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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I write you with much concern for our community. Serving with you in the last 22 years, we all love Couples for Christ where we all grew in loving God, our families and one another, including the poor. Our CFC experience has started to concretize fullness of life in Christ. But recent events have caused the blur of this vision.

“Fullness of life” is coming to a thankful realization of our Father’s all-embracing love which He gives at His cost, and our nothingness before Him. We as creatures, wishing to express our deep gratitude, follow His command of loving our neighbor. By this, He says, others will come to know Him. He particularly entrusts to our care the weak, the vulnerable, and the oppressed. This is how I have come to understand “fullness of life” in CFC.

Yet today, this is not so. We see strained relationships among brothers and sisters. We notice unrest in our service lines. There is uneasiness, tension, and apparent non-concern. And now, the spade of cutting-off of leaders who are deemed “dysfunctional, discordant, inimical, and un-aligned”, the seeming wanton disregard for our time-honored culture of spiritual discernment and fraternal consultation. In light of these, I ask – Is community headed for fullness of life?

When I started working with young people in CFC, first as head of Youth for Christ, and later on as Director of the Family Ministries, I came into a deeper appreciation of my Christian marriage and role as a father to my own children. The vision of building the Church of the Home became real in my own family and in our bigger community in CFC. When we embarked on the next phase of our journey through Gawad Kalinga, I finally saw the fullness of our Christian life with the vision of the Church of the Poor, as the pillar for the renewal of society and the building of a people who truly honor God. I saw in the work, not only the future eradication of poverty in our country, but also a bigger door to our work of evangelization as CFC gained the respect of many from all sectors in the country.

As an International Council member, I saw the need for a broader perspective as the work of CFC was deepening. Sitting in the GK board, I saw too how the young, led by Luis and Issa, convicted and passionate, impressed us, their CFC elders, with GK’s worth. But, they often met with frustration, as meetings were postponed or cancelled due to other CFC priorities. This was particularly challenging as the work was growing, needing urgent responses. Despite realizing our limitations to extend our presence to the magnitude of GK areas, there was unwillingness to entrust the work to them, hindering the full response of young people who were giving their all to the noble task.

Tensions filled our meetings, but I kept my peace and hoped to work through the

differences without disrupting community relationships and the unity of the CFC body. To my mind, differences spell opportunities for exploration and growth requiring a listening heart, evoking maturity and trust. But I was slowly being marginalized as I expressed my views about this important work of God, which I felt should not be sacrificed in the interest of ownership and control. I saw a reluctant spirit to listen and understand the issues, always insisting on authority and demanding obedience to it. As a result, mistrust and animosity grew on both sides. I felt like the man caught in the middle, desperately trying to work things through, but to no avail. By taking on the role of peacemaker, I was already labeled as being on the opposing side.

Finally, I was voted out of the IC in the June election. I took the defeat peacefully as I am committed to serve the community beyond position. It just hurt us when a brother-fulltime worker voluntarily confessed to the deliberate campaign to ease me out. The revelation was that IC brothers gave the directive saying I was “dysfunctional, discordant”. It saddened our whole family that top leaders were involved in the betrayal. When approached, one said to forget it so as not to destroy the peace, one claimed ignorance. The most hurting word was that “it was a personal opinion” and a shrug. What happened to our brotherhood?

It is difficult for me to go against brothers in the IC, whom I hold with high regard and respect, but today, I have to speak out because a greater wound is being inflicted on the community that we love, and a grave injustice is being committed against many of the most dedicated and respected leaders of CFC for believing that GK is God’s work and a valuable ministry of CFC. They were dropped from their positions in CFC without due process and respect for their many years of dedicated service to the community.

We know that we all have failed one another. The fire of anger and vindictiveness that we see today grew from a spark of mistrust and judgment that has started to erode genuinely caring relationships. Our dignity and integrity are put on the line. And what examples are we giving the young, the next generation of believers? Are we teaching them to compromise their sense of justice and truth? What principles are we asking them to live by? What lies will we continue to tell them to justify our actions? Alas, is loving being replaced by vengeance? Service by control? Humility by power? Is God being replaced by self?

I am speaking out for us to return to what is truly CFC – to seek the truth, to rebuild relationships that we have broken, and to restore the culture that we are destroying, to love without counting the cost.

I am taking a big plunge into the unknown by writing this letter. The first time I defended a brother in my household who was being maligned, I was accused of campaigning and playing politics by no less than an IC brother. But then and now, I do so with all the sincerity of intention, faith in a just God, and trust in the integrity of brothers and sisters in CFC, because I am speaking out in behalf of members, especially the leaders who are afraid to right a wrong for fear of rocking the boat and losing their service.

My beliefs, if they differ with the IC, do not make me less CFC. I hope that the people

whom I have loved and served in the community all these years do not consider me less of a brother and a friend.

I call on my brothers in the IC to account for their acts and to heed the costs, no matter what. It is our accountability to the people we are called to serve, and most of all to God. It is the most loving act we can choose to do.

Only then in all truth, will fullness of life in Christ truly blossom in our community!

I remain your brother in Christ,

Ernie E. Maipid, Jr.

***Knowing God,
Learning His Ways, and
Doing His Work!***

"Food For The Poor Is Food For Our Soul"

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