

FROM THE SERVANT GENERAL

December 26, 2008

My dear brethren in Christ,

Peace be with you all.

The year is almost over, and we face another exciting year to come. It is always exciting when faced in the Lord and looked forward to as another opportunity to do the Lord's work. By His grace, we know that it will be a year of spiritual growth—for ourselves, for our families, and for the community.

But are we fit for the fight? Or are we not only unfit, but might even be the enemy within? There are many professed Catholics who are anti-life and who oppose the authentic teachings of the Church. The Philippines is a Christian (majority Catholic) nation but many crooks in business and government, and many criminals, and many of those in prisons, are Catholics. Even with the old CFC, the crisis last year brought out the worst in even top elders, who conducted themselves in very unchristian ways.

There is a dire need for authentic spirituality and growth in holiness. We need to be fed solid spiritual food. Given our experience of many Christians throughout the world, and even our own experience through the crisis of 2007, it seems that there are many who remain as babies in Christ, and do not move on to greater maturity. This is the challenge.

“About this we have much to say, and it is difficult to explain, for you have become sluggish in hearing. Although you should be teachers by this time, you need to have someone teach you again the basic elements of the utterances of God. You need milk, and not solid food. Everyone who lives on milk lacks experiences of the word of righteousness, for he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those whose faculties are trained by practice to discern good and evil.” (Heb 5:11-14)

In the crisis of 2007, even elders failed to discern good and evil. And many members were led astray, like lost children. This is not as it should have been, but unfortunately it was. Some will have to be fed milk again. Hopefully many others will accept solid food. Then let us all in CFC-FFL be teachers to the world around us.

Authentic spirituality and growth in holiness will happen through the many tools to growth provided by the Lord, and one of those tools is Christian formation. Christian formation happens in many ways. There is your own prayer life, your reading and study of the Bible, and then there are the more formal programs that we have in our community. But at times, these formation programs are not offered, or if offered, brethren are unable to attend, for various reasons.

We have one further formation tool that is available. These are the books I have written, and will continue to write, for your benefit and in furtherance of our mission. All these books are grounded on Scripture, and make use of very many Biblical passages. Reading these books will allow you to learn what the Bible teaches about the most important aspects of our Christian life and mission.

Further, in order to serve as guideposts so that we never again veer away, we have our 7 Core Values. These Core Values, while on the surface are easy to understand, are really quite profound and will take a lifetime of reflection and study in order to be fully integrated into our very being. My books can help you appreciate and appropriate our Core Values for your lives.

You can look to the correspondence of my various books with our 7 Core Values, as follows:

Centered on Christ

A Future Full of Hope *

Amazing Truths that will Change your Life *

Focused on Christ

Evangelistic and missionary

Facing the Future

Fishers of Men (on person-to-person evangelization)

Fulfilling the Mandate

Renewing the Face of the Earth

Witnesses to the Ends of the Earth

Focused on the family

Families in the Holy Spirit

Females are Fabulous (on husband-wife relationship)

Being community

Forty Days of Lamentations

Showing His Power and Majesty

Preferential option for the poor

Bringing Glad Tidings to the Poor

Forty Days with the Poor

Freeing the Captives

Servant leadership

Friend or Foe? Fighting the Enemy Within

Being a servant to the Church

Forty Days with Mary

Forty More Days with Mary *

(* coming out in January 2009)

I encourage you to read these books. When you do, have a Bible beside you, and check out the passages cited in the book with your own Bible. Read the text before and after the cited passage. Pause to reflect as led. Pray as led. One benefit in reading a book, as opposed to listening to a live teaching, is that you can put the book aside for a moment in order to reflect, check out references, study, jot down thoughts, and pray.

If all our brethren, especially our leaders, would take to heart the content of these books, we will be well on our way to growth in holiness, full appreciation of our vision, and total commitment to our mission. Then God can truly use us as families in the Holy Spirit that will be His instruments in renewing the face of the earth.

God has much in store for us in the years that are to come. Let us properly equip ourselves. Let us be prepared to do our work in all circumstances. And let us take our life and service in community as privileges and opportunities the Lord gives us in order to truly become closer to Him and to our eternal reward.

God bless you all.

Your brother and servant,

Frank Padilla