



ANG BINHI



"Ang Binhi" (The Seed) is the Official Newsletter of the Catholic Filipino-Australian Chaplaincy of Brisbane

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JOY IN LENT

My lola used to gather us, her grandchildren, at the beginning of each Lenten Season and enumerated to us the litany of the don'ts in Lent. Examples of these: Don't eat meat, Don't eat much, Don't laugh loudly! Don't go to parties and merry-makings, etc. In short we were exhorted to be sad, gloomy and melancholy.

Metropolitan Anthony Bloom of Sourozh said that contrary to what others feel and think, Lent is a time of joy. It is a time when we come back to life. It is a time when we shake off what is bad and dead in us in order to become able to live, to live with all the vastness, all the depth, and all the intensity to which we are called. Unless we understand this quality of joy in Lent, we will make of it a monstrous caricature, a time when in God's own name we make our life a misery.

This notion of joy connected with effort, with ascetical endeavour, with strenuous effort may indeed seem strange, and yet it runs through the whole of our spiritual life, through the life of the Church and the life of the Gospel. The Kingdom of God is something to be conquered. It is not simply given to those who lie surely and lazily wait for it to come. *Fr. Marce*

Ang Binhi newsletter is now published every three months.

Please email articles to: caltez@bigpond.net.au for inclusion in next publication.

FROM CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS TO SIMPLE GUIDELINES

On 17th February, elected officers of the Filipino Chaplaincy (Brisbane, Gold Coast, Ipswich and Caboolture) assembled for the time at the Parish Centre of St. Matthew's Church in Loganholme. As we all know, these officers are the representatives and the voice of the Catholic Filipinos from the four corners of the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

One purpose of the gathering is to evaluate and to share and to listen to each other's pastoral experiences in the past years; to check where we were before in our ministry, where are we now, and where are we heading at in our service in the Lord's vineyard. The aura of the rendezvous was delightful as each group and individual poured out their concerns to improve our service to the Filipinos in the archdiocese. After the lively sharing, the chaplain gave some bits and pieces of spiritual inspiration on the meaning of their ministry in the chaplaincy.

Another purpose of the annual general meeting is to look at the practicality and the usefulness of our constitution and by-laws, formulated in 1998. We discussed the items of the said document and we found that many items are not anymore in harmony with the actual or the present situation of our ministry. I therefore made a draft and presented it to the assembly as a suggestion. The draft does not sound Constitution and By-Laws but simple Guidelines. This is in line with the strong advice of Sr. Cecilia Anning, Executive Secretary of the Pastoral Councils of the Archdiocese of Brisbane, during her meeting last year with all the chaplains of the different ethnic communities in the archdiocese. Sr. Cecilia strongly exhorted the chaplains not to be too wordy, not to be too meticulous and too legalistic with the rules and regulations for those who minister in the pastoral council.

The draft that I presented was unanimously accepted by the whole assembly with minor revisions of some few words. Starting this year, therefore, the Constitution and By-Laws of the Filipino Chaplaincy ceases its effect. Instead of the Constitution and By-Laws, what we have now as a document is called "GUIDELINES FOR PASTORAL COUNCIL" The new Guidelines sound very handy, written in a simple language with a pastoral tone. It is a short and a friendly Guidelines. The whole text of this new document of the Chaplaincy will be published in the next issue of Ang Binhi.

I am very grateful to all the Chaplaincy officers who spent their precious weekend time in the meeting. Thank you for your sacrifice! - Fr. Marce

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From the Epiphany Sunday to the day before Ash Wednesday is Epiphany season. In the liturgical year calendar, the Sundays after the Epiphany Sunday falls under Sundays in Ordinary Time. One would think to believe that the Epiphany season is ordinary time in the church calendar. On the contrary, this is a very important season in the church's year. Epiphany is that manifestation of God to the world in which we come to see who Jesus is, where He is to be found, and where we begin to understand what He is about. Most theologians call this season, the season of light. The readings from the scriptures provides us epiphany stories, glorious accounts with which and through which we can see the Christ.

The first story is the magi or the wise men or the three kings, the most familiar. They arrive as representatives of the exotic, the secular, and the scientific world beyond that provincial little burgh of Bethlehem, and their arrival is a sign for, and in behalf of, us all. They are our Epiphany witnesses. They opened their treasures and gifts for Him on bended knees, for He is the King of kings. They saw God made manifest for us.

The second story is found in St. John's gospel, of Jesus' first miracle at that famous wedding in Cana, where, once again, it was Jesus who gifted the occasion. He rescued the wedding from certain disaster by replenishing the supply of wine; he turned the water into wine. It was this manifestation, that the disciples saw the work of the saviour, and they believed in Him.

The third story is the baptism of the Lord. In Luke's gospel, John the Baptist, said to the people: "I baptised you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire." Now when all the people had been baptised and while Jesus after his own baptism was at prayer, heaven opened and the Holy Spirit descended on Him in bodily shape, like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you."

These are three epiphany stories in which the identity of Jesus is made clearer and clearer to all who will look and see. To fail to understand the meaning and the message of these stories have difficulty in understanding the meaning of Lent. It is true, the past links the present and the future. Although the Epiphany season is past, full understanding of it help us lift our eyes to see beyond our narrow understanding of the real identity of Jesus. By the light of the glory of His countenance He show us that we are the subject of His work and finally, in us will His glory be made manifest and that we are meant to be not simply witnesses to the epiphany of our Lord in the world: We are His epiphany.

Ash Wednesday Reflection

Beginning the journey in the footsteps of Christ. When we unite ourselves to the passion and death of Jesus, by connecting our pain to his we also experience his victory and resurrection. This Lent, as we follow Jesus in his footsteps, our journey will teach us to embrace our crosses. We will discover great blessings in them.

In today's Gospel passage, Jesus gives us a walking staff to help us on our journey. It has three parts. The bottom of it is prayer -- this is what grounds us. The middle section is fasting -- this is what gives strength to the staff. The top section, like a shepherd's crook, is almsgiving, because it bends our heavenward heart back to earth where we minister to the people God has placed in our lives.

ALMSGIVING is a gift we give to God in thanksgiving for his generosity toward us. Jesus describes two different "rewards" -- the repayment received by the Pharisees and the recompense given to those whose generosity is based on love. Those who give lovingly are friends of God, and since friends share freely with each other, we are generous with our money and time and patience. Such love opens us to receive more of God's love. For example, as we treat others with mercy and forgiveness, we likewise receive God's mercy and forgiveness.

PRAYER can be motivated by a right attitude or a wrong attitude. Do we pray with pious words and appropriate gestures to get people's approval? Do we turn our attention to God in prayer because we want him to grant us favors? Do we recite formula prayers over and over to convince God to pay us heed? Or is our prayer time truly an intimate communication with the One whom we dearly cherish?

Coordinator's Corner

Working in the Chaplaincy within the Archdiocese of Brisbane with the boundary from Sunshine Coast to Gold Coast and Ipswich is not just an easy task. It involves public relation, planning and management in terms of serving the community by way of organising Holy Masses, fund raising event, supporting other religious groups and of course family commitment. As the new Coordinator of the Catholic Filipino Australian Chaplaincy of Archdiocese of Brisbane, I found out that serving the needs of the community within the Archdiocese of Brisbane is a complex task.

The celebration of the Misa de Gallo mass was held in St. Matthew Parish Church and was a very successful Chaplaincy event. Almost every night there were lots of people. On Dec 24 midnight mass, the church was well attended and there were lots of food for everyone to share. After the midnight mass some of the people stayed till 3:00 am to celebrate the Christmas with dancing. The music was nice compliments from Bernie and Rebecca.

Late last year, the pastoral council of the CFACB has approved the creation of another sub-chaplaincy in Caboolture to serve the Catholic Filipino Australian community in that area. They have already celebrated their first monthly mass and it was successful. I would like to thank Jo Camilleri the coordinator in Caboolture and the pastoral council for their effort in bringing the intention and mission of the chaplaincy in their area.

In December last year, I went to attend the Chaplaincy Christmas mass celebration in Ipswich and I was amazed the number of people in the church, it was nearly full. Now in Ipswich, the Filipino Australian community supporting the chaplaincy keeps on growing. Chaplaincy in Ipswich is in the right track in putting community unified and supportive. Well done Thelma and to the pastoral council of Ipswich.

In Gold Coast chaplaincy, there is no doubt that the level of service to their community really exceed to their expectation. Not only they serve their community but they as well extend their services back to our country where they have a project called "GIVE A LIFE". They have already donated a large amount of money to the Philippine General Hospital as part of their success in bringing the people in Gold Coast together to raise funds for the their project. Well done Mary Ann and to the pastoral council for their wonderful effort.

On February 17, we had our general meeting held in St. Matthew Parish church. It was a very good meeting and well attended from Caboolture, Ipswich, Esk, Gold Coast and Brisbane pastoral council. We discussed many things but our main focus was the amendments of the Constitution and By Laws. And finally it was amended and replaced with the streamline Guidelines for Chaplaincy Pastoral Council. Once this is finalised it will be distributed around.

The whole idea of establishing sub-chaplaincy is to extend the services and to respond to the cultural and spiritual needs of the Filipino - Australian community in their respective areas.

On behalf of the Catholic Filipino-Australian Chaplaincy of the Archdiocese of Brisbane I would like to express my sincere gratitude to each and everyone for your ongoing support. Also my special thanks for the generosity for those who donated to raise funds for the typhoon victims in the Bicol Region, Philippines. -Adel Cos

FASTING is valuable only if it helps our spiritual life. If we fast so that others will be impressed by it, it's worthless. Fasting originated in Jewish history as a personal sacrifice on the Day of Atonement -- the annual day for the forgiveness of sins -- to show God humility and repentance. Today, fasting is recommended by the Catholic Church as a means of acquiring "mastery over our instincts and freedom of heart" (Catechism paragraph 2043). In other words, fasting helps us enter into greater conversion.

This walking staff is necessary for our journeys because it aids our conversion. Almsgiving converts our hearts by sacrificing our selfish attachment to materialistic stuff for the sake of loving others. Praying converts our hearts by sacrificing our selfish use of time for the love of God. Fasting converts our hearts by sacrificing our selfish pleasures, represented by our enjoyment of food, for the strengthening of our spiritual nature and our holiness.

The Birth of the Filipino Australian Chaplaincy (Caboolture)



The Catholic Filipino-Australian Chaplaincy (Caboolture) was formed last December 10, 2006 after our Misa de Gallo mass. The mass was very well attended, and was officiated by Father Marce Singson. He told the Congregation of his idea to form a Chaplaincy North of Brisbane -and asked if they agreed. Everyone heard the loud "YES!" response. He outlined the objectives of the Chaplaincy, which are:

- To unite all Filipino Catholics in the area - no more groupings.
- To bring back Filipino Catholics who have joined other religious sects.
- To help local Filipinos in times of trouble.
- To give donations during natural calamities in the Philippines.

He also suggested having a Management Committee to take charge of the running of the Chaplaincy. Nominations were taken from the floor and he then appointed the following:

Coordinator - Jo Camilleri
 Assistant Coordinator - Bing May
 Secretary - Susan Hughes
 Treasurer - Ludy Fuller

The Chaplaincy holds a Mass every second Sunday of the Month from 1:00pm at the Saint Peter's Parish, Beerburrum Road, Caboolture, and fellowship follows - BYO plate at the under-covered hall area of St Peter's School.

The Caboolture Chaplaincy has its own bank account in which the monthly mass collections and all fundraising profits are deposited.

The Filipiniana Choir in Caboolture have sung wonderfully during our first mass in January and have committed to sing on our May (Flores de Mayo) and December (Misa de Gallo) masses. The January mass was even well attended as a result of word of mouth, and the local paper advertisements (up to the Pine Rivers Shire). Filipinos who have missed the Misa de Gallo have come as far as Logan, Ipswich, Brisbane, Carseldine, and Redcliffe.

Certainly, news has trickled down about our Chaplaincy and its monthly mass, because the February mass attendance has again increased and the enthusiasm and cooperation of the members are mounting high. The angelic Couples for Christ Choir voices were heard during the mass with the Support of their families and friends. They have committed to sing again this year. Fr Marce inducted the Management Committee after the mass. Everyone shared abundance of food during the fellowships each month.

Ipswich Chaplaincy



The season of Advent highlighted the importance of the birth of the Child Jesus. During this time, Ipswich Chaplaincy had organised Christmas Carols within the Filipino-Australian community. The group were delighted with the success and response of the community. All members of the group with the support of their family were very thankful on their input into the preparation. Over the weeks of Advent, all members of the Chaplaincy were invited to join the "Misa de Gallo" (midnight mass) which was held at St Matthews, Loganholme. It was good to see everyone was united in the carolling and joined together in praying and singing for the coming of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Every fourth Sunday of the month is the Holy Mass of Ipswich Community.

Everyone is invited to come and join in the celebration. Year 2007 is on its way; we are looking forward to see new faces "As the real Challenge is to live as Jesus taught us to do justice, show kindness and to walk humbly with our GOD"

Ipswich Filipino Chaplaincy

2007 monthly Sunday mass schedule:

January 28	July 22
February 25	August 26
March 25	September 23
April 22	October 28
May 27	November 25
June 24	December 16

Venue: Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Robertson Road, Eastern Heights

Time: 12 noon (Please bring a plate)

Contact person: Thelma Woodman
 Ph 5426 7139 or 0439 728 267

Fr Marce's homilies are refreshing, humorous and hit everyone with their truth. This, I can say, is one of the reasons why the Chaplaincy is thriving. People are actually enjoying the mass, not just Filipinos. Everyone is looking forward to our Lenten Retreat next month and all the masses ahead.

A Chaplaincy Night is scheduled on September 15, where everyone can dance the night away, socialize, and raise funds. With Fr Marce, a united Management Committee, an enthusiastic congregation, and with the Lord, the Chaplaincy's birth is a BLESSING to Caboolture Shire residents and its neighbouring areas.
 - By Susan Hughes

GIVE A LIFE

Project of Catholic Filipino Australian Chaplaincy Gold Coast and Philippine General Hospital



Donation of 205,595 pesos was presented by Mary Ann Boehme, GC Chaplaincy Coordinator and team to Dr. Carmelo Alfiler, Director PGH with Dr. Virgilio Novero, Coordinator of Resource Generation PGH.

This six month old child is one of the patients helped by this project

The Catholic Filipino Australian Chaplaincy Gold Coast coordinated with PGH Office of the Deputy Director Fiscal Services through the Coordinator for Resource Generation established this project on July 2005. Management Committee hosted two concerts with P-Noise on the Coast and staged Santacruzana Reyna Elena Quest to raise funds for this project. These events were successful resulting to a total donation of \$7843 (290,195 pesos) to Pediatric Cancer Ward. Presently, the Chaplaincy is helping this ward, however, donors may also choose specific patients with certain conditions in other wards. These children are young and suffering patients' ages range from newborns to fifteen years old. Conditions and illness vary. Most of the children are cancer patients (bone marrow, leukemia) dozens of them are premature babies, some suffering from pneumonia. Most children die not because they are seriously ill nor doctor are unskilled, but because of the apparent reason of "being poor". The hospital cannot accommodate all the needs of the large number of patients coming in and their steady arrival. It is a fact that hardship and struggle of having too many patients and not much of equipments, supplies and medicines. Aim of this project is to touch hearts and encourage people to help provide care of these children and to help families face the most tragic and trying times. The Management Committee ensures that 100% of cash and kind donations will be coursed directly to PGH administration office and they are responsible to choose the most needy charity patients, unless stipulated by donors. Total funds raised came from proceeds of Chaplaincy events and cash donations from valued generous donors. Restoring dignity to children suffering illness and poverty is more than like saving our future for these children are our future. Let us remember that every child has the inherent right to life.

For GIVE A LIFE donations please contact:
 Mary Ann Boehme
 Coordinator, Catholic Filipino Australian Chaplaincy Gold Coast
 Phone: 07 55 356 243 or 0416331233
 Email:

catholicfilipinoaustralianchapl@yahoo.com.au
 PO Box 729 Pacific Fair 4218

Parable of the Empty Egg

by Art Pagaduan

Anthony was born with a twisted body and a slow mind. He was diagnosed to have a muscular dystrophy, a genetic and hereditary disease; characterised by progressive skeletal muscle weakness, defects in muscle proteins, and death of muscle cells and tissue. At the age of 12, he was still in second grade, seemingly unable to learn. His teacher Annie Miller often became exasperated with him. He would squirm in his seat, drool, and make grunting noises. At other times, he spoke clearly and distinctly, as if a ray of light had penetrated the darkness of his brain. Most of the time, however, Anthony irritated his teacher.

One day she called his parents and asked them to come for a consultation. As the parents of Anthony entered the empty classroom, Annie said to them, "Anthony really belongs to a 'special' school. "It isn't fair to him to be with younger children who don't have learning problems."

Anthony's mother cried softly into a tissue, while her husband spoke. "Miss Miller," he said, "There is no school of that kind here in Burdekin Falls and nearby towns. The nearest is the Cootharinga Special School in Townsville, which is 200 kilometers away. It would be a terrible shock for Anthony if we had to take him out of this school. We know he really likes it here."

Annie sat for a long time after they had left, staring at the lawn outside the window. Its coldness seemed to seep into her soul. She wanted to sympathise with the parents of Anthony. After all, their only child had a terminal illness. But, it wasn't fair to keep him in her class. She had 18 other youngsters to teach, and Anthony was a distraction. Furthermore, he would never learn to read and write. Why waste any more time trying? As she pondered the situation, guilt washed over her.

"Here I am complaining, when my problems are nothing compared to that poor family," she thought. "Lord, please help me to be more patient with Anthony."

From that day on, she tried hard to ignore Anthony's noises and his blank stares. Then one day, he limped to her desk, dragging his bad leg behind him. "I love you, Miss Miller," he exclaimed, loud enough for the whole class to hear. The other students snickered, and Annie's face turned red. She stammered, "Wh-why that's very nice, Anthony. N-now, please take your seat."

The month of March is about to end, and the children talked excitedly about the coming of Easter. Annie told them the story of Jesus, then to emphasise the idea of new life springing forth, she gave each of the children a large plastic egg. "Now," she said to them, "I want you to take this home and bring it back tomorrow with something inside that shows new life. Do you understand?" "Yes, Miss Miller," the children responded enthusiastically, all except for Anthony. Had he understood what she had said about Jesus' death and resurrection? Did he understand the assignment?

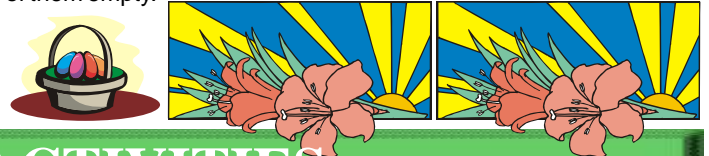
The next morning, it was time to open the eggs. In the first egg, Annie found a flower. "Oh yes, a flower is certainly a sign of new life," she said. "When plants peek through the ground, we know that spring is here." A small girl, in the first row, waved her arm. "That's my egg, Miss Miller," she called out. The next egg contained a plastic butterfly, which looked very real. Annie held it up. "We all know that a caterpillar changes and grows into a beautiful butterfly. Yes, that's new life, too." Little Judy smiled proudly and said, "Miss Miller, that one is mine."

Then, Annie opened the third egg. She gasped. The egg was empty. Surely it must be Anthony's, she thought and, of course, he did not understand her instructions. She quietly set the egg aside and reached for another. Suddenly, Anthony spoke up. "Miss Miller, aren't you going to talk about my egg?"

Flustered, Annie replied, "But Anthony, your egg is empty." He looked into her eyes and said softly, "Yes, but Jesus' tomb was empty, too." Time stopped. When she could speak again, Annie asked him, "Do you know why the tomb was empty?" "Oh, yes," Anthony said, "Jesus was killed and put in there, then His Father raised Him up." The recess bell rang.

While the children excitedly ran out to the schoolyard, Annie cried. The cold inside her melted completely away.

Three months later, Anthony died. Those who paid their respects at the mortuary were surprised to see 19 eggs on top of his casket all of them empty.



NEWSBRIEF / ACTIVITIES

Feast of Black Nazarene: The Nazareno mass was held last January 9th. This yearly event was organised by the Herrera and Bulaong families.

Filipino Shrine: Many thanks too Russell and Pavie Milne, Robert and Nilda Rivett for their time and effort in maintaining our Shrine in Cunungra.

Couples for Christ: The annual Have a Heart for Gawad Kalinga Fundraising Ball was held at Bardon Convention Centre last 17th February 2007. Proceeds from the ball will go to the building of homes for our slum dwellers in the Philippines. Heart shaped pins are still available for sale. Any donations please contact 0408 119612.

Filipino Ash Wednesday Mass took place at St. Carthage Church, 115 Beaconsfield Terrace, Gordon Park at 6:00PM on 21st February 2007. The mass was celebrated by Fr. Marce.

Marriage Enrichment Movement (Brisbane): The MEM group celebrated it's 7th year anniversary/valentine's party at St James Catholic Church Hall, Coorparoo last 24th February 2007. A lots of fun, dancing, singing and foods as well.

Easter Dawn Mass (Salubong) All are invited on April 8th, 5am at Chinese Catholic Centre, Nemies Road, Runcorn. Bring a plate to share.

Farewell Thanksgiving Mass for Fr Felix Barela: Fr Felix is celebrating a thanksgiving / farewell mass at St William's Parish Church Dawson Pde Grovely on 3 March 2007 at 7pm. A Fellowship will follow after the mass. Fr Felix just wants to say a proper thank you and goodbye to the Filipino community and the many people who have made his 5 years stay in Australia a fruitful, meaningful and memorable one.

A big **THANK YOU** to Fr. Marce Singson and his parishioners for allowing the Catholic Filipino Australian Chaplaincy of Brisbane to celebrate the chaplaincy events in their parish.

