“JOHNNY V. GUMBAN SUNDAY”

Binhi sang Pagtuo
September 24, 2012
Dear Friends,
Greetings!

Yesterday, the Bacolod Bethany Church, Negros Occ., celebrated the Johnny V. Gumban Sunday. I was privileged to be their speaker in this celebration. Dr. Gumban was my Dean in the College of Theology, and a dear mentor.

In honor of his memory, let us reflect on a portion of his lecture entitled “Contextual Filipino Theology: Towards a Filipino Theology.” This lecture was delivered a week after Sen. Benigno Aquino, Jr., was assassinated in 1983. The death of Sen. Aquino was one of the many consequences of Martial Law declared by President Marcos on September 21, 1972.

“. They do not live in a vacuum. They live in the midst of distortions yet they believe that what God has done in Jesus Christ, has the consequence of finality. In him all the separation has been reconciled and all distortions of human life have been overcome. For them, hope is both present and future. In the present, hope is present in the process of becoming what we ought to be. In the future it is being freed from all distortions of human life.

The Christian community is an activist community. People with hope are not apathetic. They live a vital life. It is a community with a mission. The Christ in them makes them always search the Christ in others, participating in the work of Christ of actualizing the God-given potentials in others. They participate in the removal of everything that hinders their actualization. They are not stationary. They are always on the move. They find themselves in the government, in schools, in hospitals, in public markets, always responding to the call of Christ who is in others. They do this not according to their convenience but according to their calling. To paraphrase D.T. Niles, they are like beggars telling other beggars where the food is. In their life with others they serve as catalyst to unite those who are separated and isolated. They turn the powerlessness of the separated and isolated into powerful living. This is why Christians who live their hope are always a threat to any oppressive government or system.

The Christian community lives in proleptic anticipation, a term used by Dr. Hans Schwarz in his book On the Way to the Future. This means living now in anticipation of what is to come. Christians take history seriously. They do not live in one isolated segment of time. They see in the past a promise, in the present, hope, and in the future a fulfillment. They see the present as important because of its demand on them to make a decision now. The Christian response to present situations is made on the basis of the reality, which they perceive in the future. They see this reality in Jesus Christ who to them is future made present now.”

May we become Christians who lives with hope that this world can be reconciled back to God, an activist that works toward the actualization of the gift of God on others, and respond to the present realities with an eschatological perspective that God will ultimately triumphed.

May God bless us all!
Sincerely,
Rev. Francis Neil G. Jalando-on