



# SIMBAHAY

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

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 9

SEPTEMBER 2013



**By Fr. Ting Miciano, SDB**

In all my years in the Parish, there are two great Marian feasts that never fail to touch the hearts of so many Catholics: the feast of the Nativity or Birthday of our Blessed Mother Mary (September 8) and the feast of her Immaculate Conception (December 8). We have to schedule additional Masses to accommodate the overflowing number of devotees who would come to venerate and pray to her on these days. And why would they not? Isn't she our mother who dearly loves and cares for us, her children? When did this reciprocal affection and devotion begin? I would surmise that everything began at her birth.

In the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD, the Eastern Church started memorializing Mary's birth on September 8, exactly nine months after the Feast of her Immaculate Conception on December 8. The Western Church in Rome only began to celebrate it in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, with the rest of the Church following much later. By tradition, both the Eastern and Western Churches accept the details surrounding Mary's birth, including the names of her parents, Joachim and Anne, found in the Apocryphal[1] Gospel of James.

But what is most important in Mama Mary's birth, is that it prepared for the birth of the Savior of mankind, Jesus Christ. Hers was the one life in the world which preceded THE Life of the world. Through Mary's birth, her Son gained entry into humanity and saved it.

From its inception, Mary's life was permeated by the Divine. The Father preserved her from the poison and effects of original sin (Immaculate Conception); He assisted her to remain pure while she was growing up (Holy Virginity). His Holy Spirit influenced her to cooperate in the work of our redemption (Divine Motherhood). His grace prepared her for the momentous offering of her "fiat"[2] to welcome His Son into her womb (Annunciation).

And because of Mary's life-giving "yes", all of humanity (including those who came before us and those who are to come after) is redeemed by the Life of Jesus himself. Her "yes" to Life brought us everlasting life. As such, we can claim, we were all born from her.

As the Mother of Life and all life, Mary's whole being was devoted to fostering and nurturing life. As a young mother, she took care of Jesus in the most dedicated and

loving way possible. A lot has been written on how Mary already "saw" all of us in Jesus, and by taking care of her only Son, she was making sure that we will all be safe and secure. She supported Jesus throughout his public life and ministry, this time, "giving life" not only to him but to his disciples. She stood by Jesus as he was dying on the cross; the embodiment of quiet strength and courage. In that way, she remained the mother of life because, with his death, Jesus restored sinful humankind back to life. Long after the first Easter and Pentecost, Mary inspired the apostles and disciples with her strength and reassuring presence. And now that she is in heaven, she continues to give us life through her dependable intercession and inspiration.

We owe our spiritual life to Jesus and Mary. While Jesus is the source of Life, Mary is the beginning of that Life.

Most dear and loving Mother, our most august Queen, we greet you and give thanks for your birth. We celebrate your coming to life and, through it, the coming of Jesus, our Lord and Savior, our Life.

[1] *Apocrypha* – early Christian writings not included in the New Testament

[2] *Fiat* – a formal authorization or proposition



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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

SEPTEMBER 2013



Fr. Ting with SJB Parishioners during the Million March Against Corruption

The observant reader would have noticed that lately, my editorials, including this one, are commentaries on issues, which are not solely religious and spiritual. I decided to write on “secular” concerns, not because of a sudden dearth of spiritual topics, which are worth writing about, but because I find topics as: ecological sensitivity, the solution to our traffic woes and now, government corruption timely as they are relevant. After all, we are not only spiritual but also socio-political beings. Anyone in the country who is unaware of the raging controversy on “corrupted pork” is either woefully out of touch or simply doesn’t care.

But I am aware and I do care, like so many others in our country who wish to have a say and participate in the “uprising” against the corrupt and corrupting “pork barrel” system. I strongly feel that this is one moment in our country’s and my own personal history when silence and inaction would be a tragedy. Please hear me out.

Enough has been said and written about the sickening excesses of the “pork-barrel” system in our government, particularly in its executive and legislative branches. Where there is money, there are temptations to be dishonest and greedy. Where there are huge amounts of money, the temptations increase a hundred to a million fold, depending. If indeed the 10 billion pesos of stolen “pork” which were recently exposed are but a fraction of what has been plundered over many years from huge sums entrusted to the sole discretion of government officials, then our country will soon be financially bankrupt, thanks to the discretion of the morally bankrupt.

Archbishop Soc Villegas, one of the more prominent figures in the Church in the Philippines, wrote in a recent pastoral letter,<sup>[3]</sup> “the shameless corruption of some greedy legislative officials” points to “the breakdown of the moral fiber of our country as a Christian nation.” Therefore, corruption is intimately connected to (the lack of) morality. And when we speak of morality, religion and the tenets of our Catholic faith are brought to the fore.

<sup>[3]</sup> “The Church and the Pork Barrel Protest” – Letter to my brother priests in Lingayen, Pangasinan by Archbishop Soc Villegas, DD.

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR PARISH PRIEST

Rather than expound more on corruption, let me single out one very important Catholic teaching that may offer a sober understanding of this disgraceful problem and its solution.

Simply put, **Catholic Stewardship** is a complete lifestyle, a life of total accountability and responsibility in the use of anything and everything that God has given to us. It begins by acknowledging God as the Creator and Owner of all. And so, if God is the creator (source) and owner (proprietor) of everything, we are not. Instead, we are only stewards, managers and facilitators entrusted with the responsible management of our God-given resources of time, talent and treasure. Catholic Stewardship is living out a commitment to be Christ-centered rather than self-centered; it involves conversion of the heart. The ultimate goal of Catholic stewardship is to be God-fearing, to be responsible and accountable for the management of resources, to promote the common good and the prolongation of creation.

By looking at the gross misuse of public funds and the scandalous behavior of some of our legislators in the light of Catholic stewardship, we gain a sound understanding of the problem. If people do not acknowledge God, they will misuse God’s gifts, including and especially money. If people consider themselves the owners of public funds and not merely responsible and accountable managers, then it is easy to misappropriate these. If people think only of their personal rather than the common good, then the gap between rich and poor will never be bridged. And if we live for today without thinking of tomorrow, then our descendants will have very little left of the world to live on in the future.

In conclusion, may those who are perceived to be misusing public funds, heed Cardinal Tagle’s tearful plea to repent and allow the innate goodness in every person, which comes from God to come out, “You can do better than this.” With the principles of Catholic Stewardship in mind, the way out of this corruption scandal could still be a long way off, but it remains a rewarding possibility.

— Fr. Ting Miciano, SDB

## JOY IN SERVICE ON THE FEAST OF BLESSED TERESA OF KOLKATA – SEPTEMBER 5



By Vi P. Hernandez

*The Missionaries of Charity is a religious congregation founded in 1950 by an Albanian nun who was beatified in 2003 by Blessed John Paul II as Blessed Teresa of Kolkata (Calcutta, India). Aside from the vows of obedience, poverty and chastity of all religious orders, an MC takes a fourth vow – to give “wholehearted and free service to the poorest of the poor”.*

In her indigo-edged white sari, Sr. Ligaya, MC serenely blends with almost a hundred similarly-swathed sisters and pos-

tuants in the Formation House in Tayuman, but the moment she speaks, the extent of her injuries from a 1990 car accident becomes painfully evident. Every strangled word is accompanied by spasms, involuntary jerky movements and urgent gasps for air. I wanted to call off our interview, but she assured me she was fine. She gave her answers, partly à la “charades”, partly in guttural whispers and the rest, in her surprisingly neat handwriting. This is her story.

They were passing an intersection in Karachi, when a bus rammed Sr. Ligaya’s side of the van, throwing her out and smashing her head against the tarmac. She immediately went into a coma. When the doctors, suspecting extreme brain damage, advised her superior that she was beyond hope, her superior had the Blessed Sacrament exposed for a 24-hour vigil, and then ordered the sisters to fast for Sr. Ligaya’s recovery. After three weeks, she woke up from coma, in pain, unable to speak or see clearly, but with her mental faculties intact – the first miracle.

On her way back to the Philippines, Sr. Ligaya was brought to the Mother House in Kolkata. As they laid her on Mother Teresa’s bed, she remembered that during her first profession, it was Mother who blessed her on her new mission to serve the sick and the dying. Now, just a year after, she is blessing her again as she lay sick and possibly dying. And then it happened, her vision suddenly cleared and she saw the benevolent, deeply-lined face again – the second miracle.

Since then, for the past 20 plus years, Sr. Ligaya has been a miracle in progress, not so much for her remarkable recovery, but more so, for her joyful and unbroken spirit. In time, she walked again and cheerfully took on increasing responsibilities: helping prepare for Mass, assisting in the kitchen and eventually heading it. For ten years, she planned and supervised the preparation of economical yet tasty and nutritious meals for over 90 residents in the “Home for the Dying”.

Sensing my last question, Sr. Ligaya revealed the source of her obvious joy. She wrote in my notebook, “I was so touched by the life of Blessed Mother Teresa. I also want to face my suffering as a gift of God; it is no longer a suffering, but a real communion with God. In offering it, I honor and glorify Him and all souls”.

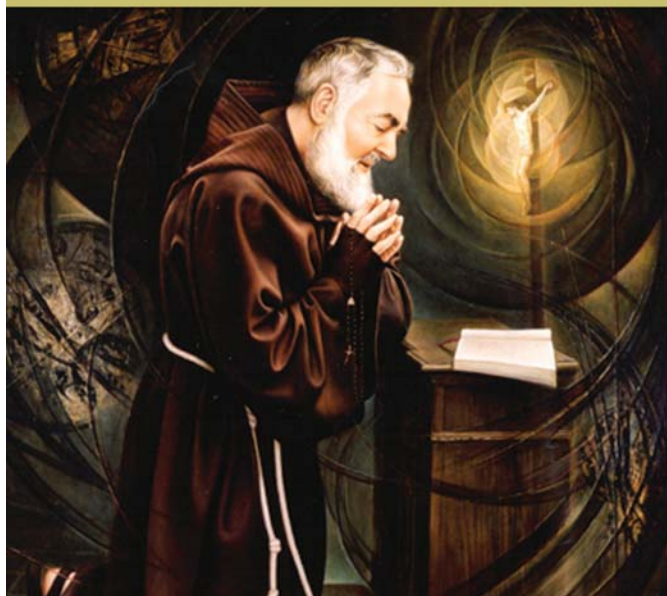
I am not used to hearing about the miraculous power of fasting and adoration vigils, and the spiritual dimension of suffering mentioned so matter-of-factly. But after all, 4000 multinational MC’s live with such spiritual realities everyday as they continue Blessed Teresa’s mission of loving service to the world’s needy, “Christ in distressing disguise”, in 450 charity centers worldwide.

Turning to leave, Sr. Ligaya remembered something and whispered, “The Dutch nurse, who cared for me when I was comatose in Karachi, became an MC; she is now our regional head in Sri Lanka – a miracle from a miracle!” Smiling, she joined the other white saris in prayer.

## 23 SEPTEMBER: FEAST OF ST. PIO OF PIETRELCINA

## PRAYER OF POPE JOHN PAUL II TO ST. PIO OF PIETRELCINA, PRIEST AND STIGMATIST

*Pope John Paul II recited this prayer on the occasion of the canonization of Padre Pio, 16 June 2002.*



Teach us, we pray, humility of heart,  
so that we may be counted among the little ones of the Gospel  
to whom the Father promised to reveal  
the mysteries of His Kingdom.  
Help us to pray without ceasing,  
certain that God knows what we need  
even before we ask Him. Obtain for us the eyes of faith that will  
help us recognize in the poor and suffering, the very face of Jesus.  
Sustain us in the hour of trouble and trial and, if we fall,  
let us experience the joy of the sacrament of forgiveness.  
Grant us your tender devotion to Mary,  
mother of Jesus and our Mother.  
Accompany us on our earthly pilgrimage  
toward the blessed Homeland,  
where we too, hope to arrive to contemplate forever  
the Glory of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## 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.



### 23<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

#### Grandparents' Day

#### 8 September 2013 Readings

\*Wis 9:13-18a – Only those taught by God's wisdom know how to please Him.

\*Phlm 9b-10.12-17 – St. Paul intercedes in behalf of Onesimus.

\*Lk 14:25-33 – Jesus invites his listeners to consider well whether they will be able to meet his demands.

#### Theme: CHALLENGED TO LOVE AS CHRIST DOES

Following Jesus entails many forms of detachment and renunciation. It takes a lot of courage and generosity to accept them and to persevere in them. But this does not mean that a disciple of the Lord is forbidden to love, or that he/she is not able to love. In fact, all real disciples of Jesus are called to be "loving persons."

What distinguishes them is the way they love, for they are expected to love the way Jesus did and does – to love with an absolutely pure, selfless, generous love which excludes no one and seeks only the real good of the beloved. Our nature, wounded and weakened by sin, does not find it easy to love in this manner.

To love "the Jesus way" requires a long apprenticeship, and plenty of generosity and perseverance. It may come to cost a lot in terms of personal sacrifice. But its fruit

is well worth the price, for it is through such a tested and pure love that the Kingdom of God flourishes, and lasting happiness can be attained.

### 24<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

#### 15 September 2013 Readings

\*Ex 32:7-11.13-14 – God's plan to punish the Israelites and Moses' intervention in their behalf

\*1 Tim 1:12-17 – Hymn of gratitude to God for His mercy towards sinners, as manifested through Jesus Christ

\*Lk 15:1-10 – Two images of God's saving love for those most in need of His mercy

#### Theme: WE ARE UNIQUELY PRECIOUS TO GOD

Sin is an unfortunate part of our life here on earth. This is the result of the devil's disruptive activity in us and of our letting him hold sway over our lives. When we indulge in sin, we become strangers to ourselves and God; we go astray and thereby become the first victims of our own wrongdoings.

But the Lord is not happy about such a situation. He is not prepared to lose us, for we are precious in His eyes. That is why, whenever we get lost through the wrong choices we make, He goes in search of us with immense patience and caring love. He is like the Good Shepherd who is not at peace until he finds the sheep that went astray, or the thrifty housewife who searches every corner in the house till she finds the coin she lost.

God's caring and forgiving love should teach us not only to be grateful to Him for saving us, but also to have a greater appreciation of ourselves and our brethren, for we must indeed be precious if God cares so much for us.

### 25<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

#### 22 September 2013 Readings

\*Am 8:4-7 – Severe warning against those who exploit the poor

\*1 Tim 2:1-8 – Paul's profession of faith in God's universal salvific will as actualized in Jesus Christ

\*Lk 16:1-13 – Parable of the dishonest and shrewd servant

#### Theme: LEARNING TO BE CLEVER FROM BUSINESS-MINDED PEOPLE

The cleverness of people with worldly concerns often puts to shame those who claim to believe in the life to come. The creativity and sense of urgency which characterize most business people often contrast sharply with the dullness and the



complacency of the so-called "religious people." This is a sad reality which was already an "established tradition" in the time of Jesus. And it was in order to counteract that negative trend that he told the parable featured in today's Gospel passage.

Today's theme is for us a challenge to make the most of the opportunities the Lord offers us in the different circumstances of our lives, in view of the life to come. If business people are conscious of the preciousness of time and of every chance to improve their performance, we should be even more eager to catch every opportunity to get closer to the Lord and please Him in whatever we do, for on this depends our eternal salvation. This is what it means to take everlasting life seriously.



### 26<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

#### National Seafarers' Day/Start of Laity Week

#### 29 September 2013 Readings

\*Am 6:1a.4-7 – Warning of the impending punishment which will be dealt to the rich who have been insensitive to the needs of the poor

\*1 Tim 6:11-16 – Paul exhorts Timothy to become an example in the practice of all Christian virtues.

\*Lk 16:19-31 – Parable of the selfish rich man and Lazarus

#### Theme: WE CREATE OUR OWN HELL

No one is destined to go to hell, and no

one is herded into heaven. For those who can exercise their freedom, the final outcome of one's life is always the fruit of the free choices one makes. Unrepented sin is the name of the "highway that leads to hell," while sustained virtue is the narrow road that leads to heaven.

The sins of indifference and omission are among the most common ones. They are also among those we take less seriously and from which we readily absolve ourselves. Such an attitude is totally incompatible with the teaching and example of Jesus.

## HAILING MARY

By Maris Katigbak-San Juan

A Marian devotion hailing[4] Mary not once, not thrice but 2000 times, the 2000 Hail Mary's devotion began with a beautiful story 80 years ago.

While studying in the Salesian seminary of San Vicente de Horta near Barcelona, a 15 year old boy named Juan Riu Farran was told by his co-seminarian, Daniel Ara, of a pious belief that whoever prays 2000 Hail Mary's on the feast of the Annunciation would obtain three graces from the Blessed Mother.

He took this to heart and on the feast of the Annunciation, 25 March 1933, he prayed with great devotion 2000 Hail Mary's and asked for three graces: to be a Salesian, to be a priest, to be a missionary.

Trustfully, Juan Riu waited for our Blessed Mother to grant him the three graces.

On 27 July 1935 after his novitiate in preparation for religious profession, he took his vow as a Salesian. The first grace he requested from the Blessed Mother was fulfilled.

On 15 June 1946, in the seminary chapel of Madrid, together with 20 Salesian companions, Juan Riu was ordained a priest by the bishop of Madrid, Leopoldo Eijo. The second grace from the Blessed Mother was fulfilled.

And on 30 August 1952, when he arrived in the poor district of San Juan in Puerto Rico to begin his apostolic missionary work, the third grace was fulfilled. After eleven long years as missionary in Puerto Rico, he was invited to help the eastern Salesian missions of Ecuador.

Today, the devotion of the two thousand Hail Mary's has spread to many parts of the world.

In our Parish of St. John Bosco Makati, the devotion was propagated for many years, every first Saturday of the month, by a Marian devotee, a co-parishioner and

Indeed, it is not enough that we refrain from oppressing and exploiting our neighbor. It is not even enough that we show our compassion for the suffering and the needy in words alone. (See *Jas 2:15f and 1 Jn 3:17f.*) We must show our love for them through deeds that respond to their needs and are proportioned to our means. Only then will we begin to be disciples of the Lord. Only then will people realize what a difference the Christian faith can make in the lives of individuals, communities, and nations.



friend, Pilar David, who recently passed away this June, and whom I fondly remember while writing this article.

Our group of devotees would gather at Pilar's house, a three minute walk from the Parish church, and start praying the devotion after the 7:30 morning Mass and end eight hours later. We took turns in leading the prayers, dedicating every 100 Hail Mary's to one of 20 prayer intentions, among them: graces from the prayer, peace, conversion of sinners, victims of abortion, vocations, and families. We also wrote down our personal intentions on paper, which we would then burn as a symbolic offering at the end of the prayers.

The 2000 Hail Mary devotion is a powerful intercessory prayer. We hail our Mother and pray with her to her Son Jesus for the graces we implore. And sometimes, graces and blessings are obtained from

## SEPTEMBER 2013 CALENDAR

01 Sun	22 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time
03 Tue	St. Gregory the Great
06 Fri	First Friday / Salesian Congress on Evangelization (Batangas)
07 Sat	Day of Prayer and Fasting for Peace in Syria
08 Sun	23 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time/ Birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary
09 Mon	St. Peter Claver
12 Thu	Holy Name of Mary
13 Fri	St. John Chrysostom
14 Sat	Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross / Mass Makati City Jail
15 Sun	24 <sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time
16 Mon	St. Cornelius & Cyprian
17 Tue	St. Robert Bellarmine
19 Thu	St. Januarius
20 Fri	St. Andrew Kim Taegon & Companions
21 Sat	St. Matthew
22 Sun	25 <sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time
23 Mon	St. Pius of Pietrelcina
26 Thu	St. Cosmas and Damian
27 Fri	St. Vincent de Paul
28 Sat	St. Lorenzo Ruiz & Companions
29 Sun	26 <sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sick Visitation – Thursdays 9:00AM

Holy Hour – Thursdays 6:30PM

Medical & Dental – Sundays 2:00PM

Visit our website for the complete Sep 2013 Calendar  
<http://sjbmakati.com/parish-events.html>

Mary through one, three or two thousand other Marian ways.

For more information on the devotion and to download copies of the prayers guides and the intentions, please visit [2000hailmarys.org](http://2000hailmarys.org).



Pilar David

[4] hail – to greet with enthusiastic approval, acclaim

Grandparents bestow upon  
their grandchildren  
The strength and wisdom that time  
And experience have given them.

Grandchildren bless their Grandparents  
With a youthful vitality and innocence  
That help them stay young at heart forever.

Together they create a chain of love  
Linking the past with the future.  
The chain may lengthen,  
But it will never part . . .

– *Unknown Author*

## 8 September 2013: Grandparents' Day



### TOMAS JR. AND RAQUEL CARUNUNGAN – THE GRACE OF GROWING OLD AND TOGETHER

By *Vi P. Hernandez*

*“Basta ako, mas mahal ko ang aking mga apo, kahit sa aking mga anak”,* declared Raquel Carunungan with a twinkle in her eye and a sweet smile; beside her, Tomas Jr., her husband of 59 years, beamed in happy agreement.

I often see this elderly yet spry couple offering the bread and wine during the presentation of gifts in the anticipated Sunday Masses or walking hand in hand after. But what attracts me most are their friendly, infectious smiles; the same engaging smiles and easy laughter that brightened the Pugad coffee shop during our interview one overcast afternoon.

Tomas, who belongs to four generations of printers (“I have printer’s blood running in my veins . . .”) and Raquel, a former nurse, met as college students through mutual friends and got married soon after graduation. They have nine grandchildren (12 to 35 years), one great-grandchild and another on the way. With obvious pride and affection, they talked about their *“tubo”* (profit) from three daughters and one son. *“Ang babait nila, maganda ang pagpapalaki kaya walang mga bisyo – none of them smoke!”*

They look forward to special occasions and weekends when their grandchildren



would visit their Mama Mi and Papa Pu, as they are fondly called by their apo’s who are growing up fast: finishing school, starting families and building careers as marketing managers, doctors, engineers and, of course, as printers.

When asked how they have been spending their retirement, Tomas smiles and declares, “But we have not retired!”

Since they closed their printing shop, he and Raquel, now both in their 80’s, have been managing a small trading company for printing equipment. Working, worshipping, walking and travelling together, enjoying their family and each other’s company keep Raquel and Tomas alert, vital and in love. No wonder, they have so much to smile about. 😊

## WALA KA SA LOLO KO

By Nico Ibaviosa

My *lolo* was asked five years ago, "How many more years do you want to live?" "Five years," he replied, "Pag nag-graduate na ng college si Nico."

Next to my mom, my Lolo Ed is my biggest fan. He always checks up on me to see how I am doing and to ask about my subjects, activities, love life, and everything else – just to point out in every conversation, how I am basically like him. I genuinely enjoy every conversation with him. It always amazes me how sharp he has remained despite his age. In his 80's, he tutored me on our difficult calculus classes. The amazing part was how he arrived with unorthodox solutions to the same right answer. He never fails to fascinate me. Once in his 70's, I came home with a jump rope. Recalling his days as an amateur boxer in their neighborhood, he began telling me about how he used to train and stay fit; and before I knew it, he was demonstrating the proper use of the jump rope. Cool!

We all have our share of "*Wala ka sa lolo ko*" stories. I am fortunate to have shared longer moments with mine. As my *lolo* watched me grow up, so have I watched



him grow old. And as he grew weaker, he has become even more an inspiration to me. Despite his age and ailments, he makes it to St. John Bosco Parish Church each morning to serve as a Eucharistic Minister. Seeing how my *lolo* always puts God first and trusts in Him, despite all hardships, and without question, is his perfect way of transmitting his faith to me.

He reinforces my trust in the Lord.

To say I'm close to him is an understatement. I was happy helping him renew his driver's license this year. I feel blessed to have him and will forever be grateful for every moment we had shared and will share together. My super *lolo*, now at 90.

## 14 SEPTEMBER: THE GLORY OF THE CROSS

By Valerie Averia

*Deus caritas est.* God is Love.

And this Love is powerful. Potent. Transformative.

This Love sparked the creation of a universe . . . achieved a virgin birth . . . and transformed the horror of that cross on Calvary to something noble, beautiful and glorious.

On 14 September, the Church commemorates the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. We celebrate the discovery of the cross of the crucified Christ by St. Helena during her pilgrimage in Jerusalem. The cross was buried, hidden after his death but St. Helena located it successfully, along with the crosses of the two thieves. Legend has it that the true cross distinguished itself by restoring the health of a dying woman, who was healed upon touching it. This great discovery was celebrated by St. Helena's son, the first Roman Emperor Constantine by constructing the Church of the Holy Sepulchre over the holy site of the crucifixion. During the sacking of Jerusalem in 614, Persians took the cross. Thankfully, in 629 AD, Emperor Heraclius recaptured it. It is said that this

emperor desired to carry it on his back to Jerusalem but could not do so until he disrobed from his luxurious attire and donned a simple garb.

This is the cross of Christ. From being an instrument of torture and shame, it became an object of veneration and exaltation. Because of Jesus' resurrection, the experience of the cross no longer inspires terror or fear. No longer does it lead to death, but to life everlasting. And so we celebrate the cross. We embrace it. We search for it.

The cross is where love finds its climax. It communicates the noble sacrifice of a very loving God who willingly sacrifices His life to obtain for us eternity with Him. "God loves each one of us as if there were only one of us to love," St. Augustine said. We are precious and worthy in God's eyes. Each of us contributed to the weight of that heavy cross. Jesus lovingly carried each of us on His back. Each, a soul to love. A soul to save.

The cross is our identity, the very image of our faith. It shows who we are. Who we follow. What we must do. "Take up your cross and follow me (*Matt 16:24*)."

The cross points to our destiny in heaven. Like Christ, it is where we are lifted up and glorified at the end of it all.





**VICARIATE CELEBRATES PONDO NG PINOY'S 9<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

On 31 August 2013, representatives of the parishes and a community comprising the Vicariate of Sts. Peter and Paul<sup>3</sup> gathered to celebrate the 9<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Pondo ng Pinoy (PnP) at the Don Bosco Technical Institute in Makati City.

PnP, a brainchild of Cardinal Gaudencio Rosales, Archbishop Emeritus of Manila, was launched in 2004 as a movement, a private, non-profit foundation that mobilizes local resources to support development-oriented humanitarian projects that benefit the poor. These resources are drawn from

little acts of kindness, voluntary daily savings of loose change, “crumbs” (e.g. 25 centavos saved for charity), which if “sustained by similar constant little acts, can grow into great expressions of daily charity and compassion.”

<sup>3</sup> Includes Holy Cross Shrine, (Dambana ng Banal na Krus), Our Lady of La Paz Parish, National Shrine of the Sacred Heart, Saint Andrew the Apostle Parish, Saint John Bosco Parish, Saints Peter and Paul Parish and the Sto. Niño de Paz Chapel



**CONSECRATION OF THE WORLD TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY**

On 13 October 2013, a few months after the June 8<sup>th</sup> National Consecration of the Philippines, His Holiness Pope Francis shall consecrate the whole world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. This special Marian Day celebration on the anniversary of Our Lady of Fatima's last apparition, will take place in the Vatican with hundreds of Marian organizations and institutions present.

“The Holy Father strongly desires that the Marian Day may have present, as a special sign, one of the most significant Marian icons for Christians throughout the world and, for that reason, we thought of the beloved original Statue of Our Lady of Fatima,” announced Cardinal Rino Fisichella, President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization.

**HIMIG NG KABATAAN ALAY KAY DON BOSCO CHORAL COMPETITION 2013**

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Twenty-two years ago, the second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP II) envisioned a “renewed integral evangelization” of the Church in the Philippines. Today, the Archdiocese of Manila, joins the journey of the universal Church towards “new evangelization” as it confronts current realities of urbanization, poverty, graft corruption, globalization, gross economic and educational imbalances, while taking advantage of new information and communication technologies, e.g. social networking.

“The Philippine Conference on the New Evangelization (PCNE) is a milestone in the Church’s journey and a concrete response to her call as well as a reawakening to PCP II’s vision.” It will be held from 16-18 October 2013 at the University of Santo Tomas and is open to all.

For more information on the topics and speakers, and to register online visit [www.pcne.com.ph](http://www.pcne.com.ph) or like PhilippineConferenceOnNewEvangelization on facebook for the latest updates.

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