

EPITAPH

by Francis Delgado

(a narrative prose in the making)

There were birds flying and squawking. The coolest breeze ever felt was there too. The green Bermuda grass was tempting. The nature was so inviting. That early morning in April, we were standing with all eyes and ears for each other. In an assembly place that we called Bulwagan Makata at MLB, San Lorenzo, we gathered. With us, were recollections and reflections. The wild and the rain were both over. Just cannot remember when and who did declare the end of men?

You know, no matter how funny (as hahaha or as strange) life was, nothing lasts forever in this world, I think. One may want to die with feelings or with style (that's cool), at least. Some of us (if not all) were ordained by God to ensure the welfare of both humanity and human; to keep good above the latter's opposite. Probably, there were concrete reasons that death was shown to us in order to permanently appreciate life and such precious God-given talents that we may have (even those that we no longer have).

You see, we were made to fulfill miracles in our own little way. We were cute, imaginative rainmakers. And so, we may want to let us examine our conscience (again, again and again), not merely dream as men of equality in terms of power, absolute privileges, moreover, worldly occupation. In so far as heaven and earth were concerned, we were men created in the image and likeness of God. But, yes. Yes, nothing was too late for as long as we know how and learn how to listen. We may say that the quest of forever begins with the word "listen" (not just hear). After all, for some surprising or sudden reason, we simply started to unusually realize things, and after all these realizations, we naturally tend to end the day by closed eyes. Even what we have for breakfast are tasteful, juicy leftovers of limited time.

LENTEN SEASON: FROM PALM TO EASTER

Was it really a long week of prayers, or repetitive stories at all, made us all bored in an instant, say, sigh or yawn once, twice, even thrice?

Yes, we called ourselves men of faith. We never did hunt Easter eggs or look for an Easter bunny out of fun only. There were reasons behind all these and it's up to us to find out. While we're in the process of search, we are, at the same time, preparing ourselves for something special. Something worth preparing. Most kids in primary education prepare themselves for secondary. And those in secondary prepare for tertiary and so on and so forth. Believe it or not, from friends, others prepare for courtship in some way, and from courtship, others called lovers, partners, into relationships, eventually, marriage, single blessedness, or religious. As men of faith, we are preparing for heaven. During these busy times, sometimes, because of little faith we have, we tend to be unaware that we are taken care of. Then, whenever for a moment we stumbled, we blame either ourselves or others. We lost hope in a snap. Still, men are so fortunate that even angels and non-angels alike envied us so much that both the latter deliver everything in their powers, purposely, for us to fail—to kiss our greatest adventure goodbye. Be faith-filled instead of faith-less our dear brothers and sisters. He is always our guaranteed guidance.

HOLY MONDAY

We both agree that we are having a beautiful day after rainfall—sun still shining, wind relaxing, Earth in most favorable pleasure. And all we know is that these extra work times during rest days or overtimes are nothing more but one of those beyond corny company jokes, and since not everyone is laughing, the gods made a reality out of these instead. Others were born to hate such reality called work, labor. However, this day we dedicate our attention to the One above and that is all that matters.

HOLY TUESDAY

We mirror ourselves in front of a morning mirror. We kept a stare, proceed to our day's business. We may be able to build connection to one another rather than

establishing relationships. Sometimes, things are easier said than done. However, we try to pray for motivation and keep ourselves inspired instead of inviting discouragement. Despite our differences and for some reasons, we managed to survive as a team. No one is happy when one did not get the score. We become unselfish and think of our neighbors above ourselves.

When we failed, we move on, overcome fear when we practice constantly and/or consistently. With confidence, we seek fair play, integrity, sincerity (mean what we say, say what we mean), we find ways to multi-task. Eventually, we become familiar, punctual, assumptive (let me set up a pre-order for you and I'm sure you won't regret, let me get some information and I'll have a representative call you back to confirm the order), grateful (thank you for bringing that up...we acknowledge), and we have initiatives to perform beyond expectation, to participate is our pleasure.

We're more responsive, at the same time, issues were resolved immediately. Then, we realized that the company we are currently in do not deserve us. Perfection is what we are looking for.

One Filipino site director mentioned that there is no such thing as a perfect company and the latter must not be the reason of ones resignation. We read a prayer coming from a colleague: "Our Most Divine Shepherd/You make impossible things possible/Always look after our colleagues/Keep the latter safe, secure, and at peace/We truly have faith in Your unlimited grace, generous blessing, redemption, and absolute forgiveness".

HOLY WEDNESDAY

In a small town called San Lorenzo, we are expecting how businessmen transition the latter's business from a business as usual to spiritual. In San Lorenzo, we're expecting balangays' finest, color-coded groups with or without slippers, fully bloated beggars with open-wide alms, on sales printed shirts and hankies (limited edition, check them out), most practical, if not the best buffet presentation and all those sorts. By the

way, where's Elsa? Tomorrow? And somehow, whenever we see street children, we don't realize future poverty, but, we found our pockets, our children's pockets covered with our own hands. How about, Judiel? Alas, tomorrow! Sesquipedalianist aside, how literally rubbish our streets can be? How we carry over mindset as if we're not stakeholders both in and of the community? How ludicrous and lucrative this town is if even a stakeholder is no where to be found? Tomorrow, we're expecting countless queues in myriad of stations wherein not even a single train is found. Kneel even our arms are strong. When there is a prayer wherever we go, no worry, there is no wrong. There is a Shepherd for whatever reasons we may have.

MAUNDY THURSDAY

There is a time in our own timeline when we listen to our God for a change. We reflect not about significance of trains that transport us from one station to another just to reach our destination, mostly, home, study and/or work. Work that brings food on our table, perhaps, at least three times a day. We contemplate not about crosses as if the latter were marks that we incurred whenever we answer questions incorrectly, commit painful mistakes. Education is what we must have, lessons we learned that are rightfully for us to educate others. Instead of all these, we remember something worth while, worth telling for our generations to remember. One of the best biblical stories ever told, Stations Of The Cross tells us the story of faith, passion with humility—which is the way to greatness, redemption from sins, ultimate forgiveness. As we, the walking stations of life, deliver the cross of change to one another. So, that others may, likewise, feel or sense God's love through us—God's postmen.

GOOD FRIDAY

At around twelve in the afternoon, we rose from a long sleep. We were thinking about God for a couple of minutes after a short while of silence. As if it was a morning newspaper, we read few new text messages from a mobile phone. Replied back as usual. Followed by a quick cold shower... and an exercise walk (if there is such a thing).. then, transport... No traffic is sometimes surprising these past few days! For refreshment we

fed ourselves with KFC Dapitan 2 afternoon specialty. More cold drinks for us that time, peace of mind and freedom—chose what we really wanted. We were happy, we made a poppysmical sound. Then, we did smile and it felt good. Like everybody else, 'Thank God It's Friday!'

BLACK SATURDAY

This Lenten Season, at work, we were specifically instructed to wear anything black simply because our management or line of business requires us so. Moreover, at home, majority of the members from our community group told us to be all in black just for today, just for a change, they say. We say, that is not how we pray. That prayers may be considered different from ours. That we don't pray out of requirement. That we don't pray merely because others simply told us to. We pray with our own freewill fortified by faith that we possess. Precisely the reason that through Christ's resurrection, Death is defeated. Thus, granting us life eternal. There is redemption and salvation upon us, wherein, from enemies to friends, from slaves to free men of God Almighty we now are.