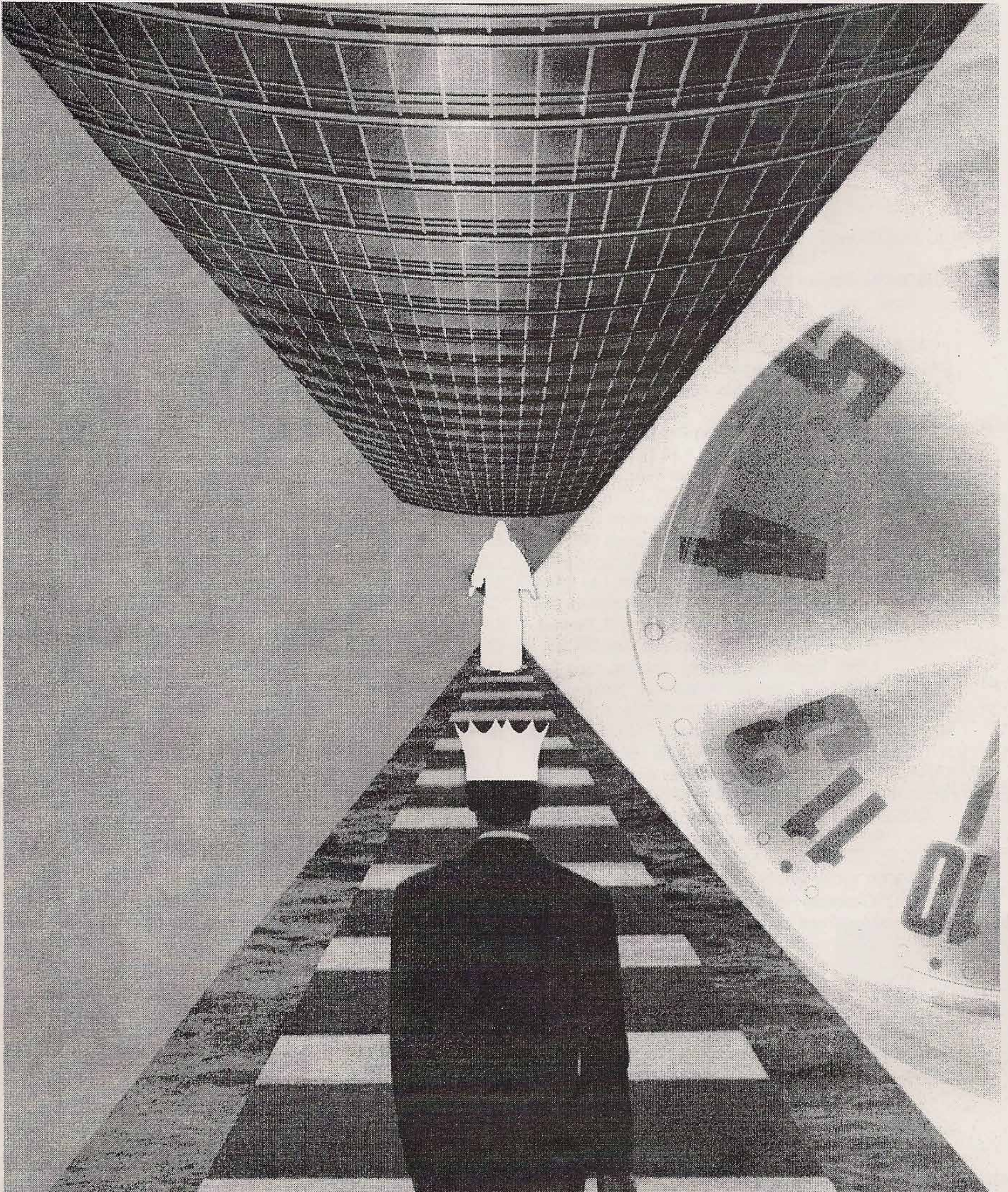


# Kapatiran

Vol. XIV Issue 6

November-December 2000





# BCBP



# Breakfast Venues

## MEN'S BREAKFASTS (7:30 A.M.)

Wednesdays – MAKATI : Makati Sports Club

Thursdays – GREENHILLS: Club Filipino, Greenhills  
VILLAMOR: Villamor Air Command Staff  
College (1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>)

Fridays – MANILA: Max's Restaurant, Ma. Orosa

### Saturdays

ALABANG: Ayala Alabang Country Club, Muntinglupa

BACOLOD NORTH: Nobles Restaurant

BACOLOD SOUTH: Nobles Restaurant

BAGUIO: Max's Restaurant, Kisad Road (1st, 3rd, 4th Sat.)

BAYBAY: Angelicum (1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Sat.)

BUKIDNON : Taipan Rest., Valencia (1<sup>st</sup>) Hotel Malibu  
Malaybalay (3<sup>rd</sup> Sat.)

BUTUAN: Embassy Hotel

CAGAYAN DE ORO: Silver Court, Cagayan De Oro

CALAMBA: Riverview Resort and Conference Center

CATBALOGAN: Maqueda Bay Hotel, Tomalistic Dist.,  
Catbalogan, Samar,

CEBU: Ding Qua-Qua Rest. Gen. Maxilom Ave., Cebu City

DAGUPAN: Jollibee Junction A.B. Fernandez Ave.  
cor. M.H. Del Pilar St. Dagupan

DAVAO: CAP Anda St. (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sat.)

DIGOS: CAP/ANP Hotel (every other Saturday)

ILIGAN: Mandelicious Native Foods (4th Sat)

ILOILO: Amigo Terraces Hotel

LAS PIÑAS: Italia Club 500, BF Resort, Las Pinas

LEGASPI: Albay Hotel, Legaspi City

LUCENA: Halina Hotel & Restaurant, P. Gomez,  
Lucena City (3<sup>rd</sup> Sat.)

LIPA: Sawali Restaurant, Sabang, Lipa City

MACTAN: Majestic Restaurant, Mactan City

MANDAUE: Flormont Hotel

MANILA: Max's Restaurant, Orosa St., Malate Manila

ORMOC: Pongos Hotel (3rd Sat)

PARAÑAQUE: Pidente Rest. Presidents Ave. BF Homes

PUERTO PRINCESA: Legend Hotel, Puerto Princesa (3rd Sat.)

QUEZON CITY: Max's Restaurant, T. Morato Ave.

RIZAL: Manila East Golf Club, Taytay, Rizal

ROXAS: Kanami Restaurant

SORSOGON: Jollibee Sorsogon (1st & 2nd Sat.)

SURIGAO: Gateway Hotel and Rest. (1st and 3rd Sat.)

TACLOBAN: YamYam Food Lane, Salazar St. (2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sat.)

TAGBILARAN: La Roca Hotel

TUGUEGARAO; Marilyn's Restaurant

VILLAMOR: Villamor Air Command Staff College

## LADIES' BREAKFAST

Wednesdays – MAKATI: Makati Sports Club (2<sup>nd</sup> Wed.)

Thursdays – GREENHILLS: Club Filipino, SJ (3<sup>rd</sup> Thurs.)

Fridays – MANILA: Max's Restaurant, Ma. Orosa

### Saturdays

ALABANG : Ayala Alabang Country Club (2nd Sat.)

BACOLOD NORTH: Nobles Restaurant (3rd Sat.)

BAGUIO: Max's Restaurant, Kisad Road Baguio City (4th Sat.)

CAGAYAN DE ORO: Tia Nanang, Corales St., (2nd & 3rd Sat.)

CEBU: Ding Qua-Qua Restaurant (3rd Sat.)

DAVAO: CAP Anda St. (4th Sat.)

ILOILO: Amigo Terraces Hotel (last Sat.)

LAS PINAS: Italia Club 500 (3rd Sat.)

LEGASPI: Albay Hotel (4th Sat.)

MACTAN: Majestic Restaurant (2nd Sat.)

MANDAUE: Flormont Hotel (3rd Sat simultaneous men's/ ladies)

ORMOC: Pongos Hotel (3rd Sat.)

PARAÑAQUE: Ribs & Chops, Presidents Ave., (3rd Sat.)

PUERTO PRINCESA: Legend Hotel (3rd Sat.)

QUEZON CITY: Max's Restaurant, T. Morato Ave. (2nd Sat.)

ROXAS: Kanami Restaurant

RIZAL: Manila East Golf Club, Taytay, Rizal (1st Sat.)

TACLOBAN: Don's Cabin (2nd Sat.)

TAGBILARAN: La Roca Hotel (3rd Sat.)

## JOINT BREAKFASTS (7:30 A.M.)

Wednesdays – MAKATI: Makati Sports Club (1st Weds.)

Thursdays – GREENHILLS: Club Filipino (1st Thurs.)

Fridays – MANILA: Max's Restaurant, Ma. Orosa (1st Fri)

### Saturdays

ALABANG: Ayala Alabang Country Club (4th Sat.)

BUTUAN: Echelon Hotel (2nd & 4th Sat.)

BACOLOD NORTH: Noble's Restaurant (4th Sat.)

BACOLOD SOUTH: Nobles Restaurant (4th Sat.)

BAGUIO: Max's Restaurant (2nd Sat.)

BAYBAY: Angelicum Parish Hall (2nd & 4th Sun.)

CAGAYAN DE ORO: Silver Court, Capt. Vicente Roa St., (3<sup>rd</sup> Sat.)

CAVITE: Emperor Restaurant, Cavite City (3<sup>rd</sup> Sat.)

CEBU: Ding Qua-Qua Restaurant (3<sup>rd</sup> Sat.)

DAGUPAN: Jollibee Junction A.B. Fernandez Ave., Cor. M.H. Del

Pilar St. Dagupan City (1st & 3rd Sat)

DAVAO: CAP Anda St. (1st & 3rd Sat.)

DIPOLOG: Top Plaza Hotel (2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sat.)

DUMAGUETE: Bethel Rest. House (1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sat.)

LAS PINAS: Italia Club 500 (1<sup>st</sup> Sat.)

LEGASPI: Albay Hotel, Legaspi City (2<sup>nd</sup> Sat.)

MAASIN: Valteuvian Restaurant, Leyte (1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sun.)

MACTAN: Majestic Restaurant (2nd & 4<sup>th</sup> Sat.)

MANDAUE: Flormont Hotel (4th Sat.)

ORMOC: Pongos Hotel (2<sup>nd</sup> & 4th Sat.)

OZAMIZ: Supermix Restaurant (1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sat.)

PARANAQUE: Chilean Restaurant Nat'l Rd. Infront of Robinson's

Imus (1st & 3rd Sats.)

PUERTO PRINCESA: Legend Hotel (1st Sat.)

QUEZON CITY: Max's Restaurant, T. Morato Ave. (4<sup>th</sup> Sat.)

RIZAL: Manila East Golf Club, Taytay, Rizal (3<sup>rd</sup> Sat.)

SAN FERNANDO: Café Rustico, Olongapo – Gapan Rd.

SAN JOSE: Regina's Restaurant (1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sun.)

SORSOGON: Jollibee Sorsogon (1st & 2nd Sat)

TACLOBAN: Don's Cabin (4<sup>th</sup> Sat.)

TAGBILARAN: JJ's Seafood Village (2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sat.)

TAGUM: Molave Restaurant (1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sat.)

TUBIGON: Parish Palao Hall (1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sat.)

TUGUEGARAO: Marilyn Restaurant (2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sat.)



# Kapatiran

# CONTENTS

## MORAL ASCENDANCY

### FOCUS

Moral Ascendancy	2
Church as the Vanguard of Morality	3

### CHAPTER FOCUS

<i>BCBP Quezon City:</i>	
Have No Fear, Focus on the Lord	8
How God Forms People	10
Fulfilling the BCBP Mission	12
<i>San Fernando Outreach:</i>	
Spiritual Rewards of Belonging to the BCBP Community	13

### NEWS

Cavite	19
Dagupan	20
Davao	21
Mactan, Mandaue	22
Tacloban	23

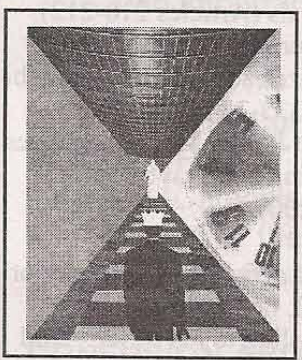
### REGULARS

<i>Editorial:</i>	
We are Unprofitable Servants	5
<i>Christmas Message:</i>	
The Tyranny of Gift Giving	7
<i>One Minute Meditations:</i>	
The Paradox of Jesus' Birth	14
<i>From Cries to Kisses:</i>	
Form and Substance	15
Columnists' Corner	24

### FEATURES

<i>Tribute:</i>	
To Brother Bernie	16
<i>Sharings:</i>	
God is Just a Prayer Away	17
How Mama Mary Answered My Pleas	18

### OUR COVER



But what is moral ascendancy in governance? The late President, Dr. Jose P. Laurel wrote: "The foundation of good government is morality; the basis of morality is righteousness which is divine". Thus our cover depicts a leader wearing a crown and marching towards Christ from whence he gets his anointment and to whence he leads his people!

*Allow me to divert from the usual Editor's Notes for introducing the issues articles to a matter of higher importance. One of the strengths of the BCBP organization over the years has been its grace to always find dedicated servants to fulfill the Lord's wishes in whatever capacity was needed. Despite the great demands of leadership and talent, we as an organization have not been in want of AGL's, DGL's, Unit Leader, Mission Directors, Chapter Heads and the like. A common denominator we all share in the selection of such servants is to find "a man after God's heart" as King David was chosen. One who would, in prayer and meditation, seek God's heart and do His wishes through the service. The good news is we have found one such servant in Bro. Ricky Beltran of the Rizal Chapter who will be taking over the service of Managing Editor starting this 1 January 2001. Bro. Ricky has served faithfully in the BCBP since 1996 and as part of the Kapatiran staff for the past 3 years. He also shares the same vision of unity we have for the BCBP body. Please pray for him as he assumes this service and pray for me that the Lord lead me to a new service. Keep writing those articles for you have found favor with God! Thank you again for this opportunity to serve God's people in the BCBP.*

### Editor's Note





# ASCENDANCY MORAL

By: *Msgr. Artemio A. Baluma, LLM, JCD*  
CBCP Legal Office

In civil law, the degree of blood relationship is determined by counting the line between related persons in the direct, whether ascending or descending, or collateral lines. In the direct line, parents are called ascendants, and children, descendants. From this direct relationship of ascendants-descendants, parents have ascendancy over their children, not only biological but also spirituo-moral. Thus evolved the phrase "moral ascendancy."

But what is moral ascendancy? Rather than invent a definition thereof, I'd rather propose situations that illustrate it.

First, natural parents have moral ascendancy over their children. The former exert moral influence on the latter. Hence, they have to give good examples to their children in attitudes, in words, in conduct so as to wield a positive influence on them. Parents are the living embodiment of religiosity, of righteousness, of all virtues for their children to emulate. Thus, piety, integrity and character are passed on to their children. Should a parent fail in

this positive influence, he breaches his/her moral ascendancy. Second, a priest, a pastor, an imam, or a rabbi is the spiritual-moral leader of his flock. Everyone in the parish looks up to him as a paragon of virtue. He wields moral ascendancy over his followers. If, for example, he physically abuses a member of his flock or if he is discovered to be dishonest with Church funds, he loses his moral ascendancy as leader.

Third, the President of a country is the guardian of the people, *parens patriae*. Here, the power involved is the President's residual power to protect the general welfare of the people. It is founded on the duty of the President as steward of the people. To paraphrase Theodore Roosevelt, it is forbidden by the Constitution or the laws that the needs of the nation demand. But if the President does not know how to distinguish public funds from private pockets, if he receives pay-offs from illegal gambling, if he maintains several households and displays luxurious living way beyond what legally accrues to him, if he receives token gifts from business transactions, etc., then he loses his moral ascendancy to effectively lead his country. And he should have the decency to resign.

The Constitution is a basis for public administrative ethics. Section 13, Article VII of the 1987 Constitution prohibits the President, Vice President, the Members of the Cabinet and their deputies or assistants from holding any other office or employment during their tenure, they shall not directly or indirectly practice in other profession or business, nor be financially interested in any contract. Relatives by consanguinity or affinity within the fourth civil degree of the President shall not be appointed to any government-related office to avoid family dynasty and nepotism. Article XI of the Constitution

.... "The foundation of good government is morality; the basis of morality is righteousness which is divine" .....

is all about the accountability of public officers. Section 2 of R.A. No. 6770 or "The Ombudsman Act of 1989" declares as a policy: "The State shall maintain honesty and integrity in the public service and take positive and effective measures against graft and corruption."

Our Revised Penal Code in Title Seven, Crimes Committed by Public Officers, Section Two on Bribery, penalizes direct bribery, indirect bribery and corruption of public officials (Articles 210-212). Title Eleven thereof, Crimes Against Chastity penalizes adultery and concubinage (Articles 333-334). Title Six, Crimes Against Public Moral, penalizes gambling, betting and grave scandal (Articles 195-200).

If a high public official commits any or all of the above, he has lost moral ascendancy to cling to his office. And he should be prosecuted. *Dura lex sed lex*.

The late President, Dr. Jose P. Laurel wrote, "The foundation of good government is morality; the basis of morality is righteousness which is divine," (Moral and Political Orientation, 1949).

There must be change of command in a new Philippine social order. As Rizal wrote, "A nuevos hombres, nuevo estado social," (Filipinas Dentro de Cien Años). To new men, a new social order.-





# CHURCH AS THE VANGUARD OF MORALITY

By: Fr. Herb Schneider

## CHURCH AND STATE

To say that the Church is very much involved in the present political crisis is making an understatement. Cardinal Sin has asked that President Estrada resign. Other Archbishops have issued statements to the same effect. They say that the moral corruption of the President is such that he has lost his right to govern the Philippines. Catholic schools, organizations together with Church leaders have taken lead roles in public protest actions. The question arises, is this the role of the Church, of bishops or priests? Ought they to meddle in politics at all? Isn't their role the area of spirituality and personal morality and the administration of the sacraments? What are they doing out in the streets joining rallies? What are they doing organizing the protest? In what follows I will present to you the answer of Archbishop Quevedo, the head of the Philippine Bishops Conference to similar questions asked by *Malaya*.

Two important documents must be mentioned, which Archbishop Quevedo summarizes in his answers. The first is the 1997 "Pastoral Exhortation on Philippine Politics" and the second the 1998 "Catechism on Church and Politics" by the Bishops Conference of the Philippines.



## CONFUSION ABOUT THE TEACHING OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Many educated Catholics do not know what the mission of the Church is in the fields of economics, politics, and culture. There is a whole set of teachings from Leo XIII to Pope John Paul II on the social order: Labor unions, just wages, violence, war and conflict, social justice and peace, structures of injustice and social sin, the family, the state, the international order, ideologies, etc. These teachings result from the interplay of reflection on Scripture, moral theology and the social realities. These teachings are to guide moral conduct in society. Here in this body of teaching, we find

instruction on the role of the Church in politics. The 1997 and 1998 documents summarize and apply these teachings to the Philippine's political situation.

## THE GOSPEL AND SOCIAL REALITIES

Because the Church's mission is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, it has to play a major role in the political field. Its nature is primarily spiritual. It has to do with entering the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom of truth, justice, peace and love. The Church is concerned with integral salvation of the individual and communities from everything that oppresses and dehumanizes the human person. The integral Gospel includes the social implications of its message.

This means that the values of the Gospel have to permeate every strata of society and every dimension of human life, including economics and the political dimension. It follows from this that the Church must play a major role in political life.

The role of the Church is in the moral and religious dimension of political life. Political activity is a human activity that can lead either

to grace or sin, to God or away from him. Obvious examples of such sin would be graft and corruption, dishonesty in elections, etc.

That is why for the Church, aside from competence, the moral integrity of a candidate for political office is necessary. This is why the Church insists on catechizing the people with respect to the necessary qualifications candidates must have. The Church uses social doctrine regarding moral integrity in public office, the common good, preferential option for the poor, political authority as given in trust by God for the common good. Morality is not only in the personal sphere, but also in the public and social spheres. The Church



provides guiding moral principles for the governance of the community and acts as a complement of the government in the role. The Church also acts as a moral conscience of government, because the competence of the Church is in the moral and religious dimension of political life. The Church's role is one of critical solidarity toward any government. Critical when required, solidarity when necessary. The Church has a valid role in politics. Unfortunately, when it criticizes public officials, it is accused of interfering in politics or violating the principle of the separation of Church and State. When it supports government there is no outcry of interfering.

### **SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE**

The mission of the Church in the moral and religious dimension of political life does not in any way violate the principle of separation of Church and State. Our Constitution has a strict interpretation of the principle. It means that no religion can be established as the official religion of the State; and the State cannot favor one religion over the other, e.g. support one religion over or against other religions. Nowhere does the Constitution prohibit non-seditious criticism of the State by any religion.

### **THE CHURCH AND PARTISAN POLITICS**

The Church is the People of God. As people, it is made up of lay people, clergy (priests and bishops), and religious (sisters, brothers and priests). Obviously lay people can participate in partisan politics, openly support a political party and run for public office. They can "work to explicitly promote the election of leaders of true integrity to public office" (2<sup>nd</sup> PCP). Although there is no absolute prohibition in the Church for priests, bishops, and religious in involving themselves in party politics, it is a wise and prudent policy for them to refrain from partisan involvement. The reason for this is simple. They are religious leaders

***MORALITY is not only in the personal sphere, but also in the public and social spheres.***

of the community. If they were to involve themselves in party politics, they would divide the community by their partisan choice, especially since political options are generally pluralistic, i.e. there are many different political choices that do not necessarily contradict the Gospel. No political party or program can really claim to be the only option compatible with the Gospel. The political situation, or more correctly the political culture, of our country is the reason for the Church's moral and religious program regarding politics. This program aims to catechize, politically educate the people, provide guidelines on choosing political officials, prepare young people in Catholic colleges and universities or in Basic Ecclesial Communities for political leadership, and to work for conversion to new values as against the values of so-called traditional politics. The Church is also urging structural changes and reforms in the political field, such that manipulation, for instance, of election returns would become a thing of the past.

In these times of great national crisis we need to remember that Church and State are working for the same common good of all, each in its own sphere of competence. The competence of the Church is with the moral and religious dimension of social, political, economic and cultural life, i.e. of human life. Deep understanding of this primary role of the Church is needed on the part of all in order to avoid division and conflict. The common good is the common objective. The roots of the present crisis have to be courageously faced. Sacrifices for the common good, such as party loyalty, personal or family interests, would have to be willingly and heroically made. The good of the nation is a moral value that everyone has to defend and promote. For this purpose, God's grace is necessary. I would therefore urge that everyone of good will, men and women of different faiths, offer fervent, sincere and unceasing prayers to God, while actively working toward social change in accord with the Kingdom of God. ☩

**The good of the nation is a moral value that everyone has to defend and promote.**



# We are Unprofitable Servants"

Nowadays, there is so much competing for our attention. I have had my fair share this morning. I had an ear glued to the AM radio news picking up the developments on the first Philippine president to be impeached. I had the morning paper in my left hand with the day's fresh headlines screaming for my attention, fact, fiction and innuendo tantalizing at an arm's reach. The on my left side, my eldest son was excitedly relating his latest war game simulation triumph with the Goth civilization. On my right my 7 year old daughter is trying to catch my attention for me to start telling her the day's Bible story for kids which is a morning ritual. My wife is silently signaling me through it all a pile of bills for me to pay upon arriving at the office. For a moment I wonder where can the Lord squeeze himself in at this particular period of time. Actually, the moment is full of His presence and I will let you know why in a second.

One of the best things that can aid us in our stewardship or in our relationships is to listen intently to the people around us. We cannot be capable of unconditional love or be in the "consciousness of giving," as Dr. Jampolski, renowned author of the book "Forgiveness: The Greatest Healer," puts it. No physician can adequately give his diagnosis or prescribe medicines if he has not satisfactorily interviewed and studied his patient. Jesus, himself is the model of all listeners. As in every big decision in his life or ministry, he made it a point to go away to a quiet place and pray, that is, to listen for what is Father's will is. As Jesus said in, Luke 17:10;

His very life was focused on listening. And so, that precious family moment that I illustrated to you was really full of the Lord's presence, simply through my own love-filled

"My food is to do the will of the Father."

attention for every member of my family. First, I turned off the radio. Then, I folded the news paper and then one by one gave my time to each family member intently until I had heard them all. And each one really having had a satisfactory measure of my attention beamed back loving smiles to me. What a great morning to start with! Being listened gives the person such an elation and sense of worth.

One of my biggest learning experiences as Managing Editor of Kapatiran has been to listen, that is to listen with love. But before I elaborate further I want to tell you that one of the most haunting images of this ministry to me has been; after Kapatiran issues had been distributed evenly among members and everybody is about to leave the assembly, I would find copies of Kapatiran left behind. At the start of my service in Kapatiran, seeing this hurt me deeply because each issue is blood, sweat and tears of myself and the staff. Each issue has been delivered with care, prayer, discernment, humility and vigilance. The guiding light of each issue had always been: what the Lord's will is. Every issue theme is prayed for and discussed and tested. All this though I consider a small thing and many others may think so too as evidenced by the leaving of Kapatiran issues behind. But we in Kapatiran hold this stewardship, small as it may be, in our heart of hearts. As the Lord in Luke 16:10 says,



For the past three years, we in Kapatiran, have made it a discipline to listen with love. We listen to the ordinary members. We listen to the MANCOM, the Regional Council Director, the Chapter Heads, the BCBP women and youth. We lend an ear to our Bishops, to our marketplace, to the business trends, to the local humor, and to the political happenings in our country. And after listening to all, we sit at the Father's feet and listen

***"The person who is trustworthy in very small matter is also trustworthy in great ones; the person who is dishonest in very small matter is also dishonest in great ones."***

lovingly. For what we may hear, we take to heart and start writing. For what we fail to hear we ask for forgiveness and examine ourselves as to how we can be better listeners next time around. For apart from Him there really is nothing we can do or write! This is why I have agonized at every issue left behind by members, because every single issue is designed to be a tool for evangelization. Every issue contains a part of the Lord waiting to be listened to.

**I LET GOD  
BE GOD.**

Nowadays, I no longer agonize over left issues. I simply pick them up for they will be useful to someone who has not met the Lord. In other words, once the latest issue has gone to the press, I let go in prayer.

From that point, it is already God's work whether that piece of paper will remain paper or be the vehicle or instrument for bringing God into a person's life.

Brothers and sisters in the Lord, with this I bow out from this service at the end of the year. And though many have warned me that this would be a

***"WE ARE  
UNPROFITABLE  
SERVANTS; WE HAVE  
DONE WHAT WE WERE  
OBLIGED TO DO."***

thankless job, in faith I know I have earned my keep and rewards with the many opportunities of meeting the Lord and experiencing His goodness, mercy and healing. Meaning, this service has helped me keep my eyes fixed on the Lord as I walked through one of the most turbulent storms of my life. If not for this opportunity of seeing the Lord and fixing my gaze on Him through it all, I would have been swallowed in the sea like St. Peter. And this also has been my biggest learning from this service: that the intensity with which the Lord is faithful and present in our consolation is the same intensity with which He is present and faithful in our times of desolation. Even though we may not see Him or hear Him; He is not even one degree less in His intensity to love us and renew us. He does not leave our side!

They say that the measure of a man's success is not what he has become or what he has accumulated but what others around him have become. I also know in faith that we in Kapatiran have planted seeds of faith, the harvest of which we may not see or hear about in our lifetime. But my prayer has always been that the Lord touch you and move you to loving action through this magazine and it is He who is glorified and not me or the staff, otherwise, we stand to lose our heavenly rewards.

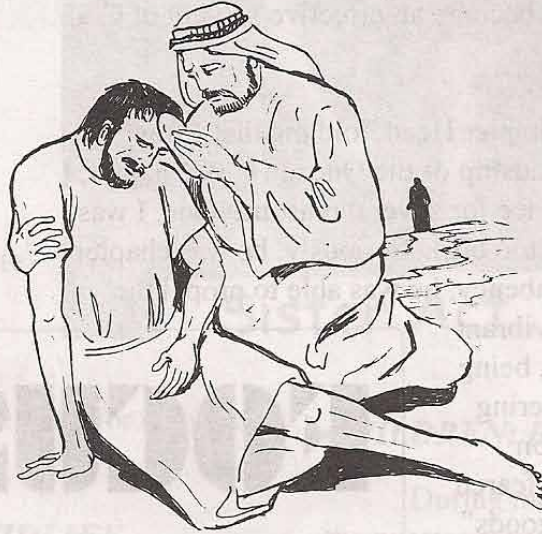
Having said that, I leave you now with the Lord's words in Luke 17:10 *"Is he (the Master) grateful to that servant because he did what was commanded? So should it be with you. When you have done what you have been commanded, say **"WE ARE UNPROFITABLE SERVANTS; WE HAVE DONE WHAT WE WERE OBLIGED TO DO."*** -  
Ronnie Caballero



# THE TYRANNY OF GIFT GIVING

By: Bro. Louie Morales,  
BCBP National President

I'm sure you all give gifts for Christmas. Unless you are a Mr. Scrooge - you will get a bottle of wine for the boss, socks for Tito Bobby, payong for Lola Nene. Just grab at anything that Uncle Sonny can smile at when he unwraps it, even though no one can think of anything he really wants or needs.



the manger - hay of Bethlehem's rejection? I'm not sure. He doubtlessly wept as He traced Jesus' path to the cross' torture and triumph. Like Jesus, "Who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross..." (Hebrews 12:2), the Father tempered His pain with His anticipation of *the happiness and freedom which would surprise the recipients of His Gifts upon opening.*

*The season also imposes its tyranny on many of us.* Instead of being able to give out of thoughtfulness and love, we often give because it is "expected." I heard of one couple who had 85 people they *felt obligated* to remember with a gift. I know a lot of you experience this. No wonder the joy of giving falls away to a sort of panicked despair and emptiness.

It is time to refresh our giving with a truth from Scripture deeply imbedded into our consciousness from hundreds of repetitions in the BCBP assemblies and at church gatherings but which we sorely forget: "Each man should give what *he has decided in his heart to give*, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). This should be the BCBP's way of giving.

Can we really give cheerfully this Christmas? Only in so doing can we emulate the *great gift of Christmas*. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Think about this. Was our Father cheerful that night He sent His Son to lie in

And so God gave, not reluctantly or because He was forced by popular opinion, *but because He loved*. No store-bought gift would do for those He held dear, it must be home-made. Nor was His choice of Gift an optional trinket for the "man who has everything." *He gave the only possession that we don't have - but really need.* He did not give a thing, an object. He gave Himself - a costly Gift in the extreme, so expensive that *many reject the Gift because of the obligation they know they incur upon acceptance.*

Herein lies a Christmas mystery. We in the Brotherhood know this only too well. Only by opening the first true Gift may we truly comprehend what is the real significance of giving and receiving gifts. How we have loved will be the true measure of our gifts.

Brothers and Sisters, may this Christmas season not capture us in its tyranny frenzied of giving, but release us in an eager cheerfulness to give this "one true gift."

May the joy, peace and love of the Infant Jesus be with you this Christmas.



# HAVE NO FEAR,

**Humility. Patience. Perseverance.** Three essential qualities that one needs to characterize and radiate to become an effective servant of God. Qualities that I am not certain I possess.

When Roy Calleja, our former Chapter Head, told me that I was recommended to assume the chapter headship of the Quezon City Chapter, I had misgivings about accepting the service for several reasons. One, I was not ready to fill in Roy's shoes (they're too big). Seriously, he was chapter head for six years, and during his incumbency, he was able to propel the chapter into becoming one of the most vibrant and more active chapters there is. Two, being the shepherd of a "spirited" flock numbering 321 members with six units and 23 action groups is quite an overwhelming task. I feared that I might not be able to "deliver the goods" according to my brethren's expectations. Three, I judge that I am not worthy to serve as chapter head because of the limitations in my own character. I may be successful in my career as a corporate man, and may have through the years developed a spiritual maturity but being head servant of a group of highly dynamic men and women is a different story altogether.

Before I accepted the service, my wife Lally and I prayed hard for discernment. Lally had her own fears of not being able to meet the demands of being a chapter head's wife, especially since her job as an educator requires much of her time. Our prayers led us to Psalm 119:105-106, especially verse 105 that says, "Your word is a lamp to guide me and a light for my path. I will keep my solemn promise to obey your instructions. I am your servant: give me understanding so that I may know your teachings." With this inspirational message from the Lord, Lally and I gathered our children together and told them of the Lord's call for us to serve as chapter head. We asked for their commitment to support us in our service.

I consented to be of service to the Lord and have submitted to His will because I know that He has a divine plan for me. My fears notwithstanding, I told Roy of my decision and looking back, I could clearly hear Roy tell me when I articulated my fears to him, "There's nothing to fear; just don't lose your focus on the Lord."

Being in the frontline of a Christian community helps me grow deeper in faith and relationships with the Lord. It brings about character transformation that only He is capable of accomplishing. In my dealings with my

brothers and sisters I have learned valuable lessons in humility, patience and perseverance. On many occasions I have placed myself before the Lord asking Him to make me firm and steadfast in the midst of discontent and dissatisfaction. I believe that the Lord has called me to this service because He wants to put me right with Him. I could have declined God's offer since there is nothing in it for me anyway but I owe it to Him, to shepherd and serve the flock He has entrusted to my care.

## FOCUS ON THE LORD!

My acceptance makes me recall St. Paul's letter to the Romans 12:16, "Do not be proud, but accept humble duties. Do not think of yourselves as wise." At times, I would find myself in situations where I tend to order people around, for them to do things at my bidding but then the Lord would gently exhort me in my prayers and remind me that I am His servant. Hence I should not be proud. Again Romans 12:3 says: "Do not think of yourself more highly than you should. Instead, be modest in your thinking and judge yourself according to the amount of faith God has given you." He reminds me of how I should conduct myself as I live my life in His service.

It's been almost a year since I became chapter head. I learned to



overcome my fear as I put my service in God's care. In place of fear is the joy that I experience every time I shepherd my brothers and sisters who likewise manifest a genuine desire to serve God in any way they can. Also I found joy in the all-out and unstinting support that my brothers and sisters afford me. For having chosen me to become the lead servant in Quezon City, I thank Him most graciously. With His call, He has blessed me and my family in great abundance.

## **CHAPTER LIFE**

To maintain and enhance the life and growth of the QC Chapter as a community and individuals, regular and special activities are developed and implemented with much prayer and call for commitment.

### **ADULTS: PARENTING AND MIDLIFE**

Since 1999, a "Parenting" seminar series was shared by counselors from the Center for Family Ministries (CEFAM). Talks on "Improving your Child's Self-Esteem," "Positive Ways to Discipline your Child," and "Parent-Child Dialogue" were indeed relevant issues. Another special and highly appreciated series on "Midlife Crisis (Transitions)" was conducted by Fr. Armand Robleza. Other topics for adults included Globalization and Information Technology, Freemasonry, and Integrity in Business. These special talks were intended to supplement the spiritual growth teachings and leadership formation of BCBP adult members, mostly parents.

### **YOUTH: CAREER CHOICE**

In 1998, the BCBP-QC Youth Ministry called PALS (Pro-Active Loving Servants) initiated a Career Choice Program with a threefold purpose: First, to enable BCBP teenage children or young adults to properly discern their professional career and be morally ready for college life. Second, to provide BCBP adults a venue to share their experiences as practicing businessmen and professionals. And third, to help the BCBP governance lay the foundation for the future generation of BCBP members and leaders. Batch I (1998) and Batch II (2000) have benefited about 35 participants, mostly teenage children of BCBP-QC members.



## **Sister Act...**

### **CHILDREN: BIBLICAL GAMES & FORMATION**

During the Family Day held every 3rd Sunday of the quarter calendar, Danny and Glo Santos were entrusted to care for children's formation, consisting mainly of meaningful games and playful activities with biblical messages. Meanwhile, the parents were simultaneously occupied with listening to BCBP teachings and discussions in the other rooms of ISO Ateneo.

### **SINGLES MINISTRY**

Noli and Bong Tiongson have been appointed as Unit Leader for a special group of about 25 unmarried singles, including 10 gentlemen and 15 ladies, with an age range 22 to 45 years old. During the current year, the Singles Unit was blessed with a series of teaching and retreats: Self-Discovery Retreat entitled "Empowering Decision to Change" facilitated by Bro. Cesar Liza and guests Po Magno and Joy Abejo; Discipleship teaching by Bro. Mike Joseph, Jr.; and Understanding our State of Life by Fr. Eli Santos.

### **MUSIC MINISTRY**

In the past year, the Music Ministry through the headship of Bro. Rayben Mague has taken an important role in the conduct of Music Workshop for BCBP-QC/Camanava Music Ministry members graced with the guest presence of Bro. Mike Joseph, Jr. at the EAPI Ateneo. Bro. Mague also ensured the success of a well-attended Jazz Concert at the UP Diliman to raise emergency funds for a BCBP-QC member.



# HOW GOD FORMS P-E-O-P-L-E

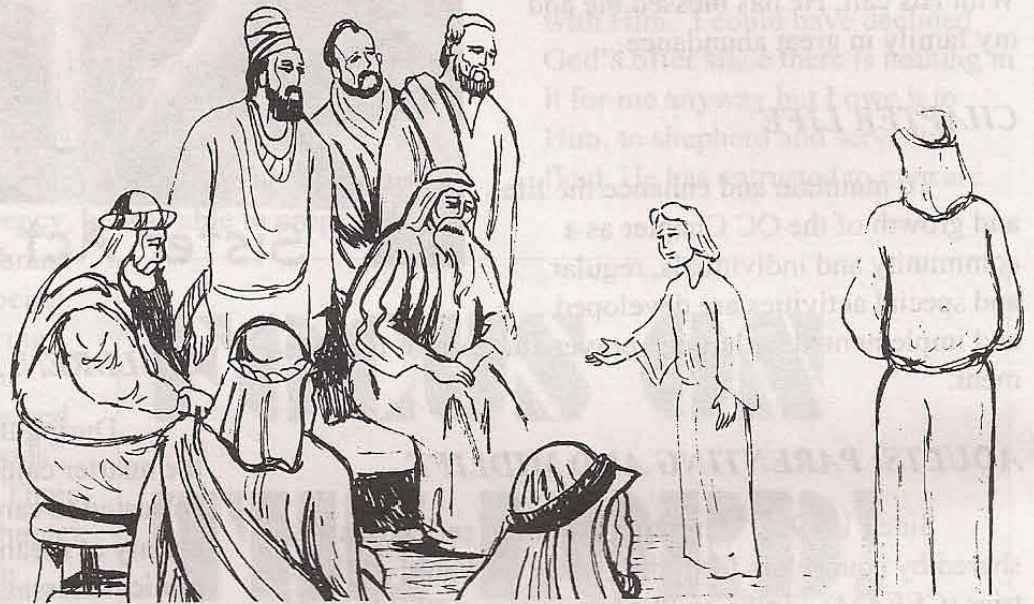
The Baguio Outreach Experience:

On December 16, 2000, the Baguio Outreach of the Quezon City Chapter will be installed as a full Chapter of the BCBP.

This article is not about Baguio but on the learned experience of the Quezon City Chapter specially the Mission Team on how God forms people and how people doing evangelistic work can be used more effectively by the Lord to be "the proper instruments fit to His hands."

In 1993, members of the QC Mission Team motored to Baguio to visit Bishop Ernesto Salgado to ask for his permission to open a BCBP Outreach in the City of Pines. Several years before that and in the meeting that formulated the Mission and Vision of the BCBP in the EAPI in the Ateneo, it was decided to target Baguio as a site for BCBP Chapter giving the assignment to Dagupan with the QC Chapter in support.

The initial trip to Baguio was one trip marred already by problems. I accidentally bumped a car at the meeting place and into an argument with the young driver of said car. We were not able to reach Baguio because we were warned that the roads leading to the City was full of mud and rocks because of previous storm. We ended up spending the night in



Dagupan and we had to hire a van the following morning just to be able to reach the City of Pines. These two experiences bothered me since it was not an auspicious start for a group full of plans and enthusiasm as Baguio was the first Outreach of the Chapter. However, little did we know that from the start, God wanted to make sure that we knew that He was the Lord of this apostolic venture and that with this venture, He would be forming us into men and women of faith and trust, hope and love.

Before, the start was of the first breakfast, we continued to go to Baguio to bring letters of invitation to businessmen and professionals identified by Tito

Louie Rodrigo who used to be the PNB Branch Manager in the City of Pines. We opened the first breakfast and encouraged with the response, we proceeded to have several breakfasts prior to the first CLP which we started in 1994. The first CLP netted 4 couples and we were so disappointed with God at the results. As Chapter Head, I put up a very encouraging stance but deep inside, I complained why God did not make it easy for us. Even if we decided to continue, we were all hurting inside and we were giving formation talks to the BCBP 1 in Baguio and also to the QC Mission Team together with healing sessions. However, as we started with the next CLP's, God was starting to form the group albeit slowly and slowly, our faith



and trust in Him was growing. There were times when our hope in His promises to us in connection with the apostolic venture waned but He always came back to cheer us up and He continued to affirm His promises as in Hebrews 6:10-12 "God is not unjust: He will not forget your work and the love you have shown Him by your service, past and present to His holy people. Our desire is that each of you show the same zeal till the end, fully assured of that which you hope. Do not grow lazy but imitate those who through faith and patience, are inheriting the promises."



Two humbling experiences where we learned much about ourselves, our weaknesses, the pride and the self-love that accompanied this evangelistic venture were the following:

***.... God is not unjust: He will not forget your work and the love you have shown Him by your service, past and present to His holy people....***

1.) Together with the work, the desire to be successful in the soonest possible time and the frustration of the results not based on plans, tempers flared and relationships were strained. We had to do a lot of healing work on the strained relationships and the result was the grace to increase in ones capacity to love and be loved. We also learned to continue planning because it was our response to God but at the same time, learn to be sensitive to the changes God wanted to do during implementation time.

2.) In one of the BCLP's, a brother who finished the BCLP died a tragic death prior to commitment. The Mission Team was devastated that they were not able to detect this in the brother and started blaming themselves. Some entertained the thought of dropping out from the Team altogether. It was during this time that God taught all of us that the reason

why we were in Baguio to form a Chapter was because of this. The spiritual warfare for the hearts and minds of men and women, businessmen and professionals existed and the battle was being fought every-day, some with tragic results. God told us that He was relying on us to be His instruments. The Mission Team then resolved to work harder than ever for the Lord and grow in patience and perseverance.

As the outreach grew in numbers, our desire in the Mission Team to let them mature

into a full Chapter also grew but was based on selfish motives. We were using our own standards on them and were trying to form them into our own likeness and image and not in the likeness and image of God. We forgot that we were only the Bestman and our work was to let the Groom, Christ, and the Bride, the Outreach, meet and have that decency not to go on the honeymoon. However, in one incident when the leaders of the Outreach complained to me about how we

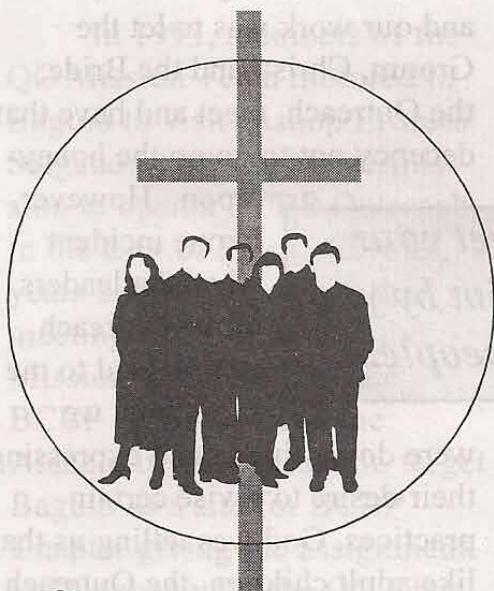
were doing things and expressing their desire to revise certain practices, God was telling us that like adult children, the Outreach was ready to take responsibility and move out into world. Our job then was to help them prepare for it.

I am glad that with all of these experiences, God made it very clear that He was the one who formed Baguio into a Chapter. I am also glad that we learned a lot from the experience of growing into a partner of God in evangelistic work. **PRAISE BE HIS NAME.**



By: Bro. Gerry M. Mijares

# FULFILLING THE BCBP MISSION



Experiencing the love of the Lord as a BCBP member never ceases to amaze me every time one of our brothers or couples shares their life stories showing how they made the turnaround from worldly attachments. Stories that are told during the breakfasts always glorify the unconditional love of our mighty King. The most abused saying, "it takes one to know one," aptly conjures the reality that surrounds the importance of regularly attending the breakfast

as a way to recharge ones spiritual energy. Yes, indeed, the mystery of BCBP breakfast continues to provide my quest for more God-centered thoughts that further nurture the seeds of truth and the light planted during my baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Not only is the breakfast addicting but it is also self-fulfilling. Imagine the impact of influence that one BCBP member can make in the life of a first timer in the event that the seeds initially planted germinate and then sprout to become potential BCLP participants. The process of evangelization is a long and tortuous road to traverse on with the forces of diabolic nature is hard to contend with.

The work of bringing Christ to the marketplace is the very hallmark of each BCBP member. However, the essence of inviting first timers to partake in our regular breakfasts is often

overlooked and not properly complied with resulting in a cross section of BCLP participants who are strangers to the BCBP breakfast as the entry point for all prospective candidates. As a consequence, our mortality rate in harvesting renewed souls through the BCLP needs further improvement. As the week of each BCLP unfolds, the number of participants is always the main intention of our intercessory prayers. Of course, the hands of the Lord are always there backing us up against so are the forces of Satan that tries to sow discontent and discouragement.

As the BCBP continues to breakdown the barriers in conquering the whole country through bringing Christ to the marketplaces, it is lamentable to observe that proper protocol in conducting the search for prospective members sometimes ignores the process of the breakfast as the entry point.

Let us not forget to reflect once in a while our commitment cards and live by it upholding the unique tradition of the BCBP in fulfilling our vision.

"Don't be afraid, I will never abandon you; My spirit is always with you. Get up, stand up for Me & acknowledge Me before men. Accept one another for my glory & be light to others. Don't worry, trust in Me. Humble yourself & be like little children."



I have long been wanting to join a Catholic organization where I could be of service to the Lord. Nobody invited me to join one.

On Jan. 15 of this year, the inaugural meeting organized by the BCBP – Baguio Outreach was held at Mandarin Restaurant, San Fernando City. I assured Sis. Cristy Antonio that I will be there but the unexpected visit of some friends prevented me from giving. It was on February 19, after three meetings that I finally went to Sea and Sky for the breakfast. The atmosphere of prayer and songs, warmth and friendliness of the people and their sincerity completely awed me. Listening to the sharing of the invited sharer pricked and sank deep into my heart. So I prayed to the Lord to lead me always to the breakfast if this is the community He wants me to join, to be of service to Him. And truly, He led me into the BCBP. Praise and thank you Lord! From then on, I always see to it that I go to the breakfast. I just love to see my brothers and sisters and I also don't want to miss the sharings. I feel the nearness of God everytime I am with you, my brothers and sisters in the BCBP.

Thus, on June 3, the first CLP Seminar began where I was one of the participants. I was looking forward to it every Saturday. Really, it was an enlightening experience. I was spiritually renewed and morally uplifted. My intimate spiritual encounter with God brought me to a life of love, peace and joy. My vision and mission in life hav changed. Because of the so many good things that I have learned, I have developed the attitude of being totally dependent on Him in all things. God is giving me spiritual consolation and I'm receiving it with thanksgiving, reflecting that it is His gift, not my merit. And so, I've become more humble in this gift, more cautious and fearful in all my actions.

Truly, I am experiencing God's unconditional love and care in my life. I have learned to bear my crosses and I like to think that they are fruits of the grace of Jesus Christ. I have placed my whole confidence in God and have let Him be my fear and love. I know He will always answer me and do for me what is best. Now I can proudly say that my path is toward humility and simplicity, with truth and sincerity. If before I have God on my lips and seldom in my heart, now, I pray to God not only with my lips, but also with my mind, will and heart. Slowly but surely, I'm learning to overcome my passions and desire more of heavenly and eternal things.

I like the BCBP community. It is full of love because it is God centered. In the BCBP, I have learned how to praise and thank the Lord in all circumstances, how to pray for others realizing that I should love them without expecting anything in return. I have stopped making hasty conclusions and judgments about them. The Lord has made LOVE become the focus of my life. With God now as the center of my life, I'm ready for everything.



## SPIRITUAL REWARDS OF BELONGING TO THE BCBP COMMUNITY

By: *TERRY A. MIRANDA-CABILADAS*  
*BCBP-San Fernando City Outreach, La Union*

I don't have a vision for the BCBP, but I do have some great hopes in my heart. With the workings of the Holy Spirit, I dream of a growing consciousness of human brotherhood especially in the BCBP. I dream in the San Fernando Outreach certain realizations and I can't help but have a lively optimism with regard to its future. With the Lord's blessing, I will do my best to invite first timers to the BCBP breakfast and the BCLP,





# REFLECTIONS

## The Paradox of Jesus' Birth

By Fernando de Larrazabal

*"She gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the place where travelers lodged."* Luke 2:7

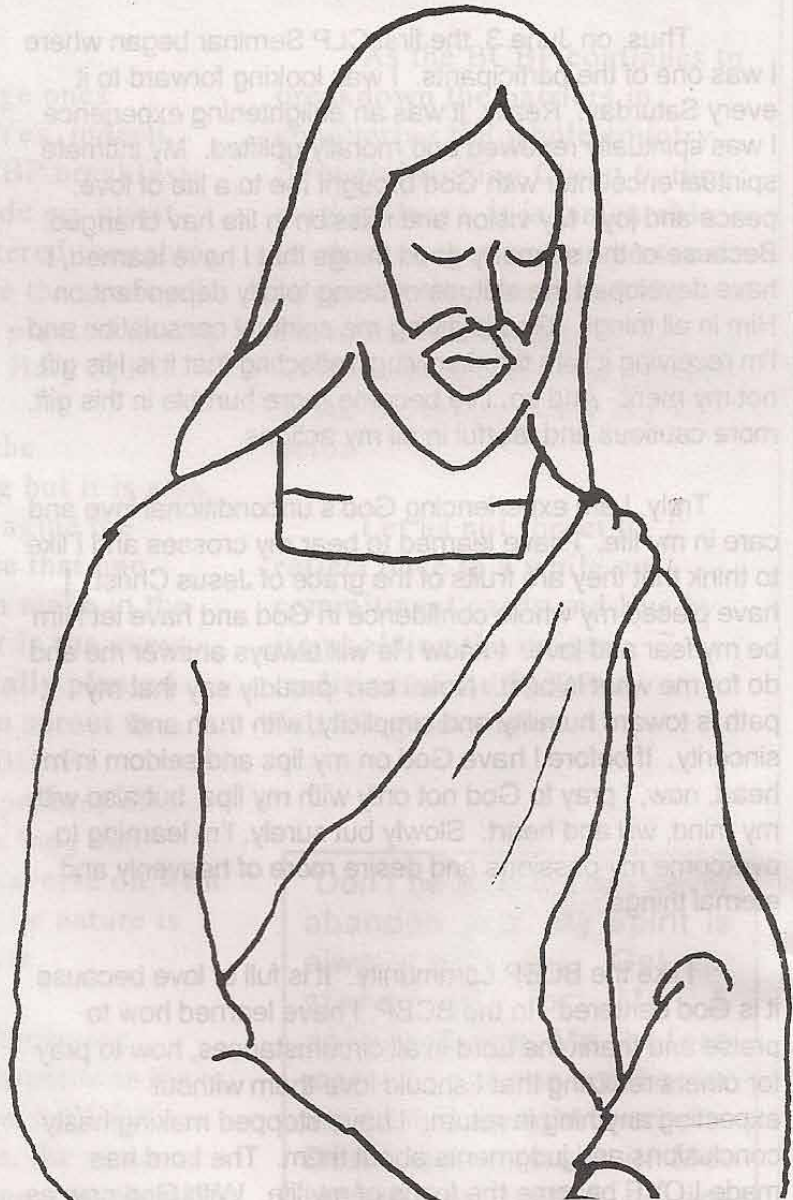
When Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem, they found no lodging for them, probably because they were poor and could not afford to pay. Mary was heavy with child and no one offered them a place to lodge.

Can you imagine, the God-Man, Creator of all that exists, could not find a place to be born! He was not welcomed and finally was born in a stable. This is a paradox difficult to explain and much more difficult to believe. But it did happen two thousand years ago.

If his birth is a paradox, what would you call his death on the cross? There is no logical explanation, except to say that God's ways are not bound by human logic. There is no way man will ever understand the mystery of God's love, which is beyond all human understanding.

### Prayer

*Dear Jesus, the promise of salvation had to be accomplished. Otherwise, we would have perished. You gave up for a while your prerogatives as God to become a mere mortal, who was destined to die for our sins. There was no other way acceptable to your Father, you had to be offered as a sacrifice to atone for man's iniquities. Your Blessed Mother joyfully held you in her arms as a baby and not too many years later, sorrowfully held you in her arms as you were brought down from the cross. It was I and other people like me who were the cause of your suffering and that of your mother. Lord, give me the grace to become more like your mother, who loved and served you throughout her life. Amen.*





**H**ave you ever noticed the way a little child, like toddler, looks at his mommy? He gazes up at her with adoring eyes, soaking up her image, love undiluted pouring out of him. I love that look. Despite having experienced it in five different versions, I can't seem to get enough of the feeling it brings: that of being needed, of being everything to someone.

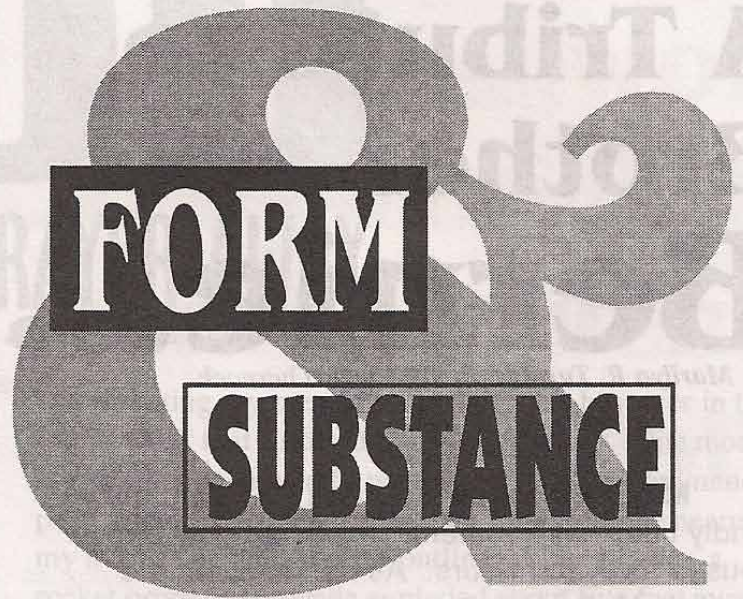
It was not always like that. Holding my first newborn in my arms, I was actually panic-stricken for a few moments, having realized that in many ways, I was solely responsible for this tiny human being. The thought that he relied completely upon me for his food and care among others things was petrifying.

And it will not always be like that (Have I lost you? I'm still talking about adoring gazes here). As the toddler grows into the preschooler and later on into the child who can read and write and reason, adoring gazes will give way to frank stares, squinted eyes and yes, the upward roll across the ceiling.

Whenever I find that I have ceased to be the center of my child's universe, I always feel a little sad. But then again, in a way, I am validated as a parent. Goodbyes of this sort herald new beginnings: she is coming into her own, for now she begins to question and to challenge, to disagree and even to doubt. Somehow, I take that to mean I am doing a good job.

For it is not to question without rhyme nor reason, but to seek to understand, so that whether yielding to authority or accepting a doctrine, she will do so not by default but by choice. And it is not to challenge just because, but to explore the limits of rules and boundaries, that they may be defined and thus proven. It is not to disagree just for the sake of it, but to assert oneself, because individualization is a sign of growth, and dissent - if honest and respectful - brings wider perspectives. And it is not to doubt per se, but to wonder about things, testing observed realities against values held dear, because a truth must be made one's own before being embraced.

When I was in college, my father discovered I had a pack of cigarettes in my bag, and he got angry with me, forbidding me from smoking. Now at that time, he was a heavy smoker himself, and for that reason, I felt he was in no position (well, being my dad, he was naturally in position, but I felt it was diminished by his vice, ok?) to hand me a decree against smoking. I questioned the authority behind his prohibition and challenged the rule that he was imposing on me yet himself not obeying. I disagreed with him, denying him my obedience (of course, as furtively as possible), because, in the BCBP manner of speaking, he did not walk his talk. Eventually, I quit smoking, but for my own reasons (ironically, it was to avoid ending up like a two-and-



a-half-packer-a-day like him) and not because my father said so.

This brings me to the central point I'm trying to make: honesty and integrity are a parents' best weapons in the battle against the forces that would wrest our children from the straight and narrow path. Simply said: honesty is telling the truth and integrity is living it.

And these two cannot be overestimated, for unless a leader - whether mother or mentor, pastor or president - be grounded on honesty and integrity, his leadership has no basis other than that of circumstance. Walang moral ascendancy, 'ika nga.

Did someone say the medium was the message?

If a child's upbringing is steeped in his parents' honesty and integrity, he may - and probably will - still question and challenge and doubt and disagree. Indeed, he may even stray from the straight and narrow. But he will always know which way is home, because in the face of Truth, he will recognize his parents.

And so, as I would have my sons and daughters grow to be responsible citizens of our nation, so I must be. I must let them see me following the law and casting my vote and standing up for my rights. As I would have them grow to be mature adults, so I must be. I must show them how I control my impulses, meet my responsibilities and learn from my mistakes. As I would have them grow to be upright Christians, so must I be. I must have them witness my compassion, my faith in action and my knees bent in prayer.

Or it's all a lie. And their adoring gazes would have been for naught.



# A Tribute to Brother Bernie...

By: *Marilyn R. Turalde, BCBP Cavite Outreach*

**Major Bernardo Bautista PAF**, whom we fondly called as Brother Bernie lived only a few houses away from ours. As neighbors in the Sangley Air Base community, our relationship was not that close until such time that he and his wife Liza joined the BCLP No. 2 of Cavite Outreach way back 1992. Since then, most of our acquaintances became very meaningful. We were sharing and revealing with one another our inmost feelings and attitudes. This couple fully committed themselves in the service of the Lord through the BCBP community after Baptism in the Holy Spirit and after finishing series of culture talks. They were eager to attend action group meetings, breakfast fellowships, Lord's Day, recollections, retreats, assemblies and other activities that would make them closer to our Lord Almighty. We were together most of the time in all these spiritual gatherings including BCMR in Mary Hills Retreat House in Antipolo. That was year 1994.

Brother Bernie, together with his wife Liza, served the Lord through BCBP in various capacities. They became assistant action group leader to Brother Wil Agudelo. They also joined the music ministry. Singing and dancing with joy for the Lord were one of those things that we remember about our Brother Bernie. He clapped and sang worship songs even though sometimes out of tune. He didn't care and was not even bothered about being teased as having both left feet while dancing and jumping with joy for the Lord. He practiced and lived the teachings that were being taught - that we should not hesitate to worship the Lord, emphasizing the relationship between us and our dear Lord God.



We were a witness to how our Brother Bernie grew spiritually. He noticed that he became more mature in dealing not only with our brothers and sisters in the community but to all whom he came contact with. He shared with us how he handled family problems and his children. He struggled also in his job as a military officer showing not only how it was to be an officer and a gentleman but more of being a man of God.

Brother Bernie also served as BCBP's breakfast head for quite sometime. His efforts to continuously serve God extended to the Parish community and the whole Air Force members as well. He organized fellowships in the neighborhood during special occasions like Christmas and New Year's to foster camaraderie and a spirit of unity. And in all of these services, he did it with a light and happy mood, high spirit and full of smiles infecting everyone that surrounded him. Yes, he always had that "sweet" smile that encouraged others to move and do what was expected of them. A "smile" which he carried up to his last breath when he joined our Creator last April 6, 2000. He was a basketball player of the Sangley Air Force team when at the height of their first game in Villamor he just looked lovingly at his wife, slowly sat at the end of their ringside, raised his hand and lay down. And instantly he just died.

He taught us a very big lesson that we should be "prepared" all the time because our loving Father may take the life that He has given us anytime. I knew the question that was going on inside the minds of our brothers and sisters. Why did Brother Bernie die? Brother Bernie who was so kind, helpful, serious in life and most of all, actively serving the Lord. But as we looked in his coffin, with that smile on his face, he assured us that he was so happy now where he was.

He was also a BCLP course leader who never was..... days before BCLP #10 started wherein he was supposed to be the course leader, he left us. He left his wife and his four children. Inspired by his dedication to serve the Lord, BCLP #10 was pursued in his honor. And we were happy and proud to say that he left behind a successor who will continue to serve the Lord in the person of his eldest son Jeremy graduated BCLP #10. To our dear Brother Bernie, may you rest in peace and please pray for all of us. We miss you and we will never forget you.



# GOD IS JUST A PRAYER AWAY

By Rusty Guerrero, BCBP Quezon City

In 1998, I was designated to command a Marine Battalion in Sulu. In the predominantly Muslim community of Jolo, I found friends among the parishioners, nuns, and the OMI bishop and priests, one of whom was my former parish priest. These friends of ours helped my unit in various activities in the community. We had a lot of interaction because we always provided security in their activities. Their prayers protected me and my men on several occasions during our operations against the Abu Sayaff and other criminal elements.

Last April 23, 2000, my unit was transferred to Maguindanao and went through the armed conflict against the MILF. Before we embarked on our combat operations, I requested a local priest to celebrate the Holy Mass with us. In my briefing to my men, I enjoined them to always pray. I told them not be ashamed to pray, that "hindi nakakabawas ng pagkalalaki ang sundalong nagdarasal." I reminded them that we can only accomplish our mission if we accompany it with prayers. I also remember our conference with a two-star general before the clearing of Narciso Ramos highway started. He ended the conference by telling us not to forget to pray.

Most of my men are Catholics, but not all of them go to Church regularly. In one way or another, I believe all of them turned to the Almighty during those uncertain times. I noticed that most of us carry religious articles such as the Rosary, the Lord of Pardon pamphlet or the Our Lady of Miraculous Medal in our uniforms. Most of these came from our religious friends in Sulu and the ones my wife sent for distribution. Right from the start of the conflict, I always prayed to God for two things: one, that my men will not get hurt and two, that the MILF will just withdraw so nobody will have to die. With the heavy exchange of fire, I realized from the very first day that this conflict will cause a lot of casualties. The first two weeks seemed to be very, very long, but the Lord's protective shield has minimized casualties in my unit. On three instances, bullets whizzed past me while I

was directing my men in combat. It was however in the fourth week that I started to have casualties. One morning, while my men and I were in our tactical command post, I decided to move my group forward to be nearer my troops engaged in the frontline. After an hour, a rocket propeller grenade exploded about five feet away from a table where we partook our meals. It unfortunately killed one of my men. If I had not moved my group, a lot of officers and my staff including me would have been hit by that explosion. God in His mysterious ways really works at the time often you need Him. Knowing that God was with me, I never felt we would be defeated. My faith in God guided me in my decision-making and sustained me through those two months of on-and-off firefight.

Although a soldier is trained for war, he is the last person who wants war because he is first one who suffers when he gets maimed or killed. That includes his family. I may be considered a good leader and tactician because I was able to accomplish my mission. But I believe all these were possible through the grace of God, the prayers of my family and the BCBP QC community members for our safety.

God even gave me a bonus. I was awarded the second highest medal in the military while special benefits, financial assistance and awards were accorded by the government and some NGOs to my men especially those who died or were wounded.

In my nineteen years with the Marines, God has protected me from different armed groups like the NPA, MNLF, kidnappers, Abu Sayaff, bandits and the MILF. Fact is, God is close to us in times of trials and uncertainties. He is just a prayer away. Romans 5:3-5 says "Not only that we feel secure even in trials knowing that trial produces patience, from patience comes merit and that merit is the source of hope which does not deceive because the love of God has already been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit given to us."



# How Mama Mary Answered my Pleas

Mama Mary was instrumental in my becoming an action group leader and breakfast head in the BCBP Rizal Chapter, and now managing editor of the Kapatiran.

More than a year ago, my action group leader requested me to replace him so that he may assume the role of a unit leader. I hesitated because that would be my first major service in my chapter. Doubts about my capability and fear of leading a group in the community overwhelmed me, so I requested for some time to pray over the matter and discern my decision. My action group leader gave me three days to do so because he himself faced a deadline for assuming his new role.

On the third day, as I was driving home after work, I played my rosary cassette tape as I usually do offering that day's rosary to my pending decision. Lo and behold the narrator in the tape repeated our Blessed Mother's response when she was visited by the angel Gabriel.

The sincerity and humility of those words drove me to reflection. When I got home, I called up my action group leader and accepted his entreaty.

And last July, our breakfast head was appointed to lead the chapter's Christian Life Program and again I was sought as his replacement so that he may focus on his new responsibility. He had endorsed my taking over the breakfast ministry to the governance and pleaded that I give him my answer during the forthcoming First Friday mass. First Friday came and I remained undecided. Thus, I offered the mass for enlightenment and after its celebration, I still hadn't decided. A teaching on the life of Mama Mary followed and I listened intently to Fr. Tino's narration on how our Blessed Mother offered her whole life to the service of the Lord, unselfishly without expect-

ing anything in return. This led me to introspection of how I was so unselfish in giving my time to the Lord. The following week, I became the chapter's breakfast head.

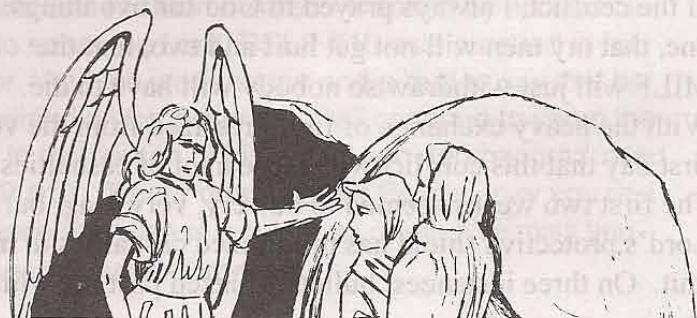
And then again late last year, the Kapatiran's editorial board solicited me to become the magazine's managing editor. I sought the advice of my unit leader, life director and chapter head. All of them advised me to lift up the matter in prayer and if I so decide to accept it, give up one of my two other present major services. This time deciding proved more difficult because it not only involved accepting a responsibility but also giving up another. For two months, I drowned in confusion.

Mysteriously, it was during my attendance of the eucharistic celebration of Mama Mary's birthday that I chose to serve the Lord in the Kapatiran and to relinquish my role as an action group leader. It was a painful decision born out of a response to the priest presider's challenge during the homily. He simply asked the congregation to pause for a moment in silence and to meditate on what gift we were to give Mama Mary for her birthday. I felt that I had always asked our Mother to intercede for my needs and to pray for my problems but I had never given her anything in return. As tears rolled down my cheeks, I offered the Kapatiran as my birthday gift to her.

*"Be it done to me  
according to your word".*

It is only now that I realize that Mama Mary was my inspiration in accepting my major roles in this community. In moments of indecision, she taught me to give my complete trust and obedience to the Lord. By her unwavering motherly love, she showed me how to return this love to her and to her son.

That rosary, First Friday mass and homily were not mere coincidences but the voices of a mother speaking to her son, a son that needed inspiration and, yes and answers to his pleas.





# CAVITE

# 9<sup>th</sup> Year Celebrates its



Last October 7, 2000, BCBP Cavite City outreach had a double celebration: its 9<sup>th</sup> anniversary and its 10<sup>th</sup> BCLP commitment rites. It started with a Eucharistic offering officiated by Fr. Albert Adison, 15<sup>th</sup> Strike Wing chaplain. Bro. Jun Catan of BCBP Manila gave the last culture talk for BCLP 10. The signing of the commitment card by the new members followed. The salt and candle ceremony conducted by Bro. Rudy Flores of BCBP Makati made everyone realize the importance of one to the other in the community.

The anniversary celebration started with a mini-worship led by the Music Ministry and Bro. Paul Marcelo. Bro. Dickie Basconillo, BCBP Cavite Mission Director gave a warm welcome to all guests and members. There were a total of 150 attendees, with the Makati chapter giving their full force support to their outreach. Two BCLP 10 members gave their

sharing of how they felt before and after their baptism in CLP. A couple sharer, Bro. Dong and Sis. Claire Orodoñez shared to the community how life in BCBP has changed everything about their family, their outlook and way of life. Bro. Bel Belostrino, Outreach Head, thanked everyone who in one way or another, helped the outreach through their nine years of walking with our Lord, Jesus Christ. A very encouraging and challenging message was given by Bro. Topy Vasquez, BCBP Makati Mission Leader.

After a marathon of serious talks and speeches, dinner was served. During the dinner, entertainment started with the numbers prepared by each unit from the BCBP Cavite City outreach. A surprise number was also rendered by BCBP Makati. There were songs, dances and both! The last presentation from an action group of Unit III was a fitting finale to the celebration where everyone leapt to their feet and danced with joy for the Lord. ✍️ *By Joy Taccad*





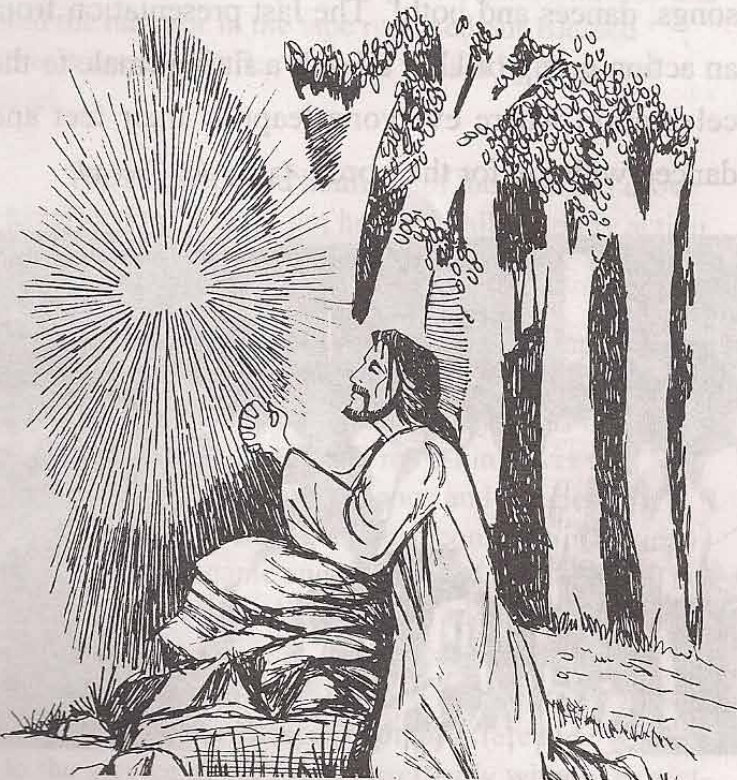
# DAGUPAN

By: **Teddy C. Fernandez**

*Chapter Head, BCBP Dagupan*

In about a month and a half, the year 2000 shall draw to a close and the twenty-first (21st) century shall actually dawn on us with the coming of the New Year, 2001. Looking back to the beginning of this year, I can still recall that at our chapter's anniversary celebration in February, the chapter was "commissioned" by Brother Louie Morales to start an outreach in Laoag City. Earlier in the program, our spiritual adviser, Fr. Denny D. Lucas, SVD, had challenged us to go on mission and evangelize his own town mates in Laoag City. Likewise, at this occasion, Bro. Louie Morales announced the new servant-in-charge who were afterward prayed over, with Fr. Denny, leading us in prayer.

As the new chapter head of the BCBP in Dagupan City, how do I envision our chapter in the coming year? I would like to see a chapter that is more committed to its evangelization tasks. As BCBP members, we are expected primarily "to spread the Gospel values of Jesus Christ" in our marketplace. But I believe we cannot proclaim, much less spread, the Gospel in the business and professional milieu as effectively as we should, if we are not living witnesses of the Word. This means, for me, that we, in BCBP Dagupan, must try to live as best as we can the BCBP way of life.



About a week ago, the governance team started its planning session for next year. The team, which includes aside from the chapter head and his wife, the Mission Director Ed Poserio and wife, Marie, Chapter Life Director Russel Braganza and spouse, Elsa, chapter treasurer Abing de Venecia and wife Doris, unit leaders Betz and Edit Singian, Fred and Nenet Rosal, Romy and Jane Rosario, decided to prepare for next year's activities by holding this December, the action group leader's training as provided for in the manual found in the Chapter Life Director's Working Kit. We are aware that the key to a strong chapter is a strengthened action group, and yet, as some members have observed, we have different "styles" of conducting action group meetings in addition, we feel that the action group leaders need to be reminded, now and then, of their responsibilities and roles. Likewise, it was agreed that next year, the unit leaders would meet the action group leaders for the teachings on the "Fruits of the Spirit" to be discussed in the action group meetings. It is our hope that through these discussions the members will be more spirit-filled and be enabled to exercise the gifts of the Holy Spirit in serving the Lord and the community.

With God's grace and the generous help of our brothers and sisters from the other BCBP chapters, the outreach that we opened in Laoag City in June of this year, is, in the words of our irrepressible Mission Director, Ed Poserio, "alive and kicking." Plans to hold the Grand Breakfast during the second week of January, 2001 and the first BCLP (Brotherhood Christian Life Program) in the outreach have been drawn with the guidance of Bro. Ted Siapno, Luzon Regional Council Director. For our Laoag outreach, we have also scheduled Brotherhood Christian Marriage Retreat No. 1 (BCMR) to be joined in by the recent graduates of BCLP No. 13, the "Jubilee class" of Dagupan City.

Our chapter has a relatively small active membership. I realize that we might not be able to pursue the plans that the governance team has prepared if the other brothers and sisters in the chapter are not empowered. We hope that thru the action groups, our members will be encouraged to be pro active in the ministries/services that they have signified they would join. With the teaching tracts on Evangelization and Christian Relationship series scheduled to be given next year in the First Friday Prayer Assemblies after the First Friday Mass, it is hopes that the "evangelistic spirit" will be rekindled among our members who will be more keenly aware of their commitment to serve the Lord in and through the BCBP.

Dagupan City, November 18, 2000.



# DAVAO

By Sis. Ollie Robillo

## RECOLLECTION 200

The first Sunday of December saw us, 63 of the Davao chapter members, 2 couples from our Digos Outreach, and 4 youthful family members who were game enough to join their elders, attend a traditional year-end recollection where we have always felt at home - the St. Charles Borromeo Retreat Center, venue of the last National Leaders' Retreat. Our young, new-found Chaplain, Fr. Rommel Cruz of the Mission Society of the Philippines, shepherded us to fulfill our spiritual yearning to welcome another season to be reborn. We gained fresh insight in that the Recollection was a preparatory exercise for taking stock of ourselves, our conduct, our family/community relationships, our commitments and mission. We learned to view Advent as a homecoming towards a reunion with God on the commemorative day of Christmas.

Fr. Rommel reflected on the story of Abraham, to whom God promised a son, Isaac, only to be offered as a sacrifice. We all know that Abraham, like our Blessed Virgin Mother Mary, said YES to God's call. Their common trust and obedience were greatly rewarded. Fr. Rommel then led us back to the deliverance of the Hebrews and their trek from Egypt. He recalled how the chosen people vacillated between the joy of freedom from bondage in Egypt and their sense of misgivings and impatience in reaching the Promised Land - when all along, God had been with them in their journey.

Between songs and prayers, we reflected on the courage, obedience and trust of Abraham to give back Isaac, the son God promised would be his delight in his old age. We examined and asked ourselves whether we could also be staunch believers in the divine mercy and unconditional love of God through Jesus. We resolved to break away from

what was preventing us in seeing the Way, finding the Truth, and leading a Life of blessedness. In the course of the lectures, we realized that we all have our 'Isaacs'; for example, non-intervention in the religious vocation of a son or daughter; or letting go of the unbearable grief on the demise of a loved one, allowing us to mourn, but not interminably. Our 'Isaacs' can be in our forgiving and forgetting wrongs; or in choosing between career advancement or more time with the family; or going to work abroad against staying together through thick and thin. Are we willing to surrender our 'Isaacs'?

Our speaker also illustrated the infidelity of the Hebrews who longed to go back to Egypt after many decades of travelling in the wilderness. He said we too have our own 'Egypt' to turn away from: it could be our addiction to cigarettes - the many times we have quit and then smoke again; or our deep-seated dreams of becoming wealthy someday, despite our avowal for seeking poverty in spirit. Or it could be any of our comfort zones and pleasure points in our life that distract us from our mission for Christ.

In the BCBP way, we gathered together into eight groups and shared our individual reflections, which our leaders collated, each giving a summation at the end of the session. By the warm hugs and smiles all around, the Recollection was worth remembering. Fr. Rommel heard confessions during the breaks, and capped the day with the celebration of the Holy Mass, to enrich the Advent of another renewal.





# MACTAN

## MACTAN IS 7 YEARS OLD!

Mactan & Mandaue brothers and sisters joined efforts together to celebrate and thank God for the blessings and good harvests that he so generously and continuously poured out on them for the last seven years. The simple affair at the Casino Español on October 15, 2000, was a night of worship, fun and laughter. More than three hundred members and first timers joined in the celebration.

### IN HIS SERVICE

#### "Breakfast and Me"

The "david" who heads the "goliath" task of the Breakfast ministry is the unassuming couple, Kuya Mart Pusta and wife Ate Nes. Blessed with four lovely girls, the couple is in to brokerage and forwarding business and also run an eatery. Busy schedule? How do they respond to God's call to serve?

"We have been serving as head of the Breakfast ministry for seven months now and we consider this a blessing to have been chosen to serve the Lord in this manner. Although I must admit that there was a moment of hesitation as we were then action group leaders. However, the urge to please Him was strong and the call simply irresistible. God's call was a great opportunity to say "Yes" and we see this as our way to thank Him for all the blessings he continues to bestow on us.

Notwithstanding the two offices I manage daily, family matters and other concerns, we made a commitment to spend quality time for the Lord. I thank God for His mysterious hand in arranging our hectic schedule so that one activity does not interlap with the other. This way we would be able to serve Him the way He wills it. And I thank God for His intervention everytime trials set in like petty quarrels with Nes, or problems with the business. In Sirach 2:1; the Lord says, "My son when you come to serve the Lord prepare yourself for trials"... but faith strengthens and encourages us to continue serving Him more. Despite our meager capability, to serve God is a treasured joy for us. It is a fulfillment that no other business return can compare. Agnes adds "before, for Saturdays were spent idly, no plans, no schedule to follow. Now with the Saturday Breakfast fellowship to prepare, we look forward to our service because I believe that we are starting our day right."

### GOD'S MESSAGE FOR THE MONTH

*"Is anyone among you DISCOURAGED? I see many of you need HEALING. Be STRONG and take COURAGE, for I am your GOD. Do not be afraid for I am with you.*

*Give thanks to the LORD. Talk of His wondrous deeds. Seek His face forevermore. Lift up the banner of love and claim your victory. The LORD is GOOD to everyone who TRUST in HIM."*

# MANDAUE

The Sectoral Breakfast last September 30 was a milestone for the entire BCBP Community here in Cebu. It was the first of such a kind of activity to take place. Our chapter was blessed by the Lord to do service by hosting the Sectoral Breakfast fellowship. Our National President Bro. Louie and Sis. Lily Morales shared their life story to 22 first timers with more than five hundred of our brothers and sisters in our entire BCBP Community attending the fellowship.

The next sectoral breakfast is scheduled in December, this time, Cebu chapter will host the occasion. It is an activity worth waiting for.

Latest on SPORTS: the bowling tournament was held last October 8 at the Gasiano Bowlingplex. The top prizes for the highest individual scores were gardnered by our very own Bro. Armand de la Cruz and Ate Cora Pflugfelder. Congratulations to both of you.

"LET THE CHILDREN COME TO ME" is the theme that led to the BCBP KID'S FELLOWSHIP which was held last October 21 at the San Roque Parish Social Hall. The children had an afternoon full of fun and game meeting new friends and barkadas. The fellowship started with a prayer. With Tita Cora Pflugfelder as the emcee, the kids had a grand time.



# TACLOBAN

## BCBP TACLOBAN... NOW A CHAPTER

.... a millenium chapter in the jubilee year....

An unforgettable event and a memorable day – Saturday, August 26, 2000, aptly describes the installation of BCBP TACLOBAN as a chapter.

As early as Friday afternoon, guests from different chapters and outreaches started to arrive. Among the “early birds” were BCBP brothers and sisters from Cagayan de Oro, Iligan, Maasin, Baybay and from our mother chapter, BCBP Cebu (both North and South). A hospitality dinner was served that Friday night in the residence of a member of BCBP Tacloban.

In the morning of Saturday, members of the Mancom, headed by the BCBP Millenium Prexy, Bro. Louie and Sis. Lily Morales arrived in time for the installation Breakfast where the National Vice-President, Bro. Manolet and Sis. Carla Siojo were the breakfast sharers. Also, BCBP brothers and sisters from the outreaches of Catbalogan and Calbayog graced the occasion and also attended the installation breakfast.

Brothers and sisters from the BCBP Ormoc Chapter together with the National Director for Family Programs, Bro. Charlie and Sis. Josie Carballo, as sharers in their breakfast, arrived in time for the hospitality lunch.

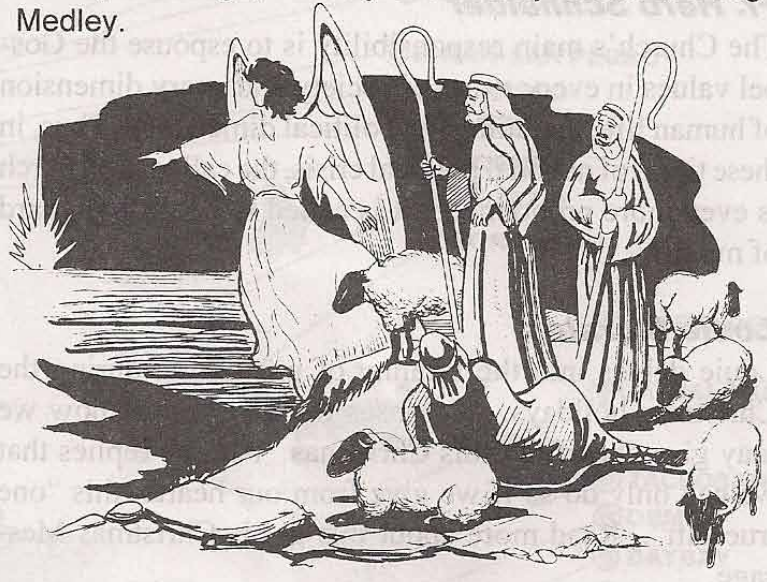
*Spiritual Rewards... from page. 8*

where each one will have a grand experience of spiritual renewal in his encounter with the Lord. Together with all the other graduates of the BCLP I, I dream that when the Baguio Outreach becomes a Chapter, San Fernando Outreach will also grow and in the Lord’s time, establish also an Outreach and eventually become a Chapter. I hope and pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to inundate the members and highlight the “seeds of the Word” in them, so that they may be engulfed with continual newness of light, of life and of works which only God can bring about. May this happen so that more and more will follow the right road and may meet their creator, placing their hearts and souls in His service.

I am always inspired and challenged by my BCBP-Baguio brothers and sisters’ show of love, unity, enthusiasm and their sacrifices in serving the Lord without counting the cost. With them as our inspiration, all our dreams and plans for the San Fernando Outreach will be

In the morning after the Breakfast, the Mancom held their regular meeting in one of the hotels in Tacloban City. Other guests, especially the ladies, opted to tour the city and some of the tourist spots.

The installation of the BCBP Tacloban Chapter was unprecedented because of the empowerment and praying over of the new set of officers, aside from their induction into office together with the Unit Leaders, Action Group Leaders and Head of the Service Groups. Of course, a mass preceded the installation, the praying over and the fellowship where the different chapters and outreaches and the Mancom displayed their talents in the presentation part of the program. The BCBP Tacloban Music Ministry entertained the guests with variety of songs, notably the Waray Cultural Song Medley.



realized in His time. Along the way, there will be trials that will come, but with God’s grace everything will work out for the best in the end. So what is there to worry about?

I would like to thank all my brothers and sisters who supported me and gave me so much encouragement that really pushed me into committing myself in this community. I know that you are only instruments of the Lord and you acted by the power of the Spirit. But you deserve my gratitude because you allowed the Holy Spirit to work in you by heeding the call to evangelize and support me. You will surely be rewarded for your commitment in the work of evangelism.

Brothers and sisters, I still need your support. Being a young Christian, I need more prayers so that I can truly mature as one.

**Thank you and God bless us all.**



**Ronnie Caballero**

Ronnie in his valedictory shares what the Lord has taught him throughout his three years as Managing Editor of the Kapatiran; and, that is to focus on the Lord, more so during the most turbulent storms of his life. By keeping his gaze on Him, he has realized how the Lord was present and faithful most specially in times of desolation.

**Msgr. Artemio A. Baluma**

Msgr. Art Baluma tackles our issue focus on moral ascendancy which is the foundation for any governance. Instead of defining the term, he cites interesting situations that illustrate it.

**Fr. Herb Schneider**

The Church's main responsibility is to espouse the Gospel values in every strata of society and every dimension of human life, including the political dimension. Thus, in these times of national political crisis, the call to the Church is even more pronounced, it is called to be the vanguard of morality.

**Louie Morales**

Louie delves into the tyranny of gift giving during the Christmas holidays. He poses the question of how we may give cheerfully this Christmas. And he replies that we can only do so if we give from our hearts this "one true gift". Read more about this in his Christmas Message.

**Fernando de Larrazabal**

How can the God-Man, the Creator of All be born in a manger? If his birth is a paradox, what would you call his death on the cross? These are interesting questions that call us to reflection in Bro. Larry's One Minute Reflections.

**Annie Salvador**

Annie reflects on how she learned integrity and honesty and about being a true Christian from her parents. And now as a parent she must be a model of what she teaches to her own children. Know more about this in her "Form and Substance" article.

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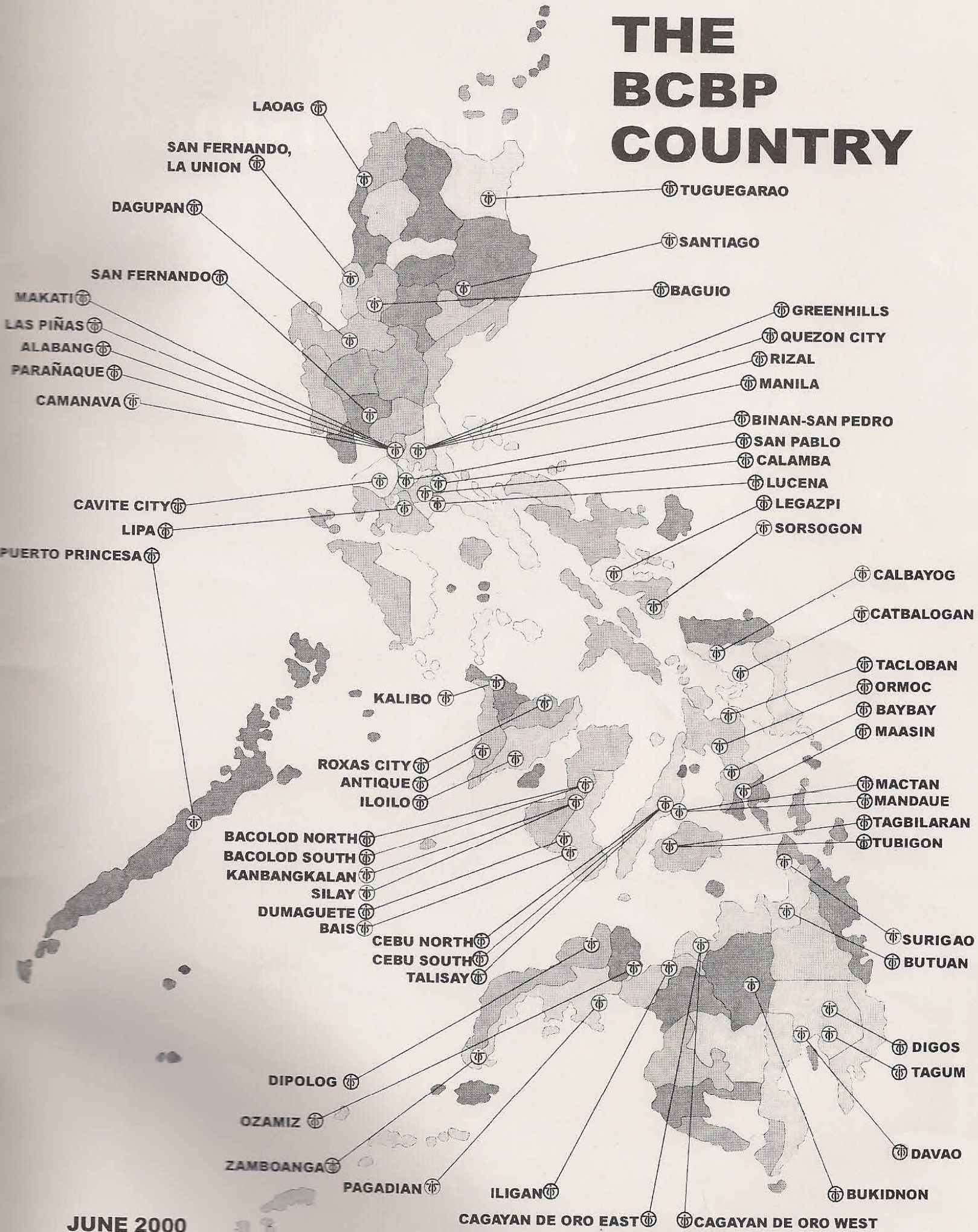
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