

Illustrated By: Elaine Tanpin

ABOUNDING IN HOPE

Humility and Obedience



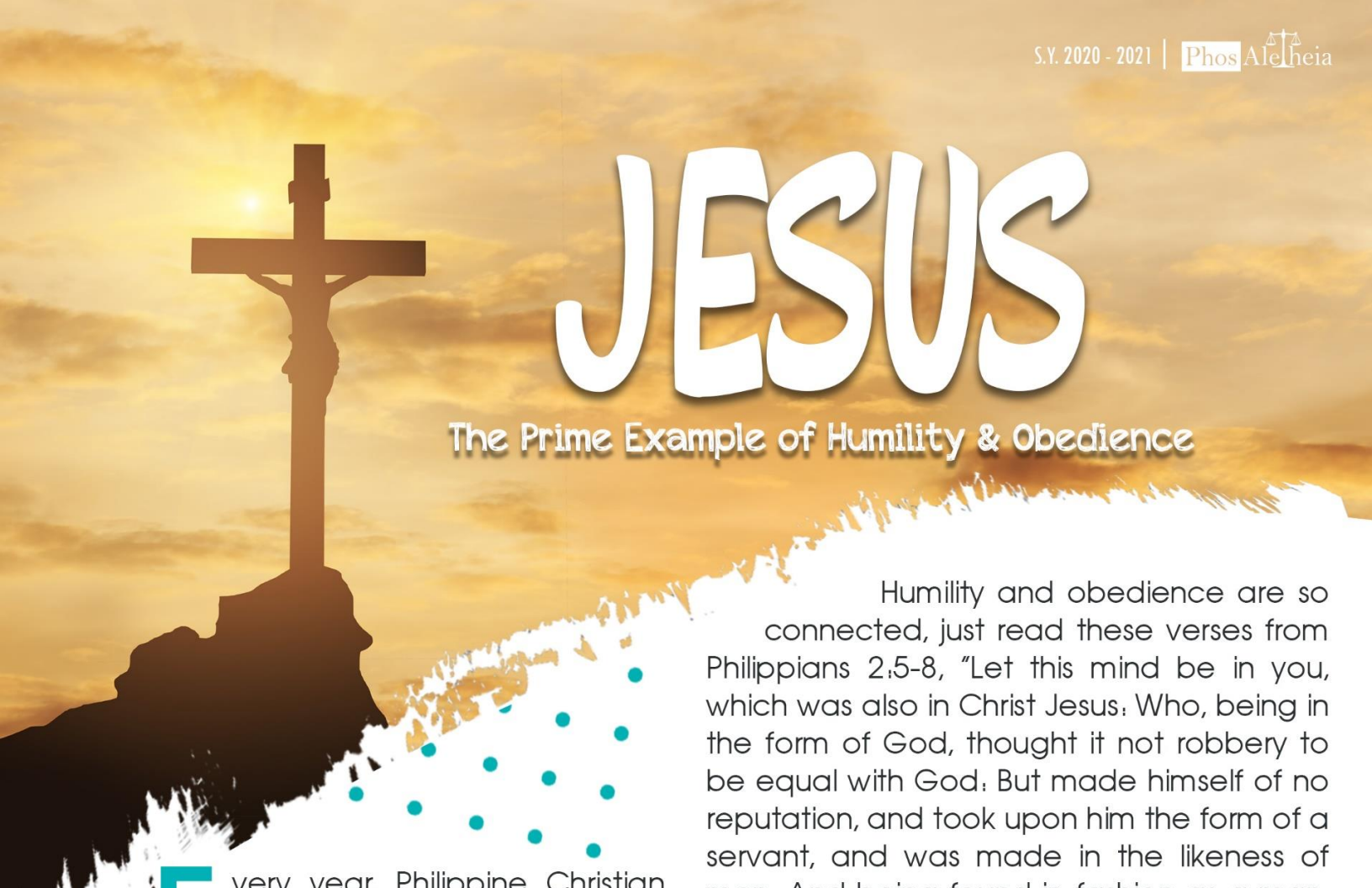
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ABOUT THE COVER

The cover imagines a scene of a Kian-keenian in Chapel where she talks and kneels humbly before God in prayer after dealing with conflicts and upsetting

circumstances. It's that favorite place in school where faith and hope are refreshed and restored which is essential in this particular time.

Cover by: Elaine Tanpin



JESUS

The Prime Example of Humility & Obedience

Humility and obedience are so connected, just read these verses from Philippians 2:5-8, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Jesus as the prime example of humility and obedience should encourage us to be more demonstrative of these qualities. Well, these qualities should come in handy most especially now that there are protocols to follow like social distancing, wearing of face masks and shields, regular handwashing and applying of alcohol or sanitizer, and staying at home most especially for kids and the senior citizens. If we do not have humility and obedience, we will have difficulty in following these simple rules. This time, most especially, cooperation is very critical, and as Christians we must manifest these two important qualities so that we can shine brightly in our societies. Furthermore, we should be radiating hope by trusting in Jesus, our only hope in this seemingly uncertain and hopeless time.

Every year, Philippine Christian Gospel School challenges its teaching and non-teaching

staff, students, parents, and families to learn by heart and eventually practice the school-wide theme. This year, it's ABUNDING IN HOPE which is based on 2 Chronicles 7:14 that says, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." This time the school has chosen HOPE as an acronym for HUMILITY, OBEDIENCE, PERSEVERANCE, and EXPERIENCE which clearly sums up the verse. The verse is very timely of what we are experiencing now, and very challenging to apply. Similarly, Phos Aletheia uses the theme only that in this first issue of the very first digital version of the school paper, HUMILITY and OBEDIENCE are focused.

ENEMIES OF HOPE

The year 2020 was a year like no other. As of March, 21, 2021, the WHO reported that 122,524,424 people tested positive for Covid-19 and close to 2,703,620 people had died from the virus. If you have been following world events, you know the problems we face, internal and external conflicts and aggression, the cataclysmic weather disturbances, and the extreme poverty in many countries, etc. The list is endless. The state of the world today looks so hopeless and our individual lives can also be overwhelmed with feelings of hopelessness and helplessness. As we enter 2021, many well wishes include statements like *"hope 2021 is a better year!"* Or *"Let's make 2021 a better year! Pray for a better 2021."* **We all could use some hope during these confusing times. God offers us real hope.**

WHAT IS BIBLICAL HOPE?

When life is a constant struggle, hope may be the resource that will see us through. Hope is not a warm fuzzy feeling that things will get better; rather, it is a strong support and unshakable foundation. **There is no real hope apart from God. With God, we have a solid hope that can serve as "an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast" (Hebrews 6:19).** Biblical hope is founded on who God is, what God says He will do, and what God can do. Therefore, as a believer in Jesus Christ, we have a hope anchored on the character of God, secured in the trustworthiness of His word and finds its fulfillment through the display of His sovereign power in all things. That is real hope! But hope finds its enemies in a myriad of influences (to mention a few) – circumstances, personal doubts, and people's perception, etc.

ENEMY #1 – INFLUENCED BY PEOPLE'S PERCEPTION

Just as there are *"kill joy"* there are also *"hope-destroyers."* These are what may be considered as *"enemies of hope."* We are familiar with many of these because we have met them along life's journey. These hope-destroyers appear as critics with well-meaning intentions. By their words, they actually diminish the hope that we have regarding a circumstance. For instance, the twelve spies who were sent out by Moses to survey the Promised Land. After the surveillance mission, they went back and filed this report – Everyone said the land was what God had told them all along – it is a land flowing with milk and honey. BUT (according to the ten spies), *"the land is inhabited by giant-sized dwellers who are warriors. We are no match to them. We are not warriors but shepherds. We never have combat training, let alone fighting experience. Remember – the last time when Pharaoh's armies came pursuing us – we panicked! Had it not been for God's intervention and*

miraculous deliverance by parting the Red Sea for us, we could just have been trampled to death by the pursuing chariots." The argument posed by the ten spies sounded so logical. Their hopes were crushed by the words of the ten unbelieving spies. How sad!

ANTIDOTE #1 – FOCUS ON GOD'S PROMISES

In contrast, Joshua and Caleb, two spies who were part of the surveillance mission, did not agree with the report of the ten spies. Instead, they said something like this – *"Yes, the place is inhabited by giants who are warrior-like. Yes, they look like they are ready to fight and defend their land whatever it takes. Yes, we may not stand a chance if we go to war against them. BUT wait! This land was promised to us by the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. What God promises, He keeps. This land is ours by virtue of a promise that God made so long ago to our forefathers, and by virtue of God's sovereignty and faithfulness, He will see that we possess it. Look, we cannot go wrong if we remain steadfast in believing that God will give us the land whatever it takes, with a fight or none at all. God says it, I believe it, that settles it!"* End of argument. Joshua and Caleb were hope bringers to the unbelieving children of Israel. But who won? You know the rest of the story. As we always say – majority wins but remember, the majority does not always mean they are right! Their voice just happened to be louder.

ENEMY #2 – INFLUENCED BY PERSONAL DOUBTS

The hope-destroyers may also come in the guise of a mindset that focuses on our feelings of inadequacy. Feelings of inadequacy set in when we start comparing ourselves with others. Moses was grooming Joshua to be his successor. Joshua was Moses' assistant and had been around Moses since they got out from Egypt. From the tribe of Ephraim, Joshua was not really unknown to the children of Israel. He played important supporting role in many events after the exodus from Egypt. But Joshua must have thought a lot of times – *"how can I possibly fill in Moses' shoes?"* What a weight of responsibility that Joshua must have felt when his first assignment after taking over the leadership position, that he must lead the Israelites to take possession of the Promised Land. His words spoken forty years ago to refute the ten spies' claims *"what God promises, He keeps"* is now put to the test. Is God truly trustworthy and is He really able to bring them into the

AND ITS ANTIDOTE

By: Dr. Wanda Po Liam Giok

land of promise, as Joshua had chosen to believe?

The hope-destroyers appear to paralyze our earlier convictions because we tend to look down upon ourselves and lose focus.

ANTIDOTE #2 - FOCUS ON GOD'S ALL SUFFICIENCY

We are all uniquely and wonderfully made in God's image. No two individuals, not even identical twins, are created the same. There is no point in trying to compare ourselves with anyone. Not denying our limitations in skills and abilities, and character flaws, every one of us has the potential to be somebody. I don't say this in an arrogant or boastful manner, but the truth said – *"We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them"* (Ephesians 2:10). We are God's masterpieces! If we are products of God's creation power, then we must be a great piece of creation! To counter hope destroyer #2 that tells us that we are no good, that we don't measure up to somebody's standards – well, we can point these critics to God our maker and tell them that we may not be like "so and so" but we are somebody in God's eyes. God's all sufficiency is our sufficiency. *God said to Joshua, "No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you"* (Joshua 1:5).

ENEMY #3 - INFLUENCED BY CIRCUMSTANCE

How must have Joshua and Caleb felt when God disciplined the whole nation of Israel for their unbelief based on the report of the ten spies? As a measure of chastisement, God made the children of Israel, including Joshua and Caleb, to wander in the wilderness for forty years. Joshua and Caleb might have reacted – *"This is so unfair! We gave a positive report; in fact, we told the people that we can possess the land as promised by God.... So why include us and make us wander in the wilderness for forty years? God, I think you are making a mistake here!"* These conversations did not happen because none of these are recorded in the Bible. During the wilderness wandering, Joshua and Caleb could be thinking that the promised land is a thing of the past. God seemed so distant; our personal struggles and feelings of unjust treatment are of no concern to God. These are voices of the hope-destroyers. We allow our circumstances to dictate whether or not we can hope for a better tomorrow.



ANTIDOTE #3 - FOCUS ON GOD'S LOVE

Honestly, I don't know why God had to include Joshua and Caleb in the punishment meted out to the unbelieving and grumbling children of Israel. Seemingly, it appears so unfair. Looks like *"one for all, all for one"*? In many Psalms, David had to grapple with the issue of delayed justice. In fact, after the fall of Adam and Eve, God had delayed punishing evil and the one behind all evil. Satan and his cohorts seemed to be the ruling power in the world; consequently, evil permeates every area of our lives and our world systems. Is God therefore unjust? No, God is not unjust. His delay is not denial, rather, it is mercy. God is withholding the just punishment that all sinners deserve, which is death, because of His great love for all peoples. Paul expressed it this way *"but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ... we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation"* (Romans 5:8, 11). Christ's death on the cross paved the way for sinners to be reconciled with God. This is the hope that has eternal results – to all who believe in Christ, we have the hope of eternal life *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life"* (John 3:16).

We can indeed have incredible hope in the knowledge of what lies beyond the grave –

Eternity with God.
This life is not all there is after all!

HEROTV ORIGINAL

HEROES WITHOUT CAPES:

Quarantine Edition

★★★★★ 2020 1 Season

 PLAY  More Info

Unsung heroes, creating better futures one class at a time...

By: Theseus Hector



2020 has been a very unique year. The pandemic changed most if not all our plans for the year. We all had to make sacrifices. For some of us, the adjustments were easy. Instead of going out to work every day, we work from home. We get to spend more time with our families. The workload may also be less for most of us. That is not the case for quite a number we call front liners. The underappreciated medical industry has now become people of high regard. Heroes --- we call them. Day in, day out, putting themselves out there at risk, fighting the virus and giving aid to those infected. While the healthcare workers fight for the wellness of the public, there are also noble men and women striving for the growth of the youth. They are who we call teachers. Their sacrifices are hidden, unseen most of the time, yet their efforts have doubled, even tripled. Teaching is not for the faint of heart. It takes passion, hard work, love, and sacrifice. It is only right that they are recognized and appreciated for their dedication.

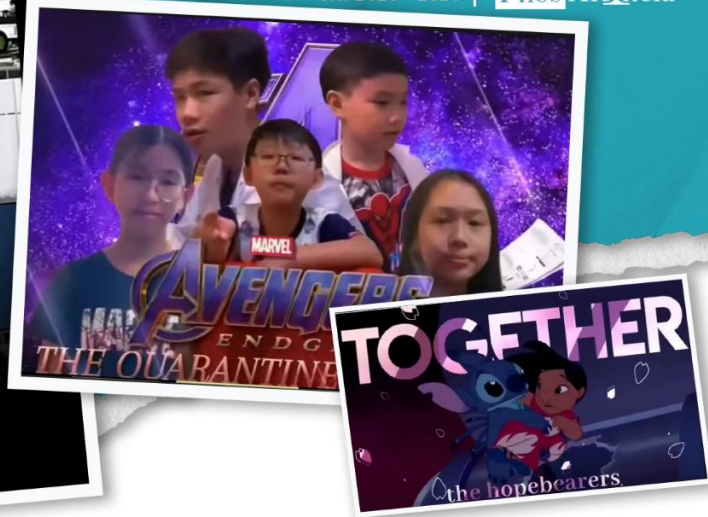
Teachers' Day is an event to celebrate the noblest of us all. Kian Kee and her family are all very blessed to have such wonderful and selfless teaching and non-teaching staff. It has been a tradition to celebrate them every September, but due to the pandemic, that wasn't possible this year, or so we thought.

The abrupt end to last school year left so many things hanging. The team of student leaders responsible for planning and preparing for Teachers' Day has not been elected. The only team that got to file for candidacy for Supreme Student Government stepped up to show and give our teaching and non-teaching staff the love and appreciation they deserve. The core team led by Carmela Go is composed of Trisha Bok, Shaun Borromeo, Kelly Co, Renise Lim, Isaiah Tan, and Kylie Yu. These brilliant leaders carefully planned and organized every part of the program. PCGS is very blessed with these servant leaders because they are those who do not seek recognition but selflessly give their best for the benefit of others and for the glory of God. For us Kiankeenians, we always look to one model for leadership and that is Christ Himself. Just as Jesus came not to be served but to

serve, Kian Kee encourages her students to be servant leaders. Working with the core team is another team composed of SSG Alumni and batch representatives from 2008 to 2018. They are Joeven Lee, Aaron Ong, Daniel Ching, Catherine Chua, Samuel Uy, Lorenz Ong, Carl Que, Jeremias Sorongon Jr., Benson Go, Melody Lee Yu, Merjerie Sorongon, Jacqueline Tan, Charmaine Yu, Elyzza Ferenal, Sophia Wong, Michelle Manglapus, Caroline Tan, Wayne Dayata, and Adley Lagmay. Graduating from Kian Kee doesn't mean that we no longer have ties with her. Kian Kee will always be home. Who we all are, we owe much of it to our teachers.

Since the government has prohibited mass gatherings, Teachers' Day, usually celebrated in the school gym, would have to be celebrated in small groups. Two teams, the students and the alumni, worked on two parts to complement each other into one virtual celebration. On one hand, the team of students took care of the program looking for volunteers willing to participate and perform and putting them all together. On the other hand, the alumni focused on logistics for the teachers' gift packs and for all the physical preparation needed, since children under the age of 18 were not allowed to go out yet. Planning and preparation started last week of August. We wanted to keep this a surprise to all so we only reached out to a few key people from Kian Kee. With the help of Dr. Wanda Po, Mr. Duane Po, Mrs. Kristine Pepito, Mr. Ramon Vilanoba and Mr. Gimbo Dayanco, little by little, the efforts of the students and alumni started coming together. There had been many challenges along the way. The greatest of these might have been having to do all this without physically meeting one other and meeting the need to supply manpower the days before and on the day of the event itself. Only by God's grace that efforts came into fruition. There were quite a number of lapses, but responses were mostly positive.

Heroes without Capes, The Quarantine Edition. The first and hoping to be the only virtual Teachers' Day celebration had accomplished much more. First, it made all the teaching and non-teaching staff feel loved and appreciated. Second, it showcased the talents and hearts of the students and alumni. Third and most importantly, it demonstrated God's power and sovereignty. With Him, nothing really is impossible. When He



plants a seed in the hearts of His people, He doesn't leave them helpless to accomplish His plans. He will raise people up to do and complete the work. His grace is sufficient. Soli Deo Gloria!

* Let's read some reactions from few teaching and non-teaching staff!

Gaddiel Puzon

(High School Science Teacher)

Quietness had filled the many corners of the school in the past months. Had it not been for sporadic chats and laughter of a few good people, I may have gone mad at some point in time. However, last September 25 proved to be different; in fact, it was special. While the school had still been free of students attempting their indiscriminate means

of fun, their cheers and sweetness had been incredibly loud and had reached our end of the screen. The setup had been different—the seating arrangement, the distribution of goodies, and especially the students' performances. There were a few things I couldn't do even if I tried. I couldn't just wave at the students I knew, couldn't just smile at them, couldn't even show my excitement when my students performed, yet these limitations did not change how special and important they have become to me.

The entire program, especially the students' thoughtful messages, had reminded me of why I love being called a teacher—that even in my young age, I can make a difference. Feelings of insignificance and insufficiency have often haunted me, but when I saw what wonderful souls the Lord have partly entrusted to me, I found *"my cup runneth over"*. I may never be a superhero with a cape on my back who can defy gravity or know every scientific word there is, yet it is not I who does the marvelous work. It is God through us. I realize with a grateful heart that we are never going to be completely capable on our own, but we have the Lord who fills the gaps and seals us whole. And I believe that is much greater than any hero Marvel can ever make.



Deborah Lim

(Chinese Language Teacher)

I had low expectations for this year's Teachers' Day celebration since there would be no students in school. But to my surprise, there were some alumni who went to bring some food and gifts to the teaching and non-teaching staff and some students

even presented a virtual program for the teachers. Just like every Teachers' Day celebration we have had, this year's event brought so much joy to the teaching and non-teaching staff because of the combined effort of the different batches. Kudos to the organizers and students that contributed to this year's Teacher's Day celebration! God bless you all!

Raquel Barril

(Prefect of Discipline – Elementary)

It was an awesome and memorable Teachers' Day celebration. The team behind the event did a great job. Just wanted to thank them for putting together a heartfelt program. While watching every presentation, I became emotional because I was extremely pleased and touched. I see alumni and students devoting their time and resources to make the PCGS teaching and non-teaching staff feel loved and appreciated. Wow! Thank you for making us proud to be a teacher!



Celsil Ramos

(Librarian)

I am so blessed that I felt appreciated by the students. I highly appreciate what the students did despite the pandemic. They have given their time to make us happy and to let us know that we are important and valuable. The students really made an effort to make us happy through video presentation and bountiful snacks and lunch. I love the gifts that they gave us most specially the gift certificates. To all the students, THANK YOU SO MUCH! God Bless you all!

OPERATION ULYSSES

filled
WITH
gratitude
to all who gave

#UlyssesPH
By: Renise Lim

In 1922, Irish writer James Joyce published what would now be considered as one of the greatest novels ever written, *Ulysses*. *Ulysses* is the Latin counterpart of the Greek name, *Odysseus*, the epic hero featured in the literary classic, *The Odyssey*. The name means “*the one who is wrathful or hated*”. *Ulysses* was also the name of a typhoon that made landfall in the Philippines just recently.

Internationally known as typhoon Vamco, typhoon *Ulysses* was a powerful and deadly category-4 typhoon that ran at a devastating speed of 155-215 km/h. To make matters worse, the typhoon had arrived as the fourth tropical storm in a span of two weeks – the first of which being a category-5 super typhoon that ran at wind speeds of 315 km/h. By the time *Ulysses* made its landfall, every sort of defense against the would-be rushing waters was exhausted. The earth had become soft from too much water, the dams were nearing their spilling points, and the trees couldn’t handle anymore. It was a set-up for disaster.

The aftermath was as expected, if not more. In the highly affected areas, houses, specifically the bungalow

ones, were quickly submerged by the flood-waters that had overflowed from nearby rivers. People had no choice but to sit on top of their roofs and hope for rescue. The askals did their best to swim to safety, and some other pets had been left in their cages or on their leashes by their owners and had died because of it – mummified by thick, dried mud.

However, the flooding didn’t stop there for the people in the Cagayan Valley region. Magat Dam, one of the largest dams in the Philippines, had gathered more water due to the typhoon and, as a result, was on the brink of spilling point. To avoid a dam failure, the management decided to open all seven of its floodgates to “release some steam”. It was as though *Ulysses* somehow turned around and thought it well to hit the region for a second time. The entirety of Cagayan Valley was seemingly wiped off from the face of the earth. What once showed houses in the middle of vast greenery became debris in the middle of murky waters.

Thankfully, dozens of people were there to help. Rescuers and volunteers bravely faced the rushing waters to reach the people stranded on the roofs of their houses. Those who were far from the place of the incident found other ways to help. Using social media giant, Facebook, many people posted and shared information containing rescue hotlines and evacuation shelters. Those who were in dire need of saving brought their situations to the platform – with many netizens using the hashtag #rescuePH to give more visibility to the posts (some even went as far as to call rescuers themselves). Even after the destruction, people formed groups and asked for monetary donations that will help the victims of the typhoon.

Typhoon *Ulysses*, much like its namesake, was a devastating tropical storm that had come in the most unfortunate of times. It ravaged parts of Luzon, leaving many people homeless or dead. Even through all these things, we see that some are more than willing to help the victims of such a calamity. Social media platforms can become places of communication and rescue when needed. It’s during these times when we must unite together to help one another. In unity there is strength.

*By God’s grace, Philippine Christian Gospel School organized Operation *Ulysses* in which parents, teaching and non-teaching staff, students, and alumni had an opportunity to help, be a blessing, and become bright lights during the not-so joyful holidays for families that had been badly affected by the typhoon. All in all, the cash gathered was over P100,000 with several boxes of canned sardines, beef loaf, and instant noodles. Indeed, God is faithful and when we’re given that perfect opportunity to be a helping hand whether small or big, let’s not hesitate to shine for God’s glory!

THE QUEEN'S GAMBIT

By: Renise Lim



The Queen's Gambit. Heard of it? If you're a chess player, you would know it as a pretty well-known chess opening that opens with the queen's pawn on d4. However, if you're on Netflix 24/7, you might have somehow come across a show titled, The Queen's Gambit, with a red-headed Anya Taylor-Joy gracing the cover.

Last October 23, Netflix released a limited series titled, The Queen's Gambit. An adaptation of the 1983 novel by Walter Tevis of the same name, the story follows an orphan girl named Beth Harmon on her rise to become the greatest chess player in the world all the while battling her drug and alcohol addiction. Since its release, the show has broken records and managed to become the most-watched scripted miniseries on the platform. Aside from the positive reviews the show got, it also managed to revive the public's interest in the game of chess.

The Queen's Gambit, in the game of chess, is an old yet aggressive opening that tries to gain the upper hand by sacrificing a pawn (hence the term 'gambit'). The opening starts with d4 followed by d5 and then c4 (note that in every chess match, the player with the white pieces is the first to make a move). Black can choose to take the c-pawn, however, this will put him at a disadvantage – which is why, more often than not, the position turns into one of many variations of the 'Queen's Gambit Declined'.



Here's a diagram showing the opening

In the series, however, our main character, Beth Harmon, isn't limited to only the aforementioned gambit. As black, she plays the Sicilian Defense – an aggressive, flexible, and often successful response to the e4 pawn opening. As you may have guessed from her choice of openings, it's clear that Beth is an aggressive yet flexible player – aggressive enough to scare her opponents during matches (it's the stare for me) all the while flexible enough to create lines, or plans in layman's term, whilst in the middle of a match.

Nonetheless, while these traits have their share of screen time in the show, the one that shines brightest is the fact that she is, first and foremost, a drug addict. I don't mean marijuana or cocaine or anything of that sort, I mean tranquilizer pills – as they're called in the series. The pills, which are green in color and said to be predecessors of anxiety treating drugs, allow Beth to relax and imagine a giant upside-down chessboard on her ceiling (you read that right). Through this, she is able to review her earlier matches on the giant chessboard and think up ways to avoid them the next time she plays. While this becomes a major plot point in the series, along with her alcohol addiction which comes in later, this is something I absolutely do not recommend you try.

With all that said, there's definitely more to The Queen's Gambit than the chess and addictions – there's also all the beautiful sceneries and gorgeous clothes. Oh, and also Thomas Brodie-Sangster. You don't have to be a fan of chess to enjoy this masterpiece of a show – you just need to watch it. Who knows? Maybe it'll intrigue you enough to learn chess and find comfort in a "world of just sixty-four squares".



NEW SYSTEM, STUDENTS

For sure, all schools have been struggling since the preparation of school year 2020-2021. Some were not even sure if they could operate, and some were striving if they could operate, and some were striving if they could obtain a permanent learning management system. Nevertheless, God is so good to Kian Kee amidst the many challenges! Even before the school year opened, teachers and students were assured that Kian Kee School Year 2020-2021 would unfurl its flag and is ready to continue to bring education to life. Truly, the pandemic affected so many establishments whether small or large badly, yet even in this uncertain age, PCGS welcomed a new set of students. **These new students are blessings and undeniably they are a gesture of God's faithfulness.** Let's take time to know them a bit and read their experiences so far in this new system.

Jhad Kynel Dyguani
(Grade 9 Courage)

My stay in PCGS so far is pretty cool and chill. The people are really friendly and very caring. I only have a few close friends, but I can see that they are good people. They are really kind towards me. I can also see that people always help one another and give another a time to enjoy. The Teachers are really caring and kind towards me. Some are strict, but I still appreciate them because they try to help us improve from any difficulty we are experiencing.



Carlos Israel Reyes
(Grade 7 Faith)

My stay in PCGS is going very well. I have made a lot of friends, and the lessons are easy and the way the teachers teach is very understandable. The students here are very kind and very helpful.



Lionel Jude Francisco
(Grade 11)

I really enjoyed studying in PCGS so far, and I couldn't wait to see my classmates and have fun with them.



Angela Ng
(Grade 11)

Staying in PCGS has been good. I got to meet new friends, learn new things and everything seems fine, and I was able to adjust very well. It's just a little bit stressing sometimes.



Moriah Luz Osmeña
(Grade 7 Hope)

I am liking it so far. I was able to make new friends. I also like the teachers because they are easy to understand.



Yamei Chen
(Grade 8 Joy)

So far, my stay in PCGS is fine. I am just new to everything especially that it is through online classes, and I am still trying to get used of the way the teachers discuss here since it is kind of different from my old school, but it is pretty much okay.



Precious Mae Yap
(Grade 11)

My stay in PCGS is very nice. The teachers and my classmates are really nice because they are really approachable to the new students, and the topics are nice as well. Sometimes it's difficult, but I might get used to it soon. I'm looking forward to know more about PCGS when the time comes that we meet one another face to face.



LITERARY PORTFOLIO



THE LION IN ME

By: Altair Genesis Boquia

He is a man who is always tempted to
Unravel his heart to the lion
Mane dipped with golden vanity
Indebted to its own vainglory
Lost in acts that show he's worthy
In everything, his pride saw fit
To show he was a true being of
Yes, to show he was above all of it
But in the end the man knew better
Even if it was difficult to do
And he trudged ahead and pet it
To lead it to the path to improve
Side by side, tame as a cat,
they trudged to the path to improve
Putting others ahead of him and
Reaching out to those in need
In these small acts of kindness, lie humble hearts freed
Deeds that show there's more room to grow and
Eventually calm the lion in me

LIFE MUST GO ON

By: Shebamyrh Alda

Life inside a prison
Is toxic like poison.
Time passes along with its season,
But yet you continue to live for a reason.
Persecutions, challenges, trials are constant
You want to flee but you are hesitant.
Fight for what is important,
But falls back because you are so reluctant.

Why is life so unfair?
When you think that you'd given all your share.
It would be better if you just jumped from the stair
When nobody around seemed to care.

Would it be better if we put an end
To this life that we can't comprehend?
No one to blame and continue to descend,
So chaselofty dreams just to blend.

But life must go on
Dressing up with all your brawn
Facing the pros and con
That is always set at yon.

You labor with all your might
Because you believe in your present plight.
That above all things we must continue to fight,
Through these darktimes there is a ray of light!

Don't put all your efforts into trash
Because there is no space to abash.
Stand tall and put that sash
So that hope may continue to splash!



FOLLOW THE LEADER!

By: Rhenelyn Chantavysouk

A man and his followers walked across a path, trudging it in hopes to find the city they started this quest for. His followers grumbled under their breath, muttering how this quest was for nothing and how they'd die in the deserted path. Only a few had hope, the leader's most trusted friends and himself. They remained silent, humbly following their leader without fail nor doubt as they walked through the Earth.

The leader was proud to have these men, those who were obedient to him and weren't arrogant enough to think they should be the leader of this quest. They valued their leader and never questioned his skills. He was glad to have them and they usually chatted with him more than the others who refused to acknowledge his presence and often went their own way.

When they crossed a marsh, there was an unusual bubbling in the swamp water. All of them saw it but they were divided in their beliefs. More than half urged them all to get to shore and escape and the lesser half followed the leader who said that they needed to hide behind the marsh trees.

"We are safer on shore!" They shouted against the leader.

"The bubbles may be something large, we need to hide in the trees, so we won't be easy prey on land," the leader tried to reason.

"On land we can fight it! We can also run out of its way when it tries to attack us!"

"Fighting won't be very good, we are all tired," a follower of the leader said.

"We are not tired! We will head to the shore and your little crew will go to the trees and get eaten."

"Come with us!" The leader urged gently. It was their last chance.

Of course, most of them didn't listen to the leader and scrambled to the shore quickly while he and his loyal followers slowly crept towards the trees and hid there.

From the swampy water emerged a giant toad, barnacles adorned on its back and vines on its head swinging around. A few lily pads were seen on its forehead too. It croaked loudly and bounced towards the shore, splashing mud water everywhere.

"We must save them!" The leader whispered.

Half of the group was shocked at his sudden urge to help the people who have abandoned him.

"Why? They have left you!"

"Because they are also my men, and a leader leaves no man behind," they all nodded at his answer. To be humble is to put others above himself, and he was doing just that. They were also loyal to him, so they followed his lead.

"What will we do, leader?"

"We will distract the toad, and the others must lead it back to the water. It seems the toad was only coming to land because they were very loud."

"Good plan sir."

"On my count, one, two, three!"

They ran out of their hiding spots and sprinted towards the ground. The group immediately split into two groups, the other yelling to grab the toad's attention and the others to try and lead the toad back to the swamp. The men who ran to the shore were cowering under the toad, shaking and shivering at the massive amphibian.

The men worked their plan quickly, ushering their fellow comrades away while the others lured the toad back to the swamp and its waters. It's successful, the toad went back to the swamp and everyone was safe.

"We see now that we should have listened to you," the men said to the leader who just smiled.

"I'm glad you learned your lesson, let us continue on our quest."

The leader and his men continued with their quest now much wiser, humbler, and more obedient. **To be obedient was to follow and to be humble was to surrender and think of the people around them instead of themselves.**

LUCINDA THE ORDINARY

By Shane Lee Lu

In an ordinary village there lived ordinary people. The same green grass, the indistinguishable dark gray clouds from the other days, the common scent of such gloomy world, and the predictable thoughts of the people. Amidst these plain characteristics, there was this girl who always stood out and apparently the reason was that she was separated from her world and she now stayed in the village where everyone else behaved differently. She didn't resemble any identical qualities with the people in the village. No one but only her could stay positive and smile a lot. Her name was Lucinda Guildenstern. She was a girl that had a heart full of love and so much more. Lucinda had a different point of view towards everything. When they hear birds chirping, she hears the birds singing, when the sun shines down on them, she sees the sun smiling brightly right at them, when they feel the wind blowing, she sees the trees dancing and while the wind blows, she hears the wind whistling to tell her *"it's gone be a good day again!"* Everyone told Lucinda that she didn't belong there.

"You are an outcast!" a villager screamed at her.

"You aren't supposed to be here!" a lawyer told her calmly.

"Go somewhere else you joyful weirdo!" said a blacksmith.

Lucinda knew that well. She knew that she didn't belong there and was hurt at times with what they had to say about her. She had a very strong will to go back to where she came from because where she was just didn't feel right at all. She tried to stay positive and happy even though they always insulted her for just being this type of girl. She was so confused. All she wanted to do was spread happiness, kindness, and love yet in return she got the opposite! She wanted to stop existing for a while, no she didn't want to die, she just wanted to finally feel peace and quiet. By and by, she changed her thoughts of negativity and prayed everyday to the Lord for one bright day in which there would no longer be grumpy people surrounding her.

One day, everyone suddenly looked a little more colorful, they looked a little happier and a little different! Lucinda closed her eyes to clear her mind; then, she saw the stars shining as she disappeared into thin air. She opened her eyes, and she was in a different world! She was home! She heard people singing with the birds. She saw everyone smiling back at the sun and saw everyone dancing with the trees. She saw colorful houses and beautiful smiles. Lucinda's smile became brighter than before. She could never imagine for this to happen. She sang, danced, and stayed where she rightfully belonged. Everyone around her was so similar yet so different! Lucinda went to look for her biological parents and eventually found them. And as they met face to face...

"Mom! Dad! I missed you! I never thought I'd see you again! Please don't leave me again!" Lucinda begged.

"Yes, my dear! I am so sorry! I didn't know what hapened! I tried

to find you all these years! But you found me! You are such strong little girl. You came back on your own. The love you have and give will truly last forever and will grow stronger," her mother shed some tears.

"We promise to be with you now and forever," her father standing beside her mother rubbed her shoulder.

One night, Lucinda looked out for shooting stars and about a million came flying by and she couldn't help but smile and say, *"Thank you Lord for putting me to where I belong. I will cherish this gift and forever put it in my heart and mind, and I will never forget this very moment that you have given to me. Amen."* She slowly closed her eyes and looked forward to the next day.

The next day Lucinda jumped around the streets of Corona, she waved and smiled at everyone. She was so happy to see everyone smiling and greeting her back! She couldn't help but give out the sweetest smile! Instead of birds she saw unicorns flying, instead of clouds she saw cotton candy, instead of rain-drops on the other side of the town she saw jellybeans! She was delighted to see a world full of color, smiles brighter than ever, and hearts beating gracefully. She didn't see what would displease her anymore, she saw what she wanted to see. Lucinda didn't think of any bad thing anymore, no more criticism about her happiness, no more judging about her kindness. They complained about her every move in the old world, but now she fit in very well.

She then thought to herself, *"I want to help those people change their minds and be open to this new world!"* Lucinda pulled up her kindness and mustered some courage to go back to that old village and invited everyone to her world.

It worked! They all followed her to the world of happiness! A world where everyone was different and where everyone saw hope and brightness! Lucinda felt the rush of her heartbeat. Feeling delighted, she was able to help the people that she thought would be helpless.



THE ONLY WAY TO BE HAPPY

By: Lyle Castro

Why is it important to have humility? And why are \ many people refusing to act such a way? Why is it so hard for them to practice it? Imagine that you are conversing with an atheist. After giving him evidence for the authenticity of the Christian worldview, he still says that he won't accept that. You ask yourself, "Why?" Then, you say, "Let me guess what you're thinking. Admitting the existence of God would annoy you profoundly, because there is something within you that is ultimately morally responsible towards Him, and the idea that you're responsible to Him is so agitating that you want to get away from it by denying His existence. And if there is no God, then every moral thing is subjective. That gives you a reason to say that you are the captain of your soul and of your destiny."

The idea of humility causes discomfort to many people. The reason why is that humility is closely related to morality. The paragraph above is an example of the underlying pride of an atheist. Atheists are not the only ones who do this, even some Christians act proudly. It is stated rather implicitly: "God, don't you tell me what to do with my life. I love sin, and it feels good." And then they go as far as denying God's existence. But is that practicable? The desire to be the captains of our destiny is quite attractive, yet it would lead to disaster. If you say, "I can do whatever I want," with no social boundaries then it, of course, is false. There are certain rules we have to follow; otherwise, we suffer the consequences. It is the same when it comes to God and his commands. The idea of us - creation made in the image of God- to elevate ourselves higher than the Creator is dishonoring to Him, and we shall suffer the consequences should we do so. You yourself become an idol, an object of value and worth higher than God.

A passage of Scripture that ought to humble us is Psalm 90. It talks about the unchanging and everlasting God (Psalm 90:2). And then it shifts to the frailty of our existence (Psalm 90:3-6). It then talks about the problem of our sin (Psalm 90:8), that none of our sins have been hidden from God. The next verses foreshadow the coming of Jesus Christ - the ultimate sacrifice for sins - by the One who is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in loving kindness. Until we realize that it is our hearts that are hard and deceitful, and that He is the only one who can make us new, we have no hope outside of ourselves. And the message of the gospel is that we need to humble ourselves, acknowledge that we cannot attain God's favor through our good works, and that only by the blood of the Lamb can we be redeemed. And with humility comes obedience - obedience to God's Word. You do not put your trust in Christ and then resume sinning - it is not a license or excuse to sin. Moreover, if you repent and trust in the Savior, your mind is renewed that you want to do good things as a child of the King. And your heart as well is changed - from one of stone to a heart of flesh (Ezekiel 36:26).

So, again, we ought to humble ourselves before God, because it is a misplaced position to value ourselves higher than God, given the fact that He is the Creator, and we are the creation. It is also that we are not independent that we can save ourselves from consequence, but that only He is the solution to our problem of sin. Moreover, the consequence of humbling ourselves before God is so that He will lift us up (James 4:10). Jesus also says that those who humble themselves shall be exalted (Matthew 23:12; Luke 14:11). **It turns out that the only way to be happy biblically is what you would least expect - to walk humbly with your God.**

A STEP DOWN

By: Lann

From measly shrubs to great oak trees
Both started from but little seeds.
Though eagles rule as flier's best
were fledgling birds from new-made nests.
But does the wood boast of his height
when from a seed he sprouts upright?
And eagles who are well aware
were helpless in their mothers' care?
Was God above, from Heaven high
Not born anew under our sky?
On Christmas day was his first breath
That he may suffer mortal death?
How great a God who would step down
And give up his immortal crown,
That he would meet us face to face
And bless us with abounding grace!
How humble we would have to be
To match our Father's majesty
When all we need for us to grow
That we may stand, we must bow low.

FAVORITE DESSERT

By: Kai Ong

The glint of accomplishments
you pile on yourself,
like icing that's too sweet;

people are picky, they don't like their cake
flavorless underneath.

Save some of the sugar & spice for when
they're digging in,

the taste is in that just-right slice of character within.

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ABOUNDING IN HOPE

Humility and Obedience



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