



The Life-Changing Magazine
KERYGMA

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AUGUST

2018

**Will You Accompany
Others in Their Journey?**

**Depression:
What You Need to Know**

**Let's Talk: Crisis
Intervention for Suicidal
and Homicidal Persons**

**Be the Light
This Dark World Needs**

BREAK OR BOUNCE?

Understanding Mental Health
and Why It Is Important

PATRICK GAMO

A psychotherapist explains how to deal with depression and how to reach out to our loved ones who are going through it.

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Do You Think Your Children Are Too Entitled?

The first generation makes the money. The second generation spends it. By the third generation, there's nothing left. It's the same classic story that we've heard before and we can't help but ask—why do many accomplished entrepreneurs find it easier to build a business than to raise their children to become independently successful?

This book is for those wondering why their children are lazy and reckless with their money. This is for the children who wonder why they're being labeled as lazy and self-indulgent. And this is for those who are close to success and have the time to prepare their children for what's to come.

The solution lies in your hands. The best part about it is that it won't cost you a fortune.



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Will You Accompany Others in Their Journey?

MARILYN MONROE was the pinup girl of the 1950s. She was considered one of the most beautiful women of her time. Guys had her picture on their lockers. Every man wanted her. Every woman envied her. But in 1952, at the young age of thirty-six, she took an overdose of drugs. She wrote these words in her personal diary: "Can anyone love me as I am, not just for my beautiful blond hair?"

More than food, more than shelter, more than clothing, people need love. I believe there are many Marilyn Monroes in the world today.

Let me tell you one of my favorite stories.

One day, a man had some puppies to sell. He even put a large sign in front of his house, "Puppies for Sale—P5,000 only."

One morning, the man saw a little boy looking at the sign. He asked, "What do you want?"

"I want to buy a puppy," he said. He then pulled out his little hand from his pocket and opened his palm. On it were a few coins.

The man said, "I don't think you have enough money."

The little boy said, "Will this be enough just to take a look at the puppies?"

The man said, "Sure." He whistled and called out, "Here, Dolly!" Out came Dolly from the doghouse. And following Dolly were the pups, like four balls of fur, running after their mother.

The little boy pressed his face on the fence, his eyes bulging, filled with joy. And that was when he noticed something still moving in the doghouse. A little puppy came out, much smaller, much slower. It limped its way to its mother.

"I want that one," said the little boy.

The man knelt in front of the boy and said, "Son, you don't want that dog. He was born with a short leg. He won't be able to run with you or play with you."

The little boy took one step backward, bent down, and rolled up the leg of his blue jeans.

The man was surprised to see a steel brace on the little boy's leg. It started above his knee all the way down and attached to a specially-made shoe.

"I don't run too well, sir," the boy said, "and the dog needs someone who can understand him."

I've got news for you: all of us are like that little puppy. Because all of us have a limp. We just have different kinds of limps.

What's your limp? Accept it. Unless you do, you won't be able to accept the limp of others. You'll always be judging, condemning, looking down, being irritated by the weaknesses of others.


In America, there was a huge survey done among young people ages sixteen to twenty-nine, and they were asked what they thought of Christianity. Their answers were tragic: Eighty-seven percent of them said that Christianity was judgmental. And eighty-five percent said Christianity was hypocritical. One out of four non-Christians said that modern-day Christians were no longer like Jesus.

Why? Rick Warren explained it this way: "Christians are more known for what we are against than what we are for." Because we love to tell people what's wrong with them.

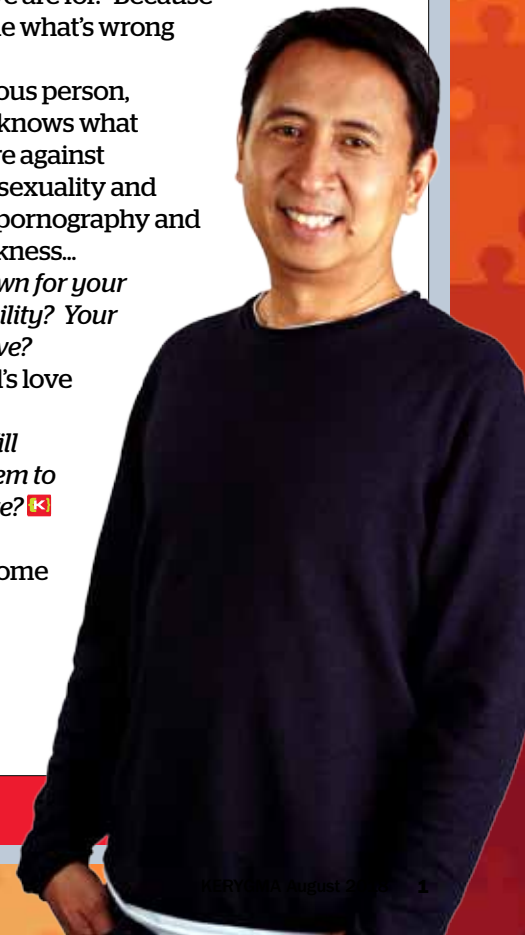
If you're a religious person, everyone instantly knows what you're against. You're against abortion and homosexuality and premarital sex and pornography and gambling and drunkenness...

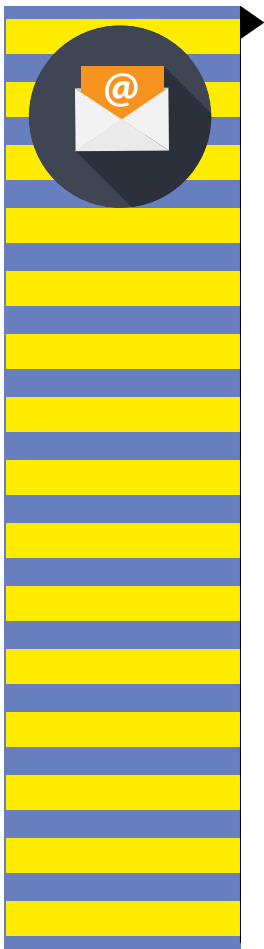
But are you known for your kindness? Your humility? Your selflessness? Your love?

Will you be God's love to others?

Big question: *Will you journey with them to experience God's love?* 

May your dreams come true,





I find Kerygma magazine humbling and relevant. Thank you, Kerygma, for giving hope to your readers! I am one of the thousands of people who are looking forward to your next issue because I know I can learn a lot through your magazine.

May you never get tired in your mission of inspiring us.

God bless Kerygma!

**Diana Reyes
Makati City**

I've read your December 2016 issue and I am struck by the generosity stories that your staff shared. Thank you not only for putting the Kerygma magazine together, but also for inspiring us to appreciate our blessings and give to others.

You bless many people more than you think you do.

Thank you, Kerygma staff!

**Joy Sarmiento
Manila City**

As a student, I am blessed to read your magazine because it guides me to the right direction. Your topic about wealth motivates me to prioritize well and to save for my future. You are like a personal coach that guides me and encourages me to improve.

I hope that more young people and college students will be inspired by Kerygma. You are a blessing!

**Paolo España
Cebu City**

Kerygma makes me look at life in a positive way. The stories of the people featured in your magazine assure me that God is real and He is working in our lives.

Thank you, Kerygma! God bless your coming issues.

**Michelle Ragos
Sto. Domingo, Quezon City**

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spoke with someone who had committed a sin when she was much younger and had since confessed it to a priest. She changed her ways and no longer committed that sin again. Still, she was continually bothered by it years later and would confess it now and again.

When she told this to me, I said, "God had forgiven you the first time you confessed. It's you who haven't forgiven yourself."

She was taken aback by my statement, but I watched as enlightenment flooded her eyes. That day, she was released from the guilt of a sin that had long been forgiven.

I can understand where that woman was coming from. I, too, unknowingly rejected God's forgiveness when I felt like I hadn't done enough to deserve it.

I remember one time when I couldn't wait to go to confession over a sin I had done. (My scrupulous twentysomething conscience convicted me for speaking to a guy for hours on the phone when I had a vow to the Lord not to entertain suitors or exclusive male friendships.) I entered the confessional and relieved my soul of the burden of my sin. And when the priest sent me off with a light penance, I felt that I was let off the hook too easily. I should have done more to earn my absolution.

But here's where the confusion lies.

When I was much younger, I learned that you shouldn't say, "Please forgive me," when you did something wrong. You should say, "I'm sorry."

When you say, "I'm sorry," for doing something wrong, you acknowledge your mistake or sin. But when you say, "Please



Anatomy of an Apology

Forgive Me vs. I'm Sorry

forgive me," you are asking the other person to do something about what you did.

Going to confession is me saying, "I'm sorry," to God. It's acknowledging my sins against Him and others. The absolution, which the priest gives in God's behalf, is the Lord forgiving us. It is not based on what I did but on what Jesus did on the cross. We are forgiven not because we said, "I'm sorry," but because God is merciful.


That's why we pray, "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us." We don't pray, "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us and who say sorry."

Forgiveness is an action we do, not something the offending party does. The reason why we find it hard to forgive, and we use it often as a reason to withhold mercy, is because the other party has not asked for forgiveness or shown remorse. We say, "Why should I forgive when she hasn't even acknowledged her fault? *Hindi man lang nag-sorry!*"

By Rissa Singson Kawpeng

We confuse what our action should be with what the other person should do when an offense is committed against us.

In sentence construction, "I forgive you" has *I* as the subject, meaning the one who does the action. *Forgive* is the predicate, which is the action that the subject performs. And *you* is the object of the action, the recipient of the forgiveness. *You* doesn't perform any action in that sentence. Therefore, forgiveness should not depend on what the other person does to merit the absolution.

May we learn to forgive the way our Lord has forgiven us. 

But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

E-mail Rissa at justbreatherissa@gmail.com.
Visit www.rissasingsonkawpeng.com for more of Rissa's inspiring articles or follow her on Facebook.



about the **cover** model



Patrick Gamo, or Pat to his friends, is a professional psychotherapist and counselor. He has a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and just recently completed his Master's degree in Counseling in Australia. Apart from his academic training, he is certified in Mental Health First Aid, Advanced Suicide Intervention, and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). He envisions a physically and mentally healthy Philippines, with an increased sense of self-awareness and understanding of the mind.

Aside from spreading mental health awareness, Pat is also passionate in serving the Lord as a drummer at The Feast Bay Area, a weekly Catholic prayer gathering.

Read his insightful article about depression on page 28.

*Photo credits:
Dakila Angeles*

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daily pause **with** Pope Francis

<p>1</p> <p>"Love can recognize good things even in bad situations. Love keeps a tiny flame alight even in the darkest night."</p>	<p>2</p> <p>"When we think of the end of time, with all of our sins, with our history, let us think of the banquet which will be freely offered us and let us lift up our heads. Do not give way to depression. Hope!"</p>	<p>3</p>  <p>"When the Holy Spirit is present, something always happens. Where the Spirit blows, things are never at a standstill."</p>
<p>7</p> <p>"The mystery of the Blessed Trinity invites us to live in communion with one another, in love and in sharing: certain that wherever there is love, there is God."</p>	<p>8</p> <p>"The Gospel calls us to live outside our comfort zone, because anyone who follows Jesus loves the poor and the lowly."</p>	<p>9</p> <p>"A Christian's life should be invested in Jesus and spent for others."</p>
<p>1 3</p> <p>"There is no curse on our lives but only God's gracious word, which drew our existence out of nothing."</p>	<p>1 4</p> <p>"We are always before the eyes of God, little fountains made to well up with good water."</p>	<p>1 5</p> <p>"Love calls to love, more powerfully than hatred calls to death. Jesus did not die and rise for Himself, but for us, so that our sins might be forgiven."</p>
<p>1 9</p> <p>"In our pain, we are not alone."</p>	<p>2 0</p> <p>"Consumerism has brought us anxiety."</p> 	<p>2 1</p> <p>"We can inspire others through witness so that one grows together in communicating."</p> <hr/> <p>2 8</p> <p>"The unknown that tomorrow holds for us is not a dark threat we need to overcome, but a favorable time given to us for living out the uniqueness of our personal vocation."</p>
<p>"At times like these, more than ever do we need the reasons of the heart, which alone can help us understand the mystery which embraces our loneliness."</p> <p>2 5</p>	<p>2 7</p> <p>"In moments when doubts and fears flood our hearts, discernment becomes necessary. It allows us to bring order to the confusion of our thoughts and feelings to act in a just and prudent way."</p>	
<p>2 6</p> <p>"Even when differences separate us, we recognize that we are part of the redeemed people, the same family of brothers and sisters loved by the one Father."</p>		

4

"Love of God and love of neighbor should be the two cornerstones of our lives."



1 0

"God needs people who bring His forgiveness and His mercy into the world."



1 6

"God loves us first. God does not love us because there is some reason in us that arouses love. God loves us because He is Love, and love by nature tends to diffuse itself, to give itself."

2 2

"The call for peace must be shouted. Peace sometimes gives the impression of being quiet, but it is never quiet, peace is always proactive."

2 9

"Being a believer means learning how to see with eyes of faith."



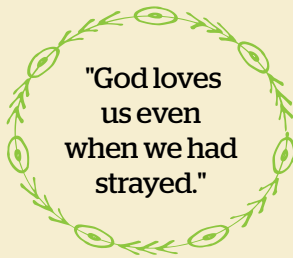
5

"We need the mercy, the consolation that comes from the Lord. All of us need it. This is our poverty but also our grandeur: to plead for the consolation of God, who in His tenderness comes to wipe the tears from our eyes."

1 1

"How do you make a person feel that someone loves him? First, you need to embrace him. Make him feel that he is wanted, that he is important, and he will stop being sad."

1 7



2 3

"Jesus, too, knows what it means to weep for the loss of a loved one."

3 0



"Are you angry with someone? Pray for that person. That is what Christian love is."

6

"Hope lets new life blossom, like a plant that grows from the seed fallen on the earth."

1 2

"But could it be that God has some children He doesn't love? No. We are all God's beloved children."

1 8

"The life of man is an exchange of glances: someone gazing at us is able to pry out a first smile, and we freely smile at those closed in sadness opening a way out for them."

2 4

"We too need the certainty that the Father hears us and comes to our aid. The love of God, poured into our hearts, allows us to say that when we love, nothing and no one will ever be able to separate us from those we have loved."

3 1

"Today people are suffering from poverty, but also from lack of love."





WHAT TO SAY (AND NOT TO SAY) TO SOMEONE WITH DEPRESSION

EVEN IF you have the best intentions to your loved one who is suffering from depression, you should still take precautions with the words you say—as words have the power to help and heal, or to hurt and humiliate.

1. Let me help

What to say:

Do you want a hug?

What not to say:

Stop feeling sorry for yourself.

2. I'm here for you

What to say:

You're not alone in this.

What not to say:

There's always someone worse off than you are.

3. You matter

What to say:

You are important to me.

What not to say:

No one ever said that life was fair.

4. There is hope

What to say:

We are not on this earth to see through one another, but to see one another through.

What not to say:

Try not to be so depressed.

5. Depression is real

What to say:

You are not going crazy.

What not to say:

So you're depressed. Aren't you always?

6. I'll do my best to understand

What to say:

I can't really understand what you are feeling, but I can offer my compassion.

What not to say:

Believe me, I know how you feel. I was depressed once for several days.

8. You can survive this

What to say:

When all this is over, I'll still be here and so will you.

What not to say:

It's your own fault.

9. I care about you

What to say:

I love you.

What not to say:

Haven't you grown tired of all this "me, me, me" stuff yet?

10. We'll get through this together

What to say:

I'm sorry that you're in so much pain. I will take care of myself, so you don't need to worry that your pain might hurt me.

What not to say:

Have you tried chamomile tea?

Source: <http://www.health.com/>

WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR BODY ON A FLIGHT AND HOW TO DEAL WITH THEM

WHILE MANY PEOPLE love to travel, do you know what flying does to your body?

- 1. Bloating.** The drop in cabin pressure at altitude can cause the gases in your stomach to expand, leaving you feel bloated and uncomfortable.
Solution: Avoid fizzy drinks and gas-causing food before boarding. Peppermint tea reduces bloating.
- 2. Deep-vein thrombosis.** Sitting for a long time leads to poor circulation and swollen feet, and it increases the risk of developing deep-vein thrombosis (DVT), a blood-clotting condition.
Solution: Stay hydrated and avoid excessive alcohol consumption. Wear comfortable footwear.
- 3. Jet lag.** Jet lag can cause problems such as exhaustion, trouble concentrating, memory problems, constipation, indigestion, and diarrhea.
Solution: Stay hydrated and get enough sleep.
- 4. Nausea and sickness.** The reduction in air pressure on a flight may cause you to feel dizzy or nauseous. Also, the air in the cabin is recycled and lacks moisture, making you feel more dehydrated.
Solution: Carry a sanitizer and make sure to wash your hands regularly. The cabin air is filtered, but you can still get bugs from those around you sneezing or coughing in your direction.
- 5. Back pain.** Sitting down for long periods of time can have a negative impact on your health and well-being.
Solution: Maintain a good posture. Avoid crossing your legs or twisting your spine. Walk up and down the cabin, do some stretches, and move around regularly to reduce the pressure on your lower back.

Sources: Dr. Steve Iley, Medical Director of Bupa UK; <https://www.cosmo.ph/>

Quick Health Tip

Barley

Barley is a grain full of fiber; therefore, it is more slowly digested by the body than more refined grains. It also helps lower blood pressure and keep blood sugar levels stable.

Source: <https://www.delish.com/>

Saints-at-a-Glance

St. Monica

Feast day: August 27

Birth: 331 A.D.

Death: 387

Patricius, Monica's pagan husband, and his mother made Monica suffer because of their ill temper.

Monica's son, Augustine, also led a sinful life, turning to a false religion and forming wicked habits and got addicted.

Monica bore her difficulties by praying fervently and unrelenting patience. God heard her prayer when Patricius and her mother-in-law decided to become Christians in 371.

Augustine converted as well. He did not only become a good Christian, but also a priest, bishop, and a famous saint.

St. Monica died in Ostia, Rome in 387 with her son Augustine at her bedside.

Source: <https://www.catholic.org/>



IN THE CHRISTIAN community, it has been a practice to hold a christening ceremony a couple of weeks after an infant is born. But for Stanley Everett, a retired army officer for Britain and Australia, it is never too late or too old to be part of Christ's family.

Everett joined the army at a young age and was posted to North Africa where he was trained to defuse and detonate land mines. It was during the Second World War, one of the most disastrous periods of his life, that he started to look for Christ.

"All my life, I've been searching," he said. "To be honest, I don't know who's right and who's wrong, but they all believe in Jesus, all the denominations, and they all believe that He is our savior."

Everett received the Sacrament of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Communion last May. He was ninety-five years old. He called the momentous day, "a complete change in life." He plans to spend the rest of his life practicing the tenets of the Catholic faith and reading the Bible.

Everett has already spent three years learning the Mass at a chapel inside Villa Maria Centre, Fortitude Valley, an elderly day-care center that he considers home.

Sources:
<http://www.patheos.com/>
<http://catholicleader.com.au/>



SMBA BUYS USED CIGARETTE BUTTS TO HELP SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT

THE SUBIC BAY Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) Ecology Center has caught the attention of the public, and called to take action on the #HeaviestButtCampaign.

Cigarette butts are the most common coastal trash in the world, and they take at least ten years to decompose. This is the reason SMBA has started a project to help alleviate the problem.

The local campaign encourages everyone to pick up cigarette butts from streets to beaches and sell them to their organization. The cigarette butts will be used for a study they are currently conducting for possible upcycling.

SMBA needs twenty to sixty kilograms for the said study. One kilogram of cigarette butts is worth P300. So far, they have already collected five kilos from nearby areas.

The #HeaviestButtCampaign is part of SBMA's bigger program, "War on Waste."

Source: <https://subic.morefun.ph/>





The 25th Anniversary Celebration of the Light of Jesus Pastoral Care Center

▲
Twenty-five years of love.
The LOJPCC reached out to others through their seminar on depression and suicide. They also empowered their pastoral carers through a retreat in Baguio City.

By Ditas Español

Once upon a time, there was a dream... a dream to care for God's hurting people. The dream was to set up a ministry that would share God's light to the lost, the broken, the emotionally and spiritually wounded. Under the leadership of Bo Sanchez, Ditas Español and four other women namely, Cristy Galang, Avic Achaval, Babes Fontillas, and Janet Ealdama (+), this dream was pursued with passion. Thus, the Light of Jesus Counseling Center was born in July 1993. The group's first project was to set up a telephone hotline for people who needed a listening ear.

Twenty-five years later, it is now called Light of Jesus Pastoral Care Center (LOJPCC), and it continues

to pursue that dream of sharing Christ through caring. The 25th anniversary theme, "Sharing God's Light, Reaching Out Towards New Heights," captures that burning passion in the hearts of its ministry members to live out its mission to the fullest—to nurture and empower God's people through pastoral care.

To jump-start the year-long celebration, various projects have been organized:

- 1. Psycho-Spiritual-Educational Learning Sessions** that deal with current issues and problems such as depression and suicide, grief and loss, gender identity and sexuality.
- 2. Psycho-Spiritual Healing Retreats** such as the Journey to Personal Growth.
- 3. Roadstead Support Groups** for family members and caregivers of



online live chat with a pastoral carer, e-mail, and face-to-face pastoral care sessions. Last year, we engaged in 4,513 caring sessions, and ministered to 1,323 individuals.

Looking back to the past twenty-five years, here's what the LOJPCC has done:

Twenty-five years of bringing hope to those whose hope is failing,


Twenty-five years of bringing Christ to those who have lost their way to Him,

Twenty-five years of caring and nurturing,

Twenty-five years of touching lives,
Twenty-five years of empowering people to love and serve God,

Twenty-five years of equipping those who give care...

The list goes on.

Through God's grace, the dream that God planted in our hearts twenty-five years ago is very much alive and a reality today. From the heavens, God is smiling and looking down on the LOJPCC saying, "Well done, my good and faithful servants!" 

Visit www.lightfam.com to know more about the mercy ministries of the Light of Jesus Family, or call 725-9999.



depressed and self-harming individuals.

4. Women at the Well (WAW)

Support Group for women with emotional, relational, and sexual brokenness.

In addition to the above, the ministry is intensifying its Continuing Education Program for Pastoral Carers by holding special growth sessions for them, as well as making available opportunities for them to attend seminars for their professional growth.

From a single hotline in 1994 that was operated once a week, the LOJPCC now provides twenty-four hours, six days a week of pastoral care services through the phone, through



NEED TO TALK? WE LISTEN

THE LIGHT OF JESUS PASTORAL CARE CENTER

As a community of carers, we share the Light of Christ via the following services:

1. **Confidential Pastoral Care sessions** with via landline, mobile, online chat sessions (lightfam.com), email, and face to face appointments.
2. **Support Groups**
 - a. **Roadstead** - for family members and caregivers of depressed and self-harming individuals
 - b. **Women at the Well (WAW)** - for women with emotional, relational, and sexual brokenness
3. **Psycho-spiritual-educational Seminars, Workshops, & Training**

UPCOMING EVENTS:

After and Through: Dealing with Grief and Loss - Aug. 21, 2018
Journey to Personal Growth Retreat - Sept. 29 - 30, 2018
Out in the Light: The Real Issues about Sexuality - Nov. 10, 2018

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT US AT -

Landline: 726-4709 | 726-6728 | 726-0267 | 725-9999 loc 119.

Mobile No. +63.922.840.7031

Email - lojpastoralcare@gmail.com

Lighthouse Bldg., 60 Chicago St. Brgy. Pinagkaisahan, Cubao, QC



LAHAT TAYO NAWAWALAN... NAIWAN... NAAAGAWAN... NASASAKTAN...

The LOJ Pastoral Care Center invites you to "After & Through:

HOW TO DEAL WITH GRIEF AND LOSS"

On August 21, 2018, Tuesday, 12:00noon to 5:00pm
The Feast Center, Robinsons Galleria, Ortigas Center, QC.

SPEAKERS:

DR. EARNEST TAN

Psychologist, Guidance Counselor, Broadcaster, & Publisher

MS. CHERI ROBERTO

Speaker and Author, "From Mourning to Morning"

FR. LARRY TAN, SDB

Educator, Author, & Missions Director - Salesians of Don Bosco

Seminar Investment: P 500.- (includes afternoon snacks)

P 300.- for Students/Senior Citizens/PWD. LIMITED SLOTS ONLY.

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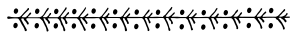
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How can I comfort a friend who is having suicidal thoughts? He mentioned that he wanted to end his life and I don't know how I could help him. Please guide me.

Hurting Friend

Dear Hurting Friend,

Shalom!

From your question, I can sense you have a compassionate heart for your friend. And as a friend, we should never take lightly anyone who expresses suicide ideations. It is best to pay attention even to indirect references to suicide or death.

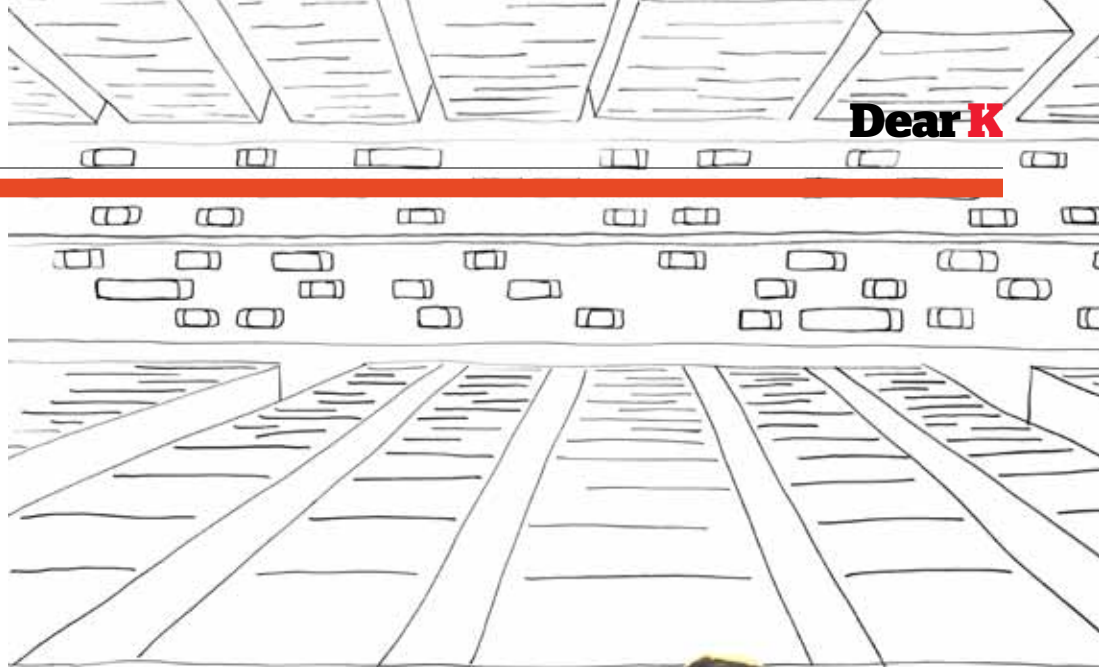
Below are a few tips I can suggest to enable you to journey with your friend in this difficult time in his life.

1. Be calm. Don't panic, express shock, overly react, or worse, lecture the person. Don't say "You have so much to live for" or "Look at the brighter side of life."

2. Let your friend know you care. Connect with his feelings. Some helpful things to say are: "You must be feeling really terrible to want to end your life" or "You must be going through a lot" or "I may not be able to understand exactly how you feel, but I care for you and I want to help."

3. Encourage your friend to talk about his suicidal thoughts. Listen with empathy. Allowing him to express his pent up negative emotions can give him relief from pain and loneliness and it can prevent suicide. Let him talk. Never give advice or solution, or offer to fix his problems.

4. Assess the risk. Ask how he plans to do it. Those who have a detailed plan with a specific time



How Can I Comfort a Suicidal Friend?



set, the means to carry out the plan (e.g., has in possession pills, a gun, a knife), and a clear intention to do it are at high risk.

- If risk is high, arrange for immediate psychiatric treatment or bring the person to an emergency room.
- If risk is low or moderate (there are suicidal thoughts but has no plan or has a vague plan), offer help and support. Refer to mental health professionals. Together, make a safety plan—a series of steps which he can do when there are triggers that may lead to suicide. List down people, and their respective contact numbers, whom he can call when he has a suicide crisis.

5. Offer hope and encouragement. Often, a person decides to kill himself when he is facing a blank wall or when he doesn't see options. Explore with your friend alternative options or steps he can take to resolve life issues. Help him shift his perspective from the negative to the positive things in his life.

6. Take care of yourself. Find someone you can trust with whom you can talk over your own feelings and emotions, and who can help you process your experience. You cannot pour from an empty cup. Nourish yourself so you can nourish others.

I pray that the above steps will equip and empower you to journey with your friend in this crisis he is facing. Our God of hope will surely be with you!

***In Christ,
Ditas Espanol***



Ditas Español is a cancer survivor. Now a counselor, she still uses that sword to battle the pain of others. She believes she was healed so she can be an instrument of our Divine Healer. Together with her husband, Vic, Ditas trains the pastoral carers of the Light of Jesus Pastoral Care Center.



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Shakespeare once said, “The breaking of a greater thing should make a greater crack.”

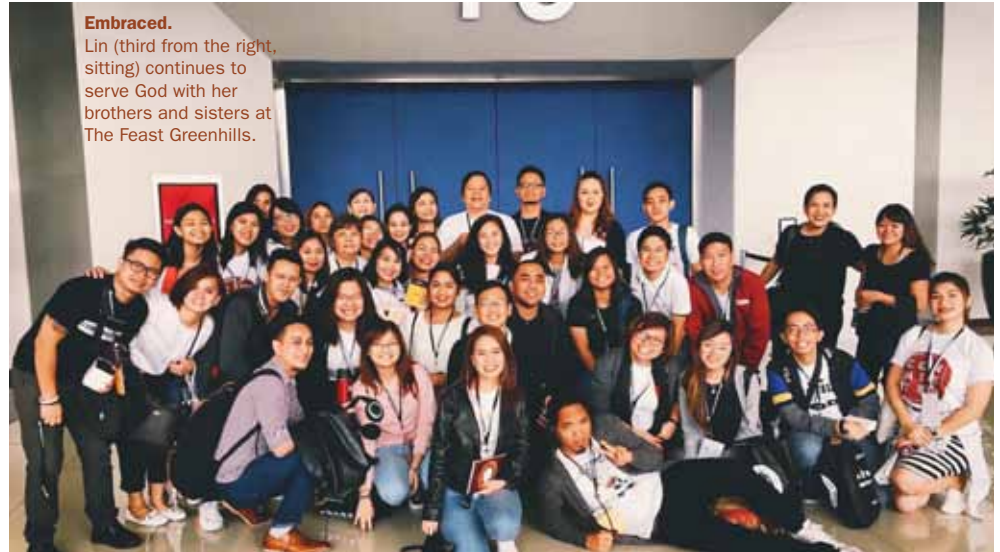
That final night, when he punched me in the face, I screamed at the bathroom walls and cried until my lungs collapsed. And finally, when everything went quiet, in the silence of the night, I think I heard the greater crack.

Abused and Afraid

My ex was older than me. He liked talking about the mundane, like cars, money, and himself. Before I met him, I was innocent and naïve. He liked that about me, he said. Liked that I was so much more than I seemed. And then, about a year later, he told me he loved me, and I believed him. He showed me so much about the world. But he was an angry, vicious one. He liked to yell and hit.

My ex said I was everything a man could ever ask for—prim, proper, refined. The kind you would bring home to meet your mom, he said. But he was looking for something different. He liked other women—the bad and the wild ones. I was not any of that. And I did not want to be any of that. I preferred drinking at home or under the night sky. My ex took everything I am, along with everything I had to offer, chewed it all up, and spat me right back out on the concrete.

I was physically, verbally, emotionally, and sexually abused. I’m not proud of it. It is not easy to say, “I was raped by my boyfriend.” I used to think I could heal from my wounds even without talking about them. But I learned that sometimes, we have to dig up skeletons first before we can bury them. So here I am, revealing all the monsters under my bed and the fears I kept hidden in the closet.



Embraced.
Lin (third from the right, sitting) continues to serve God with her brothers and sisters at The Feast Greenhills.

The Greater Crack

By Lin Albalos

Safe and Secured at The Feast

I was dead scared. I feared for my life. I feared losing myself entirely. I didn’t feel safe until he was out of the country. It was always his anger and my acceptance, his anger and my apology. The night he punched me, I felt the relief before the pain. I thought to myself, “Finally. Finally, I have a reason to get out of this hell.”


Even though I was unfortunate with my love life, I was blessed with the best of friends. They were the ones who walked with me in the aftermath. For the days that followed, I always came home to their encouraging smiles and comforting hugs.

I always prayed for the heart to conquer the pain. God gave me exactly that through The Feast. Every Sunday, The Feast equipped me with the strength I so badly needed. Being there has always felt like home. It’s where I feel safe, secure, and loved. I have no reason to dwell in the sadness this world has brought upon me. How can I? Grace met me where struggle left me. God brought me out

of the dark, and He didn’t let me face the aftermath alone. He gave me people who held my hand the entire time. In my deepest wound, I saw His glory through this community, and it astounded me.

In that greater crack, The Feast was there. And I was reminded that God has not forgotten me. That I was still growing even when I felt empty, especially then. I am proud to say that the thunder no longer makes me scream, and the rain no longer makes me shiver.

I thank God for the people at The Feast who encouraged me with their words and presence. For walking with the wounded. For helping me make it through the darkness, and now I hold my head high.

The Feast made me realize that the darkness will never take me. It never will—because I am a child of the light. 

Visit www.lightfam.com for The Feast schedules and venues.



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His hair is gray and long, tied with a rubber band down his nape.

He approaches the cashier in a popular bake shop cum restaurant, presents his senior citizen card, and orders a dozen of *ensaymada* (fluffy pastry).

The cashier asks, "Are you going to eat all the twelve pieces in the restaurant?"

"Ah, no. Take out," he replies.

"Sir, *isang ensaymada lang po ang may senior discount*," says the cashier. That means he gets the twenty percent discount for only one *ensaymada*—not for all the twelve pieces.

"*Bakit?*" The guy raises his voice, wondering why.

Blushing, the cashier explains the discount does not apply for bulk take-out purchases.

Obviously irked, the guy goes out, comes back, buys one more piece, and continues to go in and out until he gets the one dozen he needs.

All of us waiting in line couldn't help chuckling at his *modus operandi* to get his discount. The guy shrugs his shoulders, mumbles some expletives, and walks out of the restaurant.

When my turn comes, I present my senior citizen card and order a cake for a friend.

"Ma'am," the cashier says blushing again, "*wala pong discount 'pag cake*." Cakes, I was told, are considered luxury items. I guess, old people are not entitled to luxuries.

What the Law Says

It's been eight years since I got my senior citizen card, and I have eight years of anecdotes about how to use and not to use my card.

I turned sixty on January 13, 2010. The Senate and the



Senior Moments

Right or Wrong

House of Representatives passed Republic Act No. 9994, the act granting additional privileges to senior citizens on January 27, 2010.

So I felt like by Divine Providence, the law was made especially for me. Republic Act 9994 is an amendment of Republic Act 9257, which was an amendment of Republic Act No. 7432.

I delight on the provision of express lanes for senior citizens in all commercial and government establishments, and that "in the absence thereof, priority shall be given to them." Thank you!

Above the Law

Aside from encountering seniors buying in bulk or more than they are entitled to have, cashiers also contend with people using SC cards of seniors who are not present at the time of purchase—just to take advantage of the discount.

Or the seniors could be present but the purchased items are not really for them.

One time at a supermarket, I saw a couple in their early thirties with various grocery items in their cart. When it was time

to pay, they called their maid—a gray-haired woman—asked for her SC card, and presented it to the cashier. Is that an abuse or an abuse of the privilege?

At another time, I saw an old lady sitting on a chair outside a cinema for hours. Apparently, she bought a ticket at an SC-discounted price but someone else was enjoying the show.


Or it could go as ridiculous as this incident...

A well-dressed lady wearing diamond earrings and carrying a Louis Vuitton bag argued forever with a cashier about a discount she's entitled for a piece of loaf bread she was buying.

When the *doña* finally got her discount and left, I asked the cashier, "How much was the discount you were arguing about?"

"Twenty-nine pesos only," the cashier sighed.

OK, you can say, "It's not about the money. It's about standing up for your right."

But can't it be about being more prudent in making the most of our blessings whatever season we are in? 

E-mail Chay at cusantiago@gmail.com.

By Chay Santiago





THREE STEPS AWAY FROM A SCAM

One afternoon during my senior year in college, I found myself wandering in a shopping mall alone when a saleslady suddenly ran up to me and started waving an insurance brochure in front of my face. “Talk to one of our consultants and you might win a free car!”

Being my usual skeptical self, I excused myself but she persisted, “No, look, all you have to do is talk to an agent then you can pick a prize and immediately win either a car, a smartphone, or a brand-new TV.”

“So all I have to do is talk to someone and you are one hundred percent sure that I will get to take home at least one of those prizes?”

“Yes.”

It seemed shady but I figured any of those prizes would have been worth a shot. As soon as I met with their insurance agent, I found him to be very enthusiastic, friendly,

and quite professional as he explained to me their products and how they could be highly beneficial for my future. After more than an hour and a half of listening to him, I was quite impressed by what his company was offering and told him that I was interested to become a client. He gleefully took out a set of documents and said, “That’s wonderful! So if you will just provide an ID and sign the contract here, we’re good to go.” I shook my head, “I want to bring home the materials and study them further. I can’t just sign off on this so quickly.”

Almost immediately his face darkened, “I would suggest that we finalize the entire deal now, after all there is a promotion to sealing our partnership today.” Warning signs started blaring in my head. I didn’t budge. “No, I’m not signing anything. I’ll read up on it, if I like it then

By Eleanore Lee Teo

I’ll get back to you.” With obvious frustration in his actions, he shrugged his shoulders and stood up to walk away. “Fine.” I called out, “Hey, I thought I was allowed to pick a prize?” A lady suddenly appeared beside me and told me to pick out a piece of paper from a fishbowl. The prize that I received in exchange for my valuable time which had unfortunately been wasted? An umbrella.

In the Philippines alone, over a million Filipinos have been victimized by investment scams and more than P25 billion has already found its way into the pockets of con artists who promise unbelievable returns but deliver nothing. No one else can guarantee the security of our money except our own selves so it’s important to heed these guidelines before handing our hard-earned savings to anyone:

Do your own research. In many situations, the ones soliciting funds from the victims are people

(continued on page 20)




they already know—friends, family members, or people they trust. It is not necessarily because their peers have a malicious intent to steal money but because they have also been convinced of the generous rewards that these potential investments could reap. They genuinely believe that they are doing you a favor. Apparently, they heard it from a friend of a friend who was the brother-in-law of an officemate's cousin that had an uncle who had invested and made millions. It's the same story over and over again. Conduct your own due diligence on the authenticity of any product and the company offering it. Don't depend on anyone else to do it for you. This is the first and most important rule because by simply following this initial step, you are already more than halfway

through the process of protecting yourself from fraud.

Like in any investment, avoid going all-in. Your chances of having all your funds wiped out, whether in a casino or in a financial market, is greater without proper risk management. If you feel that an investment opportunity is quite attractive even after doing all your background checks then by all means, test it out. Just make sure you only invest an amount that you can afford to lose.

Be reasonable, not greedy. There really is such a thing as something being "too good to be true." People can actually sense when a product is being hyped or exaggerated yet somehow, they still choose to ignore the warning

signs because they're hoping that this could be the jackpot that we've all been waiting for in our lives. It is our greed that drives our impulsive actions and in the process, we suffer the consequences of making decisions based on emotion and not on critical thinking. So remember that when it comes to making money, putting in a little extra hard work and a little more time is always better than trying to take an unfamiliar shortcut. Unfortunately, a good learning experience can also be an expensive one, and those are the ones we should try to avoid. 

Eleanore Teo is the director for marketing and operations at the Caylum Trading Institute. She authored a book titled, Raising Heirs, available at www.kerygmabooks.com. E-mail her at elyo.lee@gmail.com.

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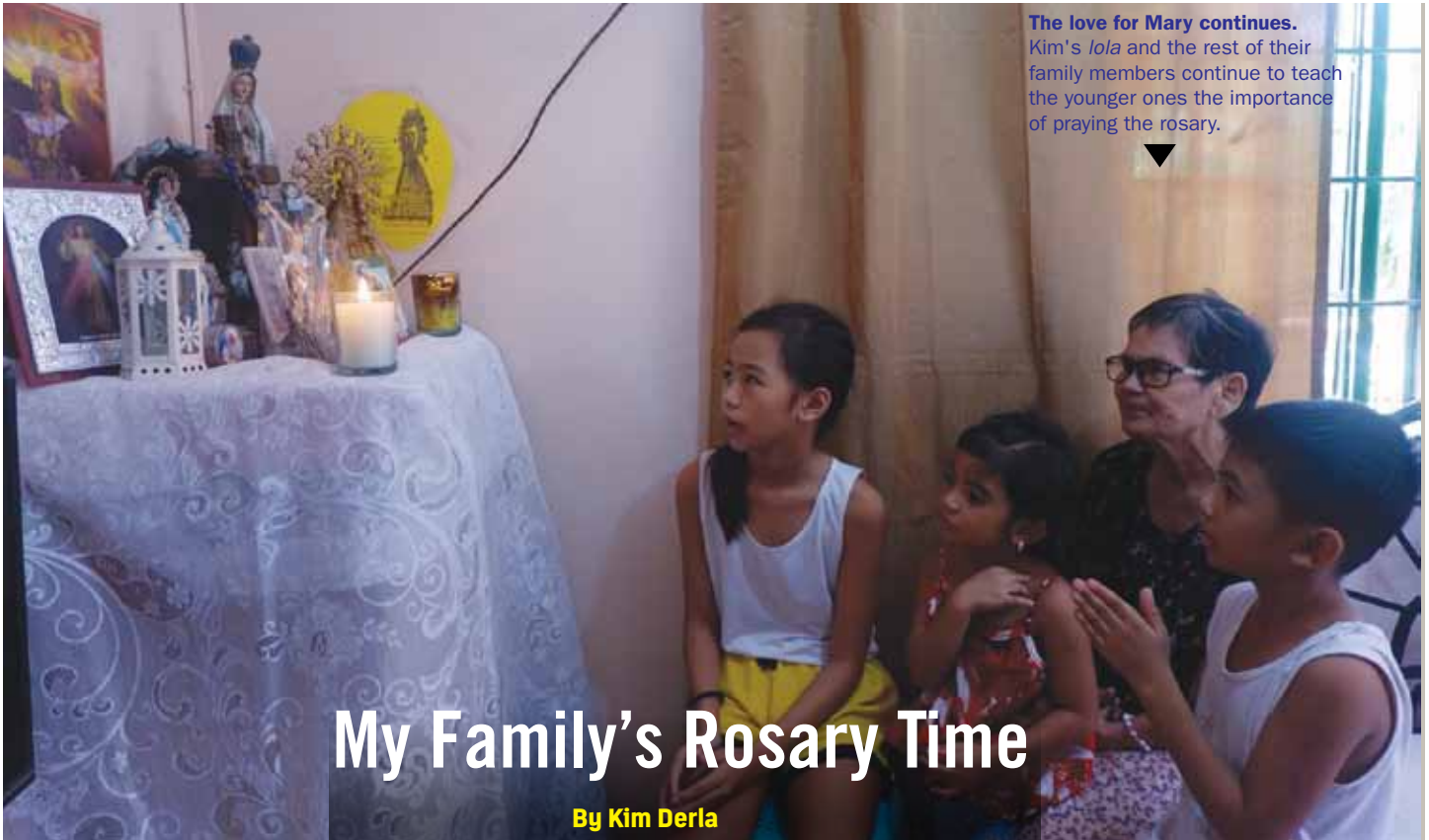
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The love for Mary continues. Kim's *lola* and the rest of their family members continue to teach the younger ones the importance of praying the rosary.



My Family's Rosary Time

By Kim Derla

It's six o'clock and it's rosary time!

I belong to the generation of people who spent their childhood outdoors. We would start playing in the morning, and sometimes, this playtime would reach until night. But when six o'clock would strike and I was still outside, I would automatically hear a whistle coming from our house. That whistle meant that I. Must. Go. Home. Right. Now.

My sister and I would sit properly and listen to our *lola* as she prayed the Holy Rosary. It was our six o'clock habit that I could not understand at first.

I thought the prayer was just so repetitive and passive. I needed to memorize such long prayers, mysteries, and litany. All these were a huge burden to us, kids. We even responded to a Hail Mary with a bass tone.

We used to do it out of fear. But on a particular event in our childhood, this prayer totally changed my life and perspective.

The Earthquake

I was still in preschool then. We were sitting in the living room—my *lola*, sister, and I—when the grounds started shaking. We got nothing to hold on to but our rosary. As kids, my sister and I were so scared. We didn't know what would happen next. All we could do was to relax and pray the rosary.

That was the first time that I prayed the rosary seriously.

As my *lola* held the rosary, I held on to my faith. I knew I could not do anything but to say those repetitive prayers. As I prayed the rosary, I hoped for the best and that the shaking of the floor would stop. I prayed the rosary while asking God to end that misery.

After several minutes, everything settled down. We looked outside and saw that the trees had bent slightly. That's the only unfortunate thing that happened. Thank God for that!


It happened in December. The 6.8-magnitude earthquake did not directly affect our area. But there were reported casualties in Northern Luzon and in Manila.

This event definitely measured where our faith would lead us. Thanks be to God, our *lola* knew what to do. She led us to pray the rosary.

The Habit with Heart

From then on, we took the praying of the rosary seriously. When it's six o'clock, we already knew where to go and what to do. We also taught our younger cousins how to pray the rosary. They even participated in our parish May Catechesis.

There is grace in praying the rosary. Asking for Mary's intercession is such a big help. I am already twenty-three years old now and I still see to it that we pray the rosary together every day, not just during October, which is the rosary month. As we pray, we believe that everything will fall perfectly into its right place.

What time is it? It's time for us to appreciate the gift of the rosary. 

Let's strengthen more families! Share your unique family traditions by sending us an e-mail at editsvp@shepherdsvoice.com.ph.



On Desolation and Consolation

By Dina Pecaña

Discernment is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit that help us unwrap His other gifts. According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), “Charisms [gifts] are to be accepted with gratitude by the person who receives them and by all the members of the Church... for the apostolic vitality and for the holiness of the entire body of Christ” (800). It is in this sense that **discernment** of charisms is always necessary... so that all the diverse and complementary charisms work together ‘for the common good’”(801).

In the process of discovering our God-given gifts and as we journey through everyday living, we experience consolation—growth in the gifts of the Holy Spirit—and desolation—growth of selfishness, doubt, fear, and others. When talking about consolation, there is one question we need to ask ourselves: Where is life taking us—toward God (consolation) or away from God (desolation)?


Let me share my own experience of consolation and desolation.

I was first diagnosed with clinical

depression when I was in high school. This depression would afflict me over the next thirty-five years. I would withdraw from people, preferring to stay at home in the “safety” of my room. I would become a prisoner of unfounded fears and negative thoughts that seem to go in an endless cycle in my mind. I have no desire to pray because I blame God for my condition. Depression drains my energy to do even the simplest activity like bathing and getting up from bed. I am in desolation when I’m depressed because it draws me so deep into myself that I forget everyone and everything else around me, even God.

Desolation is a state where we need to humbly go back to God and reconcile with Him, even if it is hard to do. The CCC says, “The whole power of the sacrament of Penance consists in restoring us to God’s grace and joining us with him in an intimate friendship... reconciliation is ‘usually followed by peace and serenity of conscience with strong spiritual consolation’” (1468).

St. Ignatius defines consolation as “every increase of hope, faith, and charity, and all interior joy which

calls and attracts to heavenly things and to the salvation of one’s soul, quieting it and giving it peace in its Creator and Lord.” It brings peace just like the peace I feel after Mass or after our morning prayer in the office. Consolation enables me to accompany others in their joys and sorrows despite my own troubles. It restores balance in my life and clarifies my vision for the future. But being in a state of consolation does not mean that one is always happy. I recall the time I was discerning whether or not to become a full-time writer. Choosing to be a writer meant giving up a good-paying corporate job (with even better benefits) of eleven years. I was torn because I knew I was choosing between two good things. But God is faithful. He showed me the better choice through this message: The simple life is a powerful life. In prayer, He helped me understand that the simple life meant to do what He created me to be—a writer. Even though I struggled, the moment I decided to make that career shift, I felt at peace and grateful for knowing God more and for the lessons I learned from Him. 



A Friendship Made in Heaven

*A Prayer Warrior Saved a
Future Carmelite from Suicide*

By Julie Bernal

It was Holy Week of 2006 when my Calvary started. My feelings of intense despair, anxiety, and sleepless nights prolonged to a couple more weeks and so my parents already decided to bring me to a psychiatrist. My world crashed when I was diagnosed with clinical depression. I had to take medications to stabilize my emotions.

I was twenty-five years old. I was doing well as a grade school teacher working in a nongovernment organization, serving the less privileged children of Better Living Subdivision in Parañaque. A private school also offered me a promising teaching career. I could not understand why this happened to me. All I wanted was to serve God and His children. But heaven was silent, and in my desperation and painful cry, I bowed down in complete surrender to His mysterious plan, and prayed, "Thy will be done."

But it wasn't easy.

In January 2008, I decided to end my life. But I did not want to leave my family a messy room so I started to fix my things. I was taking medications for my depression and anxiety for almost two years already. I was so sick and tired of my endless pity party and being a burden to my family. I was losing the battle with the big D and I lost hope that I will ever be healed of this so-called cancer of the soul.



'The Text That Changed My Life'

One of the things that I started to put away was my collection of *Kerygma* magazines. During the height of my depression, I wasn't able to read any inspirational books or magazines. All I did was sleep and cry. It was truly a dark night of my soul. I put the magazines one by one in a box, when mysteriously, I paused. I picked up and flipped through the pages of the March 2007 issue when an article caught my attention: "The Text That Changed My Life: From Disability to Availability."

It was the story of Ann Martha Padilla. She has cerebral palsy but is blessing many people through her text prayers and quotes. I was amazed because in spite of her disability, she still managed to serve the Lord. To serve God was one of my dreams but I already

lost hope when I got sick of depression. At that moment, something prompted me not to give up and to give life a chance. I got Ann Martha's cell phone number, told her my story, and asked for her healing prayers. Ann Martha was very kind, patient, and prayerful. For several months, she was more than my prayer warrior; she exemplified a true friend who's always there whenever I needed someone to talk to, who guided and inspired me not to lose hope, and to keep the faith.

After a few more months of medications and by God's grace and mercy, I was able to let go of my antidepressants, mood stabilizers, and sleeping pills before 2008 ended. It was truly a miracle. Through the years, Ann Martha has been God's instrument of His healing grace. Her unceasing prayers, love, and caring ways made a huge

impact in my heart and soul. It helped me to be cured and free of my mental illness that imprisoned me for almost two years. She was Jesus to me.

Unfortunately, our communications stopped when I lost my cell phone and Ann Martha also had to change her phone number.

But God's ways are amazing.

Through Facebook, Ann Martha added all servant leaders and attendees of The Feast to her friends' list, including me, in 2012. I was surprised and happy that our friendship was rekindled.

It was divine intervention that God used a back issue of *Kerygma* magazine to stop me from my suicide attempt. I survived my battle with great sadness and as a way of thanking the Lord for the answered prayer and blessing, I served Him through the ministries of The Feast Alabang District. I served as an intercessor, writer of The Feast Bulletin, and Singles Light Group Head.

During one of our fellowship activities with my Light Group members, we visited Ann Martha in her house in Sucat, Parañaque in 2016. My friends in the singles ministry were immensely blessed by her presence and love as well. It was one of my best decisions in my life—to share Ann Martha to them. I also realized that the Lord made my dream come true to be His servant. Serving Him is an answered prayer in my *Novena to God's Love!*

My two-year battle with depression

My two-year battle with depression further made me realize that when you hit rock bottom and survive, there are very few things in life that can scare you.



further made me realize that when you hit rock bottom and survive, there are very few things in life that can scare you.

That includes a call that I didn't see coming.

A Bigger Calling

Years passed until I felt the Lord asking me to get out of my comfort zone and be a secular Carmelite (Third Order). The thought of entering a religious order scared me a lot and made me feel unworthy. How can the Lord call someone who had history of depression and suicidal thoughts?

As I discerned if being part of the Third Order was really for me, the Lord gently reminded me of His love and affirmed me through the book, *Your Past Does Not Define Your Future*, written by one of my mentors and

the Light of Jesus Family founder, Bo Sanchez.

Finally, on April 18, 2015, I heeded God's deeper calling and joined the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites, St. Elijah of Carith Community of Paranaque. I am now novitiate II of my Carmelite spiritual formation. I thank the Holy Trinity and Mama Mary, Queen Beauty of Carmel, for calling me to this vocation in spite of my sinfulness and unworthiness.

What's more, God's timing is perfect! As I write this testimony, it is also the 400th celebration of the arrival of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel image to the Philippines in San Sebastian Basilica, Quiapo, Manila.

Forward with Faith


Even as a Carmelite, I still



A blessing to all. Ann Martha became a friend and prayer warrior to the Singles Ministry members since they visited her.

experience very strong struggles with the flesh, the world, and Satan. During my moments of darkness and pain, I take comfort in the wisdom, guidance, and counsel of our Holy Founders, St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross, and our Holy Sister, St. Therese of the Child Jesus. "Be not afraid, God alone suffices" is my mantra.

I am forever grateful to *Kerygma* magazine for featuring Ann Martha's story and to my family, my faithful friends and prayer warriors who have journeyed with me in trials and in triumphs.

Without their love and loyalty, I will never make it this far in my spiritual path. I pray that as long as I live, I will boast of nothing but the Cross of Christ and my life will continuously be a testament of God's amazing and saving grace. 

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28)

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BREAK OR BOUNCE?

By Bo Sanchez

WHEN you order iced tea, waiters usually ask, “Bottomless?”

If you say yes to him, your glass will always be refilled. And he’ll keep pouring and pouring and pouring for the next 147 years unless you stop him and say, “No, thank you.”

I have a confession to make: Sometimes, I think problems are like bottomless iced tea. Because they don’t stop. If you solve one problem, a new one takes over.

Sometimes, I wonder if my problems talk to each other...

Financial Problem #193: “Hey, I’m done here with Bo. It’s your turn.”

Relationship Problem #238: “When will you be solved?”

Financial Problem #193: “I think Bo and God will solve me tomorrow at around 11:38 a.m.”

Relationship Problem #238: “Great. I’ll arrive at 11:40.”

Financial Problem #193: “Shucks, that’s too late. Can you arrive at 11:39?”

Relationship Problem #238: “Yes, that can be arranged.”

Sometimes, I tell God, “Lord, I’m applying for a two-year official vacation leave from problems.”

But each time, His response to me—which I don’t

like—is, “Bo, I love you too much to say yes to that request. Application denied.”

Groan.

And for most of us—yes, myself included—this is where depression comes in.

When problems overwhelm us.

When no one seems to understand us.

When God doesn’t seem to hear us.

If you feel any of this, this message is for you: You are not alone.

I know how it feels because I’ve been there, too.

Above all, Jesus experienced the lowest of lows, too.

If there’s someone who fully understands the pain that you’re going through, it’s Him. We may feel that we have bottomless problems, but God’s grace will outlast them. His ways are bigger.

So I pray that you’ll hear His voice and experience His love through the pages of this month’s *Kerygma*.

I pray that amidst all your struggles, you’ll bounce back. Better. Braver. Bolder.

Turn the page. And bounce higher. 

Special **S**ection

Teaching

DEPRESSION: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

By Patrick Gamo, MCOUNS



Life is hard. There is loss, pain, suffering, sickness, rejection, dissatisfaction, aggression, anger, stress—I could go on and on. Often, people expect us to be able to deal with all of these things on our own, and if we can't, we're called weak-willed, incapable, "sissies," or much worse names. All of those things I just mentioned, if not managed effectively and productively, can lead to depression. The sad thing is, not a lot of people understand what depression really is—so much so that even a famous noontime show host said that it was "something people made up."

Depression is disabling and can even be deadly. I don't mean to take such a heavy tone with this article, but it's high time we become more aware of what depression is, so we can take steps toward taking care of and protecting our loved ones. You don't even have to be a mental health professional like myself—there's a lot we can all do to help mitigate the effects of depression.

What Is Depression?

There's a huge difference between being depressed and having depression. Everyone gets sad—and that's perfectly normal. Sadness is one of the basic human emotions, and it's a common experience for people to get sad. If you've watched the movie *Inside Out*, you'll learn that the central message of the movie is that it's healthy to feel your emotions if the situation calls for it. Think about it—if your wallet was stolen from you, or if a beloved pet gets lost or sick, what's the appropriate reaction? Happiness? Excitement? I don't think so.

That said, "having depression" is when sadness becomes prolonged and it seeps into the different areas of your life. We say "having depression" in reference to the existence of a diagnosable psychological illness—not unlike how medical doctors can tell you that you have tonsillitis based on observable symptoms. Trained psychological professionals, such as psychiatrists, psychologists, psychotherapists (like me!), and counselors are able to spot key signs that can tell if a person suffers from major depressive disorder. We use a manual called the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (or DSM, for short), that provides a guideline of criteria for each diagnosable mental disorder known to man. The DSM outlines the criteria for depression, but I'll simplify it for you.

Symptoms of Depression

A person suffers from depression, if within a two-week period, five or more of these things are seen:



call a downer, meaning if you're depressed, it makes you more depressed.) As I mentioned earlier, depression can be deadly. Suicide is commonly linked to depression, and suicide is a growing epidemic especially in the Philippines. Globally, it is now the second leading cause of death among adolescents and young adults.

Who's the Culprit?

You might ask, "Patrick, what causes depression?" The simple answer is: there is no one single cause of depression. Depression depends on many things, but it all boils down to three key areas: a person's biology, psychology, and social environment. That's a separate discussion all on its own, but I'll provide some helpful resources below to help you learn more about it.

What can we do about depression?

Fortunately, there are many things you can do to help if you suffer from depression yourself, or know someone who has. The first thing I would suggest is changes in lifestyle. There are two significant aspects of your personal lifestyle (in terms of physical health) that have a direct effect on your mental health.

First is exercise. Exercising is not only good for your body, but good for your brain, too. You see, healthy doses of exercise can improve your sense of well-being—you feel more energetic, calmer and relaxed, and you can sleep better. Completing exercise gives you a sense of positivity and accomplishment. Exercise also pumps your brain full of endorphins—the chemical that makes you feel less pain, and makes you feel good.

Physically:

- Weight loss or weight gain (more than five percent change in total body weight in a month), and increase or decrease of appetite
- Difficulty sleeping (sleeping too much or not sleeping enough)
- Loss of energy nearly every day

Behaviorally:

- Loss or decreased interest in all or most activities most of the day, nearly every day
- Seems either restless (tense, like pacing around the room) or slowed down (in physical and emotional reactions, like speech)

Cognitively:

- Thoughts of death and thoughts of suicide
- Decreased ability to think, concentrate, or decide

Emotionally:

- Depressed mood for most of the day, nearly every day (feeling sad, empty, hopeless, looks tearful)
- Feeling worthless or guilty

According to the World Health Organization, three hundred million people in the world suffered from depression in 2017. In the Philippines, there are 4.5 million reported cases of depression—the highest in South East Asia. People commonly think of depression as normal sadness that is just blown out of proportion, and that people can just "snap out of it." There's also a stigma around having mental illnesses, so I wouldn't be surprised if the 4.5 million statistic is actually more than it is, given that people might be ashamed about what they're going through and don't speak up about it.

Well-meaning friends and family think that depression can be solved through "*Ikain lang 'yan!*" or "*Tinom lang 'yan!*" But truth be told, this doesn't really solve anything, and sometimes, with the case of alcohol consumption, it actually makes it worse. (Scientifically, alcohol is what we in the psychological community

The second thing is diet. Depression has a lot to do with your energy levels and your brain. Despite your brain only weighing two percent of your total body weight, it consumes twenty-five percent of your body's energy. So if you fill your body with junk food and no healthy stuff, then your brain runs on nothing but junk, too. A twelve-year study was done with nine thousand people that chronicled their fast-food eating habits. That study showed that a person is forty percent more likely to develop depression if your diet consistently included fast-food, and contained no vegetables or fruits.

From a psychological and environmental perspective, you can also help fight depression by learning a bit of positive psychology—things like being more expressive with gratitude and building optimism, as well as putting yourself in an environment or community that helps relieve your stress or sadness in a productive way (such as joining an exercise group or a prayer community like The Feast).

These things I've suggested aren't the end-all and be-all of helping combat depression. There are more complicated cases that exercise, diet, or a community can't help. In those cases, that's where mental health professionals can be most effective. Such cases are when the above three aren't working, and the person is already suicidal. In those situations (and in any situation actually), you shouldn't be ashamed of seeking help from a professional, nor shame a person who wants to seek help from a professional. Consider this:

- When people have health or medical



concerns, do we laugh at them for seeing doctors?

- When they want to improve their money knowledge, do we shame them for consulting with financial planners and accountants?
- When people want to learn a new sport, or lose weight, or get stronger, do we ridicule them for seeking out coaches, personal trainers, and other fitness experts?
- When they have legal issues, do we embarrass them for hiring lawyers?

Like financial, or medical, or fitness concerns, sometimes our problems are beyond our own personal capacity to handle or fix. We're all wired a little differently—we're not all born with or taught or parented with the same problem-solving skills or stress management capabilities. Sometimes, we need extra help. Psychotherapists are professionally trained to help you sort out your problems without any judgment of who you are, and you don't have to worry about rumors

spreading about your problem because sessions are confidential and your information is kept safe. They don't give advice, but instead, help you manage what you're going through and help you find your own best way forward. Think of it as a gym for your mind.

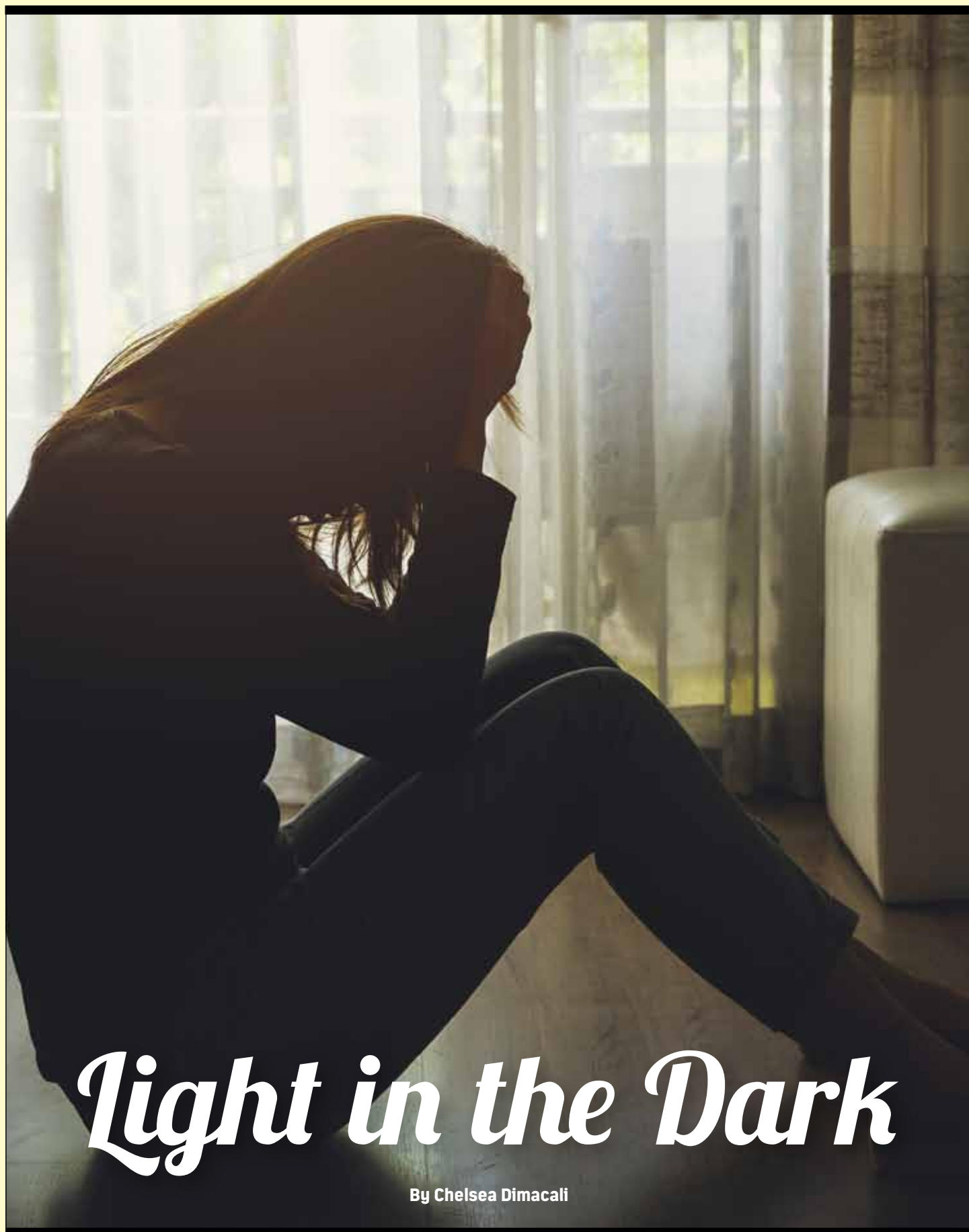
So remember, exercise, eat healthy, find a good environment, and if all else fails, get help from a professional.

Here are some helpful resources:

- For questions about this article, you can reach me at [facebook.com/PsychOfPat](https://www.facebook.com/PsychOfPat)
- My YouTube page (for more information about all things mental health): bit.ly/psychopat
- Where does mental illness come from?: bit.ly/whereitcomesfrom
- Support Services for Suicide (courtesy of the Buhay Movement): bit.ly/BuhaySupport

There are always people who are willing to help. 

E-mail Patrick at charlespatrickgamo@gmail.com.



Light in the Dark

By Chelsea Dimacali

To start the day, you have to wake up, get out of bed, and get on with your life. But what if a task that simple becomes a burden? It sounds crazy, but it has happened to me.

One day, I just woke up and my body suddenly just didn't want to get up. I preferred to look at the ceiling rather than do something with my life. Why? Because at that point in my life, it seemed pointless. At fifteen, I seemed to have lost my purpose to live.

Into the Darkness

I was just like any other kid before that. I was jolly. I was also an achiever in school. No school year passed without me receiving a medal. But as the saying goes, "There is nothing more constant than change," something did change. By my third year in high school, my grades started going down. The next year, I did worse. I was at the bottom of my class. I also started pushing people away and kept more to myself. My absences were increasing in number and just the thought of school alone was enough to give me panic attacks. This went on and on, until I finally acted on it.

It wasn't until I admitted to myself that there was something wrong that I told my mother. I was very reluctant at first. I didn't want to tell her because I

didn't want my family to worry. It was a friend who convinced me to do it.

By then, I was having difficulty in sleeping. I lost my appetite (I lost twelve pounds in two weeks). I was also doing self-harm, and I became anxious all the time. For so many months, my brain just kept thinking that it would be better if I didn't exist.

Shed of Light

After telling my mom, we scheduled an appointment with a psychiatrist. The psychiatrist put me on antidepressants and anti-anxiety meds for two weeks for observation. The drugs alone were expensive, but the checkup was even pricier. So after two weeks of medication, I didn't go back for the followup. We just couldn't afford it. But for every door God closes, He opens a window.

The window God opened appeared in the form of a friend. My mom told my story to Tita Fe and, as it turns out, she was able to help us. She invited us to The Feast Bellevue in Alabang. She got me free counseling from Brother Choy, who was part of The Feast's Pastoral Ministry. After months of counseling, I was better.

And it wasn't just the counseling that helped. The talks at The Feast helped to enlighten me, too. All the talks of Bro. Arun Gogna made me realize that I was not alone in that battle. While I was fighting my own demons, God

"To anyone who is in a dark place right now, just stay put. Light will come and it will shine even brighter in the darkness."

was by my side helping me. The Feast taught me that it's OK and normal to be beaten down as long as you get back up, because God will always be there to support you when you stand up again. Now I know I'm stronger because God is with me.


After the counseling ended, I became better. Even if my school year had a rough start, it ended pretty fine. I tried to do better at the last quarter and I ended getting two academic awards despite the fact that I nearly got a 74 on a particular subject.

I even got to represent my region in a nationwide competition. I finally believed all the people who told me that things will get better.

Never Alone

To anyone who is in a dark place right now, just stay put. Light will come and it will shine even brighter in the darkness.

Remember that God is always there for you and that you are not alone in your battles.

God is always by your side. 

Special Section

Teaching



LET'S TALK:

CRISIS INTERVENTION FOR SUICIDAL AND HOMICIDAL PERSONS

Suicide Myth and Facts

Myth: A person who is thinking about killing himself won't tell anyone.

Fact:

- Most people who attempt or succeed in killing themselves do tell others within the weeks before they attempt.
- Communication may not be direct or verbal. In some cases, it could be nonverbal (e.g., giving away important things).

Myth: *Suicide talk is petty talk.* It is only an attention-getting device. Never take it seriously.

Fact:

- Although it may be true that suicide talk can be an attention-getting device, it should, nevertheless, be taken seriously and responded to properly.



Myth: Talking about suicide makes it so.

Fact:

- Many believe that if we talk about suicide, we may be triggering the person to do it.
- In fact, many attest to the "domino effect" of suicide.
- Although it has been proven by research that domino effect is true for suicide, talking about it does not have the same effect.
- Allowing persons to discuss their thoughts about harming themselves decreases the risk that they will commit suicide.

source: <http://suicideprevention.nv.gov>

What to do when there is a risk of suicide?

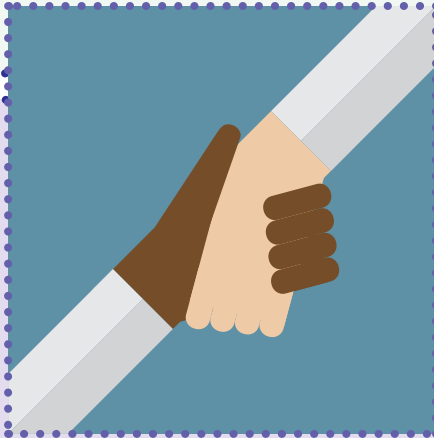
- Consult with professional peers.
- Refer person for appropriate treatment.
- When possible, assist person in obtaining treatment.
- Encourage person to inform a supportive person of his or her condition.
- Offer hope: a person decides to kill oneself because he/she doesn't see options.
- Explore with the person on what possible options to take.
- Highlight the good things about his/her life now.
- Talk about faith experience if this is something important to the person.

Depending on the risk level:

- **For Moderate Risk:**
 - Make a contract, verbal or written (which includes calling you when and if he plans of doing it).
- **For High Risk:**
 - Do not leave the person alone. Contact relatives or friends who will be able to perform suicide watch, especially for higher risk persons.
 - Arrange for immediate psychiatric consultation or emergency room treatment.

Exploring Faith Resources

- What is his/her view of suicide vis-à-vis his/her practice of faith?
- In what way does one's suicide ideation become part of his/her spiritual experience?
- Continue journeying with this person in faith: prayer, and relaxation exercises are surely helpful.



WHERE TO CALL OR SEEK FOR HELP AND COUNSELING?

Center for Family Ministries (CEFAM)

Ateneo De Manila Campus
426-4289 to 92
0927-863-9346

Light of Jesus Pastoral Care Center

726-4709
726-6728
lojpastoralcare@gmail.com

HOPELINE:

0917-558-HOPE (4673)
804-HOPE (4673)

Prayer Against Depression

By Saint Ignatius de Loyola

O Christ Jesus,
when all is darkness
and we feel our weakness and helplessness,
give us the sense of Your presence,
Your love, and Your strength.
Help us to have perfect trust
in Your protecting love
and strengthening power,
so that nothing may frighten or worry us,
for, living close to You,
we shall see Your hand,
Your purpose, Your will through all things.



Be the Light



This Dark World Needs

By Bo Sanchez

People are looking for God's light. The world now is bombarded with negativity: at home, in school, at the work place, in the Internet... And each person we meet has their own struggles, too. No wonder many people are depressed. They can't find a safe place and listening ears so they keep their pain within themselves.

That's why the world needs hope, positivity, love.

But there's a problem: Many can't find God's light in church anymore. Statistics show that eighty-five percent of Catholics no longer go to church.

So how will people find God's light?

Jesus knew this already. And He already has the solution.

Because in Matthew 5:14, He said, "You are the light of the world."

You!

God's strategy is revolutionary. He's not expecting you to bring people to Jesus. He expects you to bring Jesus to people.

And how?

By preaching Jesus?

No.

By being Jesus.

By being another Jesus in this world.

Jesus even explains how to shine His light. He said, "Let your light shine before others that they may see your good deeds..."

At the end of the day, it's action.

Not words.

There's just too much noise in the world. Too much words.

To shine His light, to be another Jesus in the world, we need to do good deeds.

It's to love like Jesus.

First Step: Be Kind

Let me tell you about two men I know.

The first one is a religious leader who knows the Bible so much, he's memorized large chunks of it and can recite them verbatim.

One day, I visited this "holy man" to interview him about his leadership and organization. I wanted to learn how he grew his church to become so big.

But after we greeted each other, he never allowed me to ask him questions. He just attacked my faith. He used his Bible knowledge to dismiss my Catholic beliefs as garbage.

It was interesting that he mentioned Jesus in every other sentence he spoke, but I never felt the presence of Jesus in our conversation.

Let me talk about the second man.

He's a friend who doesn't consider himself religious.

He tells me he knows only one Bible verse—John 3:16. He said he memorized it because as a kid, he saw the verse every day displayed on the facade of their grade school building.

But I love talking with him.

Why? Because even if he doesn't mention Jesus in every other sentence, I actually feel the presence of Jesus when we talk. Why? *This guy is one of the kindest, most selfless, and most loving human beings I know.*

The first guy talked about Jesus.


The second guy simply became Jesus.

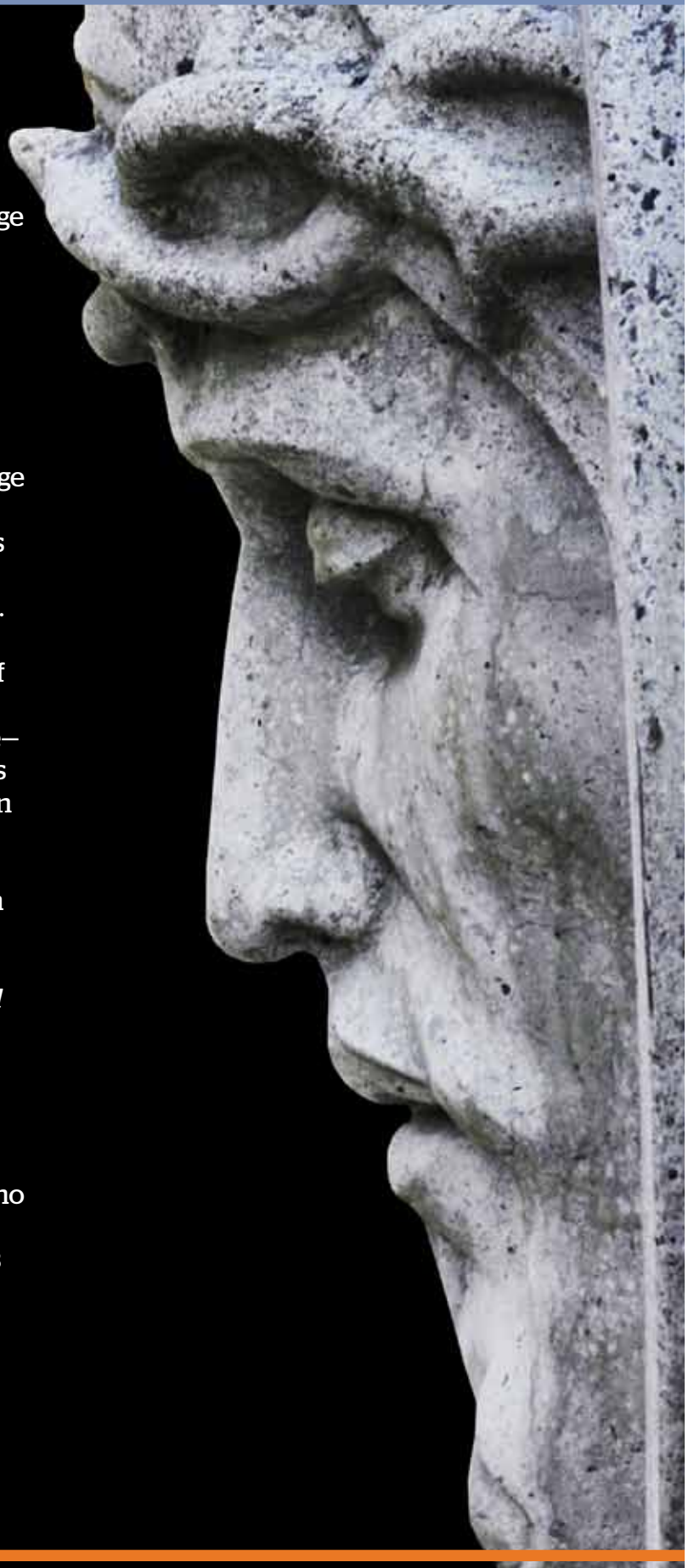
No judgments. No discriminations. Just a friend who listens and loves.

And this is how we can help the people who are going through tough times right now. Not all of us have the skills to counsel others. Let's leave that to the professionals—counselors, psychiatrists, and psychologists.

But we can always listen, empathize, and embrace our hurting brothers and sisters.

We can always be Jesus to somebody.

And our presence can make a big difference to someone's life. 





A Daughter's Love.

Kristine (right) proves that her love for her mother, Gie (left), is more powerful than depression.



From Fearful to Fruitful

By Kristine Grace Natividad-Tome
Photos by Francz Miki Fabros

My mom battled with anxiety and depression twice in her life. The second time happened in 2016, after she availed of early retirement. The drastic changes in her routine, income flow, and the uncertainty of the future fueled her fears and eventually dragged her into anxiety and depression. I wanted to help her but I was clueless on how to do it well. It felt like no matter what I did, things were just not in my control.

During her bout with depression, my mom had crying spells, easily got irritated, and was clouded with fear. She went to different hospitals to seek treatment. She also took the prescribed medications and followed the doctors' advice. However, she would always go back to rock bottom. She told me, "I am hopeless. No matter what I do, I could not find the happiness that I am longing for." I embraced her and reminded her that the purpose of life is not just to be happy, but to make our stay here on earth meaningful.

I was thinking of more ways to help my mom when I heard a story from preacher and author Bo Sanchez about a depressed woman who got healed after she started serving the Lord. It was a light bulb moment for me.

Service to Healing

Since then, my husband and I tried our best to bring my mom to The Feast Technopark Hotel in Sta. Rosa, Laguna (now The Feast Vista Mall) every week.

During the 2017 Kerygma Conference, my mom said

that she would commit to serve the Lord with me. I didn't even ask her to serve. About two months after, Jon Escoto, The Feast district builder in Laguna, asked me and my husband to be part of a team that would start The Feast in SM Calamba. I took it as an opportunity to invite my mom to join us in serving. She gladly said yes. I was very hopeful that our service will lead her towards complete healing.

Her first task as a servant came during the Kerygma Lenten Recollection in Sta. Rosa last Holy Week. I signed her up to be part of the Warmth Ministry. She was hesitant at first so I encouraged her that she could do it. That same day, TJ Manotoc shared about his battle with anxiety and depression. My mom felt God speaking to her through TJ's words. She then surrendered all her fears and bondages to the Lord.


From then on, there were no longer crying spells. No more anxiety attacks. Her fears were transformed into joy.

Sprinkles of Love

People would come to her for comfort and prayers. She also writes her story on her Facebook page and blog, *Sprinkles of Love*.

She actively shares her renewed relationship with God through our Feast Light in Los Baños. We also serve together in the Media and Marketing Ministry at The Feast SM Calamba.

Every time we meet, we talk about God. She would share how in love she is with God right now. She used to spend the whole day inside her room wallowing in sadness. Now, she still spends a lot of time in her room but not to cry anymore. She is soaking herself in prayer and reading God's Word. She is also now free from medications.

Anxiety and depression may come to anyone. These are psychological conditions that need medical treatment. Just like any ailment, spiritual, and emotional upliftment can help patients, along with proper medication. We're just very grateful that my mom went through that battle at the same time when God called us to serve Him through The Feast. It's a miracle our family has been praying for. 



With light hearts.

Kristine and Gie (first and second from the right respectively, standing) find joy in serving God together with their Feast Light Los Baños family.



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- Mr. Rex Ma. A. Mendoza
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Deadline of submission of entries date and time		Raffle draw date, time and venue	Coverage date to qualify on the raffle	Prize	No. of Winners
Minor draw	July 2, 2018, Monday, 6PM	July 16, 2018, Monday, #60 Chicago Street, Cubao, QC	March 1, 2018 to July 2, 2018	Fujifilm X-A10 Mirrorless Camera	1
Minor draw	October 15, 2018, Monday, 6PM	October 29, 2018, Monday, #60 Chicago Street, Cubao, QC	July 3, 2018 to October 15, 2018	(5) Kerygma Conference 2017 VIP Tickets	1
Minor draw	December 31, 2018, Monday, 6PM	January 13, 2019, Sunday, 11:45AM, The Feast Bay Area, Vicente Sotto Street, Pasay City	October 16, 2018 to December 31, 2018	Devant 32" Smart TV (32LTV800)	1
Grand draw	December 31, 2018, Monday, 6PM	January 13, 2019, Sunday, 11:45AM, The Feast Bay Area, Vicente Sotto Street, Pasay City	March 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018	Trip to Holy Land Pilgrimage	1

Grand Prize: 1 Winner Holy Land Pilgrimage

- Entries received from **March 1, 2018 until December 31, 2018** qualify for the Trip to Holy Land promo. A DTI representative will be invited to witness the grand and minor raffle draw on **January 13, 2019, Sunday, 11:45AM** at The Feast Bay Area, Vicente Sotto Street, Pasay City.
- Holy Land Pilgrimage Prize inclusions: Round trip Airfare from NAI to Libson Airport – Libson Airport to NAI, meals on full board basis, hotel accommodation for 10 days and 9 nights with breakfast. Exclusive of travel tax.
- All new and regular subscribers are required to have a passport valid until 2020, travel documents, taxes and other related documents.

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(1) Winner of Five (5) Kerygma Conference VIP Tickets to be held at SMX Convention Center

- Entries received from **July 3, 2018 to October 15, 2018** qualify for the Five (5) Kerygma Conference VIP Tickets promo. A DTI representative will be invited to witness the minor raffle draw on October 29, 2018, Monday, #60 Chicago Street, Cubao, QC, 3:00PM.
- Prize inclusions: (1) winner of Five (5) Kerygma Conference VIP Tickets reserved seating in all classes and plenary talks and a limited edition conference t-shirt.
- Kerygma Conference 2018 is on November 22-25, 2018 at the SMX Convention Center.

(1) Winner of Devant 32" Smart TV (32LTV800)

- Entries received from **October 16, 2018 to December 31, 2018** qualify for the **Devant 32" Smart TV (32LTV800) promo**. A DTI representative will be invited to witness the grand and minor raffle draw on January 13, 2019, Sunday, 11:45AM, The Feast Bay Area, Vicente Sotto Street, Pasay City.

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Grand Prize: 1 Winner Holy Land Pilgrimage

- Entries received from **March 1, 2018 until December 31, 2018** qualify for the Trip to Holy Land promo. A DTI representative will be invited to witness the grand and minor raffle draw on **January 13, 2019, Sunday, 11:45AM** at The Feast Bay Area, Vicente Sotto Street, Pasay City.
- Holy Land Pilgrimage Prize inclusions: Round trip Airfare from NAIA to Libson Airport – Libson Airport to NAIA, meals on full board basis, hotel accommodation for 10 days and 9 nights with breakfast. Exclusive of travel tax.
- All new and regular subscribers are required to have a passport valid until 2020, travel documents, taxes and other related documents.

Minor Prizes:

(1) Winner of Fujifilm X-A10 Mirrorless Camera

- Entries received from **March 1, 2018 to July 2, 2018** qualify for the **Fujifilm X-A10 Mirrorless Camera promo**. A DTI representative will be invited to witness the minor raffle draw on July 16, 2018, Monday, #60 Chicago Street, Cubao, QC , 3:00PM.

(1) Winner of Five (5) Kerygma Conference VIP Tickets to be held at SMX Convention Center

- Entries received from **July 3, 2018 to October 14, 2018** qualify for the Five (5) Kerygma Conference VIP Tickets promo. A DTI representative will be invited to witness the minor raffle draw on October 29, 2018, Monday, #60 Chicago Street, Cubao, QC, 3:00PM.
- Prize inclusions: (1) winner of Five (5) Kerygma Conference VIP Tickets reserved seating in all classes and plenary talks and a limited edition conference t-shirt.
- Kerygma Conference 2018 is on November 22-25, 2018 at the SMX Convention Center.

(1) Winner of Devant 32" Smart TV (32LTV800)

- Entries received from **October 16, 2018 to December 31, 2018** qualify for the **Devant 32" Smart TV (32LTV800) promo**. A DTI representative will be invited to witness the grand and minor raffle draw on January 13, 2019, Sunday, 11:45AM, The Feast Bay Area, Vicente Sotto Street, Pasay City.

Guidelines:

- A participant can only win once. Subscriber who won the minor prize is not eligible on the other minor & grand draw. Non-winning entries after minor draw can still win the grand prize.
 - A notification letter via registered mail will sent to winners for confirmation. Instructions on where to claim the prize will be detailed in the letter via registered mail. For GMA and provincial winners, the sponsor will not cover the transportation fee going to the travel agency and NAIA upon departure to Pilgrimage. SVP Sales staff will coordinate and instruct the grand prize winner all the necessary details and inclusions of the trip to Holy Land before endorsing to sponsor travel agency.
 - The winner of the trip to **Holy Land Pilgrimage** will secure his/her own passport.
 - Prizes are transferrable but not convertible to cash.
 - The winner of the trip to **Holy Land Pilgrimage** shall shoulder all the taxes and documentations related to the trip, and the 20 percent tax for prizes exceeding P10,000.
 - Validity of international trips is within 6 months from issuance.
 - Prizes must be claimed w/in 60 days from receipt of notification.
 - Prizes unclaimed will be forfeited in favor of SVP with prior DTI approval.
- Winners shall claim their prizes at the Shepherds Voice office at 60 Chicago St., Cubao, Quezon City. Winners must present the notification letter, official receipt of subscription, claim stub with control number & valid ID with photo (e.g. driver's license, Company ID or passport).
 - Winners may send a representative on their behalf provided they present letter of authorization from the winner, proper identification / any valid ID with photo (e.g. driver's license, Company ID or passport), letter sent by SVP & official receipt of subscription payment and claim stub with control number.

- The promo organizer's decision is final with the concurrence of the DTI.
- All SVP employees are not eligible to join the raffle promo including their relatives up to the 2nd degree of consanguinity or affinity.
- For GMA winners, they can claim their minor or grand prize at #60 Chicago Street, Cubao, Quezon City; For Provincial winner of minor prize, he/she can claim the KCON2017 tickets upon agreement between SVP and his/her preferred method of transaction. . The winner shall shoulder 20% tax on prizes exceeding 10,000.

THERE'S MORE!

Kerygma Mission Partner Mercy Package:

- Platinum Kerygma Mission Partners (donation of P10, 000.00 and above) are automatically entitled to Coffee with Bo and a sponsored Breakfast with Father Bob Mcconaghy.
- KMP Mercy Package includes a Kerygma Books package worth P500.00, The Light of Jesus Coffee Table Book, Coffee with Bo and/or a sponsored Breakfast with Father Bob Mcconaghy.
- New or renewing subscribers from March 1 to March 31, 2018 are qualified for Coffee with Bo promo. While April 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018 new or renewing subscribers are qualified for Breakfast with Bob promo.
- Coffee with Bo & breakfast with Bob schedules will depend on the availability of Bro. Bo Sanchez & Father Bob Mcconaghy.
- Call 725-9999 and look for Sarah for more details.

Per DTI FTEB Permit No. 3783, Series of 2018.



What an Enigmatic God We Have

"The Everlasting God has in His wisdom foreseen from eternity the cross that He now presents to you as a gift from His innermost heart. This cross He now sends you is considered with His all-knowing eyes, understood with His divine mind, tested with His wise justice, warmed with loving arms and weighed with His own hands, to see that it be not one inch too large and not one ounce too heavy for you. He has blessed it with His Holy Name, anointed it with His grace, perfumed it with His consolation, taken one last look at you and your courage, and then sent it to you from heaven, a special greeting from God to you, an alms of the all-merciful love of God."

This sobering prayer was written by Saint Francis de Sales. A friend of mine, Beth Melchor, and I held it as our favorite. I "met" St. Francis de Sales through Father Guerrero, a Jesuit priest who was part of the Assumption prayer

meetings I attended in 1975. I think Beth "met" the saint through one of the Assumption nuns, because by the time Fr. Guerrero spoke of him, she already knew him.


On and off before or after prayer meetings, they traded thoughts on it. I was new to prayer meetings and was only in my last year of high school, so I wasn't part of the sharing. I quietly sat there listening intently to wiser people. There was Tita Thelma. And Phyll. And Tito Angel. Tita Neng. Mike. Sister Anunciata. I don't remember all the names. What stands out till this day is Father Guerrero sharing the other prayers written by this saint. All of them carry the same zealous tone. But after I read this one for the first time—The Cross—it struck a chord inside me. I was amazed at this man equating a cross with God's love. That was its impact on me back in 1975.

In 1975! Long, long ago, when I had no idea that a serious illness was up ahead in my race track. It

By Rosanne Romero

impacted me back then, but it's just more significant to me now that I have multiple sclerosis. Strangely enough, it's the same with my friend, Beth. Back then, she had no idea about the cancer up ahead in her life, or down the road.

I visited Beth last April, and ever so softly, she recited this prayer to me. We stayed quiet for a while. Our eyes locked. My mind replayed a few lines from an old song we used to sing: "For in the furnace of much affliction, I have chosen Thee... and so for iron, I'll give Thee silver and for brass, I'll give Thee gold... Thou art my chosen... Thou art graven in My hand."

Beat that. This prayer—it's as if God made us read it because we would so need it. For us to know that in any furnace, we are graven in His hand. What an enigmatic God we have. 

Rosanne Romero is the bestselling author of *Amusing Grace*. E-mail Rosanne at rosanne.romero@gmail.com.



*Be my partner in advancing God's Kingdom
here on earth!*



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- ✓ FREE Kerygma Books Affiliate link... and more!

For more details, email us at sales@shepherdsvoice.com.ph, or call us at 725-9999 loc. 107 or 416-3482 and look for Cecille or Christian.



You're a Superhero

love superheroes!

Growing up, my favorite was Superman. Later on in high school, it was a local band called The Dawn.

In college, it was a mascot named Yosi Kadiri (remember that shame program by the Department of Health against smokers?). Now, it's Spider-man, aside from Jesus Christ, of course.

But why Spider-man?

There's been an influx of new superheroes in Hollywood: Thor, Incredible Hulk, Green Lantern, Captain America, Iron Man, The Smurfs... the list goes on. Why choose a scrawny character who seems so shy because he doesn't even show any part of his face, and someone who wears tights all over his body (as if tights in the legs aren't enough). Why him?

Spider-man said a line that I would never forget. He remarked, "For me, living an ordinary life is not an option anymore."

Here is an ordinary guy, who found out that he has radioactive

power in him. Hence, he realizes that he has extraordinary power that doesn't fit an ordinary life. He decides to live extraordinarily. So what does he do?

From walking the streets, he swings from building to building. From being bullied, he terrorizes bullies. From wearing street clothes, he wears tights (at least he knows where underwear should be worn, unlike Superman. He, he). From being ordinary, he becomes extraordinary. Truly amazing Spider-man!

Friends, let me tell you now, each one of us is Spider-man—but you don't need to wear tights (please!). Let me elaborate: You are an ordinary person, saved by the love of Jesus, who is now in you, who gives you extraordinary power.

Unfortunately, most of us do not realize this, so we live an ordinary life. *Sayang naman!* When we have

power within and we do not use it, *sayang talaga!*

Friends, I pray that you'll realize this: You have great power within you. And through that great power, you can do big things. Philippians 4:13 says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Read that again: *All!* No exemption. No limitation.

I have a confession to make: At the onset of our Feast, I had a hard time believing that I would be a Feast builder. But after claiming and believing that I can do all things, I have improved myself, gained confidence, and am serving with all my love. Because at the end of the day, I may not have riches or vast experiences, but I have love. And because God is love, I also have God. And God within me says, "I can do all things!"

And so can you. God is in you! Christ is in you! 

As of this writing, Boggs has helped build four Feasts in Nueva Ecija and Cavite. He now leads the Feasts in Cavite as the District Builder in-training. E-mail him at boggsburbos@yahoo.com.

By Boggs Burbos



DO YOU LONG FOR MEANINGFUL SUCCESS IN YOUR CAREER, BUSINESS, AND LEADERSHIP?

"This must-read book tells us that whatever path a person decides to take largely depends on one's resolve."

- *Washington Sycip (1921-2017), Founder, SGV & Co.
1967 Management Man of the Year*

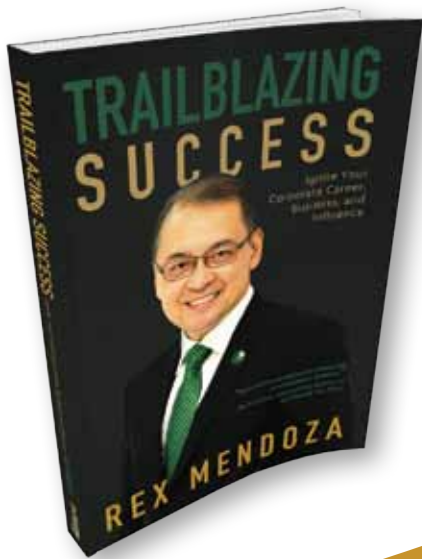
Packed with wisdom and powerful insights, this book will help set you up for success.

Whether you are an employee, executive, entrepreneur, or student, there is a lesson for you to learn. The author is a living testament that you can be all that you set out to be.

From his humble beginnings as an employee and insurance agent, to his rise as CEO of a multinational company, a successful entrepreneur, and a prosperous investor, Rex takes you on his life journey and along the way equips you with the tools you need for your own path to success.

You will also learn leadership lessons that you need as you move from one stage of your career to the next.

Soak in the wealth of insights from this inspiring leader who honors God and is loved by those whose lives he has touched. Follow the best practices that Rex generously shares to catapult you in your career, business, and family life.



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GOD IS MY SAVIOR

On April 21, 2018, I climbed Mt. Maynuba and Mt. Cayabu in Rizal province and invited our Light Group (LG) to raise funds for the Casa Miani Orphanage. We did a similar outreach last December where we served food, sang songs, and gave gifts to the elderly inmates of New Bilibid Prison. We wanted to do the same to the young orphans in Casa Miani.

We ended at around one in the afternoon, refreshed ourselves, and prepared for a long drive home.

I drove the car and my ex-fiancee sat at the passenger seat while another one sat at the back. We were on high spirits because of the beauty of God's creation that we experienced through this climb.

But an accident cut our joy short.

Miraculously Saved

During our ride home, we overshot a tight curve along the mountainside to avoid hitting oncoming vehicles. Unlucky for us, there were rocks as big as the regular garbage can at the side of the road and our car hit these rocks one at a time making me lose control of the vehicle.

By Jave Villa del Rey

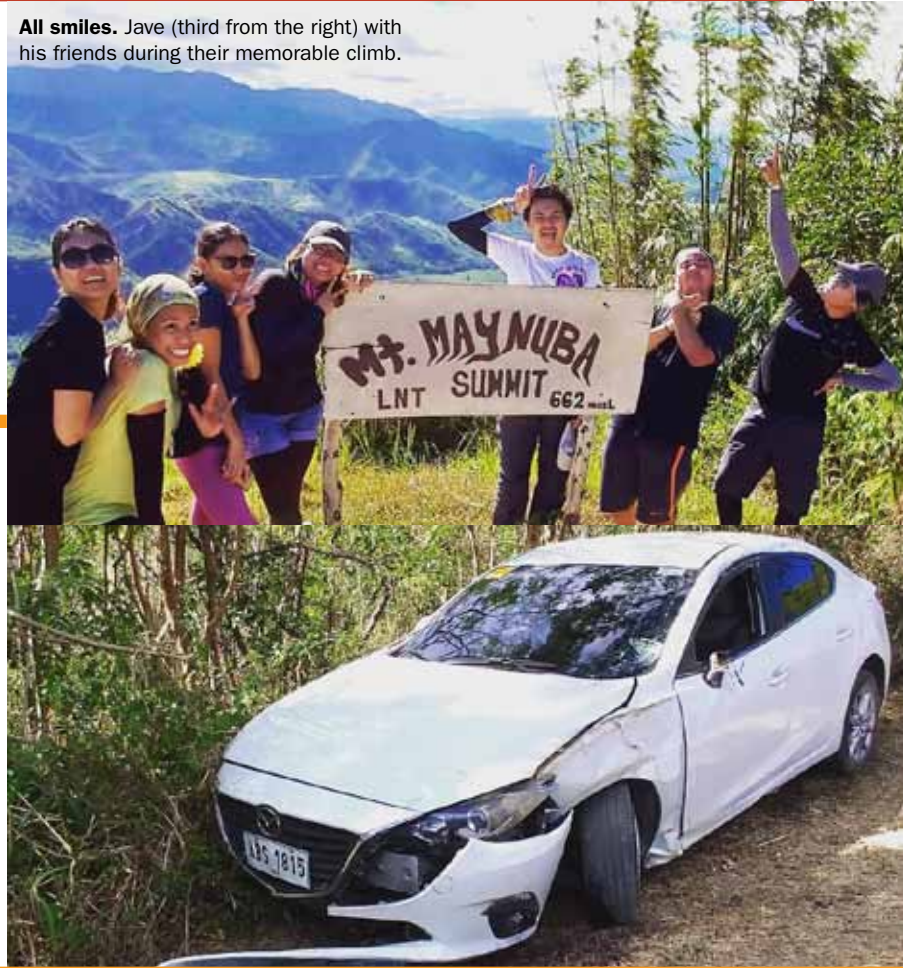
Fortunately, we did not fall off the cliff edge but hit two giant rocks. Our car flipped at the driver's side and we had to climb upright at the passenger's side door to get out of the vehicle.

The car was a total wreck: shattered glasses and car parts were everywhere. It was impossible to believe that its passengers would come out alive. Thankfully, all three of us in the car survived. The people around us rushed us to a nearby hospital. Aside from muscular spasm and strain, my friends were alright.

As for me, I had a minor fracture on my right arm and had to be cast for six weeks. But that was it. I believe God was with us and He saved us that day.

We could have fallen off the cliff at the side of the road but it was as if God placed two giant rocks to prevent us from falling. We could have had late respondents but there were bikers on our tail who were members of Red Cross and gave us first aid. There could have been no available


All smiles. Jave (third from the right) with his friends during their memorable climb.



ambulance but within ten minutes, one came and took us to the nearest hospital.

I know it was God who made all these things possible.

Faith Over Fear

Although I have not yet fully recovered from the accident, I am able to go back to doing my day-to-day activities. I have learned that the incident should not instill fear or worry because it is a great testimony that God saves and protects us. He is my Savior and Divine Protector. It is clear that my mission in this world is not yet done. Despite what happened, I have decided to follow Jesus and I will keep doing so for the rest of my life. As the psalmist declared, "Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me" (Psalm 23:4). 

I PRAY THAT YOU RECEIVE YOUR MIRACLES IN JESUS' NAME!

I PRAY THAT GOD LIFT YOUR TRIALS, heal your diseases, bless your problems, and direct you to the path He wants you to take. I pray that God remove your fears and give you the courage to surrender your burdens to Him.

So place your hand over my hand, and let's pray with trust, together with our prayer team of intercessors praying for you right now...

This page is our Point of Contact, our spiritual connection.
Say after me...

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

Lord, I surrender to You my worries and anxieties. I surrender to You my needs, my problems, my trials. I place them all in Your big hands. And I open myself to all that You want to give to me. On this day, I say yes to Your love, to Your blessings, to Your healing, to Your miracles. And Lord, specifically, I ask for the following miracles for my life...

I believe that You answer my prayer in the best way possible! And I thank You in advance for the perfect answers to my prayers. I also ask for the special intercession of Mama Mary. I pray all this in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.



SPECIAL INTENTION FOR THIS MONTH:

Dearest Father, thank You for Your love and protection. Embrace our brothers and sisters who are going through darkness at this moment. Be our light, O Jesus, and may Your peace be upon us. We receive Your empowering grace and claim Your promises and hope. In Your mighty name, we pray. Amen.

Praying for you,

E-mail your prayer requests to me at bosanchez@kerygmfamily.com or write to me at Shepherd's Voice Publications, #60 Chicago St., Cubao, Quezon City, Philippines 1109.

God Wants to Be in Your Every Season

The rituals and traditions that complement our faith can be overwhelming. Or they may seem archaic to others that their response is to become indifferent to these practices and celebrations. That's why this book is a breath of fresh air to those who want to enliven their faith.

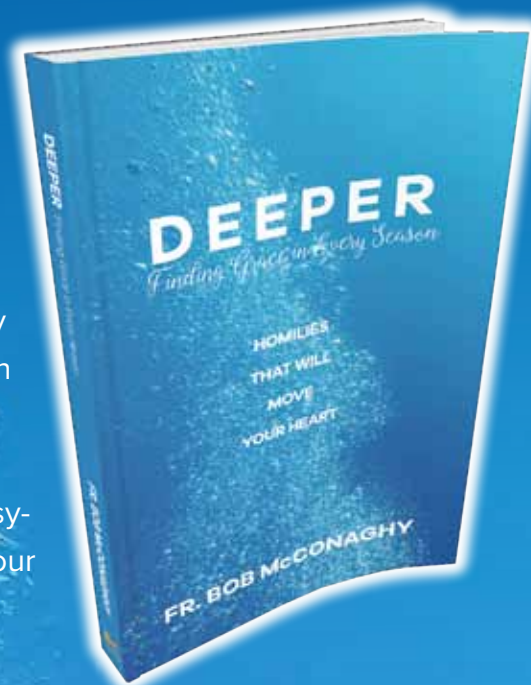
Through this soul-kindling collection of homilies, Fr. Bob McConaghy invites us to take God's hand and experience His love and presence in every season of the liturgical year.

Father Bob gives light to theological truths by presenting them in easy-to-digest stories and insights. He gives practical ways to live out your faith during Lent, Easter, Advent, Christmas, and the Ordinary Time.

Let your spirit soak in love and grace at every season of the year as you deepen your relationship with the Lord.

"Father Bob has a gift of delivering the truth from a fresh, different perspective. This book will help you embrace the teachings and traditions of our Catholic Church more. As you read these pages, you will find that you want to pray more, fast more, love more".

– Arun Gogna
Bestselling author of *Happy Secrets to an Obedient Life*



Fr. Bob McConaghy is a retired priest from the diocese of Allentown, Pennsylvania. Having retired from active parish ministry for health reasons, he has come back to Manila, Philippines where he has been serving for eight years at Lorenzo Mission Institute Seminary in Guadalupe, Makati City, where he also lives. He is spiritual director to many of the seminarians there. Nowadays, he gives retreats and offers pastoral counseling in Greenbelt Chapel, also in Makati City. He has produced many DVDs and CDs of his seminars.

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