



THE MENORAH

The Official Publication of the Fullness of Christ International Ministries



**CHURCH IS
NEVER
CANCELLED**

Inside this issue

THE WHYS AND WHEREFORES OF
**FOCIM'S
UPRISING 2020**
p.3

BUILT AT A TIME SUCH AS THIS:
A Conversation with
**SIS. APRIL EVE G.
GUINIGUNDO**
p.12

**RENEWED FAITH:
A JOURNEY TOWARDS
HEALING & FINDING**
Jesus
p.14

CONTENTS



Editorial 01

NEWS

The Whys and Wherefores of FOCIMs Uprising in 2020 03

Breaking Through in 2020 04
A Message by Dr. Michael McKinney

New Life : FOCIM Holds First Water Baptism this 2020 05

FOCIM Youth Leaders Attend Haggai International Advanced Leadership Seminar 06



FEATURES

Built at a Time Such As This: 12
A conversation with Sis April Eve G. Guinigundo

Renewed Faith: 14
A Journey Towards Healing and Finding Jesus

Can We Thank God in Lockdown? 17



Gen-C Gears Up to Transcend 2020 with a General Assembly 07

Rising Up: 08
Ushers Welcome 2020 with a Successful General Assembly

A New Beginning: 09
Gen-C Launches New Series for Vertical Youth Services

More Blessings Came to Bacolod 10



ARTS AND CULTURE

E-C (EASY) ECQ Home Workout 19

Star Wars: 21
The Rise of Skywalker Movie Screening

EDITORIAL

By Rosalie C. Faune



Manila's empty roads during lockdown. Photo from CNN Philippines

If we have been reading what people are sharing in social media or watching the headlines, we may have wondered whether the world is coming to an end. The coronavirus pandemic is alarming and confusing, and fears about it are not unjustified or to be taken lightly. This plague raises serious medical, moral and safety concerns. Beyond these, it raises more fundamental questions for people of faith.


Where is God while all this is happening? Where is He in times of crisis? What are we expecting from God in times like this?

In Exodus 14, we are reminded about the people of Israel finding themselves at an impossible crossroad, caught between the rushing army of the Pharaoh and the raging Red Sea. They had just started their journey after having been delivered from over four hundred years of bondage and slavery under the strong hand of the Pharaoh. They left Egypt with high hopes and expectations. But when they were faced with another crisis, trapped by the Red Sea, they started to worry and doubt. They failed to see the hand of God moving in their favor as the crisis unfolded before their eyes.

When we heard that Covid-19 had been declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization, infecting people from all over the world; and we all experienced extreme quarantine for a month, were we one of those who went on panic buying? Were we among those who hoarded alcohol and paper towels to ensure we have enough?

At some points in our lives, we behave no different from the people of Israel. Doubtful instead of trusting, worrisome instead of composed. We walk by fear and not by faith when we are faced by an overwhelming crisis, forgetting the nature of the God that we serve. "Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see. Through their faith, the people in days of old earned a good reputation. By faith, we understand that the whole universe was formed at God's command, that what we now see did not come from anything that can be seen." -Hebrews 11:1-3, NLT

Abraham exercised his faith in God when he was called to sacrifice his only son Isaac as a burnt offering. He trusted God and God provided for a substitute offering. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego demonstrated their faith when they willingly allowed themselves to be thrown into the fiery furnace by King Nebuchadnezzar. They had no doubt that their God would save them and indeed, they survived the fire. Moses showed his faith when God asked him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt and across the Red Sea, away from everything they were familiar with. God parted the Red Sea, provided them with manna and quails and water.



THE GENUINE ACT OF FAITH, MADE POSSIBLE BY GOD'S GIFT OF GRACE TO US, IS COMPLETE TRUST IN THE LORD THROUGH EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE, EVEN WHEN WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHY SOMETHING IS HAPPENING OR NOT HAPPENING.

Faith is expectation. Faith is what enables us to wake up expecting that His goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our lives. The genuine act of faith, made possible by God's gift of grace to us, is complete trust in the Lord through every circumstance, even when we do not understand why something is happening or not happening.

FOCIM, what are we expecting from God in times like this? As Jesus said in Matthew 19:26 "Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But with God everything is possible." God is able to do more in our lives than we can hope or think or imagine.

Perhaps our problem when we pray is that we put limits on what God can do. Often, we come to believe that our situation is beyond the scope of God's ability. Our weak faith makes us expect far less than God is willing to do or capable of doing. Yet, Matthew 21:22 clearly assures us, "You can pray for anything, and if you have faith, you will receive it." All we have to do is pray with faith. We need to pray in faith with an expectant heart that our Father can do infinitely more, exceedingly and abundantly above all that we could ever ask for.

God has mandated our Church to relocate, build and expand. Have we become too comfortable being in a small church where everybody knows our name, that we no longer pray for God to grow our Church? Are we praying in faith that God will change our heart? Or have we given up praying for that family member because our expectation is that they will never surrender their lives to Jesus and be saved anyway?

FOCIM, let us not allow our little expectation to limit our prayers. Let us not limit what God can do in our lives, in our Church and in this nation. God has great plan about this pandemic of a deadly pathogen and that is to use it to wake up individuals, families, cities and nations to acknowledge that He is God and everything else lies on His palm. He wants our faith to grow and be steadfast. Trials build up patience and perseverance, patience and perseverance build up character and our stronger character leads to stronger faith.

The truth is we may expect many things of God, but He also expects us to be willing to follow His purpose for us, our Church, our nation. We need to pray in faith, trusting God, obedient to His plans, and following His will. Remember, God specializes in exceeding our expectations. We cannot outgive God!

Let us always remember the words of our Lord Jesus in Matthew 16:20, "I tell you the truth, if you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it would move. Nothing would be impossible."

If there is anything that we need to spread now, it's not the virus but faith because faith is contagious. Expectation is contagious.

Let us go viral with our faith and expectation.

THE WHYS AND WHEREFORES OF

FOCIM'S UPRISING IN 2020

By Diwa C. Guinigundo

This year 2020 is very significant for the Fullness of Christ International Ministries. We are building two sanctuaries for the Lord our God in response to His original mandate for us to first relocate, build and expand.

We have relocated twice in the last 20 years from Limay, Tondo, Manila to Eastgate, EDSA in Mandaluyong and to PBJ Building on Shaw Boulevard also in Mandaluyong. God answered our prayers and allowed us to purchase a 647 square meter lot along Mayon Street in Barangay Malamig also in Mandaluyong. Now we are finalizing all the documents for securing the building permit before we finally construct the Lord's Sanctuary in the next couple of months.

This is the first sanctuary we are building to remind ourselves of God's great faithfulness to His people.

We are responding to God's call in Isaiah 66:1 when He asked: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me?"

The place where the Sanctuary would be built is very symbolic. Mayon is the volcano in Albay with a perfect cone. God wants His people to perfect their faith with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It is in the mountain where our faith is strengthened because it is where we are closest to God. The Sanctuary will be in Barangay Malamig, somewhere cool that is most conducive to pursue the cause of God in the city and the nation. Mandaluyong is a place associated with the word "daluyong" which means storm surge, an outbreak of God's spirit, a vision that reminds one of the great anointing of the Holy Spirit, a special visitation that produced speaking in tongues, signs and wonders and miracles during Pentecost.

The second sanctuary we are building is the spiritual sanctuary in the hearts of God's people. God wants FOCIM to do His Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20 in a big way.

Alongside the building of the physical sanctuary, FOCIM is now concentrating on systematizing both its evangelistic and discipleship ministries through the publication and teaching of Roots for evangelism and Lead for discipleship. The campus ministry is coming on stream to expand the membership base of FOCIM. To cover social media, FOCIM has also organized its social media group to ensure that FOCIM reaches as many people as possible, both within and outside the church.

These two construction projects require FOCIM to be fully focused on the Lord's direction. Just like the Joshua Generation before finally possessing the Promised Land, we need to be all circumcised of all the foreskins of unconfessed sins and frailties. We need to say "no" to lukewarm commitment to God and His ministry. We need to say "no" to compromise with the world. We need to say "no" to unbelief and indifference, "no" to fear and nervousness, "no" to family problems and disunity, "no" to poverty and financial problems, "no" to giving alms and pittance of money to the Lord's treasury.

We say "no" to any further delay in the establishment of His kingdom on earth.

This is the great uprising in FOCIM.

There is no turning back from following Jesus. There is no reservation about carrying our own cross and following Him.

The great uprising in FOCIM is for harvesting souls for Jesus, teaching them everything that God has taught us, operationalizing the five-fold ministry in FOCIM, prophesying to FOCIM.

The great uprising in FOCIM is building more and more home churches and daughter churches all over the Philippines and beyond, helping transform the Philippines and building the kingdom of God.

FOCIM intends to cast great amount of bread upon the waters!

Let us all roll our sleeves and together do the work of the ministry in FOCIM! Have a Kingdom mindset and spirit.



BREAKING THROUGH IN 2020:

A Message by Dr. Michael McKinney

By Woodrow Wilson C. Young

*Hear His Voice,
Obey His Word, and
I tell you breakthrough
is coming.”*

– Dr. Michael McKinney

Dr. MICHAEL McKinney, President and Founder of Promise Christian University, was FOCIM's guest speaker during its Sunday Service last February 2 at the Lampstand. Bro. Bing Guerrero gave a brief introduction and asked Dr. Michael's wife, Sis. Adelle, to share a few words to the congregation. In her short exhortation, Sis. Adelle declared that breakthrough is coming for FOCIM, as evident in the forthcoming building of its new Sanctuary. She also expressed gratitude for FOCIM's warm welcome.

In his message, Dr. McKinney shared that the first thing he noticed upon entering the Church is the tremendous anointing in the building as he felt the tremendous presence of God. As such, he believed that 2020 is the year of breakthrough for FOCIM. Dr. McKinney emphasized that the keys towards a breakthrough are simple – Hear God's Voice and Obey His Word. He further explained that our journey with God is an adventure as we do not know what to expect, and this keeps us alert and focused. Breakthroughs for the Church are coming in different areas – healing of the sick, promotion in the marketplace, and building of the new sanctuary. Breakthrough comes when we hear God's voice. When we hear God's voice and obey His Word, things begin to happen (1 Corinthians 2:9). Dr. McKinney expounded on his message by telling the story of Elijah (1 Kings 17). The prophet heard God's voice and faithfully obeyed until Israel overcame the drought as he was able to prove the one true God. Just like Elijah, we are God's people in this generation destined to make a stand and bring forth cleansing for our nation. Dr. McKinney reminded the congregation that God wants to use each and every member of FOCIM. When we hear God's voice, He will direct us as to what to do. As Dr. McKinney ended his message, he performed a prayer of healing for those who are sick. After the prayer, he reiterated to the Church the simple yet vital keys towards breakthrough: Hear God's voice and Obey His Word.



A NEW LIFE: FOCIM HOLDS FIRST WATER BAPTISM THIS 2020

By Woodrow Wilson C. Young

“For surely you know that when we were baptized into union with Christ Jesus, we were baptized into union with His death. By our baptism, we were buried with Him and shared his death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from death by the glorious power of the Father, so also we might live a new life.”

Romans 6:3-4, GNB



February 14 marked a significant event for seven new FOCIM members as they buried their “old lives” and rose to walk in a “new life” centered on our Lord Jesus Christ through the symbolic act of Water Baptism. The said event was held at North Susana Executive Village Commonwealth, Quezon City. In obedience to the command and in imitation of the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, the following people were buried with Him in baptism and was raised like Him to live a new life:

- Riza Marie Aspillá
- Mynard Buletche
- Lei Jhunnel Galvez
- Erika Bianca Paras
- Aya Karl Superales
- Cherry Ann Superales
- Richard Vidal

Rev. Diwa Guinigundo, FOCIM's Senior Pastor, was the event's Officiating Minister. Each of the baptized individual received a Certificate of Baptism during the Sunday Service that followed.

FOCIM YOUTH LEADERS ATTEND HAGGAI INTERNATIONAL ADVANCED LEADERSHIP SEMINAR

By Aertzah Denise V. Cerveza

*"He must become greater;
I must become less".
John 3:30*



To better prepare FOCIM's young people as our nation's next generation leaders, selected FOCIM youth leaders attended the Haggai International Advanced Leadership Seminar last February 22-25 in Hop Inn Hotel Alabang. The FOCIM youth leaders were Bro. Matthew Unite, Sis. Mariela Reyes, Sis. Denise Cerveza, and Bro. Nigel Delgado. As a background, the Vision of Haggai International as an organization is to see every nation redeemed and transformed through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The objective of the Seminar is to seek spiritual leaders from different countries and give them life-changing training in leadership for evangelism and send them back home with motivation to advance the skills of other Christian leaders.

Sis. Denise Cerveza shares her experience from the seminar: "What truly inspired me from the Haggai Leadership Seminar were the wonderful stories on evangelization shared by the speakers and the personal testimonies from certain people I conversed with. I was amazed by their passion for evangelizing. This experience definitely motivated me to further pursue my personal dream of becoming a campus minister. It also pushed me to become a better leader as it set my heart on fire in bringing more souls for Jesus. I learned that becoming an evangelist is not an easy task, and it takes courage in answering God's call to become one. My heart has been truly set on becoming a faithful follower of Jesus Christ who has ordered me to go and make disciples. The seminar also reminded me that God put me in position as President of Generation for Christ Youth Ministry to open a path for young people and lead them towards God's light by equipping and inspiring the youth through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I was redeemed and transformed to end the so-called "Gospel Poverty". I can't do it on my own, but God can do it in my life. I surrender my life to God. He must become greater; I must become less (John 3:30)."



GEN-C GEARS UP TO TRANSCEND 2020 WITH A GENERAL ASSEMBLY!

By Aerzah Denise V. Cerveza



THE GENERATION for Christ Youth Ministry held its General Assembly last January 26 at the Lampstand. There were some 32 attendees composed of students and young professionals.

Sis. Louver Jannel Arada, one of Gen-C's Spiritual Counselors, started the event with an opening prayer. This was followed by an Inspirational Message delivered by Sis. Pamela Young, also one of Gen-C's Spiritual Counselors. Her message emphasized the four-year plan of Gen-C, entitled "Transcend", and that we are already on our third year entitled "The Summit". For this year, different mountains will be discussed across eight Vertical Youth Services. The General Assembly did not just focus on discussing Gen-C's Calendar of Events but also included a healthy and productive discussion through an assessment of 2019 events. Bro. John David Dionisio and Sis. Denise Cerveza facilitated the said assessment of last year's events. Feedbacks and suggestions from anyone of the attendees were welcomed. This activity showed the passion and dedication of the young people in further enhancing God's Youth Ministry. There were several students and young professionals who volunteered to serve as Project Heads of various Gen-C events.



After finalizing the Gen-C Calendar of Events, the assigned project heads participated in the "Project Proposal Making" activity. Sis. Mariela Reyes guided each one of them and shared the responsibilities and expectations from the Committee and Project heads. Truly, God continues to move in the lives of young people. This is indeed the year of overcoming different mountains for the Lord!





RISING UP: THE USHERS WELCOME 2020 WITH A SUCCESSFUL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

By Michelle D. Sarmiento



THE BLITHE Ushering Ministry held its yearly General assembly last February 23 at the Lampstand. In line with FOCIM's mandate to expand, there were 20 people in attendance including four young people interested in becoming part of the Ushering Ministry: Alex Sarmiento, Lei Jhunnel Galvez, Aya Superales, and Cherry Ann Superales. All of them were also baptized last February 14.

The assembly started with an opening prayer led by Ptr. Hilda C. Lactao, followed by the Opening Remarks of the World Ministry Head and MCCA (Mandaluyong Christian Churches Association) Vice Chairman Ptr. Robert Lee L. Guerrero. Ptr. Bing encouraged the ushers to sustain their servanthood spirit, prepare for the new sanctuary, and support the outside church activities including MCCA projects.

To further inspire the ushers, video greetings coming from Ushering Ministry Adviser Bro. Daniel G. Guinigundo, who is currently finishing his LLm at Georgetown Law, and former Ushers' Numerical Head Sis. Karen Leslie C. Bello, who is working in Abu Dhabi, were shown.

A fun and meaningful activity called the "Affirmation Train" followed. The participants had the opportunity to know each other better. Sis. Michelle Sarmiento, head of the Blithe Ushering Ministry, provided an overview of the Church's Word / World / Well ministries for the new ushers in attendance.

A small group discussion followed. The two pillar heads, Sis. Emma Belle Cerveza and Sis. Dhors Faune, thoroughly explained the Ushers Manual and other matters related to the Ministry. An Open Forum highlighted the general assembly that resulted in the sharing of ideas on what ushers need to do in case of certain scenarios that may arise during the service or other special church events.

Sis. Michelle Sarmiento gave the Closing Remarks and Ptr. Shirley So, ended the assembly with the Closing Prayer. It was truly a productive afternoon as the Ushers were refreshed and they renewed their commitments in facing challenges for the rest of this exciting year.



A NEW BEGINNING: GEN-C LAUNCHES A NEW SERIES FOR THE VERTICAL YOUTH SERVICES

By Nigel John C. Delgado

Another year, another perspective in life, and another chance to live a new beginning. This is how the Generation for Christ Youth Ministry (Gen-C) started the year 2020, guided by its theme "The Summit." The Youth Ministry has decided to fix their eyes on God's mandate and its mission with 20/20 vision as they plan to deliver the 8 Series of the Vertical Youth Service this year.

Last February 29, 2020, Gen-C held its first Vertical Youth service entitled "The Summit: A New Beginning" headed by Kristel Dionisio and Nigel John Delgado. It was indeed a new beginning for the youth ministry. Its leadership was reconnected with MCCA-YF (Mandaluyong Christian Churches Association - Youth Fellowship) as the president of Gen-C participated in the organization's meeting and some of MCCA-YF members attended the Vertical Youth Service. Some of the friends of Gen-C leaders from Haggai International also joined. These united efforts resulted in a full house of praise and worship youth service, promoting as it did unity in the body of Christ. Moreover, there were new faces present in the service who heard the Word of God and found new hope. They were ministered upon through the culminating activity initiated by the speaker of the service, FOCIM Sunday School teacher Bro. Reuel Cuello, a masteral student of Asian Theological Seminary (ATS).

In his message, Bro. Reuel stressed the new beginning of Noah at Mt. Ararat. Like Noah, Bro Reuel, testified that he himself experienced a new

beginning in God through His grace and His power. He shared that he had been baptized for the last five years but his life was not totally surrendered to God. Through the unceasing prayers of his fellow believers and his family, he encountered God in a special way that changed his whole life and perspective about the kingdom of God. He admitted he became so excited about God that he decided to enroll at ATS to learn more about the Bible and God. Like Bro. Reuel, some of the youth who attended the service also shared their life stories, like their inability to start a new beginning in life because they failed to get the support they needed. They were afraid to start again because they thought that it was too late for them to take another step in reaching their goals and dreams in life. All of these sharing represented the culminating activity of Vertical. Gen-C prayed for these young people for God to help them conquer the mountains in their lives through God's power and grace and celebrate as well in the summit with their fellow believers and followers of Jesus Christ.

Everyone was filled with new hope and new spirit. In the end, excitement was evident in the faces of all the young people who were prepared to lead a new beginning guided the Word of God along with His promise. Members of the Generation for Christ Youth Ministry is excited as they look forward to what God will do for the next Vertical Youth Service in March this year.



MORE BLESSINGS CAME TO BACOLOD

By Elso U. Cabangon



From Wikipedia: “Bacolod is the capital city of the province of Negros Occidental in the Philippines. It is known as the City of Smiles because of its MassKara Festival, a Mardi Gras-like festival and a spectacularly vivid mix of dance, color and music.” Bacolod had more reasons to smile when “Touching Heaven Changing Earth” came to the city last November 26th, organized by the BSP Christian Fellowship together with the Fullness of Christ International Ministries (FOCIM).

The event’s morning session was an enlightening briefing on the country’s economy for the city’s government and business sectors, delivered by recently retired BSP Deputy Governor and FOCIM Senior Pastor Diwa Guinigundo. The afternoon session had an audience consisting of the leaders of the Body of Christ in Bacolod and nearby cities/towns.

In both sessions, the message was delivered loud and clear, and unmistakable:

The Philippines is a nation of, and under God!

In his economic briefing, Pastor Diwa cited headwinds that pose threats to the nation’s economy, most of them external, such as “the slowdown of the global economy; the retreat from multilateralism as indicated by ongoing trade tensions in the world’s major economies; the rise of new technologies or the fourth industrial revolution; climate change; demographic shifts; and rapid urbanization”.

Yet, there are tailwinds that counter and soften the effects of the headwinds. Pastor Diwa mentioned the uninterrupted robust growth of the country’s economy especially in the last 20 years; the manageable inflation rate that has come within BSP’s projections; the supportive liquidity condition that allows banks to expand their lending operations leading to increased production activities; sound and stable banking system; favorable external payment position; sizeable foreign direct investments and continuing healthy OFW remittances.



Pastor Diwa countered some claims and (mis)impressions that the Philippine economy is “hopeless”. While some years back, we were viewed as Asia’s “basket case”, today we are looked up to as growth model, he said.

Afternoon Session

Pastor Cezar Arceo, elder of Jesus Loves You Church, and a leader of BSP Christian Fellowship, introduced the vision and mission of Touching Heaven Changing Earth.

The vision is to See the Nation Worship Jesus, and the mission is to Establish the Kingdom of God, Push the Devil Out of the Marketplace, and Transform our Beloved Nation.

He called for Revival, which meant restoration from a depressed or inactive state; giving new life or energy; bringing back to life or consciousness; and refreshing in the presence of the Lord.

He encouraged the Body of Christ to “return to the right direction and to manifest the power of Resurrection”.

He cited Acts 3:19 “Repent therefore and be converted that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord”, and he said to “expect a fresh prophetic anointing to be a priest and king”.

Destiny and Calling of the Nation

Atty. Lyndon Cana, co-founder of Negros Island House of Prayer, spoke of the destiny and calling of the Philippines to be “a righteous nation, a blessed nation and to be missionary sending, evangelizing nation of the last days”.

He said, however, that it would require an ekklesia that is united, walking in holiness, prophetic and evangelizing.

Atty. Cana also spoke of the End Times as a period of restoration of fathers, sons and daughters, the gospel of the Kingdom, and unity of the Body.

Can a Nation be Born in One Day?

Pastor Diwa Guinigundo delivered the closing message, stressing the major points in his economic briefing in the morning, and declaring that “God is moving mightily in the Philippines”.

He narrated the prophecies declared since 1992, such as “the Philippines will be one of the wealthiest nations on earth; there will be a transformation movement that will be a world model”.

Today, he said, the Philippines is “one of the fastest growing economies” spurred by 25 years of reforms, and that has been duly noted and affirmed by international institutions and agencies.

Moving forward, he cited the prediction that by 2040, the country will be a “prosperous, predominantly middle-class society where no one is poor; a healthy and resilient society; a smart and innovative society; and a high trust society”.

Pastor Diwa concluded his message by affirming that indeed, a nation can be born in one day. “Remember”, he said, “that God is the Lord of the times and seasons”. He quoted Daniel 2:21, “He changes times and seasons; He deposes kings and raises up others; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning.”

Praise and Worship

A lot of the success of the Bacolod Touching Heaven Changing Earth was also due to FOCIM’s Praise and Worship team of singers and dancers. Their high energy and masterful rendition of their numbers were not lost on those who attended the sessions, who were blessed by the anointed worship songs and dances.



FOCIM's Praise Worship Team during THCE Bacolod

BUILT AT A TIME SUCH AS THIS: A CONVERSATION WITH SIS. APRIL EVE G. GUINIGUNDO

By Daniel Alberto G. Guinigundo



On being 65, women on the pulpit, and balancing the role of a wife, a mother, a church leader

Where did the love for God and the church come from?

As a child, we were raised in a Christian home where praying every night as a family was a MUST while going to Church every Sunday and using God-given talents in serving God were encouraged. Even as a child, our parents taught us the importance of giving back to God our offering.

What were the highlights and the low points of your spiritual journey? How has God been present in the midst of pain and struggle?

Highpoints: (a) Being married to Bro Diwa & giving birth to Daniel & Abraham; (b) Seeing the three of them take their rightful place in their ministry in the marketplace; (c) Being able to appropriately respond to the prophecy of FOCIM to Relocate, Build and Expand; (d) Whenever we are together as a family (does not matter where we are: may be inside the bedroom, the coffee shop, travelling, supermarket or eating), we never always seem to run out of things to talk about, laugh about, or be grateful for. We always learn new things from each other with all the promotions of Bro Diwa and the honors that Daniel & Abraham have received; Being able to send our sons to take their Masters of Law in Georgetown University School of Law.

In all of these, we were quite conscious that we were building relationship and linkages with the next generation. Daniel and Abe are the second generation after us. It is important that we share with them our visions and prayers for the Church as much as we learn from them. It is very instructive to know their plans and expectations for the future. They make us aware of what needs to be done today to ensure a seamless transition from the present to the future generation.

Low Points: (a) Death of David (our eldest son, after waiting for five years) in 1987; (b) Vehicular accident that almost killed our entire family in 2003; (c) Daniel's failures in the bar examinations; (d) Not being with the boys during the COVID-19 crisis.

Through all these highs and lows in our lives, we would always feel the Hand of God moving to keep us stronger during those low periods and ensure that our feet remain on the ground during the high periods. God was and always will be our Tower of Strength, Well of Comfort and our very present help in times of trouble.



Gender inequality and the question of whether women can preach is still a topic of debate among churches. What is your personal take on this matter? How can the church continue to empower women today?

On the issue of women preaching in the pulpit, I strongly support it. It is not because of the issue of gender inequality but because I believe that God does not distinguish among gender when He distributes the giftings and callings. The distinction is always according to the measure of one's faith and the level of one's anointing.

At FOCIM, gender inequality was never a problem. We even encourage financially supporting members whom we feel are called regardless of gender. At FOCIM, I can say with all confidence that no member is ever marginalized because of his or her status in life, gender and age.

How do you balance all the roles that you play as mother, wife, and preacher of the Word?

In terms of doing a balancing act in my role as wife to Bro Diwa, mother to Daniel and Abraham, counselor to relatives and friends, Chairperson of the Word Ministry, preacher of the Word and many other roles where the Lord will lead me, I only have one rule to follow: Prioritize my day according to the degree of importance and time allotted for me to do it; there is no substitute to planning ahead.

Any tips for mothers who want to serve more in the ministry but can't seem to find the time to do so?

I encourage our members who want to serve in various Church ministries but are constrained to do so because of various reasons to do the following:

- a. Pray for God's leading – If it is His will, He will make a way
- b. Share their burden to their Home Church leader or Ministry Head or Church Elder or Pastor to have someone praying with them
- c. Ask God to lead them to the way He wants them to—His answer will either come to them as they read their Bible, through people or circumstances.

His answer will either be Yes, No or Wait a while. But He does always answer; and His answer will never be too late, it's always on time.

Quick answers: Choose one no explanations):

Make up or clothing?

Clothing (one of man's basic needs!)

Chocolate or vanilla?

Vanilla (non-fattening)

Going out or staying in?

Depends on the need but I'm basically a home person

Preaching the Word or Conducting prayer meetings?

Conducting prayer meetings (praying is my passion)

Old testament or new testament?

New Testament (speaks of how Jesus lived in the flesh, so it teaches us the things that we can do in following Him)

One word answer:

1 word to describe Bro. Diwa?

Loving

1 word to describe your life?

Fulfilling

1 word to describe FOCIM then?

Maintenance

1 word to describe FOCIM now?

Apostolic

Favorite woman Bible character?

[Queen] Esther (my prophecy)

Favorite dish to cook?

[Anything] Greek!

1 thing you can't leave the house without?

Wallet





RENEWED FAITH: A JOURNEY TOWARDS HEALING AND FINDING JESUS

By Daniel Alberto G. Guinigundo



The Menorah had the opportunity to interview Atty. Carlo Llanes Navarro, one of the country's first COVID-19 survivors, on his journey of healing and faith. Read on to see his experience grappling with the disease and seeing God in all things:

1) What was your initial reaction/thoughts upon learning that you were COVID-19 positive? Your wife's reaction? Your daughter's reaction?

On Tuesday, 3 March 2020, seven (7) days after our family's trip to Tokyo, I started feeling ill. I had chills and a low-grade fever of 37.7 C. That evening, I decided to play it safe and immediately isolated myself from my family. The following morning, I went directly to a private hospital and insisted on being tested for COVID-19.

I had to insist on being tested despite my symptoms since the government policy back then was to test only those "Persons under Investigation" (PUI). The hospital said my symptoms were mild, and Japan is not a COVID-19 hotspot. Thus, I was only regarded as a "Person under Monitoring" which does not qualify for testing. I insisted nonetheless on being tested.

The waiting period for the results was frightening as you anticipate the worst case.

Since I was Patient No. 4, the first Filipino to be diagnosed after a lull of a month (The first three patients in the Philippines for COVID-19 were Chinese tourists from Wuhan), this made finding out that I was positive for COVID-19 doubly frightening. It was surreal.

“ I realized that ignorance and inaction will cause the virus to spread faster. ”

That should anyone experience any symptoms, they should stay home and limit contact with others. They should not shrug off any symptoms and downplay them. This community quarantine is something we need to protect the people that we love. ”

— Carlo Llanes Navarro
PH4 patient who recovered from COVID-19



My first thought was fear that my family - my daughter, my wife and our helpers would get infected because of me. I was very afraid for them.

My teenage daughter, Gia was first to know and she was frightened and scared. She cried a lot in the beginning. She prayed with our helper, Ate Malou right away. Then she called her mom who was in the province and they prayed together.

My wife, Evie was shocked at the news and hoped it was just a bad dream.



As soon as she realized it wasn't a nightmare, she became very methodical. She was deliberate in what next steps to take. First, she called DG Diwa and Ma'am Apple Guinigundo to pray. Then she called on our local Pastor in Batangas for more prayers.

Then she contacted her sister, Gela who is a doctor. She also kept it together every day, ensuring that Gia and the rest of the household including herself would be physically, emotionally and psychologically ready for the next two weeks as Persons Under Monitoring. I was told she was almost military-like in checking everyone's temperatures and dispensing vitamins and drinks.

2) What were the things that you found helpful, during those times when you were hospitalized? What proved to be harmful/counter-productive? Evie's comments? Gia's comments?

I was in the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine from 4-14 March 2020, a total of 10 days.

Evie and her sister, Gela tried to have me transferred to a private hospital so I could get better care but I was constantly rejected. Each and every hospital they tried to get me into, refused. I was getting desperate because the pneumonia that I acquired was from the public hospital. I was coughing profusely, and chills were getting worse by the day.

God intervened. A hospital agreed to take me! After fervent prayer, it was a miracle that UERM finally allowed me to transfer on 14 March. I stayed there until I was discharged on the 20th.

While in both RITM and UERM, I had chills and muscle pains that dissipated after taking paracetamol, but the dry cough continued. By the 6th day of confinement, I had diarrhea and the fever came back. At this point, in RITM, my doctors suspected that I developed pneumonia which was confirmed through blood tests and x-ray the following day. Upon contracting pneumonia, I began to lose my appetite and vomited everything that I ate. But I forced myself to eat.

For two weeks in confinement, it was not the physical pain that was frightening! It was the psychological stress that made it difficult. I was vomiting endlessly and had diarrhea probably due to stress. I was completely isolated. Even nurses and doctors rarely came into my room.

Since there are no known cure for COVID-19, doctors targeted the symptoms and gave me medicine to address the symptoms that were developing.

Both my wife, Evie and daughter, Gia showed me extraordinary love during my isolated confinement. They constantly kept in touch with me via video calls. They both prayed with me profusely and would make sure I was eating well and taking my medications.

Gia researched on nutritious food and would have fruit shakes and vegetables delivered to me daily. She and Evie would call the nurses' station to ensure they were tending to me.

Evie also read to me and helped me meditate so I would not be overwhelmed by fear. Evie distracted me by sending me videos of Gia dancing, of our dogs playing, and sent pictures of our plants.

DG Diwa and Ma'am Apple prayed with me every night. They sent me a Bible and regular delicious home-cooked meals through Engr. Matthew Unite (who works at UERM)! These dishes helped me regain strength!

3) Was there any particular verse/Word that you clinged to during those weeks? Evie's? Gia's?

Being alone for two weeks in both the RITM and UERM was a time of spiritual reflection. My faith was deepened with the realization that I was not in control, only God was my help.

Psalm 90:12 is a prayer: "Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom." In the New Living Translation, focus is on mortality. The psalmist reminds us "to realize the brevity of life."

This - the brevity of life - was something I became keenly aware of while I was in the hospital. I was frightened in the middle of the night as people in the rooms beside mine would suddenly cry out and wail as they lost loved ones to the virus!

To me, the fact that the future is something that cannot be foreseen or controlled has never been more apparent.

Worry was easy to succumb to. But with the daily guidance and prayers of DG Diwa and Ma'am Apple, I was reminded that God remains faithful and I could hold on to all of His Promises - of forgiveness, of healing, of provision, of deliverance and of salvation.

Psalm 50:15 the Lord says, "call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee!"

Our family's go-to Scripture as I was battling COVID-19 and even now as the world fights the pandemic, is Psalm 91 - "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, " He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." ... "Because he loves me," says the LORD, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name."



4) How did God strengthen your marriage/family in the face of COVID-19 ?

While completely alone in both the RITM and UERM battling COVID-19, I learned about Evie and Gia's extraordinary love for me. Evie and her cousin, Annette Gozon, looked for people who could help me while in RITM.

Evie kept me company for hours and days via viber video calls. She prayed with me profusely! She called on people to pray for me. I knew I married right!

Getting sick with Covid-19 made me value my family even more. Staying in constant communication with Evie and Gia helped me regain strength and fight the virus.

In fact, since I got sick and even now that I am already well, the three of us always end our days in prayer, thanking God for His faithfulness.

God heals our physical bodies. He heals families as well.

5) Anything you wish to highlight in terms of appropriate government response to the crisis? Anything that should be done? Challenges?

First, we should value our health care workers more. Doctors, nurses, laboratory technicians, even janitors and orderlies are our heroes now. I implore Government to value them. Protect them with adequate equipment, compensate them as they deserve. More public funds should be invested in strengthening our healthcare system and facilities.

Second, ignorance and inaction will cause the virus to spread faster. It is easy to take the symptoms for granted. A cough. Sore throat. Muscle pains. One need not have a high fever to be Covid-19 positive. Looking at the DOH spreadsheet, one can even be totally asymptomatic.

"I am grateful that God gave me the discretion to have myself tested at the first sign of symptoms, and that I was immediately subjected to strict quarantine and confinement. I believe that these first acts shielded my elderly parents, my family and household helpers from infection.

"With this in mind, Government can step-up public communication about the virus. Constant reminders should be given that should anyone experience ANY symptoms, they should stay home and limit contact with others.

"In easily understandable messages, the public should be strongly reminded that they should NOT shrug-off any symptoms and downplay them. This community quarantine is something we need to protect the people that we love.

"Third, in the two weeks I was in a hospital, and now, almost two months into the Enhanced Community Quarantine, I realize there are many people who cannot afford a lockdown. They do not have food to survive! Our society has not given the proper dignity to our labor - depressed wages, poor working conditions.

"We must give back to society in any way we can, especially during these difficult times."

- Atty Navarro

CAN WE THANK GOD IN A LOCKDOWN?

Milton B. Amayun, MD, MPH

On March 16, 2020, a lockdown was imposed on Metro Manila. Public transport was suspended and most businesses closed. That included our hotel in Pasig. My wife, Sis. Raija, and I were told that we had to vacate our two-bedroom unit within 72 hours or we might be “compromised or evicted forcibly by the military or local authorities.” Fortunately, she had a ticket for a scheduled flight to the US on March 19 which she quickly took advantage of. I did not have a ticket, so I had to stay behind in the country.

Since we do not have a car, Bro. Bing Guerrero kindly brought her to the airport while I stayed behind at the hotel to make phone calls to find alternative housing. The hotel finally allowed us to leave most of our things under lock and key in our unit. Two options were open; I prayed for the right choice and the Lord gave me peace as I accepted the offer of Bro. Diwa and Sis. Apple Guinigundo to stay with them.

On March 20, with only a suitcase and a roll-aboard with me, I joined the Guinigundo household. Since then, I have been occupying Bro. Diwa’s office in their compound. There is office space, a shower and a bedroom. The internet connection has been a big blessing allowing me to develop and submit proposals for International Care Ministries nonstop during the lockdown. I have also been able to communicate with family members in the US and Singapore free through WhatsApp. Through technology, I have attended many Zoom meetings in the USA, the UK, Singapore and other places.

So how has it been like with the lockdown?

First, there is a family atmosphere. Pastoras Hilda and Shirley, Sis. Kat Distor and Sis. Mariela Reyes had already joined the household before I did. I met Elmer, the driver, and Malen, the helper, for the first time. Nine of us comprised the Luke Home Church during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Second, a daily schedule is followed – a prime recommendation to maintain one’s mental health under the current crisis. I wake up at 6:00 am, prepare for daily devotions which I lead for the five of us – Kat, Maye, Elmer and Malen – at 7:30 am. We have been studying Moses and the shaping of the Jewish nation into a theocracy in Exodus and Deuteronomy. These devotions have deeply impressed in me how God deeply abhors idol worship: Could it be that our country has many disasters because of the worship of wooden saints like Quiapo’s Black Nazarene?



In the evenings, at 5 pm, we gather for a Zumba session, followed by devotions at 6:30 pm with a plenary of 10 participants. The 10th person is Sis. Marie Demafelis, who joins via Zoom. We have taken turns leading the evening devotion. It is often preceded by a game – with prizes for the winners!

Sunday morning church is online at 9 am; communion is organized in individual house churches. Prayers are said from various places around the globe, while offerings are collected online through a bank account. An offering box is available in the Luke home church. Dance and music permeate the service. Bro. Diwa gives the sermon.

Third, the evening meals are non-lockdown, non-vegetarian in character. They are nearly all home-made by the ladies of the house led by Sis. Apple. We have enjoyed Filipino, Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Italian cuisines, occasionally supplemented by mangoes from two trees next to the house. Dinner is often followed by games or discussions on Philippine history, politics, literature, travel, movies, church traditions and Bible characters. The discussions always pivot back to the news of the day on COVID-19.

Fourth, the birthdays (Sis. Apple's, Kat's and Elmer's) and special events (Mothers' Day) have been celebrated well with a special menu and dining arrangements. Well-decorated cakes were part of the celebrations.

So where was the pain in the lockdown? It was in the lack of opportunities to go where you want to go, like to a restaurant, to the office or to the mall for shopping. I haven't had a haircut for nearly two months! It was also the uncertainty of when the quarantine would be lifted, and when one could travel again. It was also in the confusing signals on how the "new normal" would look like in classrooms, airplanes, theaters and barber shops.

But the most important contribution of the lockdown to me was the opportunity to listen to God's voice more intently by studying His Word and to pray more fervently for the Philippines and the world. The community and fellowship of the Guinigundos who adopted me into the household during this time will never be forgotten. I also thank God for everyone who helped me survive the COVID-19 crisis in 2020.

Can we thank God in a lockdown? Yes! For me, it was a time to feast on His Word and claim His promises!





E-C (EASY) ECQ HOME WORKOUT

By Roanna G. Santos

Being locked down at home should not stop you from getting and keeping in shape. Below are some simple exercises which you can do indoors. Before starting any type of exercise, it is extremely important to warm up your body. You may start with simple movements such as light jogging in place or doing shoulder and hip circles. Also, do not forget to stretch BEFORE and AFTER your workout. See a sample of leg stretching utilizing a belt found at home.

EXERCISE 1

➔ Stair-Climber



What you need: Any part of the house with steps

How to do this: Start at the bottom of any flight of stairs, take your right (R) foot on the first step and bring your left (L) foot up and forward as if about to step up, such that your thigh is parallel to the floor. Then step the (L) foot back down, followed by the (R) back to first position. Do this for 12 repetitions x 3 sets.

Benefits: Good for any fitness-levels, this exercise utilizes the largest and most active muscles in your body (quads, hamstrings, glutes and core). When you work with your larger muscles, you will burn more calories at rest. This means that you'll burn more calories during and after your stair-climber workout than you would by doing moderate, steady-state cardio.

EXERCISE 2

➔ Mountain Climber



Benefits: Great for building endurance, core strength and agility, mountain climbers work several different muscle groups, almost like a total-body workout. Your shoulders, arms, and chest work to strengthen your upper body while your core stabilizes the rest of your body. As the prime mover, your quads get an incredible workout, too. Since it's a cardio exercise, you'll strengthen your heart and burn calories at the same time.

What you need: Paper plates or any rags

How to do this: Begin in a plank position: Hands under your shoulders. Keep your back flat, core and legs engaged. Take your toes over the plates (or rags). Slide the (R) foot forward to bring knee close to your chest. Then switch, sliding that foot back and bringing the other foot and knee in. Do this for 12 reps x 3 sets.

EXERCISE 3

➔ Modified Push-up



Benefits: This is an effective bodyweight movement that strengthens the upper body and core.

What you need: Any counter or sturdy tabletop or waist-height cabinet

How to do this: Begin with a standing plank position. Take your hands (shoulder-width apart) on the edge of the counter/tabletop/cabinet. Arms are straight and step feet back to bring your body diagonally away from the table. Core engaged. Bend the elbows to bring your chest closer to the table and then straighten the arms to bring chest back up. Repeat 8-12 times to make a single set. Do 1-3 sets.

EXERCISE 4

➔ Arnold Press

Benefits: Named after the bodybuilding legend Arnold Schwarzenegger who performed these moves to achieve his huge shoulders, the Arnold Press is one of the best exercises that targets your deltoid muscles. This workout involves rotational movement while pressing and thus helps in increasing shoulder stability.

What you need: Water bottle

How to do this: With your water bottle in hand, simply begin with your palms facing your shoulders and your elbows down in front of you. Press the bottle straight up, turn your wrists out once the dumbbells reach eye level so that your palms face forward as you reach full-arm extension. Then do the reverse. Control the water bottle as it goes all the way back down to the start position. Perform about 1-3 sets of 8-12 repetitions for each side.



EXERCISE 5

➔ Biceps Curl



Benefits: Biceps curl strengthens and tones the muscles at the front of the upper and lower arm. Doing the biceps curl will build strength and help you learn to use your arm muscles correctly, together with your core muscles. You use these muscles anytime you pick something up, which is common throughout daily life.

What you need: Water bottle or any similar-shaped weight-bearing items at home

How to do this: Hold the water bottle at the side of your body with palms facing forward. Lift hand toward the shoulder with the elbow pointing to the ground. Keep the elbow close to the body. Then lower back down the side of the body. Finish 1-3 sets. For each set, do 12 repetitions on every side of the body.

EXERCISE 7

➔ Russian Twists



Benefits: This workout strengthens your core. It trims your mid-section: front and obliques and helps build stability in your spine.

What you need: Option to carry weight

How to do this: Sit on the floor with hip-width legs in front of you. Bend knees such that they point upwards. Lean back to roughly a 60 degree angle (depends where you'll feel more stable) and twist from side to side. Repeat 12 times on every side for 3 sets.

EXERCISE 6

➔ Squat



Benefits: The squat is a dynamic strength-training exercise that requires several muscles in your upper and lower body to work together simultaneously. This workout builds these muscles which help you through your daily tasks such as walking, climbing stairs, bending, or carrying heavy loads.

What you need: Option to carry load in front or back (see photos)



How to do this: Stand with feet hip-distance apart. Chest up. Core engaged. Shift weight to your heels as you bend knees and bring hips back into a sitting position. You may lower your hips until thighs are parallel to floor. Then straighten legs to go back to standing position. Repeat 8-12 times for about 1-3 sets.

EXERCISE 8

➔ "Sandbag" Carry – Home Version



Benefits: This functional exercise utilizes almost all muscles in the body. In order for you to carry a heavy load, you'd need to activate your lower, middle and upper body muscles.

What you need: No need for a sandbag to perform this workout which is usually included in an Obstacle Course Race. You may use any heavy thing which can be easily found at home, such as the big water container as seen in the photo.

How to do this: Stand hip width apart. Activate your core as you bend knees to pick up your weighted items from the floor. Begin to walk a few meters. Option to have a starting/ending point, similar to obstacle course race. Important to keep the core muscles engaged as you bring the weights down back to the floor. Repeat 8-12 times.

STAR WARS: THE RISE OF SKYWALKER MOVIE SCREENING

By Sherwin Rex G. Marcelo



Deuteronomy 8:18

“But remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms His covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.”

During the evening of December 20, 2019 FOCIM sponsored the premiere of Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker at Cinema 5 of the New Wing of Robinsons Magnolia in Quezon City.

This event was one of the Church’s fund-raising projects for the building of the new Sanctuary along Boni Avenue, Mandaluyong. Despite all the busyness of the Christmas season, many came and supported the premier. Several of them who were touched by the Lord decided to purchase tickets and support the project even if they were unable to come. Five entities supported the project as sponsors. Majority of the movie goers were members and partners of the Church. Ms. Karen De Vera, an avid Star Wars fan hosted the event.

With God’s favor, the project was a success, raising a net of Php 132,605 for the Sanctuary. Truly, His favor was seen throughout the event, bringing to mind the words in Deuteronomy 8:18: “But remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.”

The event was spearheaded by the Well Ministry core members, Bro. Bodge Santos, Sis. ML Marcelo, Sis. Shelly Cuello, Sis. Mitch Sarmiento, Bro. Elso Cabangon, Sis. Ems Cerveza and Bro. Woods Young.



Editorial Board

Rosalie C. Faune
Editor-in-Chief

Daniel Alberto G. Guinigundo
Acting-Editor-in-Chief

Woodrow Wilson C. Young
News Editor

Dan Abraham G. Guinigundo
Arts and Culture Editor

Emma Belle A. Cerveza
Lay-out Editor

Anna Pamela U. Young
Web Content Administrator

Writers/Contributors:

Aerzah Denise V. Cerveza

Danilo C Bello Jr.

Michelle D. Sarmiento

Milton B. Amayun, MD, MPH

Nigel John C. Delgado

Roanna G. Santos

Sherwin Rex G. Marcelo

Consultants:

Bro. Elso U. Cabangon

Sis. April Eve G. Guinigundo

Head Consultant

Rev. Diwa C. Guinigundo, D D



www.focim.com.ph



FULLNESS OF CHRIST INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES

3F PBJ Bldg. S. Laurel St. Corner Shaw Blvd. Mandaluyong City, Philippines

©The Menorah 2020