

St. Scholastica's College - Westgrove

ENGLISH MONTH

SY 2020 - 2021

STORIES FROM THE

frontliners

Building a Strong
Community
in the Times of Pandemic
through **P**urposeful,
Unambiguous, **R**espectful,
and **E**ffective Communication



In This Issue:

Feature Articles

Grade 5 - St. Walburga

Foreword

This year's global health crisis due to COVID-19 has been a time of uncertainties for many people. Uncertainties that St. Benedict of Nursia himself similarly lived during the time of the global pandemic. He has shown many ways to deal with it. Among them is found in his prologue, reminding us to live each day as we can because this life does not go on forever.

**We salute all
frontliners!**

Thank you for your service and sacrifice
during this difficult time.

You are our heroes.



*This year's theme for English month celebration, "Building a Strong Community in the Times of pandemic though **PURE** - Purposeful, Unambiguous, Respectful, and Effective communication," could be likened to the wisdom of the saint on how are we going to live our lives in this time of the pandemic. That amidst the restrictions and physical distancing that alter our usual way of academic life we can remain one with our family, with our community. One way of making it happen is through communication. Communicating that the feature articles of Grade 5 St. Walburga presented here reflect - communicating the greater purposes that the global crisis challenges us to see and live such as hope, courage, charity, servitude, altruism; communicating in more concrete ways how these values and virtues remain relevant amidst fears of uncertainties; the overwhelming respect to the people for caring, protecting, valuing human life amidst the present threat to their own life; and, this collection of feature articles is our students' simple yet effective way of communicating to us how our heroes of this time - our frontliners; the security guard, the doctors, dentists, nurses, caregivers, bank personnel, those in logistics, public servants and many more who in the featured articles bring to our consciousness the greater purpose in what they do, showing this concretely through their actions, driven by sincere and genuine respect for human life.*

Ms. Kimmi Besmonte
Subject Teacher

Frontliners, Present-Day Heroes

by Jia Alessandra G. Abueg

As Bob Riley once said, "Hard times don't create heroes." It is during the hard times when the hero within us is revealed". During this time of the Covid-19 pandemic, frontliners are bringing out the true hero in them to help us get through this pandemic. I was lucky to be able to interview one of the many frontliners helping in this pandemic. I asked him a few questions about how this pandemic has changed his daily life.

Dr. Arman Lim is a urologist who continued to consult with patients and perform surgery during the Covid-19 pandemic. Though he does treat people infected with Covid-19, he is still considered as a frontliner because he was continuously exposed to potential Covid-19 infected people in the hospital whenever he went to see his patients.

According to Dr. Lim, being a frontliner was very difficult in the beginning but as time went by they got more and more used to the "New Normal". The New Normal involves taking many precautions, such as wearing masks, face shields, PPE suits, etc. These precautions are done to protect and minimize the spread of Covid-19.

Many people's jobs have changed a lot due to the Covid-19 pandemic, even Dr. Arman Lim's. He mentioned that in their clinic, they put air filters, open windows, take temperatures before entering, and practice social distancing with their patients and staff. All patients also have to take swab tests to ensure they are not infected before coming into the clinic.

Dr. Lim said it was difficult to adjust to the changes in his job. Some of these were needing to wear personal protection at all times, the change in the flow of patients at his clinic, and the extra protection needed when performing surgeries. But he also said that they are getting used to all these extra precautions because they have been doing it daily.

The hardest change he had to adjust to was the complicated protections that had to be done before operating on a patient. Another one is that he has to change his protection suit with each new consultation with a patient so that he does not transfer the virus. But the easiest change for him was wearing a mask because doctors always wear masks so it would not be something to forget as most of us may do.

With regard to communication among his colleagues and coworkers, Dr. Lim said that it got more complicated due to face to face meetings being discouraged. So they could only meet up virtually, and this would be a problem for those with poor internet connection.



Photo Courtesy: Dr. Lim

"being a frontliner was very difficult in the beginning but as time went by they got more and more used to the New Normal."



Photo Courtesy: Dr. Lim

As for his relationship with his family, he didn't have to stay away from them but had to take extra precautions. He couldn't come close to them until he had fully sanitized himself. As soon as he came home, he had to go straight to the bathroom to take a shower. He had to put his clothes in a bag and wash them separately from his family's clothes. He also said that he was still able to fulfill his responsibilities towards his family and they actually even got closer because they all had to stay home during quarantine.

When asked if he enjoys helping those who come to him for help, he said "yes, of course," because it is his job to help stop the virus from spreading. It is also their job to treat patients and give them advice.

To end, this is the advice that Dr. Lim gives to people who are struggling in this difficult situation: **"We just follow the basic things, like washing your hands, wear a mask, and practice social distancing - these are very important at this time. Sometimes it's very difficult for other people to do that. But if we follow that, it will really minimize the spread of the infection. And I will also tell them that this is not forever. I think this will end soon, and we just have to pray to God for help to end this virus."**

In conclusion, I would say that being a frontliner is difficult and so is having to go through this Covid-19 pandemic.

ALRIZA NARVAEZ: ESSENTIAL GOODS DELIVERY PERSONNEL/DRIVER (CDO CANNED GOODS)

by Heather Marie P. Brosas



Photo Courtesy: Mrs. Narvaez

Tita Alriza is my mommy's friend. She and her husband Tito Sonny Narvaez owns a trucking business that delivers CDO canned goods. They have a son named Enzo, both Tita Alriza and Tito Sonny go out of the house every day to provide canned goods to different supermarkets.

Food is one of the basic needs of people. Through delivery, foods like canned food products reach even the farthest part of the Philippines. Delivery played an essential role during the pandemic because of the lockdown. More canned goods are needed than usual because people were told to stay home, and canned goods are the easiest to store.

They were very busy during the lockdown because they had to deliver more than normal. More and more people are getting infected with covid-19 and they are so scared that they will get infected also but they need to go out to make a living. They had to wear uncomfortable suits while loading and unloading the goods to protect ourselves. They had to make sure to apply safety first and make sure they follow protocol. They had to make sure that they sanitize before they enter their house as they need to protect their family also especially Enzo.

No face to face transaction was required between the factory, the delivery people and the recipient so the internet is really a big help. The good thing about the lockdown is the lesser traffic and they finished their task earlier. The gas was cheaper too, which made their expenses lower than ordinary days.

She and her husband deliver goods sometimes together and sometimes separately. Seeing each other arrive home safely after the delivery is a big relief for both of them. She feels really great when she sees her son's face after a tiring day. They make sure to spend time with their son when they are at home.



Photo Courtesy: Mrs. Narvaez

My IMPREGNABLE Tita

by Althea Nina A. Divinagracia

Covid-19 brought challenges and limitations to us. It made our stay at home. Meanwhile, the so-called medical frontliners worked unfalteringly for us despite the hardship of wearing personal protective equipment(PPE)and the risk of being infected by the virus. One of them is my tita. She always works hard for us and her patients, especially my lola, who had stage-4 breast cancer at that time. Her name is Dr.Alwyna Divinagracia Gayapanao.

Tita Weng, as we call her, is a company doctor. She is the one taking care of our lola, who was sick. In April 2020, she was tested positive for COVID-19. She needed to stay at the hospital for one week and almost a month at home quarantine. During that time, she was isolated from her family and us. The only way to communicate with her is thru our smartphone. She was very thankful for the internet technology and I quote,

“We are so lucky at present to have very sophisticated communication platforms that help us stay connected with our family anywhere in the world and in real-time. Communication helped me express my thoughts and feelings and helped me become more educated about this pandemic,” she said.

During that time, tita Weng was not able to visit my lola for safety concerns. My lola was not able to go to the hospital for her chemotherapy because of the many requirements brought about by COVID-19.

“I am a company Doctor... I felt scared, but this pandemic strengthened me for my patients and family...”

Her oncologist asks before administering it, and also, they don't want to risk my lola's safety that she may be infected by the virus that she might get from the hospital. After tita Weng's home quarantine ended and was tested negative from COVID-19, she continued taking care of my lola and resumed her work at the company. At first, she was hesitant to go to the company because she might be infected again with COVID-19. But because of her caringness to help her patients, she continued to be a doctor to them.

“I am a company Doctor... I felt scared, but this pandemic strengthened me for my patients and family. It also brought out the Bayanihan spirit among us frontliners.” she said. My lola's condition worsened. And on July 4, 2020, at 7:35 am, she died. We all cried, and we were all grief-stricken about what had happened. Although we know that she won't be able to recover, it still hurts inside. But tita Weng fought the pain that is in her heart. She was able to compose herself.

Truly tita Weng is an IMPREGNABLE woman. Until now she still continues being a doctor to others and to be a tita to us - that we are very thankful of.

Noel Fomoles: The Security Guard Who Gives Protection to Our Subdivision

by Mikaella Eun M. Ji



Photo Courtesy: Mikaella Euin M. Ji

As a Security Guard of a subdivision, they give the homeowners protection and ensure that the whole subdivision is safe. They are our heroes during this pandemic. We must respect them and trust them for their ways of protecting our homes. And to listen to what the government is doing to protect us from the virus. They also need some things to survive during this pandemic, such as food, drinks, etc.

He is Sir Noel A. Fomoles, a security guard in our subdivision. He lives in Cabuyao, Laguna. He has two kids, and the two kids are boys.

One of the difficult challenges that he had during this pandemic is having visitors in the subdivision. It was not easy for them to control it. Some visitors will say that the security guards were greedy, but in reality, they are not greedy, but kind and soft-hearted.

When the city government announced that there would be a lockdown, they had to undergo a fourteen days quarantine. And they stayed in the clubhouse to be safe. Sir Noel communicated with his family by using video calls. According to him, it was beneficial even during this time. When he goes home, he needs to wash his hands and go take a bath so that his family will be protected. And he also makes time for his family in need, like watching TV and having lunch or dinner together.

Being a frontliner for him was not easy to deal with. He needed to check the visitors' body temperature and other safety protocols. For those who shows symptoms of the COVID-19, it is required to be taken straight away to the hospital.

He said that life before the pandemic was normal, but now it is difficult. Now that there is a pandemic, we cannot do it by ourselves thus let us help each other. For sir Noel, he would help other people especially the homeowners in the subdivision. He is a part also of being a hero in this time of the pandemic. Protection is what we need today and tomorrow.

"life before the pandemic was normal, but now it is difficult. Now that there is a pandemic, we cannot do it by ourselves thus let us help each other..."

Casey Ocon: A Medical Technologist with Great Courage

by Kiara Celine O. Gana

In this pandemic, there are plenty of frontliners are risking their lives to give service to those in need. I got a chance to interview my aunt, a frontliner working for a hospital in a province in Mindanao. Her name is Casey Ocon. There are different types of frontliners. There are medical workers, government workers, and private workers. My aunt Casey Ocon is one of the medical workers in Mindanao. She is a Medical Technologist and a trained swabber of Sunga hospital in Digos City.

As a Medical technologist, she helped their doctors to diagnose the sick and in need. They treat every patient as a positive COVID - 19 for them to make sure that they always equip themselves like wearing PPE's, it was not comfortable for them to wear their PPE's because they are always drenched with their sweat for long hours of duty. However, they still need to wear it to keep themselves safe; she remembered that before there was a pandemic, they could extract blood without wearing PPE's, but right at the middle of the pandemic, everything should be double like wearing double masks, double gloves, and double laboratory coats just to protect themselves from the virus.

"She learned that she could be happy even without socializing with big crowds, even if small numbers of people are enough for her.."

This pandemic cost her to be separated from us, her family. So she is thankful that there is technology today wherein she can communicate with us, her family, and her friends through calls and video calls. And for her, we became her source of strength and happiness at this time, and constant communication kept her sane and happy.

During this pandemic of COVID 19, she learned a lot of essential things. She learned that she could be happy even without socializing with big crowds, even if small numbers of people are enough for her.

This pandemic taught her to be mindful and take extra precautions so that she can be happy with us, her family safe and sound after this pandemic.

How COVID-19 Affects the Life of a Specialist Doctor

by Dominique Leigh L. Gonzales

When you hear the word frontliner, you would normally think of doctors and nurses who would specifically interact with the victims of COVID-19. We simply call them doctors, but most doctors specialize in one type of medicine or another.

In fact, there are several hundred medical specialties and subspecialties. These are what you call *specialist doctors*.

Example of specialist doctors are: cardiologists, dermatologists, immunologists, obstetrician gynecologist and many more.

I happen to be related to one such specialist doctor in the person of Doctor Allan Anthony Ortiz, a cardiologist who specializes in cardio thoracic surgery. I had the opportunity to get his perspective on being a COVID pandemic frontliner and how he copes with it. Starting with a common question, I asked him "What are your thoughts about the pandemic going on right now?" to which he replied to with

"I have personally seen how this Covid 19 pandemic has made a whole lot of people sick and even causing the death to a number of them. It is so disheartening and even scary to see all these happening before my eyes but as a doctor in the frontline, I can only do my best to care for patients who may need my services in the hope that I may help save their lives."

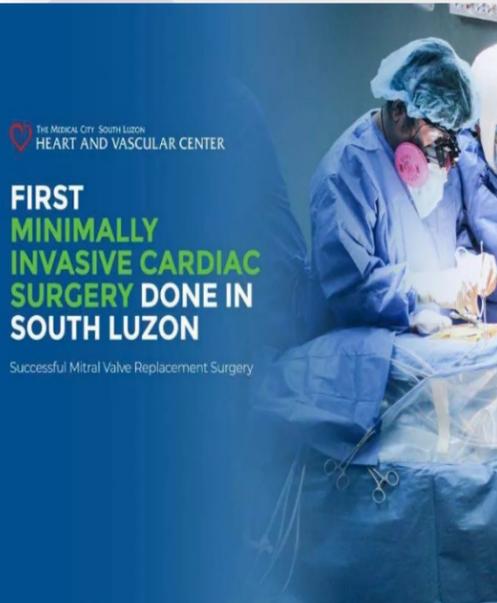


When I asked him if he had any regrets while doing his duty as a specialist doctor, he had this to say - "To be honest, I initially had regrets in working in the frontline. I had fears of getting sick while doing my job and risking the health and lives of my family. But then, I am reminded of the oath I made to care for patients even at the risk of my own life, just to be able to give them the appropriate care and treatment that could extend their lives."

After that, I asked "How did your duty as a specialist doctor affect your mental health?" He answered with this - "It can really be mentally and physically draining sometimes especially when your patient dies. These depressing thoughts however, are immediately replaced by happy thoughts of accomplishment when my patients are healed, which is mostly the case (about 80%-90% of the time). Being a frontliner in these pandemic times really requires one to be mentally tough so as not to be discouraged and defeated by the enemy, Covid 19. We just have to keep on reminding ourselves that with hard work and perseverance, all these shall pass." Then I asked him - "Was there anything you were grateful for while doing your duty as a specialist doctor?" which he replied with - "I am always grateful for patients that get healed and most happy when they are eventually discharged from the hospital. Being a part of a team in a Covid 19 hospital, we celebrate every Covid patient that gets well and goes home to his family Covid-free. It is so fulfilling to know that you have done and served your greater purpose in life which is to help save lives."

Filled with more curiosity, I asked - "Did you have any difficulty in adjusting to the new normal?" and he replied - "Most definitely! I had a lot of difficulty adjusting to the new normal such as the painstakingly wearing of PPEs that made me sweat so much. Add to that the difficulty of moving around and doing surgery while wearing the PPEs and the face mask and shield that sometimes blurred my vision. But then, these hospital and surgery protocols are very critical and need to be adhered to for everyone's safety and health." With all these questions answered, I asked him once more with - "How did the pandemic affect your relationship with your family?" He answered with "This pandemic has dramatically lessened my already limited time spent with family. I have a wife and a three year old daughter that I rarely see for their own safety. It's just a good thing that my wife is also a nurse who just recently (last December) retired from work and decided to stay home and care for our only daughter. She understands the need for caution and is very supportive of my work as a frontliner."

After reading all of Doctor Allan's answers, we can see how the pandemic affected his life, his mindset, and his relationship with his family. Nevertheless, Doctor Allan, and other frontliners continue to risk their lives and serve our country. As citizens of the Philippines, we too can fight for our country. Though it may not be as much as the frontliners' sacrifices, we could help and avoid the spread of COVID-19. All we need to do is just stay home and pray for these frontliners, because by staying home we decrease the amount of COVID victims meaning we decrease the chance of the frontliners getting COVID-19.



FIRST MINIMALLY INVASIVE CARDIAC SURGERY DONE IN SOUTH LUZON

Successful Mitral Valve Replacement Surgery

"I am reminded of the oath I made to care for patients even at the risk of my own life, just to be able to give them the appropriate care and treatment that could extend their lives."

Serving for People during 2020

by Danica N. Miranda

A lot of companies have shut down because of the pandemic caused by the Corona Virus. Some people are forced to close their business due to losing too much money. This is also why the workers lost their jobs. Starting March up to now, with or without lockdown by the government, many are still struggling. Ms. Joan Denise Iligan is one of the employees who were able to keep her job despite the pandemic. Ms. Denise is a Customer Service Representative working in a company in Alabang. According to her experience in this time of the pandemic, the new normal is challenging. There's still worry that the COVID-19 is still around. She mentioned that in pre-pandemic times, she needed to wear mask & face shield and bring alcohol always to protect her from the virus.

As a frontliner, she shared that being conscious of her actions has helped her and the community be safe. It is prohibited to handshake and get close to other people to avoid the virus from spreading. World Health Organization released a post on Facebook on greeting people to prevent physical contact. They agree to just bow, wave, or nod. In this way, humans can be safe but still respectful to each other. While being separated from the family is hard especially some families are used to be together always. For Ms. Denise, video calling is her tool to connect with her relatives if they cannot be together. "Talking about daily lives to others thru video call or just call makes us feel closer to that person even though they are distance away. Having a good conversation is

important in this current situation we are in". This is her statement on how communicating with our loved ones can help cope during the pandemic. Being able to communicate online still is better than not seeing at all. This generation must be grateful that social media is just one click away. The past pandemic was harder since the resources are very limited for the people compare to today's resources. Phones have a camera now, money can be transferred online, and food can be delivered fast to our homes.

Ms. Denise is an example of how Filipino frontliners remain resilient and hardworking despite issues circulating on the internet. However, hopefully, the vaccines being released today are safe, and this pandemic will end so that our frontliners will be able to rest somehow. They are the modern heroes of this generation.

All the hardships and services they offer to the people are very much appreciated.



Photo taken during the interview by Danica Miranda

Eugene Delisay: A Doctor who Worked Hard and Kept His Faith in God to Succeed

by Hazel A. Luares

This is about the reasons why we should always keep our heads up. Success may be difficult at this time. Hard work may be a struggle, but in the end, there will be something there for us that we will appreciate. This article can be an inspiration to us people. This article may let people know that giving up will not always answer our problems and difficulties.

Dr. Eugene Delisay works as a medical doctor. This pandemic has affected him like how it affected us.

This pandemic has affected Eugene, but it affected his children more. Being at home and studying was a big adjustment for his children. He makes sure that he and his family eat together and pray together; that is how he and his family communicate and support one another. He achieves his dreams and succeeds for his loved ones. Being successful is how he can make his loved ones happy and make their lives comfortable.

During this pandemic, one of Dr. Eugene's goals is to be close to family and stay safe and healthy. He wants us to know how to be safe and healthy by washing our hands, practicing social distancing, staying inside, and wearing a facemask when going outside. We must stay indoors as much as possible, and if we have the virus, we should not let it go out. Dr. Eugene wants us to be responsible and do these things because the pandemic is not yet over. If we're going to go do the things we did face to face, we should stay patient and wait for this pandemic to end.

Since this time may be a bad one, we should think about what makes us feel happy. Determination and patience is extremely important for many reasons. We should always keep our health in good condition. If we do not, we will not achieve our dreams for ourselves and others. This pandemic is dangerous, but the support of our loved ones makes us feel safe.

"Determination and patience is extremely important for many reasons. We should always keep our health in good condition..."

Heroes Among Us

by Gabrielle Marie Rosario C. Lee

Angie Miranda Mojica: All day in the bank, In the service of the Philippines.

Mrs. Angie Miranda works hard everyday. The bank is important these days because the money you put in banks they use to invest in businesses to earn money. In the first month of quarantine people had a hard time. We had to follow the protocol. Going to the bank is hard because it's a long line and we also need practice physical distancing.

Mrs. Angie Miranda is a private employee who works as a banker. She manages the financial needs of her clients. This time of pandemic, people have a hard time going to the bank. Angie works hard everyday. She wakes up early and gets ready for work. Before school (When it was still face-to-face), every 5:00 in the morning, I would see her get in her car and go to work.

Being a banker is hard, especially nowadays in a pandemic. But at least at the end of the day, you get to spend time with your family. The challenging thing about being a banker is that you're exhausted once you get home, and you want to rest, but you still need to do work. Being a banker is also challenging because you wake up early, but then you get home late when you're done.



Photo courtesy: Mrs. Angie Miranda

We were better when we're together. In these times of doubt, we're all looking for ways to help each other. Work is important because it is good for our health and wellbeing. Through this time it's important that we support each other and the wider community.

The impact of the new coronavirus disease, COVID-19, is being felt all over the world. Work is important, but family is more important. And health is wealth. Taking care of ourselves because health is wealth. If you are not healthy you cannot.



Photo taken during the actual interview.



Photo courtesy: Mrs. Angie Miranda

A Dentist Who Risked Their Life for Plenty

by Bomi C. Jang

You may or may not know, but dentists are also a huge need in a pandemic. They work hard for their country's safety. And as you may know, today, us humans are fighting from COVID-19. I am about to show you one of the experiences of the dentist I interviewed. COVID-19 is a serious virus that's spreading around the world. All kinds of jobs that have to do with the citizens' medical health in the country are in charge of helping. These people are called frontliners. They are the people who risk their lives for us. But today, we'll mainly be talking about a dentist's job to help fight this virus.

Dentists around the world are helping with COVID-19. Although you may think they are just dentists, they are very much help to us. This dentist beside this text is a picture she took while having work.



Photo courtesy: Mrs. Angie Miranda

She said that her job was very difficult. She couldn't handle the children in pain when she saw them. She was assigned to check the mouths of the patient checking if it is unhealthy because of COVID. She couldn't do anything but prescribe antibiotics and pain reliever. She said the most difficult thing was to go to work.

"My husband drives me to work, but since I was assigned in a health center, we decided not to pick me up to avoid bringing the virus inside the car and at home." She walked to work until she borrowed her friend's electric scooter for a while. She eventually bought her own and went to another day of being a dentist. She was not very used to it, but she got used to it in a while.

She said we wanted to give up most of the time, but she didn't have the choice to. It is hard seeing people who you probably see everyday suffer in pain because of this virus. The times you want to give up are the worst moments in life. You don't feel satisfaction in anything, you feel disappointed.

It is really heartbreaking how they can't do anything but treat the patients.

Sometimes we can forget how hard it is being a frontliner. Here I showed you a glimpse of what it's like being a dentist in a pandemic. **It is important to have a better thinking and understanding of the duty of the frontliners in a pandemic because that way you would understand everything.** As a student, all I can do is tell people to sanitize and wash their hands. Understanding each job and duty of a frontliner is important these days, always remember that they risk their lives for us.

The Frontliner's Job

by Cassandra Margaux T. Ferrer

Dr. Mariza Ramirez is our family dentist, and she has been practicing dentistry for 20 years. She is also a mom of three, and all of them are studying at St. Scholastica's College Westgrove. Her life as a medical frontliner changed very much due to Covid-19. Her job also was greatly affected. She became busier because she needed to disinfect more than what was occurring before the pandemic. She and other front liners also wear protective equipment. However, they have a smaller number of patients than before because they attend to urgent cases more than small cases. She also mentioned it was a bit harder, and there were many changes to how she did her job and what she does in her job. She and the other front liners need to be very careful and aware. They need to be extra careful and aware of their patients and what's happening around them during Covid-19. They needed to add a lot of protective equipment around their clinic and most things around them.

The most important thing she needs to do in her job is to help patients in need who are suffering from Covid-19 and other diseases or injuries. They also said it's important to help patients who need relief and are relaxed about their problems and the pain they are going through. It is also important to stay safe and healthy so that we can avoid Covid-19.

According to Dr. Ramirez, we should practice doing the things to avoid Covid-19, like being safe inside or cleanliness at all times. We should always wear face masks to be safe when we're going outside. We can also take things that help our illnesses or injuries to cure them just to be sure that we won't get Covid-19. Doing healthy things like drinking vitamins, doing different and safe exercises, and also getting enough sleep will help during the Covid-19. This is a sign we can still be healthy if we do things we should and avoid doing things that can seem reckless in this period during the pandemic. We should try to be safe and happy with our friends and family.

"Doing healthy things like drinking vitamins, doing different and safe exercises, and also getting enough sleep will help during the Covid-19."

MARWEN MISSION : A SUPERHERO WITHOUT A CAPE

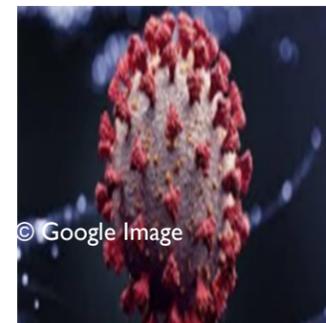
by Johann Margaux C. Tomagan

In the Philippines, 2020 has been greeted by unfortunate circumstances. Last January, Taal Volcano erupted. Many households in nearby towns were greatly affected. Everybody I see and know wore masks so we won't inhale the toxic air. Schools were forced to postpone classes because it is unsafe especially for kids and for those who have respiratory ailments. After a few weeks, schools started opening its doors to students and establishments began operating once again.



Photo courtesy: Johann Tomagan

Life goes on.



The Filipinos' resilience is once again tested. A new challenge came in our lives. One that we are still facing right now, one that is deadly-COVID-19. This virus doesn't choose who its victims are. It doesn't care if you belong to the elite, middle class, or the poor. It doesn't care whether you are an actress or a singer, a mother or a daughter, or a millionaire. It doesn't even care if you are from Europe, the Middle East, or Asia. Around the world, thousands of people died, and many are still infected. The good news is that many people have survived and are still recovering from the virus. All thanks to our modern-day heroes. They are called our frontliners.

One brave frontliner I know is my godfather, **Marwen "Dudut" Mission**. My parents call him Dudut Mah Man, so I call him Ninong Dudut Mah Man! Sounds cool, right? Cool name for a cool frontliner! I was very fortunate to interview him despite the time difference. He works as a Radiologic Technologist in Doha, Qatar. He does x-ray on patients to see bone structure and organs to check if there are fractures or if there is something wrong in their bodies. He's like Superman with superpowers! He says, "I enjoy my work, especially when I encounter rare x-ray procedures, and it's difficult also because we need to be always careful on the effects of radiation during the procedure."

Like superheroes, we all have weaknesses, too, so we need to protect ourselves. To Ninong Dudut Mah Man, he needs to wear full Personal Protective Equipment or PPE so he won't get the virus in his field of work. He also said that we need to have proper education and communication to fight this virus. He stressed that we could prevent the spread of COVID-19 if we do proper handwashing, use of hand rubs, proper wearing of masks, practice physical distancing, and most importantly, we still need to exercise to boost our immune system.

With all that's happening around us, Ninong Dudut Mah Man, like us, initially experienced difficulties adjusting, especially in his line of work since the hospital he works for will be specializing with the treatment and management of the virus. "Lots of training conducted on how to deal with patients who are tested positive and needed to do swabbing test every two weeks" are just some of the challenges he had to face, he added. He mentioned that during the first swab, his colleague got tested positive. He was anxious upon learning this. Everyone at work was stressed out because patients coming in were significantly rising daily for the first three months. But as weeks go by, they were getting hopeful because more patients were recovering.

He said, "I am still lucky that I did not get infected" A superhero indeed!

Here in the Philippines, we were in quarantine for months. People were only allowed to go out to buy essential items like food and medicines. That means no dining out, no playtime with cousins and classmates, and no visit to the mall. We were not allowed to visit our relatives or friends. Our only way to reaching out to them is through communication. Ninong Dudut Mah Man said that communication played the biggest part in keeping his relationship stronger with his family. He would do a video call and chat with his family to discuss and deal with problems. "It keeps you stronger and inspired because, at the end of the day, you know that you are just one call away, and your family is always there for you," he added. I asked him what his message to his fellow frontliners is, and he said, "Always be aware of what your job is and your role in your line of work. Be patient also in dealing with COVID-19 patients." His message for the people, "If you hear or know someone who got infected, don't criticize and despise them because they have already suffered enough, both emotionally and physically.



Photo courtesy: Mr. Marwen

Let them know you are there to support them because they are not bad people, but they are just sick people who are recovering to be better and who needs care."

Despite our situation now, all of us are hopeful that this pandemic will go away so we can all go back to our normal lives. Let us support one

another and extend our help in any way we can. Most importantly, we should be thankful that there are heroes out there who unselfishly give their services to other people and who sacrifice their lives saving others.

Thank you so much our dear frontliners.

Thank you Ninong Dudut Mah Man, one of our superheroes!



Photo courtesy: Johann Tomagan

"Let them know you are there to support them because they are not bad people, but they are just sick people who are recovering to be better and who needs care."

Justice Adolfo Azcuna: Training Judges in the Time of Pandemic

by Maria Lucia A. Siongco



Photo Courtesy: Lucy Siongco

Justice Adolf Azcuna attending the first blended learning seminar of the Supreme Court Judicial Academy.

We live in a civilized society because of our laws. And these laws are safeguarded by people like my grandfather. If there were no lawyers/judges working, there would be chaos in our country. Why is the law important? The most basic function of law is to defend us from evil – that is, from those who would want to harm us for no good reason. Next is to encourage people to do the right thing and/or act.

My grandfather, Adolf Azcuna, works in the world of the law. He is a justice of the Supreme Court and the Chancellor of the Judicial Academy. They are in charge of training all the judges in the Philippines. When COVID happened, they moved to working from home for several months. But a few months ago, he and his office were asked to go back to work at the Supreme Court. Despite being a senior citizen and high risk for COVID, he is risking his life going to work, for the good of our country.

In the Supreme Court, they all have to wear face masks. They wash their hands all the time. They keep their distance from each other. They always check their temperatures. They also have to get a rapid test every now and then. They had to use different ways of teaching the judges. They do online distance learning via Zoom. But sometimes, they combine it with face to face, so that some of the judges are there face to face while others are listening via Zoom. They call this blended learning.



Physically distanced meeting with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

At first, they didn't have the necessary equipment and experience to do online distance learning. But eventually they learned how to use Zoom and they got the proper equipment for everybody. Some of them prefer online learning, while some prefer face to face. It took them about 3 weeks to adjust and to be able to put up their first blended learning workshop.

They had a few test runs, and after 3 weeks they succeeded.



A virtual seminar at the Supreme Court
Photo Courtesy: Justice Adolf Azcuna



My grandfather is my hero. He is risking his own life to keep our country safe and organized. Even though my grandmother was concerned about his going back to work, she eventually understood that this was his duty.

I hope that my grandfather can be an inspiration to many other Filipinos, especially during these challenging times.

Interviewing my grandfather.

Justice Adolf Azcuna - Chancellor, Judicial Academy

MY KIND MOTHER: A FIERCE FRONTLINER!

Hope may be the one stronger than fear

by Celine Margaret B. Aquino



Risking her life every day, working for endless hours, assisting pregnant women deliver their babies normally or operatively, wearing uncomfortable Personal Protective Equipment, subjecting herself to stringent hospital protocols, so that she can go home to her family safely --- this is what my mom does. She is an Obstetrician – Gynecologist, a frontliner!

My mother's name is Rica Aquino --- she is a doctor, a frontliner. She was caught off guard because no one expected or anticipated the Covid 19 Pandemic. Public places were closed during the lockdown to prevent everyone from viral exposure. She didn't want to stay at home and do nothing because she wanted to help and many pregnant women need her. She was determined to do her work amidst the danger of contracting the disease.

There were strict protocols we had to follow, such as washing your hands more often, social distancing, and wearing face masks. One of the most challenging times was when she couldn't see us or be able to communicate with us because she is in quarantine. But she tried her best to always keep in touch with us. She always prayed to God that this pandemic will end and that all frontliners will be safe.



She is worried every time she comes home because she might transmit the virus to us. Once, she had a patient who tested positive for coronavirus and was about to deliver her baby. The idea of transferring the patient to a Covid facility was considered. Still, because of the urgency of the condition of the baby inside her womb, my mother braved the risk of getting sick, delivered the baby via C-section operation, saved the mother and the child, underwent disinfection and quarantine, and went home feeling victorious. I thanked the lord that she did not get the virus.

When you do the same work every day and the progress of your efforts is very slow, you tend to get tired. My mother said that the newborn baby always gives hope to all of us. No matter how tired she is after a grueling day, the sound of the baby crying during delivery gives her hope and removes her fear to continue her mission. One baby at a time!

*That in all things
God may be Glorified!*