

The Transfiguration

March 7, 2009 Community Celebration Teaching

Today we hear the story of the Transfiguration. It is one of the most important events in the life of Jesus. All the Gospels except John's, recount this event as a turning point situated towards the end of Jesus' three years of ministry. In Mark's account, we hear how Jesus transfigured before his disciples, "and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller on earth could bleach them." Dinaig pa ang kaputian na dulot ng mga pangunahing sabong panlaba sa ating mga tindahan ngayon! Then Elijah and Moses appeared and they were conversing with Jesus. This event is actually an epiphany. A revelation. Isang kaganapang nagpapakilala kung sino talaga si Hesus. This is a feast of temporary glory, a flicker of heaven, a flash-forward to Jesus' future resurrection. To what can we compare the significance of this event to our everyday experiences?

When we go to movies, aside from the main feature, we also get to see some movie previews. These previews are meant for us to look forward to upcoming movies. They make us anticipate with excitement the showing of these movies: Hindi dapat palagpasin kasi ang gaganda ng trailer. Dapat panoorin at talaga namang kapanapanabik. In the idiom of movie advertising, the scene on the mountain is a preview of coming attractions in Jesus' life, his resurrection and his ascension into heaven. It is also an indicator that humanity will share in the glory of God through the resurrection.

But why did Jesus allow his disciples to witness the transfiguration? Jesus chose to do so in order to strengthen their faith. He wants to give them hope. Why? Because Jesus knows that the following events in his life will be difficult for the disciples to accept. They will see him in



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the hands of the religious leaders, they will see him sentenced to death by a foreign leader, they will see him suffer, undergo cruelties, stripped of dignity. They will see him die. Ang taong kanilang sinusundan, hinahangaan at ipinagmamalaki, ay makikita nilang magdurusa, hihiyain sa buong bayan, ipapako sa krus, at mamatay. That's devastating. And so Jesus in his mercy,

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I have always believed that since my sufferings are nothing compared to what Christ went through in His passion and

Why do I have to experience suffering?

Eli Prieto, Council / MEM

death, I should be able to **submit and surrender** to my sufferings the same way Christ did – **THY WILL BE DONE**. However, I could not accept that **MY GOD**

would **WILL and WISH** me suffering and pain. I have stated this time and again in our BCGG meetings. I even argued Christ suffered the agonizing pain and suffering in His passion and death so *that I will not experience them myself*. **TAPOS NA YUN. GINAWA NA YUN NG DIYOS PARA SAAKIN**. Why, then, do I still have to experience pain and suffering? To make me stronger? To make me a better person? Wouldn't this make God a pervert and a sadist? This issue on suffering has remained a blur to me until Fr. Manoling Francisco, SJ, clarified my concept of suffering during the Annual Ignatian Retreat (AIR) held March 13-15 of this year.

Fr. Manoling identified the first type of suffering as **PRE-MORAL SUFFERING** (i.e., random acts of nature). For example, it would be absurd to think that God would order a mosquito to fly and guide it to find a specific child to bite in order to inflict the said child with dengue fever. In reality, the mosquito flies at random and, **without logic or reason**, inflicts the dengue disease on any child arbitrarily. Hence, mosquito bites and tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, etc., do not happen because God wills them to inflict suffering. They are part of nature's random incidents and events.


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Letters to the Editor

From: Marylou Albert
 To: magisdeocommunity@yahoogroups.com
 Sent: Friday, March 13, 2009 3:47:50 PM

Dear Magis-mates,

Here is another reflection/discernment of Monchet which I feel is a good follow-up to the first article I sent. Thank you for your kind attention.

Mary-Lou 

On Fri, 3/13/09, Ramon Albert <monchetalbert@yahoo.com> wrote:

Dear Jun,

I did not send this to you earlier, for fear that I may be misunderstood but after I discussed this with one of my Jesuit spiritual directors, I now know that it is time to pass this to the Ateneo community.

Thanks to the wise advice of Fr. Balchand, I was able to draw the conclusion that innocence is not the end-all and be-all of the equation. Guilt coupled with true repentance does not make them less of a hero. In my case, I am thoroughly convinced that the majority are innocent but I must be open and respect a contrary view.

I learned many things while I was at LST but the lesson which has helped me most in my pastoral ministry was the late Fr. Venny Calpotura's wise advice: "When faced with a problem, always look for the paradox, for man is the greatest paradox. He is a soul trapped in a human body." And the paradox here is that when I began to be open to a contrary view, my conviction was not shaken. Rather, it was fortified. IF my directee was guilty and thus deceiving me by claiming innocence, God will not give me consolation. For God, who is truth, will not lead me astray by blessing this experience with consolation.

Monchet

From: Marylou Albert maryloualbert@yahoo.com
 To: magisdeocommunity@yahoogroups.com
 Sent: Monday, March 9, 2009 2:23:30 PM

Dear Magis Deo companions,

Here is a message written by Monchet, inspired by the release of the prisoners connected with the Ninoy assassination. The story may open new insights and a better understanding of what these prisoners experienced in the more than 20 years of incarceration. Thank you for your kind attention.

Mary-Lou 

On Sun, 3/08/09, Ramon Albert <monchetalbert@yahoo.com> wrote:

I have been blessed to know intimately two of the soldiers convicted in the Aquino-Galman double murder case. I am completely convinced that most of the soldiers are innocent. I echo the sentiment of Msgr. Bobby Olaguer, as expressed in an article of the Inquirer.

To my mind these guys are heroes, worthy of emulation. Do you know what it means to be deprived of your freedom for one single day? They were deprived of theirs for 10,000 days. They were sent to the tarmac to protect Ninoy, without any knowledge of the murder plot. Ironically, they suffered 25 years of incarceration for a crime they did not commit.

My prison ministry drew me closer to one of them. I met him in July 2002, four months after I graduated with a Master's Degree in Pastoral Theology. He was in my second batch of directees. We were in the seventh week of our eight-week retreat. I did not realize till later that August 21 fell within that week. I had asked the batch of five to meditate on the cross and what it meant to them. He shared:

"The cross for me is the sign of God's personal love for me. I used to curse every single August 21. But this week something different happened. I suddenly realized that if I were not in prison, I could well be dead, or a real killer, or a womanizer. I am glad I am here, for it is here that I found God. I now know that I am here for a

purpose. Suddenly my frustration disappeared and I feel fulfilled."

I have heard many sharings in my lifetime but none moved me more than this. I often draw strength from his peak experience. This story of heroism has gone through my mind more than a hundred times. I have not only memorized it; it has become a part of my being.

Less than a year later, God gave him a wife. He met a catechist who went to the prison regularly. They fell in love and got married. Soon after, God gave them a baby boy who became my godchild. After a discernment process, my directee became a Eucharistic Minister, doing God's work, sincerely seeking to help rather than joining merely for show or stature.

A very close relationship developed between us and I promised him that on the day he would be released, I would drop everything and be there to take him home.

In the middle of 2006 I gave up my prison ministry because of health problems. But last month, I was called back to serve. After two-and-a-half years we met again. Last Tuesday, I saw a text message from him. I didn't need to read the message; somehow I knew its contents. After a long wait, the day had finally come - I would finally bring him home, to a home he had never seen.

On the way to the prison, I had a consolation experience. In my case, it took the form of inability to control my tears. After I brought him home, I slowly reviewed the events that finally led to this occasion. There was no doubt in my mind that this was a genuine consolation that came from God.

I always believed that this man was innocent though there was still an element of doubt. But God gave me that consolation experience that removed all doubts.

This story is being told to create a wave in the bar of public opinion through a heightened awareness of the heroism of this man and his companions who went to escort Ninoy.

Monchet Albert

It takes a giant leap of faith to understand the meaning of today's Gospel incident, when Christ was transfigured before the very eyes of the apostles Peter, James, and John. (Mk. 9: 2-10). No wonder those three apostles "kept the matter to themselves, questioning what rising from the dead meant." (v. 10). More so they did not understand when Christ said further that the Son of Man "must suffer greatly and be treated with contempt" (v. 12).

"Must suffer greatly." How can we accept this as a part of Christ's life and still believe that He was the Son of God? And how, then, can we

Leap of Faith

Sunday Homily - March 8, 2009

Ruben M. Tanseco, SJ

accept this as part of our own lives if we are to believe that God loves each one of us personally? It does not make sense at all, does it? Especially today, when we are constantly conditioned by the culture all around us to precisely avoid, nay, prevent, hardships and pains, and instead keep working for self-pleasure, self-satisfaction, and self-fulfillment.

Indeed, God's ways are not our ways. The more we try to understand His ways with our limited human intelligence, the more we fail to experience the mystery of God's unconditional love. But the more we begin to simply let go and let God at the height and depth of our trials and sufferings, the more we gradually experience His loving presence within us. The power of powerlessness, the power of suffering. This is the deepest meaning of unconditional love. No logical explanations. No rational understanding. Call it blind faith if you wish, for that is the meaning of unconditional love, and the beginning

of our own personal, individual transfiguration. We do not have to wait for our literal, mortal death. In fact, if we do, then we will not be transfigured at all. Unnoticed and ever so slowly but surely, we are being transfigured as Christ was, provided, like Him, we live day by day in total loving surrender to the Almighty.

This is also what we see in today's First Reading (Gn. 22; 1-2, 9-18). In his old age, Abraham was gifted by God with a son, Isaac, his one-and-only child. But at the height of Isaac's youth, God asked Abraham to sacrifice this very son by offering him as a holocaust to God. You can just imagine what the deeply troubled and confused Abraham was thinking and feeling. Here again, a giant leap of faith, motivated by love of God, was needed, and he responded accordingly. He was preparing for this most irrational sacrifice, one step at a time, until God intervened just in time, and saved his son's life.

But then, at times, God allows a son's life to be taken prematurely, under the most tragic of circumstances. Just two weeks ago, a healthy, well-loved ten-year-old student from our Ateneo Grade School was accidentally run over by a vehicle driven by a mother who also has a son in the same school. The boy was rushed to the hospital, but was pronounced dead on arrival. And all this happened within the campus, at the Grade School parking lot at that! Upon investigation, it would seem that the woman-driver accidentally stepped on the accelerator instead of the brakes when she saw the boy and her nanny crossing in front of her van.

No amount of words can ever adequately describe the pain, agony, and grief that the boy's parents and family are going through right now, and for all the days to come. What is the meaning of all this in God's loving providence? How is all this related to the very life of Christ Himself? To the



mystery of His Passion, Death, and Resurrection, as well as in our own lives as His loving disciples?

And what about the woman who accidentally caused the boy's death? What is she going through at this point in time? You can just imagine the agony and pain that she, too, is experiencing. For both surviving families, that leap of faith we described above is what will gradually lead them to their own transfiguration.

It is in this context that I cannot but share about my own dear, youngest brother, who is in his mid-fifties. Less than a year ago, he suffered a major stroke, which rendered him speechless and paralyzed the right side of his body. His brain is not affected, so he thinks and feels normally. You can just imagine what agony and suffering he goes through from day to day. He is being given speech and physical therapy several times a week, and has shown some improvement. We are doing our human best, and the rest is in God's hands. My brother's faith is quiet, deep, and strong.

And my ever-devoted sister-in-law who takes care of him is simply amazing. I call her a living saint. Her love for God and my brother all throughout the years are beyond words to describe, and she suffers quietly, for the sake of that love.

In conclusion, then: The very meaning of our love for God is our readiness to bear the hardships and sufferings in life. Through all this will come about our own transfiguration. In God's own time, in God's own way. Amen.

EDITORIAL

Preparing for Easter: A New Life

Monchito & Tina Mossesgeld, Chaircouple / Cana BCGG

Easter recalls and celebrates the resurrection of Jesus.

The Gospel stories also tell of its impact on the first disciples. But the Easter celebration is, as importantly, concerned with the meaning of this event for our own lives and for our faith. The celebration of Easter and the days of Holy Week leading up to it are a call for us to change – perhaps change

We not only believe, we not only proclaim, but we do what we believe and what we proclaim.

radically – as Jesus’ own disciples changed so that we can share more fully in the risen life of Jesus. The sign that we are truly sharing in the risen life of Jesus is that our lives and our behavior undergo a constant development. We not only believe, we not only proclaim but we *do* what we believe and what we proclaim (Fr. Frank Doyle, SJ).

Easter is the culmination of the Paschal Mystery, which we were introduced to in our Marriage Encounter Weekend – the Passion, Death and Resurrection. Easter is a time of celebration for Christ’s triumph over sin and death. It is the time to celebrate that through God’s love, we have been given a share in the risen life of Jesus. Yet it is also an invitation to us to reflect what we need to die to so that we, by the power of God, can truly and fully share in it.

We are invited to live the Paschal Mystery in our own lives. It is, according to Fr. Ronald Rolheiser, OMI, the cycle of rebirth in our lives, a process or transformation that gives us a new life and spirit. The gospel passage, “unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain;

but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest” (John 12:24), captures the essence of the Paschal Mystery in our lives: in order to come to a fuller life and spirit – God’s life and spirit – we must constantly be letting go of our present life and spirit.

We often speak of the need to die to self. What this means is dying to those elements in ourselves that keep us from growing. We die to self to open ourselves to the deeper and richer form of life that God deeply desires for us. In the Ignatian spirituality that forms us, we believe that God is constantly at work, molding us, shaping us to what He would like us to be. By dying to ourselves, we allow the grace of God to come in and allow his work to take full effect. This is the image of the grain dying and yielding a rich harvest. This is the cycle that we must undergo not just once but daily, in every aspect of our lives.

We are therefore invited, in preparation for Easter and the promise of new life that it brings, to reflect on ourselves, our families, the small groups that we belong to (BCGGs, ME, Post LSS, Ministries) and the entire community to see how and where we need to die to ourselves so that we may receive God’s spirit in fuller measure and have a fuller life.

While many of what we need to die to are easy enough to identify, many more are more difficult to identify and admit. It requires radical openness to ourselves. It requires God’s grace. We need to reflect deeply, in prayer, on what could possibly be keeping us from being more generous and responsive to God’s will in our lives and live a life characterized by one of Ignatius of Loyola’s most beautiful expressions, *En todo amar y servir*. In all, to love and serve.

Here are some possible examples to start our reflections. These are not

meant to refer to or criticize anyone but simply to start the process of reflection: It is easy enough to hold someone responsible for hurting us but not as easy to realize that we may have an unforgiving heart that contributes to continuing the relationship problem. It is easy enough to find fault with those who we think jump to conclusions about people’s intent and behavior and thus cause problems but more difficult to realize that we too contribute to creating problems by jumping to conclusions ourselves. It is easy to justify to ourselves and others why we are not more involved in the community but harder to admit that we simply do not

... in order to come to a fuller life and spirit, we must constantly be letting go of our present life and spirit.

want our sense of comfort and convenience to be bothered which sharing and serving will entail and call for. It is easy enough to say that the teachings during community celebrations are sometimes not interesting which is why we do not like to attend but it is harder to admit that, while we refer to ourselves as members of the Magis Deo Community, we may be too insularly focused on our own groups and do not participate enough, as membership requires, in coming together for worship and fellowship, and for programs that involve the entire community. It is easy enough to say that the problem is that we do not have enough warm bodies to serve in the community but harder to see that we may be lacking in helping our members develop such deep awareness and appreciation of God’s love in their own lives that they are moved, on their

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COUNCIL CORNER

Listening to Jesus in Prayer

Ted & Susan Concepcion, SSFM / Archangel Gabriel BCGG

“I have come in the name of my Father and you refuse to accept me; if someone else should come in his own name you would accept him. How can you believe, since you both look to each other for glory and are not concerned with the glory that comes from the one God?” John 5:43-44.

Jesus was rejected by so many people during His time – his fellow Jews, the Pharisees and Scribes, the Romans and even his disciples. And the rejection that He experienced while He was still here on earth continues each day up to the present time. He waits for us each day in the Blessed Sacrament in various adoration chapels all over the world. He waits for us each day wherever we may be – at home, at work, at the gym, at the mall, wherever. And when we do visit Him during prayer, we reject Him when we do not listen to what He has to say.

As I reflected on the above passages I asked myself: why is it so easy to be inspired by our retreat master, by an eloquent speaker, by a priest’s homily or talk rather than be moved by Jesus himself during prayer time? Shouldn’t it be the other way around since Jesus is the real thing and the other humans are just his representatives? I believe the problem lies in the fact that Jesus does not speak as humans speak. We cannot see Him face-to-face. He doesn’t use microphones and prefers to speak in whispers. We need to learn how to converse with Him in a way that is so

radically different from the way we usually converse with other people. It is a new skill and the only way we learn and hone new skills is by constant practice.

One common question we ask about listening to Jesus in prayer is, “How do we know it is Jesus talking to us and that we are not just talking to ourselves?” The following are three tests to help us determine if we are really hearing Jesus’ voice and not just our own. I picked this up from an article which I found on the website www.allaboutprayer.org

“The first test is the confirmation of God’s written Word – the Bible. Everything that God says will agree with His written word. He will never tell you to sin or go against a teaching in His Word.” In reading Scriptures however, we should have an open mind and not read it with preconceived ideas about its message.

“The second test is the confirmation of godly counsel. God has placed people in our lives to help us to hear His voice.” Priests, religious, teachers, parents, our spiritual adviser and other godly friends may confirm God’s message for you or help you see where God is leading you. However, since these people are also human, their feelings and fears might get in the way of their objectivity.

“The third test is the confirmation through circumstances.” God speaks to us in the events in our life and we should carefully watch these events, study the

situation we find ourselves in and see where God is leading us and what His will is.

It is best to use all three tests when trying to confirm God’s voice especially in making major decisions.

In addition to the above three, Fr. Thomas Green, S.J., also says that God always works in peace and slowly. According to Fr. Green, a question we could ask ourselves is, “How do I feel about it when I am most at peace – when I am at prayer and quiet (not emotional) and most open to whatever the Lord wants?” He also explains that Jesus taught His apostles slowly and that spiritual growth does not come overnight.

St. Teresa of Avila says, “The important thing (in prayer) is not to think much but to love much.” And love, she says “consists, not in the extent of our happiness, but in the firmness of our determination to please God in everything.”

Prayer is pleasing to God. It is not important that we do not know how to pray or that we cannot hear His voice or that we may just be talking to ourselves. What is important is that we approach Him in love and we do not easily give up trying to pray, but practice constantly.

In the passage above, Jesus voices out his frustration because we refuse to accept Him and prefer His prophets over Him. He wants us to develop an intimate relationship with Him. He wants us to listen to Him. We can only do this through prayer. Do we love Him enough to make prayer an important part of our lives?

Preparing ... continued from page 4

own, to respond to His love through service in and outside the community.

As general guide reflection questions, we can perhaps ask ourselves and prayerfully ponder: what is it in me that is keeping me from being *Magis Deo* (More for God)? What is it in our group? What is it in our community as a whole?

Then we can share our reflections in our small groups and bring what is relevant to the leadership of the *Magis Deo* Community. But most importantly, we need to also act on our reflections and change. For this, we need not only our efforts but God’s power and grace.

On Easter, let us pray for God’s power, the power that is Easter’s grace,

the power that can “re-arrange the very atoms inside of our physical bodies, our aching emotions and our divided world and raise up new life from the ashes” (Rolheiser), to break into our lives and do for us what we cannot do simply through our own efforts.

May we truly share in Christ’s resurrection and live Easter in our lives.

A dream becomes reality.....the South Sector gets together

Sally G. Chua Chiaco, John BCGG / South Sector Head

Sixty-one members from eight BCGGs of Magis South Sector came together on Saturday, February 28, 2009

Satisfaction guaranteed as there was more than enough for many to bring home.



for four hours of friendship and fun in The Learning Child School in Ayala Alabang Village. Registration started at 5:00 PM and by 9:30 PM those who graced the affair said their goodbyes with happy smiles on their faces.

As Magis Chair Monchito Mossesgeld noted in his welcome remarks, it was the first time the South Sector got together for fellowship. A dream finally became reality. It was a time for old friends to meet up again and for everyone to get to know members beyond their BCGGs. Magis Chaircouple Monchito and Tina Mossesgeld and South Sector heads Anchit and Sally Chua Chiaco expressed the hope that this get-together would be the first of many, and that the friendships developed will pave the way for greater involvement in the many activities of Magis Deo.

All BCGGs contributed a dish to the buffet table. Food was abundant. For this affair, the South Sector focused on sharing and forgot about simplicity.

Upon registration, each attendee was given a piece of paper containing half a heart. The first game "You



This spread better not be seen by our cardiologists!

Complete Me" had everyone looking around for their "heart-mate" for the evening. Winners had to report three facts about their "heart-mates." It was a good way of making a new friend within the sector.

The second game was the Magis Trivia. Participants had to choose the answers to questions about St. Ignatius of Loyola, the history of Magis Deo, and current events within Magis Deo by making a line for the correct answer.

The Mossesgelds seemed to know all the answers, so after five questions, they voluntarily retired from the game.

Other games were Jack n Poy which raised P760 for the Suyuan; Bring the Ping Pong Home (a relay); and the Human Bingo which at one time had participants showing off pictures of their spouses in their wallets. Proudest of all was Josie Llamas who showed off a picture of a handsome Ike in his twenties.

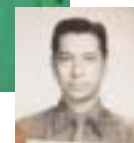
The last game, Sunduan, was most fun and elicited much laughter. A reverse Trip to Jerusalem, the game required two players flanking an empty chair to grab another player to sit on the chair. Players did this with so much gusto and speed that game master Anchit had to declare a 15-second rest time.

Special prizes were given to the early birds (Cora Buenaventura who arrived at 4 PM from Cavite, Ike and Josie Llamas, and Benz and Vina Dimanalata), the most color-coordinated couple (Boyet and Rose Ambata, ME 92, who both donned pink shirts), the most represented BCGG as a percentage of attendees over active members (John with 12 out of 13 members present), the couple with the most number of years in Magis (the Mossesgelds) and the couples newest in Magis (the Ambatas and Jamoras of ME 92).

A big "Thank you!" to everyone who came and helped make this first get-together so much fun! We're definitely looking forward to the next!



Tito Ike Llamas - pogi na noon, mas pogi pa ngayon.





In the Jan. 31 appreciation dinner, Tony & Bambi Narciso introduced a game we used to play as children - Jack n Poy, hali hali hoy! - with each player "betting" P20. The winners of the first round played against each other in succeeding rounds until a winner emerged. Magis played the game with a final twist at the end. The winner, Eli Prieto, made a wonderful gesture of donating the proceeds to our Suyuan. Alex Caramat (Jeremiah BCGG), winner of the Feb. 28 Jack n Poy, followed the wonderful tradition started by Eli.



In this relay race 4 team members each had a soft cartolina that was slightly folded to serve as a channel for the ball to roll through. The first member rolled the ball through the lower end of his "tube". The person next to him had to catch it and roll it to the 3rd guy... and then to the fourth. The first team to "shoot" the ball into the cup held by a fifth team member at the end of the line was declared the winner.



A cerebral activity after dinner (Trivia Game) on the history of Magis, the Newsletter, St. Ignatius, etc. formulated by Sally got everyone all fired up. Participants chose one of three possible answers and stood in front of the letters A, B, C, (representing the three answers) . Since Monchito had answers to all the questions (and everyone simply lined up behind him) he had to be disqualified. You can see the long queue under letter C. After Monchito got "disqualified" for being overqualified, the game became really interesting with participants giving different answers.

Suffering ... continued from page 1

The second type of suffering is labeled MORAL SUFFERING (i.e. man-made). It would be ridiculous to blame God for the sufferings made by man himself. For example, I fail in my exams because I did not study. It would be ludicrous to blame God for failing my exams or to ask the question, "Why didn't God influence me or force me to study?" or "Why didn't God point the right subject matter for me to study?" Countless other sufferings are man-made (e.g., murder and other forms of crime, war, genocide, global warming, human illnesses, etc.)

The third type of suffering happens as a consequence of our decision to love. God does not will that I suffer. GOD'S WILL AND WISH IS FOR ME TO LOVE UNCONDITIONALLY. Although God wills me to love, He still gives me the freedom to choose and decide whether to follow His will or not. If I decide to love, suffering becomes a consequence because in loving unconditionally, I embrace the totality of the person I love. *(I think this perspective of suffering as a consequence of a decision to love can*

also be applied in issues like corruption, in outreach activities, etc.)

When I decide to love my wife, I also EMBRACE SUFFERING. I cannot choose to love only the aspects I like in her nor prefer to love only her qualities that do not conflict with my own or with those of my expectations and discard the rest of her attributes. In loving her unconditionally, I cannot avoid the consequence of suffering.

During the retreat I had to grapple with the question: if I don't experience suffering, "Do I REALLY love at all?" In loving my wife, do I embrace suffering? In loving my wife, do I embrace HER at all? I tried to reflect on issues where Edith and I have had our differences. One such simple issue is the use of her car key. I have the habit of placing my car key in a small box in the same location. I always ask Edith to do the same. She simply doesn't comply. She has the whole house where she (mis)places her key. Whenever I ask for her car key, she has to look for it and many times, she doesn't find the key at all.

Then, I get irritated, she gets annoyed. Then, I give her the cold shoulder

and she does the same. Then, we do not talk to each other for days. Then, the irritation turns to anger and the anger bursts into hurting words. This simple thing has been an irritant in our relationship for years.

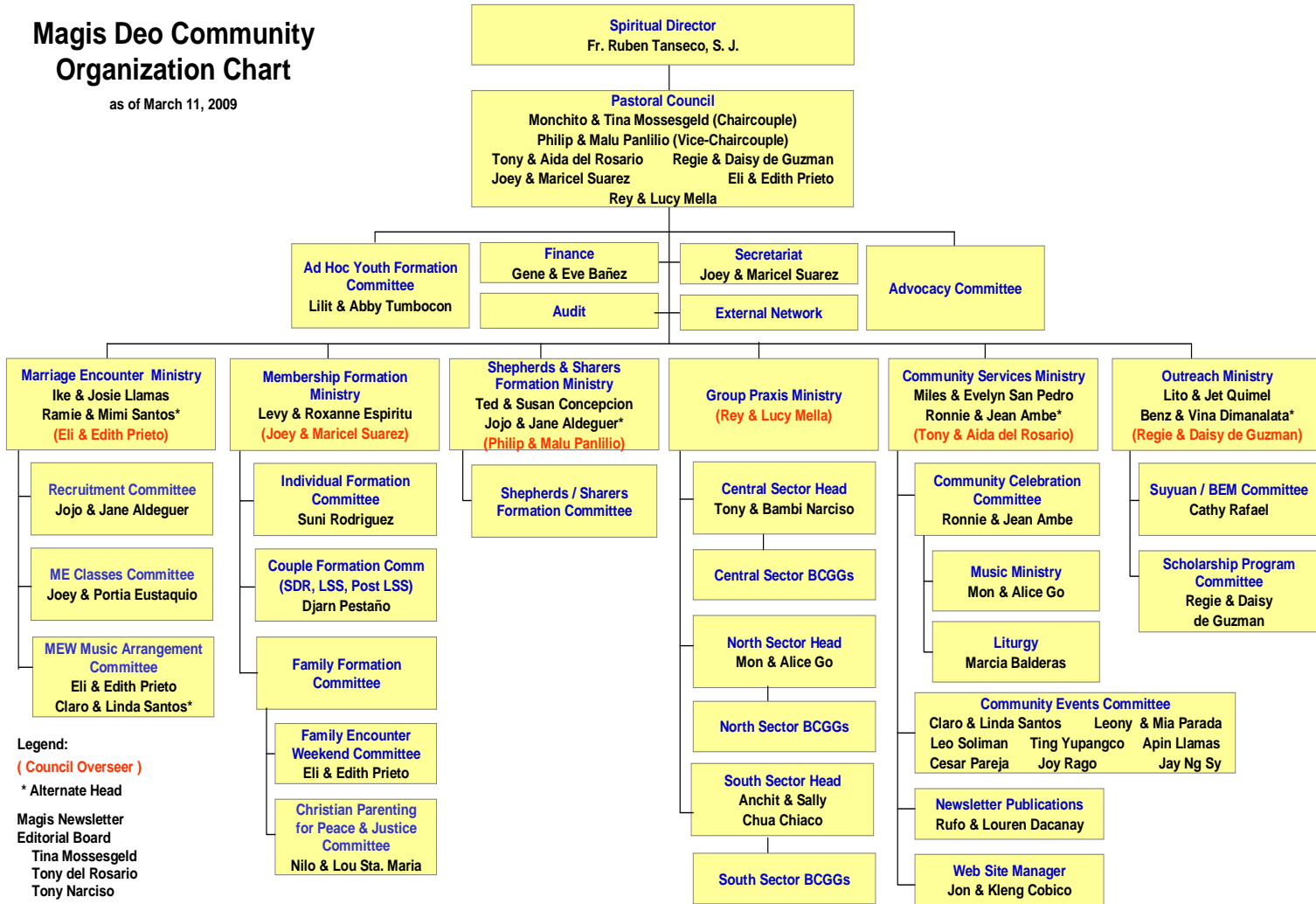
However, several days before the AIR, I decided to use the duplicate key to her car which always hangs near our helper's room. I decided that even if she gave me the original key when I asked for it, I would insist in using the duplicate key just to spite her. However, I noticed that during those same days, my irritation about the car key disappeared. Looking back, I find the meaning in what Fr. Manoling was telling us that Saturday: that the grace of God is **always** present in the suffering borne out of a decision to love unconditionally. The grace of God is not the spare key. The grace of God is my using the spare key.

I can avoid suffering due to the random acts of nature (Pre-Moral Suffering) by taking preventive precautionary measures: vaccines can help me avoid disease; early warning systems have been developed to help me

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Magis Deo Community Organization Chart

as of March 11, 2009



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allowed his disciples to see this “preview.” It is His way of telling them, “It will not end in suffering and death, there is glory awaiting me, and if you can keep up with me and share in my suffering, you too will share in this glory.

But Peter somehow missed the point. Upon seeing the outstanding light and sound show unfolding before him, he declared “Rabbi, it is good to be here! Let us make three tents: one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” Overwhelmed by what he saw, Peter decided to stay put in the mountain. Akala niya main feature na. Ayaw na niyang bumaba. Sapat na sa kanya ang

patikim. Ayaw na niya ang buong istorya. But a “preview” is just a “preview.” It is not the entire movie. And in order for them to enjoy the whole movie, they have to go down the mountain and accompany Jesus. Accompany Jesus in his trial, in his suffering, in his death. For the only way for them to share his resurrection is for them to share in his suffering. Kailangang mamatay upang muling mabuhay.

We tend to become like Peter. We want to stay put on the mountain and enjoy the “preview.” Ayaw nating bumaba sa bundok. Thus we miss the main feature. As St. Paul in his letter to the Romans writes, “we are heirs of God

and fellow heirs of Christ, provided we suffer with him in order to be glorified.....” Those who think that there is another way to follow Jesus aside from following his bloody footsteps are mistaken. If we reject suffering outright, we end up rejecting the message of Jesus altogether. If we reject the cross, we also reject the resurrection. Kung hindi pagdaraan ang krus at ang kamatayan, hindi makakamit ang buhay na walang hanggan.

In trying to live out this challenge, I invite you to take the example of Abraham whose story of faith is recounted in our first reading. God tested Abraham by asking him to offer

A perspective on organization charts

Rufo Dacanay, Mustard Seed BCGG

When one comes across an organization chart, a cursory glance and nod are usually accorded this document filled with boxes linked by lines, with names and other labels in said boxes.

Far be it from being a *de rigueur* document occasionally updated and released by organizations, an org chart brings a wealth of information about an entity. It can tell you what an organization is all about, what it stands for, what it does, sometimes even what it wants to achieve.

In the case of the Magis Deo org chart, one immediately sees the organization's spirituality-, family- and community-orientedness. One sees the various ministries and committees (departments and divisions, if you will) wherefrom and "wherehow" the organization grows, develops, guides and inspires its membership; one sees the areas where Magis works to extend its vision and mission, its outreach, to others outside the organization.

An org chart is also a "Who's Who" list, that one may know who are responsible for specific or various arenas in the organization, and, beyond getting their names, to get the chance to know the personae better, to see how they work and relate, how they lead and inspire. For us members of the Magis community, getting to know and to understand the organization and the "boxes" in Magis may further guide us (lead and urge us, even) into the box (even better: *boxes*) we can be involved in and jump into with our three T's of

time, talent and treasure. (Perchance are you eyeing the box labeled "Spiritual Director"?)

Org charts are usually reactive rather than proactive. An organization is created; it evolves; it grows. A bunch of boxes is then drawn to show who does what, for the benefit of people within and without the organization. A better option, however, is to craft an org chart that reflects where the organization wants to go, what it wants to do and accomplish, rather than to simply reflect how it is now. Such is the Magis org chart – proactive. Already one sees a box labeled "Advocacy." While unfilled to date with prime mover names and supporting boxes and lines for specific committees and plantilla, this declares Magis' awareness, concern and thrust for more active and focused action against what we have discerned to address: corruption in government.

On the lighter side, a pundit-cartoonist said that org charts are all the same, and drew the "universal" chart shown on the right. Amidst chuckles and guffaws, we could agree with him. A notable exception of course is the Magis org chart, where the "white stuff," if we were to equate this to work, is heavy on the upper rather than the lower rungs (which is why we urge more of us to jump into the boxes with our three T's). And if we were to equate the white stuff to blessings, in the Magis org chart these would be distributed all over equally.



his only son, Isaac, as sacrifice. It may have appeared a cruel joke on the part of God but it was his way of telling Abraham that he alone matters. Isaac came to Abraham as a gift. He should be able to offer him as a gift back to God. It was a lesson of dying to oneself, of making God the center of our lives.

In order to share in the resurrection, we must learn to share in Christ's suffering. We must learn to die to ourselves. This is the call for us during this season of Lent. Tinatawagan tayong mamatay sa ating sarili at mabuhay sa Diyos. To be able to give up our own Isaacs in order to grow more in the love of God. Perhaps the question to ask

ourselves is: "Who or what are the Isaacs in our lives?" Things that God may be asking us to give up and offer back to Him. Our Isaacs can be our family, our career, our bank accounts, our jewelries, our plans for the future. Are you willing to die to yourself? To give up what is precious, in order to share in the greatest of all treasures? Unless we die to ourselves, unless we carry our own crosses and follow Christ, we will not be able to share in the resurrection.

The story of the transfiguration is told to us today in order for us to look forward to our own resurrection. But let us not be content with the preview. Let

us desire to see the main feature. And it means going down the mountain, and, with Jesus, take up our own crosses. The cross can be terrifying, but love makes it tolerable. Let us be like Abraham. In his love and faith in God, he was able to give up what is precious to him for God's sake. And his act was not left unrewarded. He was made the father of all nations. May naghinhintay sa atin sa bandang huli. Huwag tayong matakot tahakin ang landas na tinahak ni Hesus. Ang pagmamahal sa kanya nawa ang maging lakas natin. Whoever loves God needs to fear nothing else; whoever does not love God needs to fear everything else.

LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD

Joy Uy-Tioco, Micah BCGG

“Be still and know that I am the Lord.”

This quote is imprinted on the chapel wall at Betania Retreat House in Tagaytay, where many of our Magis Deo couples first encountered God through their spouses and the ME. From that very first entry point of our lives into community, we have heard, over and over again, that it is in silence that God allows us to find Him. From Betania, to Canossa and the SDR, to Angono and the CPPJ, to Silang, and to Sacred Heart, we are companions on a journey distinguished by contradiction – silence and the bustle of the marketplace, contemplatives in action, Mary and Martha. It is in the retreats where for 40 hours silence surrounds us and can flow to the heart and a still small space is opened for God. This AIR 2 was no exception, and astonishingly wonderfully satisfyingly silent.

Preparing for this retreat, Suni and I realized we were going to have as many as 60 retreatants. We looked at each other in concern - the most AIR has ever had is 38, and the director called me aside to tell me the retreatants didn't know what to do with reflection time and they were beginning to talk and wander around. Other retreat directors have also commented on Magis Deo's gregariousness and obvious delight in each other's company. I remember noisy ME auxies, I remember the very first AIR 1 when retreatants brought chicheria, and I remember Tina's (whom we called "Mother Abbess") almost

frantic "SHHHHH!" I remember retreats with other groups when the Spiritual Director would suggest not-always-gently that participants go home – they were disturbing the peace of their companions. I remember once we auxies would sit at tables where people were talking, and they clearly felt insulted and showed their annoyance. I also remembered the utter silence of two IDRs Magis Deo had – but those were individually directed, not preached. Each retreatant had a Spiritual Director all to her/himself, and that meant the importance of waiting upon God in silence would impress itself upon them.

"Suni, we'll have to pray hard," I said. "I don't see how we can tell someone to leave," Suni said, "We'll just have to give the example of silence," and inside me, I shuddered, knowing there is always a gap between good intentions and actual performance. And the temptations have, without fail, increased a thousandfold whenever we were doing His Work.

But the retreat was graced history in more ways than one, not least of all being the quality of silence. At the close of the retreat, Fr. Manoling thanked the group for the intensity and devotion of the silence. At prayer before a session Sunday morning, I stole a look, and from the back, I saw 56 bowed heads, and an utter physical stillness. I felt like jumping up shouting for joy; but instead, I sat and allowed myself to sink into a still, green pool of silence.

Suffering ... continued from page 7

stay away from areas that may be affected by a volcanic eruption. Science and medicine have developed ways and means of helping me sidestep suffering that result from random acts of nature. God has also given me numerous gifts I can use to elude man-made (moral) suffering, by, again, taking preventive precautionary measures. For example, I can study hard before an exam so that I don't fail the said exam.

However, I cannot avoid the suffering resulting from my choice to love. I can only EMBRACE suffering as a CONSEQUENCE OF MY DECISION TO LOVE.

For me, this is the core of the pain and suffering of Jesus on the cross – JESUS' UNCONDITIONAL LOVE FOR HIS FATHER AND HIS FEELING HIS FATHER'S INFINITE UNCONDITIONAL LOVE FOR HIM. This is why Jesus embraced his

sufferings born from His and His Father's unconditional love. This is the reason why at His agony in the garden of Gethsemane, His immediate and spontaneous ultimate response to His impending pain and suffering on the cross was: **THY WILL BE DONE.**

After the retreat with Fr. Manoling, I have changed my question from "DO I HAVE TO SUFFER?" to "DO I REALLY LOVE AT ALL?"

SCENES AND SIGNS OF FAITH

Clyde Abapo, Jeremiah BCGG

A re-enactment of the washing of the feet

The South Sector did it once again – the solemn re-enactment of the washing of the feet. This happened at the residence of the Chua Chiacos. We first quieted down as Sally read the Gospel of John 13: 1-18. After a few minutes of contemplation, the couple participants then took turns in washing each other's feet. When my turn came, I held my wife's feet gently. First the left, then followed by the right. "Masahiin mo naman ang paa ko," my wife whispered. I did and wiped her feet dry. This short activity that I experienced was a reminder that when I serve, I can do something extra to comfort the one being served.

Everybody was on camera as Anchit never failed to take a shot. Here are the thoughts and feelings of some participants during the sharing that followed:

Tita Cathy: "It was a great privilege to wash and be washed. The feeling was wonderful!"

Fil: As he was washing the feet of Mary Anne, the thought of his shortcomings and wrongdoings came into the picture. Deep inside, he wanted forgiveness.

Tito Tony: He felt so blessed to have Aida as his wife. The washing of the feet was a symbol of his love and gratitude to God.

My wife Patchot: Her sharing was more of a question than a feeling. "Washing the feet of my husband is no problem, but can I do it with my maid?"

In my case, I didn't have much to say about my feeling. But I want to share my afterthoughts regarding the Gospel in relation to our daily activities. The washing of the feet is a gesture of cleansing our body and soul. Jesus must have chosen the feet because it is the part of the body that easily gets dirty. People in those days wore sandals and the feet are exposed to dust and mud. Jesus' act of washing did not only mean cleansing but also service – an act of love and humility. One day, we only go back to the Father, just like Jesus. The legacy he wanted us to realize is our freedom from the darkness of sin and our capacity to serve and share what we have. I know this is a difficult path to follow but not impossible with the grace of God.

Here is a scene I saw on television, depicting people whose desire is to serve those in need. The location is somewhere in France. The place covers quite a big area and is home to a number of autistics and mongoloids. The volunteers came from different areas of Europe. One was a Canadian, another from Australia. Methodology of caring was one-on-one. Patience was a key factor in handling the temperament and restlessness of the patients. From what I saw the volunteers seemed to enjoy and have developed a special bonding with their "alaga." Surely the spirit of their service is anchored on love.



Swedish Proverbs

"Love me when I least deserve it, because that's when I really need it."

"Worry gives a small thing a big shadow."

"When a blind man carries a lame man, both go forward."

"Love is like dew that falls on both nettles and lilies."

“People power” in basic communities can fight corruption

Union of Catholic Asian News (UCAN) commentary - March 4, 2009

Foreigners and citizens alike say the Philippines has the most corrupt leadership and economy.

Why then is “people power” not doing its job of ousting President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, accused of corruption and cheating, as it did with Ferdinand Marcos in 1986 and Joseph Estrada in 2001?

Retired Jesuit Bishop Francisco Claver says Filipinos are cynical toward politicians and do not fully recognize corruption as a sin.

Compared to the Marcos years, when bishops were active in the social justice and peace commission of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), “people power” today is different. It involves hard and unglamorous work on values formation before “moral transformation” can happen, he says.

He notes, however, that parish-based Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs), where neighbors gather to pray, reflect and act on community concerns based on the Gospel, have been recognized for their efforts to stop corruption in road building projects and fighting off illegal loggers and miners.

Bishop Claver, 80, holds a doctorate in anthropology from the University of Colorado. In the Society of Jesus, he served as associate member of its Institute on Church and Social Issues, executive secretary of the Social Apostolate of Jesuits in East Asia/Oceania, and lecturer at East Asian Pastoral Institute near Manila.

The first bishop among the indigenous northern Philippines Igorot people was appointed to serve in the former Pontifical Council for Dialogue with Non-Believers from 1973-1979 before the late Pope John Paul II merged it with the Pontifical Council for Culture.

Bishop Claver has also drafted numerous documents for the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences and Philippine bishops, including the CBCP’s February 1986 Post-Election statement that declared Marcos had no moral basis to rule as he had claimed victory in fraudulent presidential polls.

Following is Bishop Claver’s analysis of the role of “people power” today in fighting corruption in the Philippines:

People power — the peaceful rising up of a country’s citizens against an oppressive government — is generally admitted to have started in the Philippines. So we Filipinos are being asked today if we have lost that collective power to eliminate evil.

For evil there is in the Philippines, great evil. Corruption in government seems to be at an all time high, people are wondering why there is no real groundswell against it in the general perception that it is even more corrupt than the one overthrown in the first people power rebellion.

And they ask if corruption is so systemic and hopeless that any effort to correct it ends in futility. Further, if in the people power revolution of 1986 the Church played a vital role, why is it not doing so now? It seems the Church has lost the vibrancy it had in the ’70s and ’80s.

These are hard questions to answer in a short essay like this one. But there are a few points that can be made in their regard.

Let me start with the phenomenon of people power itself. There is a strong appreciation now, 23 years after EDSA, that people power, though first exercised in the political sphere, is basically a moral power. [EDSA is an acronym for Epifano de los Santos Avenue, the street where more than 1 million people gathered to pray during the 1986 people power revolution that ousted Marcos.]

And when it is used — or seen to be used — mainly as political power, it fails, so politicians here in the Philippines who have tried to use it for their purposes are finding out to their grief.

The same can be said when movements masquerade as people power but are seen to be driven and tainted by politics — they do not prosper either.

The sorry state of government corruption in the country is, to our deep shame, a byword to the rest of the world. So, why do we not kick the present government out?

One reason is that unlike at the first EDSA, there is no clear alternative to the incumbent president. There was one at the first EDSA — and she was voted in by the majority of our people in an electoral exercise.

Now the prospect of one of our present crop of would-be presidents succeeding President Arroyo scares us no end. Politicians in the Philippines are unfortunately (but with good reason) universally suspect and there is nothing to guarantee that the next president will be different.

In Philippine politics, self-interest is only too obviously the name of the game. The cynical attitude towards politicians is a general one and there is precious little to make us have it otherwise.

In the social malaise our country is mired in now, the Church’s role is crystal clear. For the past 60 years of the CBCP’s existence, the bishops have been speaking out constantly against political corruption.

Now they are seeing something that they have overlooked in the past: It is that a great part of the problem of corruption in public life is that our people most often regard it as “SOP” — standard operating procedure — for



Bishop Claver

The Word Pondered

I believe in the sun, even when it is not shining

Liz Miller

After the war, soldiers explored a concentration camp. They entered a cell where men had been kept. In that cell they found these words scratched into the wall:

I	believe	in	the	sun,
	even	when	it	is
	not	shining.		
I	believe	in	love,	
	even	when	I	
	cannot	feel	it.	
I	believe	in	God,	
	even	when	He	
	is	silent.		

There, in a place absent of light and opposed to hope, this nameless man of faith endured darkness like few of us have ever encountered. But, even in the face of evil, this man held on to something that was greater than the darkness. They may have broken his heart when they tore him from his family, they may have broken his body with savage brutality, but they could not touch his spirit. Whether deliverance was to come or not, his decision was made: **I will not renounce my God.**

Where faith seemed impossible under the weight of injustice and suffering, God breathed hope into that man's resolved spirit and he chose to "believe in love, even when he could not feel it." Sometimes, faith is the decision to never let go of what you know is true about your Lord, even when circumstance tempts you to doubt. It is that decision that enables a victim to say, "God is greater than the darkness." Perhaps, Job said it best when he looked past his crisis to write this everlasting testimony of living faith: "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end He will stand upon the earth." (Job 19:25). By faith, Job understood that he was loved and redeemed by Sovereign God.

These were not men who shook angry fists at heaven in the heat of trials. No, these men were looking beyond their life into eternity and choosing to hold on a little bit longer for the love of their God. In the most heart-rending moments of their lives, they penned praises and etched quotes of faith on their prison

walls. Can we escape their story without examining our personal reaction to hard times?

Many of us can't begin to understand suffering to the degree these men endured it, but we are familiar with situations that challenge our faith. Adversity has a way of squeezing us and wringing out of us whatever is most deeply resident in us. Veneers just don't hold up under the scrutiny of true tragedy. For some, our painful ordeals reveal unwavering devotion. For others, they reveal a shallow, unsustainable faith. But, either way, we are unveiled.

Our obstacles are faith-opportunities. Let's demonstrate our tenacity. Whatever your burden, whatever my burden - we can hold on a little bit longer. We can grab the hand of our Redeemer and refuse to let go. We can shout back at the darkness, "**Do what you will, I'm holding on to Him.**"

Liz Miller is a columnist for BaldwinCountyNOW.com, a Gulf Coast information service for South Alabama. - RCD

People Power ...continued from page 12

politicians. That simply means corruption is not defined as something particularly evil, a sin.

So now the efforts of the Church are geared towards changing that outlook — a huge problem of values change, of moral reform.

The bishops also see that the task will not be done by simply speaking out: Only organized, persistent action will do, from top to bottom in the Church.

This is where the BECs come into the picture as precisely the vehicle for wide and effective change. And we

are finding out it is hard work — humdrum, unglamorous, even at times thankless.

Unlike during the time of martial law - when street protests were the vogue and were participated in widely, and with a lot of fanfare by Church people, thus giving the impression of a vibrant, engaged Church - today the patient plodding that is involved in forming the BECs is what marks its present preoccupation.

The focus now in many dioceses is the formation of BECs, in which values formation is precisely the main target — getting Christians to be

concerned, not just with personal spirituality and conversion, but with social transformation as well (to use the term that is most often used.)

The bishops have asked for the formation of "circles of discernment" at all levels of the Church to grapple with the national problem of corruption. Those circles are ready-made in dioceses where the BECs are already flourishing.

The hope is that when there is general acknowledgement that corruption is evil, only then will we begin to see real progress in combating it.

SPIRITUAL TIDBITS AND HUMOR

Rey Mella, Cana BCGG

Taking the Lead or Letting Go(d)

After attending Fr. Manoling Francisco's recent retreat, it crossed my mind that I should write a book entitled: *All I Needed to Know To Be a Christian I Learned at the Retreat*. Subtitled: *On Mercy, Compassion and Forgiveness*. It was another beautiful retreat. I am busy; we all are busy. But, God brought me / us there. And the retreatants were simply outstanding. Punctual, really silent and quiet at all times, reflective, prayerful. Not for me to say, but I am sure God was in each one of us.

On my iPod, my daughter Fiona put one of her favorite songs, Miley Cyrus' "7 Things I Hate About You," and I've listened to it occasionally. And one line of the song says, "the 7th thing that I like about what you do is you made me love you." I know nothing about Miley but the line strikes me as beautiful. Isn't that what God is doing to us? He makes us love Him.

I was going to our Batangas plant one early but rainy morning. In tracking the circuitous and somewhat unpredictable south superhighway which is under repair and expansion, I decided to relax and then locked myself on to following a bus right in front of me. The bus was traveling a reasonable speed. Knowing a bus driver had better visibility of the road ahead, I followed it very closely and really put my trust on the bus driver that it will lead me on. Several vehicles behind me tried to overtake us on our right only to be blocked by much slower trucks. There were lots of concrete barriers that I had to manage or avoid but with the bus guiding me, it became easier.

Later, as I was traversing the national road towards Batangas, I was amused about my action of staying on and tailing the bus, no matter what. I knew the driver could see better than me in my car and knew better how to get to where we were

going as he must have been more experienced than I am. But what made it a spiritual experience is it's parallel to a decision I made several years back – that of locking on to God as my guide. I put my life, my journey in his path and followed him really closely. In good times and especially in bad times.

Prior to that, it was crazy of me to have taken the lead in my life and having God right behind me. I only turned around to ask for help and guidance when I got lost when I could have traveled faster and better and more comfortably had I allowed Him to lead me on. Every day that I drive and travel, I will remind myself to put my trust on someone who knows better. It makes life a lot less complicated.

Recently someone sent me an article about the 7 things that teenage boys most need and one of them is unconditional love. "Unconditional love with an emphasis on character and effort more than outcome: Encourage boys to live up to their potential while having reasonable expectations. To love them regardless of whether they make it into Harvard or become a star quarterback." As a father, I found this very basic and of course, know, that this is also one of God's character traits. But, somehow, I forget to exercise this with my son. And, even worse, I also forget to realize how much God loves me.

As we were landing, the plane started its descent and the pilot announced that due to low visibility in Tagbilaran, we would be diverting and landing in Mactan instead. In my old self, I would have been upset and complaining and just plain unhappy. But, now, I trust God that it's for a purpose and that it's going to be okay. So, I simply prayed. And, a few minutes later, the pilot came on again and said that we would be landing in

Tagbilaran after all and the plane pulled up and made its way to Tagbilaran.

There was a slight drizzle when we landed. After an hour or so, we checked in at the resort. As we were getting settled in our room, it rained so hard. I smiled and said wow, what a vacation. And, I prayed again. A few minutes later when we were just about ready to hit the beach and explore the place, the rain stopped. And, the sun shone bright, much brighter than an hour earlier. For the next 3 days, we enjoyed perfect weather. In my old self, I would have called it either a jinx or luck depending on how it played out. Today, I call it God's plan, or a miracle, or plain God's blessing.

A man is struck by a bus on a busy street. Seriously injured, he gasps to on-lookers, "A priest. Somebody get me a priest!"

A police officer checks the crowd - no priest, no nun, no eucharistic minister or person of the cloth of any kind. "Please, any words of the church," the injured man cries.

Out of the crowd steps a shabby old man. He says he's not Catholic, but he's slept behind the church forty years and has heard the words of the priests so many times they are etched in his memory.

Desperate, the injured man nods. The elderly homeless man kneels by him and solemnly intones, "B-4 ... I-19 ... N-38 ... G-54 ... O-72 ..."

It was Palm Sunday and, because of a sore throat, five-year-old Johnny stayed home from church with a sitter. When the family returned home, they were carrying several palm branches. The boy asked what they were for.

"People held them over Jesus' head as he walked by," his older brother explained.

"Wouldn't you know it," the boy fumed. "The one Sunday I don't go, He showed up!"

Where do our dues go?



Many may be wondering: where do our monthly membership dues go?

Magis Deo maintains an office at the CLC Building in the Ateneo Campus. Our annual administrative expenses average P361,680, which covers the salary of our secretary, retainer fees for our bookkeeper, rent, utilities, office supplies and other administrative expenses.

With these annual recurring expenses, the monthly membership dues cannot sustain our community operation. Based on a BCGG membership of 249 persons, our expected annual membership dues for 2008 was P 398,400 (inclusive of the increase in dues effective May 2008). Had we achieved the ideal 100% collection rate, the dues would have been more than enough to cover administrative expenses. To date, however, we have collected only P297,390 (approximately 75% of annual dues), for a deficit of P64,290.

While we have other sources of income from mass collection, interest income, donations, fund raising activities and, most of all, the generosity of some members who consistently and unselfishly tithe and give love offerings, these are still not enough to cover the combined administrative deficit and expenses of the various ministries.

In behalf of the Pastoral Council, the Finance Committee once more appeals to all BCGGs and their members for their support and generosity so we can sustain our activities as a community of service. We must remember that God blesses the cheerful giver.

We also take this opportunity to ask for volunteers to serve in the Finance Committee as our assistant and/or alternate. We welcome you in sharing your talent in the Lord's vineyard.

Perhaps it's time to return to God the blessings He has given us. Let's do our share and help Magis Deo live to its meaning **"More for God."**

Yours in Christ,
Gene and Eve Bañez
 Finance Committee Head

LSS Reflections

Frances Zyra Mella, Magis Youth

Prior to attending the LSS, I've felt that I was okay with regards to my faith and my relationship with God. That was one of the reasons why I wasn't keen on attending in the beginning. Another reason was that it was going to take the whole day and I felt lazy.

It was a good thing I decided to attend. If I didn't, I wouldn't have known that there's so much more I need to do to build that close relationship with God. The LSS showed me just how lost I really was.

The thing that really stuck to me was that if you allow God to take over your life, He really will. I've realized that I need to really let Him in. It wasn't about praying everyday or going to church every Sunday. It didn't make a difference if I didn't believe in or didn't absorb any of it. So, after attending the LSS, I've decided to change my routine. If I wanted to have a closer relationship with God, there would be a lot of things that I'd have to change. My parents bought me a bible (my old one got lost a while back), which I now read before I go to work and before I go to bed. When I have the time, I read some passages when I'm in the office. Just recently, a friend asked me to join their weekly bible study sessions. I've never attended bible studies before so I'm really looking forward to attending.

It's not easy, changing my routines. Sometimes I still forget to read the bible, but I'm getting used to it and I'm having fun. There are other things I need to work on, but I believe this is a start. I think I need to work on my relationship with Him first before I work on anything else. I know that once I have a better relationship with Him, everything else will follow.



Allan & Edna Pestaño (left) and Sol & Ed Macalalad celebrated their silver wedding anniversaries in March 2009.

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	Editorial Board Tina Mossesgeld Tony del Rosario Tony Narciso	Publication Ramie and Mimi Santos
Please send articles, reactions, feedback to magisdeonewsletter@yahoo.com		

Calendar of Activities: April to June 2009

April

03	Community Celebration	San Carlos Lay Formation Center (MPH)	SSFM Mustard Seed / Beatitudes South Sector
08	Council Meeting	Magis Deo Office	Magis Deo 426-7191
09	Lenten Recollection (7:30am-5pm)	AFP Theater, Camp Aguinaldo	MEFP 426-4206

May

05	Sector & Ministry Heads Meeting-3	Magis Deo Office	Magis Deo 426-7191
08	Community Celebration	San Carlos Lay Formation Center (MPH)	Central Sector
13	Council Meeting	Magis Deo Office	Magis Deo 426-7191
16	Life in the Spirit Seminar (LSS)	God's Love Catholic Prayer Community New Manila	Clyde/Pachot Abapo 838-8553 / 0922-8098768
30-31	Shepherding Seminar-1 (Free)	CEFAM	MEFP 426-4206

June

02	Shepherds & Ministry Heads Meeting 2	Sanctuario de San Antonio Parish Office	Magis Deo 426-7191
05	Community Celebration	San Carlos Lay Formation Center (MPH)	Magis Deo 426-7191
06-07	Shepherding Seminar-2 (Free)	CEFAM	MEFP 426-4206
10	Council Meeting	Magis Deo Office	Magis Deo 426-7191
12-14	FEW (Fr. Ruben Tanseco)	BLD Covenant House, Cavite	Eli/Edith Prieto 825-3463
13-14	Shepherding Seminar-1 (Free)	CEFAM	MEFP 426-4206
19-21	MEW (ME Class 97) – P3,000/couple (Fr. Allan Abuan)	BLD Covenant House, Cavite	Ike/Josie Llamas 823-0146
20-21	Prayer Deepening Workshop 8:00am-5:00pm	San Carlos Lay Formation Center Session Room. 2	Ted/Susan Concepcion 724-8019
27-28	Shepherding Seminar-2 (Free)	CEFAM	MEFP 426-4206
30	Sector & Ministry Heads Meeting-4	Magis Deo Office	Magis Deo 426-7191

April Birthday Celebrants

1	Percy Castañarez	Beatitudes
2	Tony del Rosario	John
3	Neth Alon	ME Class 92
	Eugene Araullo	ME Class 90
	Melissa Cruz	ME Class 91
5	Teng Antonio	Mt. Olivet
6	Cecil Cuevas	ME Class 91
7	Emily Almeda	ME Class 90
	Eppie Villaflor	ME Class 95
8	Albert Narciso	Psalms 46/Samaritans
	Soc Alvarado	ME Class 95
	Ian Antalan	ME Class 95
10	Clen Portugal	ME Class 91
11	Fil Alfonso	John
	Malou Apo	Exodus
	Bing Cordova	ME Class 91
12	Ed Castillo	Cana
	Jun Arcenal	Isaiah 66/Ignatians
13	Bong Ricohermoso	Kapatiran Kay Kristo
14	Rudy Ebarido	Philippians
	John Boren	Agnus Dei
	Val Lugti	ME Class 90
15	Muriel Macabuag	ME Class 91
19	Martin Tioseco	ME Class 95
20	Pocholo Cea	Isaiah 66/Ignatians
21	Monchito Mossesgeld	Cana
	Rey Coronel	Corinthians

	Marissa Serrano	House of David/Genesis
22	Melvin Padulla	ME Class 90
23	Gay Cruz	Psalms 46/Samaritans
	Joe Seranilla	Mustard Seed
25	Janet Reyes	Psalms 46/Samaritans
26	Dick Yulo	Arch. Gabriel
	Sacha Camus	ME Class 90
27	Emma Punsalan	Sirach
28	Marilyn Soliman	Corinthians
30	Lito Quimel	Exodus
	Ike Llamas	House of David/Genesis
	Hilda del Rosario	Beatitudes

April Wedding Anniversaries

7	Manny & Leslie Gatchalian	Corinthians
8	Leo & Glo Dumlao	Isaiah 66/Ignatians
12	Art & Grace Santos	Thessalonians
	Arnel & Fe De Jesus	ME Class 95
19	Jun & Amie Deacosta	Beatitudes
23	Henry & Gay Cruz	Psalms 46/Samaritans
	Fred & Cora De Guzman	ME Class 89
24	Regie & Daisy De Guzman	Corinthians
	Noe & Jo Bello	ME Class 92
25	Boy & Glo Alli	Kapatiran Kay Kristo
26	Harry & Helen Chua	Sirach
28	Bernie & Rachel Abis	Arch. Gabriel
	Marvin & Maine De Vera	ME Class 92