God we worship!

So, this is Good News! Never allow yourself to be separated from your Savior even if you sinned against Him. Because, hey, if you are in a bad relationship or in a bad marriage, even if you feel that you're the person who is abused, I want you to know that God loves you-- but God also loves the person on the other side, and He wants to change that person. So, I hope and pray that you're hearing this message.



## What Leads You Closer to God

But let me end this way: Marriage is not easy. It's not. Actually, God designed marriage only for mature people.



It's because marriage invites us to commit to doing things that immature people cannot do. That's why for people who are planning to get married, you have to talk to a priest. You have seasons and journeys with him because the priest wants you to actually think about whether you're ready or not to be married.

The priest wants to say, "Hey, take your time. You don't have to rush into it because if you're not ready, you might mismanage the sanctity of marriage."

Again, God's heart is for marriage but God's heart is also for those who have messed up in their marriages and who are really looking for a Savior.

Think about this: You might be mad at the other person because he hurt you and you might be separated from him already-- and there's that pinch of pain. But I want you to think about this for a moment --just indulge me: What if this separation is the thing that will actually lead you closer to Christ?

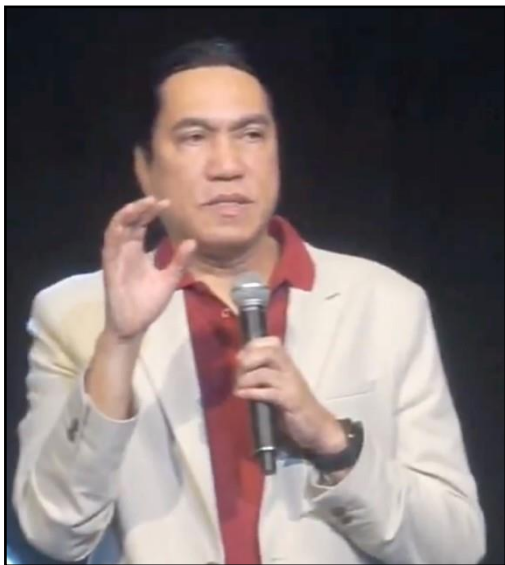
So, we can see that God can work in all things! Even through such a painful thing as that separation.

It's not the end of the talk yet.

I want to welcome back Alvin Barcelona!







## Stigma of Broken Family

### **BRO. ALVIN BARCELONA:**

Thank you again, Bro. Audee. Thank you very much.

By the way, I just flew in from Bacolod this morning. We had a fantastic Grand Feast in Bacolod. Hundreds of people came. But outside the city, there were still flooded areas...

Marriage. For better or for worse. In sickness or in health. For richer or for poorer. What God has joined together, let no man put asunder.

*You were just a dream that I once knew...*

*(Forevermore by Side A).*

Let me ask you a hard question:

And why am I the one giving this part of the talk?

Because I was just in Grade 4 when my Mom and my Dad separated—telling about it in front of us three children. They even made us choose who we would go with—to Mommy or to Daddy?

You know, something like that happens to you – we hope it isn't forever—but it hits you for a very long time.

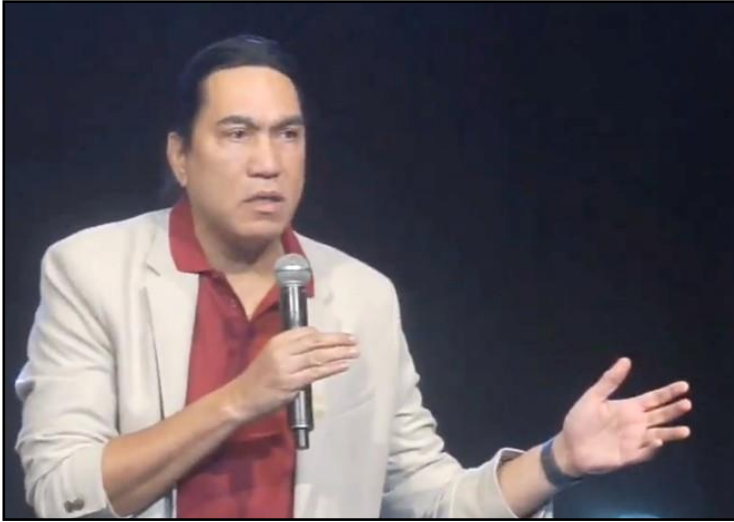
My Dad is no longer here. A few years after I graduated from college, he passed away. And my Mom just joined the Lord last January (2023).

But their separation still hits me. But as long as I can remember, I did not blame them. Truth to tell, early enough, I already forgave them—even if they were not asking for forgiveness. Even though I did not understand why they separated, I accept that there are certain things beyond our control.

We were hidden when they separated. Because well, we were a product of a scandal – in the sense that my Daddy was a politician, and my Mommy was a teacher. And, you know, those days—actually even today—politicians and teachers should have a clean image. So, when they are separated, their children suffer the stigma of a broken family.

When I came home, I was introduced as adopted – just to hide the incident.

**What if your marriage has failed?**



## Sad Generation

Now, I am a teacher. And a big percentage of our students also come from broken homes.

That's why now, more than ever, we should understand this issue. Especially in the light of our Church teachings about our faith.

I am one who wants to make light what's heavy. I'm a musician. You know, most hit songs are love songs. And do you know? Among the love

songs, the hits are about couples separating.

When I was younger—much younger— singer Imelda Papin sang, *Lunes, nang tayo ay nagkakilala... Monday when we met...*

And in just one week, the partners were already separated.

*Linggo, giliw, nang ako'y iyong iniwan... Sunday when you left me...*

That was a hit song.

Even among millennials now. Who is your biggest artist? Moira Dela Torre. And what is her hit song?

*Pinapaubaya ko na sa kanya... I am letting go...*

I can't tell whether she is giving up the guy for the other woman, or letting God to take him already to make up for what he had done to her.

Even among the Gen Z (born from late 1990s through today) one popular band is SunKissed Lola: *Palad ay basang-basa... Palm is so wet...*

So anxious because: *Dahan-dahan, sa pasilyo ng altar sa simbahan... Slowly, on the aisle of the church... Ikaw at ikaw talagang ikaw ... You and really you...*

Repeating *Ikaw at ikaw* one thousand times...

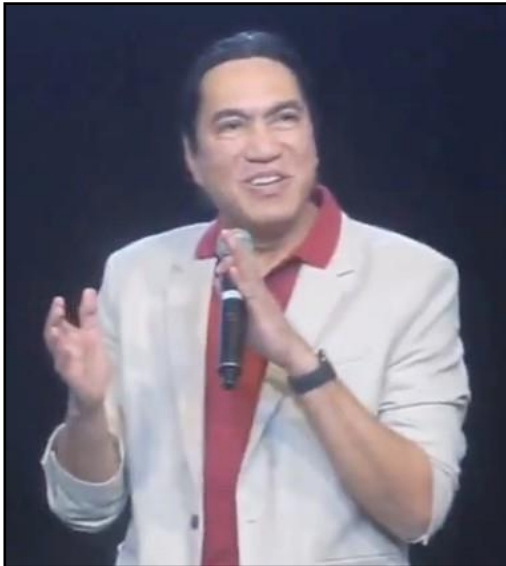
That's the SunKissed Lola.

The other rock band is named Lola Amour: *It's been raining... Feeling so cold...*

One line goes: *I will be waiting in Manila even if you're no longer coming back...*

That's why the backup: *Nakahiga, nanginginig... Lying down, trembling...*

So sad... You're alone, trembling, not really because of the cold weather... but because the guy is no longer coming back...



## We Have Hope!

Things happen.

And what is God's last message when things don't happen the way they should?

The message:

"Receive my Mercy and Restoration.  
Mercy to forgive your sins.  
And restoration to live a new life."

Mercy to forgive your sins. And restoration to live a new life.

I repeat: I am a product of parents who separated when I was just in Grade 4. But I became a preacher. I even became a school steward. I even became a World Bank consultant for the Office of the President.

I am boasting... to point out that God is a Master in drawing out the good from something bad.

Yeah! We have hope!

That's always the last say of the Lord. Everything will work out for good....

Don't get me wrong.

Don't say to your partner, "Let's separate already so that something good will happen to us."

Because God's definition of marriage is non-negotiable.

The Catholic Church, our Church, does not have divorce.

But its pastoral response to the reality that some marriages—many marriages--fail, is Church annulment.

Because God's definition of marriage is non-negotiable,  
the Catholic Church does not have divorce.  
But its pastoral response to the reality of marriage breakdown  
is church annulment.

THIS IS THE CATHOLIC PASTORAL RESPONSE TO MARRIAGE FAILURE.

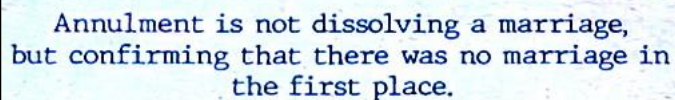


## Annulment: The Catholic Response

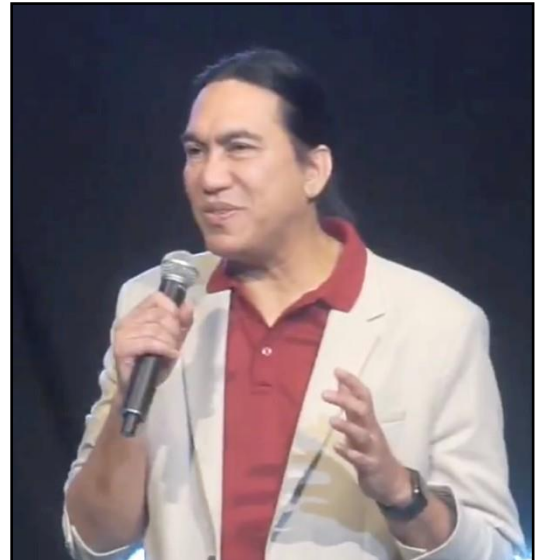
We should tell you this: My stepfather and my mother were together longer than my mother and my father were. They were opting for church annulment.

This is the Catholic response to marriage failure. We have that.

But let me just take note of this:



Annulment is not dissolving a marriage, but confirming that there was no marriage in the first place.

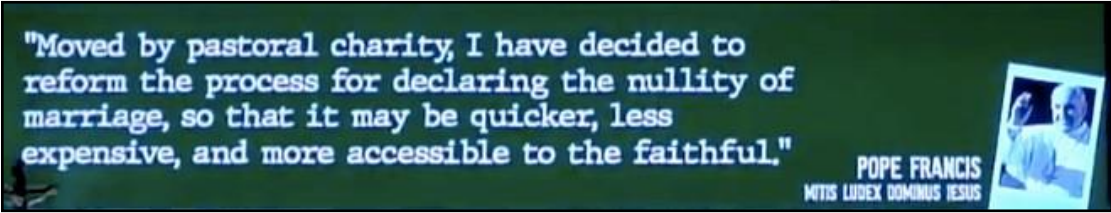


Annulment is not dissolving a marriage—but confirming that there was no marriage in the first place.

Yes, the Church provides that.

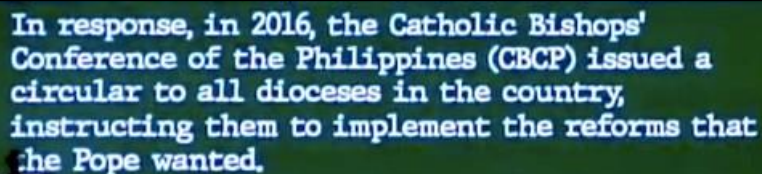
But warning: If marrying someone is complex, annulling a marriage is more complex. If weddings are expensive, annulments are not free. And to make matters worse, because humans oversee the annulment process, it is long and tedious.

In 2015, in his letter *Mitis Ludex Dominus Iesus*, Pope Francis said:



"Moved by pastoral charity, I have decided to reform the process for declaring the nullity of marriage, so that it may be quicker, less expensive, and more accessible to the faithful."

POPE FRANCIS  
MITIS LUDEX DOMINUS IESUS



In response, in 2016, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) issued a circular to all dioceses in the country, instructing them to implement the reforms that the Pope wanted.

In case you are in that situation, you go to your diocese, to your priest, and consult them about the matter. And you will be given this recourse.

Why?

Because Jesus sees laws from a different lens. In the Bible, it's harder. We see the issue discussed in *Deuteronomy* and expanded up to the New Testament.

The last words of God are always *mercy* and *forgiveness*.

## Back to Genesis

Here's a familiar story is in John 7:53- 8:1:

"Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him.

JOHN 8:  
4-6 ESV



The Pharisees were so legalistic. Hey, we're not exaggerating. They would really stone the woman until she dies—publicly. Because she was guilty of adultery.

But how did Jesus address this? How did Jesus respond?

Jesus saw the law through the lens of *Genesis*. It has been a recurring theme for us since Holy Week—that we go back to the Garden of Eden. We go back to the lens of *Genesis*.

Why?

Because Jesus always went back to the Father's Heart.

Remember, I always say, it all started with the story when Adam and Eve made a mistake. And what was their biggest sin? We were taught they disobeyed. Well, all of us disobey.

But this is my personal take: Their bigger sin was that they disobeyed but did not admit their transgression. They disobeyed. They should just have asked for forgiveness. God was looking for them.

And I said, when God asked Adam, "Where are you?"

Adam said, "You gave me the woman..."

He was saying it's God who should be blamed because God gave him the woman.

And then the woman, on the other hand, pointed at the Serpent.

Well, the Serpent doesn't have fingers, he could not point. All he could do was crawl. So, he took all the blame.

Adam should just have said, "Lord, we made a mistake."

Eve should have said, "Lord, I made a mistake."

Then that's it. The story ends in *Genesis*. We would no longer have *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, *Deuteronomy*...

The FEAST FAMILY September 10, 2023 37

## ***Receive My Mercy. Receive My Restoration***

The lesson is this: If you make a mistake, run to God. Why?

What was the response of Jesus when the Pharisees wanted to stone the woman?

Let's continue John 8:6-11:

“Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.”

Slowly, they put down their stones.

No one stoned the woman. But there was one there who was not sinful: Jesus.

If there was one who had the right to stone the woman, it was Jesus, right? But Jesus did not.

Jesus asked the woman, “Where are your accusers? Didn't even one of them condemn you?”

“No, Lord,” she said.

And Jesus said, “Neither do I. Go and sin no more.”

Through His actions, Jesus manifested the Father's Heart: Forgiving an adulterer... dining with tax collectors... with public sinners... up to the Cross... forgiving those who crucified Him.

Take note: Jesus isn't saying, “Go ahead, commit sins.”

No. No. Sin has very, very grave consequences.

What is the consequence of all our sins?

They caused the life of Jesus. The Son of God was nailed on the Cross because of sins. He sacrificed to give us New Life.

*Receive My Mercy. Receive My Restoration. Mercy to forgive sins. And restoration to live a New Life.*

My consolation about what happened to my Daddy and Mommy, I would not be the one to judge them. Because before my Daddy passed away, they would have reconciled. Because the second husband of my Mommy already died. So, she was free to go back to my Dad. But perhaps my Dad was so excited, he suffered a heart attack. But the intention to reconcile was there.

And the Lord sees your heart.

Before my Mommy passed on, our priests—Fr. Bob McConaghy, Fr. Albert Garong—were ministering to her, telling her, “Go back to the Lord. Go back to the Lord.”

Up to the last minute of your life, the Lord will show you His mercy.





## Going Back to the Father's Heart

Here's my last message:

We might be tired. We might be feeling unworthy. You might be saying, "I repeat and repeat the same sins, I fall and fall again..."



I fall ...



Stand up...



I fall again...



Stand up again...



Walk...



But I fall again...



Stand up... Walk



I fall...



Get up...



Stand up...



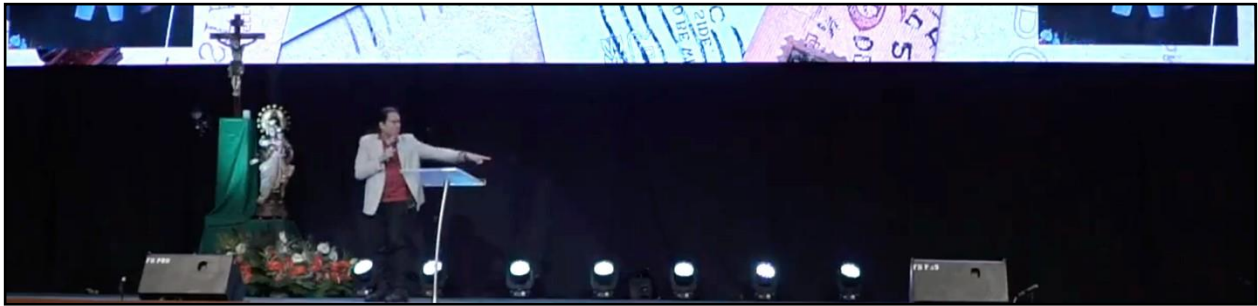
Walk...



I fall again...



So shameful...  
Nothing good happening  
in my life...



Not true... I used to be there... I'm here now...

Just don't stop. Just go on...

Continue going close to Him.

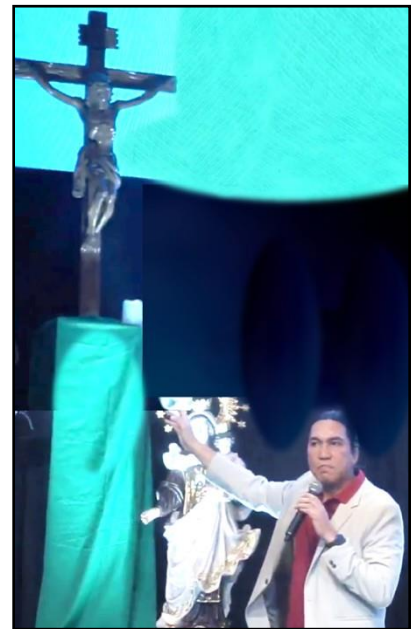
I want you to talk to Jesus.

To go back to the Father's Heart.

On the first Sunday of the *er* months, the most exciting, most anticipated season of the year, it's actually a call for us to go back to God's Heart.

No matter where you are, no matter your past, go back to Jesus.

Come, let's immerse ourselves in Worship of our God who gives us second chances, third chances, fourth chances until we are fully restored to a New Life.





Let me pray for you:

*Father in Heaven, we give You all glory and honor as we give our highest thanksgiving to You – Our God who forgives. Our God who restores. Grant us the grace to be faithful to our marriage, to our work, to our relationships, to our Community, to You,*



*and to ourselves. But thank You for reminding us that if we fail, and when we fall, we can and should go back to You, to the Father's Heart, who waits for us to be embraced and to be given a New Life. With this, we lift up our dreams, our hopes, because we know that as we go closer to You, that is where we live our life to the full. That is where we live our life with true joy, peace, and meaning. This will lift up in the mighty Name of Jesus. Amen!*





## MERCY MINISTRIES

*Jesus responded, "Why are you afraid? You have so little faith!" Then he got up and rebuked the wind and waves, and suddenly there was a great calm. —Mathew 8:26 NLT*

### The FEAST LITTLE ACTS OF LOVE PART 3

#### *All for Dagupan...Where Calamities Meet*

THE word *Dagupan* is simplified version of the Pangasinan word *nandaragupan* meaning *where people meet*. Yes, Dagupan is a strategic place, center of significant events in our nation's history.

Dagupan is also center place of calamities. Dagupan had just struggled through Typhoons Egay, Falcon, and Goring, and now, as we write this article, Dagupan City is getting soaked in Typhoon Hanna, and Typhoon Ineng is also coming...

And amid the crisis is the Light of Jesus Family Disaster Recovery Ministry now called The Feast Little Acts of Love, ministering to the affected areas.

In Dagupan, now in charge is Cheryl Tiongson, Administration/Finance head of the Light of Jesus Family-Dagupan.



She started serving in 2019, and a couple of years after, in 2023, Dagupan would struggle through the series of typhoons.

Cheryl has connected with The Feast Little Acts of Love leaders, *from left*: Bro. Hermie Morelos, chairman; Bro. Marvin Tan, executive director; and Bro. Barz Lomibao, head, The Feast Little Acts of Love in Dagupan City.

## Calamities—Natural and Man-Made

Dagupan City is now called Diamond City of the North as it celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> Diamond Jubilee on June 19, 2023.

Yes, 75 years of resiliency since its beginnings back in the 1500s.

The early settlers of Dagupan came from Indonesia. They lived along the water lines so their major sources of livelihood were

salt-making and fishing. Yes, they were fishermen. The fishers of men would come later.

During the early times, Dagupan was the center of trade for East Asia.

Still, it would not be spared of calamities.

Biggest man-made was the Spanish colonization of the Philippines.

As in other parts of the country, Dagupan revolted against the Spanish colonizers. One on record was the revolution led by Andres Malong, a local chieftain of Binalatongan town (now named San Carlos).

The revolution failed as the Spaniards subdued the Filipinos. To commemorate the gathering of Malong's forces, the place was renamed *Nandaragupan*, meaning *where people meet*, later simplified as *Dagupan*.

## Liberation

In time, on July 22, 1898, the revolutionary society Katipunan (Kataastaasang Kagalanggangang Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan) liberated Pangasinan from Spanish rule. But as history has it, after the Spaniards, the Americans came, governing the country until World War II when the Japanese took over—choosing Dagupan as the provincial capital of the newly established Japanese government.

General Douglas MacArthur led the liberation of the Philippines, setting up his Luzon headquarters in Dagupan to prepare operations to recapture Manila. Dagupan is now home to the MacArthur House, now a popular tourist destination.

Two years after Liberation, on June 20, 1947, then President Manuel Roxas signed into law Republic Act No. 170, authored by Speaker Eugenio Perez, formally recognizing the cityhood of Dagupan.



## Center of Calamities

We know Dagupan well for its pond-raised *bangus* or milkfish, said to be the world's tastiest and juiciest.

But aside from those ponds, Dagupan has rivers that make Dagupan a center of calamities.

Seven rivers and 14 creeks flow and meet in Dagupan, a low-lying area—just an average of one meter above sea level. The place is a catch basin of flood waters from neighboring towns which then exit at the Lingayen Gulf. So, Dagupan is vulnerable to flooding. A high tide of more than one meter immediately floods at least seven villages.

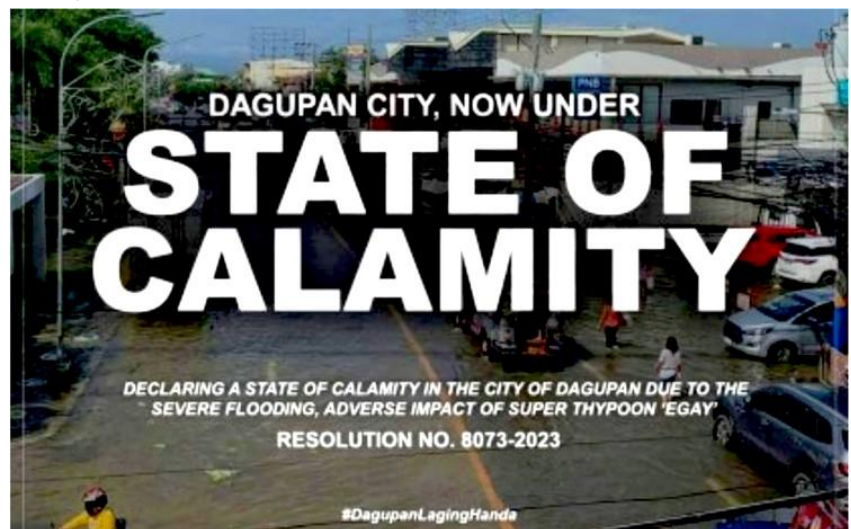
The seven rivers are Calmay, Pantal, Dawel, Tanap, Mangueragday, Patogcawen and Bayaoas. So important are the seven rivers that along with the *bangus*, they are represented by seven waves in the city's official seal.

A major calamity was a 7.7 magnitude earthquake on July 16, 1990, damaging major infrastructure. But the Dagupenos promptly moved to rebuild their city.

But more calamities would beset the City.

On July 28, 2023, the city government of Dagupan declared a state of calamity as all 31 barangays of the City experienced flooding and houses in the low-lying areas were greatly damaged by Typhoon Egay. Classes were canceled.

Typhoon Falcon, Typhoon Goring, and Typhoon Hanna would then come, one after the other.







## Quick Response

At the peak of the disasters, Dagupan City Mayor Belen Fernandez gathered government and non-governmental organizations to implement programs for the relief of affected residents:

### Goodbye Gutom or Zero Hunger

Launched on August 12, 2023, the program provides nutritious meals such as Tinola (chicken with ginger and onion soup) with Mayor Fernandez herself preparing and serving the dish to children of Barangay Careel and Barangay Lucao.

**Livelihood for Tricycle Drivers.** Still part of Mayor Fernandez's initiatives, the program is helping tricycle drivers with no means of livelihood during the calamity. The Mayor sought the assistance of Senator Imee Marcos who led distribution of P2,000 each to 2,500 tricycle drivers under the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).



**Continued Relief Operations.** Relief operations continue to cover all 31 barangays of the City.

## Experience in Calamity Response

Dagupan City is blessed with the right person to help out during the relief operations.

Cheryl Tiongson started in a Catholic school—at the Dominican School—for her Elementary education. For High School, she went to Ednas School, which adheres to tenets such as “What you do has a far greater impact than what you say,” and “An excellent leader is willing to serve, and not be served.”

For College, Cheryl went to the Lyceum Northwestern University, graduating in 2000, and continued there to earn a Master’s Degree in Business Administration.

Today, she works as real estate lessor.

Cheryl said in this corporate career, “I had experience in calamity response activities.”

But knowledge is not enough. One has to have a heart of faith which Cheryl has been blessed as she experienced a spiritual awakening.

Cheryl shares, “I was a practicing Catholic but with no consistent relationship with God.”

This would change when she found out about *Kerygma*, the inspirational magazine founded by Bro. Bo Sanchez, now called *The Feast*.

In 2019, she chanced upon a streamer of *The Feast*, checked out the prayer gathering, and today, she is a regular attendee at The Feast Dagupan.

Because here, she said, “I have a spiritual family who serves as my moral compass.”

And eventually, she began to serve in The Feast Little Acts of Love Ministry.

Because here, she said, “I developed a heart of gratitude even for simple things and gestures.”

And she is serving in other Light of Jesus Family Ministries.

“Wherever my help is needed,” she affirmed.

What sustains Cheryl in her mission is her favorite Bible verse: *Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.* – Proverbs 3:5-6 NLT.





## Acts of Love

At the wake of the typhoon disasters, The Feast Little Acts of Love-Dagupan promptly implemented relief operations.

The Ministry started feeding sessions in evacuation centers.

But one big problem has hampered the operations.

“Funds,” Cheryl said.

To address the problem, she added, the Ministry has made a directory of LGU Disaster Response point persons for quick communication particularly in securing calamity funds.



According to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), Super Typhoon Goring exited the Philippine Area of Responsibility on Wednesday, August 30, at 7:50 p.m. It actually did not make landfall in the Philippines but triggered torrential rain and fierce winds in parts of Northern Luzon.

An hour later, at 9:00 p.m., severe tropical storm Hanna entered the Philippine Area of Responsibility.

But Goring and Hanna were not the only problem. PAGASA said the enhanced southwest monsoon or *habagat* continues to pour rains causing the damaging floods.

So, servants of The Feast Little Acts of Love continue to be on their feet—most likely even immersed in the floods—to minister to affected residents.

Just to let them know that yes, they are loved.





**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.

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

Fax 725-1230

## 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.

**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.



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



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

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



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

## CHOOSE HOW YOU WANT TO GIVE

1. Donate ONLINE (through credit card) Go to [www.kerygmfamily.com](http://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 Inc. 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 Inc. and mail (registered mail) to Shepherd's 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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BPI: Savings Account no: 0123-4849-67 Cubao Aurora Branch

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Branch Banco de Oro - Savings Account no. 000160506123 SM Cubao Branch

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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.

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# **FAMILY ONLINE NEWSMAGAZINE**

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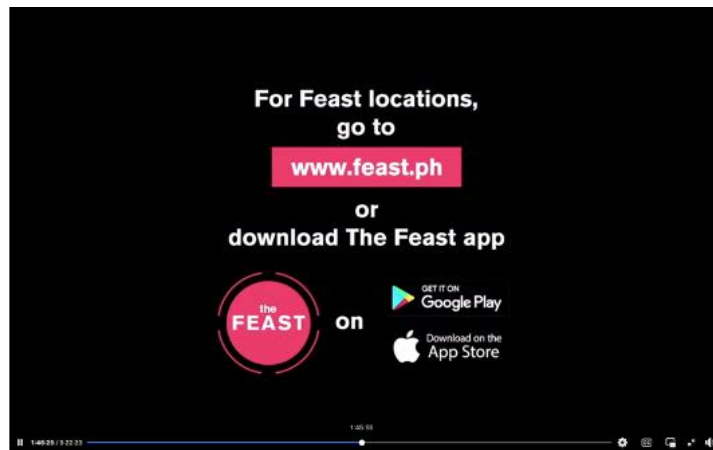
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***Go and make disciples of all men.***

— Matthew 28:19





