

Happiness and Mission

Esteban U. Lo, LRMS

The good news is this: our deepest desire to be happy or to live life to the full coincides with God's deepest desire for us. Jesus made it clear when he said, "I have come that you may have life and have it in its fullness" (Jn 10:10).

The bad news is this: our ways to achieve happiness or fullness of life many times do not coincide with the ways of God. Time and again, many or most of us believe in this way as expressed by the lyrics of a very popular song: "I lived a life that's full, I've traveled each and every byway, and more, much more than this, I did it my way." But the way of Jesus is totally different: "As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love.... I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete" (Jn 15:9-11).

For us Christians, this basically means allowing ourselves to be overwhelmed by the Gospel of Jesus, the Gospel of Joy, and responding to the call to share the Joy of the Gospel of Jesus.

Yes, as it is said, happiness cannot and should not be pursued directly for its own sake. Why? Happiness is a byproduct of something else. It is the fruit of loving, of doing good, of living with and for others. Indeed, the three elements that comprise happiness are the following: someone to love, something to do, and a future to look forward to. In other words, it means consecration of oneself to mission, to going beyond oneself, to stop being self-referential. For us Christians, this basically means allowing ourselves to be overwhelmed by the Gospel of Jesus, the Gospel of Joy, and responding to the call to share the Joy of the Gospel of Jesus. As the first letter of John puts it: "What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we looked upon and touched with our

hands concerns the Word of life ... we proclaim now to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; for our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We are writing this so that our joy may be complete" (1 Jn 1:1-4).

The theme of this present issue of *The Missions Newsletter* is "Consecrated for Mission" in celebration of 2018 as the Year of the Clergy and Consecrated Persons, the sixth year in the nine-year spiritual itinerary mapped out for us by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) in preparation for the celebration of the fifth centenary of the arrival of the Christian faith in our country. We know that each year of this nine-year preparation is focused on one sector of



our Christian community, or one crucial aspect of our faith. As Pope Francis has reminded us: each Christian is a missionary disciple. For each Christian to grow in this consciousness and commitment we need our clergy and consecrated persons to give a living and dynamic witnessing to this our particular identity, dignity and destiny as baptized people.

We thank our contributors in this present issue of *The Missions Newsletter*. Father James Kroeger refreshes us with relevant citations of “documents of the universal and local Church ... to capture the Church’s vision of a *mission-intensive priesthood and religious life*.” Bishop Gerardo Alminaza underscores the emphasis of the new *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionalis Sacerdotalis* in “forming missionary disciples and servant-leaders.” On his part, Father Dennis Estrella shares with us the vision and program of the CBCP Episcopal Commission on the Clergy, in cooperation with the CBCP Episcopal Commission on Mutual Relations (involving the Religious), for the celebration of the Year 2018. Dovetailing with 2017 as the Year of the Parish, Father Jason

Laguerta’s article on “A Sanctuary of Mission: The Parish in the New Evangelization Mode” is a good example of what it means to “think global and act local.” My predecessor and now the Apostolic Vicar of the Apostolic Vicariate of Palawan, Bishop Socrates Mesiona, underscores for us that indeed even in the Catholic Philippines the missionary challenge is real and urgent. Our other writers in this present publication share with us their personal stories as missionaries in the Philippines and outside the Philippines, as well as some aspects of their missionary program from which we can learn or even in which we can participate. It is clear that being faithful to one’s missionary call in the different situations of life—in a new and strange culture, in poverty, in war—is a sure recipe to receiving more and more the joy of Jesus and the fullness of life in him.

May this present publication of *The Missions Newsletter* help us in our common commitment to mission animation, mission promotion and mission cooperation. And, may our mission joy be complete!