



The Life-Changing Magazine

KERYGMA

342

Vol. 29

OCTOBER

2018

SEEK GOD'S VOICE

*Heed the Call to Live Out
Your Vocation*

A Sneak Peek into the Joy
of Priesthood

Getting through the
Challenges of Discernment

How to Become a Hero

My Journey toward
Living Single
for the Lord

The Family:
The Seedbed of Vocations

FR. LUCIANO FELLONI

An Argentinian-Italian boy becomes an active
and dedicated priest for the Filipino people

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You Think You're Too Messy to Go to Church?

Born out of almost 40 years of ministry, Bo Sanchez shares the DNA of a simple movement, which started as a tiny group that met in his parents' garage. Today, that small prayer meeting has expanded to 285 Feasts all over the world. Through The Feast, many have found their way home to God. Bo shares why they do it and how they do it so that you, too, can fulfill God's call to love more. Specifically, this book will teach you how to:

- Love the unchurched
- Get out of the building
- Get rid of spiritual pride
- Follow Pope Francis as he follows Jesus
- Avoid common temptations faced by religious leaders
- Build a healthy local church or community

Warning: Some of the things shared in this book may make you feel uncomfortable about your relationship with God. So get ready to be disturbed, challenged, and inspired. When you purchase this book, you also become a blessing to others, as Bo donates the royalties from all his books to his many dynamic ministries.



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How to Become a Hero

If you want to become a hero, you need to allow God to disturb you. Specifically, you need to allow Him to disturb four important things in your life.

Step one: Disturb your asking. We usually pray for our needs, problems, worries, and fears. Nothing is wrong with that. God wants you to do that.

But if you want to become somebody's hero, you need to start praying other kinds of prayers.

Here's my suggestion: every morning, pray, "God, help me to bless somebody today."

Believe me, God will answer your prayer.

Step two: Disturb your associations. Disturb your schedule. Disturb your itinerary. Shatter the protective glass of your comfortable world. How?

Every day, expose yourself to suffering. Get out of your usual route. Break your pattern.

Talk to the janitors. Chat with the security guard. Listen to the vendors. Rub elbows with the small people. Get into their world. Find out about their issues.

You'll be surprised.

We think we've got problems. Wait till you hear their problems—and you'll realize you don't have problems.

When you expose yourself to suffering, you give room in your heart for God to give His assignment. Perhaps He wants you to do something about it.

So many people are lost. Go out of your way and love them. Be Jesus to them. Listen to their stories. And share how you've experienced God's love.

Step three: Disturb your affections. One day, Catherine was going home. Suddenly, a man attacked her and stabbed her with his knife. When she screamed, the man ran away. There were thirty-eight people who were around the area who heard her scream. But none of them approached her. When the man saw that no one came to help, he went back to the woman and finished her off.

By the time the police came to apprehend the man, the woman was dead.

Where does our apathy come from?

Why do we not go out of our way to help?

Because something in our brain tells us, "It's none of my business."

It's the same voice that spoke to Cain. Once upon a time, there were two brothers, Cain and Abel. Out of envy, Cain killed Abel. And when Cain was running away, God asked Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?"

And Cain answered, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

When Catherine was murdered, there were thirty-eight people thinking like Cain. They were asking, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

The story of Cain and Abel is found in the third chapter of Genesis, right at the start of the Bible. And it's as though the entire Bible is answering that question with a resounding yes!

Friend, God is searching for heroes.

Step four: Disturb your actions. A whole army of psychologists made numerous experiments to find out why those thirty-eight people didn't help Catherine.

After years of research, here's what they realized: those people didn't help because they depended so much on what others were doing. Because no one was helping, the others didn't help, too. We practice "group think" so much more than we realize.

If at least one of those thirty-eight bystanders helped that woman, many of the others would have helped, too.

But that was the problem.

Because no one dared, everyone didn't dare.

That's how most people make their decisions. Most people don't want to lead. Most people like to be safe and just follow.

So here lies the importance of at least one person becoming a hero.

Friend, can you be that one person?

Can you lead a movement of love?

Start small. Nothing dramatic, mind you.

Act small.

You don't need mutant powers to be a hero.

Perhaps you can give an encouraging word.

Or you can smile at someone.

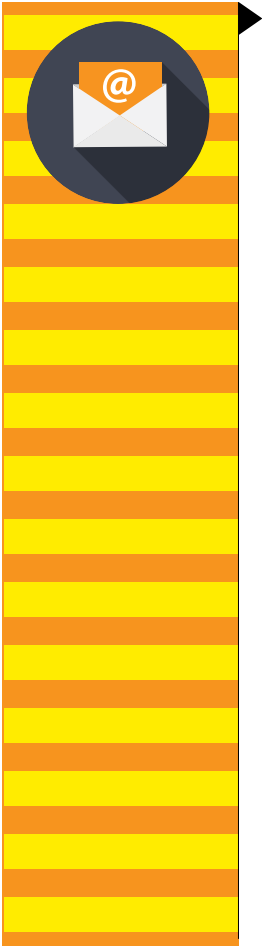
Or you can invite someone for coffee and just listen.

Or you can pat someone on the back.

Every encounter is an opportunity to be a blessing for that person.

May your dreams come true,





After reading “The Boss” column titled “Is Your Life Too Easy?” in *Kerygma* March 2018 issue, I realized that, indeed, we shouldn’t just work hard; we also have to work smart. There are other people who are hardworking but until now, they are still the same. Why not combine being smart and being hardworking?

From the moment I read that column, I’ve tried my best not just to work hard but to work smart also on my passion. I sometimes juggle my art/calligraphy/craft that my customers need and my full-time work. Plus, I also serve at The Feast. I don’t know how these things work, but according to the column, when you love what you are doing, you won’t feel like it’s work. Maybe it’s the same for me.

Now, while there are still no side projects for me, maybe the Lord wants me to rest. Once He knows that I already have enough rest, He will give me more extra income to fund my insurance and investment.

God’s blessings keep on flowing as I work hard for them as well. Like what was mentioned in the column, pray and work.

**Daljit Fulleo
Angono, Rizal**

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My eldest girl passed through that stage. So did my youngest daughter. I don't know what the attraction was to them but they loved wearing big shoes—our shoes. My husband's leather slippers. His huge Crocs. My low-heeled sandals. My pink slippers. My black ballet flats. My rubber shoes.

Then, with their awkward, unsteady gait, they'd start walking. They wouldn't get far though. They'd soon trip or fall. Or leave a shoe or slipper behind because their tiny feet couldn't even fill it enough to take it along on their next step.

I'd caution them, "You'll fall with those big shoes!"

But my warning would go unheeded.

Just as I insisted that my daughters wear their own shoes because that's the best way they can walk, the Lord tells us to do the same.

You may have been born in a family of achievers. Your grandfather may be a well-loved politician. Your dad may be a successful doctor. Your mom may be a famous resident in your town. Your sister may be an honor student in your school. And you live under the shadow of their illustrious reputation.

You have big shoes to fill.

Their success has set a high bar for other's expectations of you.

But know that you don't have to walk in someone else's shoes. Because God gave you your own shoes to walk with.

I was surprised when I first saw an actual snowflake.

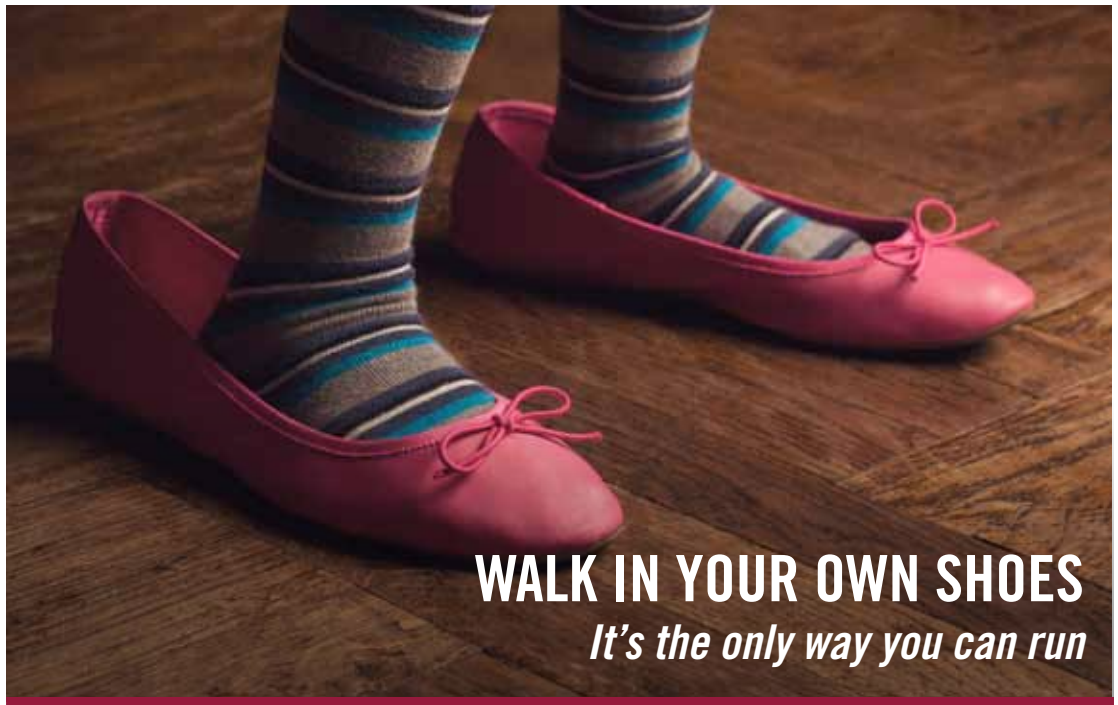
After graduating from high school, I went on a vacation in Paris with my mom and my youngest sister. We were strolling down Champs Elysee when a gentle drizzle of fine flakes started to fall from the sky. Snow!

Like little children, we tried to catch them in our gloved hands. I looked closely at the snowflake and it took my breath away. Each one was crafted like a beautiful crystal, with symmetry and beauty that resembled the snowflake designs I would see as Christmas decors. So that's why snowflakes were drawn that way!

And before I could study it further, the beautiful, tiny snowflake melted in my hand.

It made me wonder. If God took pains to individually handcraft each snowflake so that no two were alike, all the more He carefully fashioned every one of us in His beauty and likeness!

By Rissa Singson Kawpeng



WALK IN YOUR OWN SHOES
It's the only way you can run


So, really, we do a disservice to our Creator and ourselves when we try to keep up with others, when we try to walk in somebody else's shoes, or live out other people's dreams for us.

Because God made us with special gifts and talents. Unique from the ones He gave your parents or your siblings or your best friend. He gave us distinct looks and personalities that even the most identical of twins, when you really get to know them, don't look exactly the same.

God fashioned you with your own shoes to fill.

And those fit you perfectly.

So walk in your own shoes.

Because it's the only way you can run. 

I will give thanks to you because I have been so amazingly and miraculously made. Your works are miraculous, and my soul is fully aware of this. (Psalm 139:14)

E-mail Rissa at rissakawpeng@gmail.com or visit www.rissasingsonkawpeng.com for more inspiring articles.

about the **cover** model



Fr. Luciano Ariel Felloni is a forty-five-year-old diocesan priest from the Diocese of Novaliches. He was born and raised in Argentina, but has Italian roots.

When he was in fourth year high school, he started to actively serve in their church. He was a volunteer catechist and he also helped in a house for disabled children. That time, everything was OK for him—he had a happy family, he had a girlfriend, and he even planned to take law as a degree. But he found great joy in serving in their church that he started to question why couldn't he be happy like that for all his life?

So he decided right after high school to enter a seminary in Argentina, and Pope Francis, who was still a priest then, became his teacher and confessor. After three years in the seminary, he was sent to the Philippines, where he finished his studies and got ordained as a priest. He has been in the Philippines for twenty-four years now, and still has been visiting Argentina every four years. He is proud to say that while his blood, surname, and nose are Italian, his heart is very Pinoy.

He is currently the parish priest of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Camarin, Caloocan City. He is also a formator of seminarians in the diocese; a cybermissionary behind www.facebook.com/AlmuSalita, and a helping hand to the community rehabilitation program for drug addicts in his parish.

*Photos by Daniel Soriano
Grooming by Keren Talladen*

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daily pause **with** Pope Francis

<p>1</p> <p>“We will never discover the special, personal calling that God has in mind for us if we remain enclosed in ourselves, in our usual way of doing things, in the apathy of those who fritter away their lives in their own little world.”</p>	<p>2</p>  <p>“Each of us can discover his or her own vocation only through spiritual discernment.”</p>	<p>3</p> <p>“When we are firmly united to God, who loves and sustains us, we are able to withstand all life’s difficulties and challenges.”</p>
<p>7</p> <p>“Faith in Jesus Christ frees us from sin, sadness, emptiness, isolation. It is the source of a joy that no one can ever take away.”</p>	<p>8</p> <p>“Like St John the Baptist, Christians have to humble themselves so that the Lord can grow in their hearts.”</p>	<p>9</p>  <p><i>“Let us ask our Lord to help us understand that love is service, love means taking care of others.”</i></p>
<p>1 3</p> <p>“Even amid these troubled times, the mystery of the Incarnation reminds us that God continually comes to encounter us.”</p>	<p>1 4</p> <p>“He is God-with-us, who walks along the often dusty paths of our lives. He knows our anxious longing for love and He calls us to joy.”</p>	<p>1 5</p> <p>“We have to resist the temptations of ideology and negativity, and to discover, in our relationship with the Lord, the places, the means and situations through which He calls us.”</p>
<p>1 9</p> <p>“The Lord continues to call others to live with Him and to follow Him in a relationship of particular closeness. He continues to call others to serve Him directly.”</p>	<p>2 0</p> <p>“If God lets us realize that He is calling us to consecrate ourselves totally to His Kingdom, then we should have no fear!”</p>	<p>2 1</p> <p>“It is beautiful—and a great grace—to be completely and forever consecrated to God and the service of our brothers and sisters.”</p>
<p>2 6</p> <p>“Commitment to mission is not something added on to the Christian life as a kind of decoration, but is instead an essential element of faith itself.”</p>	<p>2 7</p>  <p>“To be a missionary disciple means to share actively in the mission of Christ.”</p>	<p>2 8</p> <p>“A Christian does not bear the burden of mission alone, but realizes, even amid weariness and misunderstanding, that ‘Jesus walks with him, speaks to him, breathes with him, works with him.’”</p>

4

"Every kind of material or spiritual poverty, every form of discrimination against our brothers and sisters, comes from turning our backs on God and His love."

5

"We are called to assist the elderly, the sick, and the unborn: life must always be protected and loved, from conception to its natural conclusion."

6

"Torture is a mortal sin! Christian communities must commit themselves to helping victims of torture."

1 0



"Love for others needs to become the constant factor of our lives."

1 1

"Praying together, walking together, working together: this is the way that leads to Christian unity."

1 2

"In the diversity and the uniqueness of each and every vocation, personal and ecclesial, there is a need to listen, discern, and live this word that calls to us from on high."

1 6

"Every Christian ought to grow in the ability to 'read within' his or her life, and to understand *where* and to *what* he or she is being called by the Lord, in order to carry on his mission."

1 7

"Vocation is today! The Christian mission is now! Each one of us is called—whether to the lay life in marriage, to the priestly life in the ordained ministry, or to a life of special consecration—in order to become a witness of the Lord, here and now."

1 8

"This 'today' that Jesus proclaimed assures us that God continues to 'come down' to save our human family and to make us sharers in His mission."

2 2

"We should not wait to be perfect in order to respond with our generous 'yes,' nor be fearful of our limitations and sins, but instead open our hearts to the voice of the Lord."

2 3

"To listen to that voice, to discern our personal mission in the Church and the world, and at last to live it in the today that God gives us."

2 4

"All Christians are called to be missionaries of the Gospel!"



2 9

"The seed of the Kingdom, however tiny, unseen and at times insignificant, silently continues to grow, thanks to God's tireless activity."

3 0

"God surpasses all our expectations and constantly surprises us by his generosity. He makes our efforts bear fruit beyond all human calculation."

3 1

"The Christian life needs to be nourished by attentive listening to God's word and, above all, by the cultivation of a personal relationship with the Lord in Eucharistic adoration, the privileged 'place' for our encounter with God."

7 TIPS FOR THE YOUTH TO KICK-START THEIR FINANCIAL LIVES

MONEY MANAGEMENT may seem like a grown-up concept, but it's never too soon for a young adult to become financially literate.

1. **Learn to budget.** Setting a budget allows you to prioritize your expenses. Keep track of how you are spending your money so you know how take control of your finances.
2. **Eat in.** It is always more expensive to eat out, even if you're in a fast-food restaurant. Pack a lunch and notice how much you have saved.
3. **Live on less.** Get rid of unnecessary luxuries. Spending less and saving more lets you plan on what is only essential.
4. **Shop smart.** Compare prices of the goods and services you need to avail, and know when the upcoming sale will happen.
5. **Create an emergency fund.** Saving more than enough lets you stay on track and cover the little expenses that come every so often.
6. **Insure yourself.** Health insurance protects you from unexpected medical costs and covers benefits to maintain your health status.
7. **Start saving for retirement.** When you can no longer work because of your age, there will be enough money to provide for your needs if you only save for the future and invest early.

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



5 WAYS TO WAKE UP WITH MORE ENERGY



FEELING GROGGY in the mornings? Here's how to wake up feeling refreshed and energized:

1. **Pull up the shades right away.** Sunlight stimulates special cells in your eyes that send wake-up call to your brain. Eyes are very sensitive to light, making the pupils dilate from sleep.
2. **Set the ringtone of your alarm clock to your favorite music.** It's nice to wake up in the morning hearing the music that brightens your day and makes you think of happy thoughts. Disregard the generic sound of your clock that annoys you first thing in the morning.
3. **Refuel with coffee or tea shortly after waking.** Take a sip of caffeine or green tea to eliminate the groggy morning feeling. It will make you feel more relaxed and alert. Pair your drinks with fruits or a healthy meal.
4. **Exercise in the morning.** Take a stroll, stretch, or do some light exercises to feel energized and ready to take on the day. Exercise boosts levels of energizing brain chemicals.
5. **Keep a routine.** Keeping a regular and consistent sleep and wake up schedule will alter your body clock naturally. Hence, it will no longer be difficult for you to wake up every morning.

Quick
Health
Tip



Black beans

LIKE MOST VARIETIES of beans and legumes, black beans are high in protein and dietary fiber. They're also a good source of antioxidants, phosphorous, iron, and mineral magnesium, which the body needs to keep nerves and muscles functioning. Eating black beans helps protect against inflammation, heart disease, weight gain, diabetes, certain cancers, and common nutrient deficiencies.

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

Saints-at-a-Glance

St. Francis Isidore Gagelin

Feast Day: October 17
Death: 1833

Francis-Isidore Gagelin became a missionary in Vietnam in 1822. He was ordained at the age twenty-three, and started ministering the Vietnamese people toward God.

Upon learning the rapid growth of Christianity in Vietnam, Emperor Minh Mang issued a decree to outlaw Christianity and order Vietnamese to renounce their faith. Churches were destroyed and priests were tortured, publicly humiliated, and dragged throughout the kingdom.

After months of suffering, Gagelin turned himself to the authorities. He was killed by strangulation, along with other priests. Gagelin became the first French martyr of the 19th century in Vietnam.

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



MANILA ARCHBISHOP Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle issued a statement last June 27, addressing the priests in his archdiocese not to be distracted from the current problems the country is facing—such as exploitation of women and children, violence, addictions, job security, traffic, terrorism, and corruption, among others.

“Be at peace. Be calm. Don’t let things disturb your inner peace. Let us read the situation with the eyes of faith.” Cardinal Tagle said in his letter.

The cardinal also cited Vatican II, underscoring that Catholics should strive to respect people who have different set of beliefs. “Religions are not to be used for conflicts but for mutual understanding and peace,” he said.

Cardinal Tagle reminded his flock to always rejoice, as Pope Francis tells in his latest exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate*. “Celebrate the faith! Fill up the churches! Sing loudly at Mass. Pray fervently. Serve joyfully. Tell the world of God’s love for you. Be fools for Christ. Be at peace. God is the Savior. We do not need to save God. It is God who will save us.”

The statement was penned from Geneva, where he attended the UN Conference on Migrants and Refugees, sponsored by the Holy See.

Source: <http://cbcnews.net/cbcnews/>



**CARDINAL TAGLE
ON PRESSING ISSUES:
‘LET US NOT BE
DISTRACTED’**

WAR ON PLASTIC MOVEMENT LEAVES MANUFACTURERS UNCERTAIN

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISTS across the world continue to pressure governments and businesses to ban the use of plastic straws. Environment campaigns have stirred organizations to make a change.

The British government and European Union plan to prohibit the selling of single-use plastics.

India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi has pledged to make his country plastic-free by 2022. As a kick-starter, some of the fast-food giants in Mumbai, like McDonald’s, Burger King, and Starbucks, were fined for violating the prohibition on single use of plastics.

As various companies move to the right direction, manufacturers are greatly concerned about the shift and how this would impact their sales. Top plastic straws manufacturer Soyez is hesitant on how to cope with the changes. “The problem isn’t new and it’s serious, so we obviously need to find alternatives,” the company’s director Pierre Soyez said.

Experts, however, said that biodegradable plastics might not be a solution. “A bioplastic item could present just as much threat to marine life as a conventional plastic item,” Fiona Nicholls of Greenpeace warned. As such, Nicholls says humanity’s only hope is to reduce our use of plastics.

Sources: Agence France-Presse; <http://news.abs-cbn.com/>





All Things New: The Jeremiah Girls' Encounter with Jesus



New wineskins. Fr. Jojo affirms the Jeremiah girls that they are renewed and refreshed by God's love.

By Anne Sanchez

An ordinary weekend for kids would mean waking up late, watching their favorite TV shows, and playing with their friends. Single women hang out with their buddies or go out on dates. Married women, especially moms, spend some quiet time at home, taking a much needed break from their busy daily routines.

July 7 was no ordinary day. Not for the Hunger Club Batch 3 members and the girls of Jeremiah Foundation.

Safe Haven

Jeremiah Foundation is a shelter for girls, particularly victims of sexual abuse. To date, they care for girls who are under eighteen years old. The foundation provides a home for them, which includes care and an environment wherein they are

equipped with knowledge, abilities, skills and opportunities for self-awareness and self-transformation. They are also given psycho-spiritual counseling to cope with their past.

The girls are homeschooled, which includes music lessons and basic Bible studies. They are exposed to different life experiences such as visiting the sick at an orthopedic center, educational tours in various local museums and animal parks, and recreational activities like Zumba classes.

They create cards, bracelets, rosaries, and key chains. These products are then sold and the profits go to their individual accounts to prepare for their future and give them a jumpstart as they enter adulthood.



Hungry for His Word

The Hunger Club is an annual Bible discipleship program headed by Rissa Singson-Kawpeng, *Kerygma* magazine's editor-in-chief. It was made

available to women leaders from various Feasts in the metro. This discipleship program is rooted in John 6:35, "Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'" The club met every Saturday morning for twelve sessions, basking in God's Word. They cover various topics such as bearing fruits as Christians, becoming a faithful servant of God, and forgiveness.

As a culminating activity for this year, they organized a Jesus Encounter (JE) for the girls of Jeremiah Foundation. This time, they made a simpler and shorter version of the retreat. One of Jeremiah's guardians, Tita Glo, referred to it as a JE for teens.

July 7, 2018

At 5 a.m., Luisa (not her real name) was up and in the kitchen cooking for breakfast. The other girls helped out in preparing their table as their guardians


ensure the younger ones are ready for the day ahead.

The kids beamed with excitement when they arrived at the venue anticipating what's



in store for them. Rissa took on multiple roles just like the club members who participated: Joan Hershey, Len, Ida, Vanya, and Anne. They touched on God's love, the Catholic faith, and the Holy Spirit.

During the young girls' sharing, they realized that God loves them and that He is their Father. One girl said, "*Ate, may tatay po pala ako. Kahit hindi ko nakagisnan yung tatay ko, meron pa rin po pala akong tatay—si God.*" (I didn't know I have a dad. I may not have seen my biological father growing up, but now I know I have a father). Another one exclaimed, "*Sa kabila ng nangyari sa akin, mahal pala ako ng Diyos. Akala ko wala na akong pag-asa.*" (Despite everything that happened to me, God loves me. I thought I was hopeless.) Regardless of their own hurts, they are quick to forgive others.

Fr. Jojo Opiño officiated the Holy Mass afterwards. In his homily, he focused on Matthew 9:17, about being new wineskins. Fr. Jojo then said that through the Jesus Encounter, the young girls' lives are changed as they enter into a deeper relationship with God. They are renewed and refreshed in God's unconditional love and are a blessing to others. 



To know more about the mercy ministries of LOJF, log on to www.lightfam.com or call 725-9999.

GOD CAN DO ANYTHING YOU KNOW—
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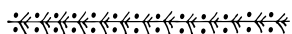
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Should I leave a community if I don't trust my leaders anymore? I feel that they don't trust me, too.

Alexa

I Don't Trust My Leaders Anymore

Dear Alexa,

I suggest you sit down with a leader from your community whom you trust. Tell him where you are coming from—why you feel like leaving your community, what makes you think the leaders do not trust you.

I would also suggest that you see if your mission and vision in life is aligned with that of your community. Joining a community is a calling. If your mission and vision don't align, it can make you unhappy and disappointed.

Seek where the Lord wants you to be—where you will grow more in loving and serving Him, where you will mature in your relationship with God.

May the Holy Spirit be with you as you seek God's direction.

Reng

E-mail your questions to editsvp@shepherdsvoice.com.ph. Or if you need to talk to someone, call **(632) 726-4709 or 726-6728** to contact a pastoral carer of the Light of Jesus Pastoral Care Center. Pastoral caring session by telephone is 24 hours from Monday to Friday, and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays. Face-to-face session is by appointment. For correspondence pastoral session, **e-mail lojpastoralcare@gmail.com, go to www.kerygmfamily.com, or call (632) 725-999.**

Reng Morelos gave up her corporate job years ago to become a full-time wife and mom. She tremendously enjoyed her “job” as driver and *yaya* to her younger kids then. She supports her husband, Hermie, in his ministry as one of the Council of Servant Leaders of the Light of Jesus Family. She has been with LOJ since 1981 and once handled the single sisters of the community.



Simulan ang iyong Sabado
ng umaga na may *ngiti* sa mata.



SABADO 5AM-6AM

Kasama sina
Bro. Bo Sanchez, Alvin Barcelona,
Randy Borromeo at Rissa Singson-Kawpeng



So Loved at The Feast SM Calamba

By Kristine Grace Natividad-Tome
and Jamina Bongabong

A weekly Feast is now happening at Calamba City. Every Sunday, cheery Feasters gather as one big family at SM City Calamba Cinema 1. The Holy Mass starts at 10:30 a.m followed by a life-changing talk by Laguna District builder, Jon Escoto.

Early this year, Brother Jon organized a team from The Feast Vista Mall Sta. Rosa to start a new Feast that will reach out to families in Calamba and nearby towns. The initial plan was to do a monthly Feast for three months, then twice a month for another three months, and if the number of attendees remains high, a weekly Feast would be launched.

On February 24, 2018, the first Feast was held in SM Calamba and the venue was jam-packed! The high number of the attendees was quite surprising because The Feast was announced through Facebook only three weeks before the date.


The second Feast in March was another full house of blessings. The youth came in groups, families attended together, and professionals

rushed from work to experience God's presence at The Feast. And they kept on asking for more.

The initial plan of having a weekly Feast by August was fast-tracked to respond to the attendees' requests. Thus, on May 5, 2018, the weekly Feast started. To reach out to more people, Brother Jon commissioned servants to start Feast Lights, or video Feasts, in nearby towns. More lives were touched in Pansol, Canlubang, Sto. Tomas, Los Baños, and Cabuyao. Stories of miracles and transformations are staples during the sharing sessions. Light Groups within Calamba area were also organized weekly for couples, singles, and youth who want to grow more in their relationship with God together with other Feasters.

Just like other newly established Feasts, one of the early challenges The Feast SM Calamba faced was the small group of servants. But Brother Jon was optimistic and organized a servants' orientation in April. True enough, many Feasters were more than willing to serve. They were excited to experience God so they answered His call to serve through The Feast. Since then, more and more people volunteer to be servants, especially after the "Let's serve together" campaign. This

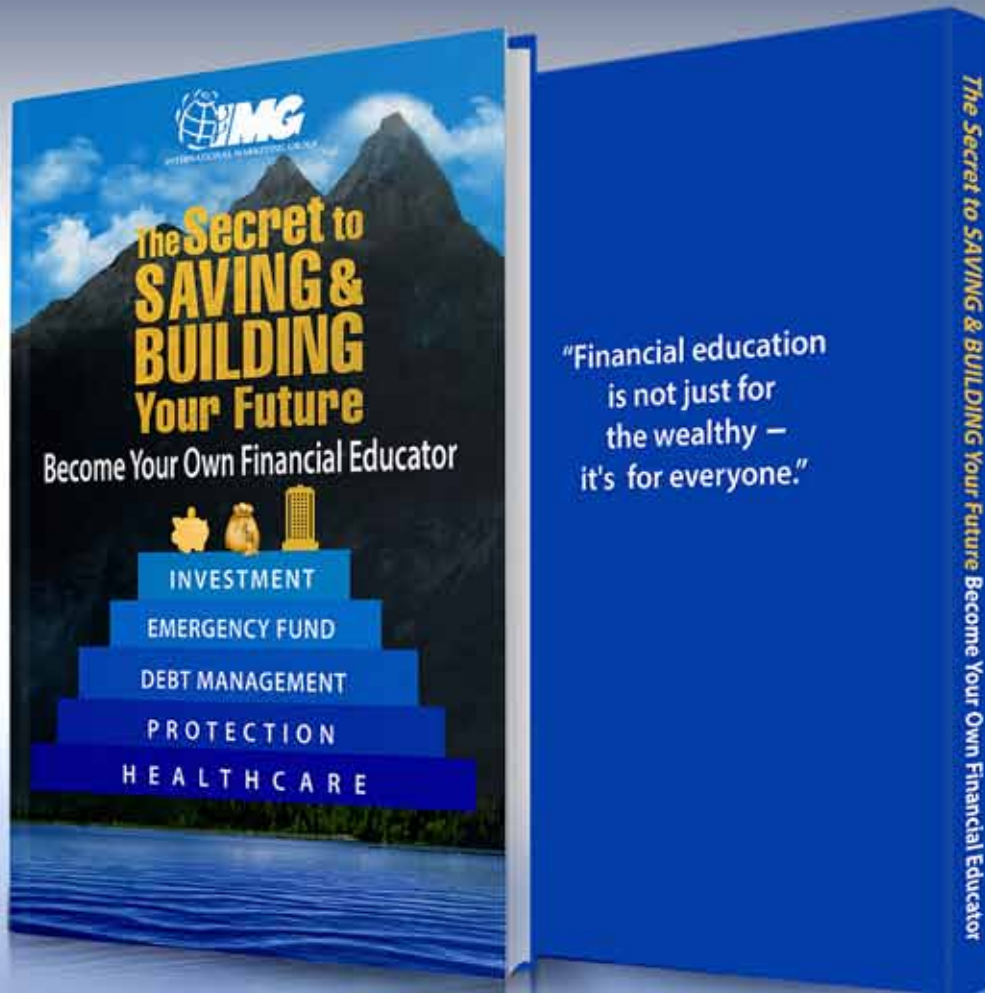
encouraged more families to serve together even if they are new Feast attendees. For Brother Jon, the servants are the living heroes who give their time, treasures, and talents just to bring heaven on earth. Truly, the people of Calamba live by Dr. Rizal's words: "It is a useless life that is not consecrated to a great ideal. It is like a stone wasted on the field without becoming a part of any edifice."

Word of mouth about The Feast reached more families who were not able to attend on Saturdays because of work and school schedules. So by insistent public demand, The Feast schedule was moved from Saturday to Sunday. When the attendees were asked why they keep on coming back to The Feast, most of them replied, "Because of the Feast, we feel so loved!" 

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



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SIBLING RIVALRY

Sibling rivalry is a problem when siblings keep fighting, especially when one child seems to repeatedly irritate the other sibling.

What can parents do?

- 1. Parents should not play favorites.** Recognize each child's strengths, skills, contributions, and accomplishments. One child may be more equipped in one area. Do not compare or say lines like, "Why can't you finish your homework as fast as your sister? You are so slow."
- 2. Parents need to build the confidence of each child.** There is usually one who feels insecure and therefore needs a lot of reassurance rather than put-downs and negative statements. Say, "I am glad you ate two spoons

of vegetables," rather than, "You are eating so little vegetables. You will get sick!"

- 3. Parents should appreciate who their child is and not what he does.** Acknowledge the child—with compassion, diligence, caring heart, and not merely for his performance.
Say lines like, "I like the way you fixed your room." Or, "Thank you for playing properly with your sister."
- 4. Parents should spend time with each child at least once a week.** Set a minimum budget per date, and focus on happy moments, fun activities, friends, and favorite topics of the child. This one-on-one date will help one parent and one

By Allan and Maribel Dionisio

child to know each other, an investment for a strong relationship between parent and child. So another date day with the other parent, at least once a week if not twice a month, will do also.

When the child feels loved and cared for by the parents, this is self-worth building and usually reduces sibling rivalry.



References:
Parenting by Don Dinkmeyer;
Helping our Children Do Well in School by Queena Lee Chua, PhD and Maribel Dionisio, MA;
Siblings without Rival by Faber and Mahzlish

Dr. Allan and his wife, Maribel, are both graduates of the Family Ministry course from the Loyola School of Theology of the Ateneo de Manila University. They are sought-after speakers and resource persons at workshops, radio and television programs on parenting, marriage, and family.



A HIDDEN GEM: BANANA BLOSSOM

We all know how good bananas are for our health. But we sometimes forget that banana blossoms are also very nutritious and can be a very good addition to our diet. Some people just get to eat one or two cuts of banana blossom when they eat *kare-kare* or *sinigang na bangus*. It's quite easy to find banana blossoms. Even the big groceries now have them in the vegetable section.

However, the benefits of banana blossoms may far outweigh your initial reluctance to use this "poor man's vegetable." In India, it is often given to women who have just given birth since it helps repair tissues and increase milk production. Naturally, because of the high fiber content, it helps relieve constipation. Potassium, found in abundance in the banana blossom, can help normalize blood pressure

levels and give energy. It is also a good option for those with diabetes, especially since the flavonoids in banana blossoms are excellent insulin receptors. All these, plus its rich iron content, Vitamins A, C, E, and K, make banana blossoms a very healthy addition to your kitchen.


Below is a recipe for Banana Blossom Tortilla. The flavor of the banana leaves adds a quaint flavor to this dish.

Banana Blossom Tortilla

Ingredients:

1 cup banana blossom, thinly chopped
1 onion, chopped
1 tomato, chopped
1 cup sayote, chopped
2 tablespoons flour
2 tablespoons water
1 egg
2 tablespoons cooking oil
2 sets of banana leaves

By Chichi Barba

1. Use a little cooking oil and sauté onions, tomato, banana blossom, and sayote. Cook until tender, then remove and transfer to a bowl.
2. Dissolve the flour in water. Slightly beat egg and mix in. Pour into the bowl with cooked banana blossoms.
3. Line a plate with banana leaves and pour in the mixture. Heat the pan with a little cooking oil and push the banana leaf on it. Cook until the bottom part is set.
4. Gently pull out the banana leaf onto a plate, cover it with another banana leaf, and invert.
5. Return the uncooked half to the pan, and cook until it sets. 

Chichi is a health mentor, speaker, and author. She wrote the book, Eat Well, Get Well, available at www.kerygmabooks.com. E-mail her at chichibarba@outlook.com.





SUPPRESSING THE EMOTIONAL SPENDING

A few years back, my mother assigned me to attend a wedding with my dad as her stand-in. I found myself seated beside a lovely and very chatty, elderly woman. She was adorned with some of the grandest jewels and diamonds that I had ever seen and dressed in the most luxurious gown dotted with glittering crystals. Even her heavy fragrance smelled expensive.

I was in my early twenties, unmarried, and quite idealistic about romance and relationships at the time. She was around thirty years older and full of grace, warmth, and stories that she openly shared with me considering that she didn't even know my name.

"I got married around your age. And my husband had an affair with another woman around the same time," she laughed, ten minutes into our conversation.

I was a little confused as to how to respond. I honestly wasn't sure about whether to be empathetic or to gamely laugh with her. She pressed on, "I got the best of him though. I told myself that I wasn't going to beg for his attention or spend the rest of my life bitter and angry. I had access to all of his money so I kept myself busy by spending it. It's been almost thirty years now and it's dulled the pain. And every time I feel the resentment starting to return, I fly to Paris, take out my credit card and I'm cured. It's not a permanent solution but it's all I have. If I could go back, would I do things differently? Absolutely. It's too late for me, though. But not too late for you."

It's incredible how we can stumble on

By Eleanore L. Teo

a random person, spend an hour or two with them, and yet they manage to leave such a significant impact in our lives. That beautiful, insightful stranger helped me to recognize and reflect on an affliction that I had also fallen victim to many times in my life—emotional spending.

How many times had I wielded my wallet to take revenge on the setbacks in my life? Countless times. I thought about how every work meeting that went wrong, every relationship that went sour, and every fit of anger that had instinctively led me into a shopping mall to find solace. It's actually quite ironic to assume that doing damage to my bank account would indirectly lessen the damage that I had to deal with in my personal life. Yes, buying the shoes that I was hesitant to splurge on or getting a ridiculously expensive haircut at that classy salon did make me feel anxiety-free for the moment.






But did it solve the problem that was the cause of my stress? Not in the slightest. It did, however, provide additional distress and regret at the arrival of my billing statement.

Perhaps it's because we find ourselves wading through a difficult time so we feel the need to reward ourselves for keeping our head above water. We owe ourselves a pat on the back for not losing our dignity or perseverance in painful situations. So we spend because

we ask ourselves the question, "What is the use of saving all my money if I feel like my world is coming to an end?"

The reality is that emotional spending is a temporary fix that may have destructive, long-term effects if we do not kick the habit. It's an indirect concept of believing that money can buy us instant relief from pain when in actuality, we are letting our feelings cloud and control our judgment when handling our finances. There is nothing wrong

with spending to reward ourselves as long as it is not used as an escape or a defense mechanism. I have seen many lives ruined because of the tendency to throw away money, either through gambling or overspending, in an attempt to dull their sorrows. In the end, they dig themselves a deep financial hole as they continue to carry the weight of their burdens on their shoulders.

The rule to avoid buyer's remorse is to make well thought-out decisions before handing over your cash or card and to keep your emotions in check. So the next time you feel overwhelmed by negativity, turn to your faith for refuge and remember that the guidance and support of your family and loved ones will provide greater value in addressing your concerns. Remind yourself that there are some things that money cannot buy and peace of mind is certainly one of them. 



Elyo is the director of Marketing and Operations at the Caylum Trading Institute. She authored, Raising Heirs, available at www.kerygmabooks.com. E-mail her at elyo.lee@gmail.com.

You can judge a person's character by the habits he's formed. You can judge a family's values by the traditions they uphold. If it is the things we do repeatedly and consistently that define how we live our lives, why not take a more active role in shaping them?

Allow me to share one tradition my family does every year that, at first, may seem a little too formal or silly, but if done in your *own* way, can help each and every person in the family be the best they can be. We call it our yearly "family goal setting."

Every year, I'm sure you've tried, one way or another, to set goals for yourself such as starting a new diet, saving or traveling more. (How have your 2018 goals been coming along?) Some think and reflect about their goals while others even take the time to write them down on a piece of paper. Still, I hear of very few who actually go as far as calling a meeting with their family to discuss, bringing out the Excel sheets for scoring and setting goals, while taking down the minutes of the meeting as if it's in a corporate setting. (I'm serious. We really do this). Don't get me wrong; it's a pretty chill and lax atmosphere where we're in our *pambahay* clothes all clumped up in a room together.

The idea really started out with my mom (a.k.a the FQ Mom) who thought, why not share our New Year goals with people who only want what's best for us and will help in any way they can? What better place to look than within our own family?

We all decided to do this when we would go to a new place where we haven't been




to before, either out of town or out of the country over the holidays for the New Year. We would then find our own spot to reflect on the year, look back at how we did, and dream some more on how to make the next year even better. We would dedicate the afternoon sharing our stories and our personal ratings of how well we did, giving a score from one to ten for the rest of the family to hear. After that, we would lay out all our goals for the next year so we would be accountable to each other. Anyone is free to give his or her comments as well as offer help and advice on how to improve.

It may seem awkward at first, but trust me, you'll learn so much about each other, know what each person truly values, and realize how great it is to have a support system as you shoot for the stars. It's great being able to share your successes with loved ones without fear of being called *mayabang*. Celebrating these achievements, like getting into your dream school or starting a business,

can really amplify the joy you get out of it. At the same time, having an avenue to share your failures and shortcomings without judgment can be the best therapy toward overcoming them.

We know everyone is on the same team, and being aware of each family member's goals gives us a chance to help where we can. We can't help someone when we don't even know where he or she needs help with.

At the end of the day, there's nothing to lose with trying this out with your family. You might discover something about your mom or dad that you never knew before. You may even learn a thing or two about yourself. And who knows, this could be that little extra push you need to finally reach that goal. 

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

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We, The Church

By Dina Pecaña

What is the first thing that comes into your mind when you hear the word *vocation*?


For many years, I thought those who had a vocation were priests, religious, and missionaries. I had relegated myself as *karaniwang tao*, an ordinary person living an ordinary life. But as I grew in my personal relationship with the Lord and learned more from the teachings of the Church, I realized that in the ordinary is a God-given vocation for folks like you and me. St. Teresa of Calcutta said, “Wherever God has put you, that is your vocation. It is not what we do but how much love we put into it.”

Majority of us are part of the Catholic laity and though it seems we live ordinary lives, we, too, are “entrusted by God with the apostolate by virtue of our Baptism and Confirmation... to work so that

the divine message of salvation may be known and accepted by all men throughout the earth” (*The Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC], 900). St. John Paul II emphasized the vital role of the laity and said, “Lay believers are in the front line of Church life; for them the Church is the animating principle of human society. Therefore, they in particular ought to have an ever-clearer consciousness not only of belonging to the Church, but of being the Church, that is to say, the community of the faithful on earth under the leadership of the Pope, the common Head, and of the bishops in communion with him. They are the Church” (CCC 899).

Each of us has a role to play in building God’s Kingdom here on earth. We are called to participate in the priestly office as it says in 1 Peter 2:5: “Like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices

acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” The CCC further explains that our daily life as the laity, if lived in the Holy Spirit, is the very sacrifice we offer to the Father together with Jesus Christ, especially during the celebration of the Eucharist: “For all their works, prayers, and apostolic undertakings, family and married life, daily work, relaxation of mind and body, if they are accomplished in the Spirit—indeed even the hardships of life if patiently born—all these become spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. In the celebration of the Eucharist these may most fittingly be offered to the Father along with the body of the Lord” (434).

Starting today, let us change the way we see ourselves. We not only belong to the Catholic Church; we *are* the Church. And it is our calling to bring God’s love to the world by the ordinary, simple, yet full life that we live. 

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



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mission and be a

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Pilma, now at midlife, joyfully recounts her experiences in the past, especially when God gave her the gift of mission as a young woman in Europe.



A Gift That Keeps on Giving

By Pilma Pilanga II

A journey to Europe is reasonably next to impossible for someone with no bank account nor profitable career to speak of. That was me after leaving the convent. Yet three months after, I was standing in front of Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome. How did it happen? Jesus said, “Ask and you shall receive.” So I did. On this year’s twentieth anniversary of that event, I reflect on the experience and give tribute to everyone who became part of it. This is a story of faith in God that was deepened by a gift.

Leaving the Convent

I was preparing my afternoon snack in the novitiate when a strange thought entered my mind, “I am not where I am supposed to be.” It confused me because it never occurred to me that I should leave the convent. After all, I didn’t see myself getting married. I simply wanted to serve and be in God’s presence.

However, I had a strong desire to go to school for missionary training. Hence, I prayed. I said that if it was God’s will that I leave the convent, then He would give me a job for transition. Lo and behold! This job was provided just a few days after. A priest mentioned to me that they were looking for someone to take on a project in their office. He did not know about my bargain with God. Was it coincidence or an answered prayer?

With that, I felt I needed help. I was used to mental prayers, the Jesuit meditation, and contemplation. It was my first time to ask for a very specific condition. And seeing it manifested immediately was new to me. I began to feel that I was in a real conversation with God.

With permission to undergo guided discernment, I went into an eight-day Ignatian retreat. It was spent with long hours of prayer in silence, just

Pilma (third from the right) spent mealtimes with her batch mates at Emmanuel School of Mission.



waiting and listening. There were not many words, just, "Lord, tell me what to do." There was only silence but my heart was peaceful.

By the end of the retreat, I made a decision to leave the convent. My departure was a mixture of sadness, assurance, and hope. There was no fear or apprehension. Just a certainty that my calling was out there.

My New Mission

Immersing myself in the new job, I estimated that the project timeline was enough before something will be revealed. The most important time of the day became prayer.

One day, while browsing documents in the office, I noticed a yellow folder, which was a brochure of a program about mission for young professionals. As I went through the content and features of the program, my heart leaped. It described exactly what I desired! It would be in Emmanuel School of Mission, an international school in Rome. The fees in dollars were stipulated. A sense of certainty came over me. I had an unexplainable belief that it was

for me. Yet my circumstances clearly showed that it was beyond my reach. So I closed the folder and forgot about it.

Still waiting for "my assignment," I continued to go to daily Mass. A longtime friend, Erl, invited me to visit Father Ric, a Salesian and former boss. He asked me what I planned to do. I said that I wanted to study. Later on, Father Ric asked me if I was interested to study abroad. He gave me a yellow folder to look at, and surprisingly, it was the same yellow folder I read a few days ago!

I said I would think about it and give Father Ric an answer after a week. Of course, I could not wait. I called in to say yes after three days. This happened just as I was completing the project as scheduled.

Preparing for School

Finally, I went to my province in Zamboanga City after submitting a scholarship application. While waiting, doubts and fear entered my mind. *Will it happen? If it will, then I will be alone in a foreign country.* These thoughts were agonizing. But one day, Jesus spoke to my heart, saying, "I will be there ahead of you." That was enough for me. With complete faith, I said, "Well, if You're there, then that's where I'm going."

People seemed to just come along and contribute to the events that progressed smoothly. The interview

by a school official in Rome was done through a long-distance phone call. Then the acceptance and advice to prepare for the travel followed.

Friends were happy to hear the news and helped by lending me their office space for communication. Cash donations were given by those from whom I asked for help, and other friends also helped in the fast processing of government requirements that were beyond my capacity and influence. A kind family also hosted me in Manila.

Finally, the actual flight to the other side of the world came. I was traveling alone with less than fifty dollars in my pocket. This was after voluntarily turning over most of the received donations to Fr. Ric who helped acquire the scholarship and round-trip plane tickets. I even had some problems with baggage while at the airport and while boarding, but just like what God has promised that He has gone ahead of me, everything was resolved. He used many angels in disguise to provide for me until the end of my trip.

School Life

We were the first batch of students in this new school in Rome. As we planned ways to do our mission work, I was delighted to be able to contribute. I suggested a youth survey to find out what our target audience needed and the class agreed. The school director asked me to lead it with a project partner. Together, we developed the survey instrument. Everyone was sent two by two to St. Peter's Square. When our classmates came back, some reported that the questionnaire enabled them to easily approach and carry conversations with strangers that later touched points for evangelization. In a way, it became our first street evangelization! It was a pleasant surprise that motivated us all. We discovered the kind of activities to organize.

Our batch had many talented people—composers, singers, writers, painters, speakers, mathematicians, linguists, musicians, actors, decorators, and those who connect with others easily. We had Mass and adoration every day. We cooked, ate, and lived together,

hopped on buses, or walked to school for class. We organized fora, plays, and a musical. We did street evangelization in the piazzas of Rome. We combed the catacombs, major churches, and religious sites of Italy, and organized a campus mission in Dublin, Ireland. We sang as a choir in churches and plazas. We also produced an album. The school was brimming with fun and creativity, prayer and work, and time for self and with others.

Real Mission and Evangelization

I was given the opportunity to give talks to small groups of various nationalities. It was both fun and enlightening to realize that we could go beyond our differences when coming together to talk about spirituality. I was expecting intense theological studies, but the school made us do more actual missions. I realized then that mission is not about the mind. It's about the heart.

I remember two experiences that I consider real moments of evangelization. One was when I got into a conversation with an Italian young lady in a school cafeteria in Dublin as we watched my classmates' mini-concert. She shared about what she was doing there and her difficulties in a foreign country. I felt compassion for her and we had a long conversation. I was happy to see her talk with other members of the community and attend Mass with us. When we talked again, she was amazed at how happy and kind our group was. Then she asked what Church is. Surprised but delighted to hear the question, I knew she did not need a theological answer. So I told her that church is the community



Pilma (second from the left), together with her batch mates, met Pope John Paul II in June 1999. She recounted how the Holy Father whispered to her, "Mabuhay!"—both a greeting and a blessing for her.

(Photos courtesy of Donna Far)

that she experienced with us. She smiled gently and nodded. We went on to discuss more. But I was already happy to be able to give her a basic answer that she resonated with.

There was also a young man who regularly came to attend our public talks. He conversed with many of us. He seemed to be someone searching for meaning and direction for his life. We were talking during a meal when he said, "Your God is a personal God." I was touched. It was then I knew that his hangouts with us had been impacting him in meaningful ways.

Toward the End of the Course

Father Ric eventually came to Rome to also study, and he helped me to do part-time computer tutorial for Filipinos, which provided pocket money. At the end of the course, I volunteered to give back by working with him in reviving the youth ministry of the Filipino Chaplaincy until my visa expired. When it was time to leave, we had a farewell party. There were gifts, including cash that was the same amount as the donation I gave.

More Grateful at Midlife


By desiring mission studies and following my intuition, I asked and received. God gave me a school with a Charismatic spirituality. As years went by, I would have insights that are linked to that experience. One of this is being in constant gratitude. I realized it was also a gift that showed me how to live a happy life. As it continues to give, my work life evolves.

Amidst midlife crisis and my mother's death, I recently rediscovered praise songs and experienced their power. I love them so much that I'd search for videos on YouTube and play them every morning, especially on Sundays.

With these songs, Scripture reading, and meditation, I gained the strength and readiness to face my wounded self, to forgive and receive healing for all pains that were weighing me down from childhood up to the present.

Now as an adult in midlife, I feel free. I love and embrace myself for all that I am. I see the beauty and connection of all life on earth. Seeming obstacles no longer matter. I choose my perspective on every situation.

Connecting the dots, everything that happened in my life had a reason. Every step was a way to wholeness. To embrace both the feminine and masculine. To be OK with my light and shadows. To be happy just as I am created to be.

I asked and received. He gave me a gift that keeps on giving. Thus, my dream keeps on expanding, mindfully turning an untried faith to an awakened self. 



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By Bo Sanchez



SEEK GOD'S VOICE

*Heed the Call
to Live Out
Your Vocation*

I have an advice for people who are twenty-five and younger: take this season of your life to find your calling. To discern your voice. To discover your place in the world.

That's what I did when I was younger. And it lasted eighteen years before I finally embraced my call to married life.

I came to know God when I was twelve. I fell in love with what I was doing for Him at a young age. I told myself that I'd serve God for the rest of my life. Obviously, I thought of becoming a priest—or at least a celibate person. How could I not think of it? Every big-name saint is celibate!

I tried forming a small group of men. Our patron was St. Francis of Assisi. However, the group didn't last. Then I joined Servants of the Word, an international celibate brotherhood. But I eventually left since I wanted to remain with the community I founded, Light of Jesus Family and its other ministries. I even thought of forming my own congregation of priests!

But none of them worked. I gave married life a chance, but none of the girls I courted chose me. Until I reached thirty years old and I went on a retreat. I went up a mountain with nothing else but a Bible and a wise Jesuit priest. For seven days, I tried my very best and did everything I could so I would know God's will for me.

In the end, God said to me, "You choose."

That was when I realized the craziest, most insane thing: at least in my own life, single life and married life are both in God's perfect will.

Obviously, I chose the latter. And the rest is history.

I know a guy who, for twelve years, has been telling me, "I'm wondering if God is calling me to the priesthood."

Every time I see him, he tells me, "I'm wondering if God is calling me."

But for all those twelve years, I've been telling him one thing as well, "Enter the seminary! How will you find out unless you go for it?" But to this day, do you know what he's doing? Still wondering.

Friend, you may have fears about not following God's will. But if you want to leave your comfort zone and enter your courage zone, remember to face your fears with God at your side. As the Bible says, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you" (Deuteronomy 31:6).

And just to protect you from veering into the crazy zone, don't just get advice from anyone. Seek wisdom from the wisest person you know.

That's why we came up with this issue, with the help of our brothers and sisters in the Catholic faith. Turn the page and open your heart to God's call. 

Special Section

Teaching

A SNEAK PEEK INTO THE JOY OF PRIESTHOOD

By Fr. Joel Francis Victorino

One time, a young person who was discerning his calling asked me, “Father, are you happy with your life as a priest?”

I wasn’t sure if he was simply testing me or he really wanted an assurance that he was being led

to the right path in life. I jokingly told him that if God would give me another life, I would gladly choose to still be a priest—that is, if God still wanted to call me.

But I had to explain to him why I answered in such a way. I told him that priesthood was not an easy thing to embrace. Although there are

a lot of “perks and privileges” that go with it, there is something beyond priesthood.

The Joys of Priesthood

The joy that accompanies my life in priesthood comes from the call itself. It is not about the authority and power that comes with it. It is



THE
D

not about the entitlement that people usually gives to their priests. It is not about having to feel that one is “holier” or more filled with God-given wisdom because of the many years in the formation and ministry. No, it’s not all of these!

The joy of the priesthood

is all about the goodness and love of God. This is manifested in His call to people like me, who, even in my weaknesses, shortcomings, and sinfulness, He still gave the grace to serve others as a priest.

Ever since I became a priest in 2000, I always remind myself that priesthood should make me humble—to the point of telling myself that I really have nothing to be proud of, except His immense mercy and love. And this has worked! I know I can be boastful on how I can excel at a lot of things, on how good I am in preaching, on how creative I can be in arts, on how good I am in organizing programs and activities, how I can be tempted to bask at my own brand of greatness, and the list goes on and on!

God has His ways of telling me that if I have this idea of priesthood, then I will never be happy as one. I will just succumb to a lot of frustrations, pains, and difficulties. Truly, at some moments, I entered into such experiences.

Priesthood is all about choosing God and allowing Him to make use of my life in humble service to others through the sacraments and other pastoral ministries. With all humility, this is what I told the young person who asked whether I was happy or not as a priest.

Reality Check—and What We Must Do

Not so many young people now want to become priests, or even entertain the idea of becoming one. I can understand this. With all the realities we are facing in an increasingly secularized world and self-serving mentalities, the idea of total self-giving to God will be something


far-fetched to people today. Moreover, the ways and actions of some of us in the ministry have scandalized many—thus, making us lose our credibility and integrity as shepherds.

What do we have to do? How can I tell the youth today how beautiful, joyous, and fulfilling the life as a priest is?

First, I need to constantly embrace priesthood as a joyful life. I have not always been perfect in this aspect. At times, people see me being grumpy. But I will always tell myself that if I am not happy with what I am doing, others will not find a tinge of God in me—and I do confront myself with this! Thus, I start to renew myself and let others realize how good God is in my day-to-day life.

Second, I must embrace the immensity of God’s mercy and love for me. As I have said, I can always be proud of how good I am. But when I am confronted with my humanity, I will surely find it difficult to find my way back. Yes, I am not worthy of priesthood, but because of His mercy and love, He makes me worthy.

Lastly, I must not be “untouchable” so others can level with me. I must constantly live out the presence of God in my priesthood, even if it is not an easy thing to do. I can always tell the best and most amazing stories about God, but if I do not live it out in my priesthood, it will be for nothing.

Inviting others to priesthood will not simply be about asking others to join in. It is telling others, through the joy of my life, how God has loved and called “miserable” men like me! 

Fr. Joel is the Executive Secretary of the Episcopal Commission on Vocations of The Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines. E-mail him at Ijoelfrancis@gmail.com.

The Priests in Numbers

Archdiocese of Manila (as of 2016)

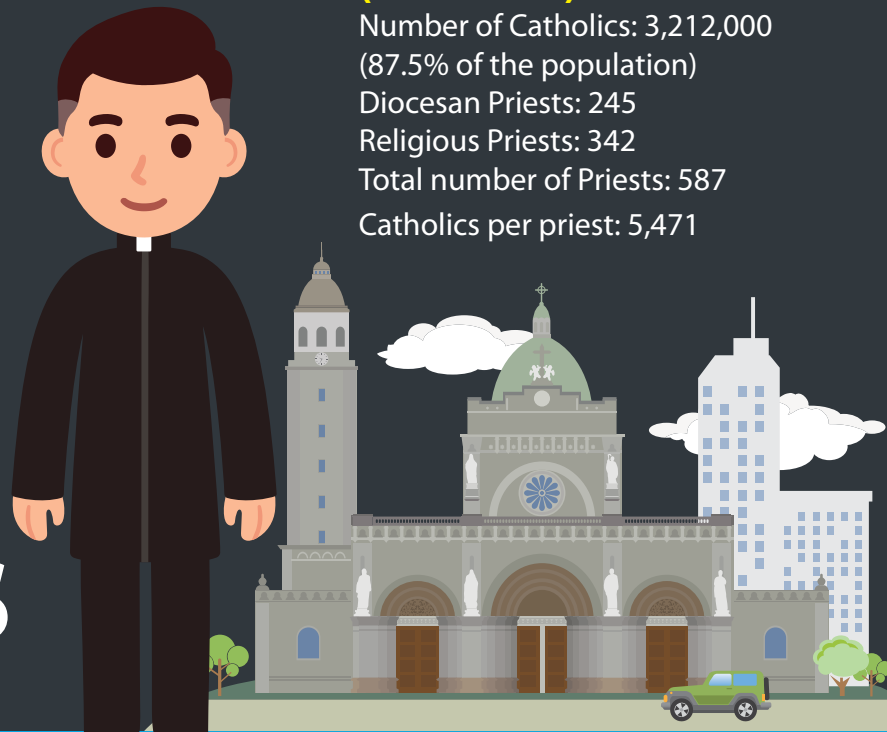
Number of Catholics: 3,212,000
(87.5% of the population)

Diocesan Priests: 245

Religious Priests: 342

Total number of Priests: 587

Catholics per priest: 5,471



DIOCESAN PRIEST VS. RELIGIOUS PRIEST

Diocesan (or secular) priests, as the name entails, are ordained for a certain diocese, under the leadership of a bishop. They usually serve in parishes, which is their main work, but some are also engaged in other ministries, such as teaching, chaplaincy in hospitals, prisons, campus ministry, etc.

- San Carlos Seminary – the archdiocesan seminary of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Manila
 - Phone: 895-8895
 - Website: www.scs.edu.ph
- Holy Apostles Senior Seminary – a diocesan seminary for late vocations
 - Phone: 895-8855 loc. 400
 - E-mail: holyapostlesph@yahoo.com / vocations@hass.com.ph
 - Website: www.hass.com.ph





Diocese of Antipolo (as of 2015)

Number of Catholics: 3,349,711
(86.1% of the population)
Diocesan Priests: 79
Religious Priests: 85
Total number of Priests: 164
Catholics per priest: 20,425

Diocese of Malolos (as of 2016)

Number of Catholics: 3,625,000
(94.6% of the population)
Diocesan Priests: 198
Religious Priests: 0
Total number of Priests: 198
Catholics per priests: 18,308



Knowing these statistics, it is obvious that there is a need for more priests. Would you heed the call?

Religious priests are members of a religious order or congregation, who vow their life within a community of men for mutual support and accomplishment of a particular ministry. They work in a wide variety of ministries, often determined according to the charism of the community where they belong. An example of a religious priest is a Jesuit, who is a member of the Society of Jesus.



The Philippine Jesuits

- Cell phone: 0917-JESUITS (09175378487)
- E-mail: vocations@phjesuits.org
- Website: www.phjesuits.org



Order of Preachers, Dominican Province of the Philippines

- Phone: (02) 712 6275
- E-mail: opvocationsphilippines@gmail.com
- Website: www.opphil.org

*There are many other religious congregations that you can search online. Or get in touch with the vocation ministry of your local parish.

A Prayer for Vocations

God our Father, You made each of us to use our gifts in the Body of Christ.

We ask that You inspire young people whom You call to the priesthood and consecrated life to courageously follow Your will.

Send workers into Your great harvest

so that the Gospel is preached,

the poor are served with love, the suffering are comforted, and Your people are strengthened by the sacraments.

We ask this through Christ our Lord,

Amen.

Sources:

<http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/diocese/dmanp.html#info>
<https://www.catholic.com/qa/what-is-the-difference-between-secular-priests-and-religious-priests>
<http://www.sanjoseseminary.org/web/faq/>
<https://www.worlddayofprayerforvocations.com/praying-for-vocations/prayers-for-vocations/>



The Family: The Seedbed of Vocations

By Elle Z. Silvestre

Bert and Marie Anne Santos knelt before the crypt of St. Josemaría Escrivá, the founder of Opus Dei, when they visited Rome in 1997. Kneeling around them were their three grown-up children, Katrina, Chito, and Herbie. The parents unabashedly prayed that their eldest son would be called to the priesthood. Chito was more free-spirited of their two boys, and the Santos couple thought that the priesthood would be good for him.

The ordained life was not a farfetched vocation in their family. Bert, himself a former seminarian, came from a clan replete with clerics. Siblings on his dad's side included an archbishop and a nun, while his mom's side had two monsignors and a Benedictine sister. Marie Anne's lineage boasted of a similar pedigree. One of her uncles was a priest, too.

The Santos couple thought that the Lord had not heard their heartfelt prayer, because in 2003, Chito got married. They never expected that the answered prayer would come through their youngest son, Herbie.

Herbie finished his masters in business administration from the University of Hawaii. His corporate stint included positions like assistant brand manager of Procter and Gamble, advertising executive of McCann Erickson, branch manager of Bank of the Philippine Islands, and vice president and chief operations officer of MRI Worldwide Philippines. He also worked in Tokyo in Fujitsu's IT subsidiary.

Today, just two years after his ordination, Father Herbie is the parish priest of The Lord of Divine Mercy Parish in Sikatuna Village, the spokesperson of the Cubao Diocese, and the head of its Media Ministry. *Kerygma* interviewed his parents and this is what we learned.

K: How was Father Herbie as a child?

Father Herbie was a well-behaved boy who loved to excel in all his undertakings. We, his parents, did not have problems with him as he grew up. He could be left alone by himself as he always managed to find something to do to make himself happy, without the help of anyone. He did not need other people to make him happy.

Even as a young boy, Father Herbie always took his studies seriously and he excelled academically.

K: What did you think he would be growing up?

He wanted to be the Steven Spielberg of the Philippines someday. He loves movies.

In Ateneo High School, he was a member of the prestigious drama guild under Mr. Onofre Pagsanghan, The Dulaan Sibol. He was an actor in the plays presented to the public by the Dulaan Sibol. While in high school, Father Herbie was also one of the anchors in a talk show for the youth in an AM radio station.

We thought that he would eventually be able to attain his ambition to be a leading producer and director of good films like Steven Spielberg. Or he could also be a top executive of a big corporate organization.

K: What were Father Herbie's personal interests and values when he was a kid? Did you

notice any sign that he was called to the priesthood?

Father Herbie enjoyed watching movies, engaging in sports (basketball, tennis, soccer), hanging out with his many friends (*barkada*), eating good food, and traveling. Before he entered the seminary, he already was able to visit more than twenty countries.

Even in his youth, Father Herbie had solid Catholic values. He never missed Sunday Masses. He never got into trouble for bad behavior. As a teenager, his bishop and concurrent parish priest, Bishop Honesto Ongtioco, appointed him to be the head of the youth in Christ the King-Greenmeadows Parish. He also was chosen as the president of the PREX Youth. That was the groundwork for a future good and devout Catholic lay person.

Father Herbie never wanted to be a priest. He wanted to be married and have children and be very successful as a lay person. He had girlfriends and was already contemplating marriage weeks before God invited him to be a priest.

We did not notice any sign that he was called to the priesthood.

K: What was your reaction when you learned that your son wanted to leave the corporate world and pursue God's calling?

We were so surprised. We did not expect it at all. After his breakup with his girl friend, I saw him sad and asked him if he wanted to take my place in an Opus Dei three-night stay-in retreat in Tagaytay. I said I thought he needed the retreat more than I did because of his very recent breakup. Father Herbie agreed. It was in the said retreat that God invited him to the priesthood when he was all alone before the Blessed Sacrament while praying at night. When we fetched him at the conclusion of his retreat, he told us in the car that he was considering the priesthood and he

told us what happened and how God talked to him. We were shocked!

K: How did Father Herbie's shift from the corporate world to priesthood transform your family life?

We became more involved with the Church. We are very supportive of his priestly vocation and we are often invited to Church activities that he presides. Moreover, we were appointed by our then parish priest, Fr. Bong Tupino, to be the head of our Parish Pastoral Council (PPC Lay Coordinator Couple) and that keeps us busier.


K: How do you express your support for his vocational discernment?

We express our support by letting him know that we are happy that God chose him to be His



priest and that we are glad that he was generous enough to accept His invitation. We give him advice whenever he asks for it. We make sure that we are present whenever he needs us. We are proud of him.

K: What else would you like to say to parents of prospective or new seminarians?

Parents must regard God's call to the priesthood on their sons as a unique and very precious gift. Not everyone is given this gift. Priests are instruments of God to bring as many souls closer to Him. Parents should be generous and encourage their sons to accept God's call. The family is the seedbed of all vocations. Parents must be flattered that God has called their sons to the priesthood. It is, in a way, God's affirmation that He looks kindly on said family. God is never outdone in generosity. Outpouring of blessings will come to the generous family! 

Special Section

Teaching

Getting through the Challenges of Discernment

By Elaine Marie Factor

In 2016, my childhood dream of becoming a nun was rekindled, and I had a strong desire to discern if it was for me. Next thing I knew, I was resigning from my job, packing my things, and saying goodbye to my family. I entered the convent and underwent the religious formation.

The whole discernment experience was beautiful that I had to write and share it; hence, the birth of my book, *Finding You: A Memoir on Dreams, Detours, and Destiny*. I figured that there were three main challenges that I faced during the discernment process—confusion, confirmation, and surrender. Let me share with you



who and what helped me overcome them.

Challenge #1: Confusion

I was happy with my life outside the convent before I went into the religious formation, but I felt it was time to discern if the

religious vocation was for me. I found myself confused, choosing between two good things. The big question was, what is God's will for me? And the following sub-questions helped me clear the fog and make a choice.

1) Is it because of a higher purpose?

"Should I enter the religious life?" I read the first option aloud then placed the sheet at the back of the other. "Should I not enter the religious life?"

It was a big help to weigh things on paper. It makes the discernment look more manageable than when everything was just in my mind. Sister Sol, my discernment retreat facilitator and formator, said I should check the pros of each option and see which I would pick for a higher purpose or for higher values such as spiritual maturity, peace, and love for God and His people.

2) Is it an escape?

If you're not confused, then I would question the authenticity of your call. Most women enter the convent because they're running away from marriage.

I talked to Sister Charry, a nun from another congregation, before I entered the convent. She told me I have to make sure I was not considering nunhood because I was escaping from something. I thought of it and realized

that, aside from running away from marriage, it could be anything. Was I escaping from my responsibilities at home? Was I in doubt that I could ever be ready for an independent life? Was I afraid I would never get a good boyfriend or husband?

3) Is it the way of life that you want?

You have to decide if this is the kind of life you want. Remember that you didn't apply for a job—the religious life is a way of life.

Sister Sol told me that all vocations—married, single blessedness, religious—is a way of life. She said the



purpose of getting inside the convent's premises and living with and like a nun is for the formands to discern well if we want such way of life. If we think we can love best in this structure of living, then it probably is for us. Another helpful method I found was imagining myself assuming the role—nun, wife/husband, living alone and seeing if the mere imagination makes me happy.

4) Does it bring you peace and bliss?

God's will and voice always bring peace. Therefore, a discerning heart should be attentive to things that bring peace. You have to follow your bliss.

My co-formands and I once attended a class on *Reflective Thinking*, and our nun-facilitator said that



emotions are the soul's skin. She encouraged us to be aware of how certain things make us feel and think while we were discerning. I also read from Fr. Thomas Green's book *When the Well Runs Dry* and Bo Sanchez's article in an issue of *Kerygma* magazine that God's will gives a sense of peace and bliss in the heart even at the mere thought of choosing it. I thought

that, of course, God wants me to have peace and bliss, so He probably will bring me to where I can have them.

Challenge #2: Confirmation

In Fr. Green's book *Weeds Among the Wheat*, he said that using solely our reason to discern can be misleading. Discerners should also listen to God when He speaks through other people, our experiences, and our senses. There are two things I found most helpful in, somehow, confirming if my choice is also God's desire for me.

Learn from the experts.

My dad told me that it would be helpful to read about the lives of the saints while inside the seminary or convent because I won't feel alone in the journey.

Papa advised me to borrow books about saints from the convent's library. He said reading about their lives gave him strength to persevere and helped him to discern better when he was in the seminary. Since most of the saints entered the religious life, reading how they handled things during their religious formation felt like taking advice from the experts.

It also helps to have someone see the situation from a third-person perspective. However, since there are spiritual confusion and questions you cannot just open up to anyone, having a spiritual director is quite a big need. I once asked Sister Sol what a spiritual director is, and she said it must be: (1) someone who I can comfortably tell my thoughts to; (2) someone I trust enough to take advice from; and (3) someone who I think knows God more than I do or is more spiritually mature than me. I remember how I prayed long and hard for the right spiritual director (SD). I had Father Jin as an SD for a day and my father for the rest of my discernment journey.

Pray more and obey more.

Prayer as a climate of the

soul means the Beloved is consciously in our hearts. What the Beloved desires, the heart desires.

We had prayer lessons with Sister Sol back then, and she mentioned about the importance of prayer in discernment. If I want to know what God wants, then why not talk to Him often? I realized that I should get to know Him more if I want to know His heart well.

I also remember how Sister Sol emphasized obedience. We were busy doing household chores as much as we were busy praying. Prayer and obedience should go hand in hand. I found Sister Sol's strictness unreasonable at first, but Papa said that it was vital in the formation because it was some sort of a practice. What's the point of knowing God's will if you won't obey Him anyway? How can you obey God whom you cannot see if you cannot obey people whom you can see?

Challenge #3: Surrender

The hardest part of discernment is the eventual need to surrender. For me, the glaring fact of its need was there before I made a choice, when I finally made a choice, and while I was performing the choice. The daunting pain of surrender almost made me ignore God's whisper that was leading me to what I thought was the better option. But when




there is certainty, there is assurance. It's just like what Papa said the first time I told him about my desire to enter the convent, "Indulgences, Elaine. We are sure that God will take care of us. He can bless us more when you're with Him." And indeed, when you show God your trust, He will never fail you.

Surrender is something that the world will never understand. When a person is torn between surrendering or not, taking a worldly perspective will only make her find the act of surrendering unreasonable.

I remember how entering the convent asked me to surrender things I was blessed with—family, friends, and work. For some, it can even be fame and fortune. That felt like dying to myself. Imagine surrendering things that somehow identify you. Some people find that hard

to understand, but for me, it helps to always remember why I was there, for Whom I was doing that, and how I came to that decision in the first place.

Discernment is a challenging process. It could break you or make you, discourage you or encourage you, and cause you joy or cause you pain (or even both). But it is when things get hard that learning and purification surely take place. This is where God reveals Himself more. And though the discernment process seems like a never-ending quest, I assure you that the God who loves you is with you along the way. 

Elaine is a writer, poet, and teacher. Her book, Finding You, is available at www.kerygmabooks.com. E-mail her at elainemariefactor@gmail.com or visit www.elainemariefactor.com.



Five Years and Counting My Journey toward Living Single for the Lord

By Jhola Salazar as told to Krizelle R. Talladen

I'm getting married."

This was what I told my parents in Oriental Mindoro in 2013. But I was not getting married to any man but to Jesus. That year, I made my lifelong commitment to live single for the Lord. The journey was not easy. But I knew in my heart that this was God's will for me to live my life to the fullest.

My State of Life Discernment

I just graduated from college when I started my state of life discernment in 2004. All single men and women in our lay community, Ligaya ng Panginoon, are encouraged to go through this discernment.

As I went through the process, I was certain I was not for religious life, primarily because I had been involved with Ligaya and Christ's Youth in Action (CYA), which are lay groups. I realized that there's something about lay people that can influence the youth more than the religious can. It was clear I wanted to remain lay.

I was also definite, then, that I was called to community life in Ligaya. If I would choose religious life or other ways to live single for the Lord, I would have to leave Ligaya. I knew I wanted to pursue my calling within this community, believing that God brings us to where we really should be.

During that time, there was no organization for women living single for the Lord. I felt it would be difficult to choose living single for the Lord because there would be no structure to affiliate myself with and I could be accountable to. If I chose to live single for the Lord without this context, for me, it's not living single for the Lord, but living single for myself and for service.

And so I leaned toward married life. At that time, I had a very big crush on one brother in the community. If I would get married, he must be the man. But I realized that I must not fix my eyes on him as I was making the decision. Choosing my state of life should not be based on the person in front of me but based on God's call.

My Three Main Fears

One time, as I sat and meditated at the porch of a retreat house, I heard God speak to my

heart, “Jhola, I want you to consider living single for the Lord.”

My first reaction was, “What?” I was three months into my discernment. I was already open to it, but the first time I heard it in my heart, I said, “No way!” I don’t think I was holy enough for that.

God showed me how I really saw the single life, and I didn’t feel it was for me. And there were three things I was afraid of. First, I felt that if I would live single for the Lord, I would be miserable and lonely. Second, I felt that there was no financial security and that no one would take care of me for the rest of my life. Third, I was afraid that I wouldn’t be faithful to this way of life if I would live it alone.

Those were the fears that I presented to the Lord and I heard Him say, “Jhola, I am inviting you. I am not forcing you. Whatever choice you’re going to make, I will still bless you.”

I looked at my very young self and eventually decided in prayer that I would not choose to live single for the Lord, and pursue married life instead.

So I ended my discernment and told Beth Melchor, my good friend and co-discerner, that this was my decision. She just agreed.

But at the time, I was open for growth. I was just starting my service in CYA, and I was being trained to become one of the youth leaders in Ligaya. I wanted to take my time to grow first, at least in the next two years.

In those two years, many difficulties came and I went through some sort of depression. My grandmother, who was close to my heart, also died, and I was not able to grieve well for her death. With everything that was happening, I almost wanted to quit serving in the community.

During Lent of 2006, I went on a silent retreat, and there, God dealt with my issues. He showed me what I needed to do in my life and assured me that He would guide me. After the silent retreat, I decided to spend more time to be a missionary, at least in the next five years.

That same year, I attended another retreat where we talked about living single for the Lord. One of the speakers said, “Whatever fear you have in one state of life is the same fear you have to deal with in all states of life.”

Those words struck me. There’s no guarantee I would be happy, secure, and faithful if I choose married life over living single for the Lord.

Toward Lifelong Commitment

In November 2006, when Beth began meeting with me and two other sisters, the first thing she said was, “Ask if the Lord is inviting you to consider living single for Him.” Those were almost the exact words I heard from God two years ago! Back then, I remember telling Beth about my decision but not what God spoke to my heart.

So I took a few months more to discern as Beth, my other sisters, and I met once a month. And on June 29, 2007, I made my initial commitment to live single for God.

After many meetings and discussions since 2005, Bethany Association was finally founded




in 2009. (Bethany is a group of women living single for the Lord as active members of The Sword of the Spirit, an international, ecumenical, charismatic “community of communities.”) God addressed my concern about not having a group to join and not having to leave Ligaya.

On February 2, 2011, I made a private vow to live single for the Lord. I invited my friends and we had a simple ceremony within the Mass. Just like the initial commitment, the private vow was renewable and not yet binding.

In the same year, 2011, I was invited to attend the Bethany Association conference in Ecuador, where I saw women who were in their fifties, living on their own, and yet remained faithful. I realized if that if they were able to do it without being lonely and miserable, then maybe I could do it, too.

There were still more questions that God answered. Through circumstances and experiences, God allowed me to discern and learn more.

Finally, in 2013, I made my lifelong commitment to Jesus, my freewill offering to Him and my response to His personal love for me. It’s been more than five years now, and I’ve had no regrets.

I can serve God in any other way, but given who I am, my gifts, and the grace given to me, living single for the Lord is the best way I can love and serve Him. 

E-mail bethanyassociation@gmail.com or visit www.bethany.swordofthespirit.net.

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 - d. Platinum KMP- P10,000.00: 10 Raffle entries
3. To subscribe, tear off the subscription form from the magazine that will serve as your raffle coupon, fill out with your complete name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, mode of payment, affix signature, and mail to or drop at:

Shepherds Voice Publications Inc., #60 Chicago St. Cubao Quezon City

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

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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

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3. 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.
4. Kerygma Conference 2018 is on November 22-25, 2018 at the SMX Convention Center.

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

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

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 - b. Silver KMP- P2,500.00: 3 Raffle entries
 - c. Gold KMP- P5,500.00: 6 Raffle entries
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Guidelines:

1. 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.
 2. 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.
 3. The winner of the trip to **Holy Land Pilgrimage** will secure his/her own passport.
 4. Prizes are transferrable but not convertible to cash.
 5. 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.
 6. Validity of international trips is within 6 months from issuance.
 7. Prizes must be claimed w/in 60 days from receipt of notification.
 8. Prizes unclaimed will be forfeited in favor of SVP with prior DTI approval.
- a. 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).
- b. 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.

9. The promo organizer's decision is final with the concurrence of the DTI.
10. All SVP employees are not eligible to join the raffle promo including their relatives up to the 2nd degree of consanguinity or affinity.
11. 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:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Coffee with Bo & breakfast with Bob schedules will depend on the availability of Bro. Bo Sanchez & Father Bob Mcconaghy.
5. Call 725-9999 and look for Sarah for more details.

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



PROMOTED! REVISITED

So when is your next promotion?" is what I normally ask my student or mentee in a management fast-track program. I get varied reactions when faced with this question. Most of which depend on one's personality or ambition level, and on their interpretation of my question.

We usually view a career promotion as an upward change in role bestowed upon us by upper management or our superiors.

While this is true, I view this as an external aspect of being promoted. In my mind, there are two types of individuals who get promoted: (1) high-potential individuals whom management believes can step up to a higher role; and (2) individuals who have acquired the skills to play the higher role and have actually demonstrated the ability to do so. Promotions in both cases are great. The first type is the


traditional view of being promoted. It is perceived as primarily an award for being a good employee and for good performance. This reward has at least a couple of drawbacks.

From a company perspective, we've seen good employees go from great to mediocre, and they stay mediocre for the rest of their career. Many entry-level roles are individual contributors and when pushed up to supervisor role, they struggle. A fantastic award-winning team leader can all of a sudden choke after the euphoria of being elevated to a department lead role. The management team would then have the temptation to call this promotion a mistake since it was sometimes viewed as a destination. The fact that this is a higher role that requires a learning process is overlooked.

From the part of the recipient, the perception that this is an award can create the "I have

arrived" syndrome that may prevent one from growing in the new role. Dr. Carol Dweck calls this a "fixed mindset." When taking on a position, it is not to say, "I have proven that I am great!" but to say, "I need to get good at this!"

On my part, I would recommend the second type of getting a promotion. Research the skills that you would need to go to the next higher or bigger role, work at it while doing excellently in your current job, and create habits that will make you perform at a higher level. You are then working to upgrade your value to the organization. This is the promotion one has to aspire for with or without the official promotion appointment document from the company.

Rather than praying: "Lord, cause me to promoted!" I'd recommend we pray, "Lord, grant me the grace to grow in the skills and gifts You gave and intend for me to have!" 

E-mail Ariel at adriz77@yahoo.com.

By Ariel B. Driz





CAN YOU TAKE LIFE'S HEAT?

Can you stay under the heat of the sun the entire day? The only time I was really able to keep myself under the sun for half a day was during my ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps) days in college. We stay in the school grounds from 6 a.m. to 12 noon!

But can you really stay under the sun the entire day? Take the summer days, with the scorching heat able to dry your newly washed clothes in minutes. Or when you just took a bath and after drying up, you are already dripping wet with your own perspiration. I just cannot! But one morning while I was watering the outdoor plants at home, I wondered how can they stay alive even if they are under the sun the entire day. How can they take the heat?

Life's heat can be both a blessing and a burden. You feel life's heat when you are down, when problems seem

to overwhelm you, and you see yourself drowning. In the same way, life's heat can be felt in your success. There is a flow where everything goes your way. Money and fame come naturally. What you need comes to you. Just like the plants, we need two things to take life's heat: soil and water.

Soil represents humility. Whether you are in your high or low point, your heart needs to be humble so it can handle success properly. We all know that a self-made man does not exist, because everything we are and own came from a selfless God. It is also humility to know that you are not alone, and there is a God who loves you and helps you in time of need. A humble heart welcomes the help of people around, so you can stand on your feet again. By the way, it is nice to know our friends and family help us not because we are weak, but because we are loved.

Water represents nourishment. And for me, we


By Dreus Cosio

receive life nourishment through loving relationships. God makes His love felt through the nourishing relationships around us. Some of us may not be familiar with John 3:16 or Jeremiah 29:11, and the only verses we know are Lunch 11:45 or Merienda 4:15. Because it is during these mealtimes when God's love becomes real through life-changing moments as we laugh, listening, or simply be there for each other. No wonder during our ROTC days, the moments with our friends under the sun made the journey fun.

As I watered the plants that were under the shade, I noticed they were not as healthy as the ones under the sun.

The reason? Plants need sunlight.

We, too, need the sun. When you experience the heat, you experience life. Know that there is a God who loves you, so allow Him to use you to be God's love to others.

Let His heat be felt through you. Let us all get it from the Son whose name is Jesus. 

Dreus is the builder of The Feast SM Sta. Rosa. E-mail him at andruscosio@gmail.com.

Tears started to roll down my cheeks as I listened in the car to American Christian music singer Kari Jobe's song "Forever." "Forever He is glorified. Forever He is lifted high. Forever He is risen, He is alive!" I felt a deep sense of joy in how victorious God is. I felt God's immense presence through the song. I've always wanted to spread God's Word through music, and hearing Kari Jobe's song showed me that she was the embodiment of that mission. I wanted to be like her—a worship singer and songwriter. In that brief moment, an enormous dream sparked in my heart.

I knew this dream is not only daunting, but most especially, impossible. How can an insecure girl like me lead people into worship in a massive nerve-wracking scale? I used to lead worship in our parish-based community but that had thirty young people in attendance. I would sing at The Feast, but I had never led worship for a bigger crowd. So how did this dream even end up in my heart?

Most of the time, when God puts a God-ordained dream in our hearts, it is almost always impossible to achieve. Sure, it feels good to have achievable dreams, but it is even more exciting to have dreams beyond our capacity—an opportunity to trust in God's capacity. As I faced that dream, I remembered what I could not do, but I also remembered what God alone can do.

And so that was the big picture—to be like Kari Jobe. But how does that look like in my current life? Leading worship won't pay bills. Serving as a worship singer won't put food on the table. I continued serving in the music ministry, but to

sustain myself, I started singing in bars and hotel lounges. I would get P300 for a gig with three sets of songs. That's pretty low by industry standard, but that's OK with me, as long as I have the flexibility of time to serve as a worship singer.

During one of my gigs, the talent manager said, "Your hands are dark and ugly. You need to put more lotion. Your hands are the first thing clients see when you sing." I can train to improve my voice, but how do I train my hands to look beautiful? I cried and thought that if this world doesn't want me to sing for them, then I would give this voice to God and I would raise these dark, ugly hands to worship Him. The mission now had a stronger conviction.

I started looking for new opportunities to sustain myself. I went into events hosting, social media marketing, even teaching English classes to Japanese. In the wee hours of the morning, as I would wait for my students, I would write lyrics of songs and I would ask for my brother to put in melodies.

Most of the songs would gather dust in our shelf as they slept in my notebook. But I continued to write until one of our songs, "Never Fail" became the theme song for Kerygma Conference. That's when I had the desire in my heart to come out with my own album. Even so, I had so many questions in my heart. How? Will people listen? Am I good enough? Am I really building God's name or am I just building a name for myself? I parked that dream in my heart. I was dilly-dallying. I was unsure. Until one day, I attended Hillsong Conference, where I heard worship leader and songwriter Joel Houston say, "If you don't put your songs out there, one day, you'll be surprised, that when you enter the gates




FAITHFUL TO COMPLETE

By Veia Lim-Viñas

of heaven in eternal life, the angels are screaming your songs. The sad part is, no one from earth heard it." In that instance, I knew the Lord was speaking directly to my heart, as if telling me, "The world needs to hear who I am."

And so with a scared heart, I trusted in God and started the album journey. I asked help from friends who are amazing musicians to arrange the songs. I asked help from my sister-in-law to create the album cover. I asked help from another sister-in-law to do my makeup for the photo shoot. I asked help from my brother to record and mix the songs.

As I did my part, I saw God do His. He didn't just send the right people, He also opened the right door to fulfill the dream He placed in my heart.

Fast-forward to today, *Healer of the Broken* is now out on Spotify, Apple Music, and on CDs—a dream I thought was impossible. God is faithful to complete what He began. But what's greater is He has just begun. 

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 of 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 of the Holy Spirit. Amen!



SPECIAL INTENTION FOR THIS MONTH:

Lord Jesus, thank You for the gift of vocation and for giving us the free will to explore and choose. By Your grace, may we all say yes to Your will so we can serve You and Your people in the best way possible, for the rest of our lives. We also pray for our brothers and sisters, especially the religious, so they will remain faithful to their calling. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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.

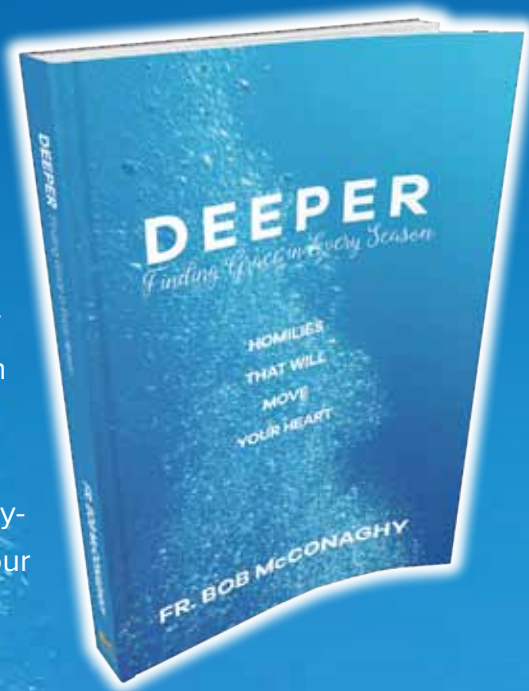
God Wants to Be in Your Every Season

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Bestselling author of *Happy Secrets to an Obedient Life*



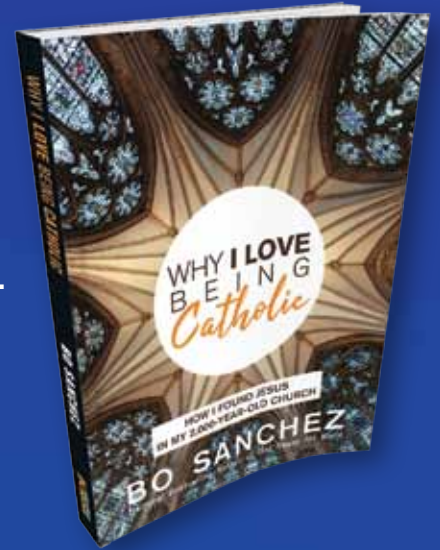
Fr. Bob McConaghy is a retired priest from the diocese of Allentown, Pennsylvania. Having retired from active parish ministry for health reasons, he has come back to Manila, Philippines where he has been serving for eight years at Lorenzo Mission Institute Seminary in Guadalupe, Makati City, where he 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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