

Church Interrupted?Church on the Move! #2

As a church worker, what have you learned during the quarantine? How do you see these insights transforming you and your ministry?



ONLINE SERIES

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It is indeed a learning season! God has visited us with this pandemic and like pilgrims on a journey to the sacred, we search, we sense, we listen, we serve – hoping to see and hear God more clearly.

The CBCP has come out with a guideline on the 'New Normal' in our liturgical celebrations and some ministries. As we prepare to enter into this new situation, perhaps it is good to ask ourselves: As a church worker, what have you learned during the quarantine? How do you see these insights transforming you and your ministry? Some of our reflections at Bukal:

CHURCH AS MISSION

In our first post, we asked the question: "When all else is 'gone', what remains? We know that the usual way we live church – liturgies, meetings, seminars – have stopped temporarily and we saw that it was mission, especially the mission of love for the poor and needy, that remained. Indeed church is mission and mission shapes the way we become church.

CHURCH AS FLUID (DUMADALOG)

We also saw the church as fluid, *dumadalog* (flowing), trying its best to deal, adapt and respond to the situation it found itself in. The institutional church sometimes known for its rigidity of structures, became wall-less, some pillars crumbling, doors and windows opening to different, varied and surprising possibilities. It reminded us of the image in Ezekiel (Ch. 47) of water coming from the Temple, flowing and wherever it flows, life teems. We are at a stage of transfiguration as church, a grace-filled stop in our journey towards our 500 years of evangelization and we pray that we do not frustrate the creative Spirit of God.



CHURCH AS RELATIONSHIPS, BEING CONNECTED

Church is where people are. In this ECQ time, church pastoral ministers – priests and lay – reached out to where people are: in their homes, in the internet, in hospitals, etc. They reawakened to this truth: the church is alive where the people are, in their locality and in their own particular situations. If we are not connected to people and to their situations, we are not being church. We also realized how important it was to connect and network with governmental and non-governmental organizations, etc. for solidarity work. In this crisis, we also saw clearly that church is not just people but our *kapwa* and being church is *pakikipagkapwa-tao*, especially with the most needy among us.

CHURCH AS DAILY LIFE

When regular ways of being church became no longer available – we realized that church is living our faith in daily life. Without structural and community support, we found our faith in our hearts to hold on to and live out our faith where we live on a daily basis and context. Church/our faith became like a spring that flows through daily life and gives us new eyes to look at our daily life situation and also discover an open heart to feel the situation of others/*kapwa*.

CHURCH AS THE SENSE OF FAITH OF THE FAITHFUL

(Sensus Fidelium) These days of ECQ, we are running on instinct, on a sense of faith that gives us hope, a heart for others and the wisdom to decide - called the *sensus fidelium*, the sense of faith of the faithful. *Sensus Fidelium* has been described as a 'collective faith-consciousness'; a Spirit-given sense or capacity or faculty given to the baptized and to the Christian community that 'enables understanding, interpretation and application' of God's self-revelation (*O. Rush; Lumen Gentium # 12,35*).

Are we sensing God clearly these days? What is God teaching us? What has our present situation teaching us about God? And how does this teach us about being church? *Ramdam ba natin ang Diyos? Nagpaparamdam ba ang Diyos sa ating kapwa? Sa kapwang iba sa atin? Sa kapwang naghihikahos? Where is God leading us?*

We are all facing the great unknown because from here on, we need to be and do things differently. How do live in a healthy way? How do we relate meaningfully with social distancing? How do we live with less or even without income? As church workers, even more questions as the new normal enters: how do we celebrate liturgies meaningfully? Has our understanding of the Eucharist changed? How has our understanding of ministry changed? How do we do catechesis? What is the new role of the priest? The Pastoral Council? What is the significance of BEC? How do we reconfigure or change altogether our pastoral plans and programs?

This pandemic crisis is hopefully helping to sharpen and mature our sense of faith.

Can we collect, gather the questions and hopefully the wisdom from our experiences so that we can sense God collectively? Learning together as church builds up our sense of faith as a community. Your insights on the title question - *As a church worker, what have you learned during the quarantine? How do you see these insights transforming you and your ministry?* - is appreciated so that we can all learn together and inspire one another!