

Newsletter

Pondo ng Pinoy Sunday

June 2023



Sumasabay sa Kasalukuyang
Panahon--Paghahanda para sa Ika-
dalawang Dekada ng Pagmimisyon!

Gospel:

Luke 2:41-51

Memorial of the
Immaculate Heart
of the Blessed
Virgin Mary

Homily of Most Rev. Gerardo Alminaza, D.D.

Diocese of San Carlos

During the 19th Anniversary Celebration of Pondo ng Pinoy on June 17, 2023

To our beloved Lolo Dency, Cardinal Rosales, the founder of Pondo ng Pinoy, to my brother Bishops, participating now through live streaming, to the different priests, religious, who are coordinators of Pondo ng Pinoy in various Dioceses, all those with us through livestreaming or through Facebook, Brothers and Sisters in Christ, mga ka-Pondo,

As said in the beginning, this Mass is in celebration of the 19th anniversary of Pondo ng Pinoy. Nineteen years na tayo. Next year hindi na tayo teenager, young adult na. And then today also is a beautiful context of celebrating our anniversary as Pondo ng Pinoy because it's the Immaculate Heart of Mary. We have a mother to accompany us and we entrust to our blessed mother all our humble efforts to really promote Pondo ng Pinoy.

In the Gospel we just heard, "Jesus went down to Joseph and Mary and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them; and his mother Mary kept all these things in her heart" (Luke 2:51).

Mary kept all these things in her heart. We ask our Blessed Mother now to accompany us as we contemplate how Pondo ng Pinoy has grown over the years for the past nineteen years. And that at this point in time in our 19th anniversary, with the Blessed Mother, let us discern and contemplate together some of the signs of our times, because the theme for our 19th anniversary, says "Sumasabay sa Kasalukuyang Panahon, Paghahanda para sa Ika-dalawang Dekada ng Pagmimisyon."

Officially with this anniversary celebration, we are intensifying our preparation for the 20th anniversary by starting with making ourselves one, in solidarity with the kasalukuyang panahon.

So una, tatanungin natin ang mga sarili, ano bang mga nangyayari? Ano bang points? Ano ba ang mga palatandaan sa ating kasalukuyang panahon?

In the Universal Church, we all know by now that we are in a synodal journey. By October, officially, the Synod of Bishops will start on this session on synodality and it will go on until next year. So, the whole Universal Church, even here in the Philippines, we are on a synodal journey. It has always been and will always be kasi ang nature ng ating Simbahan is really synodal.

So may tatlong characteristics itong synodal journey. Sinasabi natin, (1) communion, (2) participation, and (3) mission. Sa panahon natin ngayon, in our modern digital age, there's a growing specialization in various fields. Obvious ito sa medicine, sa education, even sa business—specialized yung mga aspects ngayon. Pag nagpaopera ka may anesthesiologist ka, may doktor ka para sa heart, may doktor ka para sa neuro, meron ka pang doktor sa lungs, depende; kung may sakit ka na cancer may oncologist ka pa, meron ka pang ibang field, so very specialized na. And the more we become specialized, the more there is a need for collaboration, for partnership, for teamwork, just like in the body. Because no one has the monopoly of gifts and talents.

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Pondo ng Pinoy Celebrates its 19th Founding Anniversary:

Pondo ng Pinoy @ 19: Sumasabay sa Kasalukuyang Panahon--Paghahanda para sa Ika-dalawang Dekada ng Pagmimisyon!

On June 17, the Pondo ng Pinoy Community Foundation Inc. celebrated its 19th founding anniversary through a simple yet fun and meaningful online event participated by its priest and lay coordinators via Zoom, and many more online viewers via Facebook live. At the start, the participants were greeted by no less than the founder, Cardinal Gaudencio Rosales, D.D. live from the Archdiocese of Lipa. This was followed by a very beautiful homily of Most Rev. Gerardo A. Alminaza of the Diocese of San Carlos who hosted the Mass streamed live with the help of the San Carlos Social Action Foundation, Inc. led by Rev. Fr. Ricky R. Beboso and Sr. Rely Mores, ADD, Pondo ng Pinoy Coordinators and their Diocesan Social Communications Ministry headed by Rev. Fr. Marjun A. Almario .

For the second part, a heartwarming talk show began with a deepening on the Theology of the Crumbs by Most Rev. Marcelino Antonio Maralit Jr., D.D. of the Diocese of Boac. Rev. Fr. Benjamin A. Francisco of the Diocese of Imus and Sr. Ma. Leah Japos, PVMI, former PnP Trustee hosted the show eliciting stories on Pondo ng Pinoy's spirituality from coordinators Mo. Mary Peter Camille A. Marasigan, FLDP of the Diocese of Ilagan, Mr. Edgardo L. Guevara of the Diocese of Boac, Ms. Fe A. Guarda of the Diocese of Imus, and Rev. Fr. Antonio Gerardo R. Sanchez of the Diocese of Antipolo.

To end, the National Management Office presented the theme catechesis and significant updates especially on the upcoming strategic planning following the recently concluded external Programs Evaluation. As a special treat, PnP merchandises were given to online viewers who gave their comments.

The nineteenth anniversary celebration is a prelude to a bigger celebration and relaunching of Pondo ng Pinoy in its twentieth year since it was launched on June 12, 2004. A series of strategic planning sessions with its different stakeholders integrating the results of the programs evaluation will take place in the new fiscal year.

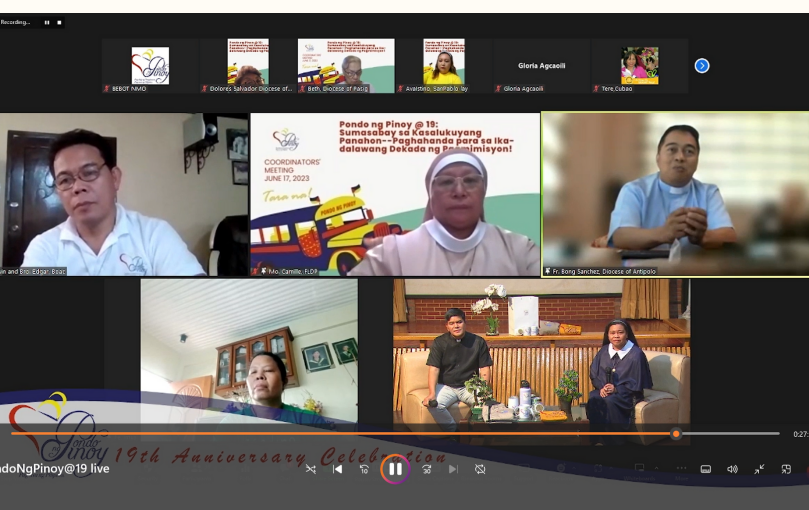
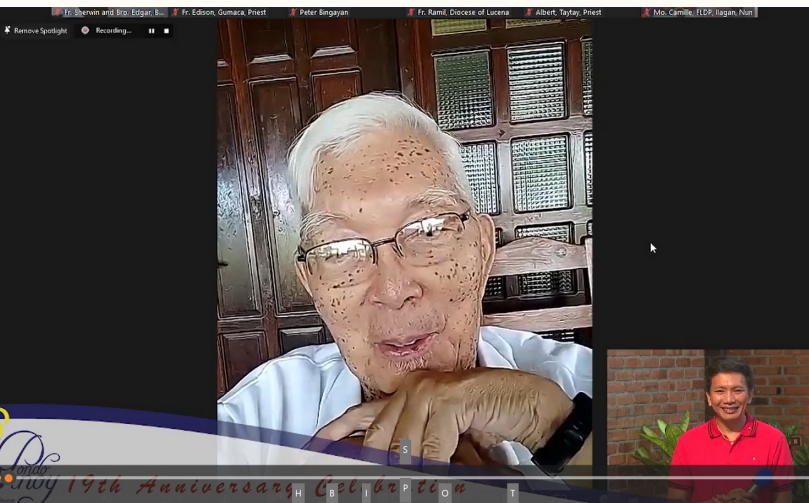


Mga
Kuwentong
Ka-Pondo

Tara na!



Pondo ng Pinoy @ 19: Sumasabay sa Kasalukuyang Panahon--Paghahanda para sa Ika-dalawang Dekada ng Pagmimisyon!



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Here in the Diocese of San Carlos, ang battle cry naming is Ubuntu. It is inspired by a tribe in Africa, wherein it is best illustrated with this story of a tribe where one anthropologist was studying the customs, the traditions, the values of the tribe. And then one day, he chanced upon a group of children playing, and he offered to give them a prize for whoever will win in a simple race that he will introduce. It is just simply to outrun each other, fast. So meron siyang nilagay na basket full of very delicious fruits under a tree, at a distance, and then at the sign of “go,” nagwhistle siya. He expects all the children to outrun each other and go towards the tree where the basket is and grab his or her prize. But to his surprise, the children did not do that. They simply held hand with each other and together ran towards the basket full of fruits and they sat around the basket and shared the fruits among themselves joyfully—kasi panay silang panalo because lahat naman sila sabay dumating. So the anthropologist asked them, why did you do that? Because normally the instinct is to be the first, to be the one to get the prize. Pag may raffle, gusto natin tayo ang mandalo. So ang sagot ng isa, Ubuntu, and then the anthropologist asked for further explanation, what do you mean by that? In their culture it means, “I am because we are.” And then it is further illustrated by the answer of another child, he said, “how can one be happy when the others are sad?” So, they always think of themselves as belonging to the community as part of a whole. In sociology, there’s also that rule or principle, which is also considered by Pope Francis as one of our pastoral principles, “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” And so, rather than being individualistic, “to each his own,” we promote collaboration, partnership, communion. And that’s also the main message of Fratelli Tutti, the recent encyclical of Pope Francis on social friendship. It’s a movement from the question “who is my neighbor?” to the question “to whom do you choose, with whom do you choose to be a neighbor?”—the focus from self to the neighbor in need as the center of our attention. And so, in Pondo ng Pinoy, that is also being promoted. We are very much in line with this call for greater communion in the Church. You see, when we practice Pondo ng Pinoy, kung ang bawat isa mag-save ng kahit maliit, pero malimit, at sabay-sabay nating gawin, malaki ang maabot natin, as proven in this past nineteen years, how much we were able to put together and how much the fund that we were able to raise from our small savings but done regularly. How many communities, families, individuals, have been helped? Some were sent to school, finished their education; some have their houses built after a typhoon; some communities were helped to have a more stable source of livelihood.



Another characteristic of our synod is participation? We have long abandoned this concept of leadership na parang lone ranger, “ako ang boss dito at ako ang masusunod.” No, we develop a more participatory style of leadership. And we envision a Church that is participatory, especially in decision-making. We listen to one another, we dialogue, and after listening to each other, we listen to the Holy Spirit that is at work in the midst. Where two or three are gathered in Jesus’ name, there He is in our midst (Matthew 18:20). And that’s what we try to listen together in mutual love. And in our Pondo ng Pinoy, it is about empowerment both of the givers and the receivers. We become responsible agents of social transformation. You know kahit maliit? Bakit maliit? Dahil ang maliit kaya ibigay ng lahat. Hindi kailangan na mayaman tayo. Hindi kailangan na malaki ang ibibigay. So kahit na maliit, lahat makabibigay kasi yun naman ang vision of the Church sa PCP II: a Church where nobody is so poor as to have nothing to give and nobody so rich as to have nothing to receive. So, imagine how beautiful it is that through Pondo ng Pinoy, we are able to grow into a more participatory Church. Really the method, the manner in which we do things in Pondo ng Pinoy is empowering, it is participatory. It would not be so if it is not participatory and so we are faithful to the call to our vocation to be a synodal Church. Imagine, nineteen years ago, it started in the Diocese of Malaybalay with then Bishop Gaudencio Rosales. And when he was assigned in Lipa as the Archbishop of Lipa, Batangas, he also brought along this spirituality, the Theology of the Crumbs, the Pondo ng Pinoy. And later on, when he was transferred in Manila as Archbishop of Manila, he continued, and from there, it has now spread in many parts of the country. There are now 32 at the latest, I heard, there are now 32 archdioceses and dioceses, who are members of Pondo ng Pinoy.

As the bishop of the Diocese of San Carlos, I feel so blessed, so honored, that our diocese has long participated and has been actively participating in this project of Pondo ng Pinoy because it embodies as well our diocesan shared vision-mission: to be a participatory Church, a listening Church that care for everyone especially the poor, the youth, and our environment.





And the last quality of being a synodal Church is mission—communion, participation, and MISSION. So, the whole Church especially under Pope Francis is in the movement from maintenance mode, just trying to maintain the status quo that always bring along everything in the center and waits for everybody to come to the center. Now we are in the mode to becoming more and more missionary. We are called and challenged by Pope Francis to go to the margins, to the peripheries, both geographical and existential peripheries. So, Pondo ng Pinoy is also raising this awareness among all of us, among those who promote Pondo ng Pinoy, because it is motivated by a greater sense of neighborliness kasi we choose to be a neighbor to each other, especially to the poorest among the poor, and we can never have an excuse, na “ay, wala akong pera,” o “maliit lang ang aking kaya” kasi ayun na nga ang slogan ng Pondo ng Pinoy, ang “Kahit maliit, basta’t malimit, aabot ng langit.” Kaya this is for everybody, “swak na swak” sa Church of the Poor na vision ng Philippine Church. Actually, there can be no communion if we do not become truly a Church of the Poor and Pondo ng Pinoy helps us to really live out the vision of the Church of the Poor. Actually, the Church of the Poor is more needed now than the poor need the Church. We really need to be the Church of the Poor, with the poor, and for the poor.

And the other kasalukuyang panahon natin, isang characteristic aside from we are on the journey to synodality is that we are on a climate emergency. Most dioceses, if not all by now, has responded to the challenge to declare climate emergency because that is what we are truly now in. Ang Mayon Volcano ay talagang matagal ng ready to erupt so nakasignal number three na, ang iba, number two, ang iba number one. Ang Taal Volcano ganun din but it is not as parang threatening as Mayon Volcano now. And then more recently, the temperature in our country is in record high. In the Philippines, temperatures reached up to 37 degrees centigrade or 99 degrees Fahrenheit while the heat index rose to 48 degrees centigrade or 118 degrees Fahrenheit in Butuan, in Mindanao on April 21. The highest in the country so far for this year 2023. The Philippines is considered the third largest contributor to plastic waste worldwide, hindi lang sa Asia, worldwide! Third largest contributor to plastic waste, and that is amounting to an estimated 0.75 million metric tons of ocean plastic every year kaya may responsibilidad tayo, may panunungkulan tayo, magcontribute to addressing this climate emergency. Kaya nanawagan tayo to adopt “sapat” lifestyle, to really live according to our means and to not really have wastes, to really just focus on our needs, not on our wants, so we can have something to share. Ang Pondo ng Pinoy ay swak na swak again to this aspect of responding to climate emergency. In fact, part of our allocation sa ating fund is precisely for risk reduction and to respond to disasters, to communities threatened or affected by calamities and so talagang, sagot talaga ang Pondo ng Pinoy sa ganitong kasalukuyang panahon natin ngayon.

Last but not the least, because this list is not exhaustive. I just choose three main characteristics of our time. The other one is when we celebrated the 500 years of Christianity with the theme Gifted to Give. The CBCP has really committed ourselves to also transition from arancel system to the spirituality of stewardship. That more and more we do away with that system that really belong to the ancient time, that is not anymore aligned to the spirituality of our time, so, the spirituality of communion, of sharing, of giving. So we are shifting since 1991 pa, we are already in PCP II, declared that we have to gradually abolish arancel system and adopt stewardship as our lifestyle. Yung balik handog, yung love offering, that we give not just on the basis of services that we receive but even if we don't need anything from the Church, from the parish. We commit, we pledge to give regularly so that we enable the Church to respond to the needs of our brothers and sisters in need. Kaya dito, swak na swak pa din ang Pondo ng Pinoy. It is still in line with the spirituality of stewardship but focusing more on those we take for granted, yung mga bagay na tinatawag nating mumo, yung tinatawag nating parang bale wala. Sa mga ka-age ko, kung Gen-Z ngayon, yung mga ka-age ko yung aming term dito is "balswals," bale-wala, yung mga hindi pinapansin kasi parang insignificant, parang walang silbi, kasi sinsilyo, parang ang liit. We tend to focus of what is big, what is grand, dramatic and we easily take for granted the little things. But through Pondo ng Pinoy, we realized little things count a lot, lalo na pag malimit, we do it regularly, becomes a part of us, builds our character and it becomes a virtue and therefore it becomes a lifestyle. We develop a sapat lifestyle and talagang we practice spirituality of stewardship. Ang stewardship kasi we determine the amount as part of our regular blessings we receive, pero ang Pondo ng Pinoy focuses on crumbs. Nahuhulog yung mga binabalewala, "balswals" nga. So, kaya mga ka-Pondo, ipalaganap na natin ito. Huwag "lbalswals" yung mga maliliit, kasi ang maliliit, lumalaki din yan pag iniipon, as also illustrated, as evidenced by Pondo ng Pinoy for the past nineteen years.



Alam naman natin yung Four Pillars of Pondo ng Pinoy: small acts, maliit na mga gawain that show care. Alam mo, more than just that a coin, that piso, or one hundred, whatever, kasi ngayon ang crumbs natin nagiging relative na, it doesn't mean 25 centavos lang. For some, ang crumbs, P1,000.00, for most of us ang crumbs ay piso, ten pesos, pero whatever, what counts is the intention behind, the attitude why I try to save because I want to be of help, I want to make a difference in the lives of other people. I'm not just thinking always of myself but I'm always thinking of what I can do to help someone else kahit hindi ko siya kilala, kahit hindi ko alam ang pangalan niya, o saan siya nakatira o kahit ano pang relihiyon niya or kahit pa kaaway ko pa siya o inaaway ako. Ang importante mahal ko ang kapwa ko and I want to help so tinitipon ko yung mga "balswals." So ang binabalewala ng society, talagang binibigyan ko ng halaga. And then later on, kasi yung pangalawang pillar, regularity, dahil malimit, it becomes a virtue, it becomes a character and becomes a lifestyle. Imagine if bawat pinoy adopts this lifestyle, mawawala ang mahirap. Pero having said that, I also remind myself, kasi ang problema sa kahirapan hindi lang na kulang ng sharing, kasi may mga sistema and structures that prevent people from achieving fullness of life. So parang ang Pondo ng Pinoy compliments all the other efforts that we have in the Church and in society to really attain that fullness of life that Jesus wills for everybody. And then yun na nga, ang Pondo ng Pinoy is because of our love for God and our neighbor. Ang ganda ng motivation natin, love for God and love of neighbor. Yun na nga, movement from "who is my neighbor?" na self ang sentro to "to whom do I want to be a neighbor?" When I start sharing the crumbs, I am thinking of my neighbor I choose to be with, to help. And that is very laudable. And it empowers the community, both the givers and the receivers to become responsible agents of social transformation. Hindi na siya nagiging dole out kasi, alam niyo ang pag-implement natin ng Pondo ng Pinoy is such it is empowering everybody, hindi nagdedevelop ng co-dependency, kahit na maliit, may inaambag din tayo. So halimbawa sa Diocese ng San Carlos, ang mga crumbs natin nanggangaling yan sa mga mahihirap nating members ng Gagmay Kristohanong Katilingban but who benefits? Tayo rin. Kasi we also receive help from Pondo ng Pinoy, madami tayong natutulungan sa ating diocese through Social Action because of Pondo ng Pinoy.



Kaya as a final message, I would like to quote yung Generation Z, kasi hindi ko na kageneration yan, senior citizen na ako. Pero ang Generation Z meron silang tagline ngayon. Kasi ang description nila sa sarili nila ngayon is “we feel so disconnected in a super connected world.” Kaya yung battle cry nila is “we need to be connected with something bigger and greater than ourselves.” Para sa akin, Pondo ng Pinoy responds to that need of the Generation Z, to be connected to something bigger and greater than themselves. If you join Pondo ng Pinoy, you will be connected to something or even someone bigger and greater than yourselves. So, wag tayong matakot, wag tayong mabahala because God is ever present, always accompanying us. God is always our faithful companion together with our Blessed Mother.



Alam niyo, if you come to think of it, our 19th anniversary was preceded by a lot of solemnity and feasts, na talagang nag-a-assure sa atin na mahal tayo ng Diyos. After easter, we celebrated Pentecost, then Solemnity of the Blessed Trinity then Corpus Cristi. Then, kahapon, Sacred Heart. Ngayon, Immaculate Heart of Mary. Bukas, Father’s Day. Maraming mga occasions to remind us na maraming nagmamahal sa atin at ito yung model o source ng inspiration natin for Pondo ng Pinoy.

Kaya let me end with a thought from the trending ngayon na movie, I Love Lizzy. May nakakarelate ba diyan? But hindi ako magcocomment sa trending quote nila na “hindi lahat ng nang-iwan, hindi nasasaktan.” By this time hindi muna yan, kasi Pondo ng Pinoy tayo. What I would like to comment on is yung sinabi ng director ng movie after the film screening, in an interview. Direk RC Reyes said that Mayon is symbolic in the movie. Para sa akin relevant na image na iiwan ko sa ating lahat to end this reflection on Pondo ng Pinoy 19th anniversary kasi aside from nag-aalboroto ngayon si Mayon, ready to erupt, but as it is kung peaceful siya, Mayon according to the director in the movie is supposed to be symbolic. He said he wants it to be mentioned multiple times in the movie because Mayon means God. He wants the viewers to understand that whatever situation you are in, God is there. Kasi pag mamasyal kayo sa Legaspi, Albay, kahit saan kayo pumunta, makikita mo ang Mayon at perfect cone talaga siya. At sabi nga ng movie doon, kahit you are always looking at the same thing always, nagbabago naman yung perspective, diba. Tayo, nagbabago din yung ating pagtingin sa buhay habang nagogrow-up tayo. Kahit yung mga painful, tragic, traumatic experience in life, nagbabago din yung perspective natin overtime, gaya ng perspective ng Mayon Volcano. Ang gusto lang ipahiwatig ng director, when we remember Mayon Volcano or when we happen to see Mayon Volcano, we remember that God is ever present in our life.

Kaya tayo sa Pondo ng Pinoy, sumasabay sa kasalukuyang panahon, magsimula na tayo sa paghahanda ng ating sarili para sa ikalawang dekada ng pagmimisyon, assure that God is always present accompanying us. Anumang magaling, kahit maliit, basta’t malimit ay patungong langit. The mission continues. Amen.