



FAMILY

FEBRUARY 25, 2024

Come Home to the Father

LET me share with you an old story.

After serving at The Feast, I was on my way to my car at the open parking grounds at the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC), when an attendee approached me.

I had never seen him before. He said, *“Brother, do you have time to talk?”*

I said, *“Yes. How can I help you?”*

He began to tell me his story. He was a recovering alcoholic and drug addict. Because of his addiction to the bottle for many years, his wife and children left him. Soon after, he turned to drugs to help him cope. He was in a very dark place in his life.

At the end of our dialogue, he bluntly asked me, *“After hearing my story, do you think there’s a place for someone like me in your Community?”*

I was deeply moved by his question. I said, *“Brother, not only is there a place for you in our church. But I truly believe that our church exists for someone like you.”*

Be inspired by the rest of his story at The Feast today.



Glory to God,

Audee Villaraza

WELCOME
to our Special Feast Talk:
You Belong in God’s Home



Welcome Where You Belong

WE always say that to anyone coming to attend The Feast. But because The Feast is a religious organization, not a few think you have to be holy to belong to The Feast.



But what does holiness mean? In his Homily last Sunday Feast, Fr. Mario Quejadas presented a definition not exactly according to popular notion about being holy, *page 3*.

We understood *holiness* also last Sunday as Bro. Bo Sanchez presented *The Greatest Metric*, Talk 6 of our series *TABLE TALKS series* about the ultimate measurement of being spiritually mature, and why we are welcome at The Feast Table, *page 17*.



Bro. Audee Villaraza expounds on why and how we belong to our church in his Special Feast Talk today. His intro is on *page 1*.

Bro. Bene Sanchez welcomed us to The Feast with a simple assurance that you belong to The Feast because whoever you are or whatever your situation is, God already knows, *page 9*.



And one who knows that God knows, is Sis. Babes Zambrano, because she came to know Jesus in a personal way in jail. We recall her story in the last part of our series on our Prison Ministry in our *Mercy Ministries* section, *page 36*.



Yes, you belong to our Feast.
Welcome Home!



All for God's Glory,

Randy Borromeo
Media Ministry
Executive Director

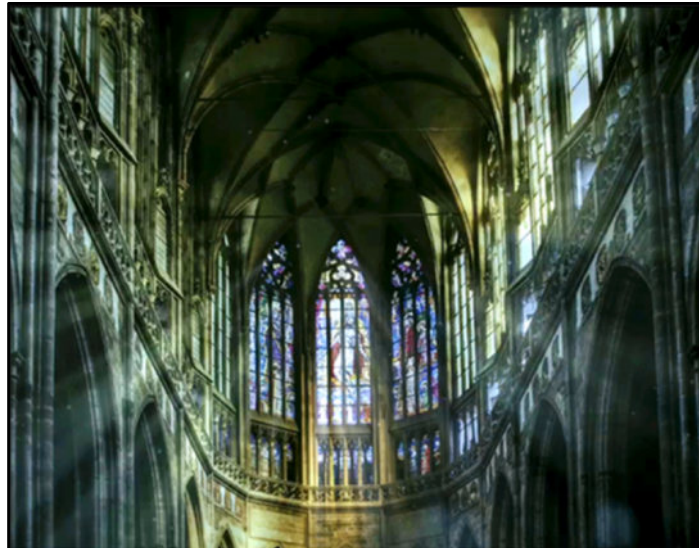




FLASHBACK!

FEBRUARY 18, 2024

Holy Mass



FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

Homily

REV.FR. MARIO QUEJADAS

on the Gospel Mark 1:12-15

Excerpts:

GOOD MORNING, CHURCH!

God is good all the time. And all the time, God is good.

Let us applaud the Lord.

Church, today, I want to talk about how holiness is possible.

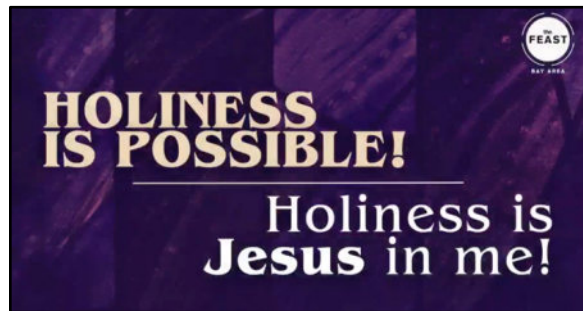
Holiness is Jesus in me.

Holiness is possible. Holiness is Jesus in me.

You know, there is this greatest lie in the history of Christianity.

And the great lie is this: It's impossible to be holy.

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What Holiness Means

“Fr. Mario, probably it’s possible for my grandmother or for the Medieval saints. But to be holy? That’s not post-modern, Fr. Mario. This lie has neutralized a lot of Christians in the post-modern era. I cannot be holy.” In fact, in the English language, we don’t use the word *holiness* anymore. Even in the Tagalog language-- *banal*-- it has been derogatory:

‘O ba-banal-banal ka na naman-- You’re acting holy.’”

Such a lie that is.

“But Fr. Mario, it’s impossible to be perfect.”

Aaah. A lot of us think that holiness is about perfection. Fake news. Fake news.

How many people in the house right now are perfect? Raise your feet... None?

So, how many sinners in the house today? Raise your... Oh, so many! We are all in the same club-- Country Club of Sinners! I love it!

You know, when Jaime Cardinal Sin was alive, in his villa, you know, it says, “Welcome to the House of Sin.”

Beautiful. Wish the cell phone was already available then. I would have taken a selfie in front of that sign. Ha-ha.

Because a lot of us think that holiness is about perfection. But perfection is not about holiness. Why? How many perfect people are in the house today?

There is one... There is!

Because He is in the house today, right? Right? Who is in the house today? Church, who is in the house today?

Jesus! Only Jesus is perfect.

You know, when He mentioned the words, “*Be perfect, just as your Heavenly Father is perfect,*” the root word to that *perfection* is the same root word, according to some Biblical scholars, as *compassion*. So, He is not asking you to be perfect like Him in the highest heavens. He is asking you to have a perfection of mercy here on Earth. To have a perfection of compassion.

I was looking for a Tagalog word for *compassion*. Is there one?

Because the word *compassion* is so beautiful-- if you divide it into Latin: *cum*=with; *passio*= suffering. Being with those who are suffering.





Start with Yourself

The word *compassion*, the closest in Tagalog I can come up with is this: *intindihin mo na lang*-- just try to understand...

If a guy says a curse, just try to understand him. As I told you, in the beginning, when you are tempted, you know, you ask Jesus to come into that situation. Because if you don't, when the guy curses you, you will also curse him.

When mud is thrown at you, what do you become? Hah? Haaah...

The perfection of mercy... As I said earlier, I struggled with the word *mercy* (*compassion*) when I receive negativity, I give negativity. That's usually the case, Brothers and Sisters.

You know, when God is asking us for perfection, He is asking us for a perfection of mercy that starts with your... *self*.

You know, usually in the confessional, when I hear people beat themselves up --because a lot of us beat ourselves up-- I ask the person, "How do you love yourself?"

"Father, you're the first person to ask me that question..."

Because Church, we don't love ourselves.

And I ask this question: "Do you beat yourself up?"

Because when you beat yourself up, you will beat other people up.

You get this?

Church, holiness is not about perfection. *Holiness* is about *Jesus in you*.

Because He is the holy one. He is the perfect one.

He is the godhead that, you know, when Jesus is in you, then holy moments are possible. So, that means, it's not your *works* that is your holiness. It's your *works* coming from Jesus, that is *holy*.

Do you get this?

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Three Pillars of Lent

Church, holiness is not about perfection.

Holiness is about Jesus in you.

Because He is the Holy One.

He is the Perfect One.

He is the Godhead that, you know, when Jesus is in you, then holy moments are possible. So, that means, it's not your *works* that is your holiness. It's your *works* coming from Jesus, that is *holy*.

Do you get this?

Every good deed that we have-- especially the three pillars of Lent: fasting, prayer, and almsgiving--all those beautiful pillars-- must not come from our ego but they must come from Jesus Himself.

Because without Jesus, the Divine Logos, you cannot do anything.

I tell myself, "Mario, without Jesus, you are nothing." Amen? Amen!



First Reading: Genesis 9: 8-15

8 Thus also said God to Noe, and to his sons with him,

9 Behold I will establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you: 10 And with every living soul that is with you, as well in all birds as in cattle and beasts of the earth, that are come forth out of the ark, and in all the beasts of the earth. 11 I will establish my covenant with you, and all flesh shall be no more destroyed with the

waters of a flood, neither shall there be from henceforth a flood to waste the earth. 12 And God said: This is the sign of the covenant which I give between me and you, and to every living soul that is with you, for perpetual generations. 13 I will set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be the sign of a covenant between me, and between the earth. 14 And when I shall cover the sky with clouds, my bow shall appear in the clouds: 15 And I will remember my covenant with you, and with every living soul that beareth flesh: and there shall no more be waters of a flood to destroy all flesh.

Holy Moments

So, Church, holy moments are possible. When you were baptized, that was a holy moment. When you went to confession, when you received Communion, when you came to the Eucharist-- those were holy moments.

When you said “Good Morning” today to someone beside you, that was a holy moment.

You know, we have a street sweeper in Pandacan (Manila). Remember, street sweepers, they have only a dirt territory. But this person, I noticed, also sweeps some parts of other barangays. That’s a holy moment.

I have a school in my parish in the United States. During recess-- you know in the United States, recess is not about food-- because here, during recess, it’s always going to the canteen ordering two and a half cups of rice, err, No. Three. Ha-ha.

In the United States, recess is about playing. They play. And I noticed that when people play, when children play, especially in our parking lot, they will look for their friends to play with.

I have two girls in the fourth grade who will look for other children who are alone in the parking lot and they will play with them. That’s a holy moment.



Second Reading: First Peter 3: 18-22

18 Because Christ also died once for our sins, the just for the unjust: that he might offer us to God, being put to death indeed in the flesh, but enlivened in the spirit, 19 In which also coming he preached to those spirits that were in prison: 20 Which had been some time incredulous when they waited for the patience of God in the days of Noe when the ark was a building: wherein a few, that is, eight souls, were saved

by water. 21 Whereunto baptism being of the like form, now saveth you also: not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the examination of a good conscience towards God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. 22 Who is on the right hand of God, swallowing down death, that we might be made heirs of life everlasting: being gone into heaven, the angels and powers and virtues being made subject to him.



Lord, I Want To Be Holy

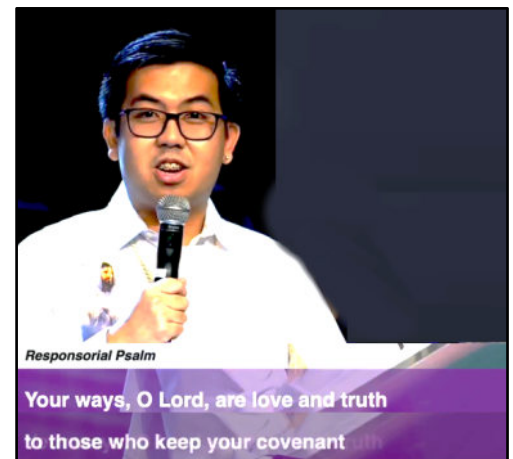
Church, holy moments are possible.
Holiness is possible. I can be holy.
Because holiness is Jesus in me. Let's say that
together: Holiness is Jesus in me.
The first movement to holiness is to desire it:
*I want to be holy. Lord, I want to be holy. Come
into my life.*
Let's say that together.
And it's a struggle. I know, I'm a human being.
I struggle with a lot of temptations
in my life.

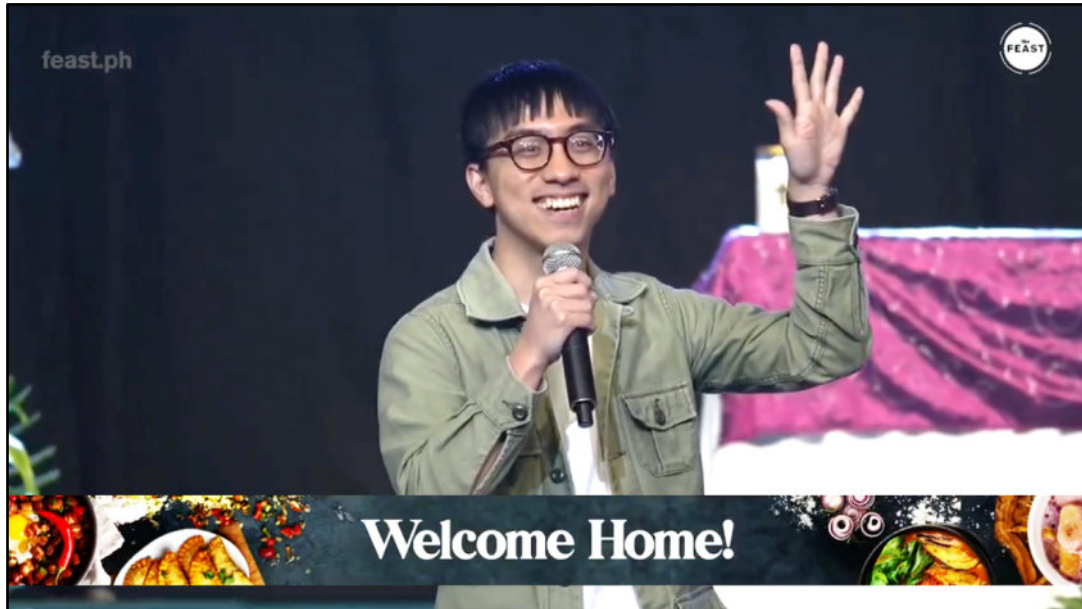
But the gift of God is Jesus who died for you, who loves you so much. Accept
this gift because He is your holiness.

Can we put both of our hands by our heart? Close our eyes. Have a conversation
with Jesus. Tell Jesus that you love Him. Tell Jesus that you are so grateful that
He is in your life. Invite Him once again in your heart. Tell Jesus:

*Lord, I want to be holy. Because holiness is Your Presence in my life.
Especially in times of trouble, Lord, I need You in my life. In times of suffering
and sickness, Lord, I need You in my life. In times, especially of temptations,
Lord, I need You. Oh, I need you. You are my holiness. I want to be holy.
I want to be marching with the saints in Heaven. When it's my time, I want to be
with You and the Blessed Mother. I want to be with
the angels. I want to be with the saints.
I want to be with my loved ones. I want to be holy.
Come, Lord. Spare nothing to make me holy.
Use all my suffering, my joys, my relationships, my
money, my house, my body. Make me holy, Jesus.
And this is my prayer, in your sweet Name. Amen.*

Thank You, Lord. Let's applaud Him.





BRO. BENE SANCHEZ:

Good Morning! My name is Bene. I'm one of the Youth leaders of the Feast Bay Area. I just want to welcome everybody here to The Feast.

Is there anybody who came here for the first time? Welcome! Welcome to The Feast! Welcome! You are Home!

There's this thing that we say in our Youth Ministry: If you want to belong, you already are. And I believe that's true. And I believe that's true here in The Feast.

Are there birthday celebrators this February?

May we just take a moment to greet them?

Happy Birthday!

We love you!





Inspiring Events

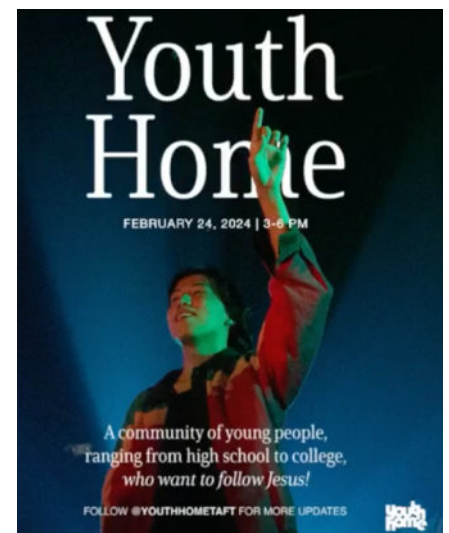
Listen up. We have a very important event that's going to happen on March 28. That's the *Holy Week Retreat: Journey with Jesus*.

Every year, we have this special retreat. And if you haven't gone to this retreat, this is the year that you should go. God speaks to me every time I attend this Holy Week Retreat. It's a time to come together, to hear God's Word, to hear directions, and to remember the story of what we are all a part of-- the story of Jesus' life, His death, His Resurrection that allows us to walk into the new life that He calls us to. So, if I were you, I'm going to save the date. I'm going to make plans not to go to Boracay or wherever, and instead, let's spend Holy Week together here in The Feast.

Are there young people here? If you're a young person, either in college or high school, we want to invite you to this event we do once a month. It's called Youth Home. We have a gathering every last Saturday of the month. Next week it will be on February 24.

So, if you're a young person, if you're interested, there's a Youth table outside. We can tell you more about what we do.

But let me just tell you this: You don't want to miss what happens every last Saturday of the month. It's for young people by young people and you're very much welcome to join.



Love Offering



We're at this part of The Feast where we do our giving.

You know, my favorite part of doing Youth Ministry, every time we gather, after Youth Home, we eat together. I love eating. It's so fun to sit down and have a meal together. Right? It's so fun to share food. Right?

When we participate in the act of sharing our time and resources to allow everybody to sit at the table so that more people can come and feel welcome, I think that's the kind of community that we want to be.

I think God has called this Community to be a community of radical generosity. And because of people like you who give every week, this allows us to make more room every Sunday for the young people who have always felt like there's never enough. We want them to know that the kind of God, the kind of Father that they have is someone who will always provide, who will always make a way -- even when it seems like there's no hope, even if it seems like they've been abandoned, or they're at the dead-end. Sometimes, they just need to hear and remember the truth and to feel that they're not alone.



Help the Feast Mercy Ministries. Help them all.

 Anawim Lay Missions Foundation, Inc.	 Grace to be Born Maternity Home and Nursery	 He Cares Foundation Street Children Caring Center	 Jeremiah 33:6-7 Foundation	 Pag-asa ng Pamilya Scholarship Foundation
 LOJ Prison Ministry	 LOJ Pastoral Care Center	 HAIL Mary of Abra	 Jesus Christ Cares for Cancer	 Shepherd's Voice Radio and Television Foundation, Inc.

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You're Not Alone

Even if you're just one person sitting here in this vast crowd, I truly believe this: what The Feast is for and why we're gathered here today, is for us to come together and be reminded that whatever worries or whatever fears that we have about what we're going to eat, or what we're going to do with our life, God already knows. He's already determined to bless you and to provide for you, to surprise you that there is always going to be more than enough. Amen? Amen. All right, let's come into prayer:



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

Jesus, we put our trust in You. Lord, we remember that whenever we think that there's a lack, whenever we think that we've reached the end, that You are capable of writing a new story. You're capable of opening doors that once were closed.

So, Lord, right now, we're praying that You open each one's heart to respond. Our giving every week, Lord, it's not a requirement, it's not a way to gain Your favor. But it's a response to the grace and to the provision that You are already giving, that You have given and that You're continuing to give us.

Lord, we want to live in the radical generosity that You've called us to. Help us respond to the level that You're calling us to-- even if it needs just a bit more than what we're comfortable with, even if it means trusting with faith that this little that we're to give is going to make room for more people to experience Your love and provision. We entrust all these to You. In Jesus' Name, we pray. Amen.

A promotional graphic for 'WAYS to Give' with a dark background and a plate of food at the bottom left. The text 'WAYS to Give' is in large white letters, with 'HELP US TO CONTINUE THIS MINISTRY' in smaller yellow letters below it. On the right, there are three logos: UB (The Builder of the Light of Jesus Family Mega Manila Inc. 000-4000-24846), BDO (Light of Jesus Family Mega Manila Inc. 039-7014-3807), and GCash. A QR code is located below the BDO logo. At the bottom right, it says 'FOR DEBIT OR CREDIT CARD GIVING, VISIT WWW.THEFEASTPICCAM.COM/COMMIT'.

Worship!

EXHORTATION

BRO. NICO NARVAEZ:

Good Morning, Church! Welcome to Church!
Just a really fast reminder that we're here
because we all just want to be more like Jesus.

Amen!

We want to be Jesus to more people every day.
Every single day we just strive to be more like Him.
So, we're going to sing, and let's just believe this:
Believe it with all our hearts!



**FATHER I PRAY MAKE ME
MORE LIKE JESUS**



FEAST BAY AREA WORSHIP

MORE LIKE JESUS

PASSION MUSIC
WORDS & MUSIC BY: BRETT YOUNKER BROOKE LIGERTWOOD KRISTIAN STANFILL SCOTT LIGERTWOOD
© 2018 SIXSTEPS MUSIC / WORSHIPTOGETHER.COM SONGS (ASCAP)
(ADMIN. AT CAPITOLCMGPUBLISHING.COM) / SHOUT! MUSIC
CCLI #: 7105732

BRO. BO SANCHEZ:

Father, You are an amazing God because You brought us here, into this place to meet You and to be with You, spend time with You. To bask in Your Presence and let Your Presence come and conquer whatever thing in our lives that prevents Your love from transforming us. That in the mighty Name of Jesus, we say YES to all that You want to do in our lives.

My dear Friends, I want you to make your Yes bigger. I want you to make your Yes more sincere. I want your Yes to be bolder. I want your Yes to be louder.

I want you to say it: 1, 2, 3, YES! 1, 2, 3, YES! 1, 2, 3, YES!

You heard that, Lord. Our YES is for You. In Jesus' Name. Amen.



NOVENA TO GOD'S LOVE DECLARATION OF ABUNDANCE

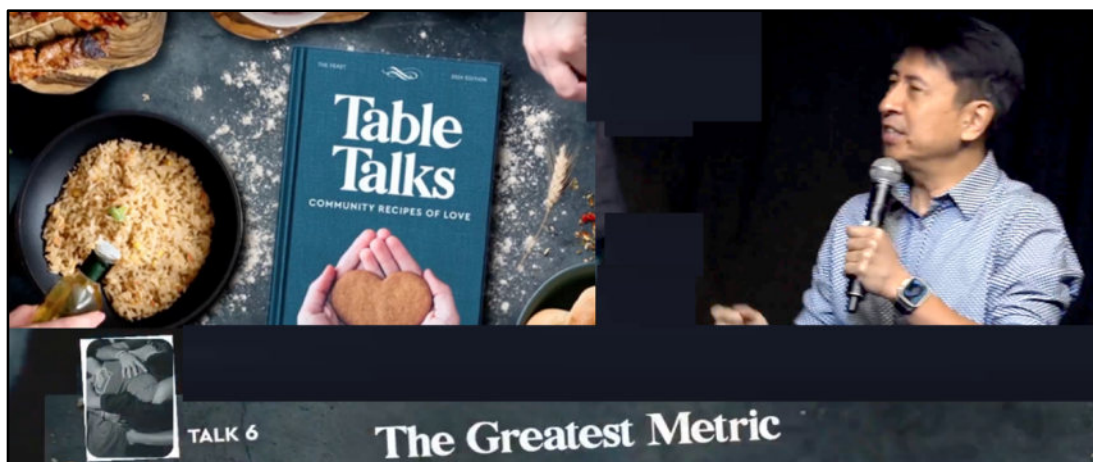
Give the Lord a big hand. God is here. God is here.



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 I am blessed, I am blessing the world. In Jesus' name. Amen

Talk



TODAY, I want to preach the message *Love like Jesus*.

Love like Jesus.

There is a person beside you who may need Jesus, who may need His love. Might be your husband or your wife. Might be your son or your daughter. Might be your mom or your dad. Or might be a friend. Or might be a stranger.

Whoever that person is, I want you to be Jesus to that person and express the love of Jesus to that person. Either by handshake or a big hug, it doesn't matter. Just express the love of Jesus to that person. Love like Jesus today.

Fr. Mario loved us like Jesus this morning. Thank you so much. Always does. Thank you for the Word. Thank you for the Eucharist. So beautiful! What a gift!



We want to thank our
Worship Team for loving us
like Jesus. Thank you.
Thank you so much.



Meet Engineer Jun

I want to tell you a story...

Two weeks ago, I met this guy.

His name is Engineer Jun. And his story is that at a very dark season of his life, he entered The Feast in Cebu.

You see, Engineer Jun is a contractor. And you know, as a contractor, you give a little... I won't bore you with the details...

But two weeks ago, he was telling me that at that point, you know, things happened in his business that when he entered The Feast in Cebu, he owed P120 million.

If you were Engineer Jun, and you were buried under P120-million debt, how would you feel? Devastated. Hopeless. That's how he felt.

When he entered The Feast, not only did he have P120-million debt, he was being sued right and left by his suppliers.

So, in his mind, he was saying, "That's it. My life is over. It's gone."

That's when he walked into The Feast. And he started praying and he started worshiping. And then guess what happened?

Somebody gave him-- of course, you're a first-timer at The Feast, what do they give you? The *Novena to God's Love* booklet. And that's what he has *there* in his hand. There are spaces in the booklet for seven dreams you want to be fulfilled, right?

He wrote: *I will pay all my debts.*

He did not know how. But he wrote it down.

The second he wrote was: *All my court cases will be cleared.*

He did not know how that would happen. Okay?

So, he kept writing his dreams. And then, No. 7, it was empty.

And the first thing that came to his mind was: *My wife, my family and I will go to the Holy Land.*

And as he was writing that, he was saying, "Ang dami ko ngang utang, paano ba ito?-- I have so many debts, how can this dream come true?"

It was like impossible, right?



Miracle at The Feast

Engineer Jun walked into The Feast in Cebu in 2014. The servants there, they cared for him, they loved him. The leaders there spent coffee time with him. They just journeyed with him.

Two weeks ago, Engineer Jun and I chatted, and he said, “All my debts have been paid. All my court cases are gone. And my family and I went to the Holy Land.”

And his business resurrected and he’s going strong.

Why did I tell you that story?

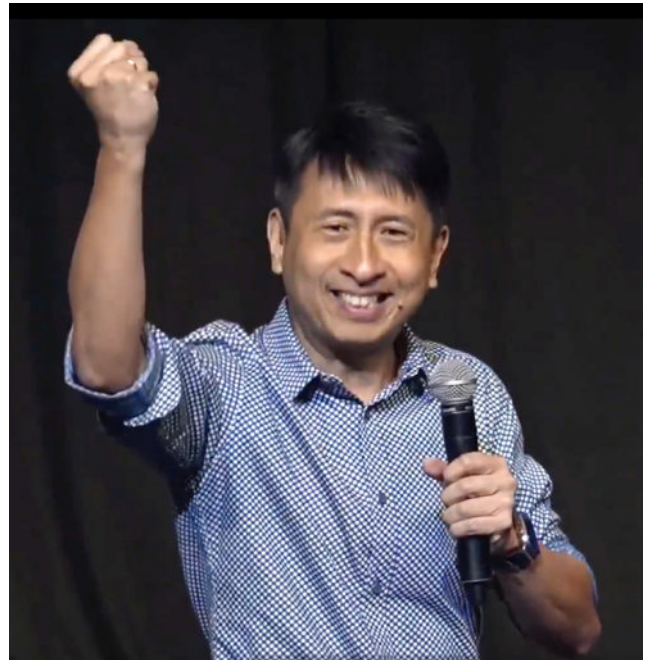
At that time when he needed someone to be with him, to tell him there was hope, there were a bunch of Feasters-- at The Feast-- who loved him like Jesus.

They did not go to him, they did not tell him:
“Kumusta ang buhay mo? Okay, ba? -- How’s your life? -- Are you following the Lord? You know, is there a relationship that needs to be morally right? Are you reading the Bible every day? Are you praying every morning?”

They did not gang up on him nor give him the Commandments that he was supposed to follow.

They came up to him and said, “What’s your need? Ah, marami kang utang-- Ah, you have lots of debts. We will pray for you. Oh, you have a lot of court cases. We’re going to be with you. and we’re going to journey with you. We’re going to be your friend. And we’re going to be praying that God will fulfill the dreams that you’ve written down in your *Novena*.”

They became his friends.



Jesus Is in You

My friend, Jesus is here and He is here in you. And if you have a need, we're going to come and pray.

Maybe right now, you're like Engineer Jun when he was in his dark season. You have a need. Maybe you have debts. And maybe you need a miracle. And maybe there's a relationship that's broken. And whatever dream that you have right now, that you've written in your *Novena to God's Love*, maybe, it's not yet fulfilled.

Friend, I want you to know Jesus is here. I want you to believe that miracles are still possible. Amen!

And that this is a place of miracles. Yes or No? Yes! It is a place of miracles because the God of Miracles is here.

And whatever happened to Engineer Jun can happen to you. Sure, it took 10 years. I'm not saying it was quick. But you know, Engineer Jun continues to serve the Lord today. And that's the real miracle: That *you love like Jesus*.



Love like Jesus.

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



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TALK 6

The Greatest Metric



What does **spiritual maturity** really mean?

What does spiritual maturity really mean?

The title of the Talk is *The Greatest Metric*.

If there is one metric that speaks about spiritual maturity, the greatest measurement is this:

John 15:12 NIV

"Love each other as I have loved you."

This is *the* Commandment.

The others are Commandments.

But this is *the* commandment.

It is the ultimate goal of life: To love like Jesus.

Put your hands over your chest. Everybody, say:

Father, perform the greatest miracle in my life. Help me to love like Jesus.

In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Let's give the Lord a big hand, Everybody. Defining what spiritual maturity is defining what holiness is, is very important.

Why? Because it will define how we do church. If spiritual maturity means loving like Jesus, the church must first of all be a band of people who love like Jesus.

Love like Jesus.

How we define spiritual maturity will define how we do church.

If spiritual maturity means loving like Jesus, then the church must first of all be a band of people that love like Jesus.



When I start defining what spiritual maturity is, I need to differentiate two terms: religious maturity and spiritual maturity.

And I will do that by introducing to you two fellows:

First: Let's call him Richard. I'll not give you his real name.

When I met him, I learned that he did not go to church. All his life, he did not go to church. But then when I got to know him more, I would be shocked at those moments when some beautiful light exploded in his life.

It was selflessness.

This guy-- Richard-- loved like Jesus. I repeat: Did not go to church. He told me he would go to church when there was a wedding he had to attend.

I asked him, "Why don't you go to church?"

He said, "My parents never taught me to go to church. All my life, since I was a kid, never did."

So, here was a man who did not read the Bible, did not know the Bible. But I do not know why he was living the heart of the Bible. And it discombobulated me. It did.

It got confirmed. It was not like I was observing him, the way he was running his business, the way he took care of his employees, the way he took care of his family...

And then it got confirmed-- when I talked to his employees, when I talked to his family, when I talked to his friends, they all told me this guy is unique, he is incredible, he is awesome-- his kindness.

And so, his life, I believe, shouted to me that there is indeed a difference between religious maturity and spiritual maturity.



Now, when I differentiate both, I am in no way--
in no way-- devaluing religious maturity.

**By differentiating them,
I'm not devaluing religious maturity.**

What is religious maturity?
Religious maturity is time in prayer-- daily,
reading Scripture, receiving the Sacraments,
being in church.
That's religious maturity.
And I'm not devaluing that.

Because all of these -- for thousands of years and millions of people-- have been
the God-appointed channels of His love to us.

**For 2000 years and for millions of Christians, these are God-
appointed channels of His Love.**

They're the incredible conduits--
powerful conduits --of God's unstoppable
grace to make us love like Jesus. And so, normally, religious maturity and spiritual
maturity grow together. *Normally*, it happens. But here was an anomaly.

**They're powerful conduits
of supernatural Grace to make us love like Jesus.**

Richard did not have the usual religious channels to receive God's love,
to make him love like Jesus. And yet he loved like Jesus. He was a mystery to me.
I could not fathom him as much...

So, I had to ask him a few times: "Richard, where do your values come from?"
And usually, he would have only one answer.

Very simply he would tell me, "My parents loved me unconditionally."

His answer reminded me of something very important that all parents need
to hear. Parents, before Scripture, before the Sacraments, before the Church,
you--mommy, you-- daddy, are God's appointed, ordained, channels for His love
to flow into your
children. That if you
love your kids like

**More than Scriptures and the Sacraments, you are God's first channel of His
Love to your kids. Your children will know Jesus if you love them like Jesus.**

Jesus, then they will get to know Jesus and love like Jesus as well.

And I know it's a heavy responsibility. But I just needed to say that.



Second Story: ‘Barbie and Ken’

The second fellow whose story I want to share with you-- again, I will hide his name-- is the husband of a friend. Let’s call the couple Barbie and Ken. Sorry, my brain is lazy right now. They have no relationship with the dolls☺.

Barbie separated from Ken one day-- after many years of marriage. Everybody was in shock.

All her friends were saying, “How could you do that? Ken was a holy person!”

That was how everybody looked at Ken. Because Ken went to church every day. Ken read his Bible every day. Ken, every time you talk to him, he will talk about doctrines, he will talk about, you know, God, and he will invite you to pray.

And so, they came up to Barbie and they said, “Barbie, *why*?! You’re so lucky to have Ken. He’s such a good man. He doesn’t drink, he doesn’t smoke, he’s always in church, he’s always walking around praying the Rosary... Why did you separate from him?”

And Barbie’s answer was this: “For the past 18 years, I have been verbally and emotionally abused. For the past 18 years of my married life, I have been treated like garbage.”

So, I know this couple. And, my dear Friends, I want you to know all these years I’ve been serving in Ministry, I have met a few Kens. They’re not normal. Okay? Because although they had the God-appointed channels of God’s love like prayer, and Mass, and Scripture, and church, for some reason, God’s love did not go through those normal channels.

Somewhere, somehow, something happened.

And we’re going to talk about that today.

Because of this view, I am going to share with you a fruit of laborious reflection over the past 45 years of my walking with the Lord -- 44 years of Ministry.



This is what I'm going to share with you today and it's priceless for me -- *priceless* for me-- to share this with you. I find this very valuable.

I am going to define what I think-- and this is just my personal opinion after 44, 45 years of walking with the Lord: What spiritual maturity means.

Spiritual maturity means nine signs that you are spiritually mature.

1. You're Growing in Receiving God's Love

When you say *saint*, the first thing that comes to mind is somebody who loves God. Yes, or No? I define *saint* differently.

A saint is someone who knows how to receive God's love. Because loving God is simply a fruit, a response to that love. In 1 John 4:19:

1 John 4:19 NIV

We love because He first loved us.

Before anything else, saints are people who allow themselves to be loved by God.

So, it all starts in receiving God's love. This is the first move: God initiates. And holiness is *receiving* that love.

That's No. 1



If the start of the spiritual journey is receiving God’s love, the fuel -- daily fuel-- is *gratitude*. And so, you know you’re maturing spiritually if you see His love everywhere and every action you make is a *Thank You* to that love.

You know you’re maturing spiritually when you see His Love everywhere and every action you make is a “thank you” to that love.

When I was 12 years old, I thought I was going crazy. Because I came to know Jesus in a very personal way. And 13 years old, I was there, walking on the street, and it was hot. It was scorching-- the back of my neck was burning. It was one of those summers when it was really, horrendously hot. And there I was-- smiling.

Why? Because I was praying: “Lord, this is how hot Your love is.”

13 years old.

The next day, I was walking on that same road and all of a sudden it rained-- and I was drenched. And I did not bother to go to a shade. I did not try to get an umbrella or a raincoat. No. I just allowed the rain to fall on me.

And I had a smile on my face again, and I said, “Lord, this is how cool Your love is.”

Seeing God Everywhere

I really thought I was getting crazy. And as I was walking, there was this field of flowers.

And I began to smell-- actually, I didn't smell it-- I just thought I smelled. You know, I have a big nose but my wife says it doesn't work. I can't smell anything.

But the flowers were so beautiful, it's like I smelled, yeah, the scent.

Oh, wow!

And then, I felt, "Oh God, this is how beautiful Your love is-- like these flowers."

Again, I thought I was getting crazy.

Because I saw love-- God's love-- everywhere.

I was 13.

And then, as I was walking on the road, there was this huge garbage can-- overflowing garbage. And it really stunk. I got a whiff of it -- and I just began to smile. And I continued to smell it.

And then I said, "Lord, this must be how my sins smell. And how obnoxious my sins are to You-- and yet You still love me."

I was 13 years old, and I thought I was getting crazy. Because everywhere I looked, it's God's love. It's God's love. It's God's love. It's God's love.

I want you to know that phase did not last. I grew up. But then at different times, it would come back. At different moments, it would come back.

And I want you to know that today, at my age, nearing that point where I will enjoy 20% discounts in drug stores and restaurants-- nearing that point-- I want you to know, it still happens.

It still happens. When I see God's love everywhere.

Spiritual maturity is seeing God everywhere-- and letting every action be *gratitude*.

Which brings me to No. 3





The Third Sign of Spiritual Maturity is healthy self-love.

Fr. Mario was talking about that a while ago.

I remember at The Feast years ago, I preached about healthy self-love. Well, after my talk, there was this critic. He was angry. He came up to me. He was a middle-aged man with spectacles. I still see his face right now.

After the talk, he came up to me, angry, and he said, "Bro. Bo, can I talk to you? Can I talk to you?"

I said, "What is it?"

And he said, "Bro. Bo, I don't agree with what you just did onstage. You did not preach the Word of God. You preached pop psychology. You did not preach the Gospel of Jesus. You preached the Gospel of Oprah. Why talk about self-love?"

And so, I smiled at him, and I said, "I agree with you. If I stopped at self-love... How many times have you gone to The Feast?"

He said, "This is my first time."

I said, "If you were here last week, if you were here the week before, if you were here last month, if you were here last year, you would have heard I preached about selflessness. I preached about sacrifice-- which is the ultimate purpose of life: to give yourself. But how can you give yourself if you have no *self*-- and what you need to do? So, I'm just preaching the start..."

And then I finally told him, "Listen to me. I was like you once upon a time-- many, many decades ago I did not want to talk about self-love. I was allergic to it."

You Are Loved

Anything with the word *self*, or *self-love* --I would not talk about it. Until I started befriending some spiritual formators.

Do you know what spiritual formators are? The priest of the priests. It's the priests who are in charge of the formation of the priests, seminarians, and the nuns.

And I've known a bunch of them and we would chat, and swap stories, and this is what they tell me: Whenever they meet a problematic priest, a priest that is having a crisis, a priest that is going through a scandal-- sexual scandal, whatever it is, ultimately, they'll find one thing: The priest may be religious, he may be doing the rigors and disciplines of the priesthood, but deep down, he does not like himself.

At the end of the day, you cannot divorce spiritual maturity from psychological maturity. Both are two sides of a coin.

Put your hand over your chest and say, "I'm amazing. I'm beautiful. I'm wonderful. God made me, and what a wonderful person I am."

How do you feel?

When you know that you are loved, and when you know you accept yourself, there is no need to fight for the acceptance of others, there's no need to prove yourself to someone else.





And guess what? We're just connected to No. 4

One of the things I hit upon when I meet people-- these are religious people-- they've got addictions. They're trapped in compulsions. Somewhere, somehow, they're trapped in bondages. I know. I should know because many decades ago, I was addicted to porn. I was trapped in it for years. I was serving God. I was praying. But why was I trapped? I'll tell you why.

Addiction, peel it away, and beneath it, at its core, is a hunger for love. All addictions. They are a hunger for love. All addicts. They do not love themselves. And it's so painful that they're looking for a painkiller.

And what happens is they look for painkillers called drugs. A painkiller called alcohol. Painkiller called lust. Painkiller called gambling. Painkiller called shopping. Painkiller called food.

I got healed when I received God's love-- Sign No. 1. And started to love myself-- Sign No. 3.

I want to speak to anybody who's addicted. Anybody who's in bondage. Anybody who's trapped in a compulsion. Jesús will set you free.

Let Him love you today and fill that heart of yours with love.

Jesus said in Luke 4:18:

Jesus is committed to set you free.

Luke 4:18 NIV

Jesus said His Father sent Him
"to proclaim freedom for the prisoners."

A spiritually mature person is growing in freedom.



My dear Friends, disobedience, at its core, is a lack of trust. A disobedience problem is a trust problem. The reason you do not follow the Lord, I'll tell you. I'll break it down for you. I'll give you the anatomy.

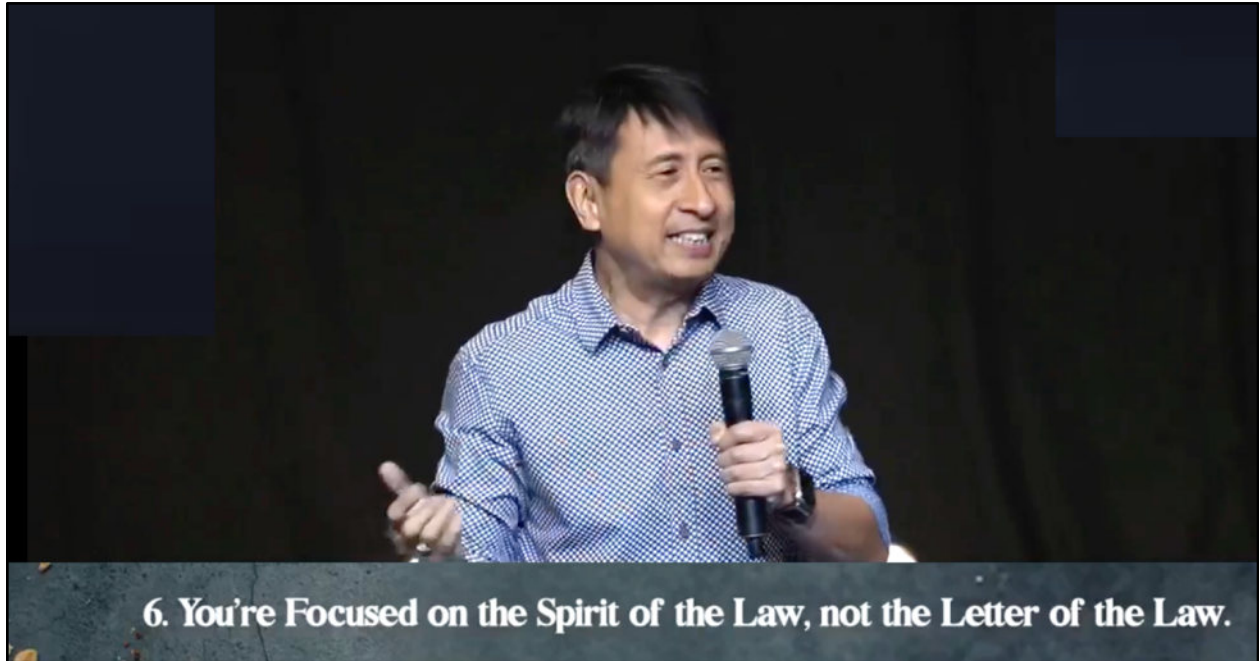
A disobedience problem is a trust problem.

The reason you cannot follow the Lord and obey Him -- and insist on what you want, you're telling God, 'No, Lord, I disagree with You. This is what is right. Not about what you're saying. I insist this is what is right'-- is that you do not trust that if you follow the Lord, you will find your joy, you will find your fulfillment, you will find your peace, you will find your happiness.

The reason you're insisting, "This is the path I will take, Lord-- not Yours"-- is you *believe* that this path will bring you happiness.

Today, a spiritually mature person-- I'm telling you now-- is somebody who daily is saying, "Okay, Lord, I may not agree with You-- all my logic is saying that I should follow my path-- but right now-- Haaahh!-- I'll trust You. And I'm going to follow You."

That's a spiritually mature person.



6. You're Focused on the Spirit of the Law, not the Letter of the Law.

No. 6: You're focused on the Spirit of the Law, not the Letter of the Law. Six times in the Gospel, Jesus healed someone on the Sabbath. Whenever something is repeated in the Bible, you know it's pretty important to God. Why did Jesus heal on a Sabbath? Mark 2:27 says:

Mark 2:27 NLT
The Sabbath was made to meet the needs of people, and not people to meet the requirements of the Sabbath.

Every time I fall into legalism, focusing on the letter of the Law, I know that I am not yet spiritually mature.

The spiritually mature person focuses on the spirit of the Law.



The Eucharist is the most eloquent expression of God's Presence. It is the *unrivaled* expression of God's Presence. Ordinary bread turning into the Almighty God.

This gathering, this one that's happening right now. Ordinary people with frustrations and doubts and traumas and hangups and issues. Ordinary people with bad breath and underarm odor and fungus in their feet. Ordinary people with histories. Ordinary people with brokenness. And ordinary people with weaknesses-- when gathered together, in the Name of Jesus, become the Body Christ.

God is here. God is here-- where the Eucharist is brought. God is here. When we worship God, God is here. When the Word is preached, God is here.

When you're alone in your room and you're praying, God is there. When you're reading the Bible, God is there. When you're praying the Rosary, God is there.

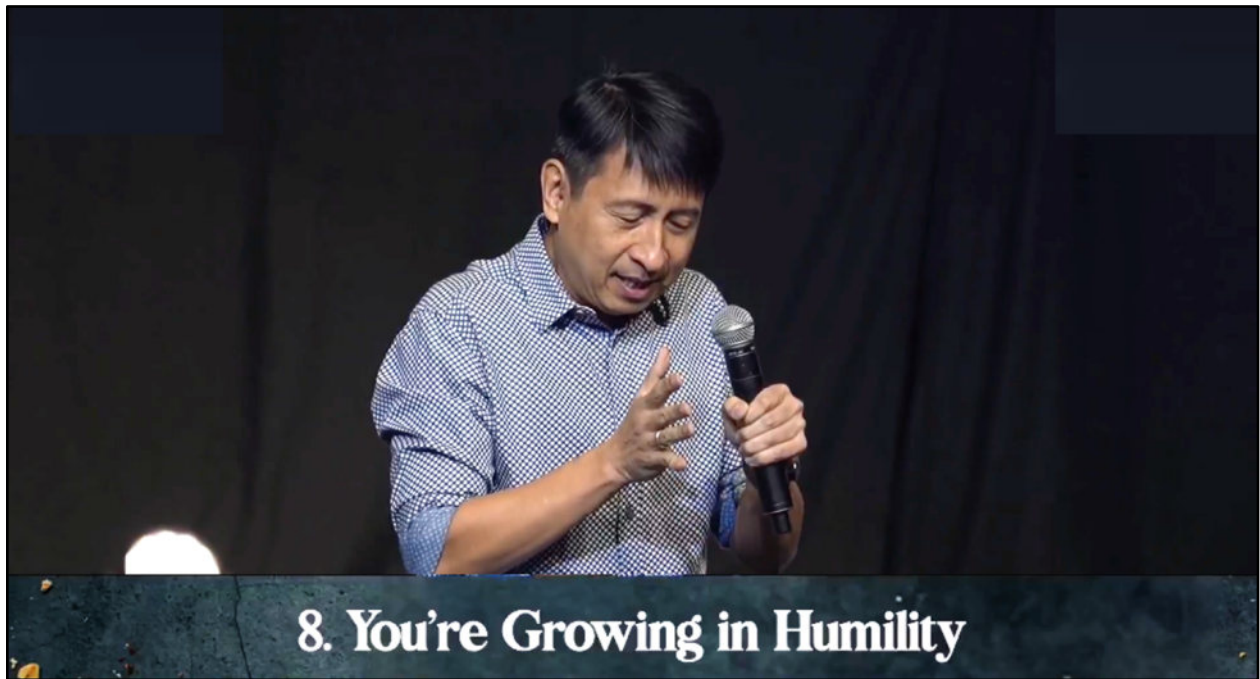
God is there in the ordinary moments of your life. God is there.

But it's got to overflow outside religious things.

That's the point. If you experience God, if you encounter God only in a religious setting, your religious gathering and your religious activities, you don't get the Kingdom of God. God is not a King just in church. God is not King just over religious activities. God is King over every area of your life.

You need to encounter God when you are in your cubicle finishing your accounting report. When you're having dinner with your family. When you are taking a shower, when you're exercising, when you're cooking your Lasagna, when you're eating pizza with friends.

God has to be in the ordinary moments of your life. When you experience that, then you know you are spiritually getting to be more mature.



8. You're Growing in Humility

A spiritually mature person grows in humility.

You know someone is holy when he is humble. If God is healing his insecurities.

Because the insecure person is the one who's trying to become proud. It is the humble person who is secure.

And Friends, full circle:
It goes back to No.1. >

1. You're Growing in Receiving God's Love



The only way to receive
God's love
is when you are humble.

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9. You're Growing in Selflessness

This is the last sign. This is the greatest sign. And this is the Greatest Metric.
This is the ultimate goal: No. 9 is selflessness.
Are you holy? Are you spiritually mature?
No. 9 says you *know* you are growing spiritually,
you *know* you are coming closer to God if you love like Jesus.

Love like Jesus.

My dear Friends, the Cross.
Is the Cross something that you hang on the wall?
Is the Cross just this golden pendant that you hang around your neck?
Is the Cross just a little picture on the front cover of your Bible?
Or, is the Cross every action from your daily life?
That is what spiritual maturity means.



Selfless Love

The reason I've been married to this beautiful woman for the past 25 years...

Do you know why this marriage is strong?
Because of the Cross.

Marowe, twenty-five years ago, I said I will die for you every day. I *will* die for you every day. I failed many times, you know. Became selfish, and proud, and so on. But I made a decision and by the grace and mercy of God, our marriage has stood the test of time.

And that's why this home. We're trying our best to love each other without expecting anything in return.

I love you. Every day. Every day.





Two weeks ago, I met with a bunch of friends. I love these friends so much. Almost all of them are in their 70s. They're my Light group.
(From left: Carl and Lanie Fontanilla; Hermie and Reng Morelos; Bo and Marowe Sanchez; Pio and Bebot Español.)

You know, in The Feast, we break up into small groups. Do you know how long I've been serving with this bunch of people? 40 years. I'm not kidding. We've stuck with each other. We've served together to this day. There's a couple that's not there (Roy and Rorie Pasimio). They're in the U.S. They migrated there some years ago but they serve there and we still see each other online. We're still a Light Group.

My Friends, I want you to know that this bunch, we fought. You count the number of times we fought; I cannot count. Some of these fights were bloody. Oh, my gosh. You know, shouting matches. I'm not kidding. We really fought. But then at the end of the day, we made up.

Why? Because a long, long time ago, when the relationship began, we said we're all broken. And if Jesus loved us in our brokenness, how can we not love each other? In our brokenness.

**If Jesus loves us in our brokenness,
we have no choice but to love people in their brokenness too.**

Tayo nga minahal ng Diyos nang tayo ay punung-puno ng kahinaan. We were loved by Jesus in our wounds. We stunk like garbage. He still embraced us. How can we not do the same way -- love like Jesus.

Love like Jesus.

Commitment

This Community has to be a community that loves like Jesus.

Now, when I took the hand of my wife and I said about marriage, I'm not saying -- you know, if a husband is abusing you already, you know, if there's adultery-- I'm not saying you still stick to each other. No. There are times when you really have to separate. Because you don't allow that. You should never allow that.

But you know, 90% of relationships are not about adultery, not abuse, and not addictions. It's about annoyance. And if they are annoyances, then we're supposed to love like Jesus and stick around, and continue in that relationship.

So, come and pray and allow Jesus, the Cross of Jesus to bless you. This is the reason we are here. Lift your hands and say this prayer with me:

Jesus, Thank You for the Cross, for dying for me, for being selfless. I don't know how I can love the way you love me. On my own, it's impossible. But I trust in you. That if you ask me to do it, then that means You're going to make it possible. And so, perform a miracle in my life. And help me to love like You. In Your Name. Amen.

Friends, I want you to just put your arms around somebody beside you. Love like Jesus. Love that person like Jesus. Love like Jesus.

Make a decision to put God first and love like Jesus.

Every Sunday, every week, make a decision to be here, worship the Lord here. Allow the Lord to bless you. Amen.



Love like Jesus.





MERCY MINISTRIES

*God blesses those who are merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.*

--Matthew 5:7

LIGHT OF JESUS PRISON MINISTRY

From Burden to Blessing

³¹ “But when the Son of Man^[a] comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit upon his glorious throne. ³² ...³⁴ “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. ³⁶ I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.’ --Matthew 25: 31-34

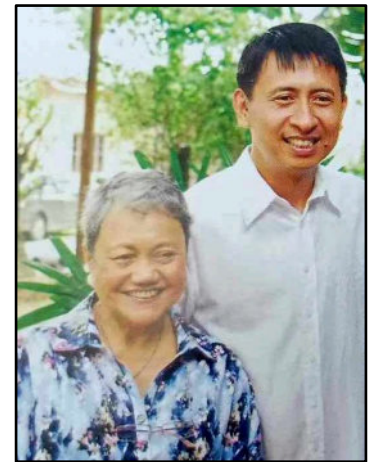
GUIDED by this inspiring message from our Lord Jesus, the Light of Jesus Family has established and sustained Mercy Ministries -- serving the *hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, and those in prison.*

The LOJ Prison Ministry started with groups in random going to jails to minister to persons deprived of liberty.

Until an incident, though unfortunate, led to the establishment of a regular LOJ Prison Ministry.

In the early 1990s, Babes Zambrano was accused of an anomaly at a government office she worked for. As she waited for the court decision on her case, Babes found her way to the Light of Jesus Family. *Here* she is with LOJ founder Bro. Bo Sanchez who readily opened our home for her.

And here, she was embraced by one of the LOJ Light (Caring) Groups, comforting her, and sharing with her God’s Word. And in time, she experienced an intense spiritual awakening.



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Eventually, Babes was given a 12-year sentence at the Correctional Institution for Women (CIW).

And yes, her burden turned out to be a blessing.

Undaunted by the lonely if not harsh life in prison, Babes focused on sharing Jesus with the women of CIW. Long story short, soon she was leading a regular prayer meeting there inviting preachers and volunteer servants from LOJ to hold the gathering.

In 1998, Babes was released from CIW by an executive clemency.

Although set free, Babes continued the LOJ prayer meetings in CIW. And not a few experienced the spiritual renewal she experienced. One inmate also released from CIW, even came and served in LOJ.

Today, already in her retirement years, Babes serves as a spiritual adviser in our Anawim Home for Abandoned Elderly.

Is that a burden you can hardly bear? Jesus *can* and *will* turn it into a blessing.



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@kerygmfamily.com

Website: <https://kerygmfamily.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.



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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FAMILY ONLINE NEWSMAGAZINE

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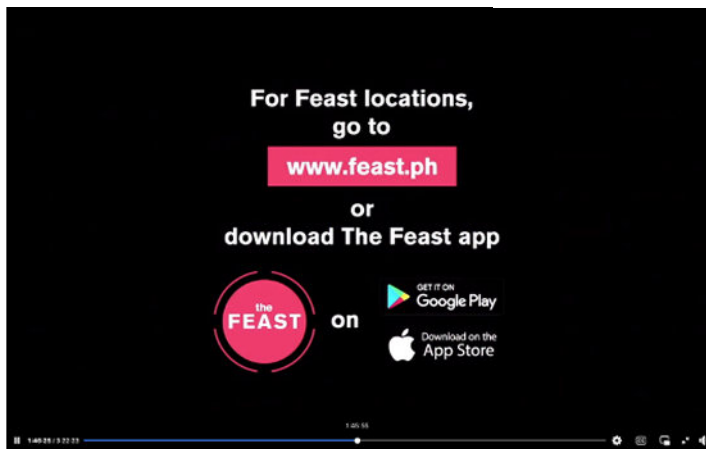
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Go and make disciples of all men.

— Matthew 28:19

