



SIMBAHAY

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF ST. JOHN BOSCO PARISH CHURCH, MAKATI CITY, PHILIPPINES

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 2

FEBRUARY 2013

2013 ST. JOHN BOSCO PARISH FIESTA CELEBRATION



Celebrate the **young**, he taught to fly
 Children of the earth, they touch the sky
 Celebrate the **God** that they learned to love
 As they talked with him, as they walked with him.
 Celebrate the **man** who gave them wings
 And the joy that faithful living brings
 Celebrate the **dream** that they dared to dream
 Dreams they heard from him, in a word with him.
 (Don Bosco Among Us – Celebrate by Fr. Stephen Schenck, SDB)



With so much to celebrate and give thanks for, the SJB Parish Fiesta events in honor of our Patron St. John Bosco spanned more than a week, beginning with the Novena Masses celebrated by guest Salesian priests, a special prayer experience, a jubilant Youth Mass, exciting games and *salo-salo* for young parishioners, mass baptism for 50 and a solemn Fiesta Mass officiated by a Salesian Bishop.



CELEBRATE THE YOUNG, CELEBRATE THE DREAM

27 JANUARY – **MAKA-JUAN, MAKI-JUAN!**: YOUTH CELEBRATION OF ST. JOHN BOSCO'S FEAST DAY *By Mary Grace Gueriba*

SJB Parish Youth Ministry held its first activity for 2013 on January 27. A week before the Parish Fiesta, the *"Maka-Juan, Maki-Juan!"* gathering served as the YM celebration of the Feast day of the Father and Teacher of the Youth and our Patron Saint, St. John Bosco.

"Maka-Juan, Maki-Juan!" was made up of three events: *"Juan on Juan with Jesus"* – a prayer service, *"Juan for all"* – the Youth Mass and *"All for Juan"* – group games, short talks and snacks.

For most of the Youth, the Taize prayer service during *"Juan on Juan with Jesus"* was a novel prayer experience. Taize Prayer is an ecumenical, participatory

prayer service where participants achieve a contemplative state through a combination of music, song and silence.

During the Youth Mass, homilist Fr. Vester Casaclang, SDB talked about Don Bosco's Preventive System of Education and how we should all make use of reason, religion and loving kindness to enable our children to become "good news". He then cited the inspiring story of Ms. Vilma Labrador as example. Our Parish Priest, Fr. Ting Miciano was main celebrant with Fr. Rector Chris Kennedy, Fr. Dave Buenaventura and Fr. Dennis Paez, YM Salesian-in-charge as concelebrants.

Before the final prayer, Br. My Hernandez

sang "Live the Dream", the theme song of the 2009 Don Bosco pilgrim relic visit. While the members of the *Ampon* and *Ampan ni Don Bosco* animated the song, representatives from the different youth organizations formed a large picture of Don Bosco from several pieces; Fr. Chris added the last piece.

Back in the Gym, during *"All for Juan"*, YM's version of "Minute to Win It", the youth joined in exciting one-minute games facilitated by the Don Bosco Youth Center (DBYC). Br. My, Fr. Dennis and Fr. Favie Faldas gave short talks on Reason, Religion and Loving Kindness. The event ended with the awarding of winners and *merienda* for all.

More on pages 2 and 3



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SCHEDULE OF MASSES

Monday to Friday:

6:30am • 7:30am • 12:15pm • 6:00pm

Holy Hour every Thursday after the
6:00 pm Mass

Saturday:

6:30am • 7:30am
6:00pm (Anticipated Mass)

Sunday:

6:00am • 7:15am • 8:30am • 10:00am*
11:15am • 12:30pm • 4:00pm • 5:30pm
7:00pm • 8:30pm

*with sign language interpreters

Confessions are available during all
the Masses

Adoration Chapel - open daily from
7:00am to 8:00pm

PARISH OFFICE & RELIGIOUS STORE HOURS

Monday to Friday (except Thursday)
8:00am - 11:30am • 12:30pm - 6:00pm

Thursday:
8:00am - 11:30am • 12:30pm - 4:00pm

Saturday:
8:00am - 12:00pm • 1:00pm - 5:00pm

CELEBRATE THE YOUNG, CELEBRATE THE DREAM



03 FEBRUARY – MASS BAPTISM

On the 3rd of February, the day of the Parish Fiesta, the Church welcomed in mass baptism rites, fifty new Christians, consisting mostly of babies, several children and a few young adults.

Rev. Fr. Ting Miciano presided over the Holy Mass within which the baptism rites were celebrated. With so many candidates for baptism, two baptismal fonts were set up in front of the sanctuary. Rev. Adie Prenanto, a dea-



con from Indonesia assisted Fr. Ting in the baptisms.

Members of the Legion of Mary helped organize the mass baptism. They gathered the candidates from indigent families of the Parish, as part of their apostolate works, while the Catechetical Ministry handled the pre-baptism seminar for parents and Godparents. All expenses for the mass Baptism were shouldered by the Parish.

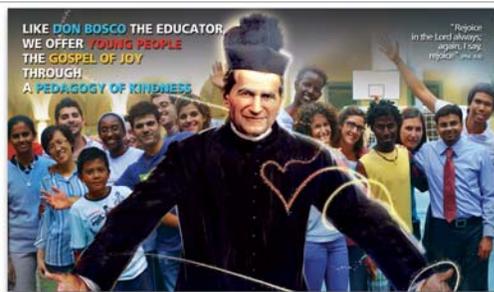
RETURNING TO THE YOUNG BETTER PREPARED by Fr. Chris Kennedy, SDB

In this second part of our look at Strenna 2013, as explained by Fr. Pascual Chavez, the Rector Major, we see that he wants the Salesians and the Salesian Family “to return to the young better prepared.” He says that it was among the young that Don Bosco fashioned his way of life, his system and his spirituality. For Don Bosco, it was always and everywhere a “preferential love” for the young, which is a gift from God, “but it is up to us to use our intelligence and our hearts to develop and to perfect it.”

The Rector Major reminds us that the true Salesian “does not desert the field of youth, for his heart beats in tune with that of the young. It is the young that gives meaning to his life: work, school, his affections, and free time, and in this way he tries to discover the real needs of the young, creating a youth ministry suited to the needs of the times.”

This demands of all of us to be in contact with the “heart” of today’s culture. In this regard, Fr. Chavez presents us all, whether we are Salesians, parishioners, or parents of Bosconians, with some thought-provoking questions.

He asks, “Just who are the young people to whom as individuals and in community we ‘consecrate’ our lives? What do they want, what are their desires and what do we (and God) want for them? Do we know today’s young people?”



One other area of concern of the Rector Major is that of “professionalism”. This means being creative, adaptable, flexible and optimistic, as well as being in touch with the situation of youth in our area of responsibility. We must move from a theoretical knowledge to practical living out of our vocations, where we are. This means not just putting trust in documents but in actual real life situations. “If the Church finds itself at a loss in the face of the young,” he asks, “is the same not perhaps also true of the Salesians and the Salesian Family today?”

All of these questions make us all rethink the nature of our parish work for the young, knowing that Salesians take on parish work with the young in mind. What we all are being asked to think about is whether our work for the young is really in our plans and daily commitments. There is more to the concerns of youth than education, because the real education takes place outside the classroom for more than anything, it embraces the “classroom of life”.

CELEBRATE THE GOD, CELEBRATE THE MAN

Parishioners, visitors, members of the SJB Parish Salesian Community and guest Salesians gathered together to celebrate the Parish Fiesta during the early evening Solemn Mass with His Excellency, the Most Rev. Precioso Cantillas, SDB, D.D., Bishop of the Diocese of Maasin, Leyte as main celebrant.

In his homily, Bishop Cantillas spoke about Don Bosco's devotion to the Pope "whose wish was Don Bosco's command". (*Don Bosco served as a trusted go-between of the Church and State during the difficult period of the unification of the Italian States.*) Sadly, the Pope's authority is no longer recognized today on issues of morality which conflict with the Church's stand. This feast is an opportunity for us to reflect on an important dogma of the Church concerning the Magisterium, which is the teaching au-



3 FEBRUARY – SOLEMN PONTIFICAL FIESTA MASS

thority of the Church, and Papal Infallibility^[1].

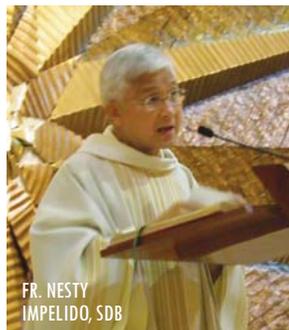
The Bishop called on the assembly to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the Year of Faith to know our Faith better towards a "more authentic conversion to the Lord". We take our inspiration from the apostles who asked the Lord to increase their faith (*Luke 17:5*) and from our own Patron Saint's regret

on how much more He might have done, had he had more faith.

^[1] *Papal Infallibility*

When the Pope (1) intends to teach (2) by virtue of his supreme authority (3) on a matter of faith and morals (4) to the whole Church, he is preserved by the Holy Spirit from error, i.e. his teaching act is "infallible". – <http://www.ewtn.com/faith/teachings/papac2.htm>

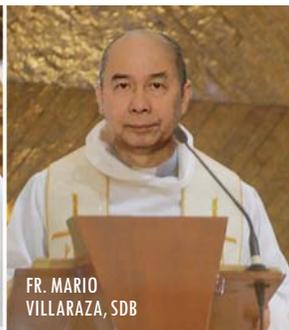
25 JANUARY – 2 FEBRUARY NOVENA MASSES



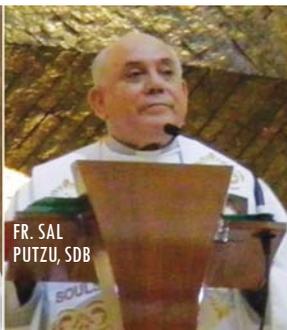
FR. NESTY
IMPELIDO, SDB



FR. BONG
OSIAL, SDB



FR. MARIO
VILLARAZA, SDB



FR. SAL
PUTZU, SDB



FR. FAVIE
FALDAS, SDB

From January 25 to February 2, nine priests belonging to different Salesian settings developed their homilies around the Fiesta theme, "To Educate is to Evangelize, to Evangelize is to Educate".

(Visit http://sjbmakati.com/wordpress/?page_id=515 to listen to the recorded homilies of the Salesian main celebrants of the Novena and Fiesta Masses)

Ms. Diva Abad Santos, Ms. Aura Lachica and the zone leaders organized this year's Fiesta Masses.

25 January Fr. Nesty Impelido, SDB,
26 January Fr. Bong Osial, SDB

Fr. Nesty and **Fr. Bong** spoke on how Don Bosco's life-work fulfilled the mission the Lord entrusted to Don Bosco when he was nine years old; a mission which continues to this day.

27 Jan Fr. Mario Villaraza, SDB

For **Fr. Mario**, Don Bosco enabled street children to get to know the Lord (education) and through his life, taught them to love the Lord (evangelization).

28 Jan Fr. Salvatore Putzu, SDB

Fr. Sal related how Don Bosco, the perfect educator and evangelizer, created

human masterpieces – exemplary Christians and good citizens with well developed hearts and minds.

29 Jan Fr. Favie Faldas, SDB

Fr. Favie explained how Mama Margaret helped Don Bosco to become a good educator and evangelizer.

30 Jan Fr. Rene Lagaya, SDB

According to **Fr. Rene**, **Reason** explains and clarifies truth, **Religion** provides Gospel basis for decisions and **Loving Kindness** eases both learning and the acceptance of the Gospel. As such, Salesians should always be kind in word and deed to everyone.

31 Jan Fr. Armand Robleza, SDB

Fr. Armand encouraged us to "celebrate our Patron who overcame loneliness, by caring for one another and enlivening each other's faith".

01 Feb Fr. Alex Garces, SDB

Fr. Alex discussed Don Bosco's secret path to sainthood: do ordinary duties extraordinarily well and faithfully, be cheerful and pray "much not many" (i.e., short but fervent prayers).

02 Feb. Fr. Remo Bati, SDB

Fr. Bati described Don Bosco as the most wonderful saint canonized by the Church who was blessed with extraordinary gifts of nature and grace.



FR. RENE
LAGAYA, SDB



FR. ARMAND
ROBLEZA, SDB



FR. ALEX
GARCES, SDB



FR. REMO
BATI,

SUNDAY MASS REFLECTIONS

Simbahay features the Sunday Mass Readings' themes from Fr. Sal Putzu's "Exploring God's Word".

These themes are part of a systematic approach to study and have a good knowledge of the Biblical passages which will be used in the coming Sunday Masses and to relate these readings to our lives.

Listen to Fr. Salvatore Putzu, SDB (General Manager and Editor, Word and Life) at *Bisperas sa Veritas* 846 AM, 5pm Saturday.



1ST SUNDAY OF LENT

Migrants' Sunday

February 17, 2013 Readings

*Dt 26:4-10 – Profession of faith of the Israelites

*Rom 10:8-13 – Essential profession of faith of all Christians

*Lk 4:1-13 – Jesus overcomes all temptations in the desert.

Theme: FIGHTING THE GREATEST "LIBERATION WAR"

Our profession of faith in God includes the proclamation in words of the truths in which we believe. It is not always easy to make such a proclamation, for there are circumstances when it takes courage even just to say "I believe".

But even more demanding than professing our faith with our lips is the challenge to profess it with our life through the choices we make, day by day. There are, in fact, ways of life which are imbued with materialism, hedonism, pride, selfishness . . . that amount to a denial of, and are as many obstacles to our faith . . . They are ways of life that lead to moral slavery and un-happiness.

Jesus Christ, like any other human being, experienced the attractiveness of those "voices". He knew that they have their origin in the devil, and the disaster they lead to. That is why he chose to reject them and to live by the Word of God. That's how he remained always loyal to the Father and restated his readiness to actualize His plan. Jesus' choice and victory over the tempter is an example and encouragement for us to do the same.



2ND SUNDAY OF LENT

February 24, 2013 Readings

*Gn 15:5-12,17-18 – God repeats His promise to Abram and guarantees its fulfillment.

*Phil 3:17-4:1 – Christians should live in the expectation of their Christ-like glorification, while behaving in a Christ-like manner.

*Lk 9:28b-36 – While at prayer, Jesus is transfigured in front of three of his disciples.

Theme: TRANSFIGURATION: A LESSON ON THE POWER OF PRAYER

Jesus' Transfiguration is a triumph of light over darkness; a triumph of holiness over sinfulness, of hope over despair. And all this, thanks to the transforming power of our intimacy with the Lord through our prayer. Weak and wounded in many ways, we need to fix our gaze on the praying transfigured Christ, to derive from him the inspiration that enables us to undertake or continue the journey to the Jerusalem of God's promises.

This is the journey from an existence characterized by the deceiving glow of sinful passions and the darkness of worldly satisfactions to the splendor of a life lived in communion with God, according to the teaching and example of Jesus.

This is the time for us to open our eyes to the truth and act. From the Tabor of this Lenten Season, prayer and meditation on the sufferings of the Lord should fill us with the strength we need to pursue our quest for the values of the Kingdom and the light of a holy life.

3RD SUNDAY OF LENT

March 3, 2013 Readings

*Ex 3:1-8a, 13-15 – God reveals Himself, His plan and His Name to Moses.

*1 Cor 10:1-6,10-12 – The events narrated in the Scriptures are meant for our enlightenment and guidance.

*Lk 13:1-9 – Jesus exhorts his audience to conversion through a reflection on current events and a parable.

Theme: THE CALL TO CONVERSION AND FRUITFULNESS

God's goodness with us during this Lenten journey should not be taken to mean that there is nothing to change in our behavior. It can only mean that the Lord, in His divine patience, is waiting for us to produce fruits of a sincere and lasting conversion.

Nor should we think that conversion consists only in avoiding committing sin. Conversion is also moving away from doing little for the Lord, to doing as much as we can for the building of the Kingdom and for our own sanctification. "I have chosen you," said the Lord, "to go forth and bear fruit. My father is glorified in your bearing much fruit."

No one knows how much time we have left for turning away from evil and doing more good. Every day or minute might be our last chance. The safest thing is to do our best every moment.



4TH SUNDAY OF LENT

March 10, 2013 Readings

*Jos 5:9a, 10-12 – The Israelite celebrate their first Passover in the Promised Land.

*2 Cor 5:17-21 – The Father has reconciled mankind to Himself through Jesus Christ.

*Lk 15:1-3,11-32 – Jesus illustrates the merciful love of God through the parable of the forgiving Father.

Theme: THE MERCIFUL FATHER, ALWAYS READY TO WELCOME US BACK

Conversion from a life of sin is a long journey back to the home which the sinner left in the deceitful attempt to assert his/her freedom against all rules. One often has to reach the bottom of deprivation and alienation, before one realizes the loss incurred and feels the urge to break away with determination from that self-inflicted slavery.

But the realization of our miserable situation would only lead us to despair if, deep in our hearts, we did not feel sure that God is a loving and forgiving Father who is still willing to accept us. We owe it to Jesus if we, in spite of all our sins, can still raise our hearts in hope. Thus, in this Year of Faith, we continue our homebound journey trusting that the Father, in His merciful love, is all too willing to welcome us back.

A PRO-LIFE MONTH FEATURE

ANG TATLONG TUKSO KAY KRISTO AT ANG RH BILL

By Balty Baltazar

Sa sobrang trapik, magandang makinig ng audiobook habang nasa daan. May natututuhan ka na, hindi pa nasasayang ang iyong oras. At kapag nag-e-enjoy ka sa iyong pinakikinggan, mas gusto mong ma-trapik ka pa lalo. Ang aking pinakikinggan ngayon ay ang *Jesus of Nazareth* ng dating Cardinal Ratzinger, na ngayo'y Pope Benedict XVI. Malalim ang sinasabi, pero ang dami kong natututuhan.

Ang isang pinagnilayan ng Papa sa libro ay ang tatlong tukso ng demonyo kay Kristo matapos Niyang mag-*fasting* sa ilang, ayon kay Mateo.

Bakit nga ba itinuturing na *temptations* ang mga 'yun? Kung tutuusin, 'yung ikatlong tukso lamang ang talagang may pinagagawa si Satanas na labag sa Sampung Utos: "Lahat ng mga bagay na iyon ay ibibigay ko sa iyo kung magpatirapa ka at sambahin ako." (Mat 4:9) Pero yung dalawang utos ay parang *venial sins* lang naman kung gagawin ni Kristo: ang gawing tinapay ang bato, at ang magpakahulog sa templo para saluhin Siya ng mga anghel.

Ano ba ang kasalanan kung sakaling gawing tinapay ang bato? Tatal, gutom na Siya. Tapos, talaga namang trabaho ng mga anghel na alagaan Siya. (Ps 91:12) Kaya, ano ang masama sa mga ito?

Ang sabi ng Papa, kung ginawa ni Hesus ang mga ito, lalabas na nagiging *independent* na Siya sa Diyos, hindi na Niya kailangan ang Diyos. At 'yun ang talagang kasalanan, kaya naging tukso ang mga inutos ng demonyo.

Naalala ko naman ang isa pang audiobook na matagal ko nang napakinggan. Ito ay

'yung *Good News About Sex and Marriage: Answers to Your Honest Questions about Catholic Teaching*, ni Christopher West na hango sa *Theology of the Body* ni Blessed John Paul II.

Sabi ni West, ang pagtatalik (*sex*) ng mag-asawa ay ang **consummation (katuparan)** ng kanilang pagpapakasal sa Simbahan. Parang, kung sa Simbahan sila'y nag-isang dibdib, sa pagtatalik sila'y naging isang laman (*Gen 2:24*).

Ngayon, kung sa kasalan sa Simbaha'y kasama ang Diyos, eh, 'di, sa pagtatalik kasama rin Siya?

Whoa, teka, teka. 'Di kaya parang bastos 'yun, na kasama pa ang Diyos sa *honeymoon*?

Wetaminit! Una sa lahat, hindi malisyoso ang Diyos. Tayo lang ang nag-iisip na marumi ang *sex*.

Ikalawa, ang pakikipagtalik ay isang pakikipagtulungan sa Kanya na makagawa ng isa pang tao. Tayo ay nagiging *co-creators* N'ya. Kaya banal ang *sex*.

At ikatlo, Siya naman ang nag-imbento ng *sex* para magka-anak. Kung hindi ba, disin sana'y ginawa Nya na lang tayong lahat na puro lalaki, o puro babae, o puro balake. Tapos, kung gusto nating gumawa ng *baby*, parang mga *amoeba*, maghihiwalay na lang tayo basta at makakabuo na ng isang tao.

E di nga ganun! Kaya dapat lang na bigyan natin ng halaga ang layunin ng pakikipagtalik, ayon sa Diyos.

Ayon kay West, ang paggamit ng *contraceptive* ay isang pakikipagtalik na ini-itsapuwera ang Diyos. Para bang sinasabi sa Kanya na, "Wait lang, Panginoon, kami na ang bahala dito." Ang paggamit ng *contraceptive* ay isang aksyon na nagiging *independent* ang isang tao sa Diyos, para gawin n'ya ang nais n'yang gawin, na hindi kasa-

ma ang Panginoon.

In essence, dito nagkakarapareho ang mga tukso ng demonyo kay Kristo at ang paggamit ng *contraceptive*. Hindi na natin isinasama ang Diyos sa ating balak gawin.

Eh, hindi naman pwede 'yun!

Nang ipinag-utos N'ya na S'ya'y ating mamahalin ng buong puso, isip at kaluluwa (*Deut 6:5*), ang ibig sabihin ay *one hundred percent compliance*. Hindi pwedeng 50%, o 80%, o 99.99%. Kaya nga "buo".

At ang utos na ito ay hindi lamang para sa Papa, mga pari't madre, o mga relihiyoso. Ito'y para sa lahat ng Katoliko, Hudyo, Protestante, *Born Again*, at marahil, pati Muslim. Basta't ang isang tao ay naniniwala sa iisang Diyos, dapat lang sundin ang utos na ito.

Dahil, kung hindi, tayo ay nagkasala na, laban sa Unang Utos. . . naisabatas man ang RH Bill o hindi.

Tie Red Ribbons



OPPOSE ANTI-LIFE LAWS

1 MILLION  RED RIBBONS

We invite each and every pro-lifer to participate in Pro Life's 1 Million Red Ribbon Campaign. This calls for tying red ribbons every where we can in order to promote awareness on this fight against the RH bill as well as to rally our troops and to remind our our valiant soldiers that our war against the anti-life forces is not yet over – not by a long shot!

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LENT 2013 SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

- ❖ Feb 13 • **ASH WEDNESDAY** (See schedule of Masses in Bulletin Boards)
- ❖ Feb 14, Thursday, 7:30PM • **YEAR OF FAITH CATECHISM**
- ❖ Every Friday starting Feb 15 - March 22 • **WAY OF THE CROSS** (Church) 6:45PM
- ❖ Feb 21, Thursday & every Wednesday from Feb 27 - Mar 20, during the 6PM Mass • **PARISH LENTEN RECOLLECTION** entitled, "Living a Life of No Regrets", a series of talks by Fr. Armand Robleza, SDB. All are invited to attend.
- ❖ Mar 10, Sunday, 8am-12nn • **LENTEN RECOLLECTION** by Cardinal Chito Tagle at the Smart Araneta Coliseum. Free Admission & open for all
- ❖ Mar 12, Tuesday, 7PM • **KUMPISALANG BAYAN** (Church)
- ❖ Mar 14, Thursday, 7:30PM • **YEAR OF FAITH CATECHISM**



In honor of St. Valentine, a 3rd century Roman priest who was martyred for administering the sacraments, including marriage, to Christians, who were being violently persecuted under the reign of Claudius II, Simbahay features God-centric love stories of four married couples from our Parish.

THE DUET OF EGAY AND SHELA

By **Richie C. De Guzman**

You may have heard of the many stories about couples finding love in unexpected places. This story is no different, except that in Egay and Shela's story, there was Divine intervention from the very start.

Egay and Shela are both SJB Parish choir members, though originally, from different choirs. Egay belonged to the Mariapolis Choir which served during the 10AM Sunday Mass while Shela's Maria Auxilium Christianorum Choir sings at the 4PM Sunday Mass. While they share interests and participate actively in their respective organizations, their busy schedules kept them from noticing each other, even as they joined common events like the Youth Encounter Program in 1996.

The two could have remained oblivious to each other, had not Egay joined the "Auxilium choir" in 2003. This move allowed them to spend a lot of time together, along with their choir mates who eventually became their common friends.

It wasn't love at first sight for either of them.

On the contrary, Egay felt Shela was too "sosyal" and "mataray" to be endearing. In turn, Shela regarded Egay as too "happy-go-lucky" for her taste. And that was when God who truly works in mysterious ways, intervened. A major misunderstanding made them realize each other's importance. Soon after, they became a couple. Still, with their different personalities, it wasn't all roses for Shela and Egay, but with God's grace, their abiding faith in Him and in each other, they stayed together.

On 14 August 2010, the eve of Shela's birthday, with their friends, Len, on the piano and Chrys, on violin, playing "Kailangan Kita", as dreamy accompaniment, Egay surprised Shela with a bouquet of flowers, an engagement ring and a proposal for marriage. The romantic proposal was offered and lovingly accepted right in front of the SJB Parish Church.

Sixteen months later, on 3 December 2011, the union of Mr. Edgar and Ms. Shelarie Mosquera was blessed at the very Parish Church which had silently witnessed the play of harmonies, discord, dynamics and melodies in the duet of their life together.



Today, they continue to serve in the Parish, enjoying every moment as husband and wife while singing in gratitude to God's glory. *Magkasama sa pagtulog, sa pag kanta, pati na rin sa pag-serve sa Kanya!*

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TAPAT SA KALIDAD, TAPAT SA TIMBANG



JUN & REMY ANTONIO, A GOLDEN PARTNERSHIP

By Nina Antonio-Santos

In this complicated world, it is a great blessing to find that one person who will simply love you unconditionally and complete you. Such was the case for our parents, Arch. Pablo Jr. and Remedios Antonio. As Dad would always say, their fate was written in the stars for their love was simply meant to be.

Mom and Dad have completely different personalities. Sometimes, we wonder how they lasted this long. Just goes to prove that no matter how different two people are, their commitment to God, their vows and their family and their willingness to sacrifice for this commitment are enough to see them through all life's trials.

Their union produced seven children who will always be blessed and proud to be part of this partnership, we call "family". By accident or design, major partners, Mom and Dad share the same set of parenting guidelines:

Family comes first!

Second, if older children are well-brought-up (i.e., disciplined), so will their younger siblings be.

Third, parents are, first and foremost, parents to their children, and their

friends much later; children should know their place and never get fresh.

Fourth, parents can never give all their children equal portions of attention, patience and resources all the time; but they must always try to be there for the child who needs them most at any time.

Lastly, parenting is a career choice, not a popularity contest.

From the start, our parents knew what kind of children they wanted to contribute to society and so they set out to make that happen. Of course, how we turned out is an entirely different story; maybe, it would be safe to say that we still are works in progress. And even if we are all grown, they are still here to guide us, though, no longer with an iron fist, but with gentle nudges here and there.

With their brood of seven different personalities, Mom and Dad raised a family, which though "functionally imperfect" with pockets of discontent, continues to be blessed with many more moments of harmony. Moments in our chaotic lives remind us that our family is our strongest base, where lifetime membership comes with the promise that all difficulties can be worked out together, all hurt feelings forgotten in a crisis, and all conflicts resolved in God's good time.

On 5 January 2013 Mom and Dad



celebrated a milestone, their golden wedding anniversary. For the past fifty years, waking up each day knowing that they have each other and their family has indeed been a blessing. They now look forward to growing "older" together surrounded by the love of their children and grandchildren.

Thank you, Mom and Dad! Thank you for your love. We owe to you both the persons we are today.

NOTES FROM A 25-YEAR JOURNEY

By Glen Navea

Dear Diary, today was my first day as a teacher in La Salle Greenhills. I was introduced to the rest of the faculty, and there she was . . . round-faced, *singkit*^[2] and radiating with a youthful glow. Sadly, though, I don't think she even noticed me. Oh well, I shouldn't be interested or my girlfriend would be furious.

. . . I have been a teacher for five months now, and *singkit's* daily visitor at work for the past four (despite my initial resolve to remain uninterested). Thanks to these faithful "pilgrimages" and some cuddly presents, I have somehow gained her attention and someday, I hope, also her affection? Well someday came today. . . I should be ecstatic, instead I am heart-broken. Her message was simple – while she admitted to having deep feelings for me, she could never reciprocate my love for as long as I am involved with another. Though hurt, I admired her even more as she truly is God-fearing!

. . . It's been a year since her gentle ultimatum, 12 months of relentless reflection on my honest feelings, 12 months of praying without ceasing for the Lord's guidance – to be able to discern what He

wills for me and to have the conviction to carry it out. At last, my prayers were answered. Today, I asked for my girlfriend's forgiveness as we finally broke off our relationship. Today as well, with confidence and conviction, I confessed to Leonie, my beloved *singkit*, how much I desired to spend the rest of my life with her, if she would be my wife. She must have gone through the same reflections and prayers in the past months, because it was with the same certainty and sincerity that she said YES.

. . . It's our wedding day today! Family and friends are all present. Many of our guests are still surprised that we ended up together. Others are even skeptical that we are right for each other. Yet, a few believe, like us, that one can fight for one's love without engaging in a battle. . . by reflecting on one's feelings and constantly seeking the Lord's guidance, one can win true love, no matter how long it takes and regardless of the odds. Today, 22 December 1998 is day 1 of our celebration of that victory.

. . . 2013 is going to be a milestone year for us. Our youngest child will be graduating from college, and Leonie and I will be celebrating our silver wedding anniversary. It's been 25 years, since we first celebrated

our victory. Twenty five years since naysayers predicted we won't stay together. Well, Diary, let me declare with the same confidence and conviction of 25 years ago

. . . that with God's abiding grace, my sweetheart and I will continue our victory celebration as silver turns to gold.

^[2] *Singkit* - Filipino for one with almond-shaped eyes



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HAPPY BIRTHDAY, FR. FARONI@90*By Maris Katigbak-San Juan*

How is a beautiful friendship born? Where does it begin? Ours began one Monday evening ten years ago in a confessional box in St. John Bosco Church Makati, the first one to the left of the main Church doors, and the other office of Father Adolf Faroni, SDB, Parish Confessor.

My son, Enzo, and I were not able to go to Sunday Mass the day before. Feeling bothered, I decided to bring him to the Parish Church on the way home from school so we can both go to confession. The 6:00PM Mass was almost over, by the time we arrived; fortunately, the red light on Fr. Faroni's door was still lit. My son went in first. Barely had a few seconds passed, when I heard Fr. Confessor shouting at my son. I pitied my son, yet could not do anything but wonder, "What sins could a 13-year old possibly confess to deserve such a scolding instead of forgiveness and absolution?" "Would he scold me too?" I decided I wasn't too keen to find out. I would have left without confessing, as soon as Enzo was "released", had not the gentleman who was next in line (probably my guardian angel) persuaded me to change my mind. The next thing I knew, I was ready for my confession.

As soon as Fr. Confessor opened the small window between us, I identified myself as the mother of the boy he had earlier scolded, and quietly expressed my hope that the experience had not discouraged my son from availing of the sacrament again. Fr. Faroni explained that he had asked Enzo to return next day for his absolution for he wanted to



FR. FARONI'S GUEST PRIESTS



THE AUTHOR AND THE EVENT'S MAIN ORGANIZER WITH FR. FARONI

impress on my son the gravity of not making Sunday a Holy Day. But he confided that he had secretly absolved him. In turn, I secretly doubted Enzo would be returning.

Surprisingly, my son did return; he accompanied me next day, after I told him that I also needed to go back for my absolution. This time, I went in first and begged Father to be kinder to my son. Yes, he made good his promise! Thus began a beautiful friendship that has gone beyond the walls of the confessional, born in the House of God,

founded and nurtured on forgiveness, reconciliation and love.

Since then, Fr. Faroni and I have been literally walking along the path of friendship. Almost every day after the 7:30 morning Mass, after he locks up his confessional, Fr. Faroni and I take our "holy walk". We stop for short prayers by the images of Our Lady of Perpetual Help and the Divine Mercy (two beautiful mosaic pieces from Italy whose acquisition was spearheaded by Fr. Faroni and me). We continue our walk down the covered walkway past the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, pausing occasionally to chat with friends and Mass goers, with a brief stop-over at the Parish Office / Store to greet the staff before we finish our holy walk by the elevator to the convent.

A jolly fellow when he's in a good mood, especially when I give him fresh flowers and hard rolls from the Pen, Fr. Faroni can be one holy terror when he sees people inside the church who are not dressed properly. He can also be a gentle, humble man who asks for forgiveness when he realizes he has wronged a friend. A loving father to Eric, his "son" in Italy. A passionate researcher, translator and compiler of books that have numbered 211 to this day. A confessor who can stay in the confessional box for hours and hours.

Thank you, dear Lord, for your holy servant, the very Rev. Father Adolf Faroni, whose 90th milestone we celebrated on 9 February 2013. Each time he opens the little window to hear us say, "Bless me Fr. for I have sinned", he also opens for us, by degrees, the gateway to Heaven.

MON AND LYNN – OUR LOVE STORY *By Lynn A. Angeles*

"It was love at first sight", Mon always tells me when he recalls our first meeting. Honestly, I don't believe him. 😊 Mon and I met in SGV & Co., where we used to work. We chose to work there because both our fathers were retired SGV Partners. Yes, they knew each other way back when we were toddlers. It happened that Mon and I were assigned to the same group and the same project. We became good friends because aside from our parents' background, we have so many things in common.

When our project ended, we were assigned to different projects. I was sent to Japan while he was sent to New Zealand. I thought that Mon would no longer keep in touch (the internet, facebook, etc. were not yet invented back then). But surprisingly, he kept in touch regularly through snail mail, without my knowing that he had an ulterior motive. He just dropped hints but never asked me outright. Later on, he admitted to me that he really doesn't know how to

court women. 😊

When both our overseas projects ended, he revealed his true feelings for me and asked me to marry him. I answered, "Huh, 😊 I thought we were friends? How could this be?" And so, it took me a while to decide that our marriage might really work. When I finally consented to be Mon's wife, both our parents were so happy. It was like an arranged marriage! 😊

After 21 years, I must admit that both of us are still working on our marriage. Honestly, it's really not that easy. Though I said earlier that Mon and I have a lot of things in common, we are opposites in many ways. While I want things done yesterday, Mon does things just in time. While I easily get angry, he always keeps his cool. And while I could be honest, to a fault, he chooses his words and is quite diplomatic. I guess we both realize that being opposites, we can learn from each other's good points. That's how we grow in virtue. Virtue needs practice; we are so lucky, we both have a



lot of practice. Now, I understand how marriage can lead to sanctification.

Mon and I are quite thankful to the Lord for inspiring us to keep on working on our marriage and growing in virtue as a family, together with our only child, Antonio. We pray that our family will someday be like the Holy Family, a family filled with love, with the Lord at its center. 😊