

## FROM THE SERVANT GENERAL

### ON SERVANT LEADERSHIP

(Part 10)

#### MARTYRDOM, MISSION AND MONEY

September 8, 2009

On the 12<sup>th</sup> death anniversary of Jun and Ben

A servant is one who is a slave of Christ, who belongs totally to him. As a slave, a servant has no rights. He is to simply obey the commands of his master. His very life is in the hands of the master.

Jesus was the suffering servant of Yahweh. He washed the feet of his disciples, taking the lowest place. He suffered and died on the cross, winning for us our salvation.

As the servants of Jesus, we are to follow him. When we follow him, we must deny ourselves and take up our cross. When we follow him, he leads us all the way to the cross. When we follow Jesus, we must be willing to give up our lives for him, just as he gave up his life for us.

#### *Martyrs for the cause*

Today I honor, once again, our brothers Ben Donato and Jun Frias. They are our first martyrs. They died 12 years ago in Vanuatu while on mission. They gave their all, to the offering of their very lives. They died with their sandals on. They were true missionaries and servant leaders.

Today we persist on our mission and our work. We are an evangelistic and missionary community. We continue to field our missionaries to different parts of the world. And there will be more of them to come.

Our missionaries face hardships (just listen to their testimonies) but rejoice in the privilege. And our missionaries lay their lives on the line every day for Jesus.

Our missionaries in Ghana had an encounter with death. Our brothers Mike Javier from Canada, Deks Gonzales from the Philippines, and David from Ghana, had a terrible road accident. Their Ghanaian driver was killed. They were bloodied and bruised, with cuts and broken limbs. They needed to be hospitalized and operated on. But they lived.

Recently also, while on their way home from our conference, our brethren had a serious accident in Italy. The car was a total wreck and cannot be repaired anymore. But thank God, all four passengers were unharmed.

In the Philippines through the years, there have been various vehicular accidents involving our brethren while on mission, causing various injuries and also deaths.

Paul, the missionary *par excellence*, suffered a great deal (just look at 2 Corinthians 11:23b-28!). He made four missionary journeys. He did not have the modern

conveniences of vehicles or the Internet. His was a hard life. But he rejoiced in the privilege of serving Christ, and especially in suffering for him.

Today we do mission, and our missionaries indeed suffer. But we have not been lashed or stoned. We have not been shipwrecked. We have not been imprisoned. But we do face the possibility of serious accidents and even death.

Not everyone is privileged to do mission. In that our missionaries should exult and rejoice.

### ***Mission and money***

There are many more opportunities for us to do mission. The potential missionaries are there, especially among our young single brethren. It is of course not limited to them. Ben's very own widow Menchie has gone to many different and difficult mission areas, all by herself.

But our big problem is finances. There simply is not enough money.

This is tragic. How I wish that we could simply call on God to send His angels who can bodily whisk away our missionaries to Africa or to Latin America or elsewhere. But every time I pray, the Lord says the same thing, "You need to buy a ticket." It sounds funny, but I am not laughing. I am grieving.

How can we let such a mundane thing as money prevent us from serving the Lord more, from being the missionary community that we are called to be?!

It is doubly tragic because it is not for a lack of money on your part. If only every CFC-FFL member gave some amount every month, no matter how small, we would have more than enough for mission. Is that too much to ask? I am not wringing blood out of you. Far from it! You would not even notice what you forgo if you give.

People at times ask why God does not provide for our needs. But God has indeed already provided. Whenever we respond to His authentic call, then He will provide. So where is the money? It remains in your pockets and purses! "Dare a man rob God? Yet you are robbing (Him)!" (Mal 3:8a). What a tragedy for our mission. What a tragedy for you.

In the accident in Ghana, we needed to raise money for the hospital and for operations. You responded! Do we have to wait for such serious accidents before we give for mission? Does the Lord have to allow an accident before you take out your wallet or purse?

People continue to die in their sins. They are the object of our evangelization. Physical death, especially martyrdom, is not tragic, for we live and die for Christ. But spiritual death *is* tragic. And for you who already know the Lord and are striving to live a truly Christian life, failure to give is even more tragic. You are accursed because you rob God (Mal 3:9). But this does not have to be. You can prevent this by your giving.

### ***Going on mission***

Ben and Jun died on the birthday of Mama Mary. So death and life come on the same day. But our brothers' death has led to eternal life—their own and those they have helped evangelize. This is the wonderful work that we have been given the privilege to do.

Our singles, couples and handmaids are stepping forth and willing to become missionaries. They know the hardships this entails, and even the possibility of death. But they persist.

You can do your part, from the comfort of your homes, in the presence of your loved ones, without the threats to life that they face. You can pray for them. But you can also make it possible for them to be sent as missionaries, by your giving of your finances. This can be your way of going on mission.

### ***Our call as servant leaders***

We are all servants of Jesus. And our community has been tasked to raise the leaders who will pursue the work of Jesus, that of evangelization and mission. There is much to be done, and we must give of ourselves so that we can lead the way for many others.

As servant leaders we must take on the mind and heart of our Master. We must be willing to give our all, including our very lives. And if we are to give our all, we certainly must be willing to give back to God what He has entrusted to us—our time, talent and treasure.

Today we honor our brothers Jun Frias and Ben Donato. Thank you, Jun and Ben, for your ultimate sacrifice.

May there be more of them, including those who will give their lives for the cause.

May our community be so blessed.