

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church

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JUN
2022

THE HOMESTEAD

More uplifting events
coming in **July 2022**

- July 10** 11:45 am **Parish Feast Thanksgiving Mass**
Mass Celebrant: Bishop Stephen Chow, S.J.
- July 13** 7:30 pm **Movie: My Son, My Saviour**
- July 16** 6:00 pm **Parish Feast Thanksgiving Mass (CN)**
Mass Celebrant: Cardinal John Tong
- July 17** 3:30 pm **Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary**
Speaker: Deacon Alex Kwok
- July 27** 7:30 pm **Sing Along with Our Lady**
- July 10 to 31** **Story Telling to Papa and Mama about Mama Mary**

June 2022

This month, we emphasis on the importance of families, as seen in the articles written by Deacon Alex Kwok and Sr. Victoria Victorino, PDDM. Our church is never short of activities - we have baby baptism, confirmation of the English Sunday School students, seminars, etc. But most importantly, summer is here. Go out and have fun with your family! But remember to take care of your health. Keep safe. Maintain social distancing at all times.



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on Facebook



OLMC Page for English Speaking
Parishioners on Facebook



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The 10th World Meeting of Families Theme: Family Love – A Vocation and A Path to Holiness



By: Deacon Alex Kwok

The Russian author Tolstoy begins *Anna Karenina* with this famous line “*Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way*” which summaries the perennial truth of family life. Yes, family life is both sweet and sour, joyful and dreadful, uplifting as well as depressing. Had Jesus not made use of the symbol of marriage to depict His relationship with the Church, she would have followed the contemporary worldly flow and given up on the institution of marriage and thus family. No! The Church has no choice but to defend marriage and family not only because of her Saviour, but also because marriage and family form a concrete entity, which is able to reflect God’s love. The fruit of love is concrete and family life is a concrete gift from God.

At the Feast of St. Joseph the Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary in 2016, Pope Francis issued an apostolic exhortation, *Amoris Lætitia*, which focuses on the joy of love in marriage and family as well as the hardship families encountered in modern world. The Church stands by families, whole as well as broken ones. On the 5th anniversary of the publication of *Amoris Lætitia*, 19 March 2021, Pope Francis launched the year “*Amoris Lætitia Family*” which will conclude on 26 June 2022 during the 10th World Meeting of Families in Rome. Despite difficulties and hardship families confront in this modern and complex world, family love is a vocation and a path to holiness. Pope Francis wants to encourage each one of us to be a sign of mercy and nearness wherever family life is not lived perfectly or where it does not foster peace and joy. If you want to see some excerpts of the message of Pope Francis on the *Amoris Lætitia Family* year, you can watch it here -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xK7-krNd2dQ>.

Wounded by the Original Sin, humanity is fragile and tends not to put up a fight against evil but to take the easy way out instead. We are able to recognize easily family problems but fail to identify them as gifts. We are rather myopic and do not see a future for troubled families. No, opportunities abound where there is a future! With the same look of tenderness and mercy that Jesus has, the Church wants to accompany families so that every family might be a pillar of evangelization. With the sacrament of matrimony, every family receives the **grace** to become a light in the darkness of the world. Husbands and wives are simple, ordinary and common people. With the grace of matrimony, they are able to bear witness through their marriage to the love of Jesus. They are able to make Jesus the friend and teacher of their children, thus ensuring their salvation and sanctification. They are able to give warmth and consolation to the sick and elderly and even to adopt abandoned orphans etc. The opportunities are manifold and the sky is the only limit.

In a concrete manner, the Parish offers spiritual counseling, infant baptisms, Sunday School to prepare youngsters to receive sacraments, writing recommendation letters for children to enroll in Catholic schools, organizing outings and workshops to cater for the various needs, viz. physical, psychological, financial and spiritual ones, of different age-groups of parishioners etc.

Brethren! Allow me to repeat. Each family is a blessing and strength for the Church. The beauty of the gift that is generated within families, the joy for life that is born, the taking care of the little ones, the sick and the elderly, make every family irreplaceable, not only in the Church, but also in society. Were the society fail to stand up for families, the Church would continue to stand by them. “*Even if my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me in.*” (**Psalms 27:10**) “*Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb? Even should she forget, I will never forget you.*” (**Isaiah 49:15**)

By the way, have you read *Amoris Lætitia*? God bless!

Families

By: Sr. Victoria Victorino, PDDM

One of the special ministries we carry out here in OLMC Parish is care for families. This is shown not only through the celebration of the Sacraments of Marriage for the new couples and Baptism for their newborn babies but most especially through the continuous formation of the children (together with their parents) in the English Sunday School (“ESS”).

In fact, our ESS carries with it the requirement and I believe, a very justifiable expectation that the parents accompany their children to attend the Mass after the Sunday school. We have tried to organize the time of the classes to facilitate the participation of both parents and students at Mass. Some parents also volunteer to assist the teachers in looking after the children during class period.

The care for the families is one of the priorities of our OLMC Parish community, in union with the solicitude that Pope Francis himself eloquently expresses in his Prayer intention for the month of June: *“We pray for Christian families around the world; may they embody and experience unconditional love and advance in holiness in their daily lives.”*

Why families? Because when we reach out to couples, to parents, we reach out to whole generations – from the oldest to the youngest. This was very evident to me during the Confirmation Rite of Eleven children from our English Sunday School during the Eucharistic Celebration last June 5. I was happy to see not only the parents and godparents but also the grandparents of some of the children. I imagine the joy in the heart of the grandparents in seeing how the flame of the Christian faith is passed on to the younger generation.

The ongoing challenge now is how to continue the faith formation of the post-confirmation kids by involving them more concretely in the parish life and ministries. I know it is not impossible. In fact, one source of my joy in my pastoral ministry here in OLMC is to see some of the young people who were confirmed in 2018 now actively singing the psalms and joyfully praising the Lord as members of the Holy Family Choir! I am sure that the Holy Spirit will continue to direct our young people and their parents in finding the ministries where they can use their talents and participate actively in the Church’s evangelizing mission.

To end, on behalf of Fr. Law, our Parish priest, I would like to thank the teachers of our ESS who have patiently and generously accompanied the children and the parents in the process of faith education this year. May the Lord continue to bless our efforts, through the intercession of our Lady, Mother of the Church and Queen of Apostles!



JOURNEY INTO MY HEART

Spiritual Reflection

Cont'd from P12

‘mother or an elder sister’ who never stopped looking after the cares and concerns of the ‘little ones’ in the religious life. It was a 24/7 job, together with the other ministries of teaching and formation work. But it was a ‘generative’ ministry for me. It was like ‘giving birth’ to other persons who will continue the link between earth and heaven, witnessing to the primacy of God’s love in our lives.

The not-so-positive side of that though was the role identification that grew out of this ministry, and the self-identification that came with it. At a certain point, it seemed that my self-worth was measured by the success (or lack thereof) in forming other persons for religious life. Sometimes, I even felt guilty when, after accompanying persons in religious life, they decided to leave and choose other paths. At any rate, I gradually learned to take everything as a continuous experience of discernment. I needed to constantly remind myself that it was God calling persons, not me. And that the person was always free to respond to that call in the way she perceived best. I was and will remain simply a ‘collaborator’ in the process of discerning God’s will for the person.

Fortunately or unfortunately, God knows how to put ‘limits’ to my predicament. It was in 1999 during the 6th General



Our Mother of Perpetual Help

History of the Icon and the Devotion

The tradition of Our Mother of Perpetual Help dates back to the 16th century with the story of a merchant from the Isle of Crete who stole a miraculous picture from a church. He set out westward without being caught and arrived Rome a year later with his stolen picture. In Rome, he fell ill and at his hour of death revealed his secret and begged his friend to return the picture to a church. His friend promised to fulfill his wish but his wife did not want to relinquish such a beautiful treasure. At last the Blessed Virgin appeared to the six-year-old daughter of the merchant and told her to tell her mother and grandmother that the picture should be placed in the Church of St. Matthew the Apostle. After many doubts and difficulties, the mother obeyed and the picture of the Virgin was placed in St. Matthew's on the 27 March 1499. There it was venerated during the next 300 years. Thus, came about the icon and the devotion to Our Mother of Perpetual Help, which began to spread throughout the City of Rome.

Devotion in the Philippines

Millions of Filipinos from all walks of life are attracted and drawn to the icon of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, an image of which appears in all the parish churches across the country and has become a fixture in almost every home where a devotee lived. Every Wednesday, thousands of people would congregate in the National Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, also known as Baclaran Church, for the weekly novena. And although Wednesday is the climax of the week, the rest of the week also has a perpetual influx of people both day and night. As such, the shrine is open 24/7 and this is called the Baclaran phenomenon.

“As a child, every Wednesday I would wear my nice dress and shoes, and my mother would take me with her to pray the novena in Baclaran church. I would wait patiently for hours. I have beautiful memories from these visits; seeing all the devotees (including mom) walking on their knees and praying rosary towards the altar of Our Mother of Perpetual Help. I also remember seeing many women covering their heads with a veil. After leaving the church, my mother would take me for a nice treat at the market before heading home. This was the only time I went for treats. To this day, Our Mother of Perpetual Help still has a special place in my heart. My mother is now 98 years old and still prays rosary each evening with her Our lady of Perpetual Help icon. She takes it with her wherever she goes. The church is part of the memories of my life I will cherish forever. I thank my mother for introducing me to this devotion at a young age and giving me the unforgettable memories and experiences that I will cherish for the rest of my life.”

~ Shared by a group member



National Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, also known as Baclaran Church, Philippines



Inside the Shrine on a Wednesday, OMPH Novena

Cont'd from P4



**PRAYER TO
OUR LADY OF
PERPETUAL HELP**

Mother of Perpetual Help, you have been blessed and favored by God. you became not only the Mother of the Redeemer, but Mother of the redeemed as well. We come to you today as your loving children. Watch over us and take care of us. As you held the child Jesus in your loving arms, so take us in your arms. Be a mother ready at every moment to help us. For God who is mighty has done great things for you, and God's mercy is from age to age on those who love God. Intercede for us, dear Mother, in obtaining pardon for our sins, love for Jesus, final perseverance, and the grace always to call upon you, Mother of Perpetual Help. Amen.

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Tai O Pilgrimage Day Trip To Our Lady of Perpetual Help Chapel





Sacrament of Confirmation

**“A Spirit of adoption, through whom we cry,
“Abba, Father!”**

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a Spirit of adoption, through whom we cry, “Abba, Father!” **Rom 8:14-15**

My Experience ~ Maxwell Yau

Receiving the sacrament of confirmation can show that we choose to be Christians for the rest of our life and wholeheartedly accept Jesus Christ into our heart. The confirmation ceremony was truly memorable especially when we got anointed with the holy chrism, which symbolizes the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

After receiving the Holy Spirit, we feel that we are able to look at situations differently. For example we can easily forgive people after they do something wrong or have the patience to teach people about different things. We feel truly cleansed from sin after receiving it.

Even though we had to go through a lot of work, preparation and practice, it was worth it as receiving confirmation allows us to get closer to God and further enter his family while getting to know more about him. Most importantly, we also learnt about the gifts and the fruits of the Holy Spirit and the true meaning of confirmation.

Moreover, the church taught us how to be grateful, how to forgive and many more skills that are useful in life. Reading the bible also helps calm our mind everyday as we learn more of God's story. The whole process was truly memorable.



My Experience ~ Edward James Bryan

On my confirmation day, I felt grateful, blessed and loved. I am very grateful for my Sunday school teachers who offer and sacrifice their time to teach us about God and help us prepare for our confirmation. I feel blessed because I have a family who loves me. I felt loved because my godparents did not have second thoughts about being my godparents.



HOMESTEAD – JUN 2022

English Sunday School

My Experience ~ Teresa Serena Wong Hei Tong

I have been attending the Sunday catechism class and mass in Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church for three years after baptism in 2019. I am very grateful to know my catechism class teachers, Teacher Jo, Teacher Aurora and Teacher Raquel. My mother is also a teacher assistant in the class. I wholeheartedly thank you my teachers for giving me interesting and informative classes, thus let me have more understanding about God. In the past three years, I have learned a lot of things from the catechism

class, like Bible stories and reading, prayers, the Sacraments, the gifts of the Holy Spirit and servicing to the church. Most importantly, I can come closer to Jesus and have experienced God's love and graces through friendship, parents' support and teachers' caring.

5 June 2022 is a beautiful day of Pentecost for me to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit through the sacrament of confirmation. In the morning on that day, I felt very excited for preparing everything well before attending in the sacrament of confirmation.

Thank you so much to my family and godmother, who always give me their full support. During confirmation, I was deeply impressed by the moment that Fr. Hyacinth anointed my forehead with oil. I felt filled with the power of the God's Holy Spirit and I hope this will make me to become a mature Christian. It gave me faithful courage and confidence to read the prayers of the faithful solemnly, which was a memorable experience to me.

I realized that receiving the sacrament of confirmation is a start in the journey of my faith. I may come across many challenges and temptations in the coming future. I believe the Holy Spirit will always strengthen my commitment to the faith, leading me in the way of humble service to the Lord. God bless all!



Confirmation
5 June 2022
1:30 pm
Pentecost Mass



HOMESTEAD – JUN 2022

English Sunday School

MORNING SESSIONS



AFTERNOON SESSIONS



Sunday
school
term ends
on 26 June
2022

The
children
will be
back in
September





Take Up

References liturgical readings for the 7th Sunday of Easter Year 2022: Gospel **Luke 24:46-53**; 1st reading **Acts 1:1-11**; 2nd reading **Ephesians 1:17-23**.

Our liturgical readings celebrate the Solemnity of the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ into heaven, and Jesus' presents His mission as the Messiah and the mission of His disciples. At this point the Messiah already fulfilled the mission as He already brought the good news, and now as disciples we have the duties and the responsibilities to 'take up' and continue the mission He started.

The scene of the gospel was when Jesus appeared to His disciples. Prior to the first part of the gospel reading, Jesus opened their minds to understand the Scriptures and presented His mission as the Messiah as Jesus said to his disciples: "Thus, it is written that the Christ would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem (**Lk 24:46-47**). In completing His mission, He beautifully said that: You are witnesses of these things (**Lk 24:48**). The disciples were able to personally hear His teachings, experienced His love and witnessed the miracles and healing He has done for the sick and needy. It is now His call upon the disciples and followers to take up and continue the mission in sharing what they had experienced with Jesus.

The 1st reading describes the preparation on the mission that took place as *all that Jesus did and taught until the day he was taken up, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. He presented himself alive to them by many proofs after he had suffered, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. While meeting with them, he enjoined them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for "the promise of the Father about which you have heard me speak; for John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."* (**Acts 1:1-5**). Preparation is important to continue Jesus' mission of preaching and sharing the good news. Like the apostles who were then living witnesses of Jesus' life, suffering, death, and resurrection, we need to be empowered by the Holy Spirit. We also need time to be prepared in knowing more about Jesus. Growing in our relationship with Him is needed, that is through constant prayer, reading the bible, attending masses regularly and receiving the Holy Eucharist, adoring His real presence in the tabernacle. We need to observe & practice the church teachings before we could be effective witnesses to take up the mission of sharing our faith and the love for others that He taught us.

The 2nd reading encourages us to see how the Lord works in us and how our Savior affects our heart and well-being. Because the faith experience that we've sown and shared to our brothers and sisters will allow them also to experience and witness the transforming power of God in us. If they see it from us, they will also be encouraged and be inspired to know more of such faith in Jesus, live it, and share it to others as well. In so doing, the witnessing that has been entrusted to the disciples to take up as a mission of spreading the good news of salvation lives on through us.

Please note that we are still having our LBS online through Zoom Video Conferencing on Thursdays at 9:30pm (ID: 320027131; PW: 7NQKV6).

Bible Study Journey

By: Jenice Li

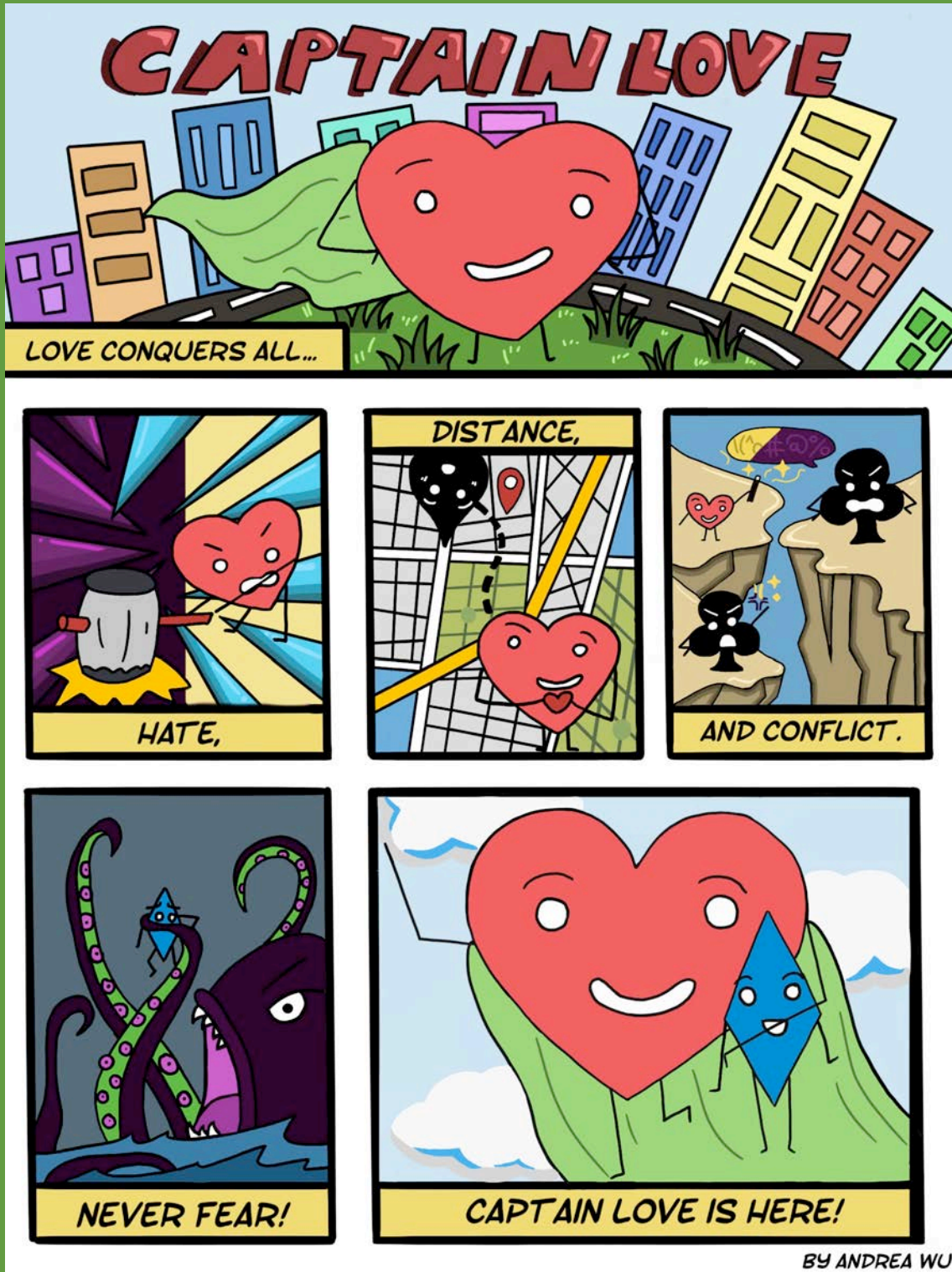
As a baptised catholic, I often took for granted the many doctrines and teachings of the Catholic church. It was until after I got married and had children of my own, did I then have this CALL to understand my faith better. To LEAD and LIVE as a FAMILY in CHRIST, I must first understand WHO is CHRIST. And so began my search to know more about God.

Bible study has been a wonderful platform in helping me not only be informed about the text, but to be transformed by God's Spirit working through the text. By developing a practice of scripture reading, it created in me, the habit of a personal communication with God. By sharing our understanding and wisdom in a faith-filled group led by Sr. Victoria, we discover how to let God live in every dimension of our lives. Moreover, we enrich the lives of each other through conversation and shared insight. Being in a supportive group helps in allowing God's word to take fire in our hearts. Through the sacred texts, God speaks to us, and this has been my guide when I apply his teachings in my daily life as a wife, mother and servant of God in his ministry. The Bible has been called God's love letter to humanity, and to be a witness to his immense love story is truly life changing.



Seminar on Developing Emotional Intelligence (EQ) – Friday, 3 June 2022 Psycho-Spiritual Formation Session



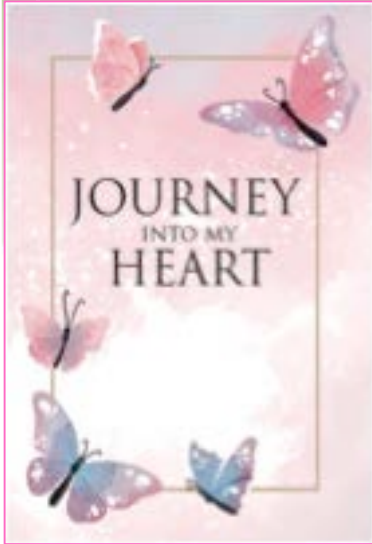


“Hope you like the above story that I drew in comic-style....”



Journey into my Heart is a mini autobiography book written by Sr. Victoria Victorino, PDDM. Sr. Victoria shares her story as compass to pilgrim searchers of God. There are a total of 11 chapters (1 introduction and 10 chapters) in the book, and one chapter will be featured in Homestead every month.

JOURNEY INTO MY HEART (CHAPTER 8) – Deepening Love



Sometimes, I have the presumption that my love for Jesus is so great and that this love is the source of everything I am and I do. I always forget that I love because He loved me first (1 John 4:19). This is actually the essence of our vow of chastity.

Let me share an entry from my journal of 3 June 1977, the year before I entered religious life. I had the chance to reread this during the time of COVID lockdown in Rome in 2020. I wrote: “My very first conscious encounter with Jesus: He told me that He loves me, that He has wonderful plans for me and He only asks that I trust Him whatever happens. I told Him that I love Him and that I do trust Him with whatever and however small love and trust I have. I asked Him to please be patient with me and take my words of love and trust in Him and He said, ‘yes.’ He revealed to me his nature, which is LOVE. Thus, whatever comes out from Him, whether it be for Himself or for others, it is love. He also revealed to me my weaknesses: my over-flexibility because of lack of self-confidence and sometimes because of my insincerity to Him. He told me that only if I do everything for Him will everything be praiseworthy both in His eyes and in those of others. His last words to me were: ‘always remember that every event in life that comes from Him will be accompanied with the peace I will feel inside me; that the message of every event is always ‘I love you!’ I was left with no other words save, ‘I love you too, my Lord!’” That love letter showed the level of intimacy with the Lord I have reached at that point of my life. But I know that the test of that love can only be proven in real life, in my capacity to ‘love my neighbor as myself’ (see Mark

12:31). It was not very evident but it was implicit: my measure of loving others is how I love myself. If my ‘self-love’ is a healthy one, not so ego-centered on one end, or too self-abased on the other end, then I can gradually grow in sharing this intimate love that flows between Jesus and me.

How do I measure my self-love? In my growing up years, it was not easy to be consistent in holding myself in esteem and have confidence in my worth. I used to “measure my value” according to the standards set by my parents and teachers, and of course, some significant persons like peers and even critics and enemies. So I strove to be number one in everything, in school, in the church, even in extracurricular activities – music, dance, writing, etc. But sooner or later, my hypersensitivity would take over and I usually ended up “beating and hating myself” when people criticized me, exposed my weakness and made me feel their displeasure. My foundation for self-love was quite shaky in this sense; it stood on the approval or disapproval of others, very external indeed. On the other hand, I guess I did have a good head start in becoming a nurturing and loving person, with my Mom and Dad as models. I sincerely enjoyed and felt the unconditional love of my parents and siblings. Coming from a big family and being considered the eldest sister and ‘surrogate mother’ of my younger siblings, I was trained and even constrained not to think of myself all the time. This experience brought out different roles in me, foremost of which was acting as ‘teacher’ to my siblings, as well ‘leader’ in school. I can honestly say that one of my joys, as a teenager was to see how my younger brothers were learning to talk and tell stories coming from nowhere. In fact, my youngest brother Emilio was born when I was 17, hence he was like my firstborn! All these experiences had an impact in my religious formation. The “elder sister, teacher and leader” in me was so strong that three months after my first religious profession in 1983, I was back in the novitiate as assistant to the novice directress. The difference from my family experience was that most of the formands at that time were older than me! So I usually ended up helpless watching them fighting their hearts out when the novice directress was not around!

When I went for further studies in Rome in 1990-1992, I was again invited to assist in the formation of the novices. The international novitiate was made up of young and not-so-young formands from Italy, Portugal, Burkina Faso, Venezuela and Western Samoa. I was not aware of what was expected of me when I accepted to be their assistant formator. I remember the difficult part was during the summer months of June, July and August. I did not realize how ‘crazy’ the city and the convent became in these months. Sisters were away for home visits; many services in the city were closed. It was also the time when the novice directress was invited to be staff member for summer school for formation, usually held outside Rome. My role as assistant was to coordinate the apostolic experience of the novices in the various services and ‘smaller’ communities present in the compound of the PDDM Mother House in Via Portuense. The demand for the presence of the novices was always ‘more than the supply’ hence I usually blurted out to the sisters-in-charge, “*how do you expect me to give birth to other novices to sustain your needs!*” Be that as it may, I must say I also enjoyed this ministry as I watched how our formands matured in their faith and in selfless service. Perhaps this sentiment was quite perceivable in my way of being that I was ‘typecast’ to be a formator for a number of years, as directress of aspirants, postulants and junior professed. Going back to the question of self-love, I am sure such experiences of caring for others somehow balanced my self-absorption. The nurturing part of me was reinforced. I was likened to a

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