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A domestic vessel facilitates the transfer of chromite ores from Techiron port in Homonhon Island to a foreign cargo ship docked few nautical miles away from the shore on April 14, 2020. The island's residents are protesting the loading operations of a China-bound ship amid coronavirus concerns. DAIPEN MONTES/CBCP NEWS

Catholics observe Holy Week 'unconventionally' in 'extraordinary times'

By Rommel F. Lopez | PressOne.PH

IT should have been the usual Holy Week he has celebrated since getting ordained for the Catholic priesthood 12 years ago.

But for Fr. Mark Ivo Velasquez of the Archdiocese of Palo, a survivor of Super typhoon Yolanda, this is a Holy Week like no other.

He had to take a tricycle to visit some of the 20 chapels in his "mission station" in Alangalang, Leyte, composed of 14 barangays.

A conversation with his tricycle driver made him realize that this was no ordinary season.

"My trike driver was telling me as we toured the barrios that this was worse than Yolanda. And I agree with him because we still got to celebrate these feasts as

they were. We didn't have Christmas this 2019 because of [Typhoon] Ursula and now we won't have a nice Holy Week because of COVID-19," he said.

It is indeed an extraordinary time for 85% of the Philippines' 104.9 million Filipinos who identify as Roman Catholics to observe traditional practices during the holiest of days in the Church's liturgical calendar, with the whole world fighting this pandemic.

Priests like Fr. Velasquez had to find more creative ways to minister to their people especially after both civil and church authorities prohibited public gatherings to lessen the spread of Covid-19.

CBCP guidelines

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines released guidelines for bishops and priests in the

Holy Week / A6



Fr. Mark Ivo Velasquez visits the Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Mission Station in Brgy. Dapdap, Alangalang, Leyte to bless the palms of his parishioners on Palm Sunday, April 5. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Caritas Manila gives P1-billion gift certificates to help poor amid lockdown



A Franciscan priest gives a grocery voucher from Caritas Manila to a family in the city's Sampaloc district. PHOTO FROM RADIO VERITAS

A CHURCH-BASED social service agency has provided around P1 billion worth of aid as of April 8 to poor families affected by the lockdown triggered by the coronavirus.

Caritas Manila used the funds for the door-to-door distribution of P1,000 gift certificates to over four million households within the greater Manila area, according to Radio Veritas. The beneficiaries came

from at least 633 parishes in Manila and the dioceses of Cubao, Antipolo, Imus, Malolos, Parañaque, Kalookan, Novaliches, San Pablo and Pasig.

Fr. Anton Pascual, Caritas Manila executive director, also credited their "Oplan Damayan" to some business groups who helped raise the funds for the needy.

Aside from from the grocery

Caritas / A5

CBCP: Easter spirit 'alive' in Filipinos' sacrifice, service amid pandemic



Archbishop Romulo Valles of Davao, CBCP President, leads the Easter vigil Mass April 11. SCREENSHOT/DXGN

THE many people's "heroic service and sacrifice" are concrete signs of the Easter spirit in the midst of the

coronavirus crisis, Catholic bishops said.

In his Easter message, spirit in the midst of the

Spirit / A7

Jesuits, De La Salle Brothers join hands for Covid-19 relief ops

THE Jesuits and the De La Salle Brothers have banded together to raise money to support people facing hunger amid a strict coronavirus lockdown.

As of April 15, they have raised more than P10 million to feed around 500 homeless staying in safe shelters and over 6,000 urban poor families in Metro Manila.

The Jesuits and the De La Salle Brothers run two of the biggest schools in the country, Ateneo de Manila University (ADMU) and De La Salle University (DLSU), respectively.

The two schools are known rivals in

the University Athletic Association of the Philippines, the country's biggest collegiate league.

"Indeed, the Covid-19 pandemic knows no competition and reminds us of our ability to come together in times of great need," the Jesuits said in an article posted on their website.

DLSU was one of the first schools to provide temporary sanctuary to street dwellers in Manila during the enhanced community quarantine. Its campus in Greenhills also provided shelter for health workers of The Medical City.

The funds raised from the alumni

of both schools were also generated through the Bayanihan Musikahan, an online fundraising concert series spearheaded by National Artist for Music Ryan Cayabyab.

To date, the initiative has raised more than P40 million and reached over 16,000 urban poor families in Metro Manila.

Ateneo has also initiated a fund drive to provide protective equipment for hospital workers and food packs for families who have been affected by the loss of jobs due to the lockdown. (CBCP News)

Homonhon Island residents disappointed on DENR turnaround

LOCAL Church officials are disappointed over the decision by the government's body to U-turn on the mineral loading operations of a Chinese-manned vessel on Homonhon Island.

Bishop Crispin Varquez of Borongan said all they were asking was an exercise

of prudence to protect the province, which has been under lockdown since March 22 from coronavirus threat.

"This collective stand is based on the principle of general welfare, health and safety of our people," Varquez said.

Homonhon / A3

Team of young Chicago priests answer the call to anoint COVID-19 patients

CHICAGO, Ill. — The Archdiocese of Chicago has assembled a team of 24 priest volunteers— all under age 60, and without pre-existing medical conditions— to administer sacramental anointing of the sick to Catholics with COVID-19 during the coronavirus pandemic.

Father Matthew O'Donnell, pastor of St. Columbanus Parish on the city's South Side, has been a part of the team for about three weeks, and told CNA that so far he has anointed two people with COVID-19.

"I know that all of us who are doing this ministry in Chicago right now are doing it because we believe that this is what we're called to do as priests, to be present to people," Fr. O'Donnell told CNA.

"And I think all of us are knowledgeable of the risks, but the importance of the sacrament outweighs that."

The archdiocese is divided into six vicariates, or regions. Within each one, O'Donnell said, the archdiocese wanted to ensure that there were at least four priests available that could handle the vicariate's anointing needs, while also ensuring that no one priest is called to every single COVID-19 patient in his area.

He said pastors can call the archdiocese to let them know about a parishioner with COVID-19, and the archdiocese will then reach out to a member of the volunteer priest team to



A priest performs the sacrament of anointing of the sick. KRISTINA ISMULYANI/SHUTTERSTOCK

convey the patient's name, the hospital where they are located, and any other pertinent information.

When he first offered to volunteer, Fr. O'Donnell said he thought it would be a while before he actually got a call to anoint a COVID-19 patient.

In reality, the day after he agreed to volunteer, the priest received his first request.

"Knowing that there's not a lot of young priests that are here, that was what made me want to volunteer. Making sure the priests in my area who might overage, or have other health issues, and I knew I wanted to volunteer for that reason," he said.

"More importantly, knowing how powerful the sacrament of the anointing of the sick can be for individuals and for families, I think as

our parishes aren't able to have public liturgies right now, this was a way for me to really minister and to really reach out people and allow the Church to be present to people in what is definitely a moment of great suffering."

At the first hospital he visited for the anointing, Father Matthew said he wore a bodysuit, a gown, gloves, an N95 mask, goggles, a hairnet, and shoe coverings— all provided by the hospital.

Once he had completed the anointing in the patient's room, the hospital walked him through a protocol for taking all the equipment off in a safe and sterile manner.

In addition to the hospital's precautions, O'Donnell said the archdiocese offered training to the priests on the team on how to safely administer the sacrament to

COVID-19 patients.

One of the recommended practices was to make sure not to dip their thumbs into the oil twice— so as to avoid contaminating the oil— and instead use a different finger to anoint first the patient's head, and then the hands.

The priests were encouraged to either burn or bury the cotton on which they placed oil, and to disinfect the outside of the oil stock.

O'Donnell said he has been amazed at the gratefulness of the hospital staff, many of whom have expressed gratitude to him for his willingness to come and minister to the patients.

Though the team of young priests is not able to "assemble" in person, O'Donnell said he has been in touch with several of his brother priests and fellow team members. (CNA)

Knights of Columbus announce donations for food banks amid coronavirus pandemic

THE Knights of Columbus announced this week that the organization will donate over \$1 million to food pantries throughout the United States in an effort to feed those in need during the coronavirus pandemic.

The Catholic fraternal group announced April 7 that it would provide funding of \$100,000 each to food banks in New York, Connecticut, and Los Angeles, as well as \$50,000 donations each to food banks in Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Denver, Detroit, Houston, Miami, Newark, New Orleans, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Pittsburgh, Seattle, and Washington, D.C.

Supreme Knight Carl Anderson noted that since the group's founding in 1882, the Knights have provided support throughout, during the 1918 flu pandemic, during two world wars, and after natural disasters.

In addition to the food bank donations, the Knights plan to fund the satellite transmission of several

global broadcasts from the Vatican for Holy Week, including Good Friday Stations of the Cross April 10 led by Pope Francis, as well as the pope's Easter Sunday Mass and Urbi et Orbi blessing April 12.

"With so many in Italy and around the world currently homebound, our support of Vatican broadcasts will allow our Holy Father to join in prayer with Catholics from every corner of the globe during this critical time," Anderson said April 8.

Anderson said the group will also be donating \$100,000 to the Vatican's Bambino Gesù pediatric hospital in Rome, in order to allow the hospital to convert its neonatology department into a high-intensity treatment room for infants and newborns with COVID-19 infections.

Though the coronavirus outbreak in Italy has affected older adults most significantly, infants also are vulnerable. The treatment center will

feature ventilators and other specialized equipment.

The Knights have announced several grassroots initiatives to respond to the needs of the COVID-19 pandemic. The organization has asked members to help provide food and other essentials to those in need. It has also urged members to take part in blood drives.

With public Masses suspended across the entire United States, many parishes are facing a cash flow shortfall due to a lack of in-person collections. Starting March 30, the Knights began offering a \$1 million line of credit to Catholic dioceses to help dioceses and parishes suffering from the financial effects of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Knights of Columbus is a Catholic fraternal organization with nearly 2 million members in more than 15,000 local councils worldwide. Its members worked 76 million service hours in 2019 and helped donate more than \$185 million in charitable causes. (CNA)

'Prayer has been the great source of strength to me': Cardinal Pell looks forward to Easter

WASHINGTON D.C.— After more than 14 months in prison, Cardinal George Pell said he was always hopeful about the High Court decision which acquitted him of all charges and released him from incarceration on April 7.

Shortly after his release from prison, the cardinal told CNA that, while he had kept faith he would be eventually exonerated, he tried not to be "too optimistic."

On Tuesday morning, the High Court issued its decision, granting Cardinal Pell's request for special leave to appeal, quashing his convictions for sexual abuse, and ordering that he be acquitted of all charges.

As the decision was announced by the court, several hundred miles away the cardinal watched from his cell in HM Prison Barwon, southwest of Melbourne.

"I was watching the

television news in my cell when the news came through," Pell told CNA, in an exclusive interview shortly after his release on Tuesday.

"First, I heard that leave was granted and then that the convictions were quashed. I thought, 'Well that's great. I'm delighted.'"

"Of course, there was no one to talk to about it until my legal team arrived," Pell said.

"However, I did hear a great cheer from somewhere within the jail and then the three other inmates near me made it clear they were delighted for me."

After his release, Pell said he spent the afternoon at a quiet location in Melbourne, and enjoyed a steak for his first "free" meal in more than 400 days.

"What I am really looking forward to is celebrating a private Mass," Pell told CNA before he had the opportunity to do so. "It

has been a very long time, so that is a great blessing."

The cardinal told CNA that he had lived his time in prison as a "long retreat," and a time for reflection, writing, and, above all, prayer.

"Prayer has been the great source of strength to me throughout these times, including the prayers of others, and I am incredibly grateful to all those people who have prayed for me and helped me during this really challenging time."

The cardinal said the number of letters and cards he had received from people both in Australia and from overseas was "quite overwhelming."

"I really do want to thank them most sincerely."

In a public statement at the time of his release, Pell offered his solidarity with victims of sexual abuse.

"I hold no ill will to my accuser," Pell said in that

statement. "I do not want my acquittal to add to the hurt and bitterness so many feel; there is certainly hurt and bitterness enough."

"The only basis for long term healing is truth and the only basis for justice is truth, because justice means truth for all."

The cardinal told CNA on Tuesday that as he readjusts to his life as a free man and prepares for Holy Week, he is focused on what lies ahead, especially Easter, and not behind.

"At this stage I don't want to comment further on the last few years, only to say I have always said I am innocent of any such crimes," he said.

"Holy Week is obviously the most important time in our Church, so I am especially pleased this decision came when it did. The Easter Triduum, so central to our faith, will be even more special for me this year." (CNA)

Vatican Briefing

Remain faithful in uncertain times, urges Pope Francis

In uncertain times, our ultimate goal should be to remain faithful to the Lord rather than to seek our own security, Pope Francis said at his morning Mass April 14. Speaking from the chapel of his Vatican residence, the Casa Santa Marta, the pope said: "Many times when we feel secure we begin to make our plans and slowly move away from the Lord; we do not remain faithful. And my security is not what the Lord gives me. It is an idol." To Christians who object that they do not bow before idols, he said: "No, perhaps you do not kneel, but that you seek them and so many times in your heart you worship idols, it is true. Many times. Your own safety opens the door to idols." (CNA)

Covid-19 crisis forces us to choose between life and love of money, says pope

We face a fundamental choice as we seek to resolve the coronavirus crisis, Pope Francis said during his morning Mass April 13. "Thus, in finding solutions to this pandemic, the choice will be between life, the resurrection of the people, and the god of money," the pope said. "If you choose money, you choose the way of hunger, slavery, wars, arms factories, uneducated children... there is the tomb. Lord -- it is the prayer of the pope -- help us to choose the good of the people, without ever falling into the tomb of mammon." (CNA)

Vatican thanks Chinese groups for donations to combat coronavirus

The Vatican has thanked Chinese organizations for donating medical supplies to help it combat the coronavirus. The Holy See press office said April 9 that the Vatican Pharmacy had received donations from Chinese groups including the Red Cross Society of China and the Jinde Charities Foundation of Hebei Province. The press office hailed the gifts as "an expression of the solidarity of the Chinese people and Catholic communities with those involved in the relief of those affected by COVID-19 and the prevention of the current coronavirus epidemic." (CNA)

Retired Scripture professor is first priest known to die in Rome of coronavirus

Fr. Miguel Ángel Tábet is believed to be the first priest to die of the coronavirus in Rome. Two other priests living in the same residence of Opus Dei in Rome remain hospitalized. The 78-year-old priest died on April 8 after treatment in the intensive care unit of the Biomedical University of Rome. He was an emeritus professor of Sacred Scripture and the exegetical history at the Pontifical University of Santa Croce. "A priest who lived by teaching and seeking the Word of God has personally found the Divine Word. Let us pray for him and entrust ourselves to his intercession," Fr. Luis Navarro, rector of the University of Santa Croce said April 8 of Tábet. (Courtney Mares/CNA)

Saving elderly from coronavirus 'a priority,' Vatican's laity dicastery says

During the coronavirus pandemic, saving the elderly must be just as important as saving others, the Vatican's Laity, Family, and Life dicastery has said. In an April 6 statement, the dicastery said "despite the complexity of the situation we live in, it is necessary to clarify that saving the lives of the elderly who live within residential homes or who are alone or sick, is a priority as much as saving any other person." "Faced with the scenario of a generation hit so severely, we have a common responsibility, which stems from the awareness of the invaluable value of every human life and from gratitude to our fathers and grandparents," it continued. (Hannah Brockhaus/CNA)

Holy See responds to High Court's acquittal of Cardinal Pell

The Vatican has welcomed the Australian High Court's decision to quash Cardinal George Pell's sexual abuse conviction. A statement from the Holy See press office, issued April 7, said: "The Holy See, which has always expressed confidence in the Australian judicial authority, welcomes the High Court's unanimous decision concerning Cardinal George Pell, acquitting him of the accusations of abuse of minors and overturning his sentence." "At the same time, the Holy See reaffirms its commitment to preventing and pursuing all cases of abuse against minors." (CNA)

Vatican Major Penitentiary: Mercy does not cease amid coronavirus

In an Easter letter to confessors on Saturday, the head of the Apostolic Penitentiary wrote that while 'social distancing' is necessary amid the coronavirus, 'mercy does not cease'. Despite the restrictions placed by many civil and ecclesial governors, "Mercy does not cease and God does not distance himself," Cardinal Mauro Piacenza, the Major Penitentiary, wrote April 4. "The social distancing required for health reasons, while necessary, cannot and must never turn into ecclesial distancing, let alone theological-sacramental distancing," he added. The Apostolic Penitentiary is the Holy See's tribunal with responsibility for the internal forum and indulgences. (CNA)

God will judge us by how we treated the poor, says Pope Francis

Many people suffering from poverty are victims of the "structural injustice" of today's global economy, Pope Francis said in his daily Mass homily on April 6. "We will be judged for our relationship with the poor," Pope Francis said. The pope said that the first question Jesus will ask at the final judgment will be: "How did you treat the poor? Did you feed them? Did you visit those in prison, in hospital? Did you help the widow and the orphan? Because I was there." The pope said that many of today's poor are "hidden" because they are "ashamed to show that they are not making ends meet." "It is a part of the cityscape to have poor people. However, the vast majority of the poor are victims of economic policies, of financial policies," he added. (Courtney Mares/CNA)

After criminal acquittal, Cardinal Pell likely to face several civil suits



Cardinal George Pell at the Vatican, March 2016. ALEXEY GOTOVSKIY/CNA

AUSTRALIA— The High Court of Australia this week overturned Cardinal George Pell's conviction for five alleged counts of sexual abuse, and despite his release from prison, Pell is likely to face several civil lawsuits from alleged abuse victims and their families.

The High Court on April 7 overturned Pell's 2018 conviction for alleged abuse of two choir boys. The father of one of the alleged victims in the criminal case— who has since died— is suing the Catholic Church, claiming Pell's alleged abuse was the reason for his son's "sudden turmoil" in 1996, according to his lawyer Lisa Flynn.

"We will continue to pursue a civil claim on behalf of our client despite the High Court's ruling today. He has suffered immensely and maintains George Pell was responsible for his son's sudden downward spiral after he abused his son as a young choirboy," Flynn said April 7.

The other alleged victim, referred to in court as Witness J, will not be filing a civil suit, his lawyer told The Guardian.

That complainant said that he and another choir boy were sexually abused by Pell after Sunday Mass while the cardinal was Archbishop of Melbourne in 1996 and 1997.

According to the complainant, Pell exposed himself and forced the two teenage choir boys to commit sex acts upon him, while the cardinal was vested, almost immediately after Mass in the priests' sacristy at St. Patrick's Cathedral in 1996. The complainant also said that Pell fondled him in a corridor in 1997.

Pell was convicted in 2018, in the second trial concerning the allegations. The first trial ended in a hung jury.

The cardinal was sentenced to six years in prison, of which he had been required to serve at least three years and eight months before being eligible to apply for parole. Pell would have been eligible for release in October 2022.

Pell, 78, has maintained his innocence.

At least two civil lawsuits against Pell have already been filed.

One, filed during March 2019, was brought by a man who claims that Pell— as well as several nuns— abused him as a boy when a resident at a boy's home near Melbourne between 1974 and 1978.

The lawsuit names Pell; the trustees of the Sisters of Nazareth, who formerly

were responsible for the management of the boy's home; the state of Victoria; and the Archdiocese of Melbourne, The Guardian reports. The alleged victim is seeking damages for psychiatric injury, loss of wages and medical expenses.

A third lawsuit, brought during June 2019, alleges that Pell, as episcopal vicar for education in the Ballarat diocese from 1973 to 1984, knew of an abuser's crimes and was involved in moving him from school to school.

The suit alleges that the actions of former Christian Brother Edward Dowlan, who is serving jail time after admitting to the abuse of more than twenty boys, were known to Pell and that the cardinal did nothing to protect the victim.

Bishop of Ballarat Paul Bird, Archbishop of Melbourne Peter Comensoli, and the Catholic Education Commission are also named in the suit, the Daily Mail reports.

An Australian royal commission launched in 2013 to investigate institutional responses to child sex abuse cases has led to Pell being questioned several times about what he knew about alleged abuse that took place under his watch. The Guardian reports that the commission's findings in this area have been heavily redacted due to legal proceedings, but that the redacted findings are expected to be released "in the coming weeks."

In addition to the civil lawsuits in Australia, Pell is now expected to face a canonical proceeding in Rome, overseen by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Shortly after the High Court announced its decision, Archbishop Mark Coleridge of Brisbane released a statement on behalf of the Australian bishops' conference saying that the news "will be welcomed by many, including those who have believed in the Cardinal's innocence throughout this lengthy process."

But, Coleridge said, the result "does not change the Church's unwavering commitment to child safety and to a just and compassionate response to survivors and victims of sexual abuse."

"The safety of children remains supremely important not only for the bishops, but for the entire Catholic community," the archbishop said. (CNA)

Catholics have forgiven Easter church bombers, says cardinal

COLOMBO— Sri Lanka's Catholics have forgiven the bombers who struck their churches last Easter, Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith has said.

Speaking at an Easter Sunday Mass April 12, the archbishop of Colombo said: "Last year some misguided youths attacked us and we as humans could have given a human and selfish response. But we meditated on Christ's teachings and loved them, forgave them and had pity on them."

The cardinal, who livestreamed the Mass from his residence due to the coronavirus crisis, added: "We did not hate them and return them the violence. Resurrection is the complete rejection of selfishness."

Nine suicide bombers targeted two Catholic churches, one evangelical church and three hotels on April 19, 2019, killing an estimated 259 people and injuring more than 500. The bombers belonged to an Islamist group known as the National Thowheeth Jama'ath and were all Sri Lankan citizens.

Cardinal Ranjith, 72, has repeatedly accused the authorities of failing to give



Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith of Colombo. ALAN HOLDREN/CNA

a clear account of how the terrorists were able to carry out the attack despite alleged intelligence that attacks were imminent.

In March, he said he would lead public protests if the government failed to produce a credible report on the bombings.

The faithful had hoped to attend Easter services at the bombed churches, but

government measures to combat COVID-19 meant they had to celebrate Easter at home.

According to Vatican News, Masses were celebrated behind closed doors at the two Catholic churches attacked by the bombers: the Shrine of St. Anthony in the capital, Colombo, and St. Sebastian's Church in Negombo. A total of more than 150 people were

killed at the two sites.

Catholic leaders are planning to hold a private ceremony marking the anniversary on April 21, reported Vatican News.

More than 217 people have contracted COVID-19 in Sri Lanka and seven have died as of April 11, according to Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center. (CNA)

China's first saint was martyred on a cross in Wuhan

CHINA'S first canonized saint was martyred by suffocation on a cross in Wuhan, the epicenter of today's coronavirus pandemic.

St. Jean-Gabriel Perboyre, a Vincentian missionary priest from France, was betrayed by one of his catechumens for money, bound in chains, tortured, tied to a wooden cross and strangled to death in Wuhan in 1840.

Dr. Anthony Clark, a professor of Chinese history, spent time in Wuhan researching the life of Perboyre and St. Francis Regis Clet, another 19th-century Vincentian priest martyred in Wuhan.

Clark told CNA that Wuhan's martyr saints are particularly suitable intercessors for those suffering from COVID-19 today.

"Sts. Perboyre and Clet were both killed by strangulation; they died because they could not breathe," he said. "How could they not be appropriate intercessors for this particular illness?"

"Among the torments against Perboyre were continued beatings on his lower back and he was forced to kneel on broken glass. He certainly knew the agonies of physical suffering, and would be a good comfort for those who now suffer from this virus."

Wuhan, now infamous as the origin of the coronavirus, was once an outpost for Catholic missionaries who founded Catholic hospitals in the city.

Outside of Wuhan Central Hospital, where coronavirus whistleblower Dr. Li Wenliang died, is a statue of Italian missionary, Msgr. Eustachius Zanoli, photographed by New York Times correspondent, Chris Buckley.

The plaque beneath the bust reads in Chinese and English: "Monsignor Eustachius Zanoli, from Italy, was the first Bishop of Roman Catholic Church in Eastern Hubei. In 1886 he invited the Canossian Daughters of Charity to Wuhan to provide social service and in 1880 established the Hankou Catholic Hospital, which laid the foundation for the development of the Wuhan No. 2 Hospital (1955) and subsequently the



An image of St. Jean-Gabriel Perboyre from Wuhan, China. COURTESY OF DR. ANTHONY CLARK

Central Hospital of Wuhan (1999)."

Another nearby coronavirus facility, Wuhan Jinyintan Hospital, can trace its roots back to an infectious diseases hospital founded by Franciscan missionaries in 1926, the Father Mei Memorial Catholic Hospital of Hankou.

It was named for Fr. Pascal Angelicus Melotto (1864-1923), a Franciscan missionary friar from Italy martyred in Wuhan, who took Fr. Mei Zhanchun as his Chinese name. He was kidnapped for ransom and then shot in the stomach with a poisoned bullet in 1923.

"I am happy to die for the Chinese," the missionary priest said at his death, according to the Franciscan Order's website. "I lived in China for the Chinese and now I am happy to die for them."

The Father Mei Memorial Catholic Hospital of Hankou was staffed by Franciscan Sisters of Christian Doctrine until missionaries were expelled from China in 1952 after the Chinese Communist Revolution.

"The Catholic community of Wuhan has suffered greatly during the era of Chairman Mao and the Cultural Revolution, and through that time they hid the tombstones of Saints Perboyre and Clet to protect them, because of their deep devotion to those martyrs," Clark said.

"While I was there I visited the seminary where the two tombstones are now displayed for veneration; the Catholics of Wuhan have a great devotion to the Eucharist and to the Vincentians, such as Perboyre and Clet,

who died for them, and shed their blood on the soil of that city," he added.

Many missionaries left for China in the 19th century with the knowledge that they would never return.

"I don't know what awaits me on the path that opens before me: without a doubt the cross, which is the daily bread of the missionary. What can we hope for better, going to preach a crucified God?" St. Perboyre wrote in a letter during his journey to China.

Perboyre's remains were eventually moved to Paris to the Vincentian motherhouse. Today his tomb is located in a side chapel in the same church where St. Vincent de Paul's incorrupt body is located. He was beatified in 1889 by Pope Leo XIII.

"St. Thérèse of Lisieux had a special devotion to Perboyre and kept a holy card dedicated to him in her personal prayerbook," Dr. Clark pointed out.

At Perboyre's canonization in 1996, St. John Paul II said: "Along the streets where he had been sent he found the Cross of Christ. Through the daily imitation of his Lord, with humility and gentleness, he fully identified with him. ... After being tortured and condemned, reproducing the Passion of Jesus with extraordinary similarity, he came like him to death and death on a cross."

St. John Paul II canonized St. Francis Regis Clet in October 2000, along with 33 other missionaries and 87 Chinese Catholics martyred under the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911).

Michael Fu Tieshan, a bishop of China's state-run church, the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association, called the canonization a "public humiliation" in an interview with state-run television, AP reported at the time.

The first "patriotic bishop" named by the Communist government in China in 1958 was from Wuhan. Dong Guangqing, who died in 2007, was president of Patriotic Catholic Association of Wuhan and vice president of the National Administrative Committee of the Chinese Catholic Church. (Courtney Mares/CNA)

Homonhon / A1

The Department on Environment and Natural Resources on April 11 backtracked from its earlier decision to delay the loading activity of MV VW Peace near the island off Guian town.

The foreign vessel is manned by a crew of 13 Chinese and 4 from Myanmar, alarming the residents of the potential health risks they might bring.

Fr. Christian Ofilan of the island's St. John the Baptist

Parish repeated his pleas for help from the national government, saying, "It feels like we are on our own at this point."

"For this government, it is China's interests first, second our rights," Ofilan said.

The cargo vessel arrived in the seawater of Homonhon on April 4 to collect some 7,000 metric tons of chromite ore worth more than P61 million from Techiron's mining operations.

A domestic ship vessel then facilitates the transfer of ores from Techiron port to the foreign vessel docked few miles away from the shore.

Officials of the town and the province have earlier opposed the loading activity until the health crisis is over.

Daipen Montes, one of the island's more than 8,000 residents, said they are "disgusted" with the DENR for the allowing the loading operations even in this time

of pandemic.

"We appeal for compassion to suspend again the mineral ore export permit granted to Techiron," Montes said.

Fr. Ofilan also lamented that some of his parishioners have experienced discrimination from some mainland Guianan residents because of the Chinese-manned vessel on their island.

"This is unfair and very unfortunate," he said.

Once the loading is

completed, the foreign vessel will leave the island and directly sail to China.

Homonhon is home to around 4,800 people from eight barangays across the island.

Mining operations have been ongoing since early 1990s on the historic island, where Christian faith first arrived in the Philippines 499 years ago.

The Borongan diocese has also been raising

environmental concerns on the historic island, where Christian faith first arrived in the Philippines 499 years ago.

Homonhon is the spot where Portugese explorer Ferdinand Magellan and his men first landed in the archipelago and took a weeklong respite in 1521.

Some theorists even claim that the first Mass may have been celebrated in the island. (CBCP News)

EDITORIAL

Religious Services are essential services

AFTER 5 weeks of quarantine, decision makers are now talking about the lifting of the lock down, either completely, or in a mitigated way, or only in some areas. In this conversation, the topic invariably comes: which are to be considered essential services that can be allowed? People naturally speak about the food industry, the health care services, peace and order services, basic transportation, and the list can go on and on. It is noteworthy however that in many lists, religious services are not included. Is this a sign of secularism that religion is not considered as important at all in the life of the people, that it is optional and can easily be dispensed with?

This is not so in the Philippines! This is not so in our special time! At this time, after more than 5 weeks of being cooped up in our houses, and with the great uncertainty about our future, people need hope. They need the assurance of a benign higher power on whom they can depend in this time of uncertainty. This is given by religion, more so in the Philippines, where the people are very religious. Religion is very important for Filipinos. For the vast majority, it is faith that gives them strength especially in difficulties.

We can see this in times of disasters like fires, floods and typhoons. One of the things that people first save are their religious images and their Bibles. After the disaster, the first thing that the community would restore is their chapel. The first thing that people do in calamities is to pray together. The signs of God in their lives are very important for the people.

This is given great evidence during this time of community lock down. People turn to online masses and church services. They find in them great comfort and strength to carry on. These services give meaning to their struggles and assure them that they are not alone, that all these will pass away. There is a loving God in whom they can depend. All of these keep them spiritually strong and psychologically sane, even.

We cannot therefore say that religious services are peripheral to the people. They see them as essential, and the sign that things are going back to normal is when they are again able to go to church and attend the services. This will uplift their spirits to a great extent.

So when the decision makers consider the essential services to be allowed, they should also consider the opening of the churches and its services as important. Of course, necessary precautions should be taken, like the proper social distancing and the sanitation practices to be done in the churches. We cannot also just go back to the old practices as before. Many things will also change in the way we do our services in the Church. This is already taken as a given. But allowing people to go back to Church to thank the Lord, to ask for his protection and implore his help, are deemed very important by the people. So if we want to reassure the people that we shall overcome, that we are on the way to victory in our fight against the virus, let us allow the people the opportunity to express their faith within our churches.

(Guest editorial by Bishop Broderick Pabillo)

The joy of Easter

WE have every reason to be most happy when we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Let's hope that when we greet each other, 'Happy Easter,' we would really mean it and know what is behind that greeting. Let's exhume that happy greeting from the tomb of our usual formalisms and clichés. Let's get real!

With Easter, we celebrate the tremendous truth of our faith that Christ, our savior, is risen, never to die again. With his resurrection, he has conquered sin and death, and is offering us the way, the means and the power to do the same. This is the greatest news of all time. Nothing can outshine it.

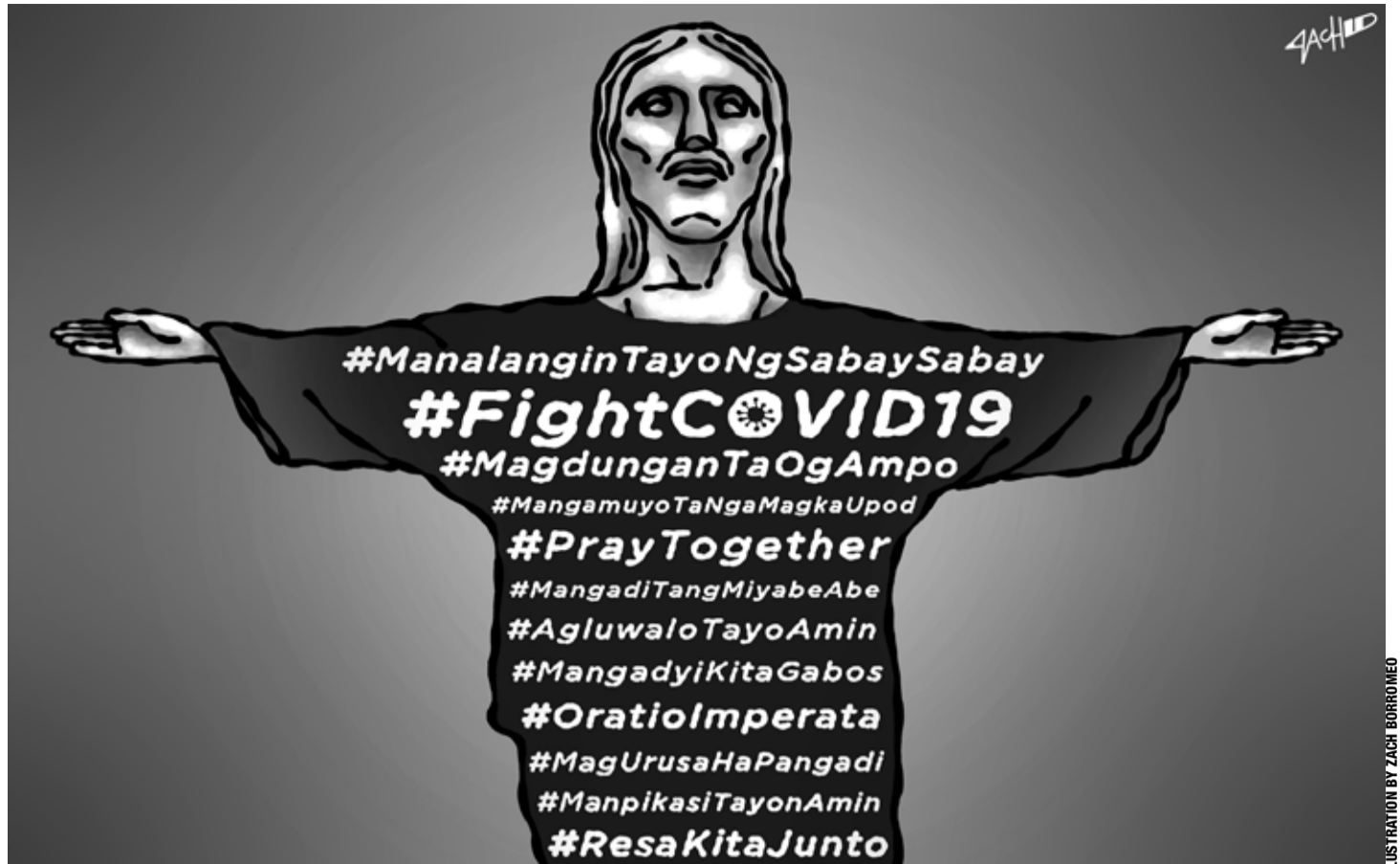
Easter marks the completion of Christ's redemptive work on us. With it, we now have the way to reach the fullness and perfection of our humanity as truly the image and likeness of God, children of his, meant to share in the divine life, because that is what God wants for us. We are now given the way to arrive at that ideal meant for us. It would be good if we can meditate more deeply on the significance of Easter and continue to draw practical resolutions to guide us in our earthly life. What a pity if Easter time would just be a feel-good moment with hardly any tangible effect on our lives, on the way we think, speak, react, behave, etc.

During this Easter season, we will be repeating many times the responsorial psalm, "This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad." And we sing, "Alleluia, alleluia," in response. With these words, we are told that Christ is truly alive. He is not dead, nor is he just a character in history, a significant one, no doubt, but just a historical figure. We are not left orphans. We need to adjust our consciousness to accommodate this fundamental, tremendous reality.

We have to understand that Christ's death was meant to conquer our sin and death. And he now invites us to die with him so we can also rise with him. This is the "happy exchange" he is offering us. He assumes all our sins without committing sin, dies to them to put our sins to nothing, then rises. We then have to understand that our resurrection in Christ would always pass through his cross. We have to make sure that we pass through his cross, not our man-made crosses, which actually can also be made into Christ's cross as long as we refer our crosses to his. We should be ready for this.

That is why we really need to activate our faith to the full, and with it, the corresponding virtues of hope and charity. Everything else will flow from there insofar as our duty to correspond to Christ's redemptive work on us is concerned.

Editorial / A7



Panaghoy

Bp. Broderick Pabillo

AN Easter Message is supposed to be a joyful message. Can there be joy when we have heard that the Enhanced Community Quarantine has been extended till the end of April? Can there be joy when the resources of many people have dwindled while the quarantine continues? Can there be joy when the news continues to speak about new infections and new deaths?

The joy of Easter is not a joy because there are no problems. It is a joy which surprises all of us, because when God acts, he acts in unexpected ways. In spite of the announcement of the Lord Jesus that he would rise again, the idea of the resurrection did not register among his disciples. So when Jesus was killed and buried, for the disciples, Jesus is over. He is dead. So when they saw the tomb empty, their first thought was, who took his body? And when they finally saw him, they were afraid. They thought they were

seeing a ghost! Jesus had to assure them that it was he. He had to show them his wounded hands and side. He had to eat in front of them. The resurrection was totally unexpected to the disciples.

Easter for us this year is also totally unexpected. Not only because we are not able to do what we usually do on Easter—go to the Salubong, attend Mass, and celebrate with friends. As at the first Easter, are we open to be surprised by God? We do not know what will happen in the coming three weeks. We do not know what will be our life after the lock down. Surely, many things will change. What will they be? Of this we are sure, though: we will rise up from this pandemic. We will rise up, hopefully not to go back to our former way of life. We will rise up stronger and more confident. We will rise up with greater care for our health and 2 our families. We will rise up strengthened

in our relationships. Most especially, we will rise up with greater trust in our God who never leaves us and who sustains us in difficult times. Let us allow ourselves to be surprised by God.

The resurrection tells us that God is faithful. He is powerful. He overcomes evil and even death. This gives us hope and joy. We can say this with greater conviction this year. The quarantine period was hard, but we have lived through it renewed and with new realizations in life. It has given us new life. Let not the monotony of the quarantine put off the joy of Easter. The basis of this joy is not what we can do, but that the Risen Jesus is with us. He is acting among us and renewing us. Because of him, we shall overcome!

May this Easter give us greater trust and hope. Jesus is risen! He is with us! We will overcome! We will live a new life with Jesus! Happy Easter to you all.

An Easter like no other

I WILL not hide it. My heart feels some sadness and melancholy this Easter Sunday. The quarantine and the lockdown is still on. The numbers of those affected by the pandemic continues to rise, and the USA has become the country with the highest number of those infected by the virus, about 500,000 persons at this time.

Where we are (Southern California) has been rainy and gloomy and cold this past week, except for a few moments when the sun was out. I guess this has contributed to the melancholy. Today, Easter Sunday is no exception. It is a gloomy day.

These are times which makes one remember CFC comrades and friends who fell in the dark night of this pandemic. The bells have tolled for them. We remember them with sadness, we grieve, and pray for their souls and for the families they left

behind.

We also do not forget the brave ones who are still battling this virus. We pray that they retain their will to fight on, and eventually that they are healed and will recover.

These are indeed times like no other.

At the same time though, these are times for thanksgiving. We are thankful that we are still healthy, that we have a home to stay during this lockdown, and a family to spend the time with, food to eat and water to drink each day, and internet and phones that allow us to communicate with others outside our homes. We are grateful that there are still doctors, nurses and medical staff manning our hospitals with adequate medicines to treat those who are sick, and that there are those who are still working to provide various services needed. We are thankful

we have a community that continue to regularly meet for prayers online; that there is a government and other volunteer groups who are helping plan and implement ways for our welfare. Let us recognize these blessings, and thank the Lord, for there are many who lack these.

With the family, we listened to the Easter Urbi et Orbi message of Pope Francis earlier today, and for some reason, I was filled with emotion. Perhaps, because the words of our Shepherd were honest, forthright in accepting the reality of sufferings brought about by this pandemic, but also reminded us of the truth of Jesus rising from the dead that give us assurance of his continuing love even in these difficult times. Our faith and hope were strengthened. Jesus will never leave us. The Pope shared words of joy that also brought tears to some, as they stirred our deepest

longing for a peaceful and harmonious life that has been disturbed by this virus.

This Easter is like no other. There are no big Easter parties with easter egg hunts and other activities we used to do. We have discovered that we really do not need these extraneous traditions. For we have found what really matters, the substance of the meaning of Easter - the Resurrection of Christ and His love for us that never dies. That is enough. We need not look for anything more.

I still feel somewhat melancholy, but strengthened. Easter will not and cannot be stopped. Nothing can stop the love of God for His people. We will not allow the pandemic nor the rain and gloomy days to define our lives. What is truly important is our relationship with Jesus and His love for us. Thus, there is and will always be reason to celebrate. Happy Easter everyone!

Active Faith

Joe Tale



Candidly Speaking

Fr. Roy Cimagala

FAR from falling into idleness and boredom, this current condition of ours brought about by the pandemic and its consequent prudential measures should challenge us and give rise to novel manifestations of our creativity and productivity.

If we just think a little and have the proper attitude, we know that the restrictions we are having these days do not necessarily restrict us in our creativity and productivity. Like some water that knows how to make its way from the mountain to the sea, we would know how to be creative and productive despite the new restrictions.

So, if anything at all, our present condition can occasion new things even

if we seem to be pushed back to times past and "forced" to do things that we have already left behind long time ago. The secret, I think, is to go the extra mile even if it is a manual household chore

which usually is the case nowadays since our stay-out domestic helpers would most likely be not available at this time.

We just have to remind ourselves that what matters most in our activities is not so much the kind of work we are doing as the way we are doing it. Are we doing it with love, or are we just doing it out of a certain sense of compliance? Are we doing our work with God as front and center of it, or are we doing things only for our own self-interest.

Going the extra mile

In the eyes of God, any kind of work, whether intellectual or manual, social, political, economic or domestic, as long as it is not sinful, is always pleasing to God as long as it is done with love.

And when things are done with love, we would not just be interested in complying with the deadlines and other technical requirements, though they are very important also. We would be more interested in doing our work with great care for details and with due concern for fulfilling all the requirements, of course.

What is most important is that we do our work, whatever it is, as a love offering to God, aware that our work is actually a part of the abiding providence of God

Candidly Speaking / A5

CBCP Monitor

PROTAGONIST OF TRUTH, PROMOTER OF PEACE

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By the Roadside

Fr. Eutiquio Belizar, Jr. SThD

“We announce to you the good news that the promise made to our fathers has been fulfilled by God for our children by raising up Jesus.” (Acts 13:32).

DEAR Brother/Sister with COVID-19, I am tempted to greet you, “Happy Easter!”

In fact, I have already done that just now, if only to take a chance at cheering you up. But I also cannot imagine how Easter could be happy to someone suffering from COVID-19, especially considering the distinct possibility not only of you rising up from it eventually cured but also of developing complications and, God forbid, leaving us and the world as we know it with finality.

But then again, who am I to say an Easter greeting would make no difference to you?

So please let me say it again, “Happy Easter” or, as I actually prefer saying, “A blessed Easter to you!”

I cannot pretend, I do not pretend, to know what exactly you are going through. It is true, many times I have seen videos of you trying to reach out to us, to your loved ones, to anyone interested, trying to warn us to take the current form of corona virus seriously by allowing us to see what it has done to you. On the other hand, it seems so obvious that in your isolation you are also just as scared, probably even more so, as we are, of the unseen monster that, in horrific ways, has held you and all of us healthy ones hostage. And your loneliness also shows through. It is heartbreaking. No matter how you try to keep it from us, your eyes and face cannot lie. If it is any consolation, many of us hear you.

What I particularly find riveting is the thought that I could be in your shoes. From childhood till my adult life I have

been downed by the common flu several times. It strikes me that COVID-19 could come, so innocuously it seems, with symptoms that resemble the affliction that had tormented me during unpleasantly unforgettable periods of my life. My own mother’s prayers and caresses—she was never afraid of the flu virus which, if my memory serves me right, I nonetheless failed to transmit to her—were just as potent against the illness. My brothers’ and sisters’ voices, banter, well-meaning jokes and other activities around the house gave me so much reassurance of a loving and caring environment. Recovery was just a matter of time. And when priest friends saw me fully recovered, some would even quote part of the Regina Coeli, saying, “Resurexit sicut dixit (He rose just as he promised!)” I knew I was back to earth.

But this is exactly what COVID-19 has deprived you of.

Isolation or self-quarantine, however it is called, has inflicted a seemingly unbridgeable chasm between you and the ones you love. What is more, you as well as they have no choice on the matter. Even if they wanted to, the authorities and existing quarantine protocols prevent them from keeping you in the warmth of their love, company and care. Sometimes I find it amusing to think that this corona virus seems tailored to our age where social media have connected us more easily and economically than where we were just a few years ago. Thankfully because of video calling and other communication devices and applications we can reach you and you can reach us. We do not have to imagine how difficult it is for you to breathe, speak or make the most ordinary movements we healthy ones take for granted. We see all these brought home to us through the stark

realism of our laptops’ and cell phones’ cameras. But we still cannot hold your hand nor even touch your head in a gesture of prayer, much less give you a hug. You yourself warn us never to come within a meter of the hospital they are keeping you in. When you weep, at least we can weep with you. It is hard to keep a straight face when we see your tears flowing more easily than your words.

I can only imagine the dark thoughts that once in a while cross your mind. Perhaps you already know about the frontliners, sometimes real couples brave and caring health workers (doctors, nurses etc.) who got infected while attending to patients and eventually died. Do not focus on their dying at the expense of their humanity and heroism. Remember the person because of whom there is Easter was himself not exempt from dark thoughts. Did he not even beg the heavens, “Father, if it be possible, take this cup (of suffering) away from me” (Mt 26:39; Lk 22:42)? And even as he was to add, “Yet not my will but your will be done” (same verses), it does not detract one bit from the fact that he shared the same agony of staring death in the face with you and, by extension, with us healthy ones. For COVID-19 also at times occasions the same dark thoughts being overcast in our own mind’s horizons. This is no surprise. We all know the virus, like hatred and love, can come to us in the most unexpected places and circumstances.

It might seem hard to believe, maybe even beyond rationality for some, but all I am saying is that you are not alone. The isolation COVID-19 has pushed people into is, if you could just think some more, just an illusion. Easter has made it possible for the Risen One to enter even closed doors and penetrate walls just so he could be with those

By the Roadside / A6

Quarantined Easter

Commentary

Fr. Elias Ayuban, Jr., CMF

Why not the Catholic Church share her billions?

AFTER the rhetorical question: “Where is the Catholic Church in these times of crisis?”, another query in some Facebook posts follows: “Why not the Catholic Church share her billions to the poor?”

This curiosity may be relevant in the past when the institutional Church was still both immensely powerful and opulent. It is no longer the case now and so, we ask in return: “Where are the billions?”

The Holy See gets its income mainly from the entrance fees to the museum, dome and gardens; sales from the pharmacy, department and grocery stores and souvenir shops inside the 44-hectare Vatican City; and, from the voluntary donations of the faithful.

It is not true that the Vatican receives a share of our parish collections. On the contrary, it is the Holy See that helps the poor local churches in mission territories (Africa and largely Asia) through the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (popularly known as Propaganda Fide), which our own Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle now heads.

Despite the limited resources of the universal Church, though, there is a department in the Holy See charged of offering charitable assistance to the poor in the name of the Holy Father called the Office of Papal Charities. To date, the Catholic Church remains the biggest charitable institution in the world.

Moreover, every diocese is autonomous, including in its finances, in the same way that every religious congregation is. Although, the Holy See oversees the administration of all ecclesiastical goods to ascertain that they serve the mission of the Church, every Catholic institution administers its own patrimony with utmost freedom and discretion.

But it is true that the Church is very rich: in arts, churches, history, liturgy, music, etc. However, these treasures are not for sale and we do not glory in them either. We glory in the cross of Christ Jesus. Indeed, the true riches of the Church does not lie in the structures, but in her members.

Particular churches may not have billions, but through private donations, Caritas Manila was able to allocate P1-billion worth of gift certificates to urban poor residents in 10 dioceses in Metro Manila.

The De La Salle Brothers house dozens of homeless individuals for the duration of Luzon quarantine at DLSU; the Redemptorists shelter Albay residents at Baclaran Church; and, the Claretian Missionaries have offered the basement of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in U.P. Diliman for the use of the frontliners. All these, and many more other initiatives, the Church does without cameras and press releases.

When St. Lawrence, who was appointed by Pope Sixtus II to be the caretaker of the treasures of the Church, was told by Emperor Valerian to surrender her wealth (258 A.D.), the Archdeacon gestured back to the door where, streaming in behind him, poured crowds of poor, crippled, blind, and suffering people. Then he proclaimed: “These are the true treasures of the Church!”

Candidly Speaking / A4

over all of us. We would be aware that we are actually doing or cooperating in God’s work. Our work is never just purely ours. It has to be a work of God, since we unavoidably get involved in the providence of God over all his creation.

So, there’s never a dull moment when things are done with love since we would be keenly aware of the cosmic dimensions of our work, whatever it is. Doing a lowly task with love acquires great sanctifying value. That task would have the power to bring us to heaven even if we are in the kitchen or the laundry area.

Thus, washing dishes, cleaning the floor, doing laundry can be more pleasing to God if done with love than doing the more serious tasks of our profession and business but without love. That is, the latter are done simply mechanically, or as an

expression of self-indulgence, pride, vanity and the like.

Perhaps these days are good days to remind ourselves more deeply of the most fundamental truths of our life: where we come from, where we are heading ultimately, what the real purpose of our life here on earth is, etc.

We need to realize that at any moment of our life here on earth, whether we are engaged in complicated, sophisticated work or simple, domestic tasks, God is still forming us to be his image and likeness. It is his initiative of love to which we also have to correspond with love.

Thus, when we go the extra mile, we would always give priority to our spiritual duties over our other tasks, with the latter always being converted into a means to correspond with God, doing them the best that we can.

Caritas / A1

vouchers, Caritas Manila has also been distributing “Covid safety kits” and food bags to poor families.

As the government combat the coronavirus, the priest said that the social aspect cannot be overlooked as he appealed for more help.

“During this pandemic, let us unite and help each other as one Christian community,” Fr. Pascual said.

The social action arm of the Manila archdiocese is providing items to the city’s low-income families to “be safe” from coronavirus.

Caritas Manila said the plight of the poor cannot be ignored during this pandemic.

“Let’s us help the poor who can’t afford to buy products for basic protection from COVID-19,” it said in a

statement.

Caritas’ “Covid-19 safety kit” includes alcohol, face masks, antibacterial liquid soap, Vitamin C, reusable gloves, liquid bleach, cleaning cloth, among others.

Aside from the kit, the relief agency is also providing poor families with food bags to poor families affected by the enhanced community quarantine in Metro Manila.

“No one should be left behind as we fight COVID-19 with charity and cooperation,” said Caritas Manila.

As of March 19, Caritas Manila has also received around P6 million donations for its programs.

“Let us continue sharing our resources to the most vulnerable in the COVID-19 pandemic—the poor and the elderly,” it added. (CBCP News)

The Holy Week during pandemic

THIS is the first time in the history of mankind when all religions cannot celebrate or observe their religious rites as they used to do. They cannot worship together with their brethren inside the Church, temple or mosque, as the case may be. The Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ), or lockdown, prevented them from doing so because ECQ requires everyone to stay home, observes social distancing, prohibits congregation of persons.

Although the CBCP declares that the faithful are dispensed from their duties to observe Sunday and holy days of obligation in times of pandemic, after three Sundays of attending Mass through TV, radio or live streaming, the faithful hungers for a live Mass

where they could participate personally and received the Body of Christ sacramentally, not spiritually. This is the first time in Lent when there was no public blessing of palms, no Visita Iglesia, no Siete Palabras, no Good Friday procession, no Easter Salubong. The faithful had to stay home and be satisfied with live streaming of Masses and Liturgical Services.

This is the time when Social Communications Ministry (SOCCOM) in the parish was much appreciated, because they need to cover every liturgical services and make them available to the faithful through live streaming. Together with the priests, altar servers, lector and commentator, organist/cantor, they are considered the frontliners of the religious sector.

Duc in Altum

Atty. Aurora A. Santiago



I would like to share with the readers the reflections of our Bishop Pablo Virgilio “Ambo” David of the Diocese of Kalookan and some trivia during the Easter Triduum.

On his Holy Thursday Homily, Bishop Ambo narrated the experience of Dra. Cherry Abu, an infectious disease specialist, a frontliner doctor who got infected with corona virus while treating a patient who was later found to be COVID-19 positive. The symptoms first appeared on her mother-in-law, thus both of them got tested and both were positive. While on isolation, Dra. Cherry monitored the condition of her mother-in-law whose health deteriorated until she was intubated and died. She feels guilty that she cried to her husband that she caused

the death of his mother. The husband told her to stop thinking that way. Dra. Cherry fortunately recovered, and was later tested negative, went home and had to go on another self-quarantine. What hurts her was their neighbors started barricading their house, to make sure nobody goes out for they fear they would be infected. What is admirable of Dra. Cherry was her determination to go back as frontliner in the hospital when she fully recovers because that was her sworn duty to serve and it was there where God called her. She also committed that when she fully recovered and she is tested negative, she will donate her blood that can be used in convalescent plasma therapy that may be injected to severely ill COVID patient.

Duc in Altum / A7

A COVID conversion



Whatever

Fr. Francis Ongkingco

WHAT will the world be after COVID-19? There will be undoubtedly many radical changes in the economic, political, social and cultural spheres. As we continue to pray and battle against this mysterious virus that has managed to lock down the entire world, we can only hope that after the pandemic we will not have to face a totally unfamiliar global scenario.

COVID has and continues to wreak unimagined havoc on society and thousands of individuals. We cannot turn a blind eye to the daily waves of fear and devastation in countries that are just experiencing its deadly effects as death rates rocket soar. Only time will tell when all this will end, but at the moment, we each have to do our part to try to minimize its negative effects.

The lockdown has forced us to change our personal lifestyles and social interactions. But this confinement has also helped to rediscover innumerable positive realities that we may have taken for granted: family and relatives, our own communities, personal projects and hobbies previously shelved; and

undoubtedly, a tremendous growth in our spiritual life as our vulnerability has put us with no other recourse than to turn to God in prayer and penance.

I can imagine that—when God deigns it should be over—how a quarantine of months can shape and reshape in us old and new habits. Perhaps, we will be more delicate about and attentive to one another’s needs, social distancing will make us more aware of public order and hygiene, and of course new structural measures by governments and other institutions to prepare for similar future scenarios.

For example, our country is both adjusting and is promoting never-ever-witnessed initiatives springing up from various sectors to answer the needs of sick people, the old, the unemployed, sowing hope in gloomy home atmospheres with the aid of social media to host virtual reunions, songs and even cultural concerts!

Our viral confinement is also reminding us of values that we may have taken for granted: families are living ‘family life’ in real-time with less

interruptions as before, despite the uncalculated toll of work-from-home, and are able to share precious moments never before engaged due to traffic, workload and travel.

The world is coming out alive in a new way never before experienced!

Reflecting on all these wonderful things, I also ask myself what change I will carry forward after all of this is ‘over’? Will it only be something fleeting? Or will I return to my old ways and practices as I disregard or neglect the proper distancing—whether close or far—I should maintain in my family, professional and social duties? Will I simply return to my default mode and settings?

Even way before the COVID pandemic ends, aside from settling home and work goals, it may be helpful for each one to ponder on personal goals that these days may slowly forge. Thus, upon returning to the normal conditions of life, we would engage them humbled but enriched since we have learned to live life’s realities in a deeper human and spiritual perspective.

Bishop calls for immediate release of cash aid for workers

A CHURCH official has echoed the calls for the immediate release of the government's cash aid to workers, as Covid-19 quarantine measures continue to affect their livelihood and food security.

Bishop Gerardo Alminaza of San Carlos pressed for a sense of urgency in assisting the country's ordinary workers.

"We strongly demand that the Department of Labor and Employment immediately release the financial assistance to all affected workers whether from small, medium, and large enterprises," Alminaza said.

The bishop, who also co-chairs the Church People – Workers Solidarity (CWS), said that many workers have not yet received the cash assistance since the Luzon-wide lockdown was imposed. "Thus, workers and their families are left without income to buy food and other basic necessities," said



Bishop Gerardo Alminaza of San Carlos, co-chairperson of Church People-Workers Solidarity. FILE PHOTO

Alminaza.

He also urged the government to ask companies employing affected workers to apply for the cash assistance to mitigate the impact of the quarantine measures due to the coronavirus pandemic.

According to him, the DOLE assistance requires employers as the ones who

should apply for the financial assistance for their workers.

"We reiterate our call to the government to oblige all companies to apply on behalf of their workers and/or allow workers to apply directly for the said assistance," said the bishop.

About 220,000 workers affected by the lockdown have

benefited from its Covid-19 Adjustment Measures Program, the DOLE said.

Around 1.4 million workers have reportedly been displaced since the lockdown forced businesses to temporarily close or implement flexible work arrangements. (CBCP News)

CRS supports PWDs, informal workers as lockdown continues

AS church groups joined various efforts in distributing aid, a Catholic charity focused its attention to helping people with disabilities and informal workers.

Catholic Relief Services is supporting PWDs and workers in the informal economy who are struggling because of the Covid-19 lockdown with over P1.2 million of initial assistance.

Matthew McGarry, CRS sub-regional country representative, said that beyond the dangers of the disease itself is the current situation for poor families to meet their basic needs.

"We are focusing our efforts on assisting the most vulnerable populations, who bear the brunt of the lockdown and are at the greatest risk from the spread of Covid-19," McGarry said.

CRS, the U.S. bishops' overseas relief and development agency, has programs across Asia. They have a sub-regional office in Manila.

The agency has partnered with Tahanang Walang Hagdanan, Inc. (TWHI) to help at least 116 people with disabilities in a TWHI residential facility in Cainta, Rizal.

The assistance includes a one-month supply of food and hygiene items that the residents themselves selected during remote consultations with CRS and TWHI. Melo Bueza, TWHI's social worker, said people with disabilities are suffering the brunt of the coronavirus outbreak.

"Since most of us are on a 'no work, no pay' basis, it has been hard to get the supplies we and our families need," Bueza said.



CRS Philippines has partnered with Tahanang Walang Hagdanan, Inc. to provide people with disabilities in a TWHI residential facility in Cainta, Rizal with a one-month supply of food and hygiene items that the residents themselves selected. COURTESY OF TWHI

In TWHI, people with disabilities are provided with opportunities to work in metalcraft, woodcraft, sewing and packaging to earn money for themselves and their families.

Ramon Rey Emmanuel Apellido, TWHI's administrative manager, said the organization, too, faces difficulties in supporting all the people it serves. "These food baskets and hygiene kits are essential to ensure we get proper nutrition and stay healthy," he said.

CRS Philippines is also working with Caritas Pasig in providing some 150

informal workers with at least P5,000 cash grants that they can use to buy food and other basic necessities.

Cash grant beneficiaries include tricycle and jeepney drivers, sidewalk vendors, construction workers and those who have lost their source of income but are excluded in the government's Pantawid Pamilya cash assistance program.

The CRS also said that plans are underway to expand its Covid-19 relief and recovery program across the Philippines. (CBCP News)

Chinese Catholics aid Manila's poor amid lockdown

CATHOLICS in mainland China have donated a big amount to help Filipinos in Manila's slums cope with the Covid-19 lockdown.

The Chinese faithful collected \$85,000 or roughly P4.3 million and coursed the donation through the Mandarin Service of Radio Veritas Asia in Quezon City.

Fr. Joseph Leo, coordinator of RVA's Mandarin Service, said the funds were used to provide food packs for the poor communities.

He said that part of the funds was also donated to different Catholic charities working among the poor in Metro Manila.

One project run by the Vincentians helps the people of Payatas in Quezon City, a poor place around a garbage mountain where scavenging is the local industry.

Fr. Leo said other organizations include the Arnold Janssen Center, which serves the homeless, and the Claret Solidarity Group, which also helps poor

families.

As a media serving churches in China, the priest said that RVA has been receiving a lot of attention from its listeners about the country's situation amid the lockdown.

"Since we reported the news of the Manila Lockdown, our listeners are very concerned about the poor people here," Fr. Leo said.

Every year many Chinese priests and nuns visit the Philippines, which also provides them an opportunity to visit RVA's projects for the poor.

"They help them (poor) through us every year. So, when Manila was lockdown, they began to donate money to the poor to buy the rice," Fr. Leo said.

"So far, people continue to donate," he added.

Most of the money received by the RVA came from the Wenzhou diocese and from its listeners in Guangzhou, Tianjin, Fuzhou, and other parts of mainland China. (CBCP News)

By the Roadside / A5

who belong to him to say, "Shalom, peace be with you" (Jn 20:19). Even when you feel so alone, he is most in touch with you for he himself went through the same trial, even questioning his own Father in the process: "Eli, Eli, lemme sabachtani? My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mk 15:34), re-echoing the prayer of lament from the psalmist in Ps 22:1.

It is a matter of faith. Believe it. He laments the pain of isolation with you. He feels the pangs of the sense of abandonment by loved ones with you. Most of all, he shows you that the abandonment, like the COVID-19-induced sense of me-and-no-other-against-a-proven-killer, is a ploy of the ancient enemy who whispers in our ears during our unguarded moments that we are no good, and nobody cares at all if we live or die. No, the Risen One says. "I am with you till the end of time" (Mt 28:20).

Perhaps you might have even entertained thoughts of being punished for your sins or of receiving your share in a divine chastisement of sinful humanity. Our leaders in the Church frown on such a way of looking at COVID-19. It does not simply square with the teaching of Jesus and of the Scriptures regarding God who is Love and Mercy itself. It might seem more attuned to the destructive nature of sin itself and that there are consequences to our sinfulness. Perhaps, as some

believers say, COVID-19 could be one of those consequences. So perish the thought that God the all-loving and the almighty Father is punishing you and sinful mankind with the corona virus. If in your harrowing moments you try to look where the virus came from, the key perhaps is to see that it was sinful human beings who put the crown of thorns on Jesus' head. Not the other way around.

There is also another reason why you are not alone. We are with you. No, not because we stand or sit by your bed. We are with you in a deeper way. We are constantly praying for you and with you. When we receive the Risen One through Communion we are also one with you; he connects us with you more intimately than the breath of your body, than the hairs of your head. He is not only our Way, our Truth and our Life (Jn 14:6). He is our Vine, we his branches (Jn 15:5).

So sail on, brother. Sail on, sister. Sail on and savor your part in the great journey of sharing the suffering, the dying and the Risen One's rising. This is the point of having been baptized, remember? And when the sailing gets rough, wake him up from his sleep and beg for his saving action on your behalf and ours. Our voices will join yours. Have a blessed, though quarantined, Easter!

Holy Week / A1

country on how to celebrate the liturgies of Holy Week as the country deals with the outbreak.

A Filipino Catholic's Palm Sunday tradition would not be complete without bringing home a blessed palm frond. Aware of this, Roman Catholic bishops and priests sought better ways of reaching out to their flock during these sacred days in the Church's calendar while sticking to the government's mandate of maintaining a safe distance from each other to prevent the possible transmission of the deadly virus.

In the Diocese of Kidapawan, Bishop Jose Colin Bagaforo permitted all priests to bless palm fronds in designated streets and areas with the help of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, commonly known as lay ministers, in far-flung village chapels.

Palms in the streets

In the Most Holy Redeemer Parish Church in the Diocese of Cubao, Parish Priest Fr. Michel Joe B. Zerrudo, riding on the back of a slowly moving pick-up truck, blessed palm fronds held by his parishioners who were standing in front of their houses mindful of the social distancing policies

implemented by the government.

Former CBCP president Archbishop Socrates Villegas of Lingayen-Dagupan also stood at the back of a pick-up vehicle to bless palm fronds waved by Catholics around the streets of Dagupan City.

"Jesus rode on the back of a donkey. I rode on the back of a pick-up truck," Fr. Zerrudo joked.

Fr. Velasquez, for his part, went around the territorial jurisdiction of his mission station, blessing the palms of his flock save for one chapel, which was too far.

People he could not reach went out to meet him and brought their palms to the nearest chapel.

Holy Week in the homes

Fr. Velasquez said that "the measures that the Church had adopted to enable the faithful to enter into the spirit of this sacred time has allowed us to go where people usually are: in their homes and boroughs."

"In many of these places where I have been today, the faithful had wanted that I go to their homes; for them it was a privileged moment, for through sacred signs and actions, the Lord was with them, and they rejoiced in the sign of his continuing

presence," he said.

For devout Filipino Roman Catholics, this is the first Holy Week they will be observing the rituals from the safety rather than comfort of their own homes.

Holy Week online

Jan Pascual, a camarero or an individual who owns or prepares religious images for procession, said this year's Holy Week would be "a very unexpected, unusual, yet a more meaningful way."

"For the past 5 years, I was very busy during Holy Week, preparing the carroza of our santa, Santa Maria Jacobe, for our town's (Santa Rita, Pampanga) Holy Week procession," he said.

He said prepping the saint's image and carroza (processional carriage) had caused him to miss out on the important liturgical activities like the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday and the Liturgy of the Passion of our Lord on Good Friday.

But because of the Luzon-wide enhanced community quarantine that led to the cancellation of religious processions, he would be able to "attend" the liturgies, albeit online.

Photographer and College of St.

Benilde instructor Jay Mangussad, meanwhile, said he and his family would have their stations of the cross at home with images of each station flashed on their TV screen. The readings are on their phones or printed on paper.

"It would be our first stations of the cross where we stand still and kneel without walking around," he said.

The essentials

Fr. Zerrudo, for his part, believes that this extended quarantine is giving Catholics the "opportunity of time and solitude" during Holy Week.

"In a way, the Holy Week has become the only opportunity for many to go on vacation. And so they readily sacrifice their Holy Week in order to go on vacation. But now the vacation is long to the point that it seems nakakaamay (tiresome) and then there is no place to go. Some people resort to do silly things like TikTok but eventually we tire of superficial entertainment," he said.

Even if this Holy Week will be devoid of the traditional rituals and spectacle, it will be a "great Holy Week," he said.

"Yes it will be devoid of the trimmings of rituals but it will

definitely be a humbling experience of renewal. In this pandemic, we realize that man truly does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from God. Less pageantry but more solitude prayer and charity."

He was hoping the pandemic urges not just Catholics, but all people, to renewal and conversion and "leave the mark of a new heavens and a new earth in a certain degree."

Pascual agreed. The quarantine made him realize what's more important in life

"I was acting like St. Martha of Bethany who was troubled by many things. I can hear Jesus telling me the exact words he said to Martha when he visited them at their house in Bethany, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one'. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Fr. Velasquez said this extraordinary time would be "one of the best experiences in my life as a priest."

"Because these are times wherein you're made to realize that you're not in charge," he said.

No room for selfishness during pandemic — Tandag bishop

'Don't use pandemic for anti-life advocacy', priest appeals



Bishop Raul Dael prays for the healthcare workers of the Adela Serra Ty Memorial Medical Center in Tandag City on April 9, 2020. COURTESY OF ASTMCC

TANDAG City— A Catholic bishop has warned that selfishness and individualism will further the problems caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Despite the lockdown, Bishop Raul Dael of Tandag stressed that a community will stand firm if people will help each other.

"What would destroy a community is selfishness," Dael said in his homily during the Mass of the Lord's Supper at the San Nicolas de Tolentino Cathedral on April 9.

"There is no more spirit of community

if people turn selfish," he said. "What builds up a community of God is the spirit of communion."

Holy Thursday's ritual that usually include the washing of the feet, he said, reminds Christians of their call to serve others through the concrete realities of life.

Given the protocols regarding physical distancing and absence of faithful, the traditional ritual was skipped.

The prelate stressed that the purpose of the celebration is not just for the sake of the ritual "but to lead us to action".

"If we look at the spirit of the

eucharist, no hunger will happen in our communities," Bishop Dael said.

"There is hunger in the world not because we lack resources but we lack generosity," he said.

Earlier in the day, the bishop visited the city's frontliners against the coronavirus in road checkpoints, hospitals and government offices.

Accompanied by some priests, nuns, seminarians, and lay people, Dael also prayed and blessed the frontliners and provided them food packs. (CBCPNews)

'Covid-19 mocks the control freak in us' — Archbishop Soc

On Palm Sunday, Archbishop Socrates Villegas of Lingayen-Dagupan said that coronavirus pandemic is a reminder that "control is an illusion".

In his homily streamed from the St. John the Evangelist Cathedral, he said that both Palm Sunday and the Covid-19 "teach us that we have no control of everything".

"God has the control. Covid19 has also stripped us naked of our imagined securities and controls," Villegas said.

"Covid mocks the control freak in us. Palm Sunday says obedience to God saves. The truth has always been there. Covid-19 just reminds," he said.

Catholics across the country observed Palm Sunday, marking the beginning of the Holy Week leading to Christ's crucifixion, death and resurrection.

But since most parts of the country are on strict quarantine due to the



Archbishop Socrates Villegas blesses palm fronds waved by Catholics as he goes around the streets of Dagupan City on Palm Sunday, April 5, aboard a pick-up vehicle. GLEEN MUNOZ LOPEZ/CBCPNEWS

Covid-19, Catholics follow the celebration online or via radio and television.

Palm Sunday is a commemoration of Jesus's humble and triumphant entry to Jerusalem, only to be crucified later by the very people who welcomed him.

Villegas said that Jesus loved his people by emptying himself unlike the "foolish

who cling to control. "And they call God who suffers as stupid," he said.

"The foolish lead by fears and threats. Not God. The way of God is freedom. He invites. He does not twist arms," Villegas said.

"Jesus became obedient and refused the temptation to be in control. He emptied himself. He obeyed the plan

of the Father. In His letting go, we are saved," he added.

After the Mass, the archbishop, who was wearing a protective face mask, went around the city aboard a pick-up vehicle to bless palm fronds.

Holding a crucifix, he made a sign of the cross as he passes through the people on the streets. (CBCPNews)

Duc in Altum / A5

Bishop Ambo said it is like in the Last Supper when Jesus said that his blood will be poured for all for the forgiveness of sins and to defeat Satan. Pope Francis once said "I am vaccinated by the precious blood of Jesus Christ; no virus can touch me."

On Good Friday's Homily, Bishop Ambo stated that the most cruel death penalty is crucifixion, as what they did to Jesus. He was tortured, ridiculed by the soldiers, stripped off all his clothing, for public shaming. Bishop Ambo said "the cross shows the cruelty of man to his fellowman." When Jesus thirst, the soldier got a stick with foam at the end. Bishop Ambo said that the said stick is used by the Romans to clean their rectum after defecated. The soldier dipped the foam in vinegar, not water, and brought it to Jesus' lips. Thirsty, Jesus sipped it. In the Scriptures, the Israelites were told to look at the snake that caused death so that they would be saved. Bishop Ambo asked "Are we not being told to look not only to the Son of God but also

to our fellowmen whom we hurt, so that it may open our eyes, realize our fault and bring back the dignity and the real person that we are who is being misled by the devil? Pope Francis said "the Cross will teach us how to see more clearly with eyes washed away by tears."

During the Veneration of the Cross, in an unprecedented move, Bishop Ambo removed the crown of thorns on the image of Jesus Christ before he venerated and kissed the feet of Jesus nailed on the Cross. He said in his FB post, he decided to remove the crown of thorns and prayed "Panginoon, patawarin mo po kami sa mga corona ng pagmamalupit at pagwawalang bahala sa aming kapwa. Alisin mo na po, para mo na pong awa, ang coronang salot na kasalukuyang kumakalat sa aming bansa at sa buong daigdig. (Lord, forgive us for the crowns of cruelty and being indifferent to our neighbors. Please take away, in your mercy, the crown of pestilence which is presently spreading in our country and the whole world).

On Easter Vigil, Bishop talked about finding Jesus in the midst of the pandemic crisis. Bishop asked what does it take to find what we are looking for? He said "If we still look at Him (Jesus) as apart from us, if we still look at him as savior, and ourselves as the objects of salvation, we will probably not find him no matter how desperately we search for him." He said, being a Christian is not about just looking at heaven and waiting. "It is a participation; it is communion. May be that is the reason why he disappears again after he appears to his disciples. He does not appear only to save us but to get us participate in his saving mission. If we have entered into communion with him in body and spirit, his suffering and death become our suffering and death as well."

During the simpler Salubong rite, the image of the Mater Dolorosa, with black veil covering her face, was brought towards the Risen Christ at the Altar. Bishop thought that he would just sing the Regina Coeli and the Alleluja but the MC

whispered to him to unveil the Mater Dolorosa. As he walked to the image of Mama Mary, Bishop Ambo said, "I had my eyes fixed on the black veil and imagined it to be the pandemic that has shrouded the lives of our people in the past several weeks". He continued, "I said a prayer to the Risen Lord, asking him to let the light on His radiant face dispel the darkness caused by the present crisis on our country and on the whole world, and bring back the smile on the face of his Blessed Mother." Bishop Ambo revealed in his FB post that when he was young, he hoped to play the part of an angel at the Salubong. Unfortunately, the task is given to girls. It is not the idea of being hung in mid-air but rather the task of removing the black veil covering the face of the grieving Blessed Mother. When he became priest, he felt he performed the angel's role of removing the dark veils in the people's life when he proclaimed the Word, anointed the sick, heard confessions. Little did he know that COVID-19 will fulfill

his wish.

It was reported in Rome that the day after the Urbi et Orbi Blessing of Pope Francis, many COVID patients recovered. Urbi et Orbi Blessing is given by the Pope only on two occasions – Christmas and Easter, and when a new Pope is elected. Because it is an extraordinary time when there is pandemic, Pope Francis gave his Urbi et Orbi message and blessing. Amidst the falling rains without umbrella, Pope Francis walked to the balcony of the empty St. Peter's Square and addressed the world. He compared our situation now when the apostles were in the midst of the storm in the sea but Jesus was sleeping. Where is Jesus at this time when we need Him most. Pope Francis advised us that we must trust Jesus because He is very generous and merciful and He is always with us. Pope Francis also gave Plenary Indulgence. Again, this Easter Sunday, Pope Francis gave his Urbi et Orbi message and blessing with Plenary Indulgence.

TARLAC City— A call by the Population Commission for the distribution of birth control tools amid the coronavirus pandemic ran into a wall of criticism from a pro-life group.

Fr. Melvin Castro, spiritual adviser of Pro-Life Philippines, questioned the promotion of condoms and contraceptives at a time when many people are hungry amid the lockdown.

"May I ask the 'reproductive health' proponents to cease and desist taking opportunity of this pandemic crisis to further the anti-life advocacy," Castro, who is also a former executive secretary of the bishops' Commission on Family and Life, said on April 6.

"When people barely survive and do not know where to get their living, the last thing they need are your

condoms and contraceptive pills," he said.

The priest said the aggressive birth control effort amid the pandemic is detached from the real need of the people.

As a concrete example, he cited a recent theft case at a restaurant wherein the suspects only took food items.

"No machine, no appliances were taken. They took the food kept in the freezer. They need food, not contraceptives," Castro said.

The PopCom earlier called on local authorities to ensure public access to contraceptives as strict quarantine continues in several parts of the country.

The agency said the move is necessary so that no unintended pregnancies happen while the pandemic rages on. (CBCPNews)

Spirit / A1

Archbishop Romulo Valles, president of the bishops' conference, particularly honored medical workers tending to patients while risking their lives.

"Together, seeing the countless acts of sacrifice and service, acts of kindness and compassion, we begin to see that the spirit of Easter is still very much alive in our hearts," Valles said.

The CBCP head said that the "simple acts of appreciation and gratitude" to Covid-19 frontliners also manifest the hope that comes with the Easter season.

"I begin to believe that we, as Filipinos, together with all the peoples in the world, are bigger than the threat of the coronavirus pandemic," Valles said.

"It is a spirit that springs forth from both convictions, the conviction that the Lord truly and deeply loves us and the conviction that we are a people truly capable of loving and caring for each other in the worst of times," he added.

Editorial/ A4

All the human virtues we need to develop, all the means we need to develop our spiritual life, especially the sacraments Christ instituted for us, will come to mind as a consequence.

The only thing that can nullify this good news is our freedom, that is, when we would stupidly use it to deny Christ, either openly or secretly, directly or indirectly, without repenting. And we should not take this possibility lightly, because even Peter, the head of the apostles, came close to it by denying Christ, not only once, but three times. But he repented. That is the difference between our salvation and condemnation, between our glorification and perdition.

With Easter, we can now face our life with confidence, even if we commit mistakes and fall into sin. Let's remember that Christian life is not so much a matter of avoiding sins as following God's loving will. This means that we pray always, we follow his commandments, we do his will which is nothing other than for us to be holy and do continuing apostolate, helping one another to go to Christ.

Jolo gets new bishop

POPE Francis has appointed Fr. Charlie Inzon of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate as the apostolic vicar of the Jolo vicariate in Sulu province.

The 54-year-old priest is currently the provincial superior of the OMI in the Philippines.

The appointment was made public in Rome on Saturday, April 4.

The vicariate has been without a bishop after Angelito Lampon was named archbishop of Cotabato in November 2018.

Since January 2019, the ecclesial jurisdiction has been under the temporary care of Fr. Romeo Saniel, OMI, as its administrator.

An apostolic vicariate is a local Church that has not yet been established as a diocese. Its administration is assigned to the apostolic vicar or apostolic who governs it in the name of the Pope.

Born in Putiao, Sorsogon on Nov. 24, 1965, the bishop-elect entered the OMI in 1982 and made his perpetual profession on Sept. 8, 1990.

Inzon studied Philosophy at Notre Dame University in Cotabato City and Theology at the Loyola School of Theology (LST) of the Ateneo De Manila University (ADMU).

He was ordained a priest on April 24, 1993 in Coloocan City.

After his ordination, he held the following positions:



Bishop-elect Charlie Inzon of the Apostolic Vicariate of Jolo.

- 1993-1995: Chaplain of Notre Dame College, Jolo
- 1995-1998: Person in charge of the mission station of Batu-Batu in Tawi-Tawi
- 1998-1999: Parish Vicar of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Bangong Barrio, Caloocan City
- 1999-2000: Parish vicar of Sto. Niño Parish, Madsayap, Cotabato
- 2000-2007: Director of the O.M.I. College Seminary, Quezon City
- 2007-2010: Research Director of Notre Dame College, in Jolo
- 2008-2010: Chaplain of Notre Dame College, Jolo
- 2009-2010: Dean of the Graduate School of Notre Dame College, Jolo
- 2010-2014: President of Notre Dame College, Jolo
- 2014-2018: President of Notre Dame University, Cotabato

Inzon also holds a master's degree in theology from LST and a doctorate in psychology from the ADMU.

The bishop-elect has been serving as OMI's provincial superior since 2018. **(CBCP News)**

Catholic aid group commits €5 million to support Covid-19 response



Volunteers of the Diocese of Kidapawan prepare relief goods to be distributed in the city April 2. **KIDAPAWAN DSAC**

THE papal charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) is providing €5 million or roughly P280 million in emergency funding to help mitigate the impact of coronavirus crisis in poor countries like the Philippines.

The funds will be used to support parishes and religious communities so that they would be able to continue their spiritual and social ministries, particularly to the most vulnerable communities.

ACN's funding will be a broad-spectrum intervention, in the Middle East, Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Africa, through project support.

Thomas Heine-Geldern, ACN's

Executive President, stressed that the pandemic has increased the demand for social and spiritual care.

"It is our wish that this aid, made possible thanks to our benefactors, will help ease the burden on our courageous religious, who stand on the front lines, bringing God's love and compassion to our suffering brothers and sisters," Heine-Geldern said.

Jonathan Luciano, national director of ACN-Philippines, said the commitment is just an "intensification" of ACN's funding for existential support for religious communities and parishes.

For many years, he said that ACN

has been a constant source of aid by poor parishes and communities of religious sisters.

"This commitment is just an intensification of that support. We are ready to support parishes and communities who were greatly affected by the lockdowns and quarantines," Luciano said.

"We are aware of the difficulties facing many parish communities and religious communities because of the quarantine and we are ready to help them," he said.

Founded in 1947, ACN has been helping churches in difficult situations. It has been recognized as a papal foundation since 2011. **(CBCPNews)**

Fr. Edgar Koning, social justice advocate for Filipinos, falls to Covid-19 in Netherlands

A DUTCH Carmelite priest and a known social justice advocate for the Filipinos has died due to coronavirus in the Netherlands.

Father Edgar Koning died on March 31 at a hospital in the city of Almelo, where he was confined due to the Covid-19. He was 87.

"The death of Edgar has been a hard blow to many people," said Fr. Ben Wolbers, Co-Provincial of the Dutch Carmelites, in a letter to his confreres.

"Caring for mutual solidarity, connectedness and respect for the uniqueness of each person — that really characterized him," he said.

Fr. Koning arrived in the

Philippines in 1965 and stayed with the Carmel community in Escalante, Negros Occidental.

For some years, he managed the Mount Carmel College and Magdalena Hospital, while serving as Prior of the community in Escalante.

For his Filipino confreres, Fr. Koning will be remembered as a missionary who struggled for peace and justice in Negros.

"We remember him as vibrant missionary and a friend of the Filipino people who continue to struggle for peace and justice," said Fr. Berto Karmelo.

In his eight-year stint

in Negros, Fr. Koning also worked to protect the rights of the farmers until 1973 when he got sick and had to be reassigned back to Holland.

"Edgar found it difficult to cope with the far-reaching corruption the country suffered from and the unjust ways in which the large landowners treated their workers," Fr. Wolbers said.

"In the long run, he couldn't take it anymore. He was overworked and on doctor's advice he went back to the Netherlands," he added.

His reassignment, however, did not stop him from working for the Filipinos. He later worked with the Philippine

solidarity group, which made people in the Netherlands aware of the many injustices in the Philippines.

About ten years later, Fr. Koning also founded Fidoc, the Philippine Information and Documentation Centre, which was located for a long time in the Carmel monastery in Dordrecht.

"Edgar still felt strongly connected with the Filipino people in heart and soul," Fr. Wolbers said.

Fr. Koning was laid to rest on April 4 in the town of Zenderen, where he was last assigned as Prior of the Carmelite's convent. **(CBCPNews)**

Pope Francis creates emergency fund to tackle coronavirus in mission territories

VATICAN— Pope Francis has created an emergency fund for those affected by coronavirus in mission countries.

The pope has earmarked \$750,000 for the fund, Agenzia Fides reported April 6.

Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, prefect of the Vatican Congregation for the Evangelization of the Peoples, said the pope was seeking to mobilize "the Church's entire vast network to face the challenges ahead".

"In her task of evangelization, the Church is often on the front lines of major threats to human well-being," he said.

"In Africa alone, there are over 74,000 religious sisters and over 46,000 priests operating 7,274 hospitals and clinics, 2,346 homes for elderly and the vulnerable, and educating over 19 million children in 45,088 primary schools. In many rural areas they are the only providers of healthcare and education."

The new fund will be based at the Pontifical Mission Societies,

a worldwide group of missionary societies under the pope's jurisdiction. The pope channels support to more than 1,000 dioceses, mainly in Asia, Africa, Oceania and the Amazon, through the group.

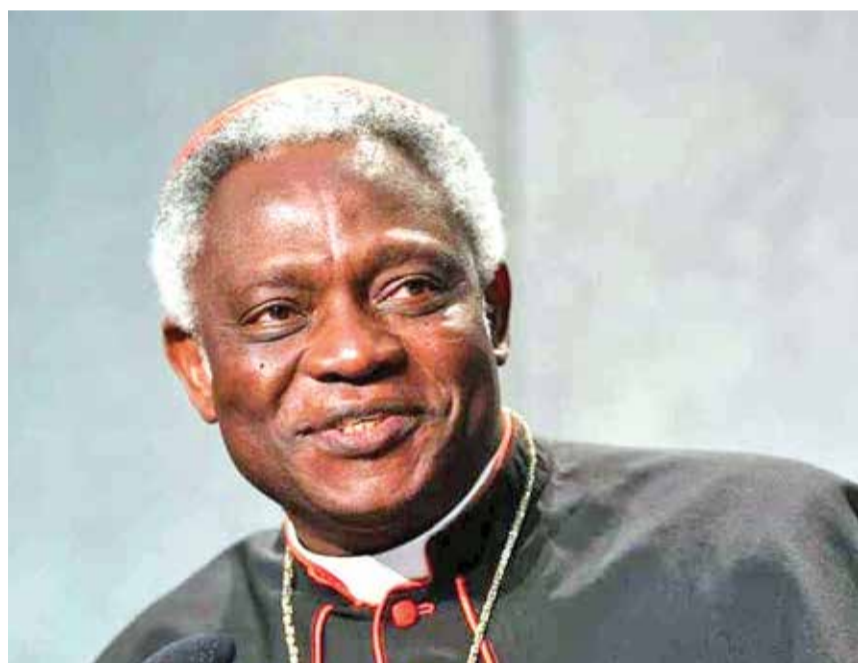
Archbishop Giovanni Pietro Dal Toso, president of the Pontifical Mission Societies, said the pope had established the fund to support the Church in mission territories as it responds to the coronavirus crisis.

"Through the Church's activity of preaching the Gospel and of practical aid through our vast network, we can show that no one is alone in this crisis," he said.

Individuals can make donations to the fund via the administration office of the Pontifical Mission Societies in Rome.

As of April 6, more than 70,000 people had died from coronavirus and more than 1.2 million tested positive for the disease, according to Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center. **(CNA)**

Vatican creates commission to address coronavirus aftermath



Cardinal Peter Turkson, Prefect for the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. **VATICAN MEDIA**

VATICAN— The Vatican is creating a commission to provide local aid and tackle issues related to the fallout from the coronavirus pandemic, according to a statement released April 15.

The group, created at the request of Pope Francis, will work in collaboration with the Roman Curia and specifically the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

The commission has been formed "to express the concern and love of the Church for the whole human family in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, above all through the analysis and reflection on the socio-economic and cultural challenges of the future and the proposal of guidelines to face them," according to the announcement.

The commission will be headed by the leadership of the Integral Development dicastery: prefect Cardinal Peter Turkson, secretary Archbishop Bruno-Marie Duffé, and new deputy secretary Fr. Augusto Zampini. The directorate will report directly to Pope Francis.

Speaking to Vatican Media, Turkson said that Pope Francis has expressed his concern at the crisis caused by COVID-19 "and for the dramatic scenarios on the horizon."

Pope Francis "told us not to waste time, to get down to work immediately," the cardinal said in the April 15 interview. "We must act now. And we must immediately think about what will happen next."

"It is important to begin to reason immediately about what lies around the corner so as not to be unprepared," Turkson argued, noting that "the health crisis has already triggered an economic one."

"The risk is that a social crisis will be provoked if this economic crisis is not dealt with immediately."

The commission is planning to have five working groups focused on different tasks related to the current crisis and to the aftermath

of COVID-19.

One of these groups will focus on researching the post-coronavirus world in the areas of environment, economy, work, health, politics, communication, and security.

Another working group will be centered on giving assistance to the local Churches, in cooperation with pontifical aid organization Caritas Internationalis.

Turkson said "our mission is not to replace the action of the local Churches, but to help them and be helped by them."

The Secretariat of State's section for relations with states will head up a working group overseeing possible initiatives regarding international relations.

There will also be a working group to handle the commission's funding and another to oversee the commission's communications.

Turkson said the group dedicated to funding "will be responsible for finding the necessary funds in a transparent manner, by promoting a virtuous movement of wealth."

The cardinal also said that the commission would involve other institutions in its work, such as Georgetown University, the World Resources Institute, and Potsdam University.

"There is a need for courage, for prophecy," Turkson said. "The pope made this clear in his Urbi et Orbi message. This is not the time for indifference, selfishness or divisions, because the whole world is suffering and must find itself united in confronting the pandemic."

Turkson advised states to relax international sanctions and called for the debt burdens of the poorest countries to be reduced or forgiven.

He also urged a global ceasefire and an end to the manufacture and trafficking of weapons.

"It is time to enable all states to meet the greatest needs of the moment," he said. **(Hannah Brockhaus/CNA)**



Pope Francis delivers his "urbi et orbi" (to the city and the world) message after celebrating Easter Mass in a nearly empty St. Peter's Basilica due to the ongoing global coronavirus pandemic on April 12, 2020. VATICAN MEDIA

'Christ, my hope, is risen!'

Urbi et Orbi Message of His Holiness Pope Francis
Easter 2020, St. Peter's Basilica, 12 April 2020

DEAR brothers and sisters, Happy Easter!

Today the Church's proclamation echoes throughout the world: "Jesus Christ is risen!" – "He is truly risen!"

Like a new flame this Good News springs up in the night: the night of a world already faced with epochal challenges and now oppressed by a pandemic severely testing our whole human family. In this night, the Church's voice rings out: "Christ, my hope, has arisen!" (Easter Sequence).

This is a different "contagion", a message transmitted from heart to heart—for every human heart awaits this Good News. It is the contagion of hope: "Christ, my hope, is risen!". This is no magic formula that makes problems vanish. No, the resurrection of Christ is not that. Instead, it is the victory of love over the root of evil, a victory that does not "by-pass" suffering and death, but passes through them, opening a path in the abyss, transforming evil into good: this is the unique hallmark of the power of God.

The Risen Lord is also the Crucified One, not someone else. In his glorious body he bears indelible wounds: wounds that have become windows of hope. Let us turn our gaze to him that he may heal the wounds of an afflicted humanity.

Today my thoughts turn in the first place to the many who have been directly affected by the coronavirus: the sick, those who have died and family members who mourn the loss of their loved ones, to whom, in some cases, they were unable even to bid a final farewell. May the Lord of life welcome the departed into his kingdom and grant comfort

and hope to those still suffering, especially the elderly and those who are alone. May he never withdraw his consolation and help from those who are especially vulnerable, such as persons who work in nursing homes, or live in barracks and prisons. For many, this is an Easter of solitude lived amid the sorrow and hardship that the pandemic is causing, from physical suffering to economic difficulties.

This disease has not only deprived us of human closeness, but also of the possibility of receiving in person the consolation that flows from the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist and Reconciliation. In many countries, it has not been possible to approach them, but the Lord has not left us alone! United in our prayer, we are convinced that he has laid his hand upon us (cf. Ps 138:5), firmly reassuring us: Do not be afraid, "I have risen and I am with you still!" (cf. Roman Missal, Entrance Antiphon, Mass of Easter Sunday).

May Jesus, our Passover, grant strength and hope to doctors and nurses, who everywhere offer a witness of care and love for our neighbors, to the point of exhaustion and not infrequently at the expense of their own health. Our gratitude and affection go to them, to all who work diligently to guarantee the essential services necessary for civil society, and to the law enforcement and military personnel who in many countries have helped ease people's difficulties and sufferings.

In these weeks, the lives of millions of people have suddenly changed. For many, remaining at home has been an opportunity to reflect, to withdraw from the frenetic pace of life, stay with loved

ones and enjoy their company. For many, though, this is also a time of worry about an uncertain future, about jobs that are at risk and about other consequences of the current crisis. I encourage political leaders to work actively for the common good, to provide the means and resources needed to enable everyone to lead a dignified life and, when circumstances allow, to assist them in resuming their normal daily activities.

This is not a time for indifference, because the whole world is suffering and needs to be united in facing the pandemic. May the risen Jesus grant hope to all the poor, to those living on the peripheries, to refugees and the homeless. May these, the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters living in the cities and peripheries of every part of the world, not be abandoned. Let us ensure that they do not lack basic necessities (all the more difficult to find now that many businesses are closed) such as medicine and especially the possibility of adequate health care. In light of the present circumstances, may international sanctions be relaxed, since these make it difficult for countries on which they have been imposed to provide adequate support to their citizens, and may all nations be put in a position to meet the greatest needs of the moment through the reduction, if not the forgiveness, of the debt burdening the balance sheets of the poorest nations.

This is not a time for self-centeredness, because the challenge we are facing is shared by all, without distinguishing between persons. Among the many areas of the world affected

by the coronavirus, I think in a special way of Europe. After the Second World War, this continent was able to rise again, thanks to a concrete spirit of solidarity that enabled it to overcome the rivalries of the past. It is more urgent than ever, especially in the present circumstances, that these rivalries do not regain force, but that all recognize themselves as part of a single family and support one another. The European Union is presently facing an epochal challenge, on which will depend not only its future but that of the whole world. Let us not lose the opportunity to give further proof of solidarity, also by turning to innovative solutions. The only alternative is the selfishness of particular interests and the temptation of a return to the past, at the risk of severely damaging the peaceful coexistence and development of future generations.

This is not a time for division. May Christ our peace enlighten all who have responsibility in conflicts, that they may have the courage to support the appeal for an immediate global ceasefire in all corners of the world. This is not a time for continuing to manufacture and deal in arms, spending vast amounts of money that ought to be used to care for others and save lives. Rather, may this be a time for finally ending the long war that has caused such great bloodshed in beloved Syria, the conflict in Yemen and the hostilities in Iraq and in Lebanon. May this be the time when Israelis and Palestinians resume dialogue in order to find a stable and lasting solution that will allow both to live in peace. May the sufferings of the people who live

in the eastern regions of Ukraine come to an end. May the terrorist attacks carried out against so many innocent people in different African countries come to an end.

This is not a time for forgetfulness. The crisis we are facing should not make us forget the many other crises that bring suffering to so many people. May the Lord of life be close to all those in Asia and Africa who are experiencing grave humanitarian crises, as in the Province of Cabo Delgado in the north of Mozambique. May he warm the hearts of the many refugees displaced because of wars, drought and famine. May he grant protection to migrants and refugees, many of them children, who are living in unbearable conditions, especially in Libya and on the border between Greece and Turkey. And I do not want to forget the island of Lesbos. In Venezuela, may he enable concrete and immediate solutions to be reached that can permit international assistance to a population suffering from the grave political, socio-economic and health situation.

Dear brothers and sisters, Indifference, self-centeredness, division and forgetfulness are not words we want to hear at this time. We want to ban these words forever! They seem to prevail when fear and death overwhelm us, that is, when we do not let the Lord Jesus triumph in our hearts and lives. May Christ, who has already defeated death and opened for us the way to eternal salvation, dispel the darkness of our suffering humanity and lead us into the light of his glorious day, a day that knows no end.

With these thoughts, I would like to wish all of you a happy Easter.

Psychological Incapacity for Marriage

The canonical concept and its misapplication by Civil Law

By Jaime B. Achacoso, JCD



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The canonical concept of incapacity to assume the essential matrimonial obligations

The canonical concept of incapacity for validly contracting marriage due to causes of a psychological nature is neatly stated in c.1095, 3° that we quote in full below:

Can. 1095. The following are incapable of contracting marriage:
1° those who lack sufficient use of reason;

2° those who suffer from a grave lack of discretionary judgement concerning the essential matrimonial rights and obligations to be mutually given and accepted;

3° those who, because of causes of a psychological nature, are unable to assume the essential obligations of marriage.

This particular number of c.1095 takes into consideration those subjects whose psychic structure makes it impossible for them to bind themselves to the essential obligations of marriage, regardless of their capacity to discern and deliberate over such obligations (the object of c.1095, 2°). According

to this norm, those subjects who do not have the self-dominion to assume and respond to the essential matrimonial obligations, regardless of actually committing themselves to such obligations through a formal act, are incapable of giving matrimonial consent: because nobody can validly commit himself to something that he is intrinsically incapable of assuming.

Thus, in the case of a factual non-fulfillment of the essential marriage obligations, the determinant question is: Is it a case of simple non-fulfillment of obligations that had been validly assumed (which would then be irrelevant for the judgment of the validity of the marriage), or a case demonstrating the absence of a valid matrimonial consent? In the latter case, a posterior question would be: Is the non-fulfillment due to a positive will contrary to marriage or to one of its essential elements or properties (a case of simulation or exclusion dealt with in c.1101, 2°), or due to an incapacity to assume the essential obligations of marriage, which is the object of c.1095, 3°.

John Paul II revealed the *mens legislatoris* at the core of c.1095, 3° in his discourses to the Roman Rota. For example, in 1987 he affirmed: “A true incapacity can be conceived only in the presence of a serious form of anomaly, which—regardless of how it is called—should substantially affect the capacity of understanding and/or willing of the contractant.” Further on he would affirm: “For the canonist, the principle should be clear that only impossibility, and not the difficulty, of giving consent and fulfilling a true community of life and love renders a marriage null. On the other hand, the failure of the conjugal union, in itself, is never a proof of such incapacity in the contractants. It is good to remember that incapacity does not refer to the ideal marriage, but to a valid marriage—i.e., the possibility of establishing a relationship that can be called matrimonial, even if in a minimum but sufficient level.”

Finally, in his discourse in 1988, John Paul II warned against the danger of shifting the focus of the incapacity from the impossibility of assuming the essential obligations

to that of the fulfillment of such obligations. “The error can arise in which the expert declares the incapacity of the contractant not with reference to the minimum capacity that is sufficient for a valid consent, but with reference to the ideal of a full maturity for a happy conjugal life.”

The core of the incapacity lies in the conjugal pact—the capacity to oblige oneself to the essential obligations of marriage—and not in the ensuing conjugal life, because the reasons for the non-fulfillment of such obligations are varied and irrelevant to consensual capacity or incapacity. We need to remember that the success or failure of the conjugal life does not normally depend on the foundational moment, but rather on the adequate response to the ordinary problems of integration that arise in the course of its development.

Proof of incapacity to assume essential matrimonial obligations

Among the elements indicated by Rotal jurisprudence for the proof of this incapacity are the following:

The defect should render the person *incapable of assuming or fulfilling* the obligations that stem from the *tria bona* of marriage.

Rotal jurisprudence is unanimous in the need for a *grave cause*, which gives rise to incapacity in the juridic sense, such that one can speak of incapacity only when there is a real impossibility for assuming the essential obligations of marriage. Slight vices, ill will and personality disorders that make inter-personal relationship difficult are not enough to declare consensual incapacity; what is necessary is at least a *moral impossibility for such relationship*.

The cause of nullity is always a *serious psychic cause*, i.e., it does not depend on the will of the subject. On the other hand, the use of the term *cause* implies that it is not enough that a psychological anomaly exists, but that such anomaly should be the cause of the incapacity to assume in the juridic sense. A subject may still be capable of marital consent even with a psychic anomaly, if such anomaly does not make it

impossible for him to assume the essential obligations of marriage. The causes of a psychic nature that are commonly alleged can be grouped into the following:

Mental illnesses: psychoses in its variations, neuroses, etc.

Psychosexual anomalies, which impede the normal exercise of sexuality: sexual hyperesthesia, some manifestations of masochism or sadism, homosexuality, transsexualism and other sexual dysfunctions.

Personality disorders: serious forms of narcissism, anti-social personality with violent inclination, weak personalities easily led substance or other habits harmful to family life (e.g., pornography).

From all of these, it is clear that Rotal jurisprudence distinguishes between a mere *difficulty* for assuming or fulfilling the essential marriage obligations and a real *impossibility* for doing so.

For a marriage to be declared null due to incapacity to assume the essential obligations of marriage for reasons of psychic nature, the following have to be proven with moral certainty:

the *presence of a psychic cause* for the subject's incapacity to fulfill the essential obligations of marriage;

the *failure of matrimonial life*; the *causal link between 1) and 2)* and the vital process in which the incapacity is manifested.

Thus, to declare marriage nullity due to consensual incapacity, it is not enough to prove the failure or unhappiness of matrimonial life; *there should be a causal link between the failure of marriage, the cause of the incapacity and the vital process in which the incapacity is manifested*.

The wrong application of psychological incapacity in civil courts

As is well known, most of the norms of the The Family Code of the Philippines as regards *Void and Voidable Marriages (Title I, Chapter 3)* were taken from the

Marriage/ B7

Distribution of communion during a TV Mass

Father Edward McNamara, professor of liturgy and sacramental theology and director of the Sacerdos Institute at the Regina Apostolorum university, answers the following query:

Q: I am writing to ask for your advice regarding the liturgy during this unique time in our history. As a community of religious sisters we, fortunately, possess some consecrated hosts. Is it liturgically sound if we watch the Holy Father's televised Mass and for our superior to distribute the reserved hosts to us at the time of communion? — M.P., Rome

A: In this time of the coronavirus crisis there are probably many houses of religious sisters and consecrated laity in similar positions.

In the current lockdown, it is a very good thing to follow a live-streamed Mass whether by the Holy Father or indeed by any of the many priests who have undertaken similar initiatives. It is a moment of prayer, of pondering God's Word along with the celebrant, and of making an act of spiritual offering and communion with the Eucharistic sacrifice.

It is not, however, participating at Mass, which requires physical presence, and so it would not be sound liturgical practice to distribute Communion during the live streaming of the Mass.

Communion may be administered immediately after the Mass has concluded, or at some other suitable time, and always following the approved rites of the Church for distribution of Communion outside of Mass.

The Church has two similar but different forms of this rite: a rite for administering communion to the sick, and the “Rite of Distributing Holy Communion Outside Mass with the Celebration of the Word of God.” In the context of a community of religious, it would be this second rite that is to be used.

According to the rubrics of the rite: “26. This rite is to be used chiefly



A family attends an online Mass celebrated by Bishop Crispin Varquez of Borongan at his residence's chapel on Sunday, March 22. All public Masses in the diocese were suspended amid coronavirus pandemic concerns, prompting many parishes to livestream their liturgical celebrations. ALREN BERONIO/ESTE NEWS

when Mass is not celebrated or when communion is not distributed at scheduled times. The purpose is that the people should be nourished by the word of God. By hearing it they learn that the marvels it proclaims reach their climax in the paschal mystery of which the Mass is a sacramental memorial and in which they share by communion. Nourished by God's word, they are led on to grateful and fruitful participation in the saving mysteries.”

The rite has the following structure:

- Introductory Rites: Greeting and penitential act.
- Celebration of the Word of God.
- Communion rite: Our Father, Sign of peace, “Behold the Lamb of God... Lord I am not worthy...”, distribution of Communion, moment of silence or a song, concluding prayer.

With respect to the celebration of the Word of God it indicates:

“29. The Liturgy of the Word now takes place as at Mass. Texts are chosen for the occasion either from the Mass of the day or from the

votive Masses of the Holy Eucharist or the Precious Blood, the readings from which are in the Lectionary. A list of these passages can be found in nos. 113-153 of this Ritual. The Lectionary offers a wide range of readings that may be drawn upon for particular needs, such as the votive Mass of the Sacred Heart. See nos. 154-158 below.

“There may be one or more readings, the first being followed by a psalm or some other chant or by a period of silent prayer. The celebration of the word ends with

the general intercessions.”

If, for example, the rite of distributing Communion were to be celebrated immediately following a live-streamed Mass, it would be a legitimate option to use one of the other readings suggested in the above rubric so as not to repeat the readings of the day. If the rite is celebrated separately, then the best option is to use the daily readings.

There is also a briefer form of the rite with a very short reading. This may be used when there are only one or two people for Communion.

Post COVID Ministry

By Bishop Broderick Pabillo

PART 1

AFTER about a month of quarantine, many people have gotten used to it. Now, the challenge to us in the church is no longer on adjusting to the lock down. We should instead start looking forward to what we will do after the quarantine!

It would be too naïve to imagine that come May 1, we will all jump back to the life that we had before the quarantine. No! There will be a very gradual period of adjustment. Many of our ways of doing ministry will change. This early let us already project the changes that can come about based on our experiences during this past month and plan for them accordingly.

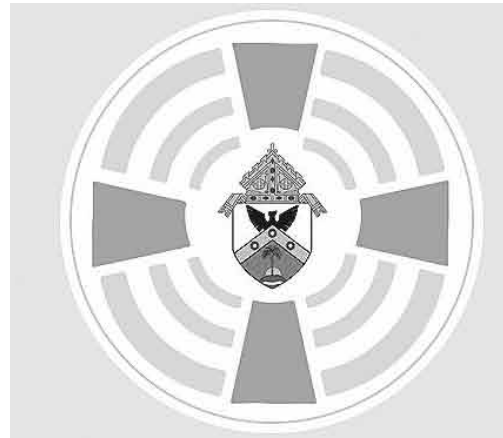
Some realizations become clear to us. First, the importance of the social media. Parishes who have well-developed social media ministry are able to reach their people easily and offer them services. Thus we should develop our social media ministry. Online religious services are here to stay. Many of our elderly people will hesitate to go to church; the social distancing cannot be easily done in our churches because we do not have that many churches. So the media apostolate is here to stay and will play a greater role in the life of the Church from now on. Thus all Church institutions are encouraged to set up good social media ministries.

If many of our elderly people would prefer to participate in the mass online after the lock down, we should be able to offer them the possibility of receiving communion in their homes. We should deploy more our lay ministers to bring communion to the sick and the elderly. In many parishes, we either do not have enough lay ministers, or many of our lay ministers are old, or both. The elderly ones can no longer give communion in the homes because they themselves are susceptible to be infected. Thus we need to recruit more and younger lay ministers. Can we fast track their recruitment and their formation? We can get from the older altar servers, or older choir members, or even ask the religious sisters and brothers to help in this ministry of bringing the Body of Christ to the elderly.

The pandemic has shown us the importance of the ministry to the sick. Not many parishes have this. In Manila we have only five priests of the archdiocese who are in the hospital chaplaincy. Most of our hospital chaplains are either religious or guest priests. We should seriously think as an archdiocese to strengthen our ministry to the sick, even down to the parochial level. This ministry does not only cater to the sick in the hospitals but also to the medical staff, and also to the sick and the elderly in their homes.

At the beginning of the lock down there were criticisms that the church to use its reputedly big money to help the poor. These criticisms soon died down when it apparent that we have churches, schools, and religious houses who were the first ones to open their facilities to house and feed the street people, the medical front liners and the uniformed personnel. People will not fault us for having big and good facilities as long as they see that these are open to serve those in need in times of emergency. This should be a deliberate choice by our institutions from one on since nowadays emergencies are a new normal in our life.

One thing that caught the admiration of the business community and the government is our silent but rapid mobilization to distribute more than 1 billion pesos worth of gift certificates (GCs) to the poor. Each family was given 1,000 pesos worth of GCs. This was done through the organizing capacity of Caritas Manila and the enthusiasm of more than 668 parishes in MegaManila and their volunteers.



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The Archdiocese of Jaro's daily prayer of the rosary is being livestreamed during the coronavirus emergency. SCREENSHOT/JAROSOCOM

Our parishes would not be able to identify the poor families if there was no good networking with barangay officials. Many times the good relations with the barangay are forged because of the BECs. This is one thing that we have to develop more—better relations with the barangay especially through the BECs. Naging mabango ang simbahan sa buwang ito dahil sa ang simbahan ay bumaba sa mga tao. Talagang naramdaman nila ang simbahan, hindi sa kanyang gawaing pangsamba ngunit sa kanyang pagtulong sa mahihirap.

These are my reflections as of now. Others are to follow, that is why this is entitled PART I. I offer them as jumping points that can lead to still other reflections that would set some paths for the ministry of the church after the lock down. Please join, deepen and widen the conversation on this topic of challenges to the ministry these coming days.

PART 2

An effect of the Corona virus pandemic that is here to stay is social distancing. The consciousness and the practice of social distancing will be with us long after the quarantine is lifted. What would this imply in our ministries in the Church? How do we limit the attendance of the people in our services? This may mean additional masses on Sundays and asking the people to come on the times when there are less people in order to reduce the density of mass goers in any given time. This can also mean the re-training of our ushers. We should get younger ones who can politely ask the people to keep social distancing. Each parish is to determine the adequate spaces to be observed between the mass attendees. Perhaps big celebrations should be done outdoors to follow the social distancing protocols. The churches can also invest in big LCD screens and a good outdoor sound system so that people can remain outside and still be part of the celebration.

Another thing that is here to stay is our

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Together, we seek Divine intervention.

On these days let us take time to pray, especially as a family.

Join us as we pray the Holy Rosary.... See more



The Archdiocese of Jaro's daily prayer of the rosary is being livestreamed during the coronavirus emergency. SCREENSHOT/JAROSOCOM

consciousness of the need for constant hand-washing. A regular feature of our churches will now be the alcohol bottles or hand sanitizers that will be made ubiquitous at the door of our churches and offices. A foot bath is to be provided at the door steps of our churches and offices. A new ministry can be started in the parishes—perhaps to be called “sanitation ministry”—whose task is to disinfect or clean the pews in between masses. This would mean that masses should no longer be on an hourly basis. Sometime should be given between services for the cleaning of the pews and other “high touch” surfaces much used in the church.

An important Filipino social custom may also change—that of the *mano po*. Instead of getting the hand of the elderly or the priest and putting it on one's forehead, or much worse, kissing the ring of the bishop, the people would be taught to show their respect by a polite bow and similar gestures.

As Filipinos we are a tactile people. We want to express our nearness by touching. This we do to one another and also to the objects of devotion. Thus we see people lovingly and devotedly touching the statues and even the casing of the statues. We have to be educated to do without this form of reverence anymore. A slight bow or a moment of silent prayer in front of a statue is also a worthy expression of our desire to commune with God and his saints.

We have been telling the people during lent that if we cannot go to confession, we can obtain God's forgiveness by a sincere contrition of our sins with firm resolve to come to confess our sins to a priest as soon as there is the opportunity. One of the conditions to fulfill in order to receive the plenary indulgence is to confess our sins to a priest. After the lockdown, it would be good if the vicariates can organize a *kumpisalan ng bayan* in all the parishes so that the faithful can avail themselves of this sacrament. Perhaps it would also help if par-

ishes can re-design their confessional boxes that it would no longer be stuffy but that there be enough room for social distancing during confession. Proper physical distance should still be kept during the *kumpisalan ng bayan*.

Let us use our creativity on how to serve our people in the new situation that we are now in. If the new practices that we will adapt are properly explained to the people, they will understand. They will even appreciate that we are making changes so that we can serve God without jeopardizing our loved ones.*

PART 3

In the past month, most of the work of many parishes was not that of liturgical celebrations. Of course, we had to prepare our churches and ourselves for the online masses and other religious services. Those did not take much time. What took most of our time was organizing how to distribute the gift certificates (GCs) and in large part, the actual giving of the GCs to the poor families together with our volunteers and barangay officials. Some parishes also spent time packing rice and other goods to distribute to the people. In a word, works of charity characterized our church activities during this time.

We have done a lot to help many people during this lock down. We now house more than 440 street people in 8 facilities in the archdiocese of Manila. Some 510 medical front liners are given lodging in 23 parishes, hostels, and convents. We have generously received help in the form of food items and sleeping materials from many religious communities and generous parishioners. Helping the poor has been an important expression of our work as church during these days. We were able to reach more than 400,000 families through our gift checks and food packs.

After the quarantine days, it would not be right to just toss the street people back to the streets and to let the hospitals take care of their medical staff. We have to maintain the good will and the relationships that we have created with the beneficiaries, with the donors and with the administrations of various medical institutions. The parishes, schools and religious communities need to set up structures that can create a continuous relationship with the people. Besides, it would not mean that come May 1, there would no longer be any COVID 19. This virus will be around for some time so our effort to contain it should also continue.

Another consideration that we have to look deeply are our financial situation. People will give to the church once the public services start, but surely not as much as they had been doing. Everyone's pocket has been affected by the quarantine. Thus the parishes are to plan very carefully with their finance councils how to make ends meet in the coming months. It is good that there are already vicariates who help the poor parishes meet their obligations to their personnel. As we have decided at the start of the lock down, as much as possible we will not dismiss people from our workforce. If people are not able to work, it is not that they do not want to work. Everyone among us is a victim of these hard times.

As we try to help our parish and school personnel, let us also explain to them to be patient and not to demand the same treatment as before, as if nothing had happened. The challenge now is how to keep the morale of our people high in spite of the fact that we all face hard times. Let us all face this new situation with generosity and trust.*



Bishop Broderick Pabillo, apostolic administrator of the Archdiocese of Manila, visits to provide aid to hundreds of fire victims in Happyland, Tondo, Manila on April 18. RENZ RESSURRECTION/CBCPNEWS

‘And He stilled the storm’

A Meditation on Mk 4:35-41; Mt 8:23-27; Lk 8:22-25 amid COVID-19

By Rev E B Belizar, Jr., SThD

“Peace is my farewell to you. My peace is my gift to you. I do not give to you as the world gives peace. Do not be distressed or fearful” (Jn 14:27)

“All the joys of this life are accompanied by sorrows: if they were not, we would grow too much absorbed in them”—St. Teresa of Avila

ASI write this it is already the ninth day of our community quarantine in our little community at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Brgy Maypangdan, Borongan, Eastern Samar. I am virtually a prisoner in the rectory except when I go down on my own for Holy Hour or non-public Masses which sometimes go online. That is, despite an ever flickering wifi signal. I keep myself updated about almost anything on the corona virus, my parish, our diocese, country and the world through television and the social media. Things are not always cheerful like anyone would want them to be. Each day I join millions in thanking the Lord for the grace of, so far, I staying alive despite my celibate life—or maybe because of it.

I have rediscovered over and over again in this our common ordeal that not even the threat of COVID-19 is an assurance that silence could be easy. Far from it, silence could still be a struggle, considering the various forms of noise outside and inside us. But, somehow, I am grateful for this chance, although it seems forced upon us, to enter and re-enter into silence not only to avoid COVID-19-related situations but also to reflect on what it could mean to us from a faith perspective. Here I do not pretend to say the last word.

Silence is helping me focus on an event many spiritual masters cite in relation to the corona virus—Jesus calming a tempest at sea. It is found in the Synoptic Gospels that I have mentioned in this article’s title. I feel lucky to meditate on the episode with the help of commentaries from Catholic biblical experts: Daniel J. Harrington, SJ (on the Matthean version); Philip van Linden, CM (on the Markan version); and Jerome Kodell, OSB (on the Lukan version). Let me take you to what I consider some relevant details.

1. “Let us Go Over to the Other Side” (Mk 4:35; Lk 8:22)

Travelers move from point A to point B. Pilgrims and the company of Jesus are travelers. He tells his disciples that simple command in Mk and Lk to move from one side to the “other side”. In Mt’s version he just takes a boat and his action is taken by his disciples as a signal to do the same. This is because, according to Harrington, Mt’s emphasis is on discipleship and faith. Discipleship for him is literally following Jesus and faith is joining him in the same boat. On the other hand, Mk and Lk focus on giving the disciples an opportunity to get to know Jesus better and more deeply (Linden and Kodell) by what is about to unfold.

What strikes me here is Jesus commanding his disciples to move from one side to another. Jesus was tired from a day’s work of preaching and healing. A boat ride was a perfect get-away. But it also indicates that he wanted his company to bring the Kingdom news to other possible recipients. Jesus sends all—himself included—to continue the mission of proclaiming the Kingdom. This is something we easily forget. Jesus is with us. It is he who has commanded but also accompanies us who heed the command. But in doing so Jesus also teaches us to, once in a while, get away from the madding and maddening crowds to rest and enter into a reconnection with the Source and with one another.

COVID-19 has offered us a chance to go to “another side”, a different situation, if you may, where we as Church could continue the mission of proclaiming the Kingdom to others. The more than 60 priests in Italy and elsewhere who recently died literally doing the Lord’s work among the sick and contracting the corona virus in the process, along with a growing number of doctors,

nurses, health care workers and members of COVID-19 patients who heroically expose themselves to danger, share something in common, aside from being in the thick of the battle against the virus. They are also proclaiming the Gospel so eloquently by what they do that words are often poor substitutes to express what they are saying in action.

Today there is another clear difference too. Jesus being followed to “the other side” by disciples also, to my mind, counts among his company priests, with or without help from the lay faithful, who celebrate the Eucharist and other liturgical acts or organize prayer brigades, holy hours, relief-sharing etc. through social media. They have realized the mission must continue even when situations change.

2. “A Furious Storm Came Up” (Mt 8:24; Mk 4:37; Lk 8:23)

All three Synoptic writers are one in citing a harrowing experience by the disciples with the Master in their midst—a sea tempest. It strikes me how the word tempest seems to lack the impact of the word ‘storm’. In fact, for a Filipino such as myself the word ‘tempest’ sounds poetic but almost lame. But both words are used in English translations of the synoptic accounts. We note how in the Jewish mindset the sea is often believed to be the dwelling-place of the devil or his agents. That explains the horrified reaction of the disciples. They are perplexed over an existential question: Why is it that the very presence of the Master does not exempt them from the attacks and importunings of the Evil one? In today’s context many Christians often ask, if non-verbally, why evils such as COVID-19 happen even to those who try their best to be faithful to the Lord and his ways. Answers are not always easy nor forthcoming. But such a pass is not new. All we have to remember are the saints, such as the beloved San Roque who, while ministering to plague victims, himself became a victim.

For Matthew’s readers the sea represents the “forces of chaos against God, the storm as the eschatological earthquake and the boat as the church” (Harrington). Most certainly COVID-19 belongs in the forces of chaos. Part of the evil it has spawned is that, in many instances, it has kept us from celebrating our saving relationship with God in the ordinary fashion we are used to—with participants at least physically present. Now we are challenged to heed the call of the master to continuing conversion through virtual and, more deeply, spiritual presence.

The worldwide storm called COVID-19 has also, for many people, called into question the very existence of a Good God who would tolerate an evil so lethally real but so hidden that it has already killed both heroes and non-heroes, the famous and the unknown, the guilty and the innocent, sinners and saints. It is, truly, a storm with a fury now being unleashed but whose end cannot be predicted. That fury has inspired monumental fears. It has also occasioned, even now, glorious stories of bravery and compassion.

3. “But Jesus is Sleeping” (Mt 8:24; Mk 4:38; Lk 8:23)

All three synoptic writers affirm that Jesus was asleep while the storm was underway. There is no explanation for his bizarre behavior, especially if the storm was strong, as the reaction of the disciples seems to suggest. But all one has to do is consider the punishing activities of Jesus before this boat ride. Still, in the context of the different theologies or emphases of the Gospel writers, the sleep of Jesus is hardly just a sleep. For Mt it is a prelude to showing himself further as having power over nature, as its Lord. For Mk and Lk the storm is an occasion for Jesus’ disciples to know him better and more than they already do.

In the frenzy of COVID-19 the sleeping Jesus seems to explain the current runaway status of evil in the world. Filipino believers, for instance, ask with Gary Valenciano



who sings the question “Natutulog Ba Ang Dios? (Is God Sleeping?)”. The answer seems obvious in this one particular recorded behavior of the Son of God. He sleeps; hence, evil is running amok. The storm is having a party.

The corona virus is only one among many indicators of this runaway evil: hegemonies that want to dominate weaker nations by hook or by crook; massive hunger and poverty among millions of human beings; lack or non-existent sense of God and the sacred; dead or moribund state of the sense of sin or of right and wrong; morality by individual whim; wholesale empires of pornography; human trafficking and other newer forms of the travesty of human dignity and of human rights; unabated environmental abuse and destruction. One could go on. One could say, as I indeed said it, that all these arguably evil manifestations are happening because Jesus is sleeping. Or is he really sleeping, we ask.

The sense of Jesus being asleep is compounded, to my mind, by a physical inability to come to a spiritual oasis—a habitual place of prayer, the church building. Some churches still have open doors. But Jesus in the sacraments seems unreachable. His virtual presence through social media is a bridge all right. But it is not the same thing as when one encounters him through a flesh-and-blood priest and with a flesh-and-blood community. After all, did not the Word become “flesh” (Jn 1:14)? This is not to say that the Church must disobey health protocols. This is just to say that the hard realities we experience today because of COVID-19 appear to generate a sense of the sleeping Jesus in our midst.

4. “Teacher, Don’t You Care That We Are Perishing?” (Mk 4:38); “Lord, Save Us, We Are Drowning” (Mt 8:25)

In their desperation the disciples engage Jesus in an urgent dialogue—a good picture of prayer. This is especially clearer and more direct in Mt 8:25: “Lord, save us! We are drowning!” They directly tell Jesus what they desire—deliverance. In Lk 8:24 they simply report to Jesus their tragic situation: “Master, Master, we are going to drown!” They let Jesus make the response he chooses, trusting in him. In Mk there is a hint of an accusation: “Don’t you care that we are perishing?”

Since prayer is really a listening to the Lord speaking to us, it seems that the disciples’ attitude shows how they failed to listen to the Lord speaking to them in his previous deeds. They saw him doing good deeds that benefited people, and, particularly in Mk, how his words have spellbinding authority and power to even drive away demons (Mk 1:21-18), heal Peter’s mother-in-law (1:29-31) or cure a leper (1:40-43). Yet they still thought he might not have cared.

It is certainly a real temptation for people of our time to think that, because of the terrible deaths that have happened and might still happen to otherwise good people due to the virus, God or the Lord

does not care. Or that he cares very little if we perish. It is better for us to pray like the disciples in Mt’s account, that is, with humility and trust: “Lord, SAVE US! We are drowning!”

This is the whole point of organizing rosary crusades, the praying of the *Oratio Imperata*, novenas to San Roque and other saints, and, most especially, the celebrations of online Masses by bishops and priests of our time. We must all do all this with the same urgency as that of the disciples who pray to Jesus out of a desperate need.

5. “Be Quiet! Be Still” (Mk 4:39)

Out to show how even Jesus’ words have power, Mk records what the Lord utters to the stormy wind and the waves: “Be quiet! Be still!” The wonder is that these words are also what the Master says to the demons he drives away from people, such as in Mk 1:25. Mk also records the consequences of those words: “The wind died down and it was completely calm” (Mk 1:39). Mk seems to highlight the Jewish mindset of evil taking possession even of inanimate things, like the waves and the wind.

But no matter. But we need to set ourselves on one objective that we intend to reach by our praying, no matter how desperate and urgent the situation. It is simply that the Lord drive the storm that is COVID-19 away from our own persons, families, communities, country and from our world. The reason is that this Jesus whom we approach is no ordinary healer. In the Gospel of Mt he is portrayed as having power over those that only God is known to have power over. He not only has power over diseases such as leprosy (Mt 8:1-4), paralysis (Mt 8:5-13), fever and demons (8:14-17). He is also shown to have power over the sea (Mt 8:23-27).

That COVID-19 is considered a disease is beyond question. If we are to listen very carefully to the Gospel writer Matthew, he would remind us of the power Jesus has over diseases and what he did to the sick. The corona virus is our storm in this day and age. Jesus shows his absolute power over a storm. He does it in the middle of a body of water. He certainly can do it in the middle of a pandemic.

6. “Where is Your Faith? Why Are You Afraid” (Mt 8:26; Mk 4:40; Lk 8:25)

There are two realities that, for the Master, are incompatible, the presence of one of which could explain the absence of the other. Both of them starts with F. First is fear. The second is faith. For the Master the disciples’ problem is fear. But it is caused by their lack of faith. This is a situation that directly takes us to ours today.

Fear, no doubt, characterizes the disciples’ condition when they confront the storm. It is the same condition we also have in the face of COVID-19. Fear so fills up peoples and governments that they do extreme measures, such as treating COVID-19 patients as though they are worse than dirt or lepers. Some

of corona virus patients are seen and condemned as criminals. Fear makes people mistreat real heroes, such as doctors, nurses and other health care workers just because they work in places where they could be exposed to the virus. It is a fear that reveals a lack of trust in the health workers’ concern or capacity to protect themselves and others from the health menace. When fear pushes us to behave in a manner so much less than who we are and meant to be, it is best to listen to the Master’s words, “Where is your faith? Why are you afraid?”

The saddest words that we must pray should not apply to us are from the Gospel writer regarding the people of Jesus’ own country: “And he did not do many mighty works there because of their lack of faith” (Mt 13:58).

7. “Who is This That Even the Winds and the Sea Obey Him” (Mt 8:27; Mk 4:40; Lk 8:25)

It is curious that all three synoptic writers record the same reaction of bewilderment by Jesus’ disciples as to who he is. It is a case of multiple attestation and thus even more credible as historical. If one person says I am kind, that may not be the same as when three different persons say I am cruel. Three would be more credible than one. The three synoptic writers report the incredulity of the disciples lends it greater credibility. We see how even the closest associates of the Master who heard him preach and witnessed his miracles from an eyewitness perspective either did not really know him or were not prepared to accept what they know of him or were simply hard of heart or all of the above.

Van Linden has an enlightening perspective on the disciples’ “Who is this” reaction to Jesus after the stilling of the storm: “Mark wants his Christians, with their knowledge of Jesus’ entire life, death and resurrection, to be assured of his protection in their times of stress and confusion. He asks for more than ‘great awe’ (v. 41) at Jesus’ stilling of the storm. He asks for deep here-and-now faith from all who struggle to understand the meaning of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection in their own daily experiences of Christian living.” That most certainly includes facing up to the challenges of COVID-19.

If being most closely associated with Jesus does not really mean knowing the person of Jesus, what does this say about you and me who did not see, touch nor hear him? One problem with the disciples is that they had a very short memory. As Cicero once said: “Memory is the receptacle and sheath of all knowledge.” The only thing they needed to do was remember something they missed after witnessing the stilling of the storm. Already when they approached Jesus in a moment of desperate prayer, they addressed him using a name that could only have come from the Spirit himself: “*Kyrie, soston apollymetha!* [Lord, save us, we are perishing]!” (Mt 8:25).

They would have answered their own question.*

The right to hope: a fundamental right that can never be taken away from us

Homily of His Holiness Pope Francis at the Easter Vigil; St. Peter's Basilica, April 11, 2020

"AFTER the Sabbath" (Mt 28:1), the women went to the tomb. This is how the Gospel of this holy Vigil began: with the Sabbath. It is the day of the Easter Triduum that we tend to neglect as we eagerly await the passage from Friday's cross to Easter Sunday's Alleluia. This year however, we are experiencing, more than ever, the great silence of Holy Saturday. We can imagine ourselves in the position of the women on that day. They, like us, had before their eyes the drama of suffering, of an unexpected tragedy that happened all too suddenly. They had seen death and it weighed on their hearts. Pain was mixed with fear: would they suffer the same fate as the Master? Then too there was fear about the future and all that would need to be rebuilt. A painful memory, a hope cut short. For them, as for us, it was the darkest hour.

Yet in this situation the women did not allow themselves to be paralyzed. They did not give in to the gloom of sorrow and regret, they did not morosely close in on themselves, or flee from reality. They were doing something simple yet extraordinary: preparing at home the spices to anoint the body of Jesus. They did not stop loving; in the darkness of their hearts, they lit a flame of mercy. Our Lady spent that Saturday, the day that would be dedicated to her, in prayer and hope. She responded to sorrow with trust in the Lord. Unbeknownst to these women, they were making preparations, in the darkness of that Sabbath, for "the dawn of the first day of the week", the day that would change history. Jesus, like a seed buried in the ground, was about to make new life blossom in the world; and these women, by prayer and love, were helping to make that hope flower. How many people, in these sad days, have done and are still doing what those women did, sowing seeds of hope! With small gestures of care, affection and prayer.



Pope Francis carrying a candle at the beginning of the Easter Vigil April 11. VATICAN MEDIA

At dawn the women went to the tomb. There the angel says to them: "Do not be afraid. He is not here; for he has risen" (vv. 5-6). They hear the words of life even as they stand before a tomb... And then they meet Jesus, the giver of all hope, who confirms the message and says: "Do not be afraid" (v. 10). Do not be afraid, do not yield to fear: This is the message of hope. It is addressed to us, today. These are the words that God repeats to us this very night.

Tonight we acquire a fundamental right that can never be taken away from us: the right to hope. It is a new and living hope that comes from God. It is not mere optimism; it is not a pat on the back or an empty word of encouragement, uttered

with an empty smile. No! It is a gift from heaven, which we could not have earned on our own. Over these weeks, we have kept repeating, "All will be well", clinging to the beauty of our humanity and allowing words of encouragement to rise up from our hearts. But as the days go by and fears grow, even the boldest hope can dissipate. Jesus' hope is different. He plants in our hearts the conviction that God is able to make everything work unto good, because even from the grave he brings life.

The grave is the place where no one who enters ever leaves. But Jesus emerged for us; he rose for us, to bring life where there was death, to begin a new story in the very place where a stone had been placed. He, who rolled away the stone that

sealed the entrance of the tomb, can also remove the stones in our hearts. So, let us not give in to resignation; let us not place a stone before hope. We can and must hope, because God is faithful. He did not abandon us; he visited us and entered into our situations of pain, anguish and death. His light dispelled the darkness of the tomb: today he wants that light to penetrate even to the darkest corners of our lives. Dear sister, dear brother, even if in your heart you have buried hope, do not give up: God is greater. Darkness and death do not have the last word. Be strong, for with God nothing is lost!

Courage. This is a word often spoken by Jesus in the Gospels. Only once do others say it, to encourage

a person in need: "Courage; rise, [Jesus] is calling you!" (Mk 10:49). It is he, the Risen One, who raises us up from our neediness. If, on your journey, you feel weak and frail, or fall, do not be afraid, God holds out a helping hand and says to you: "Courage!". You might say, as did Don Abbondio (in Manzoni's novel), "Courage is not something you can give yourself" (I Promessi Sposi, XXV). True, you cannot give it to yourself, but you can receive it as a gift. All you have to do is open your heart in prayer and roll away, however slightly, that stone placed at the entrance to your heart so that Jesus' light can enter. You only need to ask him: "Jesus, come to me amid my fears and tell me too: Courage!" With you, Lord, we will be tested but not shaken. And, whatever sadness may dwell in us, we will be strengthened in hope, since with you the cross leads to the resurrection, because you are with us in the darkness of our nights; you are certainly amid our uncertainties, the word that speaks in our silence, and nothing can ever rob us of the love you have for us.

This is the Easter message, a message of hope. It contains a second part, the sending forth. "Go and tell my brethren to go to Galilee" (Mt 28:10), Jesus says. "He is going before you to Galilee" (v. 7), the angel says. The Lord goes before us; he goes before us always. It is encouraging to know that he walks ahead of us in life and in death; he goes before us to Galilee, that is, to the place which for him and his disciples evoked the idea of daily life, family and work. Jesus wants us to bring hope there, to our everyday life. For the disciples, Galilee was also the place of remembrance, for it was the place where they were first called. Returning to Galilee means remembering that we have been loved and called by God. Each one of us has their own Galilee. We need

Hope / B7

CBCP message for Easter 2020



The San Agustin Church in Intramuros, Manila welcome the Easter with the traditional "Salubong", a re-enactment of the Biblical account of the Risen Jesus Christ reuniting with Mother Mary, after the Easter Vigil around midnight on April 12, 2020. PHOTO FROM SAN AGUSTIN CHURCH

WHAT kind of Easter message can I give in these difficult days? If one watches news on television, both national and international, and watches them not only with one's eyes and mind but with one's heart, one can easily be overwhelmed by this grim worldwide situation; it is as if, literally, death brought about by the Coronavirus pandemic is staring at you and me.

Easter, that is, our joyful celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus, is best understood by not forgetting Calvary, by not forgetting His death on the cross. He died for us when his hour had come; he faced death. He faced death consciously, willingly, with his heart filled with love for us, filled with the mercy of God for us. But then, Jesus rose from the dead; he is victorious over death. His victory over death he shares with you and me. This is Easter for me.

Yes, no doubt, we are in an extremely grim situation, but I see clear sparks of the spirit of Easter in the hearts of thousands in the midst of this pandemic. Indeed, it is so moving and so heartwarming to see individuals trying to save and protect the life of ailing patients, whose hearts

are filled with selfless goodness for others, especially for the sick and the poor, individuals who have the courage to offer heroic service and sacrifice with the clear risk of losing their very own lives. Moreover, we see people of all walks of life, men and women, old and young, manifesting simple acts of appreciation and gratitude to all those who offer their lives so that others may live. Are these not concrete manifestations of the Easter spirit? Looking at all these, isn't it that our hearts begin to fill up with hope?

Then I begin to believe that we, as Filipinos, together with all the peoples in the world, are bigger than the threat of the Coronavirus pandemic. Together, with hearts filled with goodness and love, filled with deep sense of service and sacrifice, I begin to see the hope of Easter in us, and this hope is stronger when we, together, have hearts like that of Jesus in his sacrifice in Calvary. We see that, together, our life is more powerful than the menace of death that this pandemic brings: together, with hearts inspired by God's grace, with hearts inspired by the love of the Blessed Virgin Mother, who stood

at the foot of the cross in Calvary. Together, seeing the countless acts of sacrifice and service, acts of kindness and compassion, we begin to see that the spirit of Easter is still very much alive in our hearts. This is a spirit which is born out of faith and conviction that Jesus has defeated death and has risen back to life—for all of us. It is a spirit that springs forth from both convictions, the conviction that the Lord truly and deeply loves us and the conviction that we are a people truly capable of loving and caring for each other in the worst of times.

We can still celebrate with profound thanksgiving in our hearts the solemn commemoration of the Resurrection of Jesus: the triumph of Jesus over death. This is the Easter that, I believe, we can celebrate together in these difficult days.

And because of this, with sincerity and deep conviction, I say, A BLESSED EASTER TO ALL!

Devotedly yours in Christ,

+ROMULO G. VALLES, D.D.
Archbishop of Davao
CBCP President
Easter Vigil, 11 April 2020

Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to mark the Extraordinary Exposition of the Holy Shroud



Pope Francis at the Turin Shroud in June 2015. VATICAN MEDIA

To His Reverend Excellency Msgr. CESARE NOSIGLIA Archbishop of Turin and Bishop of Susa

I have learned, dear brother, that this coming Saturday you will preside at a celebration in the chapel that holds the Holy Shroud, which, will be made specially visit to all those who participate in prayer through the means of social communication.

I wish to express to you my warm appreciation of this gesture, which responds to the request of God's faithful people, sorely tried by the coronavirus pandemic

I too join in your supplication, turning my gaze to the Man of the Shroud, in whom we recognize the features of the Servant of the Lord, that Jesus realized in His Passion: "A man of suffering, and familiar with pain... Surely He took up our pain and bore our suffering ... But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds we are healed" (Is 53, 3. 4-5).

In the face of the Man of the Shroud we also see the faces of so many sick brothers and sisters,

especially of those who are most alone and least cared for; but also all the victims of wars and violence, of slavery and persecution.

As Christians, in the light of the Scriptures, we contemplate in this cloth the icon of the Lord Jesus crucified, dead and risen again. To Him we entrust ourselves, in Him we confide. Jesus gives us the strength to face every trial with faith, with hope and with love, in the certainty that the Father always listens to His children who cry to Him, and saves them.

Dear confrere, and all of you, dear brothers and sisters who participate through the media in the prayer before the Holy Shroud, let us live these days in intimate union with the Passion of Christ, to experience the grace and the joy of His Resurrection. I bless Your Excellency, the Church of Turin and all of you, especially the sick and the suffering, and those who care for them. May the Lord grant you all peace and mercy. Happy Easter!

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 9 April 2020

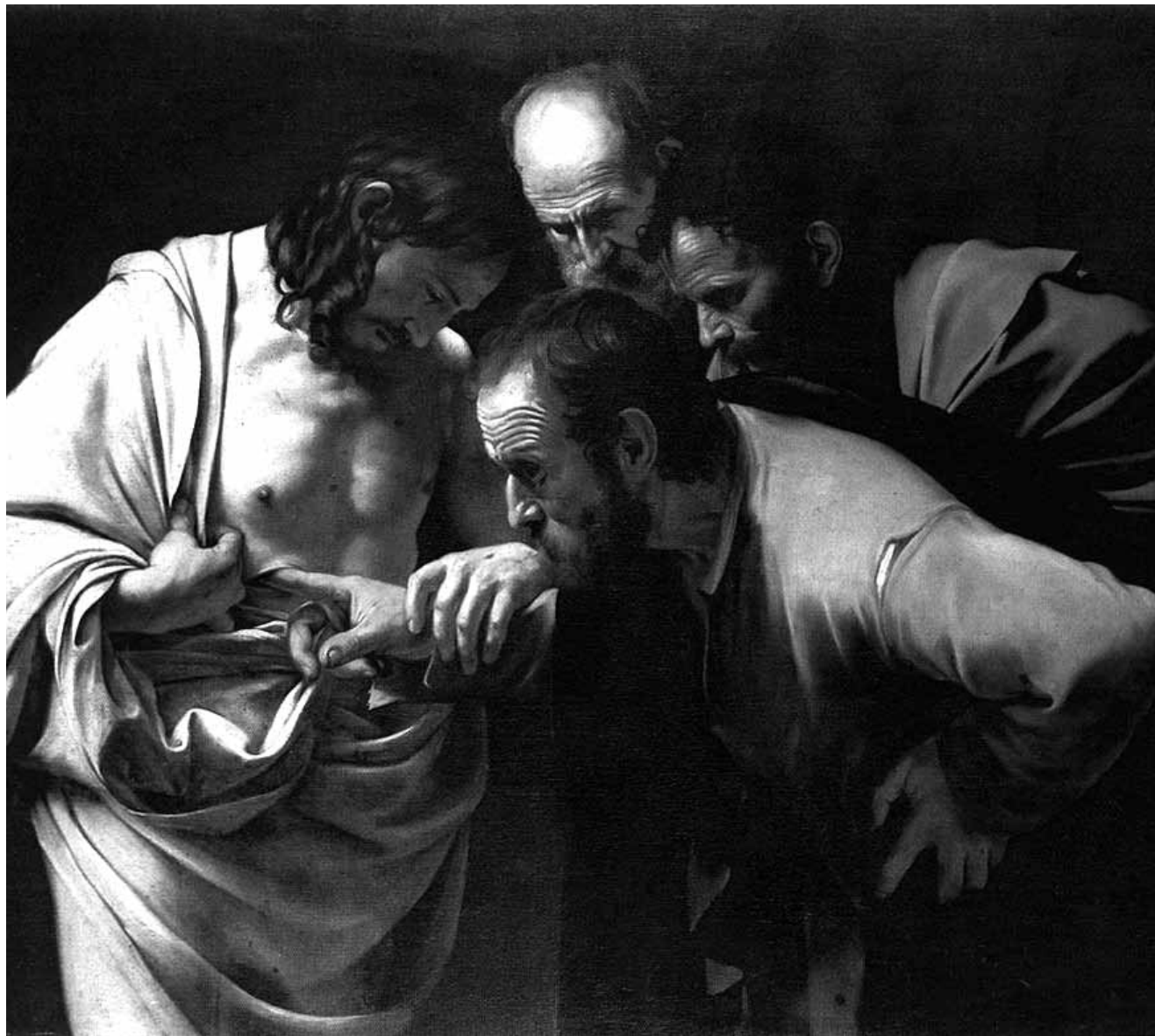
Fraternally,

FRANCIS

The Risen Lord is alive in the new community

2nd Sunday of Easter A (John 20:19-31)
April 19, 2020

By Msgr. Lope C. Robredillo, SThD



THE resurrection of Jesus admits of various meanings, but one of them is akin to this. As we noted last Sunday, God the Father, by raising Jesus from the dead, vindicated him. The resurrection proved that Jesus' enemies were wrong, after all. But this vindication was efficacious. In today's Gospel (John 20:19-31), this is indicated by a significant gesture of Jesus—he breathed on his disciples (John 20:22). This action of Jesus readily recalls God's creative acts recounted in Genesis and Ezekiel. In Genesis, it is said that when God breathed into the nostrils of Adam the breath of life, Adam became a living being (Gen 2:7). Thus, the gesture of breathing completed the action of the creation of man. Similarly, in Ezekiel, it is told that when the wind breathed

into those who were slain, they were given a new life (Ezek 37:10). There is no doubt that John had in mind these texts when he wrote today's Gospel. By saying that Jesus breathed into his disciples, John wanted to teach us that with the death and resurrection of Jesus, a new life was imparted, and a new community was born. There was, in other words, a new creation—a new people was born through the Holy Spirit, which is what the air breathed signifies, by Jesus' death and resurrection.

The second reading describes to us the form of this new creation: "The [members of the new community] devoted themselves to the apostles' instruction and the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42). A

few words may be said of this text. Though the instruction included the Old Testament, it gradually focused on Jesus' teachings and the interpretation handed on by the apostles. Later on, these were collected, committed to writing, and applied by preachers, teachers and catechists to their own particular situation. An important feature of this community life was the sharing of goods. Those who believed shared all things in common. They would sell their property and goods, dividing everything on the basis of each one's needs (Acts 2:44-45). The practice obviously brought each member closer to one another, and encouraged the development of an ethics of renunciation of property and rejection of concentration of

Risen / B7

Where do Christians encounter the Risen Lord?

3rd Sunday of Easter, Year A, (Luke 24:13-35)
April 26, 2020

By Msgr. Lope C. Robredillo, SThD

AS should be obvious from the Readings of the Easter Season, the central message of the resurrection is that Jesus lives on (Luke 24:23), and that the resurrected Lord is no other than the same Jesus who walked with his disciples (John 20:18). But if he is alive, where do we find him? In Luke's Gospel, the evangelist carefully points out that the resurrected Christ is identical with the earthly Jesus by demonstrating that the risen Lord performed the same ministries that he did when he was still with his disciples before his death. For instance, he taught his disciples about Moses and the Prophets; he interpreted the Scriptures to them; and he opened their eyes (Luke 24:27-31). But while stressing the identity, Luke likewise points out that there is a discontinuity between the risen Lord and the earthly Jesus. It is for this purpose that he narrates the incident in the Gospel today (Luke 24:13-24). Notice that when Jesus walked with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus and joined in their lively exchange, these two who had seen the earthly Jesus failed to recognize him. They simply thought that he was just another Jerusalemite who was rather ignorant of what happened in the city the past few days (Luke 24:18).

At the same time, Luke, in portraying the ignorance of the disciples, could have in mind the situation in his own community in which Christians, who did not see the risen Lord, may have felt themselves less privileged than the disciples who did see the earthly Jesus. It seems that for Luke, what is decisive for the Christian community is not whether or not one saw the earthly Jesus or the risen Lord immediately

after the resurrection, but whether one can at the present moment recognize his presence. To bring the point home, Luke tells us that when Jesus "had seated himself with them to eat, he took bread, pronounced the blessing, then broke the bread and began to distribute it to them" (Luke 24:30b). At this, the eyes of the disciples, who failed to recognize him, were opened, and whereupon they recognized that it was Jesus who was breaking the bread (Luke 24:31). For Luke, then, the presence of Jesus is recognized in the breaking of the bread. Of course, by breaking of the bread Luke does not mean an ordinary meal. The wording of the narrative easily recalls the institution narrative in which the same verbs practically occur: take, give thanks, break and distribute (Luke 22:19). That is to say, Luke wants to say that the risen Lord is recognized in the celebration of the Eucharist.

This, to be sure, should not be taken to mean that Christ is encountered in the Eucharist without any connection to practical life. The reason for this is that the act of breaking the bread has significance beyond the rite. If the bread is broken, it is because it is meant to be shared. This implies that such values as monopoly, exclusiveness, and selfishness cannot become media of the Lord's presence. To monopolize business and industry, to place the wealth of the nation in the hands of a few oligarchic families, to arrogate to oneself the rights of others is to deprive oneself of the encounter with the risen Lord, however one tries to create an elaborate worship of him. No wonder that a distinctive feature of the early Church was the holding of possessions in common (Acts

4:32b-34). And the early Christians showed themselves always ready to help those in need (Rom 15:26; 1 Cor 16:1-3; Gal 2:10).

In its pastoral letter issued during the 1987 Eucharistic Year, "One Bread, One Body, One People," the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) says in this connection: "It may be truly said that the task of the Church is to radiate the Eucharist in the life of the world. In this sense the ministry of the Church is first and foremost a 'eucharistic ministry'. Such ministry works toward creating a new world of Christian communities where freedom and justice reign, a new world of loving and caring, sharing and working together—a kingdom of reconciliation and peace." The concluding appeal of the letter remains relevant: "Our present situation summons us to seek ways of breaking down the many dividing walls in our midst, binding up and healing our nation's wounds; of sacrificing ourselves so that those who suffer hunger and other ills which accompany the widespread poverty in our land may find meaningful work and the means to fashion better lives for themselves and their children, worthy of sons and daughters of our Father who is in heaven. The Eucharist is 'bread broken to feed a hungry world.' It is also the bread of brotherhood and it is in the eucharist and from that we must find the motivation and power to realize, even in part, renewed social relationships and a new social order for our people—based on truth and freedom, justice and love. It is in the eucharist and from the eucharist that we must find the wellspring of that peace which we all seek, with such desperate longing, for our country today."*

The Risen Christ fills us with His gifts

2nd Sunday of Easter A (John 20:19-31)
Feast of Christ, King of Divine Mercy
April 19, 2020

By Fr. Sal Putzu, SDB

THE disciples had locked themselves up in the Upper Room for fear of the Jews. They had every reason to be afraid. And their hearts were locked, too—locked with the chains and bars of confusion, disappointment, for what happened to Jesus, and remorse for their cowardice when they deserted him . . . They knew they had not put up a great show of solidarity in the face of their Master's arrest. And now that he had been humiliated, killed, and buried, their lives had been plunged into an abyss of shame, meaninglessness and discouragement.

But all of a sudden, Jesus appeared in their midst, in spite of all those locks, both material and spiritual. Nothing could stop him. He was not there to show off or to get even with the disciples who deserted him. In his mercy and love, he had come to offer gifts – the gifts/fruits of his resurrection: his presence, his peace, his joy, the participation in his mission, and his Spirit.

These gifts were the tangible signs of his enduring and forgiving love. They were plenteous and most precious gifts. They were meant for each and every one of his disciples, including the latecomer and slow-to-believe Thomas.

Christ's gifts are not only for his disciples gathered in the Upper Room, but for all because his love encompasses every human being and endures for ever. No one is excluded by Jesus, not even the greatest sinners.

But gifts are gifts. They are not impositions. They can be accepted

or ignored, or even disdainfully rejected. All that Jesus can do is offer them and encourage all to accept them with grateful appreciation.

On our part, we must have a clear idea of the immense value of the gifts, the great difference for the better that they can make in our lives. By making us share in his mission, the Risen Christ raises us to an unprecedented dignity: the honor of being sent to all mankind as signs and bearers of God's love and of the Good News. By receiving from Jesus the gift of the Spirit of Holiness, we become the privileged instruments of God's forgiveness and sanctification.

We should also become aware of the immense loss we will inflict on ourselves if we refuse them. The choice between accepting or rejecting Christ's gifts is not like the choice between colors or what shoes to wear. Rather, it is a choice between life and death. So much is at stake.

Christ's gifts are forever. They are for us, today, as they were for his disciples on the first Easter day. And they will be for all believers, till the end of time. His Spirit makes them present and alive in every generation. In this way, all feelings of dejection, confusion, anxiety and fear . . . are banned, and are replaced by that sublime peace and joy which the Risen Christ alone can give. Thus, Easter becomes always and everywhere the lasting season of a renewed mankind. All that we have to do is stretch out our hands in acceptance and proclaim, "Thank you, My Lord and my God!"*

The Risen Christ, our fellow traveler

3rd Sunday of Easter, Year A, (Luke 24:13-35)
April 26, 2020

By Fr. Sal Putzu, SDB



TWO lonely wayfarers were sharing their disappointments as they trod the dusty road leading from Jerusalem to Emmaus—wounded soldiers of a routed army . . .

Almost stealthily, a foreigner caught up with them. He seemed unaware of what everybody in the region was talking about. But soon he showed that he knew many things. He mastered the Scriptures brilliantly. He knew them in depth. And from them he was able to draw the answers to the many "whys" the two men had

been tossing at each other that late Sunday afternoon.

All the while, however, a doubt kept tormenting their minds: "What if what he says is just a pious invention? . . . A kind way of soothing our pain? . . ." The answer to their doubt came in the late evening, in the quiet of the house where the three had stopped to "break bread." That was a usual action which the stranger did exactly as Jesus had done three nights before . . .

Traveler / B7

We all want to live

By Fr. Shay Cullen

WHAT do we recall these holy days but the life-giving love and compassion of one person who changed the world by teaching mankind that justice is more powerful than revenge, that compassion is greater than condemnation, that believing in goodness and truth to overcome evil is a power that can change the world. That person is Jesus of Nazareth, truly a revolutionary who worked to convert the nation and corrupt leaders by calling for justice, loving the poor, respecting their dignity and rights. He stood with the downtrodden and for him, the children were the most important of all and women had equal rights. He was rejected by the leaders, despised, falsely accused, charged as a rebel and given the death penalty.

Yet those values he introduced are alive today but are rejected by corrupt leadership. Jesus of Nazareth had a deep conviction in the power of goodness and truth. He taught that people who had conviction and was one in goodness would live a fuller life of happiness and this would change the world. Everybody wants to live, be secure, healthy and happy and avoid death. These dreams and desires are supposed to be made reality by a just government of integrity.

The tragedy of the human species is that so many of the leaders succeed by nefarious ways to get and remain in positions of political and economic power. The bad ones are people of low moral values, devoid of principles and integrity. They despise the weak, exploit them and steal from the public purse to enrich themselves. They silence the speakers of truth; they kill the doers of good. These world leaders are the greatest threat to the well-being of the people and the planet. They lack commitment and concern for climate change. They are devoid of wise and learned action for the common good and bring the people and planet closer to the brink of disaster. So it was in the time of Jesus who called for change before it was too late.

This disastrous failure of leadership today has allowed the latest catastrophic spread of the Coronavirus to every nation, community and parish. It was foreseen, predicted, and a stupefied immoral leadership failed to act. Some leaders and their rich cronies and supporters, in order to preserve their economic wealth and prevent the stock market from crashing, resisted a lock-down. It was a policy

Marriage/ B2

Code of Canon Law. Unfortunately, such adaptation of canon law into civil law was not done in a systematic manner, such that the juridic structure of marriage—as presented in the *Codex*—was not adequately imported by the framers of the Family Code. An attentive reading of the provisions of the aforementioned chapter on *Void and Voidable Marriages* reveals a lack of understanding of such juridic structure. In no way is this shown better than in the provision for the so-called *psychological incapacity*, enunciated in Art.36 of the aforementioned code.

Art.36. A marriage contracted by any party who, at the time of the celebration, was psychologically

Risen / B6

wealth. The breaking of the bread was an early feature of community life: “Every time then you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes” (1 Cor 11:26). The breaking of the bread refers, of course, to the Eucharist, which replaced the temple sacrifice with the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. Finally, no doubt the prayers consisted of Jewish prayers, although in the long run, Christians gradually formulated their own, after the example of Jesus himself who taught the “Our Father” to his disciples.

It should be emphasized that these features of the early Christian community were an actualization of the new life in the Spirit of Jesus in the daily life of Christian believers. In other words, they reflect the work of the Holy Spirit in the community. From these features developed some of the fundamental structures of the Christian community. For example, the apostles’ instruction could be easily identified with the Church’s task of evangelization,



PHOTO FROM THE CHICAGO ARCHDIOCESE

of fatalism. “There is nothing we can do,” they said. Let the weak die and create “herd immunity” for the strong. Fatalism is a form of spiritual and mental paralysis, it denies the truth, undervalues people’s lives and freezes decision-making that would have saved many. As a result, death is all around us. Friends, relatives, parents are dying because of the failure of leaders to act in time against the deadly pandemic Coronavirus.

I saw shocking video clips from Indonesia of people in public places convulsing and choking to death with Covid-19 and no one would dare to help them. One brave woman rushed to help a dying woman. She acted on an impulse of compassion and empathy to try and help the stranger. She risked her own life. Who or what motivated her and others to act in a self-sacrificial manner? Patients have willingly given up their life-saving ventilators to others younger and choose to die so that others could live. What motivates health workers to report

for work where they could be fatally infected themselves and die?

It is the power that comes from the unshakeable conviction, the belief that goodness and truth will overcome evil. It is called faith. That kind of faith is a true and good conviction that every person is of value, has dignity and right to life. Such faith and belief motivates and empowers people. They are the few who leave their comfort zone and choose to help others. They help others out of kindness, integrity and goodness. They love the poor and work for justice. People stuck in fatalism and despair cannot act in this way.

Their conviction that goodness and truth will triumph over evil is an inner experience that flows out into action for justice for the poor. It is the unseen immeasurable power of a spiritual experience. It is akin to hope, for hope too is a conviction that goodness will triumph over evil. The world urgently needs such conviction to challenge with courage the despots and tyrants, the money

moguls and corrupt captains of industry that oppress and exploit the downtrodden making them refugees, homeless and hungry. The leaders that Jesus wanted were to be believers in goodness and truth that protect, serve and help the poor, the oppressed, the deprived, the abused children.

The world community is facing a catastrophic situation right now like no other in history. Not only is the Coronavirus pandemic sweeping the world but even more damaging are the deadly effects of climate change. The indifference and apathy of many world leaders and their business partners accelerates deadly climate change that is threatening the human race and bringing the natural world close to collapse. To return to doing the good and taking right action based on faith in the goodness and dignity of every human with the right to a sustainable life is what the world needs. This will bring justice and peace to all. Without such values, evil will triumph and we will face the consequence of a faithless

Hope / B5

to resume the journey, reminding ourselves that we are born and reborn thanks to an invitation given gratuitously to us out of love, there in our respective Galilees. This is always the point from which we can set out anew, especially in times of crisis and trial, remembering our Galilee.

But there is more. Galilee was the farthest region from where they were: from Jerusalem. And not only geographically. Galilee was also the farthest place from the sacredness of the Holy City. It was an area where people of different religions lived: it was the “Galilee of the Gentiles” (Mt 4:15). Jesus sends them there and asks them to start again from there. What does this tell us? That the message of hope should not be confined to our sacred places, but should be brought to everyone. For everyone is in need of reassurance, and if we, who have touched “the Word of life” (1 Jn 1:1) do not give it, who will? How beautiful it is to be Christians who offer consolation,

Traveler / B6

That breaking of bread “opened the eyes” of the two men. It opened their hearts to believe that their mysterious fellow traveler was Jesus: the one whom Mary of Magdala had declared to be alive! And now the two travelers could testify that, indeed, he was alive, and had set their hearts afire through his presence and his word. That discovery made them forget their tiredness. It wiped out their discouragement, and set them on the road of an enthusiastic proclamation of the Resurrection. (See vv. 33-34.)

We, too, sometimes tread the dusty roads of life with a heavy heart. We find ourselves unable to make sense of many sad events . . .

society, devoid of spiritual values, one that is based on selfishness, greed, exploitation, and power.

Yet if enough people unite believing in the force of goodness, the power of loving each other, respecting the rights of all and making it a movement, there will be change. There will be a halt to the pandemic, to climate change, to global collapse of the world economy. We can change the world for the better. We need to believe that we can and that our faith will save us. That is the powerful reason Jesus gave to those who were healed. No one did it. They healed themselves. “Your faith has made you whole,” he said. For doing good and wanting a just and equal society, they killed him, nailed on a cross, a cruel death for an innocent man. He left a meal of friendship. Do this in memory of me, he said, and we remember his powerful message how to change the world. Many good innocent people are killed today for doing justice and believing in goodness.


who bear the burdens of others and who offer encouragement: messengers of life in a time of death! In every Galilee, in every area of the human family to which we all belong and which is part of us – for we are all brothers and sisters – may we bring the song of life! Let us silence the cries of death, no more wars! May we stop the production and trade of weapons, since we need bread, not guns. Let the abortion and killing of innocent lives end. May the hearts of those who have enough be open to filling the empty hands of those who do not have the bare necessities.

Those women, in the end, “took hold” of Jesus’ feet (Mt 28:9); feet that had travelled so far to meet us, to the point of entering and emerging from the tomb. The women embraced the feet that had trampled death and opened the way of hope. Today, as pilgrims in search of hope, we cling to you, Risen Jesus. We turn our backs on death and open our hearts to you, for you are Life itself.

unable to find satisfactory answers to the hard “whys” of life. Our eyes are veiled, our minds are confused, and our imagination distorted . . .

The Risen Christ is the only one who can help us read events and persons in depth, and make sense even of the most senseless occurrences and people. Our patient Fellow Traveler leads us to understand them all, bit by bit, and to “situate” them within the wider context of God’s plan.

The Eucharistic celebration is the culminating moment in the process of enlightenment whereby we become ever more aware of the presence of the Risen One who alone can give meaning to all that we do, suffer, hope, and pray for.*



TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT **MORAL ASSESSMENT**

5: Excellent
4: Above Average
3: Average
2: Below Average
1: Poor

CINEMA RATING

VA: For all ages V14: Ages 14+
V13: Ages 13 below, V18: Ages 18+
Parental Guidance NPV: Not for Public Viewing

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ORATIO IMPERATA

PRAYER FOR PROTECTION against the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19)

God our Father,
We come to you in our need
To ask your protection against the Coronavirus (COVID-19),
That has claimed lives
And has affected many.

We pray for your grace
For the people tasked with studying the nature
and cause
Of this virus and its disease
And of stemming the tide of its transmission.

Guide the hands and minds of
medical experts
That they may minister to the sick
With competence and compassion.

And of those governments and
private agencies
That must find cure and solution to this epidemic.

We pray for those afflicted
May they be restored to health soon.

Grant us the grace
To work for the good of all
And to help those in need.

Grant this through our Lord,
Jesus Christ, your Son,
Who lives and reigns with You,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, forever and ever. Amen.

Mary Help of all Christians, pray for us.
St. Raphael the Archangel, pray for us.
St. Rock, pray for us.
St. Lorenzo Ruiz, pray for us.
St. Pedro Calungsod, pray for us.

I still believe

DIRECTED BY: Erwin Brothers
LEAD CAST: KJ Apa, Britt Robertson, Melissa Roxburgh, Nathan Dean, Shania Twain, Gary Sinise
SCREENPLAY BY: Jon Erwin, Jon Gunn, Madeline Carrol
BASED ON: I Still Believe by Jeremy Camp
PRODUCERS: Kevin Downes, Jon Erwin, Andrew Erwin
GENRE: Drama, Musical, Romance
EDITED BY: Parker Adams, Ben Smallbone
MUSIC BY: John Debnay
CINEMATOGRAPHY: Kristopher Kimlin
PRODUCTION COMPANIES: Kingdom Story Company, Kevin Downes Productions, Erwin Brothers Entertainment
DISTRIBUTED BY: Lionsgate
COUNTRY: United States
LANGUAGE: English
RUNNING TIME: 1 hour 56 minutes

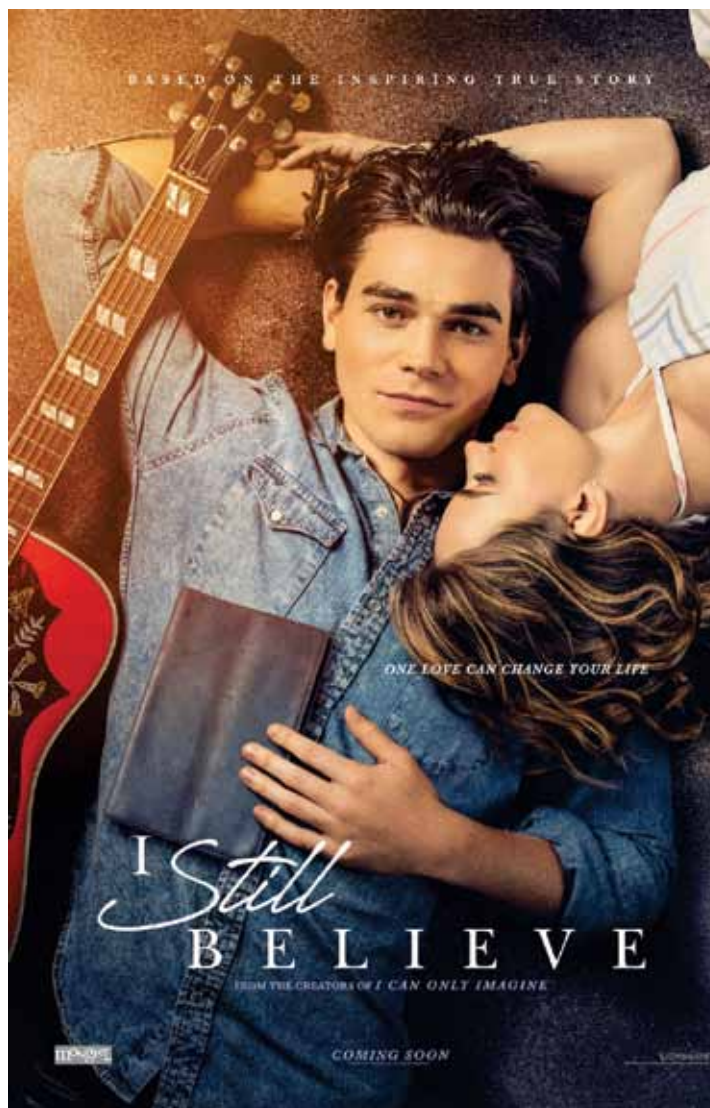
Technical assessment: 3.5
Moral assessment: 4
CINEMA rating: V14
MTRCB rating: PG

The son of a former Protestant Minister, Jeremy Camp (KJ Apa) knows that Melissa (Britt Robertson) has stage-3 ovarian cancer. Nonetheless he proposes to marry her. A well-known singer, he asks for prayers for Melissa during his concerts. Their prayers must have been answered because she is eventually pronounced 100 percent cancer free. They get married in October 2000. However, their honeymoon period is shortlived, because in February 2001, less than four months after they got married, Melissa dies. Grief-stricken, Jeremy asks his father for advice as he

struggles to overcome his difficulty to keep his faith in the Lord's disposition.

The causal sequence of events is easily understood which makes this true life story (of contemporary Christian music singer Jeremy Camp) easy to follow. Apa and Robertson display a winning chemistry that makes the central love story highly appealing. Scenes at the beach and its aerial view give a refreshing atmosphere besides enhancing the romance of the couple. Debnay's music enhances the emotional moments.

The Erwin brothers have succeeded in telling a



compelling story in film based on real events that reveal heartfelt moments of strength in the face of adversity. The film — whose trailer has been viewed over 10 million times

— is a powerful reminder that in life's storms, true hope can be found because is God is always available to us, especially in moments of suffering.

Bloodshot




DIRECTED BY: David S. F. Wilson
LEAD CAST: Vin Diesel, Eiza González, Sam Heughan, Toby Kebbell, Guy Pearce
SCREENPLAY BY: Jeff Wadlow, Eric Heisserer
STORY BY: Jeff Wadlow
BASED ON: Bloodshot, by Kevin VanHook, Don Perlin, Bob Layton
PRODUCERS: Neal H. Moritz, Toby Jaffe, Dinesh Shamdasani, Vin Diesel
GENRES: Drama, Fantasy, Sci-Fi
EDITED BY: Jim May
MUSIC BY: Steve Jablonsky
CINEMATOGRAPHY: Jacques Jouffret
PRODUCTION COMPANIES: Columbia Pictures, Bona Film Group, Cross Creek Pictures, Annabell Picture, The Hideaway Entertainment, Original Film, Valiant Entertainment
DISTRIBUTED BY: Sony Pictures Releasing
COUNTRY: United States
LANGUAGE: English
RUNNING TIME: 110 minutes

Technical assessment: 3.5
Moral assessment: 2.5
CINEMA rating: V18
MTRCB rating: PG13

When Marine Ray Garrison (Vin Diesel) and his wife are murdered, Ray is resurrected by a secret team of scientists led by Dr. Emil Harting (Guy Pearce). Enhanced with nanotechnology, he becomes a superhuman, biotech killing machine without a memory of his former life. As Ray first trains with fellow supersoldiers, a particular melody brings his memories flooding back. As he subsequently remembers the man who killed both him and his wife, Ray breaks out of the facility hell-bent on revenge, only to discover that there's more to the conspiracy than he originally thought.

This superhero film, based on the Valiant Comics character of the same name, cannot claim any originality either by way of plot or action sequences. Everything it offers has been offered by so many other titles in its genre, like fight scenes, menacing language, intense fighting sequences as well as science fiction elements.

Buhay San Miguel

CBCPNEWS
Photo: Vatican Media

May we be profoundly shaken by what is happening all around us:

the time has come to eliminate inequalities, to heal the injustice that is undermining the health of the entire human family!

POPE FRANCIS
19 April 2020, Divine Mercy Sunday



THE CROSS

A Supplement Publication of the Order of the Knights of Columbus and KCFAPI



KofC Family... Our Concern

CBCP Monitor Vol. 24, No. 8

April 12 - 26, Vol 24

Knights of Columbus: Touching lives, doing good amid COVID-19

By Sir Knight Rene V. Sarmiento
Luzon North Deputy

“Jesus Christ is risen... Indifference, self-centeredness, division and forgetfulness are words we are not to hear at this time...”

Pope Francis' Urbi et Orbi Message, Basilica of Saint Peter, April 12, 2020

THE four foundational principles of the Knights of Columbus are charity, unity, fraternity and patriotism. The program model designed to implement these principles in Faith and Action, a model that “empowers Knights to come together to share their Catholic faith, celebrate fraternity with loved ones and do what they do best --stand shoulder to shoulder in service to the community and to defend life at all stages and in every condition.

Inspired by these four foundational principles and program model, the Luzon North, Luzon South, Visayas and Mindanao Jurisdictions, had done their share, and still do, to treat and heal COVID-19 victims, to feed the hungry, to provide protection to health care frontliners, and to give spiritual nourishment to members, families and communities.

Resonating loudly and clearly with these four Jurisdictions is Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson's call to Bro. Knights to “Leave No Neighbor Behind” in this time of pandemic.

It is the spirit of “Leave No

Neighbor Behind” that moved incumbent Grand Knights of Luzon North Jurisdiction Dr. Marcelo Y. Jaochico of Sto. Niño de Congreso Council No. 13774, Diocese of Novaliches and Dr. Cecilio Terrado, Jr. of Binmaley Council No. 5891, Diocese of Alaminos, Pangasinan, to frontline in hospitals and to die in line of duty. To the Knights of Columbus and to the Filipino people, they are heroes whose exemplary conduct will always be remembered.

Indifference and self-centeredness? These are far from the minds of Brother Knights of the four Jurisdictions as shown by the following:

1. The Luzon North Jurisdiction launched an anti COVID-19 drive among its officers and members and donated the funds raised to the: (a) Philippine General Hospital (PGH) Medical Foundation, Inc. for the purchase of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for medical frontliners; (b) Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception of Batanes in coordination with the HaPag-Ibig Food Assistance Program Committee for Ivatans initiated by District Deputy Fr. Ronaldo B. Manabat, parish priest; and (c) Caritas Manila as food assistance to poor families affected by coronavirus.

In addition, Bro. Knights of St. Dominic Council 4465, upon the request of the Mayor of Sto. Domingo, Nueva Ecija, volunteered to repack the relief goods for distribution



The Knights of Columbus Visayas Jurisdiction KCFAPI Unit Manager and Brother Almar Dicar Posa facilitated the donation of PPEs to Barotac Nuevo District Hospital for the frontliners.

to the entire municipality. Bro. Knights in the Dioceses of Cabanatuan and San Jose donated 1,000 bottles of purified water and 150 bottles of locally made calamansi juice for frontliners of Dr. Paulino J. Garcia Medical Center in Cabanatuan City.

For its part, Ina ng Laging Saklolo Council No. 8226, K-01 of the Diocese of Cabanatuan holds a daily Rosary via Zoom video call.

2. The Visayas Jurisdiction through Bro. Knights in the provinces of Iloilo and Cebu, cities of Dumaguete and Tacloban, and Catarman, Northern Samar conducted fund drives to acquire

Personnel Protective Equipment (PPEs) for various hospitals in the same localities and Consolacion town in Cebu. Bro. Knights in Tacloban City solicited food donations for distribution to Bro. Knights who are seniors and whose livelihoods got affected by the lockdown.

3. The Luzon South State Jurisdiction, through Bro. Knights of the Divine Mercy Council No. 15139, District P-24, Diocese of Paranaque, regularly provide food packs meals to medical frontliners of various hospitals, traffic enforcers, checkpoint frontliners, drivers, street dwellers, and security guards.


4. The Mindanao State Jurisdiction enjoined Bro. Knights to pray the Novena for Protection in Time of Pandemic and to recite the Rosary daily until the pandemic is over. It launched Oplan Tabang involving 20 Dioceses to raise funds to buy food items for distribution to the poorest of the poor Bro Knights.

As a manifestation of the four (4) Jurisdictions' care and concern for its members, they adopted the Guidelines for Fraternal Leaders issued by Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson on March 11, 2020 regarding the cancellation of all personal contact meetings, all planned events where

people gather, and all travels for Knights of Columbus business, until further notice.

Building a culture of life and civilization of love. With this guidepost, in addition to the Order's foundational principles and program model, the Knights of Columbus in the Philippines will continue to find ways to treat and to heal COVID-19 patients, to feed the hungry, to protect frontliners and to inspire the scared, the scarred and the shattered by the pandemic.

Yes, the Knights of Columbus embraces Pope Francis' Easter message “contagion of hope” because Jesus Christ is risen!



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS
LUZON SOUTH JURISDICTION

PRAY for LIFE

We value LIFE

The Luzon South Jurisdiction Deputy Bro. Bonifacio B. Martinez called all State Officers, DD's, GK's, Knights of Columbus members and their families to participate in the Pray for Life activity in lieu of the Annual Walk for Life last March 22, 2020.

2 Knights-doctors die to coronavirus

THE Knights of Columbus has two new heroes with the death of Bro. Knight-doctors/frontliners.

Dr. Marcelo Y. Jaochico, the Provincial Health Officer of Pampanga, and incumbent Grand Knight of Sto. Niño de Congreso Council 13774, Diocese of Novaliches, died on March 24, 2020 after succumbing to Covid-19. A much-loved Doctor of the Barrios, a Lay Minister, he was active in attending to Covid-19 patients before his

death.

The other is Dr. Cecilio Terrado Jr., incumbent Grand Knight of Binmaley Council 5891, Diocese of Alaminos. He also frontlined to treat Covid-19 patients.

To these two Bro. Knights who gave their lives so others will live, we offer our prayers for their eternal repose and our salute. They died exemplifying the Faith in Action program model of the Knights of Columbus. (RV Sarmiento)

KC Luzon North launches Covid-19 fund drive

THE Luzon North Jurisdiction (LNJ) launched last March 30, 2020 KC Anti-Covid Fund Drive to raise funds for the Personal Protective Equipment of Health Care Frontliners.

The Executive Committee of the LNJ subsequently decided to expand the beneficiaries of the Fund Drive to cover poor families affected by the pandemic. Response from

Bro. Knights were encouraging and heartwarming. As of this writing, the amount of P50,000 was given to the Philippine General Hospital Foundation, Inc., the amount of P30,000 to

the Ivatans of Batanes through the Cathedral of Immaculate Conception of Batanes and the amount of P20,000 to Caritas Manila.

This Faith in Action KC Anti-Covid 19 Fund

Drive is ongoing and kindhearted donors may deposit their donation in whatever amount in the LNJ's Metrobank Intramuros Branch Account No. 632-7-63202602-8. (RV Sarmiento)

KC Foundation screens scholarship applicants

IN anticipation of the coming school year 2020-2021, the KC Philippines Foundation, Inc. held its series of scholarship application examinations from February 22 to March 7, 2020. The examinations were held at the KCFAPI Center and San Rafael, Bulacan facilitated by Ms. Arvi Rina Albaracin, HRCC Assistant; Iloilo Service Office facilitated by Mr. Anthony P. Nazario, VP for FBG (VisMin); Cebu Service Office facilitated by

Mr. Cyrus Lao; Davao Service Office facilitated by Mr. Rogelio Cabanlit and Ms Mary Jane Mendoza; Cagayan De Oro Service Office facilitated by Mr. Renante Bragat; and Baguio City facilitated by the foundations Supervisor, Mr. Juan Karlo S. Serviento.

As previously announced to the applicants, the results will be out by the first week of April. But due to the enhanced community quarantine, it will

Scholarship / C2



The Mindanao State Deputy Bro. Gerry Eutemio T. Mission, in response to the call of Mindanao State Chaplain Most Rev. Jose Colin M. Bagaforo, DD and Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson to “Help our Neighbors and Leave No Knight Behind”, launched “Operation Tabang” in the Archdiocese of Davao wherein food packs were distributed to over 700 recipients.

KC priest in action

EVEN if the country is struck by the covid19 pandemic, having without public masses especially during the Holy Week celebrations, the church did not stop its mission in serving those in need. Rev. Fr. Hernandez Mendoza, Jr. of Sta. Martha Parish, Kalawaan, Pasig City, a priest scholar and a Board of Trustee of the Knights

of Columbus Fr. George J. Willmann Charities, Inc. has initiated series of relief operations to his parishioners since the first week of the Enhanced Community Quarantine declared in the Luzon Region.

“In my priestly life, serving the marginalized and the poor is always dear to my heart. I

Priest / C3

Cebu KC volunteers buck risk, first to respond in helping frontliners

WE received the call from the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP), Cebu Chapter on the 3rd week of March, 2020, looking for people who might have the knowledge of producing the personal protective equipment (PPEs) like masks, facial shields.

It was the height of the community quarantine and that reports of the first contamination of the coronavirus start to trickle in the Cebu scene.

Without hesitation, we accepted the job. And with video instructions from

Respond / C3

Bonifacio B. Martinez

President's Message



Easter: Resurrection of the Lord

IN this season of Lent, Easter or the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ symbolizes the hope that we have victory over sin. And that through His death, we are given the chance to eternal life so long as we believe in His death and resurrection.

This year's commemoration of Lent Season is coming to an end as we enter Holy Week this April. Regardless of what we have been through in these past months brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, may it not be the reason for us to break away from God's loving hands, rather may this crisis be an instrument for us to strengthen our love and faith in His Grace.

Unconditional love is what He offers, may we also be able to transform this love towards our brothers and sisters who are in one way or another affected by this pandemic. Our help in any way possible will be highly appreciated not only by the lives we have touched but God will also be grateful. May we appreciate the essence of waking up each day healthy and given the chance to be an instrument in spreading the goodness and love of God.

In our way no matter how little we think of its impact is, collectively, it will make a difference. In these trying times, we have to spread kindness, compassion and a daily prayer is also a must.

We have nothing to worry about and rest everything in God's loving hands. It is in these situations wherein we lift all our worries to Him, we ask for guidance, patience, and enlightenment as we altogether triumphantly conquer this pandemic. Truly, with God's love towards humanity and in turn, our trust and faith in Him will work its wonders.

Vivat Jesus!

Arsenio Isidro G. Yap

A Brother's Insight



Crisis

JUST about a month ago a lockdown was imposed in Metro-Manila, then in the entire Luzon and finally the entire Philippines. This was necessitated by the pandemic Covid 19 which is spreading all over the world in a very rapid phase that it became necessary to impose a lockdown. Nobody knows how to deal with it properly and appropriately. Tensions are running high as businesses are shutdown and workers without warning are out of jobs.

During the first week, my realization and worry was that our sales target would not be met in a couple of months. Income would dwindle as low as it can get or worst, it could be a lost for this year, by how much, only time can tell. It is a daily struggle as we don't really know how the next day would unfold. But we need to do something to mitigate huge losses and cash requirements to meet our obligations especially to our employees who cannot afford a disruption on their income.

Without thinking too much, we decided to follow the request of the government to release the 13th month pay, provide some assistance financial and/or in kind and any other form of help we could extend to our workers. On the second day of the lockdown, I've already sensed that this is not an ordinary crisis; it is not an ordinary lockdown. The effect will be long term not only for the company but for the employees as well and for the rest of the population. The economy would be in jeopardy. Everybody would be affected, rich and poor alike as well as the government. And something must be done. Everybody must do their part to mitigate the downfall of everything. The poor would be hit hardest.

We set aside our sales target, our projected income and decided we need to do something not only to protect our business but to be able to provide for the needs of our employees. We decided to delay a big project of ours which is about to start by the third quarter of this year. The delay would be indefinite as we need to stabilize our cash flow first, before we could decide on any form of expansion. We decided to prioritize the needs of our employees as we all very well know that most of us have extended families to provide for.

Without thinking about the repercussion on our bottom line, we decided to release our 14th month pay due on May 8 in two tranches to all employees whether able to report to work or not. The first half was given last March 31 and the second half to be released this coming April 15. An additional P3,000.00 was given also last March 31 and another P3,000.00 this coming April 15 as financial assistance for their other needs. A bag of groceries with rice worth P500.00 every week which started last March 20 was given and will continue every week thereafter during the duration of the lockdown. They were also given a liter of Isopropyl Alcohol (IPA) and a liter of Sodium Hypochlorite (Chlorox). Those who are able to work were given extras in the form of snack or meal, an energy booster of either an egg or a banana and vitamin C.

Brother's Insight / C3

Jose C. Reyes, Jr.

Chairman's Message

“You are not in the dark, brothers” 1 Thessalonians 5: 2-6

FORGIVING is not an easy task, especially at times when the reason for not forgiving seem so valid and understandable, even to other people who know why. What causes us to delay forgiveness? When we hold back, we remain partly in darkness because of pain, fear and pride.

But since we are all children of light,

Karlo Serviento

Pondering the Words

LENTEN season, seemingly, is the time in which Catholics nurture their spiritual life further especially when it reaches to the Holy Week as it is filled with much spiritual activities from one day to another. Starting from Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion, going to the whole week itself, in the Easter Triduum that starts during Maundy Thursday and ends in the eve of the Black Saturday until we all reach Resurrection Sunday, activities of different churches varies yet all are centered on Jesus' triumph over death.

This year's celebration is quite different from our customary practices in the past. Upon the declaration of the Enhanced Community Quarantine in the whole Luzon Region, even churches were closed and the bishops

we know that if we forgive, we will have peace and will eventually see the light of Christ through a renewed friendship, and feel the joy of being able to overcome the obstacles by God's grace.

So brothers, let us not delay forgiving the people who have hurt us. This Holy Week, let us reflect on the sufferings of

I Thirst

have decided to make all the celebrations in private, using only live streaming to be a part to stop the spread of the virus. It is for our safety.

Have you observed, the temperature outside is hot and we need more water to be hydrated? Remember Jesus hanging on the cross? He even said the words, “I thirst.” (John 19:28) In these trying times, we also are thirsting. Did you also feel that you miss going to the church? Receiving Holy Communion? If yes, then, you really thirst.

The truth is we thirst even before this had happened. Yet this pandemic has awoken us that we really thirst. We thirst for our God. Looking back, we became too busy, we look at the Holy Mass being just a Sunday obligation to attend within an hour at least

once a week then we keep on doing our weekly routines. Attending the Mass seems sufficient for us. It ends as we pass by the doors of the church to return home.

And this is the beauty of what had happened. We have seen that we are spiritually thirsting. We have seen the importance of the Holy Mass. We have seen how going to church on Sundays matter. We have felt that great desire to receive Jesus in the form of the Holy Eucharist. Now, we are all looking forward to singing once again songs of praises and of thanksgiving. We even look forward to sing “Papuri sa Diyos sa kaitaasan!”

Yes, our quarantine helps stop the virus, on the other hand, it also helps to us see, discover and deepen the meaning of these holy days,



to be in solitude and wait for the glory of Easter.

But, it is not only us who is thirsting, the Eucharistic Lord, the Crucified Lord, the Risen Lord also thirst for our sweet gaze on His Tabernacle. He thirsts for our voices of prayer and praise inside His sacred place. He also wants to see us once again.

What we can do now is to continue to nurture our spiritual life. In silence God speaks. In our solitude God comes. In our hearts God lives. It is now our time to talk one on one with the Lord. We will now become our own retreat masters in front of our Supreme Master, in the deepest recesses of our hearts.

Hanging on the cross, Jesus thirst. We also thirst. His resurrection will quench our thirst.

Erwin John Mallari

EJ's Corner

Holy Thursday

MAUNDY Thursday marks the start of the Easter Triduum, wherein the passion, crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ are commemorated. The term “maundy” is taken from the latin word *mandatum*, meaning commandment, since it was during this day that Jesus said “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.”

Maundy Thursday commemorates Jesus washing the feet of his disciples, and the Last Supper. Because of this, the Mass of the Lord's Supper is celebrated where the practice of washing of the feet of 12 chosen people is done by the priest or bishop showing the act of brotherly

Atty. Luis Voltaire D. Formilleza

By the Reading Lamp

Ponderings on Valor, Kindness and Compassion

TODAY I write not by the reading lamp inside my office room. My laptop is well placed on a makeshift study desk at home, alongside my brother's personal computer and office documents. For almost a month now, we have been made to endure the agony of laboring remotely within the confines of home- all in an effort to cooperate with the government mandated Enhanced Community Quarantine, aimed at stopping the spread of the pandemic caused by the SARS COVID-19.

This is not a sci-fi movie. This had been the lived reality for all Filipinos young and old all over the country, and most if not all the citizens of the world. Indubitably, the closest event to which Filipinos had experienced something like this was during the Second World

War. All classes were suspended. Airports and seaports were closed. Public transportation was placed on a halt. All businesses except essential ones remain closed. People dare not leave the confines of their houses for fear of coming in terms with the enemy that is more insidious than the bullets and shrapnel from crossfire between forces outside during the war. Incidentally, this stay at home living had coincided with the commemoration of the Araw ng Kagitingan (Day of Valor) and the observance of the Holy Week.

While we ought to suspend all Lenten activities in an effort to curb mass gatherings and unmonitored mobilization of people, I reckon that this should not deprive us of the chance of understanding and living the essence of Lent. Being

a Catholic Christian is more than just the guided traditions and the ceremonies observed. One's virtue of religiosity would be useless and shall remain a futile exercise of rituals if our spirituality is not enhanced through actions which live out the gospel. This is indeed true during these trying times when resources are scarce and people, in as much as they want to toil in order to survive are mostly left to fend for themselves. “If anyone is poor among your fellow Israelites in any of the towns of the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward them. Rather, be openhanded and freely lend them whatever they need.” - Deuteronomy 15:7-8. On the other hand, we should let this year's celebration of Araw ng Kagitingan not just

be a salute to the fallen soldiers of Corregidor and Bataan. Our medical professionals and other frontliners are indeed heroes during this crisis. Therefore, all citizens should not hesitate in doing what they can to support the heroic efforts of those the lot who are sent to the battlefields. This starts by ensuring that we stay home.

Indeed, we all cannot wait for this crisis to be over and I am looking forward to that day like how we anticipate Easter- a celebration of new life and new beginnings. To end this, I take queue from the recent broadcast of Queen Elizabeth of the United Kingdom: “We shall meet our family again. We shall meet our friends again. We shall meet again.”

See you all again by my reading lamp.



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Scholarship / C1

be announced on the second week of May 2020.

The foundation continuously supports the advocacy of its founder, Fr. George J. Willmann to provide educational support to poor but deserving students around the Philippines.

On the other hand, the Knights of Columbus Fr. George J. Willmann

Charities, Inc., the foundation that supports the priests and seminarians will also announce the qualified applicants for their scholarship program on the last week of May 2020.

For the school year 2020-2021, the recipients of the Fr. McGivney Fund for Priest Scholars in Rome are: (Luzon North) Rev. Fr. Solomon Geslani,

(Visayas) Rev. Fr. Giovanni Bandy and (Mindanao) Rev. Fr. Rodel Balansag.

On the notice issued last March 25, 2020 by the two foundations, its President, Mr. Alonso L. Tan, requests everyone to pray against the spread of the disease (covid19), for the safety of our country and all the brother knights. **(JSServiento)**

A sure path for renewal

The challenge of reform and preserving unity within the church calls for natural and supernatural virtue

by Supreme Knight
Carl A. Anderson

EARLIER THIS YEAR, I attended the consecration of a beautifully restored church. As the Blessed Sacrament was placed in the new tabernacle, I thought of the Ark of the Covenant, which was the place of God's presence among his people, beginning in the time of Moses. Now, in the New Covenant, the Lord's true presence is a reality wherever Mass is celebrated and wherever the Eucharist is reserved.

As Catholics, we may take this reality for granted today, but the initial reaction to Jesus' discourse on the bread of life was one of disbelief — the Jews saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" and his disciples saying, "This is a hard saying, who can listen to it?" Most of his disciples actually left, and Jesus then turned to the Apostles: "Will you also go away?" As we know,

Peter answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (Jn 6:68).

Jesus' question remains painfully real in light of the devastating scandals that have recently rocked the Church and the declining church attendance among Catholics. And if Jesus' question has new relevance, so does Peter's answer. If we were to turn away from the presence of the Lord, where would we go?

There is a growing trend, especially among young people, to say that we can be "spiritual" while also rejecting organized religion. Pope Benedict XVI addressed this issue in his encyclical *Spe Salvi* (Saved in Hope) when he asked, "Is Christian hope individualistic?" He answered that "salvation has always been considered a 'social' reality," adding that we are called "to a lived union with a 'people,' and for each individual it can only be attained with this 'we'" (14).

We see this social reality, this unity within the Church, most beautifully in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament in the hundreds of thousands of tabernacles throughout the world. And this call to communion is especially important for us as Knights of Columbus, committed this year in a special way to the principle of unity.

As we pray for and seek renewal in our Church today, I am reminded what the 18th-century British statesman Edmund Burke said about institutions in need of reform. He argued that the virtue of prudence is necessary to find the right combination of "conservation and correction."

We should keep in mind Burke's recommendation of prudence. In the foreseeable future, however, the most important of the cardinal virtues may not be prudence but fortitude, which the Catechism of the Catholic Church defines as "the moral virtue that ensures firmness

in difficulties and constancy in the pursuit of the good" (1808).

And as St. Thomas Aquinas taught, fortitude is dependent upon yet another virtue: justice — certainly today, justice for the victims of sexual abuse and their families as well as justice for the People of God.

Indeed, all four of the cardinal virtues — prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance — will be necessary to achieve "correction" while preserving the unity of the Church.

In *Spe Salvi*, Pope Benedict further reminded us: "God is the foundation of hope. ... His love alone gives us the possibility of soberly persevering day by day, without ceasing to be spurred on by hope" (31).

In the days ahead, therefore, let us rededicate ourselves to the practice of the moral virtues and pray for an increase in faith, hope and charity. In this way, we will continue to move forward, meeting whatever challenges may arise.



The Lord remains in the midst of his people, and he will never abandon us. He calls us to unity. He calls us to virtue. And in him, we will find a sure path for renewal. Vivat Jesus!

The Gentle Warrior

By James B. Reuter, SJ

CHAPTER FIVE

THE WAR YEARS

THEY wheeled him into the operating room. Aside from the Navy scrub nurse, all the nurses at the operation were Maryknoll nuns. Dana Nance started the operation, by kerosene lamp, held high by a Maryknoll Sister. When the operation was only five minutes old, Sister Isabel said suddenly: "He is dead."

Nance could not believe it. He worked the chest of Father Mulry with his hands. Then he reached through the incision and pumped the heart with his fingers. But it was no use. Old Joe Mulry had really gone home to God.

Sister Isabel prepared the body for burial. The stretcher crew went to get the plain wooden coffin, and the purple vestments, from the chapel. Sister Isabel tied a cloth around Father Mulry's chin, up over his head, to keep his face from being distorted. The stretcher crew carried him back to the chapel, in Vatican City, in the coffin. They arranged the coffin in front of the altar, for the Mass in the morning. It was already 2:30 a.m. Sister Isabel untied the cloth, took it away from around his chin, and the face of Father Mulry fell into a smile. Sister Isabel wept. She said to him: "Father, you have to be serious! At least in death!"

At five in the morning, when the Sisters came into the chapel and saw the coffin, they did not know who it was. They came tip-toeing down the aisle, to look into the open coffin, at the face. It was a shock, for most of them. The night before, he was talking to them, laughing. And now he was in the coffin, smiling, but dead.

He was buried in a shallow grave, in the little cemetery beside the chapel, in the prison camp at Los Baños. The graves in that cemetery began at six feet, but as time went on and those assigned to dig the graves became weaker, the graves became shallower and shallower. The grave of Father Mulry was hardly three feet deep. There was a wooden cross over it, with his name, and the date.

George had lost a friend...or gained one, in heaven. Old Joe Mulry was a brave, brilliant, good natured generous man. He died of ulcers. His death really began in Fort Santiago, when he was sitting on the floor, in the prison cell.

Death struck frequently, in those days. One morning, just before dawn,

there was a rifle crack, just outside of Barracks 19. George ran to the barracks door. There on the ground, just outside the first row of barbed wire, was a young Pan-American pilot, an internee. He was shot through the shoulder, and was rolling on the ground in agony, but he was holding on to a bundle. A Japanese Officer was standing over him, with a rifle. Father Leo McGovern said to the Japanese, from the barracks door, that it was inhuman to let a wounded man die, without helping him. The Japanese Officer said: "It is a military offense to try to escape from this camp, and — even if he were not wounded — we would execute him."

So they dragged the body outside the camp to a little gully, and put a bullet through his head. George heard the shot, in the barracks. When they gave the body to the internees, the bullet hole was small in the back, but big in the front. It blew out all the brains.

While they were digging the grave, a Jesuit said to another Pan-American pilot who was also on the burial crew: "What was he trying to do — breaking out at dawn? That's suicide!"

To try to break out at dawn really was suicide. There were three rows of barbed wire, and four rows of Japanese guards. And the guards were amazing marksmen! One young internee, trying to escape, hid in a ravine all day. When it was evening, and the ravine was full of shadows, he ran across it. The Japanese guard was on a bluff, above him. George heard the shots in the camp — four quick shots, in rapid succession, one burst. When they gave the bodies to the internees, all four bullets went into the base of the neck, between the right ear and the right shoulder. All four bullets passed through the body, and came out on the left side, above the left hip. Any one of the bullets would have killed him.

So the Jesuit said: "What was he trying to do — breaking out at dawn?"

The Pan-American boy was quiet until the Japanese guards were out of earshot. Then he said: "He was not shot trying to break out! He was shot trying to get back in!"

The guerrilleros wanted a map of where every Japanese guard would be, at seven o'clock in the morning. There was a plan on foot to liberate the prisoners of the Los Baños camp. American paratroopers were supposed to jump on



the camp. The guerrilleros were to come in on the ground, from all sides. They had gotten this message to the Pan-Am boys. So the internees made a map, indicating where every one of the 210 Japanese guards would be at seven in the morning. They folded this map up small, and taped it between the shoulder blades of the boy who was killed. They covered the map with make-up. At eleven in the evening they caused a little divergent noise on two sides. The guards went toward the middle.

He met the guerrilleros and delivered the map. They fed him. Then the boy began to think of his wife and baby in the camp. They were hungry. So he made a little bundle of food, and started back. The guerrilleros tried to stop him. They said: "We're going to strike that camp, soon!" The boy answered: "Listen. I have heard that for three full years! First it was 'apple pie by the fourth of July'. But the fourth of July came, and there was no apple pie. Then it was Christmas.... Three Christmases under the Japanese! Now you say: 'Soon'. Suppose the strike does not come soon, and my wife and baby die in that camp? Give me that bundle!"

So he started back, sometime after midnight. And he almost made it.... If he had five more minutes, he might have been inside that last row of barbed wire.... But at that time there was a glow in the east. A guard saw him. The rifle shot. The bullet through the head. And a shallow grave. **(to be continued next issue)**

Priest / C1



Fr. Hernan gives a food pack to one of the beneficiaries in his parish.

am glad that many young priests and seminarians are encouraged with my convictions in serving the poor. I am doing this kind of charitable works not only during this pandemic but in any moment where I have the

opportunity to help others especially the poor." Fr. Hernan stated.

He also added that "There is always joy when we extend help and assistance to those who are in need. In fact, I believe that next

to the Eucharist, serving the poor is our Joy in the priesthood. I thank the Lord that in my projects, there are many generous individuals extending their resources especially in this initiative. I thank the Lord that He provides always in whatever projects that I have for the marginalized and the poor. In my previous and present parishes, serving them (the poor) is really part of my programs."

With his missionary spirit, he also spent his apostolate in giving recollections to various dioceses and congregations in the country. Also through the inspiration of the Order of the Knights of

Columbus, he continues to be a priest in action like the Servant of God Fr. George J. Willmann, bringing the Gospel of Christ into the peripheries.

"And now, I am invited by different Religious and Diocesan seminaries to give recollections and conferences about serving the poor. I am very proud also that my members of the Knights of Columbus in the Parish are helping me in all of my projects for the needy and the poor." he furthered.

Fr. Hernan is also an active chaplain of their parish council and on his 2nd year of being a Board of Trustee of KCFJWCI. **(JSServiento)**

Respond / C1

the IBP, a group of youth, practicing stay-at-home protocol responded.

By afternoon of March 19, materials of the face shields started to arrive. A KC member, actually the Grand Knight of Cebu Technological University, Carmen Campus, Fred Torregozo, hastily assembled 5 youth ranging from the ages of 16 to 20.

They cut, designed, lay out, pasted, etc., all the while observing social distancing.

I called local KofC leaders to the task at hand, but they were somehow reluctant, understandably, to lift a finger considering the situation. And they are afraid we might get contaminated one way or the other.

I told them I called only by way of informing them what some of the knights are doing, and this is not as an official project of the Order. Anyway, they told me to reprint the *Oratio Imperata* and distribute them. I told them we have been praying the *Oratio* in conjunction with the one offered by the Basilica del Sto. Nino Church.

Nevertheless, by nightfall, 600 face shields were finished,

Brother's Insight / C2

On the second week, we decided to help barangays where we are situated in, our office, our parental home and our warehouse. We offered disinfectants for free with free refills. We also decided to give 100 cavans of rice, 50 to our parish at the Most Holy Redeemer at Brixton Hills, QC and the other 50 to different barangays we decided to help. We also decided to reduce the workdays from 6 to 5 and the number of work hours from 8 to 6. The 6 hour per day work is being paid in full as if they had worked for 8 hours. This is some sort of hazard pay. For every 5 days work, they are also given two extra day credit to compensate for the lost 6th day work and the Sunday pay, as an extra hazard pay and incentive. In normal times we pay our employees even on Sundays.

Last April 4, the Quezon City government reached out to me for a disinfectant. We started with a batch sample of 20 liters which is good enough for 4,000 liters of disinfectant. The following day April 5, Palm Sunday, they said that our disinfectant was okay and that they need it very badly as they have run out of the disinfectant they were using before. We gave them 10 drums for free as our help to the city government in stopping or at least to mitigate the spread of viruses like the Coronavirus. The 10 drums could make 400,000 liters of disinfectant which I believe is good enough for the entire city if used properly and efficiently. Other disinfectants like Isopropyl Alcohol (IPA) and Sodium Hypochlorite (Chlorox) are being donated to a group of doctors who are addressing directly the

ready for delivery!

We made another 700 a day after, before the group rested and took some badly-needed sleep. After one day, they were at it again, producing 600 - 800 depending on availability of materials. And so it went on.

And the delivery is another obstacle that must be resolved. But thanks to the resourcefulness of persons and their marked passion of making sure that the precious goods would reach the hands of the frontliners, soonest way possible, this too was resolved.

Today marks the 4th week of now enhanced community quarantine, but the youth are still at it.

Sometimes, doing some 'diskarte' how to get the raw materials from the city, and getting them delivered, required patience, guts, determination but always with a certain joy that somehow the PPEs would save lives, knowing full well the risks they have taken. And somehow without knowing, that they also have saved their own.

God bless these kids! **(EMM R. ESPINA)**

needs of doctors and nurses in hospitals where supplies for such are badly needed.

Just a couple of days ago, the lockdown was extended to April 30. Again this poses a new problem to our employees' welfare and to our finances. It would not be a problem to those who are able to work as they are more than adequately compensated. But it would be a major concern for those who are unable to. I guess as on the onset of the lockdown we will again without thinking about the repercussion on our bottom line decide again to take care of our employees' financial needs. We'll have to decide to release half of their 15 month due on September 8 on April 30 and the other half on May 15 if need be?

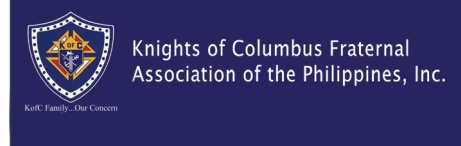
The crisis is far from over. We still do not know how long it will take for the situation to normalize. Despite the difficulties, we need to extend help as much as we can. We have to donate again another 100 cavans of rice for distribution to our parish, to some barangays and probably to some institutions as well. We'll consider again providing disinfectants to barangays where we are and to the Quezon City government should a second round be requested. Donations of disinfectants like Isopropyl Alcohol (IPA) and Sodium Hypochlorite (Chlorox) will be given to the same group of doctors.

The extended lockdown will definitely put a lot of strain on our financial resources but we are hopeful that all would be recovered with God's Graces and Blessings. Happy Easter to all and may the risen Christ deliver us from Covid 19.

The Life Insurance Cover That Fits Every Filipino Family

KC Family Protect Series

show how much you love them



ASKING what life insurance product is best for you?

For this article, we would like to feature one of the best-selling products of KCFAPI, the KC Family Protect Series. It is a Whole Life Permanent Life Insurance Plan that offers lifetime insurance coverage. It means that the insurance coverage starts from the effectivity date of the Benefit Certificate and automatically ends at age 100. Its Face Value, or what we know as the insurance coverage, may be received in one of two ways: either as a Family or Death Benefit or as a Maturity Benefit. When the insured individual dies within the coverage period, the beneficiary will receive 100% of the Face Value in a form of Death Benefit which is known to KCFAPI BC Holders as Family Benefit. On the other hand, if the insured individual outlives the coverage period and reaches age 100, the BC

Holder will receive 100% of the Face Value in a form of Maturity Benefit. By this time, the Benefit Certificate will automatically terminate.

Another important feature of the product is its Cash Value or what we also know as Living Benefit. The Cash Value is a guaranteed increasing living benefit of the Benefit Certificate. To further understand, the increase of the Cash Value happens on an annual basis with already an identified amount of increase. It means that even at the start of the effectivity of the Benefit Certificate, the BC Holder already knows how much the Cash Value of the Benefit Certificate will increase yearly as long as the contributions are paid before due date. The Cash Value also has a loanable amount which BC Holders may take out during times of emergency. The payment for the loan must be finished

anytime within 1 year with only a 10% interest. As the Cash Value grows annually, it will eventually reach 100% of the Benefit Certificate's Face Value which becomes the Maturity Benefit if the insured individual outlives the coverage period.

KC Family Protect Series is available in 4 payment terms: 10 years, 15 years, 20 years and whole life. Most BC Holders choose shorter payment terms because of the fear to commit to longer paying terms. However, it must also be understood that longer paying terms may provide BC Holders an opportunity to pay lower contributions. The number of years a BC Holder will pay and the amount of contribution must always be based on the income and payment capacity of the BC Holder. At the end of the day, the Benefit Certificate must be manageable to ensure continuous payment and must fit the needs of the

BC Holder.

Let us share with you an example: A 35-year old KC member with standard and acceptable risks for insurance applies for a KC Family Protect Series Plan with P1,000,000 Face Value. The brother knight has 4 options to pay:

10 years to pay: P37,610 per annum

15 years to pay: P27,320 per annum

20 years to pay: P22,090 per annum

Whole Life: P14,740 per annum

Analysis on this is: Two individuals of the same age choose to get the same life insurance product with the same Face Value and benefits may have different amounts of contribution depending on their chosen payment term. The one who chooses to pay longer will pay a more affordable amount of contribution. But the one who chooses to pay within a shorter number of

years will eventually enjoy a fully-paid life insurance plan.

Who may apply for KC Family Protect Series? We encourage every Brother Knight to start protecting their lives with life insurance coverage at a younger age. Life Insurance Plans are also considered as Income Continuation Fund because of its ability to provide income after the death of the insured individual. And, getting a Whole Life Permanent Plan like KC Family Protect Series is the best way to protect income because of its lifetime coverage feature. We are sure, you wouldn't want to leave your family behind with nothing.

The product is available for ages 1 to 80.

Get in touch now with the Fraternal Counselor nearest to you and know more about how you and your loved ones can get a KC Family Protect Series Plan. **(JDJavier)**

Ang Insurance at Kung Bakit Natin ito Kailangan

HINDI na bago sa pandinig ng mga Filipino ang konsepto ng insurance ngunit marami pa rin sa atin ang sarado ang kaisipan tungkol dito. Hindi tulad ng ibang bansa at kultura, ang Pilipinas ay nananatili pa rin mababa ang pagtanggap sa kahalagahan ng pagseseguro gamit ang mga insurance products na makikita sa merkado. Hindi agresibo ang pamahalaan sa pagbibigay ng mandato sa mga pamilya at indibidwal upang magseseguro. Ang pagkuha ng insurance ay nananatili pa ring isang desisyon na hangga't maaari ay isasawalang tabi. Sa kabila ng pagsulput ng mga naglalalaking insurance companies sa bansa, hindi pa rin sapat ang bilang ng mga Filipino ang nakaseseguro at ang buhay ay protektado.

Kaya naman, patuloy na inilalapat ng mga Life Insurance Advisors at Fraternal Counselors sa ating mga tahanan ang kahalagahan ng insurance. Ito ay upang masigurong katuparan ng ating mga pangarap para sa ating pamilya.

Ngunit bakit nga ba natin kailangan kumuha ng insurance? Bilang mga indibidwal, dapat ay naunawaan natin ang mga rason kung bakit kailangan nating kumuha ng insurance. At iyan ang tatalakayin natin ngayon sa artikulong ito. Narito ang ilang sa mga dahilan kung bakit importante ang insurance:

Una, maari tayong kumuha ng insurance para sa ating kalusugan, tinatawag ito na Health Insurance at makabibili nito mula sa mga Health Insurance Companies. Ito

yung insurance na pwede nating gamitin kapag tayo ay nagkasakit at kinailangang maospital. Pwede rin itong gamitin kapag tayo ay magpacheck-up lamang. Malaking tulong ito upang hindi mabawasan ang ating ipon sa oras ng pagkakaroon ng sakit. Kadalasan, ang health insurance ay ibinibigay ng kumpanya kung saan tayo nagtatrabaho. Ngunit para sa mga self-employed o walang trabaho, maaari ka ring makakuha ng health insurance para sa iyong sarili. Makipagugnayan lamang sa mga health insurance companies kung paano ito maaaring gawin.

Maaari rin naman tayong kumuha ng insurance bilang Income Continuation Fund or Protection Fund. Ito ay ang Life Insurance na inooffer ng mga Life Insurance companies at Mutual Benefit Associations tulad ng KCFAPI, na kung saan, kapag ang insured individual ay namatay, may pera na ibibigay ang Life Insurance provider sa mga beneficiaries na magagamit nila upang maipagpatuloy ang kanilang buhay. Income Continuation Fund ang tawag sa Life Insurance dahil kapag namatay ang breadwinner na siyang insured, yung income na naputol dahil sa kaniyang kamatayan ay maipagpapatuloy ng insurance. Mayroon ding mga life insurance products na may saving at investment components na maaari mong gamitin para sa mga medium term to long term goals o para sa mga emergencies sa iyong pamilya. Maganda na sa isang life insurance policy, insured ka na, may ipon ka

pa! Mayroon din naman mga life insurance plans na walang ipon at investment. Ang benepisyo nito ay pawang proteksiyon lamang na maaaring makuha kapag ang insured ay namatay sa loob ng coverage period.

Kasabay ng Health Insurance, importante na magkaroon tayo ng sarili nating Life Insurance habang tayo ay bata pa upang makuha natin ito sa mas murang halaga at habang tayo ay malakas pa at mataas pa ang ating insurability. Sigurado ako na ayaw mong dumating ang panahon na hindi ka na makakakuha ng insurance dahil may karamdaman ka na o masyado na itong mahal at hindi mo na kayang bayaran.

Ang insurance ay maaari rin gamitin bilang Educational Fund para sa ating mga anak. May mga life insurance products na may savings and investment component na maaaring gamitin sa pag-aaral ng anak pagdating ng kolehiyo. Kailangan lamang bigyan ng sapat na panahon ang savings at investment upang mas mamaximize natin ang returns nito. Kadalasan, bata pa lang ang anak ay kumukuha na ang mga magulang nito ng insurance upang makatulong sa kaniyang pag-aaral sa kolehiyo.

At siyempre, ang insurance ay maaari ring gamitin bilang Retirement Fund. Importante na bata pa lang tayo ay sinisumulan na natin ang pagseset-up ng ating Retirement Fund dahil habang mas bata tayo mas malaki ang potensiyal ng pagtaas ng ating Cash Value or Fund Value dahil

mahaba rin ang panahon na ibinibigay natin dito para sa kaniyang paglaki. Again, mas bata, mas mura ang insurance at mas maganda ang resulta ng iyong savings or investment component.

Maraming mga bagay ang maaaring iaddress ng insurance sa ating buhay dahil ang insurance ay ating nating maasahan sa oras ng pangangailangan. Huwag nating isipin na gastos lamang ang pagkuha ng insurance dahil ibinibigay nito ang pinakaimportanteng regalo natin para sa ating mga sarili - at ito ay ang Peace of Mind. Dahil gusto natin na unman ang sakuna o pagsubok na dumating sa ating buhay ay nakahanda tayong harapin ang mga ito sa tulong ng life insurance.

Para mas maunawaan natin ang mga benepisyo mula sa mga produkto ng life insurance, maari tayong makipagugnayan sa pinakamalapit na Fraternal Counselor sa ating lugar o tumawag sa tanggapan ng KCFAPI. Kung ikaw ay isang Brother Knight o kapamilya ng isang Brother Knight, hangad namin na ang unang-unang life insurance provider na iyong tatangkilikin ay ang KCFAPI, dahil bilang isang Mutual Benefit Association, maaari mong maseseguro ang proteksiyon ng iyong asawa, mga anak, at mga pinakamahal mong mga apo! Makakakuha ka ng mga benepisyo at dekalidad na serbisyo na sa KCFAPI mo lang mararanasan.

Ano pang hinihintay mo? Sigurado na mayroon kaming produkto na tamang-tama sa pangangailangan ninyo ng iyong pinakamahal na pamilya. **(JDJavier)**

Mental Health in Extraordinary Times

IT'S okay not to be okay.

There are lots of great events during this enhanced community quarantine, which could further cause frustration among the populace. Some might still feel uneasy right now—perhaps anxious, stressed or maybe scared amid the rising cases within the country. For ordinary people, the enhanced community quarantine isn't almost containing the virus, it's also about their family going hungry and this can be causing such a lot of strain and distress. The pandemic has begun to take a toll on their physical, mental and emotional health.

As much as we may have set a few mechanisms to deal with daily stressors, a crisis of this degree could overpower our usual coping mechanisms. Each individual has different levels of coping, it's important that we must always not judge people who could also be having a tough time to cope. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), it's typical to "feel sad, stressed, confused, scared or angry during a crisis" which it said was "generating stress within the population." Other than actually guarding one's body to stop infection from COVID-19, the public should also take serious effort to take care of their mental state during this period. And how do we just do that? Here are the expert-approved tips to keep your mental health in check amid crisis:

Minimize reading, listening and watching to news that causes distress

According to WHO, it's best to "look for information updates at particular times during the day, once or twice. The sudden and near-constant stream of story reports about an epidemic can cause anyone to feel anxious. Get the facts; not the rumors and half-truths." WHO, for instance, is accessible practically across all social media platforms. It's best to filter your social media feeds and try to find information only from trusted and reliable sources during this time of "infodemic".

Take care of yourself, too
You need to eat right, hydrate, sleep well, exercise, have proper hygiene, and take your vitamins and medicines.

Open and constant communication with family and friends is vital

If you feel lonely and isolated right now, chances are high that your loved ones are feeling the same way, too. We should take advantage of the time to speak with our loved ones especially those more emotionally unstable. Allow us to benefit this time to reconnect with our family and loved ones and our inner self in order to more effectively

manage our emotions and face this crisis stronger than we have ever been. The experts also recommended opening up to people who you trust, and being willing to raise help once you need it.

Mind over matter

Think positive. Act on things one can control. Make decisions. Plan. Draw up a schedule. One in every issue is the feeling of being powerless, that we can't control the case or situation. Doing things that we are able to control, drawing up plans, and doing things that we can manage on our own can help remedy these feelings.

Do enjoyable activities

Learn how to cook or bake and find out new recipes, watch your favorite movies or series, give longer time to play with your pets, do gardening and general cleaning or play some board games together with your family. You do not have to consider something very elaborate. You can do something simple that you and your family already enjoy!

Boost self awareness

Meditation and mindfulness, the psychological process of bringing one's awareness to things happening at the moment without judgement are among the most ways you can do.

By simply sitting in a quiet room and focusing on your breathing without dwelling for too long on your passing thoughts should be sufficient to exercise this!

Maintain well-known routines for youngsters

Provide engaging age suitable activities for children, including activities for their learning. Encourage them to keep on playing and socializing with others, even if only within the family. Children will notice adults' behaviors and emotions for cues on how to contract with their own emotions during difficult times.

Help yourself by helping others

Volunteering and donating in any way can do wonders for the soul. We can do it for our self-worth, and also to scale back our feelings of being helpless. Let our Bayanihan spirit come forth!

It is vital for us to be emphatic towards those that could also be feeling anxious or depressed. Please remember that whatever you're feeling, you're not alone and there's help available. If you or someone you know is in need of emotional assistance, you may visit the Facebook page of Hopeline PH. Their hotline numbers are now available 24/7. You can also check silakob.ph/help/ for the list of centers and institutions and their contact details.

We will get through this together. **(ASAlbaracin)**

ADVISORY

Dear Valued BC Holders, Fraternal Benefits Managers and Fraternal Counsellors:

President Duterte has declared the nation under a state of calamity by virtue of Presidential Proclamation 929 and the government has strictly implemented an Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) in the whole area of Luzon to prevent the spread of the COVID-19.

As such, the government has ordered for the suspension of operations of all non-essential companies, mass gatherings were prohibited, public transport operations were disallowed, people movement was restricted and social distancing was promoted to keep Filipinos safe in their homes. As such, KCFAPI has temporarily suspended the operations of its offices effective March 17, 2020 until the ECQ is lifted. Service offices in the Visayas and Mindanao were also closed due to localized quarantine imposed by their respective LGUs.

We value the trust you have bestowed on us but the directive limits our capability to offer you unparalleled, fraternal service. Although we are

unable, at this time, to operate normally due to restrictions beyond our control, we remain focused on providing you, our dear BC holders and Sales Force, support during these challenging times. We ask for your patience and understanding for any delays in servicing that you may encounter at this time. You may continue to make inquiries about benefit certificates through the following: contact numbers, email address, and social media accounts.

BC HOLDER PROTECTION

To ensure continued protection of BC Holders, the grace period has been extended from 31 days to 90 days for insurance contributions due from February 1 to March 31, 2020 and from 31 days to 60 days for insurance contributions due from April 1 to April 30, 2020.

COMMUNICATION

While work suspension continues in our operations, we have mobilized alternative work arrangements for employees so that we can continue to address your inquiries.

Our alternative communication channels such as the FB Messenger and

E-mail remain open. We encourage you to reach out to us through the following:

E-mail: kcfraternal@kofc.org.ph, beservices@kofc.org.ph, underwriting@kofc.org.ph, fbgkcfapi@yahoo.com, fmass@kofc.org.ph

FB Messenger: Kcfraternal Bro, KCFAPIIntramuros, fmas.kcfapi.5

Cell Phone Numbers:

(0947) 1579606 (BC Relations Office)
(0917) 8940841 (Cebu Service Office)
(0917) 1708850 (Davao Service Office)
(0917) 8979013 (CDO Service Office)
(0999) 3580008 (Underwriting Dept.)
(0917) 5219029 (FMAS)
(0917) 8902647 / (0999) 8494618 (FBG)

We are committed to serving you to the best of our capabilities but we also have to do our part in this fight against COVID-19 and abide with the government's precautionary measures for everyone's safety and welfare. With God's grace, we shall overcome this global health crisis.

Thank you for your understanding.

KCFAPI MANAGEMENT
April 18, 2020