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Let's Make It Happen!

Tinig Loyola

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CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

3 **Focus on the Family**
Joaquin C. Sumpaico III, S.J

FEATURES

4 **Ang Paghubog sa Pamilyang Filipino**
Msgr. Sabino A. Vengco, Jr.

6 **Ang Mapagkalingang Ama:Makabayan**
Joaquin W. Sumpaico, Jr.

9 **The Family Debacle**
Edwin T. Ocho, CP

11 **Fr. Ruben Tanseco on Family Ministry**
Jenny R. Fernandez

13 **The Christian Image of Human Fatherhood**
Ogie O. Magbanua, SSP

15 **"Let's Make It Happen" How Did It Happen?**
Adrian M. San Juan, DS

17 **Untying The Ties That Bind and Blind**
Mary Alexis M. Salinas

20 **Too Many A Life**
Eleazar D. Solas, CMF

24 **Children Will Listen**
Joaquin C. Sumpaico III, SJ

26 **A Word from the Student Council: TEAM!**
Florge Michael Z. Sy, SJ

27 **News: Bits and Pieces**
TL Staff

INSPIRATIONAL

29 **The Old Cherokee**
From the Net

30 **On Marriage and Children**
Kahlil Gibran

31 **Announcements**
TL Staff

Focus on the Family

When we had our brainstorming session at the start of the semester, we had to agree on a topic that was a pressing concern of the Church today. A suggestion was brought up for us to write about the scandals in the Church. But we thought that it was just joining the bandwagon that we saw pass by a few months past. Besides, we also asked ourselves, "Would this add more salt to the wound that is already raw?"



What also came up during the session was the coming 4th World Meeting of Families. We felt that we should address this matter too since not much has been written about it. And looking a few months in advance, it might be good to make headway as more and more people would inquire of the event.

We ended the meeting with the decision to focus on the family and its responsibility in the Church. We agreed to look for testimonies, teachings, and even poetry so as to present the topic in a manner that is well.

The collection of work seemed to have fallen in place only after the articles came in. Themes of responsibility and hope began to show its face as these posed as the common thread that bound the issue together.

Are these signs of the times? Maybe. But one thing is clear-there are yearnings coming from people that we have to pay attention to. There are a lot of hurts in our families that need healing. And probably, as God's people, we ought to discern of the direction of how to live our Christian lives in the light of these movements. We may have to assess how our families are in the light of the Christ's Good News.

Eventually, all of us are called to action in giving our own share of selfless love. Responding to the call will surely not be easy. However, with God's grace, it is for us to make it happen.⌘

Joaquin C. Sumpaico III, SJ
Editor-in-Chief

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Ang Paghubog sa Pamilyang Filipino

Msgr. Sabino A. Vengco, Jr.



Sa darating na Enero, 2003, sa pagdaraos ng Pandaigdigang Kapulungan ng mga Pamilya, bagamat hindi makapupunta ang Santo Papa, tiyak na magiging maigting pa rin ang talakayan hinggil sa gampanin ng pamilya sa ebanghelisasyon sa bagong milenyo. Alam natin na malaki at walang kapantay ang papel ng pamilya sa lipunan at sa Iglesiya. Subalit isang panaginip lamang at suntok sa buwan ang anumang mapag-usapan sa alinmang pulong hangga't hindi natin nakukuhang pagtulung-tulungang hubugin, halimbawa dito sa Filipinas, ang pamilyang Filipino.

Malinaw na kailangang matauhang iwanan ng mga Filipino ang "politics of interests," ang kanya-kanyang pamumulitika para sa kanya-kanyang interes at kapakanan lamang, kung saan ang mga pulitiko ay propesyunal na "fixers" at tagapamagitan para sa iba't-ibang pansariling layunin. Paano natin itatakwil ang estilong ito ng lipunan na palakasan ano't laging agrabyado ang mga dukha't mahina? Paano kaya natin matututuhan ang " politics of the nation," kung saan pinangingibabawan ng kapakanan ng buong bansa ang makikitid na interes ng mga grupo at indibidwal, at alinsunod sa batas ang walang-kinikilalang pamamalakad ng pamahalaan, at mga tunay na lingkod-bayan ang mga pulitiko?

Gayundin naman, inaamin ng *Pangalawang Konsilyo Plenaryo ng Filipinas* (Acts and Decrees, nn.8-33) ang malaking suliranin ng Santa Iglesiya sa ating kapuluan sa laganap na kawalan ng kaalaman at pormasyon ng mga tao sa pananampalataya. Kaya nga sa pangalan lamang Katolikong Kristiyano ang karamihan sa mga Filipino. Ano't halos hindi masisisi ang mga taon sa kanilang kawalan ng pakikialam at pakikibahagi sa buhay at misyon ng Santa Iglesiya. Kaakibat nito ang nakapanlulumong matinding kakulangan natin ng mga pari at naglilingkod sa Simbahan. Paano natin maitataguyod ang ebanghelisasyon dito sa Filipinas na siyang pangunahing layunin ng Iglesiya Katolika sa bagong milenyo? Bakit kaya titiguk-tiguk ang pagtatatag at takbo ng mga BEC na siyang inakalang paraan ng pagbibigay-sigla sa ating sambayanan?

Ang pandayan ng mamamayang Filipino ay ang pamilya; ang unang paaralan ng kabataang Filipino ay ang tahanan. Sa pamilya tutuhanang natututuhan ng murang isip ang paggalang sa kapwa, pagpapahalaga sa bawat tao, pagsunod, pananagutan, pakikipagtulungan, pagiging makatotohanan,

pagsasakripisyo, katarungan at kapayapaan. Sa pamilya dapat matutuhan ninuman na nangunguna ang kapakanan ng lahat. Sa pamilya napupulot ang bayanihan at pagpapakabayani, ang kaugalian at tradisyon ng lahi. Ganuondin, sa pamilya inihahanda ang sumasampalatayang Filipino. Duon niya unang nakikilala ang Diyos, natutuhang magdasal, at nakakayang gawin ang mabuti't iwasan ang masama. Sa pamilya unang nararanasan ninuman na hindi ginagawa sa iba ang ayaw mong ginagawa sa iyo. Sa pamilya nabibihasa ang tao sa pagmamahal at sa pagpapatawad.

Kung ang pamilyang Filipino ay ang pamilyang nararapat at inaakala, mangyayari ang mga pinagsasabi natin. Kaya ang payo ng Santo Papa sa mga Kristiyano sa kanyang Liham Apostoliko *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (n.15) na upang mapangatawanan natin ang ating gampanin sa ikatatlong mileniyo, siguraduhin muna natin kung sino at ano tayo, bago tayo kumilos at gumawa. *Agere sequitur esse.* Ang pagkilos at pagganap ay batay sa pag-iral at matibay na kasarilihan. "Pamilya magpakatotoo ka, tiyakin mong ikaw ay kung ano dapat!"- ito ang tumataginting na paalala at hamon ni Juan Pablo II sa kanyang Pangangaral Apostoliko *Familiaris Consortio* (n.17) hinggil sa gampanin ng pamilyang Kristiyano sa makabagong daigdig. Totoong napakahalaga ang papel ng pamilya sa ating lipunan at sa Iglesiya, kung magiging totoo lamang ang pamilya sa sarili nito. Ano't kung wala ang pamilyang iyon, pilay at dispalinghado ang lipunan at sabog naman at walang malalim na kapit ang Iglesiya.

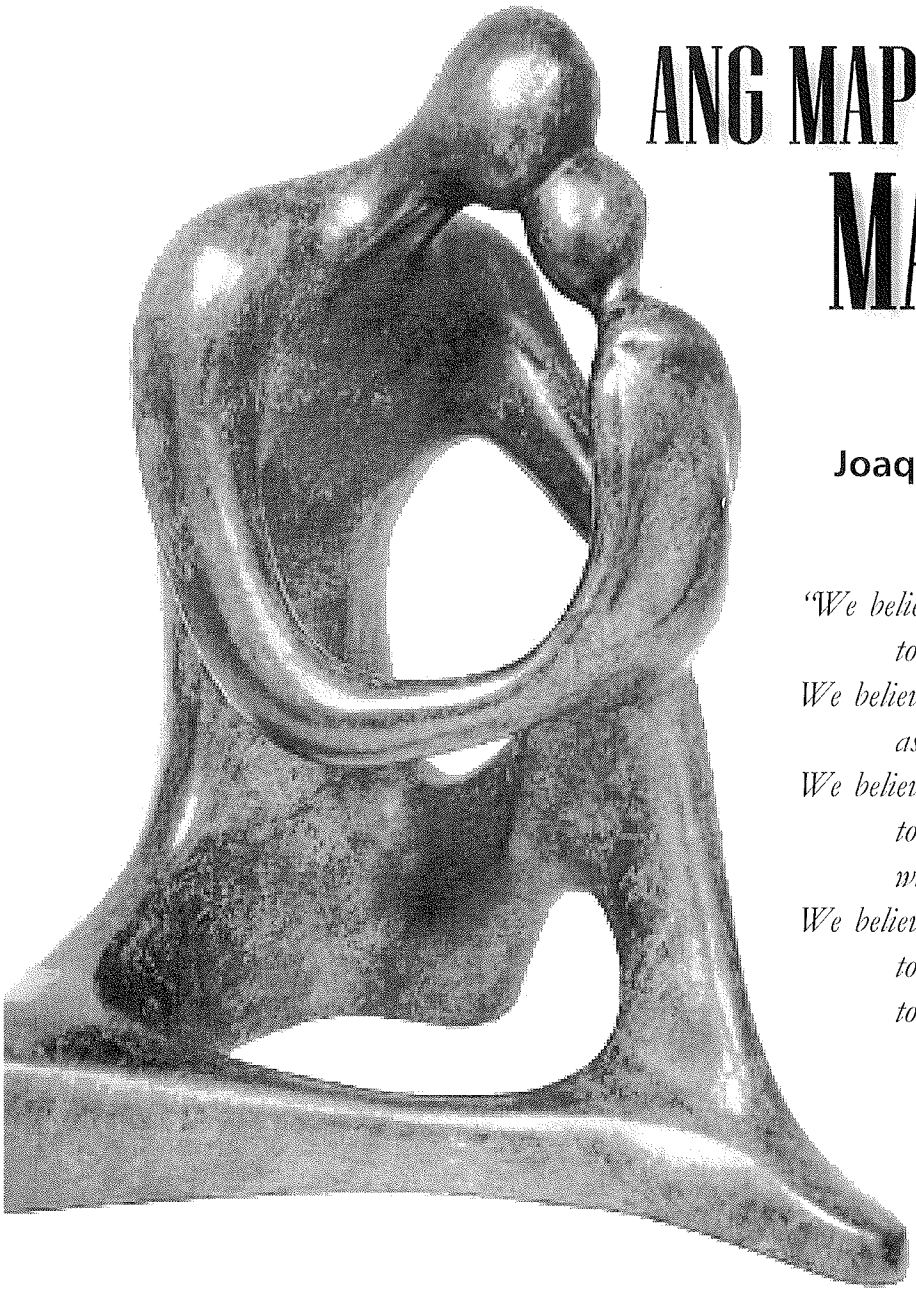
Isang pangunahing layunin ng Santa Iglesiya samakutuwid ang paghubog sa pamilyang Kristiyano. Hindi sapat na ipagtanggol lamang ang pamilya laban sa mga kaaway nito, o bagabagin ang pamahalaan na tangkilikin ito. Kailangang-kailangan ang pagbibigay kapangyarihan *(empowerment)* sa pamilya sa pamamagitan ng paghutok at pagpanday dito ayon sa pananampalatayang Kristiyano. Edukasyon at ebanghelisasyon ang di-maipagpapalibang gampanin natin para sa pamilya, upang magampanan naman ng pamilya ang papel niya sa lipunan at sa Iglesiya. Ang labanan ang mga pagtutulak sa diborsiyo o aborsiyon o kontrasepsiyon o *premarital sex* ay hindi pa ang pinakapuso ng apostolado ng pamilya; malayo pa ito sa pagsisilbing maitayo ang pamilya bilang isang ugnayan at komunyon ng pagmamahalan bilang paglilingkod sa buhay, at upang makapakibahagi sa hiwaga at misyon ng Iglesiya at sumali sa pagbabago ng lipunan, gaya ng nililinaw sa *Familiaris Consortio.*



Lalo't higit na kailangan ng pamilyang Filipino ang paghubog. Upang maging nagtataguyod ng ebanghelisasyon sa ating bayan, dapat munang maging ebanghelisado ang pamilyang Filipino. Ang Kapulungan ng mga Obispo ng Filipinas sa ika-20 anibersaryo ng *Familiaris Consortio* ay nagpauna sa pagsasabing "nakakakita tayo ng baluktot sa pahalaga *(values)* sa pamilyang Filipino. Halimbawa na, bagamat kinikilala natin ang pagiging malapit ng mga kasapi ng pamilya, kailangan naman nating itama ang mentalidad ng 'saradong pamilya', na ginagawang diyos-diyusan ang pamilya at pinag-aalayan ng kabutihan ng lahat. Ang diyos-diyusang ito ang sanhi ng katiwalian at kabulukan sa pagtutulak sa ilang opisyal na unahin pa ang pagpapayaman sa kanilang mga pamilya sa halip na itaguyod ang kapakanan ng lahat. Sa totoo, dapat ang pamilya ang unang paaralan ng katapatan at katarungan, ng kapayapaan at pagmamahal."

Hindi sapat na Filipino ang ating pamilya; kailangan itong maging Kristiyano. Hindi pa sapat ang espirituwalidad na Filipino; kailangan pa nito ang Ebanghelyo. Si Jesu-Kristo ang ating programa nuon at ngayon, tulad ng wika ni Juan Pablo II sa *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (n.29). Sa mga inilista ng Papa na dapat pagtuunan natin ng pansin upang maging totoo ngang Kristiyano, itampok natin ang pakikinig sa Salita ng Diyos (n.39). Kung ang tahanan ay magiging isang paaralan ng pagdarasal, at kung ang biyaya ng Diyos at ang Eukaristiya ay kikilalanin at uunahin, dapat na magkaruon ng lalong masugid na pakikinig sa Salita ng Diyos. At kung mayroong kulang na kulang ang Filipinong Katoliko, ito ang pagtanggap sa Salita ng buhay. Kung mayroong nagbibigay-laman sa ebanghelisasyon, ito ang pagpapahayag lalo pa ng Salita. Samakatuwid kung mayroong makalililok sa pamilyang Filipino at makapagbibigay dito ng mga tunay na yaman *(values)* ng Ebanghelyo ito ang matalim na balaraw ng Salita ng Diyos.

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ANG MAPAGKALINGANG AMA: MAKABAYAN

Joaquin W. Sumpaico, Jr.

"We believe that by our love we bear witness
to Christ's love for all men.
We believe that we are meant for each other
as a sign of Christ's love.
We believe that we are called
to build a human family of love
with our children and in our immediate society.
We believe that we are meant
to give ourselves and our children
to the service of God and God's poor."

Marital Vows of Jojo & Ditsy
Cenacle Retreat House Chapel
December 8, 1970

Ang mga paniniwala at mga panatang ito ay binanggit naming mag-asawa noong kami'y ikinasal ng ika-8 ng Disyembre 1970, mahigit nang 31 taon ang nakalilipas. Bayaan ninyong ituon ko ang ating pansin sa aming huling panata. "Kami ay naniniwala na kami'y sinadyang mag-alay ng mga sarili at ng aming mga anak sa paglilingkod sa Diyos at sa kanyang mga maralita."

Nagkita po kami ng aking kabiyak sa isang piket line habang kami ay nagsasagawa ng isang demonstrasyon sa harap ng San Miguel Pro Cathedral na malapit sa Palasyo ng Malacañang noong 1969 bilang mga kasapi ng *Laymen's Association for Post Vatican II Reforms* o tinawag na LAPVIIR. Siya po ay isang guro ng *Kuang Chi* na ngayon ay kilala sa pangalang *Xavier School* habang ako naman po ay isang seminarista ng San Jose Seminary. Pagkatapos po ng apat sa walong araw ng aming pagpipiket at pakikipaglaban para sa aming layunin, ang ilan sa amin ay nagkaroon at nagdulot ng panahon sa pagtulong sa *Correctional Institution for Women* sa Mandaluyong at sa National Bilibid Prisons sa Muntinlupa. Dito ko napansin ang mga katangian ng aking asawa, ang kanyang mga paniniwala at paninindigan. Higit sa lahat namalas at nagustuhan ko ang kanyang mga pinahahalagahan sa buhay. Ang pagiging maka-Diyos at debosyon sa Inang

Birhen, ang pagiging makabayan, ang pagkalinga sa mga salat sa buhay, ang pagiging tapat sa kanyang mga paninindigan, ang kakayanang maging babad, at ang mamuhay sa isang payak na paraan. At sa palagay ko'y tugma naman ang mga ito sa akin ring mga pinapapahalagahan sa buhay. Papalapit na po noon ang aking ordinasyon na isasabay sa pagbisita ng Santo Papa Pablo VI noong Nobiyembre 1970. Napagisip-isip ko at pinagdasalan din na kailangan kong magpasya kung ako ay magpapatuloy bilang isang pari o kaya'y subukang maging isang ama. Dahil sa kilala ko ang aking sarili, di naglao'y, nagpaalam ako sa aking mga *superior* at *spiritual father* upang magsabatikal. Ito'y anim na buwan bago ako maitakdang ordinahan bilang isang pari. Sa pagpapaalam na ito, alam kong hindi na ako muling babalik sa seminaryo. Hindi rin naman nagtagal, kami na aking mahal sa buhay ay nagpakasal noon ngang ika-8 ng Disyembre 1970.

> *"Dumating ang EDSA III at ito para sa amin ay nagbigay ng isang maliwanag na mensahe. Namulat na naman ang aming damdamin sa pangangailangan ng mga maralita."*

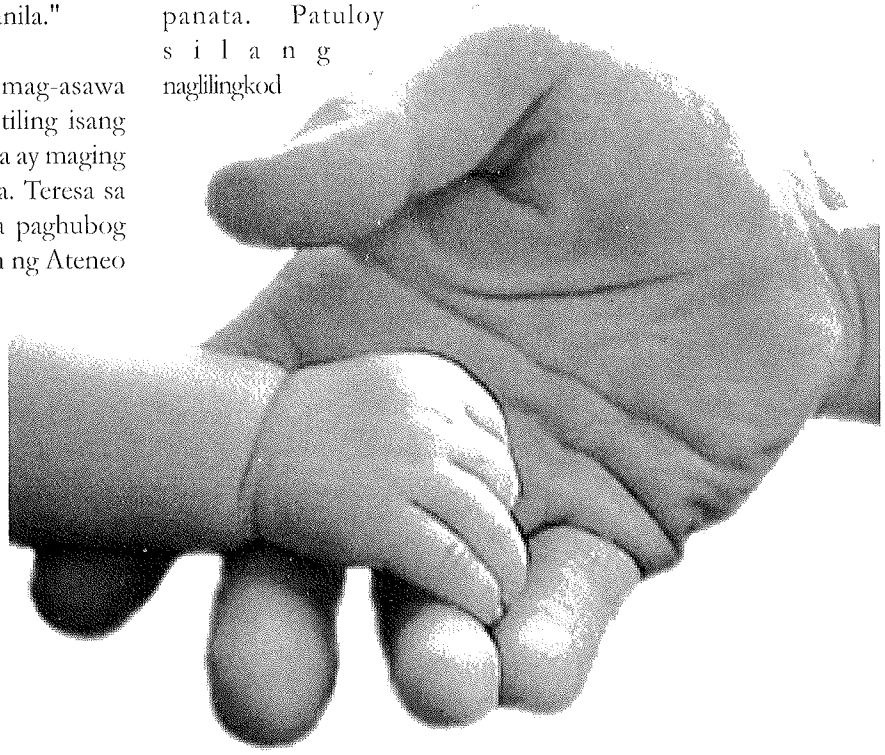
Biniyayaan kami ng apat na anak. Ang panganay ay babae na sinundan ng tatlong lalaki. Natatandaan ko pa noon na sa unang pagkakataon kong mahawakan, mahalikan at yakapin ang aking mga anak, sila ay aking itinaas sa Panginoon habang aking dinarasal, "Panginoon, ipinagkaloob Mo sa amin ang sanggol na ito, iniaalay naming siyang muli sa Inyo. Tulungan po Ninyo kaming maging mga mabuting magulang para sa kanila."

Noong una pa man, napagpasiyahan naming mag-asawa ang uri ng aming magiging buhay. Siya ay mananatiling isang tagahubog ng kabataan bilang isang guro hanggang siya ay maging isang assistant principal ng Mataas na paaralan ng Sta. Teresa sa Quezon City. Ngayon siya ay tumutulong pa rin sa paghubog ng kabataan bilang isang administrador sa Pamantasan ng Ateneo de Manila. Napagpasiyahan din namin na ako naman ay magsusumikap bumuhay ng aming pamilya sa pamamagitan ng pagtatrabaho sa pribadong korporasyon.

Habang sila ay lumalaki, hindi naman kami nakalimot sa panata namin sa isa't isa. Kami ay nagkaroon ng pagkakataong makapaglingkod at tumulong sa isang *resettlement site* para sa mahihirap na dating naninirahan sa tabi ng riles sa South Superhighway sa Barangay Langgam, San Pedro, Laguna. Kami ay nakipag-ugnayan upang sila ay magkaroon ng kaalaman sa paghahanapbuhay. Sila ay ginabayan naming manatili sa pagtitiwala sa Diyos sa pamamagitan ng pagdarasal at *faith sharing*. Upang madagdagan din ang kanilang kinikita, sila ay nag-aral gumawa ng tinapa na kanilang inilalako sa kanilang komunidad.

Napasama rin kami sa isang maliit na grupo na nais sagutin ang hamon ni Fr. Ruben Tanseco, S.J. na gumawa ng isang programang ayon sa *Marriage Encounter* ngunit para sa mga magkasintahang nagbabalak mag-asawa. Siyempre pa, dahil si Father Ruben ang aming tagagabay, ang grupong ito ay binansagan naming "Rubenites". Naitatag po ng grupong ito ang *Discovery Weekend*, isang programang nasa ika 23 taon na. Kami ng aking kabiyak ay ganoon na ring katagal naglilingkod sa *Discovery Weekend*. Noong una bilang *couple sharer, administrative couple,* hanggang maging *lay chaplain* at tagapamuno bilang *Chaircouple* ng *Discovery Weekend Foundation*. Ngayon po ang *Discovery Weekend* ay hindi lamang nasa Maynila. Ito ay nakaabot na rin sa Cebu. Hindi maglalaon ang programang ito ay makararating din sa Kamindanawan.

At habang ang panahon ay lumilipas, napansin namin na ang mga pinagkakaabalahan ng aming mga anak ay hindi rin nalalayo sa aming panata. Patuloy silang naglilingkod



sa Diyos at bayan sa kanilang mga larangang bilang doktor, seminarista, negosyante, at guro. Sa kanilang mga piniling gawain, malaki rin ang kinalaman ng pagpapahalaga sa mga nangangailangan.

Kamakailan, dumating ang EDSA III at ito para sa amin ay nagbigay ng isang maliwanag na mensahe. Namulat na naman ang aming damdamin sa pangangailangan ng mga maralita. Lalo na nagibayo ang aming pagnanasang makatulong nang aming mabasa sa pahayagan, *Philippine Daily Inquirer,* ang isang resulta ng isang pananaliksik sa kinakain ng pinakamahirap. Ito ang tinaguriang *Classes D (poor)* at *Classes E (very poor)* na bumubuo ng 45% at 20% ng ating lipunan. Sa kabuuan ito ay umaabot sa 65%. Ito ay nalathala noong ika-7 ng Sityembre 2000. Bayaan ninyong ito ay aking basahin.

"Unang araw: Kape na inilagay sa isang mangkok na kanin.

Pangalawang araw: Toyo inihalo sa isang mangkok na kanin.

Pangatlong araw: Soft drinks na inihalo sa isang mangkok na kanin.

Pangapat na araw: Asukal na pula inihalo sa isang mangkok na mainit na kanin.

Panglimang araw: Gamit na mantika ng baboy na inihalo sa isang mangkok na kanin.

Panganim na araw: Asin na ibinudbod sa kanin.

Pangpitong araw: Araw para sa tunay na ulam."



Ulam ng maralita:
Kape na inilagay sa isang mangkok na kanin.

Ang buhay ng maralita ay masasabing isang kahig, isang tuka. Ngunit hindi ba ito ang mahihirap na tinutukoy ni Hesukristo? Hindi na tayo maaaring magbulag-bulagan sa kanilang katayuan. Kapag hindi natin sila pinaglaanan ng pansin, mas masahol pa sa EDSA III ang ating maaaring harapin. Nagpagkasunduan naming mag-asawa na muling magkaloob ng aming panahon sa pagbubuo ng aming maliit na sambayanan sa *Loyola Heights*, lalong-lalo na para sa mahihirap.

Noong Oktubre ng nakaraang taon, nagsimula akong magbawas ng mga pinagkakaabalahan. Hindi na muli akong tumakbo bilang isang opisyal ng *Personnel Management Association of the Philippines,* kahit na hinimok ako ng ilan na tumakbo bilang Pangulo nito. Napagpasiyahan din namin na magbigay daan sa mga mas nakababatang pamunuan at hindi na rin kami nagpahalal bilang kasapi ng *Board of Directors* ng aming apostoladong *Discovery Weekend.* Itinuon namin ang aming kakayanan sa pagpapalakas ng *Family Life* sa aming parokya ng *Our Lady of Pentecost.* Sinubukan naming magkaroon ng mahusay na ugnayan ang mga mayroon at salat sa aming sambayanan, at makahanap ng pagkakabuhayan ang maralita.

Hindi ako magiging makatotohanan kung hindi ko aaminin na gusto rin naman naming puspusang madama ang pagiging lolo at lola ng aming unang apo. Noong pagpasok ng taong 2002, lumapit sa amin ang aming mahal na kura paroko at sinabing bubuwagin niya ang *steering committee* at *task forces* at bubuo siya ng isang *Parish Pastoral Council.* Hiniling niya na ang Konseho Pastoral ng aming Parokya ng Inang Birhen ng Pentekostes ay aming pamunuan bilang mag-asawa. Ito ay aming pinagdasalan at hindi nahindian. Alam naming mahirap ito ngunit ang pasanin ay lubhang gagaan sapagkat kasama namin Siya sa lahat ng oras.

Sa pagbabalik tanaw sa mga nakaraang buwan, siguro ay iniayos ng Diyos ng kaunti ang aming buhay at pinagkakaabalahan upang magkaroon ng panahon para magampanan ang isang iniatang sa aming balikat.

Sa pagbabalik tanaw ay natagpuan namin ang maaaring dahilan sa piniling landas ng buhay ng aming mga anak. Ang pagtugon sa tawag ng Diyos na maglingkod sa Kanya at sa kanyang maralita.

Hindi ba't ito ay isang patotoo at pagsasabuhay ng aming panata sa isa't isa nang kami ay ikinasal mahigit ng 31 taon ngayon? Isang panatang nananariwa at mahigpit na niyayakap.

OO, Panginoon, "Kami ay naniniwala na kami'y sinadyang mag-alay ng mga sarili at ng aming mga anak sa paglilingkod sa Iyo at sa Iyong mga maralita." Sa iyong tawag, O Panginoon, kami ay tutugon. ⌘

The Family Debacle: When Family Ceases To Be

Edwin T. Ocho, CP

The founding of a family is basic to the flourishing of a society. A family provides a backdrop where basic values like love and compassion, propriety and truth, word and honor, loyalty and faithfulness, are first learned. One's family is considered the center of one's life, primary support and source of moral strength.

However, the situation of most of the present Filipino families may challenge these high sounding phrases. What if a family stops to be the center where one's support system emanates? What if a family fails to provide an environment of basic learning and growth? What if a family breaks down? Would there be a society and an institution called church? What if a family ceases to be?

Inventory Of Threats

A. Economic Crisis

This colossal factor remains the biggest threat for a family to remain intact. There's no need for me to search for a concrete proof of this in a far-flung barrio or among the slum-dwellers. Right in my very own family, I witnessed the wrath this economic crisis has wrought. My father used to go to Manila in search of greener pastures. We were left in the province with the rest of my siblings and my lone mother. We missed a father-image. I could feel the pinch of how was it to be separated from my father. My *"Tatay"* inasmuch as he wanted to spare us from hardships, wasn't able to land a high paying job. My *"Nanay"* was left with no choice but to toil with the grandest intention of rearing us up in the best way she could. The bitter scenario was that we were left all alone at home. To augment the lack of financial and material resources, we, the children ended up being distributed to my aunts and uncles. It saddened me a lot. How I wished we could all be together. I was melancholic. I missed home.

What if a family ceases to be? Would there be a society and an institution called Church?

Economic crisis is forcing families to live apart for long periods of time. Families are compelled to be contented and live with shattered hopes. This crisis has brought with it numerous repercussions.

B. Migration

The economic crisis also pushes families to the verge of disintegration. A breadwinner seeks work in other countries for years at a time in the hope of saving up enough money to send home. This results in a prolonged separation and lack of communication. In the name of the mighty dollar, migration is wreaking havoc at the most prized patrimony, the family. Homes are shattered. I know of a family where the father was working as a seaman and the mother was a domestic helper in Qatar. Their daughter, who was left behind, was raped by an uncle. Their son, in search of a father figure, was molested by a priest who was supposed to be his mentor. Other parents who work abroad are likewise shocked that their children at home have become drug addicts and delinquents.

C. Decline Of Morality

The effect of the economic crisis is all encompassing. Many in our country are left homeless and jobless. Many children are left to be malnourished and out of school. When this scenario takes place, moral decline is crouching at the door of each family. Young people are prone to exploitation by thugs who lure them into a life of petty crimes, begging, prostitution and promiscuity. Abortions are rampant - from the back alleys of poor communities to some clinics close to schools. A person with an empty stomach eventually loses his/her respect for authority and a sense of the divine. She is more inclined to be a robber, a drug user or pusher or a potential kidnapper. In these quandaries, family values are lost in the wind.

D. Imprudent Legislation

The government should always uphold the family as the foundation of the nation. It must actively promote its total development. Failure to act or being apathetic in this regard may dissipate families.

The issue of divorce has an upper hand. While legal separation leaves the door open for reconciliation, divorce does not contemplate reunion because it allows remarriage. The Alliance for the Family Foundations Philippines, Inc., posits that when bills on divorce (by Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, Senate Bill 782, Rep. Bella Angara-Castillo, House Bill 878 and Rep. Manuel Ortega, House Bill 6993) are promulgated into law, its consequential ghost would loom, damaging irrevocably the institution of marriage and cause disastrous consequences to the family. Divorce legislation abolishes the right to life-long indissoluble marriages by making "for life" become "as long as." However, some feminists buy the idea of divorce on the ground that it is advantageous to women. Yet, divorce is not the solution to failed marriages. When its mentality creeps in, it threatens the stability of family life.

Another aspect to be considered is the government's fixation with overseas employment. The program of exporting cheap labor has not taken into account its long-range implication and social costs. The government is pleased to announce that this year, remittances of our labor force working abroad surged into billions of dollars. These workers shoulder the burden of paying foreign debt. Coupled with the corruption that is present in our land, they come at the expense of many politicians who amass questionable wealth and squander public funds in pork barrel.

The Domino Effect

Due to the agony of feeding many mouths with meager resources, internal conflict within the family emerges. One of these conflicts is wife battering. Husbands are preoccupied with the pain of helplessness. Patience grows thin and if wives oftentimes remind husbands of their obligations, they end up being battered. Furthermore, alcoholism is not far in this conflict. In this scenario, their offspring suffer most. Gradually, the place called home is broken.

When Family Ceases To Be

There are many problems besetting Filipino families. All these aberrations continue to haunt and hurt the groping family. It will continue to be so as long as family empowerment remains in the parchment paper devoid of meaning. When a family is crippled by these threats, there's no way for it to continue existing. It would, by no choice, crawl on its belly and eat the dust of the earth. In the long run, a family ceases to be and what remains are the individuals caught between "the devil and the deep blue sea," undecidedly willing to continue living a meaningless life.

A grim picture sets in. When families cease to be, society will also cease to be and the church will also cease to be.

Conclusion

The threats that confront Filipino families are enormous and multi-faceted. The situation has been cruel, alienating and indeed, overwhelming. The family continues to be buffeted with so many lies. Families in general and Filipino families in particular must use, employing Francisco Tatad's term, a superabundance of truth to drown those lies. Families need to meet the assaults courageously and frontally, joined by their religious and political leaders. Just as the enemy has a battle plan, families too must have a battle plan. Families must be empowered. Members of the family especially the young ones must not be token observers or mere spectators but full participants and stakeholders in the empowerment process. If this is not done, families are doomed to fighting tomorrow's battle using yesterday's tools and warriors.

The Filipino family has inner strength and fighting spirit. This has been proven many times. The Filipino family is naturally helpful, dynamic and creative in confronting difficult situations. *Bayanihan* or collective action is noteworthy. Moreover, the Filipino family is also naturally silent, but is ready to fight for their rights when necessary. These are but some of the positive characteristics of the Filipino family where empowerment takes place. Upholding traditional values in the family may be the answer to the question of family breakdown.

Finally, we are, once again, to embrace the truth which the greatest philosophies and religions of the world have taught: that a person who is born and grows in full maturity within the human family is the only creature called to a life of eternal happiness with God. ⌘

Fr. Ruben Tanseco *On Family Ministry*

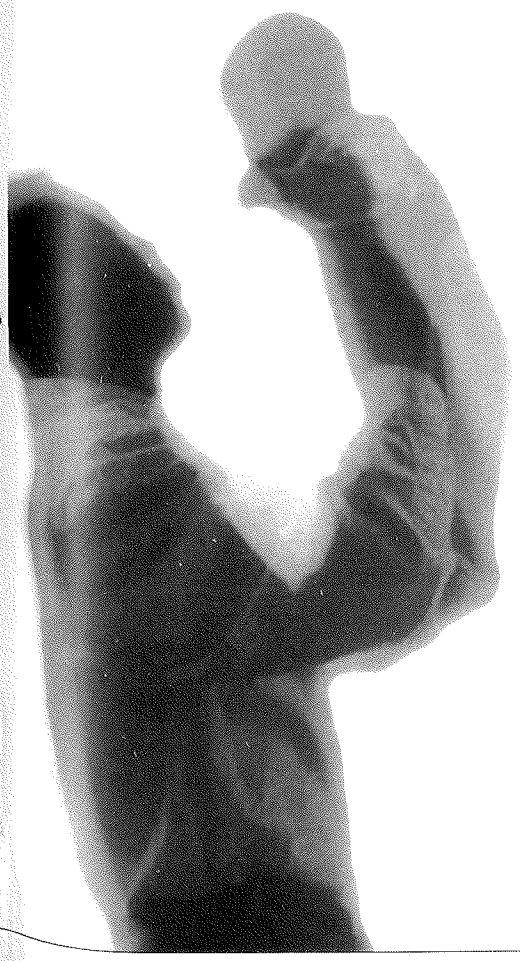
Jenny R. Fernandez

(Tinig Loyola staffer, Jenny R. Fernandez, interviewed Fr. Ruben Tanseco, SJ, founder of the Center of the Family Ministries (CEFAM), about the present situation of Family Ministry in our nation and culture. This is how the interview went.)

1. How did the idea of a center for family ministry evolve?

Since I came back from special studies I was already in Family Ministry. This was my particular ministry from the very beginning long before Cefam evolved. I introduced Marriage Encounter in the Philippines, Marriage and Family Encounter, Discovery Weekend, etc.

2. How did you envision a counseling ministry to be contextualized in a Filipino culture (a culture that is often inhibited in freely expressing oneself in most aspects of family life and that which prefers to isolate within the home, family matters and concerns)?



My special training is in Pastoral Counseling - counseling and spirituality. The most important thing is the introduction of the method of "dialogue" in the Marriage Encounter. This isn't something intercultural, it's simply being human to be able to listen to each other. It's a method of communication in dialogue that should have been, from the very beginning, intercultural, inter-racial, and humanistic, not necessarily Filipino. This means that our culture is behind in terms of the *humanistic skills of communication in dialogue.* We were not able to see this professionalized earlier on in our Filipino culture so I tried to popularize it. For those who can appreciate and do this, especially among those of the poor, it makes a lot of difference in their lives particularly with the men.

3. In line with your mission statement to empower the Filipino family to become a community of love, justice, and peace, would you claim that you have surpassed your goals and reached the level of celebration?

What celebration?... we are just beginning. Despite our many graduates both from here and other Asian countries, so many people have not yet been reached. Now, government agencies, specifically employees of DTI, are involving Cefam for "Parenting Education" seminars. They want us to reach all 13 regions of the country but we could not because of our lack for full time instructors. Another is a project of the DSWD to distribute to all regions of the Philippines a printed manual written with the help of Cefam titled "Marriage Counseling Service Manual".

Our most important activity in Cefam is the *multiplication of competence* through teaching others to be competent, to be professional counselors, and to be with Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry. We cannot reach the point of celebration or have surpassed our goals because ours is a continuing effort, what we have accomplished is just a "drop in bucket"; the expansion possibilities are open-ended as far as services are concerned.

Our services are not limited to the A and B groups alone but to all levels of society. We also have the ***Daluyan*** project for the poor. ***DALUYAN*** is a program under Cefam tasked to assist the Filipino Family to carry out its role as domestic Church, the Family's primary task under the Universal Church of Christ. As a subsidiary of a Jesuit Institution, *Daluyan* seeks to promote Ignatian Spirituality among Filipino families, especially the poor. Concretely, *Daluyan* will carry out its mission through various programs classified as Word, Worship, Works and Research. This is a project done in collaboration with Jesuit Scholastics. Currently, they are in-charge of the formation of our scholars in Montalban, Calauis, and Payatas.

Our goal of building the Church through building the family depends on how the Filipino male will grow into maturity in having a family.



4. With the many pressing challenges to uphold the value of family in society, what is your message to the Church of today?

One message is the focus of Cefam's ministry in a psycho-spiritual approach which is inter-faith, inter-racial, and inter-cultural rather the Roman Catholic alone. In this context, our most appreciative students come from different religions over the years. This brings us to the letter I recently received from one of my current students named Marianita Jose who is a Buddhist. The following are excerpts of Marianita's letter...

Dearest Fr. Tanseco,

I was moved by my soul to write you this letter...upon hearing about your illness and surgery, I prayed to God to give me a chance to show Fr. Tanseco that "I will become an abundant fruit of a seed from his tree"...make Fr. Tanseco live! Give him another chance for he is a great priest with a mission.
I prayed and believed that God will not forsake me and make you well. I believe in the power of God residing in my heart (makes me sound like a Catholic but I am a Buddhist).
Yes Father, you made me find my path towards the truthfulness of God. You changed my life, my belief about forgiveness, and my heart opened up with love for everyone. I was able to forgive everyone who have done me wrong in the past. My family now savors the happiness of your creating a new person in me. You are indeed an instrument of God.

Your student,
Nitz Jose

Another message is an appeal to the Filipino male on their role as fathers. In this connection, I was inspired by the Archdiocese of Manila to accept an invitation to conduct the Festival of Fathers last March 2002 for 1,500 fathers. Cefam was the organizing committee together with the FTC (Federation of Transparochial Communities), and MEFP (Marriage Encounter of the Philippines). The module for this was prepared by Cefam and the main thrust of this project is to prepare for the Fourth World Meeting of Families in Manila for 2003. Many groups are echoing this in their parishes so we conducted a one-day training of trainors, many of whom are fathers, for its implementation in their own parishes.

5. Do you believe and agree that we can build the Church through building the family?

Definitely, I agree in this but I will not change my challenge that a lot of this will depend on how the Filipino male will grow into maturity in having a family. This is a greater challenge for we are very far from this since we are still very *matriarchal* in the family set-up of today. We need to really empower the Filipino male to be a true head of the home. ⌘

The Christian Image of Human Fatherhood

Ogie O. Magbanua, SSP

The following was printed in Homelife last July.

The family normally hides under the security of the father most especially when problems are attacking from all sides. This is because the father is usually the symbol of strength, courage, and authority. This is quite obvious in children.

Whenever their favorite toys are broken, they are rest assured that daddy can fix them. Or just when somebody hurts them, they go to their father to give the bully a taste of his own medicine. A sensible father however, does not bully another man's child especially when the child's father is much bigger than he is. Sensibility demands not to look for trouble beyond one's own household.

On the other hand, these children can easily be hurt when their fathers discipline them. They seem to become confused when their fathers tell them they love them while reprimanding them. In their simple deductions, affection and pain are irreconcilable. They may realize however that as they grow older such disciplines are meant to make them better persons.

But what if a child's father is a drunkard who beats his children unreasonably? What if he is a jobless, excessive gambler who prefers to bet his wife's savings allocated for the children's matriculation fees? Faced with human sufferings and violence, the adult often asks, "If God is full of love, why is He allowing all these pains and sufferings?" Note that the question is no different from that of a child who cannot reconcile love and pain at the same time. Although childish, such experience remains valid.



The family normally hides under the security of the father. This is because the father is usually the symbol of strength, courage, and authority.

Is there a way out of these negative experiences?

In his letter on the opening of the *Festival of Conference on God the Father,* Pope John Paul II invites everyone to enter into a holy pilgrimage of authentic conversion. During such pilgrimage by the grace of God and by the desire for authentic conversion, a change of heart must take place. It is a kind of conversion that seeks to realize the human father's obligation as he exemplifies his "likeness to God" by personifying the qualities that are more God-like *(Father of Jesus, Father of the Church of the Poor: Homilies, Conferences and Addresses at the Festival of Conferences on God the Father, 104).*

Likewise, the *Conference* outlines these Christian qualities of human fatherhood in the family:



A good Christian father provides values as well that are life-giving more than the material security he brings. He molds his loved ones to be good persons by being an exemplary person himself.

A Christian father must be a life-giver and a good provider

Many fathers feel that their job is done when they bring their whole salaries home and not to somebody else's house. But is it enough to be *good* enough? Definitely no! Any married man can do that to his mistress and can still be called a good provider. A good Christian father provides values as well that are life-giving more than the material security he brings. He molds his loved ones to be good persons by being an exemplary person himself. The father is like a shield by offering security to his loved ones where they feel protected. Providing is part of a father's protection. Families need to be shielded from poverty's hardships and from the deterioration of Christian values. Without it, the home would no longer be a place of refuge but a place to run away from.

A Christian father is called to be a lover and a healer

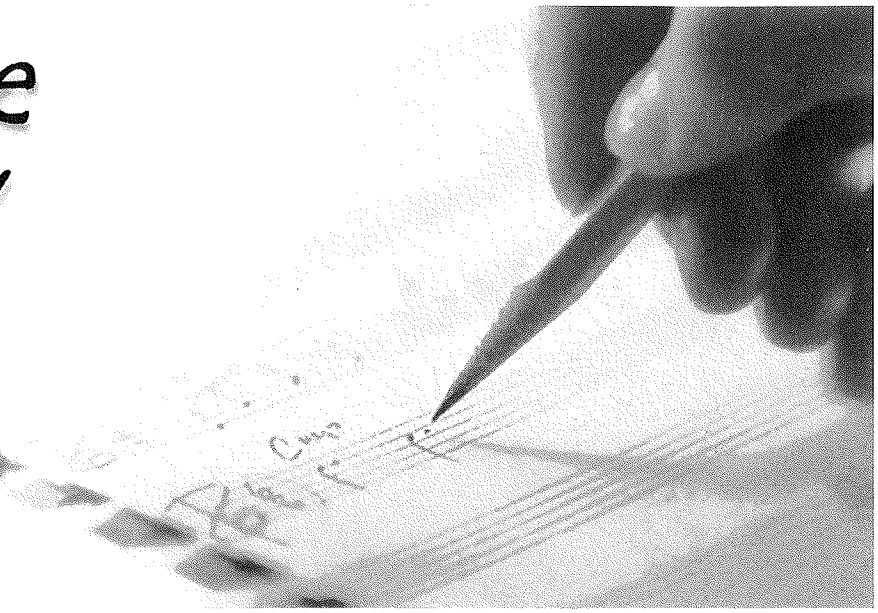
What follows from being a life-giver and a good provider is affectionate loving. A good father neither forgets his children's birthdays nor his wife's favorite dish. He does not make his work and other self-centered interests the priority over his family. A Christian father bridges gaps when conflicts in the family arise by being more understanding and forgiving. He is a catalyst for a change to a better future, not the root of destruction. When a father ceases to be a love-giver to his family, his presence no longer heals but could be the cause of opening more wounds.

A Christian father is also called to be a role model

A Christian father should be a living witness to the values of the Gospel in his words and deeds. This statement had already been repeated over and over again in every Christian article and even preached in every pulpit because of its classic importance. It never loses its value or its need of implementation. Does it mean that he will have to preach on the streets and knock in every house and force others to listen to his conversion? Not really. Striving to be a role model is more than enough to keep him occupied in his lifetime. We just pray sincerely that a father who wants to remain faithful to his calling will enjoy doing it. It takes grace more than human will to find happiness and peace in doing his difficult role.

The path to a change of heart is indeed a long journey to its concrete realization. The most difficult journey is still the journey inwards. Indeed, it is a difficult task but it is not an unreachable one. ⌘

"Let's Make It Happen" How Did It Happen?



Adrian M. San Juan, DS

The following excerpt was printed in the September issue of INSTA.

Everything has origins. Everything has humble beginnings. His Holiness Pope John Paul II has chosen Manila to host the Fourth World Meeting of Families in January 2003. To prepare our people for this much-awaited, privileged occasion involves a lot of 'advertising'- an advertising that is hardly of a commercialistic nature but rather more of a spiritual preparation and awareness. Aside from media, what else could best convey this 'good news' of the pope choosing Manila to gather all families of the world with the inspiration and challenge of the 'Good News' to all families of the third millennium? A song.

It is heard and seen in television, heard in the airwaves, sung and acted in church. Practically anywhere. It's no other than the Fourth World Meeting of Families theme song: *Only Selfless Love.*

Have you ever wondered what could be the story behind the song that most parishes sing at the recessional during Sundays? Who is the man behind the melody and the action? Fr. Carlo Magno Santos Marcelo, the song's composer, gives a brief background on how the song came to be.

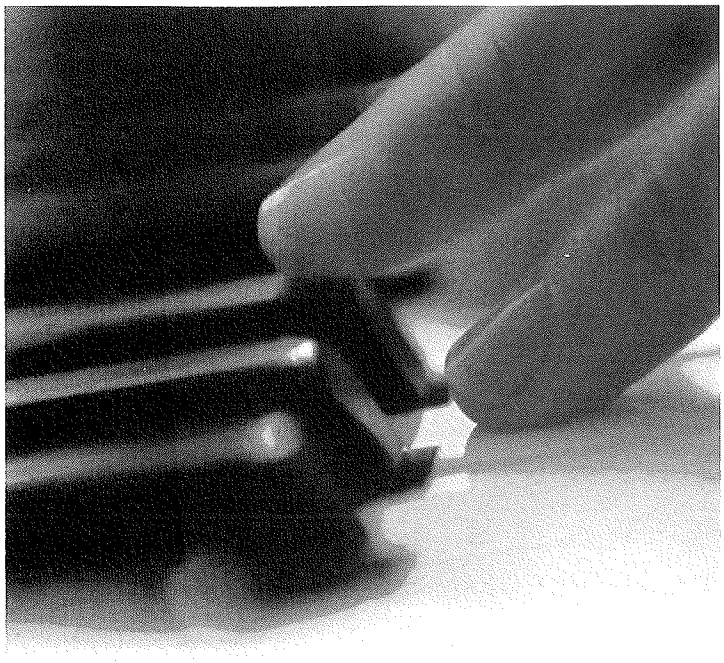
How did *Only Selfless Love* come about? Any feeling or insight being asked the second time as composer of a song to be popularized?

Last year, (around September?) Bishop Soc Villegas asked me to write the theme song for this special meeting of families. He said that since there was no more time to organize a songwriting contest, perhaps I could do what I did for the Jubilee Year, *i.e.*, to write another *Jubilee Song.* This was really frightening- to write another "jubilee-song-like" composition. But as always, I believe that because there is this special need for a special occasion, God will surely grace me with the inspiration - the song.

Very few materials were given to me in order to orient me with the celebration. So I ended up looking for articles about the family in the EWTN website. One article by Fr. Joseph Hardon, SJ, struck me. He said that the only thing that will save the family in the third millennium is the Mystery of Christ which is none other than the Mystery of Selfless Love. From this I was able to begin composing the refrain: "Only selfless love, Jesus, show the world..."

Is *Only Selfless Love* a unique creation? Is it the only song you composed for the occasion or is it one among many? Is *Only Selfless Love* the original title? Did you ask for an arranger? Is Miss Jamie Rivera the original interpreter? Who did the "sign language" of the song? How was the song promoted? Any funny, insightful, significant events (or anecdote) in the creation of the song?

Yes, it is a unique creation; for it is the only song that I composed for the gathering. By October 2001, Bishop Soc presented the plans for the WMF to the committee in Rome.



It was really frightening to write another composition like the Jubilee Song. But I believe that because there is this special need for a special occasion, God will surely grace me with the inspiration for the song.

Among other things, he presented for approval the theme song and it was well received and appreciated by the members of the committee (I just wonder if they really understand English). Immediately, we duplicated the demo for distribution to all parish priests in the Archdiocese of Manila.

Star Records was the first company whom we approached to record a popular version of the song. I personally requested them to make an instructional video of the actions of the song. Miss Jamie Rivera was more than willing to interpret it. She is also my first choice because I have seen her dedication in promoting the song and the occasion itself. She has become a 'popular catechist' for our local church.

Was composing the song tough labor for you or otherwise? What made you say that? What do you think inspired you to spin the lyrics and melody of the song? What were your feelings and reflections as the song gradually engulfs and inspires various people of all ages and locale? Do you have any "beatific or mystical" experiences in the process of writing, composing, and hearing the song being loved by people? How would you like to be remembered as composer of both the *Jubilee Song* and *Only Selfless Love?*

When one is waiting for the inspiration - one really waits! And prays in between! However, deadlines are the cruelest nails on this cross. When I finished the song I had only three days left to record and submit the song before Bishop Soc would fly to Rome. And I was informed that there is this 'brilliant' arranger who can do such feat - and indeed he did it. He is Noel Espenida. By this time, he has done so many arrangements of the song- the original, Jamie's, the Manila Symphony Orchestra's version (for accompaniment and plain instrumental version), and lastly, Jamie's Tagalog version (acoustic).

It was also a challenge to address 'big issues' that destroy the families today like abortion, materialism, etc. I do not want to write neither 'cute' nor plain 'good feeling' songs especially for this type of gathering. But when it really rains (I mean when the inspiration comes)...

The first stanza is about abortion; the second, about materialism; and the rest challenge families to show the gifts, the blessings, and the original plan of God for humanity. My favorite line is this: "where life begins and ends in God's embrace!" It speaks about the role of God in our lives, *i.e.*, from womb to tomb and beyond!

I am simply amazed at how the Spirit can really work with frail instruments like me. I do not feel that I have made a great accomplishment because I have a great trouble owning the song-because it is pure inspiration. I always treat it as God's gift to me and to all. I am led to tears every time I see children especially from far flung areas singing and acting out the song. I just hope that when they grow up and in case they find themselves in the most difficult situation where they will begin to doubt God's love for them, I pray that they can remember a line from the *Jubilee Song* or *Only Selfless Love* or in any of my songs and that it becomes a beacon for them to hope and trust once more in God's enduring love. This is and will surely be my paradise.

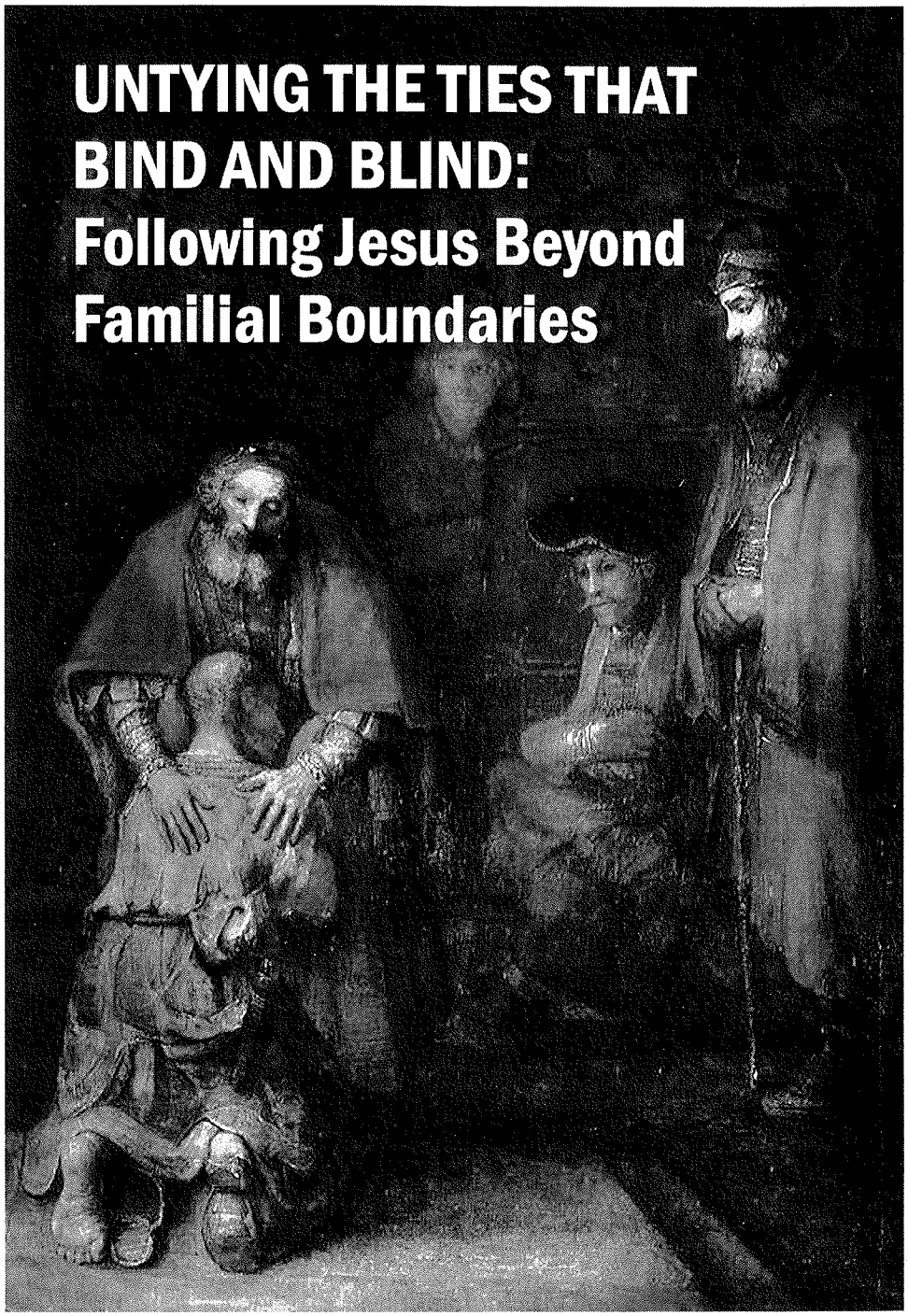
I would like to be remembered as a composer who relies on divine inspiration.

What would you like to impart to the People of God as composer of *Only Selfless Love?*

God has plans greater than ours. Just listen. Then do whatever He tells you. ⌘

UNTYING THE TIES THAT BIND AND BLIND: Following Jesus Beyond Familial Boundaries

Mary Alexis M. Salinas



"I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man at odds with his father, a daughter with her mother, a daughter-in-law with her mother-in-law; and one's foes will be the members of one's own household." (Matthew 10:34b-36, NRSV)

These words of Jesus, so unlike our image of him as the Prince of Peace, may strike a discordant note in our hearts. How can Jesus' words be good news to us who value family harmony and unity? Jesus was of course referring to the cost of following him and his way of messiahship: like him, his disciples must expect conflict, and rejection by their own kin. Thanks to socio-historical critical methods of Scripture scholars such as visiting professor Dr. John Pilch, we can understand better the context of Jesus' words, their impact on his disciples, and its implications for us following him today.

Following Jesus in the 1st Century. Two aspects of 1st century Mediterranean culture - *group centeredness, and honor and shame* - shed light on what Jesus was up against. In that culture, persons found their self-worth from the way they were perceived by their grouping, kin being a primary one. Loyalty to one's groupings and boundaries set by tradition, particularly the Torah of Judaism, was expected of its members. Disloyalty meant being cast out of the group, a penalty that to the group-centered Jew, seemed like death itself.

Jesus challenged boundaries. Proclaiming the in-breaking rule of God, he claimed in word and wondrous deeds that God's salvation "shalom" was available to ALL - sinners and righteous, Jews and non-Jews. Only one Law mattered: *"Shema Israel! Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, all your strength... and love your neighbor as yourselves"(Mk 12: 29-31).* Jesus redefined faithfulness to the Torah in terms of compassion and solidarity with fellow human beings, especially the suffering, weak, the outcast. He healed on the Sabbath, fellowshipped at table with sinners, refused to condemn the woman caught in adultery.

Crowds acclaimed him as prophet, but his kin and neighbors rejected him. Mark's gospel says that Jesus' relatives, thinking he was crazy, wanted to seize him. Religious leaders also rejected him. In a culture that put a premium on *public honor* - i.e., "looking good" in the eyes of the crowd - the way Jesus publicly won verbal debates about the Law and criticized religious elders for their hypocrisy and legalism, was bound to make him unpopular with religious authorities.

What is interesting is the way Jesus appropriated his culture's values for his messianic ministry. He formed his own grouping and led them on an itinerant mission to the "lost sheep of Israel". Jesus referred to God not only as *"abba my Father,"* but also as *"your Father"*. He taught his disciples to be perfect "like your Father": love your enemy, he said, consider anyone in need your neighbor, forgive seventy times seven times. Jesus redefined his family, basing kinship no longer on blood relations but on fulfilling his word: *"My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it" (Lk 8:21).* Luke presents Mary, Mother of Jesus, as one included by Jesus in his family. When a woman praised his mother *"blessed the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you"*, Jesus replied where his mother's true blessedness lies: *"Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it" (Lk 11:28).*

Following Jesus and his way of messiahship would threaten life and shatter kinship relations: *"Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death" (Mt 10:21).* Jesus assured his disciples their true worth was in the Father's eyes: *"Even the hairs of your head are counted. Do not be afraid; you are of more value than sparrows" (Mt 10:29-31).* Honor, another cultural value, would now come from what ***Jesus*** thought of his disciples and whether they were honored or ashamed to be identified with him: *"Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever denies me before others I also will deny before my Father in heaven" (Mt.10:32-33).*

Jesus boldly demanded a total allegiance shift to ***his person as the only kin worth being loyal to:*** *"Whoever loves father or mother, more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Mt 10:37).* A parallel passage in Luke says it more strongly: *"Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters,* ***and yes, even life itself,*** *cannot be my disciple"(Lk 14, 26).*

The disciples' loyalty was tested, and, initially, found wanting. It took Jesus' Resurrection for Peter and the rest to regain their



Jesus boldly demanded a total allegiance shift to His person as the only kin worth being loyal to.

honor in Jesus' eyes. Professing their faith in Jesus Christ, Son of God, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, they lived, loved and died in the Way Jesus had shown them, going on to become our parents in the Judaeo-Christian faith.

Following Jesus in the 21st Century. The Greek word for *"faith"*, says Dr. John Pilch, is appropriately translated to mean *"loyalty"*, *"attachment" no matter what.* This attachment to Jesus is the same gift and task we received at our Baptism. The question is "Are we loyal, attached only to Jesus, ready to go the Way he did - no matter what?" Jesus' claim on allegiance is addressed to us all *baptized Christians.* It cuts deeply into the heart of our own culture of family/ kin-centeredness and challenges us to re-examine our loyalty to family ties and clan honor.

Ties that Bind and Blind. Our "family first" orientation is not a bad thing. Where state support for basic needs is inadequate, the family is *de facto* our "social security system". Family ties are our "safety nets" for survival and welfare. But family ties - if oriented only to our own economic interests - can bind us to a slavery incongruent with our Baptism. Jesus still calls us today to proclaim the rule of God, where every family experiences fullness of life. The apostolic exhortation of Pope John Paul II "Familiaris Consortio" bids Christian families to "practice hospitality", to welcome and serve the brother and sister in every other family, especially the needy and poor. Our Baptism calls us to expand our familial boundaries and work for justice and peace, and integrity of all creation, including Mother Earth.

We need to be aware of our mentalities that work against Christian hospitality and solidarity. For example, our mentality of "tayo-tayo" (us only) and "kanya-kanya ("each to his/her own") reflects what Dr Jose de Mesa refers to as a "social individualism" which contributes to the fragmentary character of Philippine society and has produced a host of ills - tolerance of graft and corruption, economic inequities, nepotism, private armies, political dynasties. Lest we point an accusatory finger at other people, Jesus warns us: *"Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye but do not notice the log in your own eye?"(Mt 7:3, NRSV).* Letting go of our allegiance to the "kinship by blood" network requires a cultural revolution which must start within our own family.

Family ties, says M. Scott Peck, can become *a form of idolatry.* "Family honor" as defined by authority figures in the clan can become a false god. Loyalty to Jesus means discerning practices that need to be renounced, or developed and nurtured.

Living our Baptism means liberating ourselves from family attachments which prevent living out our vocations. For example, the union of husband and wife is the "primary communion". Yet, in many Christian marriages, a spouse stays attached only to his/her family of origin. The same slavery to familial affections burdens those opting for a consecrated celibate life: a young woman discerns a calling to religious life but yields to the objection of her parents; a seminarian struggles with his desire to help out in the economic security of his family; conversely, a seminarian realizes he has no priestly vocation but does not have the heart to shatter the dream of his mother or clan to see a priest in the family.

Can we do this - confront family members and speak our truth - without threatening the stability or harmony in our family? Probably not. Jesus says, "I have not come to bring peace, but the sword ". His words are like a knife twisting into our hearts. Are we ready to risk losing economic support, or the affection and approval of dear ones? Jesus says:

> *Whoever loves father or mother, more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.*
>
> *(Mt 10:37-39, NRSV)*

Security in Vulnerability. Allegiance to Jesus alone involves a "circumcision of the heart". Conflict is inevitable. The pain begins within our own self, for Jesus asks us to cut loose the bondage of our security - our expectations, attachments, control over loved ones or theirs over us Jesus wants to set others - and ourselves - free from burdensome dependencies we inflict on one another. He calls us to seek our security in His love alone, our worth in His gaze alone. His call to "hate" our kin and life itself is really a call to *be free* to love and live without a desire to control. Isn't this liberating love, Good News?

Still, conflict is painful because change creates anxiety and hostility, turning our loved ones into "foes". This is when we need the Heart of Jesus to be able to live within our families His call to *"love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven."(Mt 5:43-44b)* Division, while painful, thus purifies us to love as God's children. Jesus was not "anti-family" at all; division for His sake can be a path to authentic love and communion in the family.

Ultimately, conflict is healthy for it breaks down our heart's boundaries, inviting us to become vulnerable. Only then can we grow in union with Him, who trusting only in the Father's love, let Himself be crucified. The cross that Jesus asks us to take up is really that of becoming vulnerable. Only in being vulnerable, can we, in the grace of the Spirit, profess that *our only security, worth, and honor comes from being identified with Jesus Christ.*

If we risk losing our human securities for His sake, the treasure we gain *is the Lord, Shalom Himself - Fullness of Life, Love, Liberation, Peace, Joy !* Isn't this priceless exchange Good News? The first disciples thought so. So did the community of baptized Christians over the past 20 centuries who followed Jesus beyond familial boundaries. May we walk in their company, praying with St. Ignatius of Loyola:

> *"Take, Lord, receive all my liberty, my memory, understanding, my entire will.*
> *Give me only Your love and Your grace, that's enough for me.*
> *Your love and Your grace are enough for me. "*
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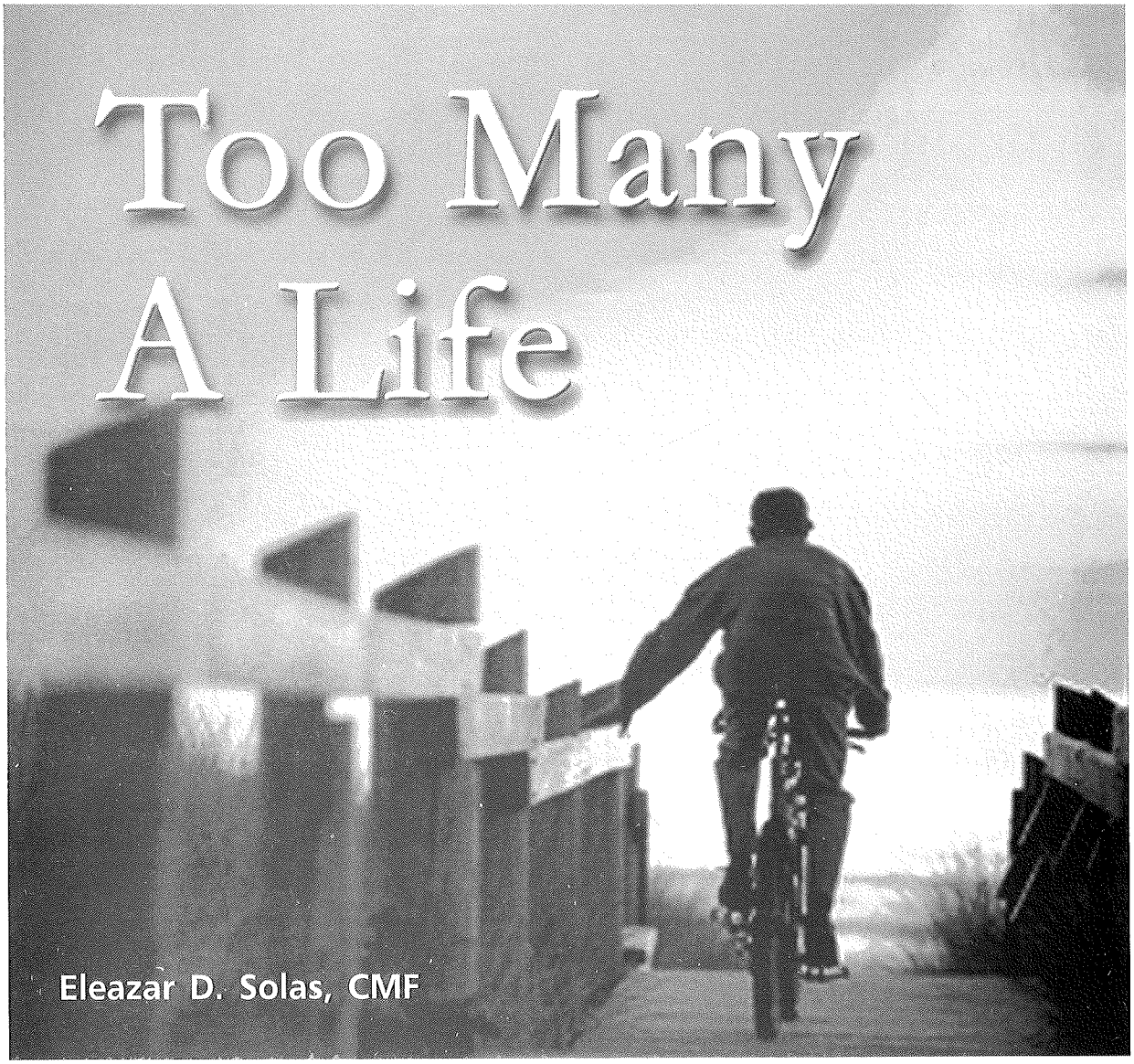
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Too Many A Life



Eleazar D. Solas, CMF

I would like to tell you about the stories of my friends from whom I learned some valuable lessons in life. As I relate to you the sacred pages of their lives, please join me in praying for them that they may remain fervent and faithful despite the hardships that come along their journey.

For all the Christian hate, I experience here a community of love.

"I promise never to sell my voice again." Such were the powerful words of Joel. "I feel at fault for using my talent to serve my selfish aspirations. I will never sing again for money. I will sing only to praise God and to serve his people."

Joel would have been one among today's leading youth singers. After winning the title in a Mindanao-wide singing competition, the life of a once ordinary student in provincial Davao turned into an instant superstar. Offers from various recording companies and talent agencies filled his mailbox. Apart from this, he was even chosen as Swatch's image model for its print advertisements. He enjoyed prominence, power and opulence in life. Money, for him, had become abundant. Joel would have been a millionaire in a few years.

"Rumors proliferated questioning my sexual preference. I became the subject of humiliation and repugnance. While I expected my batch to give me support, they rejected me, as well." It was the moment of great despair for him. It was a death experience, as Joel would say.

"In exchange for my generosity, I received malice and hatred. Was this the reward that awaited me after giving my all to God? Life was so unfair. In consequence, I hated the seminary and the Church. In my hopelessness, I condemned the world. I was running amok, even attempting to commit suicide. I thought that I only wasted my life and all my opportunities by entering the seminary."

Ironically, the fact that Joel wasted everything for his vocation made his vocation more precious to him. Wasting, in contrast to submissive obedience to an imperative, connotes willingness and determination. To waste one's time for something is to invest one's important part of him to something one values and considers worth sacrificing. In this sense, wasting is almost similar to a willful self-offering. One who can afford wasting his life is only the one who could see the deep meaning behind the act of wasting. In fact, to show one's valuing would sometimes demand to waste something essential to him.

Two years after his dark moment, Joel narrated his story - healed and vibrant. Through the saving love of his true friends, he recovered from his trauma. *"I was dramatically reconciled with my detractors lately. My batch and I mended our rift, as well. I am most thankful to my friends and family who stood by my side all along the ordeal."* By assuring Joel of their acceptance and love, he claimed his intrinsic belovedness readily. They made true the saying, 'A friend is someone who walks in when others walk out.'

Currently, his parents are preparing to migrate to the States in a few months to seek greener pastures. He will be left alone here in the Philippines to continue his formation. *"Those trials were perhaps only a test of my fidelity. But they could also be a price for commercializing my talent. Anyhow, I realize that my life is a song that proclaims the overwhelming love of God for me. Given that life is eternal, I will endlessly hum this tune,"* he concluded.

For all the individual repressions,
I breathe here an air of freedom.

Sr. Angela represents the majority of the sisters who fell under the oppressing grip of regulations embodied in religious life. She talked about her struggles in adjusting to the strict policies of the convent. *"The sisters I was living with are not the holy people I thought them to be. So, the first adjustment that I have to do is to accept the fact that I am idealistic. I need to shift my paradigms in order to enter into dialogue with the rest of my sisters in the community."*

Religious life entails renouncing so many things and depriving oneself with so many possibilities. Yet, it is more difficult to live as a nun than to carry a seminarian's life.

"I remember a very recent event which I consider a transgression of my freedom by my former superior who unintentionally got hold of my diary but deliberately read its contents. As she tried to justify her act, I shouted deep within me for injustice and oppression. I think that religious life should not go into invading personal privacy."

Sr. Angela also highlighted the seeming irrational wariness of the superiors as they interpreted the vows. *"Chastity does not necessarily mean being 'cautious' when the opposite sex is around but it is first of all a matter of loving the sisters one is living with. Ridiculously, while poverty is preached by the religious, it is lived by the family next door. Moreover, the disciplinary principles that I have learned in the novitiate are not applicable to my life in the apostolate."*

This does not simply show the rigidity in the convents but also the rigidity of the Church as well. Whenever the stress on the law is given more priority over humanitarian considerations, not only does it wound an individual's heart but it also brings about division in the Church too.

On the other hand, the law is necessary to secure the welfare of the greater majority. If the law is rooted in love it is found to be more helpful and liberating than being oppressing. *"I see these disciplinary measures as liberating in the sense that I consider freedom not as doing the things that one wants to do but doing the things one ought to do and being able to say 'no' to the*

I Love This Church

In the course of a half century,
I have seen more Christian corruption
than you have read. I have tasted it.
I have been reasonably corrupt myself.
And yet, I love this church, this living,
pulsing, sinning people of God with a
crucifying passion. Why?

things that are inconsistent with my fundamental option. I believe that discipline, taken in the proper context and with the right disposition, would eventually lead to a greater freedom."

There are things that are not compatible with the religious life. The Lord is calling us to a life of witnessing that might entail going against the current as he did. Mortifications, fasting and other acts repressing some of our desires would mean nothing if we will not have a change of heart. Laws should be used in their proper context, that is, as means to help us to grow and become like Jesus whom we are following. Enlightenment about this matter would only come if one started to think first in a macro level and set aside individual selfish pursuits.

Thus, instead of criticizing the system in the convent, Sr. Angela considered things in their positive side. *"Convent rules can make or break us. It depends on how one sees these. For some they are promoting growth. While for others, they are dehumanizing. As for me, I take these as guidelines, a preparation for greater battles in life. At the same time, I see this as a form of dying to myself so that others may have life."* To be faithful to one's vow of obedience is an act of resigning from oneself and carrying out the Father's will.

For all the fear of sex,
I discover here the redemption of my body.

Menandro is a seminarian and a victim of sexual molestation. At the age of 20, he never thought that the thing, which he dreaded would come when he was already inside the seminary. And his molester was no less than his best friend, Neil, whom he considered as his older brother, too. When I talked to him, the event had passed a year already. Yet, the wound of the past left an unfading scar in his memories.

"The experience made me realize that even in the sacred grounds of the seminary, the reality of evil is ever penetrating, contrary to my belief then that the seminary is a holy ground where only prayerful people of immaculate motivations live," said Menandro. *"I fled from the world in order to find solace inside. Yet, late have I realized that among the sheep, a wolf is in disguise. That which happened to me was already insulting but more painful was the thought that it happened in the context of friendship. I felt terribly betrayed."*

Friendship, they say, is the noblest pursuit of man. While it is considered also a gift from God, it is likewise held as a primary source of one's happiness. Friends are the people to whom we invest our trust and open our secrets. Since friends occupy a very special part in our life, there is no greater human pain than the betrayal of a trusted friend.

For all the apparent absence of God, I sense the real presence of Christ. Despite the great ordeals I've been through, I stand as a man - governed by reason, equipped with idealism, and empowered by hope.



A month after he was offended, news in the newspapers surfaced out exposing cases of sexual misconducts in local and international scenarios. The experience was devastating and the news aggravated the situation. Menandro had lost his trust in the Church. He even came to a point of losing his own faith. Yet, despite the great ordeal he has been through, he stood as a man - governed by reason, equipped with idealism, and empowered by hope.

"I should have cried so many tears to wash my utter disgust for the hypocrisy that surrounds my world. Or I should have silenced myself to save me from shame and depreciation. But I decided to move forward and face the challenge. As I continue to pursue my vocation, I vow not to allow similar things to happen in the future."

A single act of an individual person does not constitute the entirety of the institution. The *Couples for Christ* campaign posters supporting the priests were illuminating. Thus, Menandro, instead of harboring hatred against Neil and the Church, chose to take a step ahead from where he fell. He went for growth instead of dwelling in his pains. Menandro enriched his calling by finding a purpose from his nightmare. *"I look forward to do something in order to change the image of the Church. I think of engaging myself in formation where instances like this will be addressed properly to assure guidance and protection to both possible parties."*

On the other hand, Neil left the seminary.

For all the apparent absence of God,
I sense here the real presence of Christ.

As I listened to their story, I said to myself that theirs is an exceptional story of love and faith.

"Roselle and I started the relationship when we were in high school," says Jeff. *"When I entered the seminary, it was not a product of an easy decision. We cried over it. But after a thorough dialogue, we both agreed to sacrifice the love we had and be more generous to God's calling."* However, the unexpected happened.

"I was on vacation after my third year in the seminary when our family business went bankrupt. My uncle tricked my parents, diverting all our accounts in his. In consequence, I was told by my mother not to proceed any longer because they might not be able to support my expenses. Embedded within her statement is a silent implication that I was expected to support my other siblings for being the oldest in the brood of four."

The colorful setting to which their story unfolded eventually turned into an arid landscape of a vast desert. Jeff turned into a man of bitterness and grief, questioning God's unfair manipulation of the events of his life. *"I have heard so many instances like this where a vocation was denied because of the lack of financial capacity, but to experience it myself was more agonizing."*

In such a situation, Roselle, already an accountant at the Philippine National Bank, reentered the picture. She insisted of taking care of his expenses. The person whom he sacrificed for his vocation was the one who saved him when he was about to lose it.

"It was embarrassing for me and my family to be in a situation like this. But I could not do otherwise. I just wanted to pursue my vocation," Jeff lamented. *"I don't know where this will lead me. I am caught in the middle of conflicting priorities: I feel indebted and in love with Roselle, I feel obligated to help my family, and at the same time, I feel strongly called to religious life."*

Jeff was already teary-eyed when our conversation arrived at this point. How I wish to offer help but I find myself helpless, too. In as much as I wanted to join him in crossing his own desert in life, I can only accompany him at the certain extent. His desert is only his to cross, while I have mine too. No one could go with him but a simple gesture of support and a prayerful encouragement would be enough to give him strength. From a certain point, all I can do is to accompany him with my eyes as he moved onwards, praying that he would find an oasis along the way.

Jeff will be graduating this March for his bachelor's degree in Philosophy. He is now writing a thesis on *The Paradoxes of Faith*. In his experience, faith is too paradoxical, like life itself. *"While faith is clear, it is also vague. While life is beautiful, it is also cruel. And while I try to get away from God's love, I find myself more smitten by his overwhelming compassion. I am more embarrassed now to have questioned the will of God. In my despair, I cling on to faith. May I see tomorrow and the promises that it will bring."* ⌘

(The poem I LOVE THIS CHURCH from which this article was patterned is authored by Walter Burghardt, SJ.)



Children Will Listen

Joaquin C. Sumpaico III, SJ

Older people often say that during their time, things were better and are unlike the present. We often hear them brag about the differences of their growing up years to the younger generation. But is it time to rethink this practice and even admit that during each one's time, there always is a lot left to be desired?

A musical play mentioned that we should be careful with things that we say, as children will listen. It also said that we should also be careful with the things that we do for children will also see and learn. This may be true as we live with the youth of today.

Perhaps, we may even have to give credit to the young as they face challenges that were different from the challenges that their parents encountered. A writer from the Internet mentions that, "Young people today are asked to stand firm in the face of an uncertain and ever-changing world, but for some reason this doesn't seem to frighten them. The young people I come into contact with actually seem excited about this challenging new adventure."

A research from the Barna Research Group of Ventura, California even vouches for the validity of the observation.

"This turnabout in self-esteem has triggered a growing desire to excel in school and to have a breadth of life adventures and experiences. While there are still millions of teenagers who are struggling to find their place in the world, the prevailing mood among teens has shifted dramatically in the past half-decade to a more upbeat, optimistic and self-reliant perspective. A major change in attitude is the shift from feeling ill-equipped for the future and harboring anger or self-pity for that condition, as was the norm a decade ago, to the current perspective of addressing their lack of preparation by aggressively seeking the resources and experiences required to raise their capacity level."

Furthermore, the young people of today come from what we call the "millennial generation" (a.k.a. millennials, echo boomers or Gen Y). Researches have been made about this generation and most of these talk of those born after 1980 as having a more positive and active perspective compared to other generations (especially their baby boomer parents). They begin to show potential to carry on responsibility and try to correct the carefree attitude of the 1960's flower power and hippie generations. The millennials are more open to experiment, search for and push further the limits to the world's problems. In having this attitude, they become more familiar with the absorption of information (TV, radio and internet) which eventually leads to a greater awareness and involvement in the social realities of their times

With regard to matters of faith, Barna further adds that "teenagers patronize churches and other event-oriented organizations because they are seeking a compelling experience that is made complete and safe by the presence of people they know and trust, and from whom they are willing to learn and take their cues. Music and other ambient factors may attract them once or twice, but those elements will not keep them coming back for more. There has to be sufficient substance, quality, hope, and genuine mutual concern and acceptance for them to return. They need an outlet for their desire to have a positive affect on the world and to synchronize their inner drive to be needed with the needs of those in the world that have little. Despite their streetwise attitudes, teenagers have a genuine streak of compassion that influences their life. Churches that provide a conduit for serving the community will create more meaningful bonds with the generation."

Understanding the youth of today may be a great opportunity that knocks at the door of the older generations. We may either opt to ignore them or give them chances for them to flourish in time. A responsibility for the older generations is to listen to them and not to take them lightly. To guide and love them by being good examples in life might still be the best gift that we may pass on.

From what generation do you come from? This might be a good start in your research of how your generation is described. Try using the search engine, **www.google.com** as it will be of great help. Have fun!

The Interbellum Generation: Born 1901 to 1910
The G.I. Generation: Born 1911 to 1924
The Silent Generation: Born 1925 to 1939
Baby Boomers: Born 1940 to 1957
Baby Busters: Born 1958 to 1968
Generation X: Post-Busters Born 1969 to 1980
Generation Y: Millennial Generation –
Echo Boomers: Born 1981 to 1990
Generation Z: Echo Busters: Born after 1990

⌘



Despite their streetwise attitudes, teenagers have a genuine streak of compassion that influences their life. Churches that provide a conduit for serving the community will create more meaningful bonds with the generation.

A Word from the Student Council: Team!
(an excerpt from the induction speech)

Florge Michael Z. Sy, SJ

All of us have a share in the responsibility of working together as a team. It is our ballgame and all of us here are players. The truth of the matter is, you too, are part of the team.

Borrowing then from the famous line of Julius Caesar, I say, as your president my dear fellow students that during this school year, *we come as a team, we see as a team, and we conquer as a team.*

We come as team because we will try to unify our vision, our plans, our hopes, and our dreams for a better and more productive stay here in LST. Together, we can build a home next to our homes, a place where we can learn, have fun, foster companionship and pray. Together, we can achieve this if we come as a team to listen to and dialogue with each other. And, just like in any triumphant team, we make sure that not one of our members here will be left out. We will therefore try to create an atmosphere where even the voice of the least and last and the lowest amongst us can still be heard and be acknowledged.

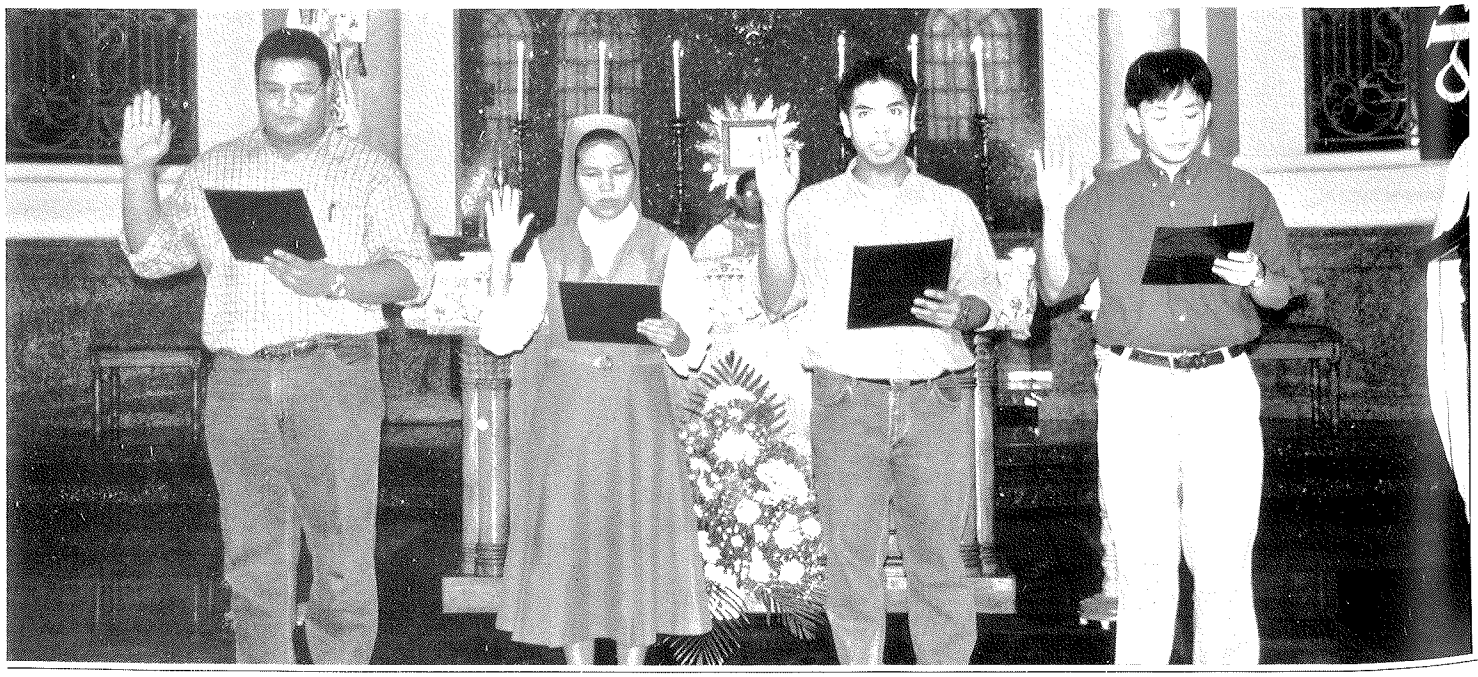
We see as a team because together, we see, analyze, discuss, discern what should be done, where to proceed, to bring our dreams and hopes to fruition. Together, we see and ask ourselves what more can we do and contribute, where else should we go, how more can we improve and get involved.

We will try to borrow a famous quote from the inaugural speech of John F. Kennedy by asking ourselves not what this school can do for us, rather, we ask and see for ourselves what we can do for LST.

We conquer as a team because we will act as a team, journey as a team and work as a team. Only when we join hands can we truly triumph over mediocrity and replace it with excellence. Only when we put our act together can we eliminate indifference and apathy and cultivate brotherly and sisterly concern.

Only when we bond as one can we succeed over the greatest threat to progress that is indolence and advance industry. Then and only then can we truly create a more lively, beautiful and exciting atmosphere here in LST.

We come as a team, we see as a team, we conquer as a team. Let this be our motto for this year, my dear fellow students. Let it be our battlecry. ⌘



School Opens with the Holy Spirit

School Year 2002-2003 formally began with a Mass of the Holy Spirit. It was celebrated in the St. Ignatius Oratory last 26 June 2002. The main celebrant and homilist was Socrates Villegas, DD, Auxiliary Bishop of Manila. In his homily, Bishop Soc emphasized that we should "do theology from the heart". Jesuit priests and professors and some other religious superiors concelebrated. In attendance were the student body, other faculty members, and the staff.

During the Mass, Ms. Lita Magaru was also recognized for twenty-five years of service to the school.

A convocation at the Sin Center followed the Eucharistic celebration. Fr. President gave his "state of the nation" address. An acquaintance party followed it. There were presentations by different congregations, which entertained all. The fellowship was capped off with a luncheon. ⌘

Feast of St. Ignatius Celebrated

The community celebrated in advance the feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Fr. Fruto Ramirez, SJ was the presider and the homilist. Other Jesuit priests and professors concelebrated.

An induction of the officers of the Student Council followed shortly. The following were inducted as the new officers: Florge Michael Sy, SJ (President), Alvin Macaranas, CMF (Vice-President), Cristina Madrigallos, FSP (Secretary), and Karl Acosta, DS (Treasurer). Fr. President presided over the induction ceremony.

The program continued in the Cardinal Sin Center with a year-end report of the previous Student Council and the inaugural speech of the new president. Since it was also the student's first General Assembly, the different working committees and their heads were presented. Simple snacks wrapped up the affair. ⌘

Break-lover's Break

Everyone at LST took a break from work and studies to give way to the semester's sportsfest last 19 August 2002. The said activity began with a Holy Mass that was presided by Fr. Manny Flores, SJ. In his homily, he stressed the importance of sports and what to avoid from it - commercialism, violence and fierce competition.

Four different teams took part in the event. A short parade from LST to the College Covered Courts preceded the cheering competition. Games in the morning and the afternoon sandwiched a festive lunch.

At day's end, prizes were awarded to the winners. The Passionists also surprised everyone as they performed a dance number. ⌘

Theological Hour Continues

True to its goal of increasing student responsiveness to the demands of the times, this semester's Theological Hour started last 10 July 2002 with Fr. James Bretzke, SJ as speaker. He talked on the challenges of developing cross-cultural ethics by stressing the significance of letting go of the belief that one's culture is superior to that of others. "We are to be always discerning, trusting and collaborating with the Spirit for the authentic rooting of the Gospel in one's culture."

The second theological hour was held last 7 August 2002. Dr. John Pilch, a visiting professor, was the speaker. He lectured on "Becoming Holy in the Scriptures". In the conference, he underlined two characteristics of being a holy person namely, that of being experientially in-touch with the spirit world and that of being a mediator of power from that world to this world in which we are in.

The third theological hour was on "Jewish-Christian Relations in the First Century". We had a Jewish speaker, Prof. Rachel Elior, from Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In her talk, she mentioned that Judaism is a religion that was never meant to be universal - that it is a national religious perspective with a universal message. ⌘

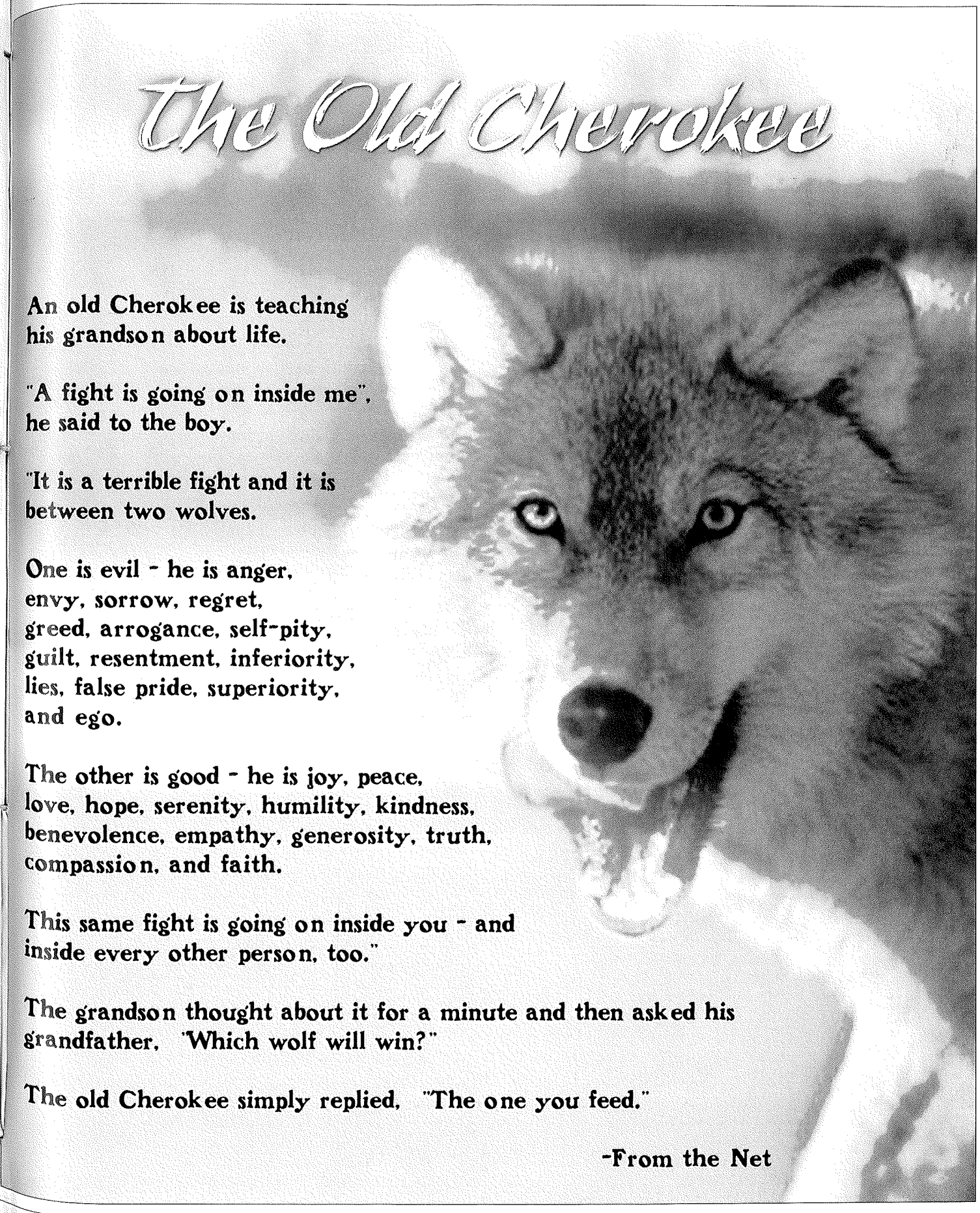
To Light a Candle

LST students and guests were treated to "an afternoon of inspiration" on August 27 in the person of Ruth Pfau, the 2002 Magsaysay Awardee for Public Service. This 72-year-old German nun, a medical doctor and member of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary, arrived in Pakistan in 1960 on her way to India. While waiting for her Indian visa, she began work in the Mcleod Road Leper Colony; soon she set up a one-hut leprosy dispensary in this Karachi slum.

Over the next thirty years she built the dispensary into the Marie Adelaide Leprosy Centre. Sister Pfau has treated nearly 50,000 disowned leprosy patients in city slums, mountain caves, and distant hamlets. Her training programs for paramedical workers assisted Pakistan in controlling the disease by 1996. Her service has both arrested leprosy and removed much of its stigma.

At LST, Dr. Pfau also shared key moments in her unique vocation journey. As a 22-year-old medical student she contemplated suicide, giving God only two years to reveal life's meaning. She grew up under the reign of Adolf Hitler's Nazi rule and was only baptized as an adult. Sr. Ruth confessed her difficulties with structured prayer, but noted her love of the Eucharist and her deep faith in God's individualized, personal love. For her, empathy and "holy anger" are keys to a true Christian commitment. She told listeners about her "eschatological list" (questions she "demands" that God will answer in the afterlife). Sr. Pfau simply lives the title of one of her five books, *To Light a Candle.* ⌘ **– J. Kroeger**

The Old Cherokee



An old Cherokee is teaching
his grandson about life.

"A fight is going on inside me",
he said to the boy.

"It is a terrible fight and it is
between two wolves.

One is evil - he is anger,
envy, sorrow, regret,
greed, arrogance, self-pity,
guilt, resentment, inferiority,
lies, false pride, superiority,
and ego.

The other is good - he is joy, peace,
love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness,
benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth,
compassion, and faith.

This same fight is going on inside you - and
inside every other person, too."

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his
grandfather, "Which wolf will win?"

The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed."

-From the Net

ON MARRIAGE AND CHILDREN

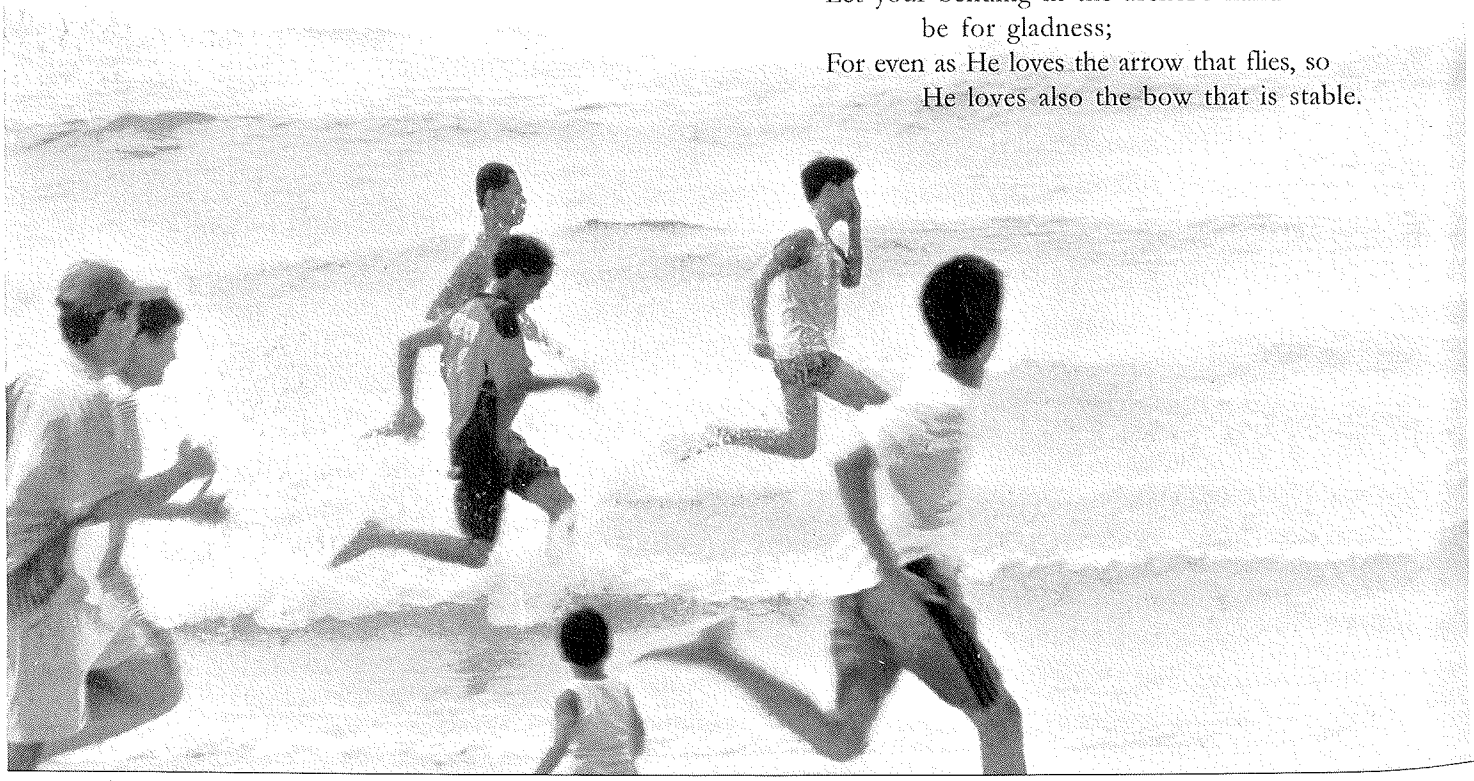
Kahlil Gibran

"And what of Marriage, master?"

And he answered saying:
You were born together, and together you
shall be forevermore.
You shall be together when white wings of
death scatter your days.
Aye, you shall be together even in the silent
memory of God.
But let there be spaces in your togetherness,
And let the winds of the heavens dance between you.
Love one another but make not a bond of love:
Let it rather be a moving sea between the
shores of your souls.
Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup.
Give one another of your bread but eat not
from the same loaf.
Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each
one of you be alone,
Even as the strings of a lute are alone though
they quiver with the same music.
Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping.
For only the Hand of Life can contain your hearts.
And stand together, yet not too near together:
For the pillars of the temple stand apart,
And the oak tree and the cypress grow not
in each other's shadow.

"Speak to us of Children."

And he said:
Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of
Life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you,
yet they belong not to you.
You may give them your love
but not your thoughts.
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,
which you cannot visit,
not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them,
but seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward
nor tarries with yesterday.
You are the bows from which your children
as living arrows are sent forth.
The Archer sees the mark upon the path of the
infinite, and He bends you with His might
that His arrows may go swift and far.
Let your bending in the archer's hand
be for gladness;
For even as He loves the arrow that flies, so
He loves also the bow that is stable.





4th World Meeting of Families

Schedule of Events

March 17, 2002
Festival of Fathers

May 12, 2002
Festival of Mothers

August 24 - August 25, 2002
Festival of Youth

September 29 - October 5, 2002
Children's Week

December 14, 2002
Concert for Families

January 23 - 24, 2003
International Theological and Pastoral Congress

January 23 - 24, 2003
Sons and Daughter's Congress

January 25, 2003 (Morning)
Eucharistic Celebration of Families on Pilgrimage

January 25, 2003 (Afternoon)
Festive Meeting of Families with Testimonies

January 26, 2003 (Morning)
Concluding Mass

Visit the website: *www.family2003.ph*

LST Alumni Homecoming

November 20, 2002
(1:30 - 5:00 PM)
Cardinal Sin Center, LST

Prayer for the Family

Lord God, from you every family
in heaven and on earth takes its name.
Father, you are Love and Life.
Through your Son, Jesus Christ, born of woman,
and through the Holy Spirit, fountain of divine charity,
grant that every family on earth may become
for each successive generation
a true shrine of life and love.
Grant that your grace may guide the thoughts
and actions of husbands and wives
for the good of their families and of all the families
in the world.
Grant that the young may find in the family
solid support for their human dignity
and for their growth in truth and love.
Grant that love,
strengthened by the grace of the sacrament of marriage,
may prove mightier than all the weakness and trials
through which our families sometimes pass.
Through the intercession of the Holy Family of Nazareth,
grant that the Church may fruitfully carry out
her worldwide mission in the family
and through the family.
Through Christ our Lord, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life
for ever and ever. Amen.

(John Paul II)

