

September 2010



KAPATIRAN

Reaching greater heights...



IN THIS ISSUE:

Ascent

**Should We Bother God
with the Small Stuff?**

**Love: Its Meanings
and Its Labors**

**Talking Points for RH
Bill Dialogue**

**The Importance
of Being Honest**

and more...

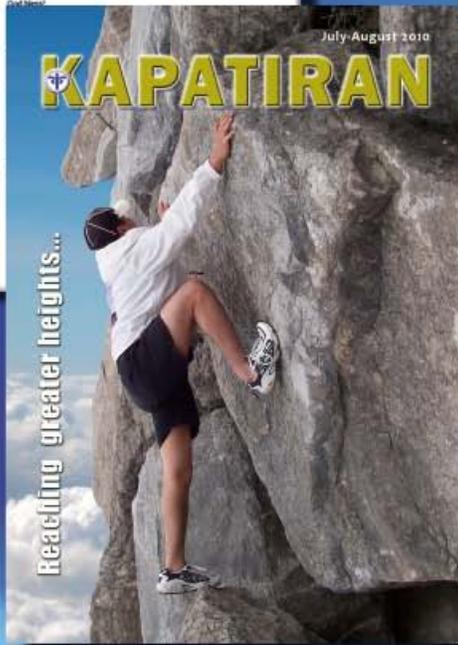
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Maiden issue

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KAPATIRAN

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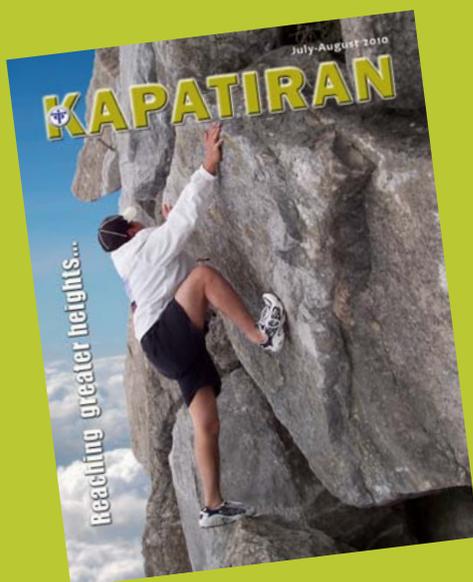
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ABOUT THE COVER

Change is imminent. To keep pace with the changes of our time, we undertake innovations and new initiatives to upscale our mode of information dissemination to ensure that majority of our community members are constantly updated of the happenings within our community and in the marketplace that we endeavor to influence. Our community web portal (www.bcbp-phil.com) and the Kapatiran have been greatly improved. We hope that these efforts would help us achieve our goal of increasing our reach, in breadth and depth. Let us then work harder and more faithfully in reaching greater heights...all for God's greater glory.



MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICES FROM GOD'S VIEWPOINT

by Nancy Catan, *BCBP Manila Chapter*

There is much controversy going on about the Reproductive Health Bill, its implications and contents, especially in the areas where the Bill limits our freedom to choose the way of life that God has designed and created for us. It not only limits our choices in life and family, but it seeks to lead us away from our life's journey toward holiness.

Unfortunately, we live in a society that embraces a culture of death. It exploits sexuality and distorts it by restricting it simply to its physical expression. And it is in this context that the RH bill seeks to compel educators to teach sex education, a subject that would include use of contraceptives and other means that threaten the sanctity of life of the unborn, as well as the family structure.

Article II, Section 12 of the Constitution says: "The State recognizes the sanctity of family life and shall protect and strengthen the family as a basic autonomous social institution. It shall equally protect the life of the mother and the life of the unborn from conception. The natural and primary right and duty of parents in the rearing of the youth for civic efficiency and the development of moral character shall receive the support of the Government."

It seems to me that the RH Bill is, in fact, unconstitutional as the Bill directly and indirectly threatens the sanctity of family life, the life of the mother and the life of the unborn. Furthermore,

I feel that it intrudes on the right and duty of parents to instill in their children good moral character and a fundamental respect and appreciation for human sexuality as a gift from God. Plus the fact that the Bill takes away parental and spousal authority in matters of sexuality thereby diminishing, rather than strengthening, the family as a 'basic autonomous social institution'.

Proponents of the Bill often repeat the phrase 'freedom of choice', meaning that only what they choose is right. But what is really meant by 'freedom of choice'? Does this mean that we can do whatever we want, when we want it, regardless of the consequences? How can we be free to choose if we are surrounded by numerous laws and regulations, policies and strict procedures, codes of ethics or barkada practices? Can we say we have freedom to choose our career or profession if our parents insist on us doing something else?

Having freedom of choice means that we have the freedom to choose to act in this way or that way, to do good, or to do evil. By consistently choosing to do the good, we exercise our positive fundamental option. The fundamental option, whether positive or negative, is a response to the innate human desire for God at our deepest core and to God's offer of love in Christ. Thus, the positive fundamental option – the life of grace – is a life directed toward God. The negative fundamental option – sin – is a life directed away from God and toward Satan.

Our everyday choices are examples of our fundamental response to God. As we consistently choose the good, we gradually become free, loving persons. We find that choosing the good anchors our whole moral character and often involves a complete turning away from the 'not good'. We need to realize that this freedom is never static; it is a dynamic movement – in thoughts, words, choices, and actions, always moving us either forward to God, or backward, away from Him.

There are two aspects of Christian freedom that are operative in our lives, that to me, sum up this concept of freedom. There is the “freedom from” and the “freedom for”. We need to free ourselves from interior obstacles like ignorance, disordered passions, fears, bad habits, prejudices, obsessive desires, and from exterior forces such as violent force or threats of violence. Other threats to our freedom include drugs, unconscious compulsions, and social pressures that create economic, political and cultural obstacles.

“Freedom for” is the end result of actively making “freedom from” choices. Once we have done our best to turn away from the threats and obstacles and from sin (this is an often endless and not easy process), we then can consciously make a “freedom for” decision or choice.

This “freedom for” decision is all about taking the responsibility for making the right choices in our everyday lives, choices that will enable us to become better persons of moral integrity and upright character. One of the best ways we can practice making “freedom for” choices is by exercising our God-given ability to love and service, through authentic Christian love, both personal and social, a love that is expressed in our families and in community with others.

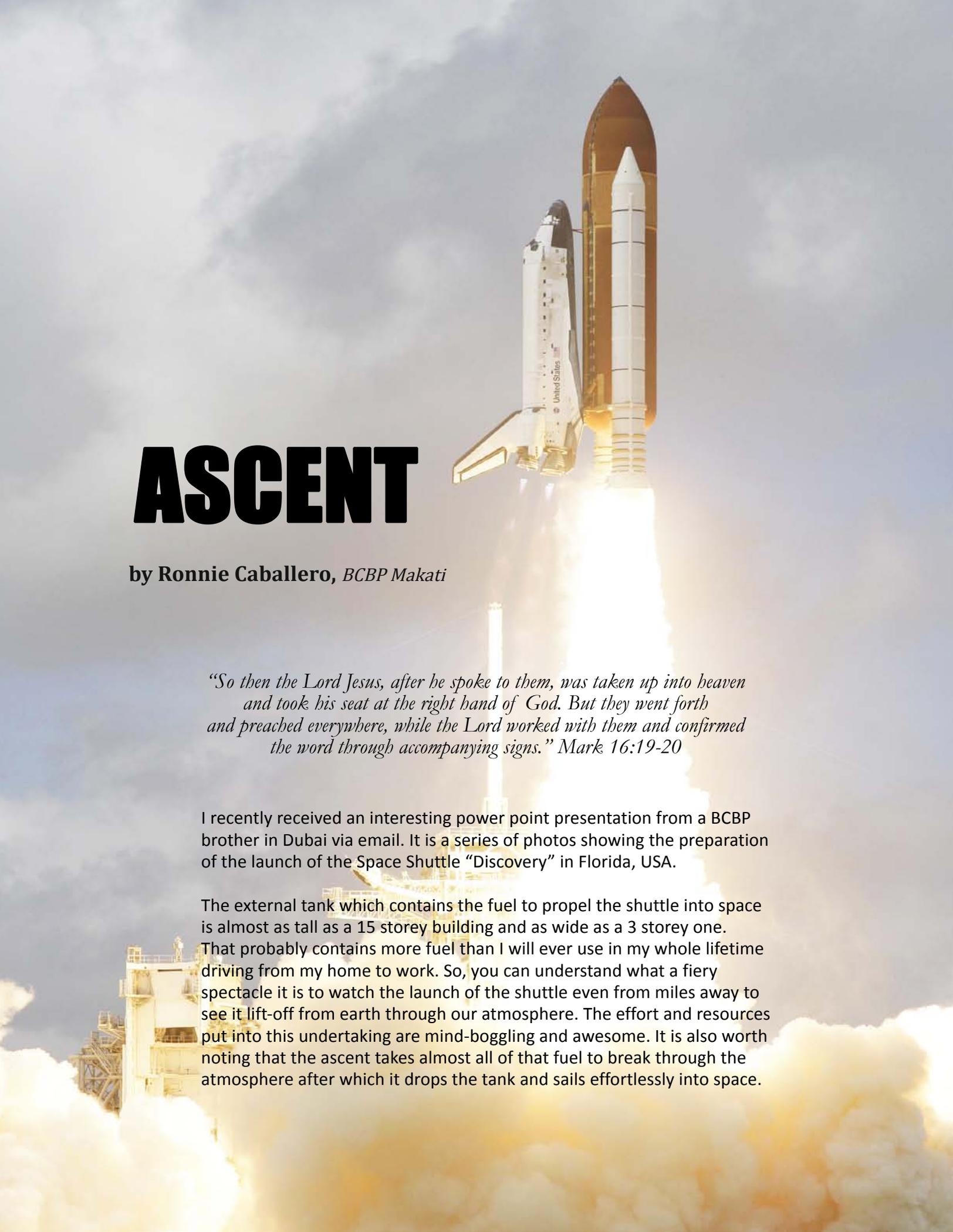
I believe that it is only as each one of us personally, willingly, and consciously exercises his/her freedom of choice – both “from” and “for” – that we and our families, communities, and our nation will experience true progress, both morally and economically.

It is through making the right choices (from God’s viewpoint) and taking the responsibility for such choices that we can build strong Christian families that will, in turn, upbuild our communities and nation.

Stop for a moment and think: Without strong families anchored on a full respect of everyone’s human sexuality, right to life (including the unborn) and right to human dignity as a child of God, without being able to exercise the full God-given freedom to make the proper choices for our lives and the lives of our loved ones, what do you think our society, our nation, would be like in, say, 20 years from now? 🙏



ASCENT

A photograph of the Space Shuttle Discovery during its ascent. The shuttle is oriented vertically, with its nose pointing upwards. It is attached to a large orange external tank and two white solid rocket boosters. A massive plume of white smoke and fire trails behind the shuttle, extending down to the bottom of the frame. The background is a clear blue sky with some light clouds. The shuttle's name "Discovery" and "United States" are visible on its side.

by **Ronnie Caballero**, *BCBP Makati*

“So then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them, was taken up into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of God. But they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word through accompanying signs.” Mark 16:19-20

I recently received an interesting power point presentation from a BCBP brother in Dubai via email. It is a series of photos showing the preparation of the launch of the Space Shuttle “Discovery” in Florida, USA.

The external tank which contains the fuel to propel the shuttle into space is almost as tall as a 15 storey building and as wide as a 3 storey one. That probably contains more fuel than I will ever use in my whole lifetime driving from my home to work. So, you can understand what a fiery spectacle it is to watch the launch of the shuttle even from miles away to see it lift-off from earth through our atmosphere. The effort and resources put into this undertaking are mind-boggling and awesome. It is also worth noting that the ascent takes almost all of that fuel to break through the atmosphere after which it drops the tank and sails effortlessly into space.

At the time of Jesus' Ascension into heaven, there was no rocket science to speak of. But no doubt, the Ascension boggled the minds and the very being of the apostles as they witnessed the most spectacular happening of their lives.

To me, that exclamation point of an event was a perfect frame for a major message that thrust an explosive force in the history of mankind that brought about the creation of the Catholic Church. This put so much emphasis on the Great Commission (described also in Mark as "the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation).

I would often ponder how great a force moved among the apostles and the new believers to bring about the birth of our Mother Church. How did they move from their doubts towards total commitment to the Gospel?

What was it surging in their veins and their souls that they worked tirelessly and fearlessly proclaiming the Gospel as far and wide as they could? What force and inspiration blew through St. Paul and other martyrs that they could forget personal safety, comfort and would wholeheartedly trust the Lord and the Spirit's inner promptings.

In Mark 8:34-9:1, Jesus outlines the conditions of discipleship. It is also still a point of misunderstanding between him and his apostles who still, with the inclusion of Peter, believe he will reign in Jerusalem with worldly, political powers.

However my Liturgical Bible Diary goes further in that event. "Jesus summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them, 'Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the Gospel will save it.'

The diary says, 'Jesus rebuked Peter for his rejection and in today's portion of the Gospel, described the ascent of the soul to the summit of perfection. To the crowds, he said that whether anyone wants to come after him is a free choice, but once people accept, they must know that God then expects an upward sweep of one's soul. It's an invitation- an invitation to the three elements that constitute the essence of being Christian: denying oneself, carrying one's cross, and following him.

As for denying oneself, some people regret their choices, but few contemplate the wisdom

of the observation of the philosopher (Kierkegaard) "that life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards." The highest point of our ascent arrives when we take up our crosses, whatever they may be, out of the joy that follows upon love.'

This then I believe is what composed that explosive force that moved through the apostles and the early church, the acceptance of one's cross out of love. The ascent of the early disciples' souls towards perfection through acceptance was a force so powerful it brought the Catholic Church to where it is. This imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation is none other than our own witness to the perfect and unconditional love of Jesus for us.

As Bruno Forte says, "The proclamation of the Gospel is not of a doctrine but of the person of Jesus Christ." However, the proclamation of Jesus and his love will have a hollow feeling within all of us if we have not ascended, that is, denied ourselves, carried our cross and followed him daily. 🕊



BCBP's **BIG** Brothers Share During Pray-Over

by Beth Ginete, *BCBP Makati*



On Friday, August 20, 2010, the BCBP held a Metrowide Metro Manila (North and South Chapters) Prayer Assembly at the Santuario de San Antonio Parish Hall, Forbes Park, Makati City. The joint assembly celebrated a thanksgiving Mass and extended their prayers over the BCBP brothers and sisters presently in government service.

Fr. Herb Schneider, SJ, BCBP's Spiritual Director, celebrated the Holy Mass attended by about 300 members. Fr. Herb mentioned in his Homily that no readings were more appropriate for the occasion than the timely First Reading from Ezekiel 37:1-14 and the Gospel from Matthew 22:34-40. The vision of dry bones coming to life by the power of the

Holy Spirit was an appropriate picture of what we all want to happen in our country. He said that the BCBP men and women who have bravely accepted the challenge of serving in this new administration should be hopeful that only through the love for God can they also love and serve their countrymen and arrive at justice and peace.

Immediately after the Holy Mass, Area Managing Director – Luzon, Manny Jimenez explained the reason for the Metro Wide Prayer Assembly, mentioning that across the nation, the BCBP community had already started supporting those in government with their prayers. Now referred to as “BCBP in Government Brothers” or “BiG Brothers”, emcees NSC-PSD Director Joey Avellana and Beth Ginete, both from BCBP Makati, invited special guests, BIG Brothers, to address the members and share what they feel about their new assignments and how the community can be supportive of their new assignments.

After the BIG Brothers each had shared their thoughts with the assembly, all brothers and sisters present led by Fr. Herb prayed over them, invoking the Lord to bless them with wisdom, courage, perseverance and strength to carry out their respective responsibilities for the good of the Filipino people.

*It is not how much we do,
but how much love we put in the doing.
It is not how much we give,
but how much love we put in the giving.
- Mother Theresa*

Here are some snippets from their sharings:



RENE ALMENDRAS
Secretary of the Department of Energy
BCBP Cebu – CLP 1

“This assignment was totally unexpected. My immediate reaction when I received the invitation to serve in the Department of Energy was that I have to discern this. Together with my wife, Marides, we sought a priest to help us in the decision. We were led to Fr. Manoling Francisco, SJ who said to us, ‘maybe the latest song I have composed is really an answer to your prayer. The song entitled “Kailan Pa Man” is about God’s infinite love and protection.’ This song was indeed the confirmation we needed before my saying “Yes” to the invitation.” Bro. Rene and Sis. Marides both agreed, “that this is our turn to “give back” for all the blessings we have received from our faithful and loving God. We expect our BCBP community to help us find solutions together and to move things forward.”



ROGELIO SINGSON
Secretary of the Department of Public Works and Highways
BCBP Makati- CLP 11/Ligaya ng Panginoon Community-District Coordinator

“The text invitations came while I was attending a retreat conducted by Fr. Herb Schneider, SJ. My immediate reaction to the invitation was a resounding “No”. Surprisingly, the retreat was aptly entitled “Heroic Leadership.” My discernment process resulted in identifying all cons, i.e. sacrifice for family, financial and loss of private time, but on the side of the ‘pros’ was the all important love of God and love of country. In the following days, several other scriptural readings affirmed the call until the final Scriptural reading clearly spoke about “Entering the narrow gate”. That was instrumental in my answering the call to government service.

“From where I am holding office, I cannot see everything happening around our country. So since BCBP is all over the country, I need your help in giving feedback about what is happening in your respective areas. We cannot afford to be mere bystanders and I encourage all of you to help me.”



MARIO MONTEJO

Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology
BCBP Greenhills-CLP 36

He described himself as a ‘technopreneur’ with a record of many technology innovations that make use of and substitute indigenous materials for imported ones. He believes his forte is thinking up doable projects that would give immediate benefits to people in the varied fields in his area of responsibility – science and technology. He proposed back-to-fundamental approaches to technical problems now facing the country, believing that we Filipinos have the creativity and basic skills to solve these technical problems ourselves. He encouraged all BCBP members to fire up their innate creativity to help him in his innovative programs for the good of the Filipino people.

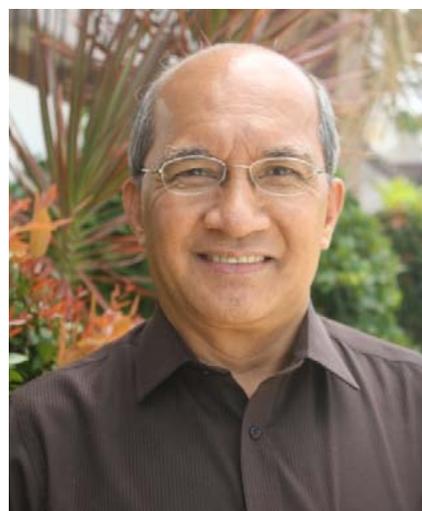


JESUS EMMANUEL PARAS

Congressman of 1st District Bukidnon
BCBP Cagayan de Oro – CLP 1/
Makati

“Together with my wife Nena, my children , and with the help of some BCBP members, I campaigned across almost 130 plus barangays in the first district of Bukidnon. This is my first time in Congress and I have not yet delivered any privilege speech there, so this short speech here in BCBP is my first as a new Congressman.

In those travels across Bukidnon, I became very aware of the needs of our people; some of them are as basic as electricity, water and infrastructure. I am encouraged by the presence of our brothers here (referring to the other BIG Brothers present) and together we hope to collaborate, not only in satisfying the basic needs of my district, but also in spreading the values of Jesus Christ as I serve my constituents.”



MANNY IMPERIAL

Executive Director of the Toll Regulatory Board
Chapter Head of Legazpi Chapter-CLP 7

“I head one of the more controversial boards, presently dealing with pending planned increases in tollway fees. The challenges and difficulties are part of my work and but in all things, my prayers are always, “Thy will be done, Lord”.

We hope to always exercise transparency in our dealings and we pray for the understanding and support of the people who benefit from our services. “

In addition to those BIG Brothers who shared their thoughts during the assembly, more than 60 other BCBP brothers and sisters from different chapters serve the new government in varied capacities as Governors, Mayors, Vice Mayors, Councilors, and Regional Directors. Other newly announced appointees include:

- **GINA BAUTISTA MARTIN** - Chairperson of the Sugar Regulatory Board, BCBP Bacolod
- **NOEL DELOS REYES** - Chief Superintendent, BCBP Greenhills
- **FRANCIS MAPILE** - PRC Board Examiner for Electrical Engineers, BCBP Makati –BCLP 22/Manila Chapter



FROILAN TAMPINCO

President of the National Power Corporation
BCBP Baguio-CLP 4 and member of BCBP Board of Trustees

“When the Lord gives you an assignment, he expects a lot, and you should expect it goes with great responsibilities. Since I had held this position during the previous administration, I was prepared to turn over and ensure a smooth transition to the new appointee of the present government. It’s not easy to serve in government, and since my term was over, I was gladly looking forward to giving up the position and continuing my service in other ways. However, unknown to me, my new boss was also a member of BCBP and, although my position has yet to be confirmed, I am ready to serve.

“I believe it’s easy to love people when you like them, but difficult to do when you are raring to get back at them. But I know that it is expected that pains, hurts, misunderstandings and challenges come while in

government service. So in my prayers I ask the Lord that I, together with my brothers and sisters in the BCBP, be ready to support change and also to be part of that change. Let us take comfort in Pope John Paul II’s favorite verse, “Be not afraid.”

JOSE MIGUEL RODRIGUEZ

Philippine Navy Commodore
BCBP Palawan - BCLP 1/
Quezon City

“Many of you are probably wondering how one can reconcile working in the Army while being a member of BCBP. In my own experience, BCBP has made a difference in my life. So I encourage you all to make sure your daughters marry husbands from BCBP.

BCBP truly makes us better military officers. The presence of BCBP nationwide makes it easy for me to be assigned from one place to another as I know I can come home to a Chapter and feel the support and prayers of our members in any part of our country.”



Gen. ROBERT RONGAVILLA

Deputy Regional Director for Administration NCRPO
BCBP Alabang-CLP 29

“I ask BCBP to help us change the image of the Philippine National Police (PNP). Amidst another controversial case, I now spearhead the investigation of alleged police brutality. But rest assured, this is more of an exception and not a trademark of PNP.

Inspired by BCBP, we start any assembly or meeting with an invocation even before the National Anthem. We are trying to build up a new face of the PNP and we would like to ask you to give PNP a chance to accomplish its mission.” 🙏



*My prayer is that light will flood your hearts
and that you will understand the hope
that was given to you when God chose you.
Then you will discover the glorious blessings
that will be yours together with all of God’s people.*

Ephesians 1:18

SAN PABLO, BCBP'S 65th CHAPTER, INSTALLED

Last July 10, 2010, the San Pablo Chapter was heralded as the 65th chapter of the entire BCBP Community in a grandiose but spirit-filled celebration held in Coco Palace Hotel, San Pablo City, Laguna. No less than the BCBP President Larry Veloso administered the installation, supported by Manny Jimenez, AMD for Southern Tagalog (ST) and Joff Almoro, RCD of ST 1.

Along with the installation, the Governance Team of the chapter was also instituted, with Vic Longno taking the helm, together with members of his support team: Obet Guia (Mission Director); Rey San Buenaventura (Formation Director); Fred Alban (Programs and Services Director); Jake Quintillano (Treasurer); and Cris Elpidas and Oca Villavicencio (Unit Leaders).

A Eucharistic Celebration by Rev. Fr. Jerry Gaela, San Pablo Chapter's Chaplain/Spiritual Director, was the first order of the day. After the formal rites, the brothers and sisters were treated to a sumptuous dinner and a showcase of talents from among the members of the chapter, the youths of San Pablo and Calamba, and some members



of the Calamba Chapter. Program emcees were Oca Villavicencio, Cris Elpedes, and Guen Evasco.

Manila Chapter was the first to sow the BCBP seed in this quaint city of San Pablo in the year 2000. Later on, the Calamba Chapter carried over the task of growing the outreach to the full-fledged chapter that it is now. Taking inspiration from Philippians 1:6, "He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ," the San

Pablo Chapter has now indeed completed its initial phase and is ready to venture into a more mature stage in its community life.

Particular individuals have been helpful in this journey: Jun and Nancy Catan and Francis and Edel Mapile, who were then the Chapter Head and Mission Director of the Manila Chapter, respectively; and Manny Cosico of BCBP Calamba who served as San Pablo Outreach Head, 2005-2008.



SAN JOSE MINDORO NOW A BCBP CHAPTER

As approved by the BOT Mancom, BCBP San Jose Mindoro has been elevated from Outreach to Chapter status, effective June 12, 2010.

The new Chapter Governance is composed of the following:
 Chapter Head : Bong Espiritu;
 Mission Director : Pabs Lazaro;
 Formation Director : Doms Bagatsolon;
 Program and Services Director: Orly Roldan;
 Treasurer : Ricky Magtoto;
 Unit Leader/s : Randy Amarila and Richard Apoderado Fe Concel

Also, BCBP Sablayan (Mindoro) has been elevated to regular Outreach with Bro. Boy Abeleda as Outreach Head — under BCBP San Jose Mindoro. BCBP Paranaque was the former mother chapter of BCBP San Jose Mindoro.



LIPA CHAPTER TALKS OF GOOD HARVEST

Last August 28, 47 participants of BCLP 16 - Lipa Chapter were baptized. The whole Lipa community, headed by the couple Boogie and Margie de la Pena were so overwhelmed by the works of the Holy Spirit.

The BCBP Lipa “Family Tree,” which Nene Cootauco made, posted a big challenge for the members to invite (its stated there who invited who), bringing in ONE couple to attend the BCLP and it was a MUST.

The anniversary and the Regional Breakfast held last April and June respectively was also a big help. The breakfast head, course leader, and the sponsors took turns in “texting the breakfasters.” It was also a good thing that the course leader knew of his role a year before the BCLP (while also preparing the assistant course

leader); they were able to plan everything ahead of time. The service team, with the sponsors, went to the participants’ house to invite them personally.

Then, the Course Leader made sure that a week before the BCLP, all the letters signed by the participants were already with them.

“Teamwork” and “preparedness” are keys to successful activity. We saw those among our members.

The best lesson that I learned from our members is that “When we serve the Lord, we must give Him our all. No ifs, no buts, no doubts, no fears. Lets give the Lord our best, not the excess of what we have. Let us not be afraid to serve God with everything that we are . . . and surely he will take care of the rest.”

As a servant of God, we all have our weaknesses and shortcomings. We had gone through rough times as well. Before, we also can’t invite new members to join in. We only had few members 10 years back.

But God restored the “burning flame” in each and everyone’s heart. And I think that’s what we lack, we don’t believe that “we can make things happen,” for with God all things are possible if we only “believe.”

Let us bring a friend to the brotherhood and share with them the joy and peace that only God can give. Let’s put that flame back in each and everyone’s heart, let’s help one another in “Bringing Christ to the Marketplace and Bringing the Marketplace to Christ.

*by Noel Landicho
 CH of Lipa Chapter*



SHOULD WE BOTHER GOD WITH THE SMALL STUFF?

by Bobby Atendido, *BOT Chairman*

There are many trivial, inconsequential decisions that we make on a daily basis. We are very busy with the mundane - what to eat, what to buy, where to go, what to read, where to surf in the internet, what shows we view on TV, the movies we watch, which friends we talk to, etc. etc.

On the business side, we are busy attending to paperwork, meetings, reports, letters that must be sent out, deadlines to meet. We make business decisions driven by logical and analytical thinking.

Business plans are prepared backed up by market and financial analyses, market research and focus group discussions, internal and external reviews and consultation. We scan the environment for opportunities and threats.

Endless meetings are held, all done in the hope that we will make the right business decisions. Business dictates that we follow policies and procedures, and processes as stipulated in corporate manuals.

The question is: **“Where is God in all of these?”**

Should we consult God for every decision especially the minor

ones that we have to make on a daily basis. Did he not give us the brains and the power to think for ourselves?” After all, as mature and responsible adults, we do not run to our parents every time we have to make a decision.

I used to think that what our Lord is probably more interested in is the general direction of our lives, the major milestones, the forks in the road. After all, these are the significant times that determine the trajectory of our lives. These are the moments when we have to consult him, ask for his guidance, seek spiritual discernment. It is the big stuff that we should bring to God. We seek God so as not to make big and sometimes fatal mistakes.

I also used to believe that He really leaves us alone to make the small and sometimes not so small decisions because He does not want to spoon feed us every day. Allowing us the freedom to

choose helps develop our own decision-making prowess and our character. All the better for mistakes we commit because we are supposed to learn from them. It reminds me of a retreat master who was asked for his opinion as to a particular issue. He responded by throwing back the question to the one raising the question and asked ‘what do you think?’. His point was for the participants to become informed and seek the answer without resorting to the opinion of others.

The way to accomplish this, he says, is that we have to strive for higher levels of consciousness or awareness so that we can exercise our best judgments. He further said that the challenge is for men to become fully “conscious” so that intelligent and wise decisions can be made. Decision makers must be accountable for the consequences. Given these opposing points of views, there seems to be an apparent contradiction of sorts.

On the one hand, we are supposed to seek God's will all the time. We are told that He cares about the tiniest, intimate details of our lives. After all, isn't it written in the bible that he even knows how many strands of hair we have on our heads.

On the other hand, since we are supposed to exercise our God-given mental faculties to make decisions, should we even involve God in the day to day running of our lives, in the petty and tiny details excepting perhaps for the major issues? Isn't it too much to ask the Lord for the little things we are about on a daily basis which we can very well take care of on our own?

My Jesuit training says that we should exercise logic and reason to arrive at decisions. It has taken me a number of years to realize that there is really no contradiction. I think the answer can be found in what the Lord said "If you abide in me and my words abide in you,

you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you (John 15:7)". To abide is to be present, to be immersed. This is the heart of the matter. The Lord wants to be present in our lives, inside our hearts, our minds and our very souls. He desires to be totally immersed in our entire being. Not a casual acquaintance he seeks. It is a permanent residency.

When he says that we should be a new creation in Christ, he literally means it. Our relationship with Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior does not mean that we are merely to be transformed. Rather, we must allow ourselves to be re-created into an entirely new creature, a replica of God who will think, speak and act like him. This is also why he says we must die unto ourselves, to discard the old wineskin, to leave the old for the new, to lose ourselves so that Christ can be found in us.

Its implication is that when we abide in His word, it is the mind of

God that works in us. God's ways and character become our own. Decisions and response will now be driven by the nature of God in us.

The way of love, of peace, of communal goodness will drive our day-to-day choices. Whether our decisions will be life-changing or just trivial ones, there is no more differentiation because the abiding presence of God will always influence them and guide our feet into the correct path. Our loving choices become innate and natural, habitual, and automatic. However, while it is God who will drive these choices, there are two things we should bear in mind.

Firstly, He will not make the decision for us. We still have to take the step. While his presence is in us, we still have to choose which way to go, trivial or otherwise. This is where the exercise of our freedom of choice comes in, where the human and the divine coincide and intersect. When Christ lives in us, we we become liberated, truth will set us free.

The second point is that abiding in the presence of Christ is a life-long journey. We have to train our minds and hearts to think the thoughts of God so that when we are faced with decisions, whether minor or major, they are driven by Christ himself. We need to train our hearts to listen to the small voice of the Holy Spirit and act accordingly to his promptings.

When Christ is in us, there is nothing then so small that will not interest God. ☩



Photo source: <http://paulwilkinson.wordpress.com/2009/07/14/forgetting-and-then-remembering-to-pray-for-someone/>

Love...

Its Meaning and Its Labors

by Annie Salvador, *BCBP Baguio*

Are you familiar with M Scott Peck? He was a prominent psychiatrist, a prolific author who has become one of the seminal writers on psycho-spirituality. Among the books he's written are *The Road Less Travelled*, as well as *Further Along The Road Less Travelled*, *A World Waiting To Be Born*, *The Different Drum*, *People of the Lie* and *In Heaven As On Earth*. Notice me fight the temptation to list them all, because each is truly excellent.

I guess you have figured that he must be a favorite of mine. This is because in Dr. Peck, I find that science and religion have no conflict, as each in fact reinforces the other. His writing's appeal to me, a psychologist and a renewed Christian, seems a most natural thing.

In the next few months, therefore, I have decided to write articles based on the work of M Scott Peck, linking the material closely to family life and to parenting in particular. To launch this series, we will discuss the most basic, the most fundamental element in family life: **LOVE**.

DEFINING and DEBUNKING

M Scott Peck defines love as "the will to extend one's self for the

purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth." The operant keywords here are:

1. **will** – love is a conscious intent;
2. **extending one's self** – it is an evolutionary process, as extending oneself makes one larger than one used to be;
3. **one's own** – it begins within, for we are incapable of loving another unless we love ourselves; and
4. **spiritual** – love necessarily has regard for eternity, because love is God relating to us.

Love then, is willful, effortful, painful, and soul-oriented. It is always a form of work or a form of courage. If an act is neither, then it is not an act of love. There are no exceptions.

Love IS NOT Feeling. Real love is volitional rather than emotional. Real love is often manifest when we decide to take loving and constructive action despite the fact that we don't feel loving toward the beloved at the time; in fact even when we are experiencing dislike. Thus, a father who tries to hold his temper as he looks into the eyes of a son he knows is lying to him, or a mother who attends to a picky

eater even as she's tired from a whole day at the office. True love is not a feeling by which we are overwhelmed. It is a committed, thoughtful decision. People who love must regularly, routinely, and predictably attend to the person and to the relationship regardless of how they feel.

Love IS NOT dependency.

We truly love not because we are compelled, nor coerced, but because we choose. Loving requires maturity. There are no shortcuts. The self must be defined before it can be extended. An identity must be established before it can be transcended. One must find oneself before one can share it. This presents itself as a perfect argument against teen marriages, as adolescents are still in the process of self-formation and self-discovery. Thus, committing to a married relationship at this time is dangerously premature.

Love IS NOT self-sacrifice.

The paradox of love is that it is both selfless and selfish. Whatever we do is done because we choose to do it, and we make that choice because it is the one that satisfies us the most. Whatever we do for someone else we do because it fulfills a need we have. Yet, it is not the



selfish-selfless continuum that distinguishes love from non-love, rather it is the AIM of the action. In the case of genuine love the aim is ALWAYS spiritual growth. This view towards the long haul is an especially important consideration for parents.

Saying “no” at the right time is more loving than saying “yes” at the wrong time. Fostering independence – even if it means being tough on our children – is more loving than taking care of them when and where they can otherwise take care of themselves. Love must be manifest in confrontation as much as in acceptance.

THE LABORS OF LOVE

Attention. The principal form of work that love takes is most commonly and importantly exercised as **listening**. It requires that we make the effort to set aside our existing preoccupations and actively shift our consciousness. Often we are unable or unwilling to expend the energy required for true listening, for no matter how briefly, it requires tremendous effort and total concentration. True listening can only occur when time and effort are set aside for it.

Listening, however, has many levels, and this largely depends on the nature – both in content and form – of the communication.

For instance, in a party or during playtime, it’s perfectly alright to give cursory attention to our children’s chatter. But when a child is explaining himself, or talking about his feelings, or approaches us to ask a question, then we must truly attend to him. This can be tricky too, as oftentimes children use levity to mask their big topics.

True listening is love in action. Listening to children is the best possible concrete evidence of esteem towards them. The more they feel valued, the more they will begin to say things of value, and children indeed have valuable things to say. In addition, the more our children know that we listen to them,

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the more willing they will be to listen to us and afford us the same esteem. The cyclical nature of benefits to listening underlines the reciprocity of loving: the giver also receives and the receiver also gives.

Independence. The process of growing up usually occurs gradually, via multiple little leaps into the unknown. Although they can be made at any age, many of these leaps are made during adolescence. Knowing this should provide parents with the impetus to aim for their children's independence, especially emotional independence.

A vast majority of parents fail in some degree to adequately recognize or fully appreciate the unique individuality or "otherness" of their children. It is very easy to fall into the trap of regarding them as "my children" rather than their own persons. This tendency sadly contributes to the fact that many so-called

grown-ups remain children psychologically, as they have never truly separated themselves from their parents and the power that their parents have over them.

The more lovingly we live our lives, the more we work (move out of our inertia) and the more we take courage (move out of our fears). Moving out of our fears and inertia requires risks, and the greatest is the risk of growing up. Risking, transcending, changing – these are all acts of self-love.

Love for oneself provides motivation for change and is the basis for the courage to risk it. It is only when one has taken the leap into the unknown of selfhood, independence and individuality that one becomes free to proceed along still higher paths of spiritual growth and to manifest love in its greatest dimensions. The highest forms of love are inevitably totally free choices and not acts of conformity.

Commitment. Commitment is the foundation, the bedrock of any genuinely loving relationship. It is our sense of commitment after the wedding which makes possible the transition from falling in love to genuine love. It is our sense of commitment after conception which transforms us from biological to psychological parents.

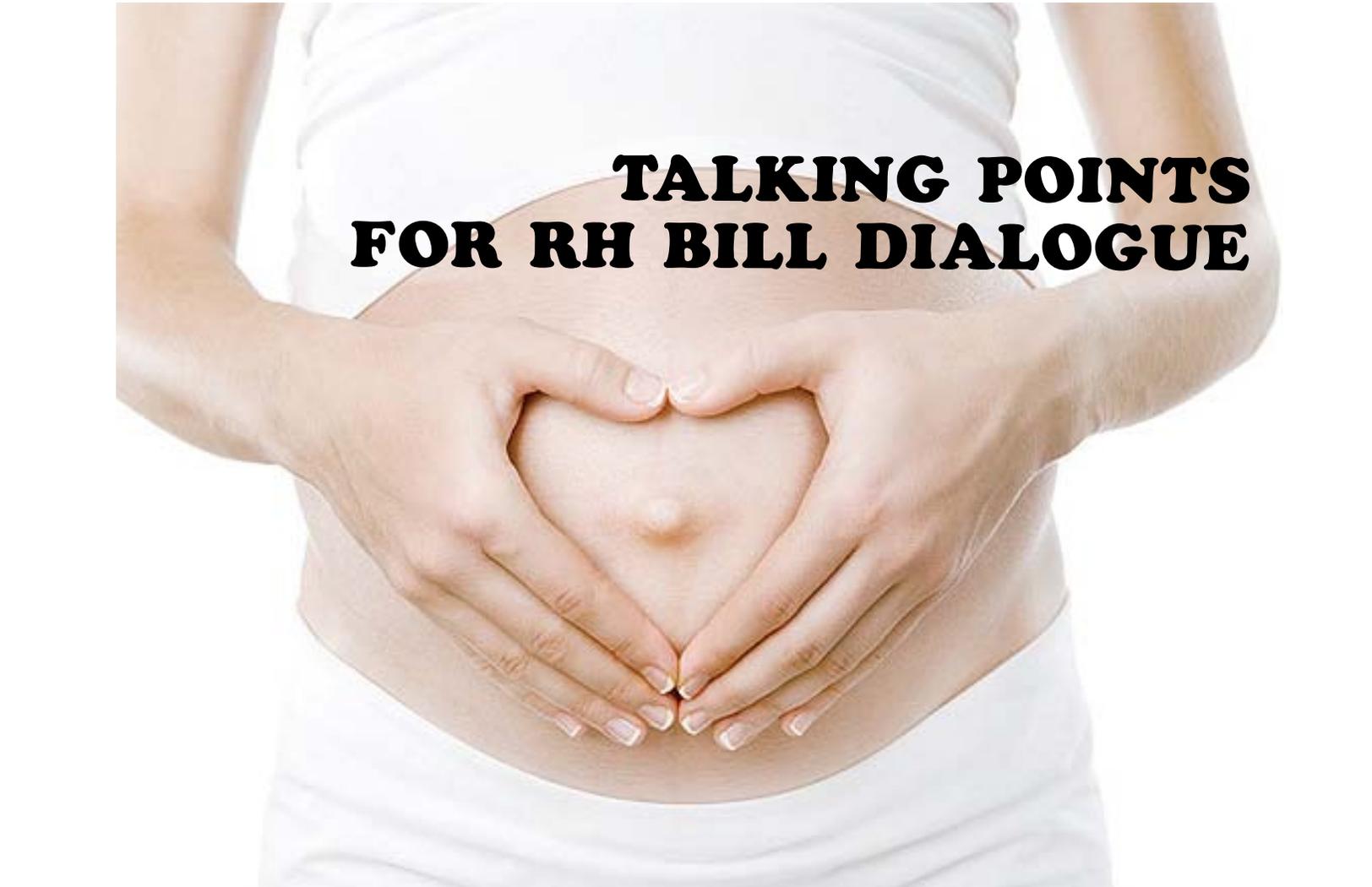
Commitment is inherent in any genuinely loving relationship. Commitment involves self-confrontation and change. Only when we are willing to confront ourselves and grow by changing can we become the fathers and mothers our children need us to be.

If one can say that one has built genuinely loving relationships with a spouse and children, then one has already succeeded in accomplishing more than most people in a lifetime. ☪

The Brotherhood of Christian Businessmen and Professionals (BCBP)

Our Vision : Bringing Christ into the marketplace and winning the marketplace for Christ.

Our Mission : We are a community of business people and professionals committed to living out Christian values and being change agents in the marketplace. We accomplish this through a process of on-going personal conversion, a commitment to professional excellence, community and nation building, practice of justice and integrity, and responsible care for all entrusted to us.



TALKING POINTS FOR RH BILL DIALOGUE

This Statement is issued jointly by Loyola School of Theology and the John J. Carroll Institute on Church and Social Issues by Authors: Fr. Eric O. Genilo, S.J., Fr. John J. Carroll, S.J., and Fr. Joaquin Bernas, S.J.

The polarization of Philippine society over the Reproductive Health Bill has been a source of discouragement and discontent among Filipinos. It is unfortunate that the debate has focused only on whether the Bill should be passed or rejected in its present form. Either option would not be good for Filipinos. The Church sees in the proposed Bill serious flaws that can lead to violations of human rights and freedom of conscience. It would not be acceptable to pass it in its present form.

Total rejection of the Bill, however, will not change the status quo of high rates of infant mortality, maternal deaths, and abortions. It is a moral imperative that such dehumanizing conditions should not be allowed to continue. What is needed is a third option: critical and constructive engagement. By working together to amend the objectionable provisions of the Bill and retain the provisions that actually improve the lives of Filipinos, both the proponents and opponents of the Bill can make a contribution to protection of the dignity of Filipinos and an improvement of their quality of life.

The following are talking points and proposals for dialogue and negotiation on the objectionable portions of the Bill:

The Protection of Human Life and the Constitution

- The Church insists on protection of human life upon fertilization. The question to be answered by the State is if this is the same position it will take regarding the protection of human life.
- The Philippine Constitution says that the State will protect the life of the unborn upon conception. It is not specified in the Constitution whether conception means fertilization or the implantation of an embryo in the womb. The Constitutional Convention seemed to favor fertilization. The definition of conception will have a bearing whether contraceptives that prevent the

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implantation of embryos would be legally allowed or not. This definition of conception in the Constitution must be worked out both by medical and legal experts in order to determine the parameters of what reproductive services can be provided by the Bill.

Contraceptives that prevent the implantation of embryos

- At the center of the controversy regarding abortion and the RH Bill are IUDs and other contraceptive medications and devices that may have the possible effect of preventing the implantation of an embryo, which for the Catholic Church, is considered an abortifacient effect. [Contraceptives without abortifacient effects are treated differently in church teaching. They are forbidden for Catholics but other religious traditions allow them.]
- Proposal: The State first has to make a clear position whether it considers the prevention of implantation of an embryo as an abortion. If the State takes this position, there must be a careful and scientifically based evaluation of each of the medicines and devices provided by the Bill. Those contraceptive medicines and devices which are determined to have abortifacient effects are to be banned even

now and regardless of whether the RH Bill is passed or not.

Age Appropriate, Value-Based, Integral Human Sexuality Education

- The mandatory nature of the sexuality education curriculum proposed by the Bill is a concern for the Church because it would compel Catholic educators to teach parts of the curriculum that may be unacceptable for Catholics. The Church is also concerned that the parents' right to decide on the education of their children would be denied by such a mandatory curriculum for all schools.
- Proposal: For the purpose of protecting academic freedom and respecting religious traditions, should not the right of religious schools to write and implement their own sexuality education curriculum according their religious traditions be respected? For public schools and non-religious private schools, an appointed panel of parent representatives, educators, experts in child development and psychology, medical experts, and representatives of religious traditions can write the sexuality education curriculum and the DEPED can monitor the implementation. Parents with children in public schools should have the right to have their children exempted from the sex



education class if the curriculum is not acceptable to them. The Constitution allows religious instruction in public schools only if the parents consent in writing. Should a similar provision be enacted relative to sexuality education? The Bill must also respect the conscientious objection of individual educators who refuse to teach a sexuality curriculum that violates their religious beliefs.

Providing Reproductive Health Information and Services for A Multi-Religious Society

- Even if the majority of the population of the country are Catholics, our democratic system should ensure that public policies are not determined solely by majority vote but also by a careful consideration of the common good of all, including non-Catholics.
- The Compendium of the Social Teaching of the Church rejects any imposition of norms by a majority that is discriminatory of the rights of a minority: (#422) “Because of its historical and cultural ties to a nation, a religious community might be given special recognition on the part of the State. Such recognition must in no way create discrimination within the civil or social order for other religious groups;” (#169): “Those responsible for government are required to interpret the common good of their country not only according to the guidelines of the majority but also according to the effective good of all the members of the community, including the minority.”
- It is the duty of various religions to teach their faithful and form their consciences about what their religious tradition allows and prohibits with regard to family planning. It is the duty of the government to provide correct and comprehensive information on all non-abortionifacient (as defined by law) family planning methods that are available. Consciences will thus be better equipped to make informed choices according to their religious traditions.
- Proposal: There can be two separate parallel programs for providing information and training, one for NFP and another for artificial methods of family planning (with separate budgets). The separation of the programs will ensure that NFP will get adequate funding and those trainers who wish to teach only NFP for religious reasons will not be forced to teach artificial methods. The conscience of health workers



and trainers should be respected. If a Catholic health worker or trainer conscientiously objects to teaching contraception methods, he or she should be allowed to teach only NFP methods.

Limits to the Anti-Discrimination Provision

- The current Bill prohibits the refusal of health care services and information based on a patient’s marital status, gender or sexual orientation, age, religion, personal circumstances, and nature of work. This provision must have parameters. For example, if a doctor refuses to administer an IUD to a minor who requests for it, would that be considered age discrimination?
- Should the provision apply equally to both in the public and private health care providers or shouldn’t private practitioners have more leeway in practicing their medicine as they see fit?

Employers’ Responsibility

- Employers should not be required to provide in their CBAs reproductive health services of their employees. To enforce this requirement would be a violation of the conscience of Catholic employers.
- Proposal: Such a provision is unnecessary because the general Philhealth medical coverage, which is mandatory for all employees, provides for such

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reproductive health services upon request of the employee. This allows employers with religious objections to contraceptives or sterilizations to avoid direct formal cooperation in the provision of such family planning methods to their employees.

Contraception as Essential Medicines in Government Health Centers and Hospitals

- The Church’s objection to this provision is that it appears to treat pregnancy as a disease.
- Proposal: The question of whether contraceptives are essential medicines should be resolved by a panel of objective medical experts such as the Philippine Medical Association. What contraceptives actually prevent diseases? It would be helpful to be able to present cases where the use of a contraceptive is a medically indicated treatment for a particular disease or emergency situation. If some contraceptives are ultimately decided as essential or emergency medicines that should be stocked in government health centers and hospitals, no contraceptives with abortifacient effects are to be allowed.

Freedom of Speech

- Proposal: The Bill’s provision that penalizes malicious disinformation against the intention and provisions of the Bill should be refined by a clear description of what constitutes “malicious disinformation,” or failing that, the provision should be scrapped.

Implementing Norms

- Proposal: The committee to be in-charge of the Bill’s implementing norms should have representatives

from major religious traditions to ensure that the rights of people of various faiths would be protected.

The above proposals are intended to generate constructive and respectful dialogue leading to concrete actions that would correct the RH Bill. It is hoped that the parties involved in the RH debate would move away from hard-line positions and consider negotiations as a more positive step towards working for the good of all Filipinos, with special consideration for the unborn, the youth, women and families in difficult circumstances.

Finally, we can turn to the following Christian maxim as our guide in our search for answers and solutions regarding the RH Bill: “In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; and in all things, charity.”

For things pertaining to protecting human life and dignity, we need to come to a consensus for the common good; for things that can be left to individual decisions without violating human life and dignity, we need to respect freedom of conscience of every Filipino both Catholics and non-Catholics; in all our discussions, we need to speak and act with charity and understanding as members of the same human family and community.

You can read more insights about this RH Bill in our community portal (www.bcbp-phil.com) . Read other comments by former Senator Kit Tatad in this article, “No Place for the RH Bill in Our Law.”





BCBP NATIONAL NOW ON FACEBOOK

The Brotherhood of Christian Businessmen and Professionals (BCBP) has launched its presence on Facebook under the moniker "BCBP National." This is the official Facebook page of the BCBP. For now, membership will be exclusive to BCBP members only; so all members are encouraged to sign up as soon as possible.

We encourage everyone to use this platform to communicate and share updates, news, and events between and among BCBP Chapters and Outreaches across the country and beyond. Also, feel free to post prayer petitions so we can, as one community, pray with you.

Bernadette Joven, wife of Calamba Chapter Head Bunny Joven, has been designated administrator of the FB group, in coordination with Nancy R. Catan, BCBP Portal Editor.

For more community news and exciting upcoming updates, visit the BCBP Community Portal at www.bcbp-phil.com on a regular, daily basis.

Let's communicate. Let's share.
Let's evangelize and win
the marketplace for Christ.
God bless BCBP!

YOU ARE INVITED FOR A CUP OF COFFEE, TEA, and "WE"

Nothing stimulates the senses like coffee or tea with friends.

The English have an enviable tradition of enjoying afternoon tea with friends and family. Silver teapots filled with Earl Grey, silver trays displaying raspberry scones and lemon curd - these make up the familiar sights and sounds of a traditional English tea.

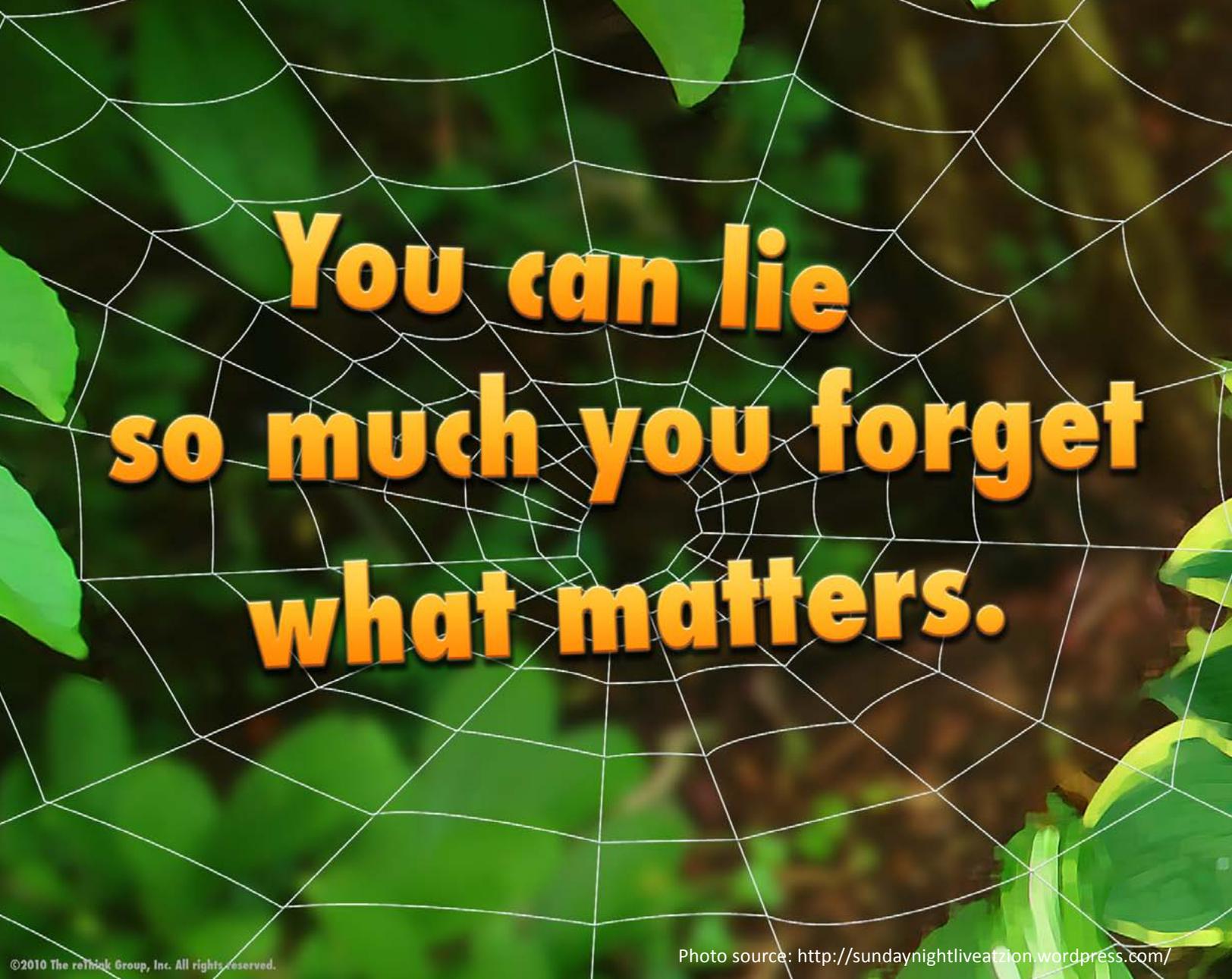
What a lovely way to get off of life's carousel for a time to re-focus on one of the most important things in life - our relationships. There's something incredibly inviting about a coffee and teashop, where the smell of freshly ground coffee beans and hundreds of varieties of loose teas mingle in the air. Soothing jazz or classical music often provides a delectable environment for good conversation and a great opportunity to unwind. Coffee bars and tearooms are springing all over.

Why not invite a friend to linger with you over a warm, soothing cup of premium coffee or tea in a relaxed (or jolly) atmosphere? Enjoy the rich rewards of uninterrupted, relaxed conversation and a growing relationship (with each other and our Lord). Growing relationships take time and planning - coffee grounds and tealeaves may just be the best fertilizer of all!

The BCBP Breakfast is just the place to experience this warm, relaxed ambience and enjoy growing friendships with other businessmen and professionals and our Lord over a cup of coffee, tea or chocolate and a delicious breakfast. Of course, the music is inspirational, as are the personal testimonies of those who share their walk with the Lord. Your hunger, both physical and spiritual, will be satisfied.

Source:
*Coffee Break Devotions:
Invigorating Blend
of Reflections and Quotations
to Energize Your Day,
pp. 168-269.*





**You can lie
so much you forget
what matters.**

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Photo source: <http://sundaynightliveatzion.wordpress.com/>

The Importance of Being **Honest**

by Henrylito Tacio

(Full spread article featured in The World Mission Magazine,
August 2010, No. 236, Vol. XXII, reprinted with permission from
author and publisher)

*In societies apparently
ruled by profit,
competition, greed
and the often
uncontrolled power
of the rich and mighty,
one is tempted to ask:
Is honesty a dying virtue?*

Fortunately, the world is not drawn in black and white, and there are still many people who are truly honest. A quality that really makes the difference, both individually and socially.

“Be honest. Even if others are not, even if others will not, even if others cannot.” That seems to be the credo of the Brotherhood of the Christian Businessmen and Professionals. As its former (sic) president, Bobby Laviña, urges, “We must live good and honest lives. Be the change we wish to happen. Be honest in all times and in all circumstances.”

There are several ways of defining honesty. The dictionary itself has several meanings for the word: refraining from lying, cheating, or stealing; being truthful, trustworthy, or upright; showing fairness and sincerity; or free from deceit. If you describe someone having an honest living, it means that he gained or earned by fair methods his income, not by cheating, lying, or stealing.

Is honesty among Filipinos already a dying virtue these days? If you answer affirmatively, I will beg to disagree. Remember that airport employee who was commended for returning a lost shoulder bag containing cash and valuables left behind in a baggage conveyor at the arrival area of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport?

In Taguig City, the mayor extolled two city hall employees for turning over the P 40,000 cash which a businessman accidentally dropped. In Manila, a 41-year old city hall timekeeper suffering from polio returned P 60,000

worth of cash and checks and vital documents to a company messenger.

In San Pablo City, driver-owner Faustino Cardoza earned praises from people for returning the P 10-million cash left in his van by a German national. In Zamboanga City, a policeman got a one-rank promotion after he found and returned a bag, containing almost half a million pesos to a retired Philippine Army soldier at the airport.

Even in other parts of the world, some Filipinos still have the decency of being honest. If you can recall, the Senate honored cab driver Nestor Sulpico for exemplifying honesty and uplifting the image of Filipinos abroad by returning US\$ 70,000 worth of jewelry to its owner after it was left in his cab in New York City.

Nothing But the Truth

In the Book of Wisdom, according to American President Thomas Jefferson, “honesty is the first chapter.” But being honest is not just returning money and lost valuables. It’s more than that. It also means not cheating.

Dr. Madison Sarratt taught mathematics at Vanderbilt University for many years. Before giving a test he would admonish his class something like this: “Today, I am giving two examinations – one in trigonometry and the other in honesty. I hope you will pass them both. If you must fail, fail trigonometry. There are many people in the world who can’t pass trigonometry, but there is no one who can’t pass the examination in honesty.”

Honesty also means telling the truth, and nothing but the truth. And the person who tells the truth is ready to face the consequence. “To be willing to march into hell for a heavenly cause,” so goes a line of a popular song. Or as Louisa May Alcott puts it: “Let my name stand among those who are willing to bear ridicule and reproach for truth’s sake, and so earn some right to rejoice when the victory is won.”

Pulitzer prize-winning novelist Pearl S. Buck urges, “The truth is always exciting. Speak it then. Life is dull without it.”

But more often than not, people would listen to more fiction than truth. A famous clergyman was preaching one Sunday and noticed that many of his audience were drowsing. Suddenly, he paused, and then in a very loud voice, related an incident that had no connection whatsoever with his sermon.

The incident went like this: “I was once riding a small village and came to the house of a farmer. I stopped for a bit when I saw something stranger than what I had ever seen in my life. There was a sow with a litter of ten little pigs. The sow and the piglets had a long curved horn growing out their forehead between the ears.” At this point, the clergyman stopped and ran his eyes over the congregation. Everybody was wide awake. So, he remarked, “How strange it all is! Few minutes ago, when I was telling you the truth from the Bible, you all went to sleep. But now when you have heard a whooping lie, you are all wide awake!”

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GOD AUDITED MY LIFE THROUGH THE BCBP

by Lino Genel, *BCBP Zamboanga*

my first work after finishing elementary and high school with honors and a 2-year course in college was with the Philippine Air Force, assigned at the Edwin Andrews Air Base, Zamboanga City in 1975. It was there I met a petite beautiful lady who is now my one and only wife, Daie. Despite the objections of Daie's mother, we were married on May 29, 1977.

The arguments about financial difficulties began several months later. I was pursuing my college degree because of the challenge posed by my mother-in-law, thus adding to those expenses to our meager salary that barely covered our daily sustenance. However, I was able to complete my college degree. I asked the Lord to make this achievement a tool for my career's growth and most of all, let it enable me to be closer to my mother-in-law. God answered my prayer for when I was sent to Manila for a 6-month military officer's training, I entrusted my wife and three children, to her care and she was very supportive of all my plans.

Upon completing the military training, I left the service because at that time, it was difficult to apply for an active duty as a second lieutenant in the Philippine Air Force. I took the Civil Service Examination, passed it, and applied at the Commission on Audit. After a few jobless months, I received my appointment as State Auditing Examiner III, assigned as a Resident Auditor of two agencies in Basilan Province. Promotions after that were fast.

To enhance my professional growth, I enrolled in the College of Law; the following year Daie also enrolled. We took the bar together but we both failed! That was not God's plan for us because on



the same day that the bar results were released, I received a message from the COA Central Office that I had been promoted.

Despite our professional growth Daie and I were having serious personal problems: impatience with the children, Daie and I would not talk to each other for days at a time, I even had an extra marital affair. But the Lord never forgot us.

We had had numerous invitations to attend and join religious communities, but we had always turned them down with the excuse that we didn't have any serious problems. Little did we know that it was God's hand leading us towards conversion through one of our Division Chiefs who kept on inviting us to a breakfast fellowship. Just for curiosity we attended a Saturday breakfast in May 1999. To our surprise, we were impressed and overwhelmed by the reception given us by people whom we did not know. The sharers from BCBP Mactan touched our hearts; we were amazed at how strong and humble they were to share their life story with people who were strangers to them.

That very afternoon we joined the BCBP's Christian Life Program where we came to realize that it was not just enough to attend mass and light candles at the shrine of Fort Pilar; we needed to have a personal relationship with God. As our relationship with God grew, I found the grace to confess my sins to my wife, and by the grace of God, she found it in her heart to forgive me. As time went by through the teachings

in the BCBP, I learned to control my temperamental attitude toward our children, enabling me to heal my relationship with them and with other relatives.

We have experienced so many trials in our life and am convinced that God never abandons his children in times of trouble, making ways to protect us. We have received death threats and bribery offers because of my job as an Auditor. Financial difficulties never seemed to go away, especially when Daie and our children were sick and needed hospitalization almost every month. Demand letters came from banks; we resorted to selling our agricultural lot but it still did not cover our obligations. In 2002 I suffered my first stroke due to hypertension and high blood sugar.

Despite the difficulties we continued to pray fervently to the Lord to release us, especially from this financial bondage. We continued to be active in the BCBP where we gained our strength from brothers and sisters in Community who were very concerned about our plight. Finally our youngest daughter was able to be employed as a nurse in a big hospital in Abu Dhabi. Isn't God a good and great God?

My most recent trial in which God tested our faith and dependence on Him was when I had to undergo brain surgery due to blood clot and fractured skull because of a bad fall on August 31, 2009. Our brothers and sisters in the BCBP were the first ones who visited me in the hospital and they, plus members from other chapters, continued to hold us in their prayers and support us when we most needed it. Indeed, BCBP helped us not to lose hope and to depend entirely on our dear Lord. As a result my operation was successful and after two months I was back to work.

Daie shares that after what had happened to me, "I do really now understand that the reason for praying is not to have all we want, but to thank God for all He has given us and that every morning is a sign of God's great love for us."

For the eleven years we have been with the BCBP, we have learned that life only becomes meaningful when we live it with a purpose, when we survive every trial and anticipate positively every tomorrow with faith in God. Our life now is a daily walk of faith with the Almighty, full of surprises yet fulfilling, full of tests

yet rewarding, and full of trials yet strengthening ... especially when one is with a community like the BCBP that has helped us become more prayerful, humble and understanding toward other people.

We rely on God's promise in Psalm 91:9-11: "*If you have made the Lord your refuge, the most high your stronghold, no harm will come upon you, no disaster will draw near your home for He will command His angels to guard you in all your ways.*"

Responses to this testimony:

Your sharing is a powerful example of faith and trust in God and I know that when you abide in him, He will always take care of you and see you thru all trials in life. May God bless you always.

- Bobby Atantido

I was really touched..God Bless!

- Ellen Paraiso

Congratulations dad!!! ur d best.. we are so proud of u... we love u always and thank u for ur unconditional love and support to all of us.. ur d greatest dad in d world!!! u've always been our model to live a great life here on earth.. thanks and we love u so much!!

- Genevieve Karen Genel

Bro, you inspire me and I am sure I will be a better servant of God and our community because of your testimony. Thanks. God bless.

- Doms Bagatsolon

God is really good and great!

- Jackie



WHY GOD DO YOU ALLOW BAD THINGS TO HAPPEN?

by Dodo Sta. Maria, *BCBP Quezon City*

I looked around and saw the poverty and sufferings of my fellowmen. The abused and battered little girl, the orphaned and starving child, the sick, helpless woman lying on the cold pavement. I looked at myself, out of a job, forced to vacate our lodgings due to back rentals owed, with three children in school. I asked God: “Why? Why do you allow this to happen? Why don’t You do something?” Then God answered: “But my son, I am doing something, I created you!”

I have often complained that God is a distant and uncaring God, that He doesn’t answer prayers, that He is a God just to pass judgment whether you did good or bad in your lifetime. I know now that God is real, He is here, as real and as relevant as you and I. I know that everything that happens has a purpose and is a manifestation of His love and care as stated in Romans 8:28.

I was born 60 summers ago in a small town in Pangasinan. We just had enough to go around as I had three other brothers and four sisters; there were no extras but we lacked nothing. My father was a pilot in the military and a disciplinarian. Being a soldier, he was always away. As the eldest, I learned responsibility early, helping take care of my younger brothers and sisters.

After elementary I entered Christ the King seminary hoping to join the priesthood. But after four years the Prefect of Discipline discerned that I had no vocation, so I left and took my college at Colegio de San Juan de Letran. Right after graduation with an AB in Economics I was fortunate to land a job. Soon promotions came one after another. Companies

pirated me so that I became marketing manager then eventually VP-General Manager. And I enjoyed all the accompanying perks and power. After a while, I went into business for myself. In between, I got married to a beautiful girl and had three kids, two girls and one boy. God’s blessings were abundant but I did not recognize them; I attributed my success all to myself and my superior abilities!

The Lord is really all knowing and mighty; He wanted my attention and change of heart. He stripped us of all the material comforts we were used to, the government cancelled our license to operate, and we found ourselves in trouble financially. So I sought Him after nothing else worked, He was my court of last resort!

When I joined the Brotherhood of Christian Businessmen and Professionals, there was no dramatic conversion. It just seemed to me that my difficulties were easier to bear because I had other people who were willing to listen and even extend material help. But my focus was still on my financial difficulties. In my confusion, I thought that by doing service in the BCBP, God would notice and take my problems away, and I joined all the service activities I could.

I was so overwhelmed by what I perceived was my problem that it never occurred to me that we never missed a meal, my children did not stop schooling, my children were into the renewal themselves, my wife was very supportive. I had friends, more than just friends in the BCBP. But I wanted more, I still equated success to material things.

Then there came a time in 1993 when I really did not know where to get the money for the enrollment of our children. I called a family council and admitted to the children that they might have to stop schooling. Our daughter remarked, "Why do you always focus on the problems? Isn't God more powerful than all the problems in the world put together?" I was humbled by her remark and immediately asked forgiveness. From then on, I learned to trust in God. How do I do it? I just recall all the impossible miracles He did in our lives.

Let me relate a few. After that incident, our prayers contained less begging and focused on submitting and accepting God's will. My children never did stop schooling. Insurance clients that I thought were lost suddenly came back. Soon after I found myself with not one, but two consulting jobs. Another miracle was the healing of our daughter Julia who almost succumbed to H-fever.

I began bringing Christ into my marketplace. In the office with my co-workers, prayers before meetings were introduced, and my bosses exempted me from entertaining clients at night. I continued my service in the Brotherhood. I tried to be a faithful follower of God.

Despite this, one after the other my consultancies were inexplicably terminated. I think God wanted to find out, once and for all, where my heart really was. Although I asked, "Why?", I continued to cling to the Word of God, believing that all things work out for good. After a period of uncertainty and with God's help, we were able to establish and organize two companies that I headed.

But, you know I think God does not want us to remain in our comfort zones too much. Came the Asian crisis, the companies I had organized experienced severe difficulties and I was out of work again. In spite of my almost 10 years in the Brotherhood, the situation was still a source of anxiety and apprehension. A struggle raged inside me. One side said to trust in the Lord, that God had and would always take care of me. The other was my perception of what reality was. I was 50 years old – it would be difficult to market myself especially with the recession; if I went into business, I didn't have any capital or business to go into to.

Again the BCBP was a source of solace, especially my action group and my service activities. My BCBP

brothers reinforced my faith and trust in the Lord.

After venturing into the fish distribution business, making wrong decisions, and closing the business, after another period of depending on God for our sustenance, after many prayers especially by my wife and children, I am now employed as a financial advisor. I am happy as now I can put my faith into action and help people grow and protect their personal wealth. I believe God put me here for this purpose.

Looking back, our lives have been surrounded with problems and difficulties, one after another. But every time we survive them, we have become better people and closer to God. The lessons we have learned would not have been learned if we had not passed through those experiences. What did we learn? To anchor ourselves on God; to pray unceasingly to Him; to be more loving, caring and understanding towards each other. My family has bonded strongly at the lowest point of our lives. We have learned to cry out to Him as a family with broken and repentant hearts. I thank God that He has given us the grace to strengthen our relationships even during the lowest points in our lives.

I pray that, as my testimony proclaims the goodness and faithfulness of our Lord, the Lord will give me more opportunities to help you and more people experience the peace and confidence in the Lord that my family and I are all enjoying now.

Some responses to this testimony:

There is this saying, "God may be late but He is always on time". I guess faithfulness comes with a price that only our God knows in His mysterious ways.....Benjie Torre

There will always be 'red seas' in our life but one thing good going for us is that our faithful and loving, living God will always part them for our good, just as He did for Moses and the Israelites. Hebrews 13:5 says: "Do not depend on money. Be content with having enough for today for God has said: I will never forsake you or abandon you, and we shall confidently answer: The Lord is my helper, I will not fear." Pete Medina

Character and Destiny

Now, going back to honesty. Who doesn't want awards and recognitions? I have received many and I think I deserved to get those honors. Mark Twain once reminded me: "It is better to deserve honors and not have them than to have them and not deserve them."

In the mid-1980's, researchers at Cleveland State University made a startling discovery. They conducted an experiment by creating two fictitious job candidates, David and John. The candidates had identical

resumes and letters of reference. The only difference was that John's letter included this sentence: "Sometimes, John can be difficult to get along with." They showed the resumes to a number of personnel directors.

Which candidate did the personnel directors overwhelmingly prefer? No, it's not David but John. The researchers concluded that criticism of John made praise of John more believable. Admitting John's wart actually helped him sell John. Admitting flaws gives a person more credibility.

Now, I know a lot people who, when on the brink of dying, will be honest to admit their sins and tell the truth. After all, "with death," said British Salman Rushdie, author of *The Satanic Verses*, "comes honesty."

Should you wait for that day to come before you become honest? "Watch your thoughts; they become words. Watch your words; they become actions. Watch your actions; they become habits. Watch your habits; they become character. Watch your character; it becomes your destiny." 🙏

Bible Sharing Guide:

WHAT FAITH IS AND WHAT FAITH ISN'T

Objective: To gain a better understanding of what faith is and what faith isn't, and to learn how to strengthen our faith.

Scripture Selections:

A. The three main elements of faith: Heb. 11:1; Rom. 10:17; Matt. 10:32-33

B. What faith isn't: Deut. 18:10-13 2 Tim. 3:5 Isa. 47:13-15 1 Tim. 1:3-11 Wisdom 13:1-9 Wisdom 13:10-19

C. Admonitions on Faith Matt. 24:24 Heb. 2:4 1 Cor. 1:21-30 Psalm 89:1-37 Hebrews 11 Col. 2:6-7

Discussion and Sharing Starters:

1. Faith is a matter of internal conviction, of learning and teaching about Christ and of acknowledging Christ before others. How do you

assess your faith in each of these areas? Share how the Lord is working to increase your faith.

2. What are some of the common and widely accepted practices in the Philippines today that lead many Christians astray? What steps can we take to fight against these false practices?

3. In what ways do Church and Community help us become stronger in our faith?

4. Why is it important for us to have strong, unshakeable faith?

5. How can our everyday lives reflect our faith?

6. Ask yourself these questions:

- Why is faith in God important to me?
- Am I truly eager to increase my faith?

c. Am I willing to practice the discipline and commitment necessary to increase and strengthen my faith?

7. Hebrews, Chapter 11, is known as the "Chapter on Faith" and contains a listing of biblical heroes of faith. St. Paul gives us these many examples of men and women who risked everything they possessed and their lives for the sake of their faith in God as a way of emphasizing the importance for each of us to work in faith toward the same goal — God's kingdom — and of never being ashamed of our faith. Read Hebrews 11 again and reflect on the faith of each of the "heroes of faith".

What kind of faith did each hero have?

Is it possible for me to have this kind of faith today?

BCBP Women are no different from BCBP Men

by Marite Laviña, *BCBP Greenhills*

Women in the BCBP are no different than the men. Let me repeat that: Women in the BCBP are no different than the men ... in the sense that:

- We share the same BCBP Vision and Mission;
- We are called to be holy disciples of Christ; and
- We evangelize by how we live our lives.

In our family...

We work as a couple in translating these values in our family life, so that our children and the people who live with us experience Christ in how we communicate and treat one another. Through our example as parents, our family becomes a holy family, a church in miniature. Men give witness to the gospel as husband and father; women give witness to the gospel as wife and mother.

In our business milieu...

Women in the business community, particularly those in positions of authority, share in the evangelization work of the BCBP by reflecting Christ into their marketplace. This they do by ensuring that Christ's values prevail in the business dealings within their sphere of influence.

In our BCBP community...

Women share in the evangelization work in the BCBP community by making Christ present in the way we live the Commitment Card. We live our

lives so that everyone who comes into the BCBP finds a home here because they experience Christ in the way we relate to one another.

In our neighborhood...

Women can also share in BCBP's evangelization work by bringing Christ to those in need in their neighborhood community. This can come in the form of social action, livelihood training, counseling, conducting bible study or catechism classes.

In James 2:14, 26 we read: "My brothers, what good is it to profess faith without practicing it?...Faith without works is dead as a body without breath."

Fr. Pat Giordano, Bobby's former high school teacher, a very good friend, and Nancy's co-author, once asked me, "The BCBP is a great community but how have you helped the Philippines become a better country? How

have you harnessed all these talents and treasures and goodness in order to make your presence felt, in a very positive way?"

And so, in addition to Nancy's examples, I recommend that we begin to look at the neighborhoods around our chapter where we can help make lives better. We don't need to wait for our Chapter Head to tell us how to respond to the needs in our neighborhood community.

At one time, all the Action Groups in our Unit reached out to various communities in need... the aged and infirm, abandoned children with cerebral palsy, drug addicts on rehab, prisoners and retired priests, to name a few. Together with the men, the women brought needed food, medicine and supplies. They played and cared for children who needed to be hugged. They made time for the



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old and the lonely who needed someone to talk to.

At the next chapter assembly, members shared about how their experiences had blessed them and this paved the way for the chapter's succeeding programs: medical/dental missions, feeding programs, soap-making classes.

I know that many BCBP women are already doing this since it is a natural activity for us given our motherly instincts. We may not be building houses, but we will be enriching lives. And hopefully, when we finally come face to face with our Lord, we will hear Him say, as is written in Matthew 25:34-36, 40:

Come, you have my Father's blessing! Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me. I was ill and you comforted me, in prison and you came to visit me. ... I assure you, as often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me.

WE ARE WOMEN OF STRENGTH

Always remember that BCBP women are women of strength!

- Having a quiet and gentle spirit does not mean we are pushovers. We know the truth and we live by it.
- Being submissive doesn't mean we are subservient. When you think you are right but your husband still decides to do something different, it takes strength to be able to say: "OK, I will support you in your decision and pray that you are successful."
- Finally, it takes strength (and competence) to effectively balance home, work and community.

BCBP WOMEN, women of strength, your homes, your business milieu, the BCBP community, your country ... all are waiting to meet CHRIST.

When will YOU let them meet HIM? 

It's All In the Attitude

by Lili G. Morales, *BCBP Alabang*

(Excerpted from the BCBP's publication PRAYERTIME, pp 34, 80.)

For all the years that passed me by, I had the mistaken notion that I had made it – not through some connections or attached strings, but because of my own best judgment and foreknowledge of good things and big opportunities in store for me.

For a couple of times friends and colleagues came to me for consultations or advice, and I responded to their enquiries with open-mindedness and perceptive concepts. Of course, they appreciated my bits and pieces of advice and for this I was exhilarated. Successes came one after the other and

during all those times the acknowledgments or the accolades were mine to have and to own, omitting intentionally perhaps, or unintentionally, to give due credit to the others who had worked with me along the way.

By our word and by our actions, we are recognized – be they in any situation or place or time. Through our body language we unconsciously reveal our personality or trait since these are outward expressions of our physical and mental and emotional responsiveness.

next page please



I had been to many places holding several positions. During all those years, but specially these past recent times, I had been aware of people's reactions. I know that I had not been spared of squirmishness and scrutinizes of many people as well, including the people I deal with and members of the staff of the company I managed. It was also in these positions that of the many responsibilities I have, mainly involving public relations and personnel management, there was the demand for me to have a close watch and discernment of people's attitudes and subsequent behavior.

It is commonly said and heard, "It is not all a matter of aptitude but of our attitude in order to reach our altitude!" (The mastery of this subject can be also attributed to John Maxwell.)

Other people find Christian brothers and sisters eclectic in so many ways – being conspicuously different than others because they bring out the good, the right, the beautiful, the positive and true ways of life, bearing the attitude of Christ. And this should always be our goal – to have the attitude of Christ.

In His time and gentleness, God tapped me on the shoulder and convicted me of this with the reminder that successes are allowed by Him alone and can only be achieved through people in our respectively defined areas of responsibility. We are but channels of God-given wisdom, knowledge, and creativity to accomplish His purpose for us. And so it was, and is, and will be. 🙏



LAUGH LINE

Kids on the Old and New Testaments

This came from a Catholic elementary school. Kids were asked questions about the Old and New Testaments. They have not been retouched or corrected (i.e., incorrect spelling has been left in)... Enjoy!

- * In the first book of the bible, Guinnessis, God got tired of creating the world, so he took the Sabbath off.
- * Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree. Noah's wife was called Joan of Ark. Noah built an ark, which the animals come on to in pears.
- * Lot's wife was a pillar of salt by day, but a ball of fire by night.
- * The Jews were a proud people and throughout history they had trouble with the unsympathetic Genitals.
- * Samson was a strongman who let himself be led astray by a Jezebel like Delilah.
- * Moses led the hebrews to the Red Sea, where they made unleavened bread which is bread without any ingredients.
- * The Egyptians were all drowned in the dessert. Afterwards, Moses went up on Mount Cyanide to get the ten ammendments.
- * The seventh commandment is thou shalt not admit adultery.
- * Moses died before he ever reached Canada. Then Joshua led the hebrews in the battle of Geritol.
- * The greatest miracle in the Bible is when Joshua told his son to stand still and he obeyed him.
- * David was a hebrew king skilled at playing the liar. he fought with the Finklesteins, a race of people who lived in Biblical times.
- * Solomon, one of David's sons, had 300 wives and 700 porcupines.
- * Jesus enunciated the Golden Rule, which says to do one to others before they do one to you. He also explained, "a man doth not live by sweat alone."
- * It was a miracle when Jesus rose from the dead and managed to get the tombstone off the entrance.
- * The people who followed the lord were called the 12 decibels. The epistles were the wives of the apostles.

Forthcoming....

31st NAC in Dumaguete!

May 6-7, 2011

Theme:

“Remain In Me and Bear Much Fruit” John 15:5

Official website for the 31st BCBP National Anniversary Celebration: www.bcbp-nac31-dgte.com

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