



Cross: You and I

QUEZON CITY, Philippines - Last March 3, 2024, Fr. Lester BONETE, SMM delivered a Lenten Recollection entitled “Cross: You and I” at Montfort Center of Spirituality in Sct. Madriñan, South Triangle, Quezon City. The event drew a significant turnout, with the room filled with eager participants awaiting their Lenten reflection.

Fr. Lester commenced his discourse with the Story of Creation from the Book of Genesis, quoting from St. Louis-Marie de Montfort's “Love of Eternal Wisdom” to underscore the divine love inherent in humanity's creation. *“Man was created by God perfectly in His image and likeness. Man was so God-like in mind, body, and heart, that when God saw man, He fell in love with His creation. He was so pleased, God especially said, “It is very good”.* Reflecting on humanity's fall from grace due to disobedience, Fr. Lester highlighted the profound sorrow of God at this rupture in the divine-human relationship.

As outlined in “Love of Eternal Wisdom”, Fr. Lester emphasized how God, moved by humanity's plight, sent messengers and ultimately His Son, Jesus Christ, to restore communion with humanity. This restoration culminated in Jesus's incarnation, where He emptied Himself and underwent death on the cross for humanity's redemption.

Fr. Lester then delved into the historical and theological significance of crucifixion, contextualizing Jesus' suffering within the broader practice of crucifixion in ancient times. Through vivid description and

multimedia aids, including clips from “The Passion of Christ”, Fr. Lester evoked the visceral reality of Jesus' physical and emotional agony on the cross.

Drawing from biblical passages, Fr. Lester underscored the spiritual dimension of Jesus' suffering, highlighting His identification with human sinfulness and the weight of the world's sins upon Him. This profound sacrifice, depicted in Jesus' cry of abandonment on the cross, serves as a testament to God's unconditional love for humanity.

In a poignant conclusion, Fr. Lester challenged participants to reflect on their response to Christ's sacrificial love, urging them not to forsake Jesus in light of His ultimate act of love. Through introspective questions and biblical references, Fr. Lester invited participants to deepen their relationship with God and embrace the profound message of the cross.

Fr. Lester's Lenten reflection, “Cross: You and I”, serves as a compelling invitation to contemplation and spiritual renewal during the Lenten season, reaffirming the enduring relevance of Christ's sacrifice for believers today.

The Lenten reflection reached its culmination with a solemn celebration of the Holy Eucharist, led by Fr. Lester BONETE, SMM, in the company of fellow Montfortian priests including Rev. Fr. Roy MILLANO, SMM, Rev. Fr. Norwyn BAYDO, SMM, and Rev. Fr. Federick YUMANG, SMM. Following the Mass, attendees gathered to share a meal together, further fostering fellowship and spiritual nourishment.

Maricar LANSANG, AMM