

In Your Brokenness, You Are Loved

LIKE last week, I met a bunch of old friends I love so much.

Most of them are in their 70s. These guys and gals have been serving with me in the Light of Jesus Family for the past 40+ years. After more than four decades, we're still part of a Light Group.

We still worship together, break open God's Word, expose our wounds, pray together, laugh together, and just have fun as lifelong friends.

Throughout these years, we've had our fights, some quite bloody. But we



always made up because, from the start, we've decided to put our relationships above anything else.

Here's why I think we've stuck together: If Jesus loves us in our brokenness, we have no choice but to love people in their brokenness too.

Is this what spiritual maturity means?

This is what we'll find out at The Feast today.

May your dreams come true,

Bo Somety

to our Feast Talk Series *TABLE TALKS: Community Recipes of Love* Talk 6: *The Greatest Metric*

WELCOME

Bo Sanchez



How Do I Love Thee?

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways. I love thee to the depth and breadth and height my soul can reach when feeling out of sight. For the ends of being and ideal grace. -- Elizabeth Barrett Browning

IT's still February, the Love Month, and as you may note, we still have a Valentine's Day hangover. So, our quote comes not from our usual spiritual sources, but from Sonnet 43 by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, iconic English poet of the Romantic Movement in Europe towards the end of the 18th century.



The poet counts the ways she loves, the measure of her passion for her love interest. The poem comes to mind not only because it's the Love season, but simply because this issue of *The Feast Family* is about measurements-yes, numbers.

In his Homily last Feast Sunday, Fr. Bob McConaghy talked about numbers-- the 40 days of Lent. Check out his recommended Lenten Plan, *page 3*.

This Sunday, we learn about love metrics, similar but more thought-provoking than Browning's count.

It's *The Greatest Metric*, Talk 6, of our *Table Talks* series. Bro. Bo Sanchez's intro on *page 1*.

Speaking of numbers, also last Sunday, we celebrated the 49th year in the priestly ministry of Fr. Bob.

Bro. Didoy Lubaton welcomed us to a thanksgiving celebration, *page 15*.

Bro. Audee Villaraza also talked about important numbers: 2 Reasons God Wants to Involve Us in Building His Kingdom, page 22. That's his intro of Talk 5-- which was also about numbers: 4 Main Points about Church, presented by Bro. John Ben Rodriguez, starting on page 26.

Yes, the numbers are God's way of letting us know: *How Do I Love Thee?*





All for God's Glory,

Randy Borromeo Media Ministry Executive Director





FLASHBACK! FEBRUARY 11, 2024

Holy Mass



Homily REV.FR. BOB McCONAGHY on the Gospel Mark 1:40-45



SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Excerpts:

IF any of you were diagnosed with COVID, you remember the fear: "Will I be taken to the hospital? Will they put a ventilator in me? My family won't be able to see me or touch me."

If you were diagnosed, you would have some sense of what it was like to be diagnosed with leprosy. Simply a blotch on the forehead, a pimple that didn't go away. And then it would get bigger.

If this was during the time of the ancient Israelites, your family would have to take you to Aaron or to one of the priests who would make the diagnosis without a doctor. You must go away and be with other lepers. And imagine what that was like emotionally because mom and dad, brothers, sisters, friends, and relatives could not give you a kiss goodbye and could not give you a strong hug. But they would not want you to come near either. Because they could get the disease. And so, off you would go.



The Pains

You know what? Lepers don't feel physical pain. All the nerves in their body become completely anesthetized. So, the only pains left are emotional and spiritual. And the pain for the leper spiritually was he believed-- and anyone would tell him-- that the reason he was a leper was that God was smiting him for some sin that he couldn't even remember that he had committed. And from then on, he had to declare himself to others-- if they saw him-- as unclean and ring a bell. And you weren't allowed really to have people come within two meters of you.

Then he meets Jesus, this leper, this morning.

And one of the things that leprosy does is it takes away your vocal chords. So, he said in a harsh voice, "May I be made clean?

And Jesus not only said, "You are clean. I will it."

But Jesus said something that no one would dare do. It was against the law. He touched the leper: "I do *will* it. Be made clean."

Somehow, you know each of us has a leprosy-- an uncleanliness that needs to be cleansed. It doesn't show itself exteriorly. There are no blotches. Fingers aren't falling off.

But we have leprosy that eats away at us. Maybe your leprosy is greed. Maybe it's anger. Maybe it's sex addiction. Maybe it's a secret.

Maybe it's infidelity. Any number of those deadly capital sins that are alive within us that nobody else sees-- except Jesus. And when He sees those within us, He is not repelled away from us.

Think of your worst sin. It is that very inability of yours to overcome that sin all by yourself-- without grace-- that attracts Jesus to your uncleanliness. The same way He was attached to the leper's uncleanliness.

And then He touches us. To let us know: Be not afraid.

So, Wednesday then, we will come in front of the Eucharistic minister or the priest and we will hear: "Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel."

We can be tempted to believe that we will be able to do that-- if we just do the disciplines of Lent. As if we can do this all by ourselves, by more prayers, more fasting, more penances. But more than your prayers, more than your penances, what the Lord really wants from you is to actually believe that He really does love you.

Getting Rid of the *H-a-b-i-t*

I told our seminarians the most difficult thing you will ever do in ministry is to convince people that God loves them. Because they can feel so lonely and so unlovable because of their sins.

So, you see, penance really during Lent is: "Not about making up by myself for something in the past. In reality, penance also means a preparation to do my loving better."

Think back on any Lent that you've gone through so far in your life. Can you remember one Lent in which you went through the 40 days and 40 nights of prayer and penance and giving stuff up? Wherein at the end of Lent you said to yourself:

"Wow, I'm a more joyous person. I'm a happier person. I'm a more loving person."

Or you find yourself coming at the end of Lent saying, "Oh, well, maybe next year."



If you've come to that conclusion, welcome to the group. It happens to all of us. Because you see, we say to the Lord: "I'm going to get rid of my habit.

That habit that I have of anger, sexual problem, whatever it is. You watch me, Lord, I'm going to make up for it."

I remember our Theology professor put the word *habit* on the blackboard.

And he said, "Now, you know, people are going to come to you on Ash Wednesday and they're going to promise the Lord that they will overcome that sin.

So, they worked real hard in the first two weeks and they got rid of the ancient and erased the h.

Now, boys, he said, what do they still have? They still have *a*, *b*, *i*, *t*. They still have *a bit*.

So, they double their efforts until the end of Lent-- and they get rid of the *a*, *b* of the *habit*. But by the end of Lent, what do they still have? *i-t*.

They still have *it*.

Because we try to do it all by ourselves-- not realizing that we need **grace** to do it.



Lenten Plan

So, I'm going to share with you today what I share during Lent. Some of you might remember it. Some of you are new. Some of you forgot it. And I call it a simple Lenten Plan.

It's different from other ways that we go about Lent in that every day, I'm going to give you something to do that was different from the day before. So, you can't get bored. It's doable in its diversity and its purpose is love. To make you a more loving person and, realizing how that love has become part of you, you can then love yourself-- to be

embraced by Easter Love. And it's going to feel wonderful and people are going to notice it about you. But you have to stick with it. It is a discipline but it's something for each day of the week to do a penance, not giving stuff up but giving something into your life that you may have withheld.

Wednesdays of Lent. So, we'll start with Wednesday.

Wednesday is a fast day. And so, we're going to allow you to get the ashes and eat less. Oh, I'm so sorry, this is a time in my life when Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday are the same day.

So, no chocolates, no dinners, no nothing. Maybe Thursday, but not Wednesday-- Ash Wednesday.

So, it's in which we stop but it doesn't mean that on Ash Wednesday, you have to be any less loving of your wife or your girlfriend. Maybe flowers-- only, nothing more. Just flowers. Kisses too, yes. But no Hershey Kisses. Okay?



First Reading: Leviticus 13: 1-2, 41-46

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "If someone has on his skin a scab or pustule or blotch which appears to be the sore of leprosy, he shall be brought to Aaron, the priest, or to one of the priests among his descendants. If the man is leprous and unclean, the priest shall declare him unclean by reason of the sore on his head. "The one who bears the sore of leprosy shall keep his garments rent and his head bare, and shall muffle his beard; he shall cry out, Unclean,

unclean! 'As long as the sore is on him he shall declare himself unclean since he is in fact unclean. He shall dwell apart, making his abode outside the camp."



Thursdays of Lent

So, the Thursdays of Lent, you're going to declare a fast.

And you might say, "Been there, done that. I get irritable when I fast."

I understand.

Thursday, however, in the morning, in your prayer, you say: "Lord, today, I declare a fast-- against enjoying that delicious dinner that I call *chismis--* gossip."

You know, chismis doesn't even sound like you feel like a sin because usually, when we're engaged in it, we speak quietly: "Did you hear? I heard that Joan, I heard from her friend's friend that guess what? Don't

tell anybody. She's pregnant. Really? Oh, my..."

And it's almost like we enjoy that. And then when we're in a group, the same dynamic, and there's usually laughter. So, it doesn't feel like a sin because it's a secret-- but what is it? When you think about it, it is taking delight in somebody else's sins-- so, I don't have to look at my own.

"So, Lord, today, when somebody wants to tell me a secret, about someone that's not there, let me remember that person has dignity. I shouldn't be looking at his/her sins. So, if I'm in a group and they start talking about somebody, give me the grace, Lord, remind me to say something kind, something generous about that person even though it might be hard to find, or to simply excuse myself from the group."

So, Thursday, declare a fast on engaging in chismis, gossip, talking about somebody else who's not there. Thursdays of Lent-- five Thursdays in a row.

Second Reading: I Corinthians 10:31 - 11:1

Brothers and sisters, Whether you eat or drink, or you do, do everything for the glory of God. Avoid giving offense, whether to the Jews or Greeks or the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in every way, not seeking my own benefit but that of the many, that they may be saved. Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.



Fridays of Lent

On Friday, well, that's a fast day-- no meat, right? No.

On Friday, you're going to declare another fast. And this fast is going to be against making mental judgments about someone else.

"Lord, that's going to be a difficult one. Because I know I'm going to see people today that irritate me. My boss is really bad and I'm thinking bad things about him and curse him in my mind. Lord, today, when I see the worst in somebody --and I'm going to see a lot of folks like that-- nobody hears my judgment but You do. So, Lord, when I'm most tempted to think negatively, let me do what You did.



"You said to the apostles, 'Love one another as I have loved you.""

Notice that Jesus didn't say to the apostles, who would become saints, 'Love one another as you've been doing so well these last three years."

Why? Because Jesus always saw the worst in them. But always the deeper He brought out the best in them.

"When I'm most tempted to say something negative about my teacher, my parents, in my mind, rather that moment, instead of that, saying a prayer for them."

Saturdays of Lent

Now, on Saturdays, we'll give you a day off. You have a day off on Saturdays, and you have to do your shopping and take care of things. So, just some prayer that day.

Sundays of Lent

Sundays, we all read the *Inquirer*, the *Manila Times*-- we read the bad news. On the Sundays of Lent, no newspaper. No looking on my social media to get the latest news. Rather, reading the Good News for that amount of time.

And you know what's a neat thing? Did you ever read the entire Gospel in one sitting? You'll be amazed. We hear it in paragraphs. But if you sit down and curl up with *the* Good Book-- and maybe give it a half hour, the Gospel of St. Mark-- by the end of Lent, you would have read the whole Gospel all the way through and experienced it differently than what you do on Sunday.

So, Sunday, then, part of my Lent is going to be reading the Good News, meditating on it, and trying to put it as best as I can into practice in charitable ways the rest of the week.

Mondays of Lent

Monday is *M*-- reminds me of Mama Mary.

So, on Mondays, for five Mondays in a row, you will pray the Rosary.

Now, the Rosary can be kind of boring and repetitive. "I don't get anything at all."

Ah. The Rosary is an opportunity to pray for 55 people-- by name.

The First Mystery, you pray for members of your family-- 10 of them, extended family as well. By name--either in thanksgiving that they're in your life, or for some need that they have, or that if there is a conflict there can be forgiveness.



The second, you pray for your batchmates, your workmates, the people in your neighborhood, your friends-- by name-- either for a need that they have, they asked you to pray for them, or in thanksgiving for their friendship.

The third, pray for priests-- by name. Feast priest, parish priest, priests that you have known during your life. Believe me, we need prayers. When especially? When we hear confessions-- that we might never let our humanness and our sinfulness get in the way of what God wants us to do by calling that person there.

So, pray for priests by name.

The fourth mystery of the Rosary, pray for your enemies. If you're a good Catholic, you should have at least 10 enemies. People who don't like you, people who spread chismis about you, people who have given you a hard time, people who mock you for going to The Feast, believing and saying, "What is that? You're not with it."

Pray for them by name. If you do, they might not change. But you will. You can't help praying for your enemies that you don't look at them differently-- seeing not just their sinfulness but their dignity.

The fifth, by name, people you know and love, who have died. For the souls in Purgatory.

Why? Because when you pray for souls in purgatory, at that moment, they know it's you that pray for them. They can't pray for themselves. Guess who they pray for? They pray for you.

So, identify 10 people that you know that are going through that final stage of their purification that they enter into Heaven.

So, that's on Mondays.

Tuesdays of Lent

Tuesdays. Now everything that I've said is easy, compared to the five Tuesdays of Lent.

From midnight, on Monday night till Tuesday midnight, you will declare another fast. You will declare a fast from all social media-- all social media. You can call and text, you know, that's okay. But reading social media, fast for 24 hours.



Google

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Can you do it? You know, they've done a study in the United States wherein they have found that college-aged

people and young people spend an average of eight hours and 25 minutes a day on social media.

So, that's going to be a real penance. And instead of looking at your gadgets, you look at real people. And engage them. Perhaps, invite them out for coffee, go for a walk with them, or just talk with them.

And putting the cell phone down will touch them like ventilators that kept people alive during COVID.

And what we do instead? Adoration chapel. Silence. Solitude in the midst of all the noise of social media. Quiet time. In which we meditate only on God's love for you. Nothing else. You're not going to produce anything in an Adoration chapel except allowing God to love you. YouTube









Wednesdays of Lent

Then, finally on the Wednesdays of Lent, get yourself a bowl, a rice bowl. It can be made of wood or plastic or glass and what you do in your room at home, you put it prominently there with a candle on the back of it.

Every Wednesday of Lent, let your lunch be rice *lang*. Rice only. And what you normally spend for lunch that day apart from the rice, you will put in the rice bowl for five weeks in a row. Now, if you spend P100.00 for lunch, that would be P500.00 that you would have by Holy Week.

And each time that you put that in there, you say, "This is my way of saying I want You to put someone in my life on Easter Sunday that needs this money."

Keep praying and say, "Lord, reveal that person to me."

And on Easter Sunday, when you go out, you'll know who it is. And it's usually somebody who comes up knocking on your car window, saying 'I need to eat'.

You roll down your window, and you say, "Ano ang pangalan mo? What is your name? Would you like this for Easter?"

And they'll look at you, "Thank you, thank you."

You say, "Utang na loob-- favor please-- pray for me. Okay?"

When you have the poorest of the poor praying for you, those are very powerful prayers. You will be blessed by their prayers.

Start This Week

Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel that you'll become not unhappy but happy proclaimers of the Good News-by becoming a more loving person and then becoming aware of God's love for you.

Thursdays, fasting against doing chismis. You have to ask for the grace to do that. That's going to be difficult.

Fridays, fasting from negative judgments about others.



"Lord, that's going to be tough. I need your grace for that today." **Saturdays,** day off.

Sundays, instead of reading the bad news, reading the Good News. Perhaps, the whole Gospel of Mark in four or five weeks.

Mondays, the Rosary, Mama Mary. First, for relatives, second, for friends, third for priests, fourth for enemies, fifth for those who have died that you know-- all by name-- 55 people.

Tuesdays, from midnight till midnight, no social media at all.

Then, on **Wednesdays**, taking all of that loving preparation and putting it into practice. But truly, fasting-- denying yourself what you are hungry for so that



I turn to you Lord, in time of trouble and You fill me with the joy of salvation.

indeed you can feed the hungry.

So, that's it. A simple Lenten Plan. And I promise you, if you stick with the discipline of it-- it's doable in its diversity-- if you stick with it, by the end of Lent, people are going to notice it about you.

Because they do what? "You look different. Did you get like a Belo facelift or something? You know?"

And you say, "No, I got a *faith*lift."

Because that's what Lent is really all about. The preface you'll hear, each year that you give us this joyful season...

"It's to bring deeper joy into my life by becoming a more loving, selfless person." And then you'll sense God's love for you. Have a joyous Lenten season. God bless.



BRO. DIDOY LUBATON: Everybody, keep on clapping for the Lord. He is good. Hallelujah! Good morning, Everybody! Everybody shout, "Good Morning!"

We want to welcome you to our Feast. This is the Light of Jesus Family. Our gathering is called The Feast. We just had a wonderful Eucharistic celebration. The Real Presence of Jesus is right with us, and it's something to celebrate about. And what happens next is a little dessert following the main course that we just served here at The Feast.



May I first make a shout-out for those attending for the first time? May you please raise your hands so we can recognize you?

Hi! Welcome, welcome! Greet everyone around you with a handshake or a hug, and say to them, "Welcome home!"

We are still here in PICC and we will continue to build our Feast Family here.

Announcements

We support our servants here, and we have Sis. Anne Sanchez. She's been serving at the Feast Bay Area for a few years now and she's been helping with our Media team. And she just launched her book, *Reflections: Meditating on Jesus' Life Through the Holy Rosary*. So, it is wonderful for Lent.

Grab your copy at the lobby today!





Then, we have a table in the lobby where you can get some magazines and books for free. So, after The Feast, drop by the lobby.



I just got confirmation that wearing shorts is now allowed in PICC but there are some guidelines.

We come in reverence. If it is good, and it is right, then it's allowed. We respect the place where we build our house.



We're going to have our Holy Week Retreat and Grand Easter Feast in SMX. We have Bro. Bo Sanchez, Bro. Alvin Barcelona, and FBA Builders and Priests.

It gives us a deeper meaning of Lent. It's wonderful. I've been attending and serving in this retreat for the longest time and it has changed my Holy Week. It has helped me renew my faith and helped me deepen my relationship with God.

Thank You, Fr. Bob

Everybody, I want to honor, on behalf of The Feast, Fr. Bob McConaghy for his 49 years in priestly ministry. Your 50th year is starting so we're going to have a beautiful celebration.

May we pray for you:

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Father in Heaven, on behalf of the Light of Jesus Family, the Feast Community, our family here has gathered to celebrate this beautiful milestone of his 49th year, going to his 50 years of serving You as a priest-- 50 years of obed50 years of sacrifice,



and in the years upon years of serving Your people. We pray that You restore his health, recover his energy. We pray for his protection from any harm. And continue to fill him with Your mission. And more than just the mission, Your love that sustains him.

And let him remember he's always welcome, he's at home here in The Feast Community. And we celebrate with so much joy your faithfulness despite our shortcomings your love despite our unlovingness, your hope that you give to us every single day. Sometimes, when we find ourselves in desperation, we celebrate Fr. Bob today and Thank You, Lord, for showing Your goodness that inspires us all. This is our united prayer. In Jesus' Name. Amen.



FR. BOB: Thanks to everybody. I think of Psalm 42...*I shall approach the altar of the Lord who gives joy to my youth.*

You have always made me feel young even though I'm 76 and still in the mix. You have always made me feel young. Because you are all young at heart.

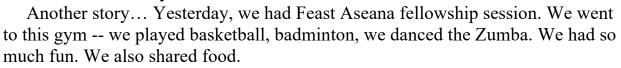
Congratulations, Fr. Bob. We love you. Salamat po. Thank you.

Love Offering

You know, we had some guests in our home. Isn't it that when we have guests, we prepare food for them, yes? We bring out all the finest things that we can offer-- even for the table setting, the china, and all.

The family who came to my house recently, they brought sumptuous food, including dessert. And they also helped us when we were cleaning up.

You know what I realized? We were treating them as visitors, but they decided to share, to help-because we are family.



You know, I realized family, especially when we're in our household of faith, in our Feast Family, you will get to decide if you are still a visitor or no longer one. It's your choice. Some people here, for many, many years, they've felt at home here, and so they just come here asking themselves: "What can I do for The Feast?"

Our servants here offer their time, talent, and treasure. They are no longer visitors. They are now part of the Kitchen serving The Feast.

You, everybody, even those online, you get to decide: Do you want to regard this as if you're a visitor, or make this part of your home,--you will share, you will help?



We're going to be present in The Feast. We're going to give our Love Offering, and we're going to volunteer our time and talent eventually, as servants in The Feast.





Let's lift our Love Offering to Jesus. Pray this prayer with me:

Dear Jesus, I give this to You. Thank You for we have this opportunity to give. Use this to build Your family, to build Your church. I give this with joy, with love, and thanksgiving. Bless many people through the giving of our church today. This is our prayer. In Jesus' Name. Amen.



Offer joyfully, Guys, and enjoy the rest of The Feast.

Worship! EXHORTATION



SIS. VANYA CASTOR:

Good Morning, Feast! If there's one thing that we want people to remember at The Feast is the truth that God is in love with you. God is madly in love with you.

And I know we hear that a lot. But that really is the heart of all that we do when we come together as a community.

So, if you need this grace that accepts you, embraces you, sees you, and meets you where you are, then let's

come together as a community and declare that salvation and redemption are possible. And this is so true in the Name of Jesus Christ. Come on, we sing...



He is worthy. You're worthy Jesus.

We Thank You that we have You in our lives, God. And in whatever circumstance, may we never ever take for granted the privilege of being able to proclaim Your Name. Jesus, how worthy you are, of all our souls, of Who You are truly!

Praise You, Jesus! You are holy!





BRO. AUDEE VILLARAZA:

You know, the first time Jesus Christ came into the world, He was disgraced. He was brutalized. He was scorned. He was crucified. And eventually, He was killed.

There was a time when Jesus was showered with insults. There was a time when He was clothed in shame. There was a time when He was crowned with thorns.

But not today. Not today!

Today, we clothe Him in majesty. Today, we shower Him with worship.

In shame. There was rowned with thorns. today! lim in majesty. m with worship. h with praise. Today, the Name above all names we glorify

Today, we crown Him with praise. Today, the Name above all names we glorify His Name.

Worthy is His Name. Holy is His Name.

Let's give God the glory and the praise that He deserves.

Somebody shout the Name of Jesus! Hallelujah!



NOVENA TO GOD'S LOVE DECLARATION OF ABUNDANCE

I invite you to pray our special prayer at The Feast. Join me, Everybody. Lift both hands in the air and say this with me:



Today, I proclaim that I am God's Beloved. I am God's Servant. I am God's Powerful Champion. And I am blessed, I am blessing the world. In Jesus' name. Amen

Everybody, lean in and seek the wisdom of God who will speak over situations in your life as we all sing in glory:

Thy Word is a Lamp unto my feet and a Light unto my path.



Talk



We are going to take a page from the Book of *Acts* today. It's beautiful reading. But before I do that, I just want to ask you this question: How many of you here are introverts? The textbook definition of an introvert is somebody who prefers to be alone, not be with other people. Introverts are the kind of persons who prefer to be in a smaller group instead of a large group.

Some of us are introverts and there's nothing wrong with that. I'm an introvert myself. But for some reason, the Lord trusts me enough to push me out of my comfort zone. But you see, one problem is when you're an introvert, you struggle with small conversations. Like you have difficulty when it comes to small talk. Like you don't like gaps in conversation. Are you like me-- who likes to fill the gaps in a conversation with random things because you feel uncomfortable in that moment, that brief moment of silence?

The problem with introverts, when you come to church, is that sometimes, the preacher likes to say, 'Touch your neighbor,' or 'Talk to your neighbor'.

And some of you, you prefer having church online. I'm speaking to the ones who are in that virtual space because you prefer not having somebody right next to you. Not having to, you know, eyeball-to-eyeball and talk with somebody.

So, there are people who are introverts. But there are also people who are extroverts. Praise God for people like you who make the world fun to live in.

Two Reasons God Involves You in Building His Kingdom

You see, I used to think like this: If the Lord can do anything-- and He can do everything-- why is it that the Lord requires introverts like me, introverts like you, to have to do something out of our comfort zone?

In Tagalog, kung kaya naman ni Lord, bakit sa akin pa ipagawa? -- If the Lord is able to do it, why make me do it?

You ever think like that sometimes? That the Lord is so powerful that He can just snap His finger and solve all



of your problems and give you all that you need?

And in case you're somebody who thinks like that, let me just say this: If that's the kind of God that you want, somebody who will just grant your every desire, you don't need a heavenly Father. You know what you need? You need a sugar daddy. Somebody who's just going to give in to your every whim. But God is not like that. He's a parent.

Two reasons God wants us to participate in building His Kingdom here on Earth:

1.God wants to grow you. The only way that you can grow is to step outside of your comfort zone. Because that's where growth is. It's outside your comfort. It's in the grinding where we grow. It's in the working where we develop our faith.

And so God wants you to grow.

2.God loves you. Imagine a father who couldn't care less... He would simply let alone his child, right?

But God is not like that. God is working on you simply because He wants to be involved in your life.

And that's what we're going to talk about today: How this idea of gathering together-- even though you're not comfortable sometimes, standing with people next to you, people looking at you from behind.

Church is God's idea.

Listen to me: Church is God's idea. It's not my idea, nor Bro. Bo's idea. It's God's idea.



Let's go to the reading from the Book of *Acts*:

Acts 2:42-47 NIV

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles.

Acts 2:42-47 NIV

⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.

Acts 2:42-47 NIV

⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

I believe that God is here. And if this is the first time that you've come here and you walked into this place, this day is for you. Because you're about to learn why we do church, why God wants us to do church.

And in case you're not a first-timer and you come here every week, this message is also



for you-- so that your countenance, your commitment to Jesus will be strengthened day by day.



Let's pray:

Jesus, You are here. There will be signs, there will be wonders, and there will be miracles all across this place. Tangible miracles-- miracles of healing, miracles of change, breakthroughs upon breakthroughs. Milestones are going to be formed today. But the greatest miracle that we want is that we would have a personal relationship with You starting today. That we would come to know You in a personal way. That You would become our personal Savior and our Lord forever and ever. Thank You for church. Thank You for The Feast. Thank You for the gift of fellowship. In Jesus' Name. Amen and Amen.

One more time, Everybody, let's sing in honor of God's Word:

Thy Word is a Lamp unto my feet and a Light unto my path.

Give the Lord a big hand, Everybody. Clap your hands and rejoice

I am not solo today. Apart from Bro. Didoy who already spoke to you, I invited another preacher to bless you today and I believe that the hand of God is upon him and I encourage you to take notes but also to open your mind and your heart.

Because if you're the kind of person who is always looking at the clock and wondering what time this is going to end because you're late for lunch meeting, you're not going to be able to receive this message.

So, receive this message with openness and wholeheartedness.

Friends, please welcome my dear, dear friend, Bro. John Ben Rodriguez.

Building Our Church

BRO. JOHN BEN RODRIGUEZ:

Good Morning, Everyone. I love the passage that we read because this is taken from Acts.

Trivia: The Acts of the Apostles happened after Jesus had risen from death and already ascended to Heaven.

So, this was the time that the apostles were no longer with Jesus. So, they were trying to set up church, how it would happen. And the passage



we read is about one of the foundational acts that started our Church.

Acts 2:42-47 NIV

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles.

Acts 2:42-47 NIV

⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.

Acts 2:42-47 NIV

⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Today, we'll break the passage down into four main points.

And you will learn more today about how we do church as a Community here at The Feast.



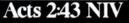
Four Main Points About Church

1. God must show up in church.

In every church gathering and every Feast that we do, the first point is this: God must show up in church.



Let's read again Acts 2:43:



⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles.

Just a little story...

Last week, it was my three-year-old daughter's first time to experience riding a horse--in Baguio City. So, my wife Athena and I were very excited. We were curious what would be her reaction. Will she be afraid? Will she beg off? Will she be excited? Will she be happy?

So, the time came. We took her on her first horseback ride. And during The entire time, she was stroking the mane of the horse and telling the horse, "Wow, long mane."

You know why? Because ever since was little, she has this little book with a picture of a horse with fur glued to it, like a long mane. So, ever since, it was her only experience of a horse. So, when she rode a horse for the first time, she was filled with awe and wonder.

Did it ever happen to you? Experiencing something beautiful for the first time? I'm sure you remember. But try experiencing it every single day, or regularly. What happens? For human beings, when something is done often--

maybe regularly, maybe part of a routine-- it becomes ordinary, it becomes normal. Sometimes, attending church is like that. When you're new at The Feast, when

you're new at the Mass, you say, "Wow, this is beautiful!"

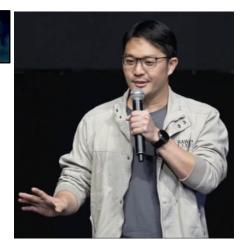
But after some time, you say, "Why is it like that, Bro. JB? The effect is not the same as the first time I attended."

The Feast is a place of miracles.

Today, God is reminding us that more than a supernatural event, this is a supernatural experience. This is not just a program.

This is not just an event.

The distinction is what we do and how we do church. In the Catholic Church, our bold claim is that the God of the universe walks in our midst, touching, healing, and blessing us.



This distinction is our bold claim that the God of the universe walks in our midst, touching, healing, and blessing us.

In short, God is here. Thank You, Lord.

We'd like to declare that The Feast is a place of miracles.

Why am I sharing this? Because I am not exempt from that temptation to regard church as ordinary. Because I have been attending Community, The Feast, since 2008. And sometimes, I feel that it's just like a normal routine, an ordinary experience. But I will never forget the 2023 Feast Conference (annual inspirational learning event of the Light of Jesus Family).

I was not excited about attending because I knew half of the time, I would be taking care of our toddler. So, probably, I would not be able to sit and listen to the talks.

But I said this silent prayer: "Lord, I want to encounter You."

That's because I remembered a talk of Bro. Bo here at The Feast where he mentioned that the FEASTCON is a supernatural event-- so, expect that God will be there.

So, I prayed that during the FEASTCON. And you know what? During the part when they were exposing the Blessed Sacrament, the moment I entered the room, I was just compelled to kneel and pray. And as I did, I cried so much. You know the ugly cry? Not just the silent cry. No. It was a heavy sob, tears falling from your eyes and more tears coming out of your nose. That kind of a cry. And as I was doing that, my wife was also crying beside me. We were so touched by God because God embraced us there.

Our First Duty at The Feast

You know, the feeling when all those problems I did not cry about, which, alone, I just tried to bear all by myself-- but when I entered that room, and there, God was exposed in the Blessed Sacrament, it was as if God was telling me, "I am here with you."

And I believe that is the same message of God to you today. He is here with you. Carrying your burden and embracing you.

So, if you're asking me, "Bro. JB, what should be our first duty when we come here to The Feast?

Because some of us are thinking, "Oh, when I am at The Feast, I will listen, I will offer, I will serve..."

Those are all good. But the first intention of your heart when you're here, is this: You should be ready to *receive*.

So, every time you come, say, "Lord, fill me with awe and wonder so that I may be able to receive what You want to give me. Amen."



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2. Our souls must be nourished.

In every Feast gathering, our souls must be nourished.

Let's go back to the passage we're reading:

Acts 2:42-47 NIV



"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles.

That is an outline of how church should happen. And 2000 years later, we're still doing it.

In the Catholic Church, the breaking of the bread happens in the Mass. We believe in transubstantiation. We believe that when the host is raised by the priest, it becomes the actual flesh and blood of God.

So, that's how powerful our Mass is. Every time you partake of the Communion, you're actually being brought back to the experience of the apostles when Christ was breaking bread for them. That's how powerful it is.

We're doing that here at The Feast.

One point I love about The Feast is this: We are called to give practical preaching. Has our preaching blessed your family life? Yes. Has our preaching blessed your financial life? Yes. Has our preaching blessed your spiritual life? Yes.

Has our preaching blessed your physical life? Yes.

And I believe that's part of our anointing here at The Feast. Because at The Feast, we preach about how to live life from a God-perspective.

Why do we do that? Because we believe that all these elements of life are intertwined. You cannot compartmentalize your spiritual life from your physical life, from your financial life, from your relationship. Those elements are connected. So, we try to put God's perspective in everything.

Because people come to us and ask us: "Bro, how can we better in our career?" "Bro, how can we deal with our debts?" "Bro, how can we deal with our relationships at home?"

We try to answer those questions in the perspective of God, in God's view about them.

At The Feast we preach about how to live life from a God-perspective.

Charlie's Problem

Last July, our Feast Talk series was about *What Matters Most.* One part was about finances. And I gave pointers about finances. After the talk, people approached me and they asked for guidance on how to handle their debts.

One person-- let's call him Charlie-- told me, "Bro, I need your help. I'm in debt. May I consult you?"

I said, "Sure, let's schedule a meeting. Write down your debts, how you incurred them, the interest rates, and let's find a strategy for you."



So, during our meeting, we added up his debts. I found out his credit cards were all maxed out-- one card maxed out as he paid one person alone. He was using about 10 online lending apps-- all maxed out. And his entire debts amounted to P3 million.

He asked me how to go about paying such a huge amount. Of course, I did the strategies: Okay, we could consolidate these; we could probably get another loan to solve all these.

But I felt this leading from God-- because I learned this at The Feast: that you can also seek help when you need it.

I told him, "Yes, getting another loan from the bank is a possible strategy. But it would mean that you have to at least double or triple what you're earning now--which will be quite challenging."

So, I asked him: "Charlie, do you know people from whom you can borrow money with no interest-- just promise them you'll pay them?"

Then Charlie opened up about another problem.

He told me, "Actually Bro, this is not the first time that I've been in this much debt. The last time was about P2 million. And my parents helped me. I did not plan to tell them about my problem, but they found out about it. They scolded me but they eventually paid all my debts. That's why now, I'm hesitant to ask them for help. Because they would scold me again."

But I just felt this strong leading from God that borrowing money without interest could be a solution for him.

I said, "Pray about it."

Because I believe that in certain life situations, we need to ask help from other people. Why? Because sometimes, God wants to humble you enough-- to tell you that you are not alone. And that He is there -- a bigger Person in charge who would help you with your problem.

We ended the meeting like that. I left him with possible solutions.



Practical Preaching

Fast forward to 2024. I greeted Charlie "Happy New Year!" And I asked him, "How are you doing? Do you need another session, probably to realign your strategies?

He said, "Bro. JB, God is so good. I prayed about my debts. I asked help from my parents, from some of my uncles and aunts. I am now down from P3 million to just P400,000. And we are now more actively serving God and enjoying deep relationship with Him."

I was amazed.

I told him, "That's the way you do it. When you ask for help, you're coming to a point of taking responsibility now. I taught him to ask people for help and promise to pay them. And the parents were so happy. Their relationship with him was restored because they saw their child taking responsibility now.

All of these I learned at The Feast. Because we give out practical preaching.



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⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.

What happened? They sold all their properties and distributed them to the needy. Question: Can we do it now-- with our setup?

You're all smiling: "Bro, I don't like to let go of my iPhone 15 Promax-- I haven't even fully paid for it..."

But what is this teaching?

cts 2:44

We were teaching here at The Feast that when you look at the verses, you must look at them through the lens of Jesus and the lens of the context.

This is the context: Back then in the First Century of this church, at that particular time,

in that area, that was the need. That was the way for them to be sensitive to the needs of other people. So that they could care for the members of the church. And if you look at historical references, you will see it was not even replicated in other home churches the other disciples built.

What is this teaching us?

That our church should be sensitive to the needs of the community. We cannot follow it literally but can you say that The Feast is sensitive to your needs right

Church is family.

now? Is it answering your needs? Because we believe church should be about doing life together.

Sometimes, it's difficult to be

familiar with the people in church. For example, if you're attending a parish church, sometimes, it's difficult because there are many people there. During the part when we *Greet, Peace Be with You,* we just slightly bow to one another.

Here, at The Feast, are you closer to those you greet *Peace be with you*? We should be-- because church is family.

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Church should be about doing life together.



3. Church is a loving family.

Big churches are incomplete churches.

This is the reality: Big churches are actually incomplete churches. If there are more than 150 people in the room you may be tasting a part of the church. This big gathering here is an experience of church. But it is not the whole experience God intends it to be. Because church is more than a program, a ceremony, or a concert.



So, what is *church*? A simple definition of *church* is this:

Church is being Jesus to someone else.

Church is being Jesus to someone else. So, sometimes, the invitation of God for you to be able to have others experience church a friend who just had a heartbreak

is as simple as listening to a friend who just had a heartbreak.

Because sometimes, when a friend is heartbroken, you just simply say, "Just move on..."At least listen to the person, journey, and pray for the person.

Church can mean supporting parents with a newborn or a toddler.

I love that this was done to us when we had a newborn and we were tired, a person would volunteer, "May I carry the baby for a while so you can have free time?"

And we would say, "Yes!"

It's like that. It's helping out and being sensitive to the concerns of others. *Church* is encouraging someone who failed at work. *Church* is spending time



with someone in despair.

Church is doing life together. That's why I'd like to honor my leader, Bro. Alvin Barcelona, the District Builder of The Feast Bay Area. He has been doing a great job in taking care of us. In Baguio (during the recent Feast Builders

Conference) Bro. Alvin surprised my wife Athena (born February 2) with a birthday celebration along with our Light (Caring) Group. I love the part when they encouraged my wife, recalled funny experiences, and prayed for her.



What The Feast Is All About

I remember, Bro. Audee Villaraza, Bro. Didoy Lubaton and I started here at The Feast as singles. Eventually, we began to serve God in ministries. Then each of us found a girlfriend, and after that we got engaged, and after



that, we got married. Now we have kids. And I am excitedly looking forward to the time that we will be grandparents-- doing life together here at The Feast.

The Feast must grow bigger and smaller at the same time.

Let's give a clap offering to God because we're about to fill up this place. Thanks to you for inviting a lot of people.

Aside from us growing bigger, we must grow smaller at the same time.

We expand by multiplying Feasts around the world, but we also shrink by building small groups—*Feast Lights* and *Light Groups*. Because we want to reach as many people outside as we can.

That's why you see, we have Feast Aseana. Very soon we'll be launching Feast Binondo.

Within large *Feasts*, we build *Light Groups* of 5 to 15 persons that meet each week for prayer and sharing.

We also have Feast Lights which are like mini-Feasts that gather in homes,

offices, schools, prisons, cafes. I'd like to honor Gerwin Damay. He was the Feast Light Planter for Binondo. About three weeks ago, all of them came here to The Feast Bay Area. What's beautiful is that Feast Light Binondo started eight years ago. And they're still together as one. They meet during special



gatherings. When someone comes home from abroad, they gather, they talk about God. They do life together.

That's what church is all about. That's what family is all about.

4. Church is always for the unchurched.

Acts 2:47 NIV

And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.



I love this because this is a good reminder of the main call of God. Yes, holiness is part of following God. You'll grow in holiness as you follow God. But the main call of the Church is for you to make disciples for Jesus, to reach out to people and tell them about the goodness and the love of God.

If the Church does not welcome the unchurched. the Church has failed in its mission.

So, that's our invitation to everyone. I love what Pope Francis said-that we should be now at the level where instead of the Catholic Church being just open to everyone, we must be a Catholic Church that moves out of our way, to go out and reach out to other people who need to experience the love of God.



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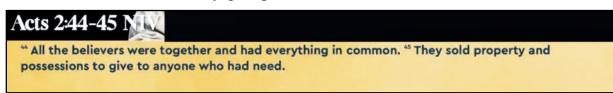
So, my question is this: Will you want to be part of that? Will you want to be among the people who would reach out to bless others and make them experience the love of God?

Pray about it. Maybe your calling is to start a Feast Light in your office. Or maybe, your calling is to finally reconcile the relationships in your family. Or maybe it will begin with you introducing Jesus to your children. Pray to God about it and He will bless you.

We're now about to end the talk and I'm glad to welcome back Bro. Audee Villaraza.

BRO. AUDEE VILLARAZA:

I want to end this Talk by going back to Acts 2:43:



There are many reasons you attended The Feast today. Or maybe not just today.

Probably there are many reasons you joined this Community.

If you can fill in the blank in the sentence *I found* ______ *at The Feast,* what will you put on the blank?

Raise your hand if this will be your answer:



How about those who found sprinkles of kindness... How about this one: You found a cup of unconditional love:

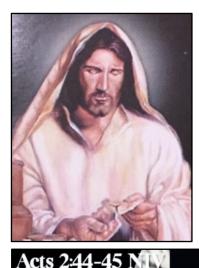






Or about this one: A dash of humility





The Answer

You know, Friends, there are many ways that we can answer this question:

I found ______ *at The Feast.* But one thing is for sure: There is one answer that we can all find in common here: That we found Jesus. Yes!

As it says in Acts again:

⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.

Here at The Feast, it doesn't take effort to find things that you have in common with the person beside you. Because we share our same love for Worship. We share our same unity in praying for someone. We share the same thought that Jesus has saved us. We share the same love for our God.



And that's the reason we come to church. That's the reason God placed you here at The Feast. Because we find something here in common. It's not *something*.

It's *Someone*.

Jesus is here. And He is the Name that gathers all of us together.

Thank you for doing church with all of us. Thank you for doing life with me, with Bro. Bo, with all the leaders, with all the servants here. Thank you for coming week after week-- even though you live far away, even though you have to spend money on gas, even though some of you have to commute, under the rain, in the heat, and yet you come week after week.

Thank you. Even if you don't feel like it, sometimes, because you need that extra hour of rest. And you have so much to do to start your week-- and yet you come every Sunday. Those online, you're here virtually with us.

Because this is *church*. It's not a building. It's the people who are with you. That's where church happens. When you start praying for one another, when you start loving one another, when you devote yourself to fellowship and prayer, church happens.

This Is Church

Right now, this is church right here, my Friends. This little hall of people worshipping God, loving God, serving God. This is church.

Everybody lift your hands... Aaah, I love church... Close your eyes and feel the Presence of God here.



Let's pray:

Lord, in Your Presence there is healing. And I believe that for every broken body, every broken heart that needs mending, You are here healing them, restoring them, resurrecting them.

In Your Presence, Lord, there is peace. And in our chaos, in our confusion, we know that as You walk by, You are breathing peace into our lungs, into our minds, into our hearts.

Lord, in Your Presence, there is love. There is so much hatred in the world today. So much bickering, so much fighting. That's why we need You because You are the God of Love. And You are here. And I pray that You impart all of these ingredients into the life and the soul of each of Your people here today. We love Your Church. We love Your people. But above all, we love You, Lord. Thank You for doing church with us. Here in Your Presence, we bask in Your love, we worship, we sing. In Jesus' Name. Amen. Amen.

Surrender

May I confess... I wasn't supposed to preach today. It was supposed to be Bro. Bo. But I got a call at 8:30 this morning, saying that he couldn't make it. So, imagine how I felt... I knew I didn't have a message to bring. So, I did what any normal preacher would do. I called another preacher. Because John Ben was supposed to preach in the afternoon session. And by God's grace, he said *Yes*. But you see, it took Didoy, John Ben, and me to



fill the shoes of one man, of Bro. Bo. And I do feel that at some point, it was not enough-- at least according to my standards. It wasn't enough. But I'd also like to imagine that even if Bro. Bo was here-- and he's not-- it still would not be enough. Because otherwise, he would be here-- and he's not.

What I'm trying to get at is that sometimes you try to fill the gaps and the holes, and the lack in your life -- with stuff, with people, with material things-- and yet you'll feel like it's not enough. It's never enough...Until you learn that there is only One Person who will be able to fill your life, not just to a point where it's enough, but it's to the full.

And His Name is Jesus.

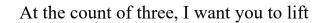
When you allow Jesus to fill your life, it's going to be more than enough. Because He says, "My grace is sufficient for you."

That means that there's grace for everything that you need in this world. There's grace that will work in your relationships. There's grace that will work in your job. There's grace that will work in your sickness. There's grace that will work in your marriage. There's grace that will work in your organization. There's grace that will work in everything that you need.



Commitment

Because His grace is sufficient, He is more than enough. And in case you don't have that relationship with Jesus yet, I'm inviting you to make this commitment with me, with all of us here who do this week after, to simply say and declare with all of your heart, that from this day onward, that Jesus will be your Lord and Savior. Whoever you are, you don't need to shout, you don't need to do anything. I only ask you to do this:





your hands, both hands, in the air, and we're going to celebrate together. Are you ready for this? Every person who wants to have life with Jesus,

who will proclaim that from this day on, He will be your King... On the count of three, raise your hands...Here we go: 1- 2- 3...!,

Come on raise your hands! Lift your hands! Hallelujah! We Praise You Jesus!





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

Be a Feast Family member. Write or call us. Now. Email Address: jocelyn@kerygmafamily.com Website: https://kerygmafamily.com

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.







Acts 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.

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Go and make disciples of all men.

— Matthew 28:19