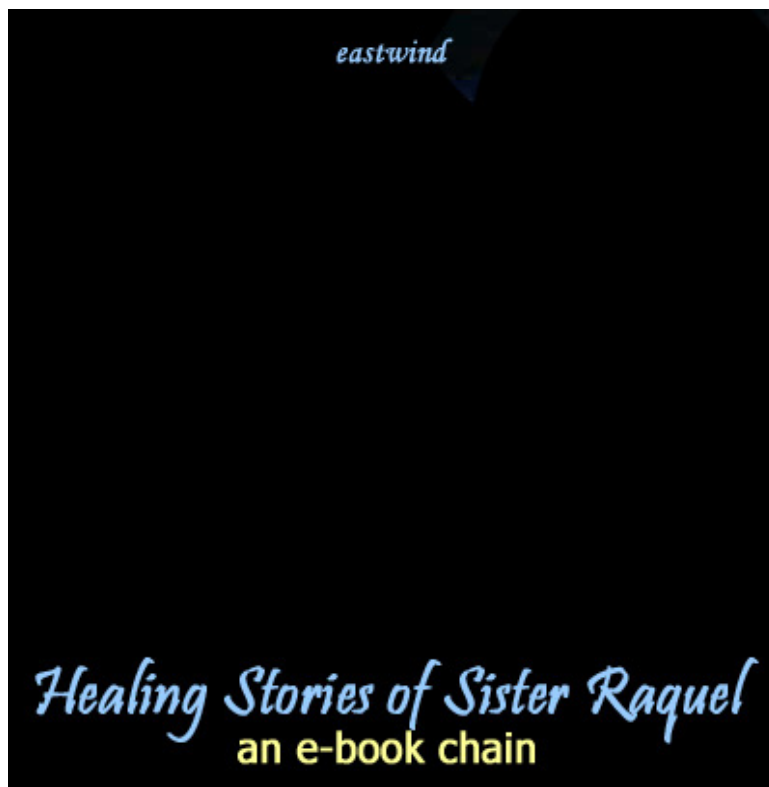




eastwind

*in the winters of our lives
You bring spring and thaw the icicles
of darkness and despair o Lord*



eastwind@edsamail.com.ph

*PLEASE PASS THIS FREE E-BOOK AROUND
SCATTER THE SEEDS OF HEALING
OF SISTER RAQUEL REODICA, RVM
IN THE NAME OF JESUS AND HIS MOTHER MARY*



The e-Book Chain

Pass it around by email

*For every privilege there is duty.
Your privilege is a free e-book,
food for your soul.
Your duty is simply to pass it on to others,
food for other souls,
part of your new e-apostolate.*

*No harm will befall you if you do not,
but the rewards are unimaginable if you do,
spiritual rewards from Him for Whom this book was written,
rewards which He knows mean a lot to you,
financial, physical, spiritual rewards, anything, only if you ask.*

*No man is an island.
We are all interconnected through our Lord Jesus Christ,
in our relationships,
in cyberspace or in the crowded streets of our lives.*

*To pass this on to your friends
is a precious gift to them and also to yourself
because the giver and receiver become one.*

*Imagine, if every reader passed on the e-book to 20 friends,
in a year it would perhaps reach a million people.*

The Lord reigns in cyberspace.

About the Author *eastwind*

Before embarking on a career in journalism, Bernardo V. Lopez, or Bernie to friends, pen-named *eastwind*, drifted through Europe and North Africa for 18 months, hitch-hiking 25,000 kilometers through 18 countries in the mid-70s. This opened his eyes and prepared him for a career in writing. Walking 80 kilometers for eight days from Lisbon to Fatima in Portugal in his pilgrimage, he discerned this book twenty years before it was to be written. He is proud to have a ‘doctorate in adventure’ even before his Masters in Communication Arts at the New York University in 1983. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Mathematics at the Ateneo de Manila University in 1966. His experiences in Europe will be published in an upcoming book *WINGS AND WANDERLUST, The Art of Discovering Yourself*.

As a career journalist, he was a columnist at the defunct *Manila Chronicle* for four years. As of this writing, and for the last five years or so, he has been a columnist at *Business World*. He writes freelance for the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* and *Philippine Star*. He has also written freelance in the past 18 years for various newspapers such as *Manila Bulletin*, *Manila Times*, *Malaya*, and *Mr & Ms Special Edition*.

Bernie is a professor and training consultant. He taught at the *Ateneo Graduate School of Business* and the *Asian Institute of Journalism*. He has given many training seminar-workshops to corporations and government agencies.

He is a freelance director-producer-scriptwriter of documentaries for television – for *Inside Story* of ABS-CBN under Loren Legarda, and for *Probe Team* of GMA7 under Luchie Cruz Valdez. He produced documentaries for Japanese television in partnership with Japanese independent film makers. He also makes corporate AVPs freelance. He specializes in coverage of Filipino tribal minorities and anthropological documentaries.

Other Eastwind Books

The Art of Discovering Yourself [publication pending, by end of 2006]

Prayer-Posters You Can Frame [2004, available by e-mail request]

foodforthesoul, A Meditation Book for Busy People [publication September 2006]

About The Book

This is a ‘healing book’, a collection of published articles written by *eastwind*. The healing stories were told to the author personally by those who were healed or by Sister Raquel Reodica, RVM, who is a bridge to the Lord’s healings of all types of terminal ailments, especially cancer. There are also testimonials of those who were healed.

This book also contains healing guide, directions and schedules of the Mother Ignacia Healing Ministry. For more inquiries on healing, send e-mail to eastwind@edsamail.com.ph (c/o author Bernie Lopez) or text by cellphone, for *Globe* – text ‘JESUSHEALS’ to 2355, for *Smart* – text ‘mytxt(space)JESUSHEALS’ to 211. You can also get a free subscription of **foodforthesoul** by email request. **foodforthesoul** gives weekly short keyboard prayer-poems and a meditation poster sent by email to thousands of subscribers, most of whom have visited Sister Raquel for healing. It also accommodates prayer requests which are sent to hundreds of prayer warriors.

Dedication

This book is written through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It is dedicated to Jesus, Lord of the universe, and Mother Mary, mediatrix, who are the ultimate authors, and who have guided my hand in writing.

For my family who had been my encouragement and inspiration – my wife Nene, and children Julius, Dee, and Roch. For those who were part of my formative years, my mother Rosella, my brothers and sisters Tony, Sheila, Balo, Joey, Ivy, Melo and their families.

For Sister Maria Raquel Reodica, RVM, who is the book's source of healing stories. For the RVM Mother General and members of the RVM congregation, for Weng Tabilog and the many volunteers and workers helping at the Mother Ignacia Healing Center, and for all those who made this book possible and helped in any way.

Finally, this book is for the many sick people who were healed spiritually and physically by the Lord through the hands of Sister Raquel, who found deliverance from suffering, and the path back to the Lord; and to the many more who are to be healed in the future.

*bernie lopez
eastwind*

Messages from Our Lady of Medjugorje

March 25, 1993

Dear children! Today like never before, I call you to pray for peace, for peace in your hearts, peace in your families and peace in the whole world, because Satan wants war, wants lack of peace, wants to destroy all which is good. Therefore, dear children, pray, pray, pray. Thank you for having responded to my call.

Hvaljen Isus i Marija. Kraljica Mira, moli za nas Medjugorje

On the Serbian wars.

Dear children! These years I have been calling you to pray, to live what I am telling you, but you are living my messages a little. You talk, but do not live, that is why little children, this war is lasting so long. I invite you to open yourselves to God and in your hearts to live with God, living the good and giving witness to my messages. I love you and wish to protect you from every evil, but you do not desire it. Dear children, I cannot help you if you do not live God's commandments, if you do not live the mass, if you do not give up sin. I invite you to be apostles of love and goodness. In this world of unrest give witness to God and God's love, and God will bless you and give you what you seek from Him. Thank you for having responded to my call.

Hvaljen Isus i Marija. Kraljica Mira, moli za nas Medjugorje.

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Information on the Mother Ignacia Healing Ministry

Address:

Mother Ignacia Healing Center,
857 Bagumbong Road, Novaliches,
Caloocan City, Metro-Manila, Philippines

Healing schedule:

Healing schedule is every Wednesday and Saturday, whole day, unless cancelled for special reasons such as out-of-town trips, or unless changed at a later time (see 'Further inquiries' below). **NO APPOINTMENTS ARE NECESSARY. NO APPOINTMENTS ARE ALLOWED** for other days. If you come on non-healing days, even if you come from Zamboanga City, you may not be attended to. Please understand that healers also need privacy and rest to regain healing energy. Please read the portion on healing guidelines.

Come as early as you want to register for one-on-one healing, first come first served. Healing session begins at about 9:30 am but you can register earlier. Bring towels and extra clothes if you want the option to join the healing bath, which may or may not be given. You can bring your own food, although there are modest canteen facilities inside and outside the healing center compound. For people who come from distant places, there are modest accommodations but they may be easily filled up. Inquire and make reservations when you visit or by email.

Further inquiries:

For changing schedules due to special circumstances, inquire further –

by e-mail: eastwind@edsamail.com.ph (c/o author Bernie Lopez)

if this email address is changed in the future or if your email bounces, use the backup email address eastwind_777@yahoo.com

by cellphone: Globe cellphones – text 'JESUSHEALS' to 2355

Smart cellphones – text 'mytxt(space)JESUSHEALS' to 211

As mentioned above, you can also get a free subscription of **foodforthesoul** by email request. **foodforthesoul** gives weekly short keyboard prayer-poems and a meditation poster sent by email to thousands of subscribers, most of whom have visited Sister Raquel for healing. It also accommodates prayer requests which are sent to hundreds of prayer warriors.

Directions:

If you get lost, ask around at the town center of Novaliches. Many people know where the healing center is.

BY CAR –

Option 1 – via EDSA clover leaf.

Go to EDSA CLOVER LEAF towards NORTH EXPRESSWAY. Turn right on

QUIRINO HIGHWAY before the expressway toll which goes to NOVALICHES. (continue below **)

Option 2 – via Mindanao Ave. and SM North.

From EDSA, coming from CUBAO, turn right on NORTH AVENUE at SM North. Turn left at the first traffic light on MINDANAO AVENUE. Go all the way to a busy traffic light after about four kilometers, turn right on QUIRINO AVENUE which goes to NOVALICES. (continue below **)

** Stick to QUIRINO AVENUE until you reach the center of Novaliches. You are at the center when there is an island separating the street and traffic is heavy. At the center, Quirino Highway turns to the right at the traffic light. Do not turn right. There is a MacDonald at the very front. Don't get confused. There are many MacDonalds before reaching the center but they are to the left or right. Take the small narrow street straight ahead at this traffic light, beside MacDonald called SUSANO ROAD. After one kilometer, the road forks before a Caltex station. Take the left to DEPARO ROAD, which zigzags for about five kilometers. When you start seeing rice fields instead of houses, you are at the edge of Novaliches. At a tricycle station with a small sign 'Villa Luisa', turn left on BAGUMBONG ROAD. After 200 meters, on the left side, there is a small sign of MOTHER IGNACIA HEALING CENTER, no. 857 Bagumbong Road.

Option 3 – via Fairview.

From FAIRVIEW, go to QUIRINO HIGHWAY one or two blocks before SM, which is on the left. Turn right on SABARTE ROAD after 2 to 3 blocks (there is a 7-11 convenient store and Little Caesar at this corner.) Go straight until another 7-11 on the right side. Here, turn left on CAMARIN ROAD. Go straight until the Caltex station on the right. Make a right at the Caltex Station to DEPARO ROAD, which zigzags for about five kilometers. When you start seeing rice fields instead of houses, you are at the edge of NOVALICHES. At a tricycle station with a small sign 'Villa Luisa', turn left on BAGUMBONG ROAD. After 200 meters, on the left side, there is a small sign of MOTHER IGNACIA HEALING CENTER, no. 857 Bagumbong Road.

COMMUTING BY BUS AND JEEPNEY –

At EDSA, take the bus with signboard 'NOVALICHES C-5' going towards Monumento. Be sure to take it before or at SM North because the bus will turn right from EDSA soon and will not go to Monumento. Tell the conductor to let you down at the center of NOVALICHES (*Bayan*). You will get down along the main QUIRINO HIGHWAY. Ask for the JEEPNEY TERMINAL FOR BAGUMBONG. It is along SUSANO ROAD, a small street beside MacDonald's. The jeepney terminal is on the left side as you walk from Quirino Highway. It is inside a vacant lot and not so obvious from the road. Take the jeepney with signboard 'Bagumbong Dulo'. Tell the driver to stop at the MOTHER IGNACIA, no. 857 Bagumbong Road. As mentioned, if you get lost, ask around. Many people, know where the healing center is.

Healing Testimonials

Reflections on Healing

by Sister Raquel Reodica, RVM

During the few years of my ministry as an instrument of Jesus for healing, I began to realize that, aside from physical poisons and genetic defects that cause diseases and physical and mental discomforts, there are also social and psychological poisons in our own homes and in society that pre-dispose us to illnesses by creating certain attitudes and feelings within us.

Heart disease, suicide, mental illness, or cancer can be correlated to psychological factors. We can even be disposed to accidents psychologically. Almost all, if not all sicknesses and bodily discomforts have psychological antecedents.

LIFE PATTERNS and ATTITUDES can predispose us to various types of diseases.

Some doctors I have met say many of them are now beginning to regard the emotional realities in the lives of their patients. They begin to look beyond the question of chemical poisons and consider the possibility of PSYCHOLOGICAL POISONS.

To go against lifelong emotional habits can be extremely difficult for most people. This is an advice that we have to give to the sick:

*relax and change your lifestyle
be more gentle to your self and to others
learn to love deeply*

Testimonials

These are testimonials received mostly by email to eastwind@edsamail.com.ph over a four year period.

Aug. 28, 2002

I am LETICIA M. LOCSIN, 69 years old and the Executive Editor of *BusinessWorld*, an English-language business newspaper published daily in Manila, Philippines. I am also the Chief Operating Office of the publishing company.

I am writing this to give testimony to the wondrous things that have happened to me since I started going to the Mother Ignacia Healing Center in Bagumbong, Kalookan.

In December of 1999, I was diagnosed to have breast cancer and had to undergo a mastectomy of my left breast on Dec. 11 of that year. The pathological results showed that I had 'Stage 2 Ductal Carcinoma'.

Two weeks after surgery, my wound had not dried up, due in large part to my diabetes. Thus it was that on January 1, 2000, I had to undergo a second operation – for what was clinically termed as 'Scar Revision'.

On the afternoon that I was released from hospital, I was feeling very depressed. When I arrived home, I went directly to my bedroom and reclined on the sofa. I closed my eyes but I knew I was not asleep. It was more like coming out of anesthesia. Anyway, I saw in the mind of my eye (but clearly enough to be sure of a presence) the figure of Mother Ignacia – in her black habit, arms outstretched and telling me ever so gently that I should take heart, that she would always be there for me and intercede for my recovery.

I opened my eyes at once. Of course, she wasn't there, but a faint scent of dama de noche pervaded the room. I was later told by Sister Raquel Reodica that dama de noche is, indeed, the scent of Mother Ignacia as the nuns themselves have come to know through her constant "visitations."

Two days later, after I felt sufficiently recovered from my second surgery, I went to the Healing Center and told Sister Raquel of my vision. She took me away from the crowds to the Healing Fountain in the Sanctuary, where she asked me to drink a glassful of water from the fountain. She filled the glass again and pulled me to a seat. She asked to see my wound. Then, without warning, she poured the water from the glass on the wound. I was panicky: I thought that the wound would surely be infected. Sister Raquel told me not to use anything to dry the wound but instead allow it to dry on its own.

I did as instructed and went to sleep that night with the wound area still damp. At about three in the morning, I was awakened by the feeling of floating on water. I felt my beddings: they were all wet. I called for my nursemaid and asked her to see what was the matter. She panicked and suggested that we go to hospital. Strangely enough, I was calm. I was feeling no pain in the area of the wound or anywhere else. And I was not running a fever.

Upon closer scrutiny, Menggay, my nursemaid, saw that water was oozing out of the wound, icy cold water. It was not bloody or yellow with pus. And it did not have a putrid smell.

I promised Menggay that we would go to hospital in the morning if the emissions would not stop. I had a fresh change of bedclothes and linens and went promptly to sleep.

Everything was dry in the morning; there was no need to go to hospital. Besides, I was

scheduled to see my doctor two days later to have the wound dressed. When she peeled off the gauze covering the wound, Dr. Diana Cua, breast surgeon at the Makati Medical Center, was surprised. The wound was dry. She said the sutures could be removed in two days and I would then be referred to an oncologist for further treatment.

The oncologist, Dr. Priscilla B. Caguioa, of the St. Luke's Hospital staff, instructed me to go through four tests: (1) complete blood count, (2) an ultrasound examination of my liver, pancreas and gall bladder and (3) a bone scan, to include my kidney and (4) chest pa. Once again, I hastened to see Sister Raquel and asked her to pray that my tests would not bear negative results; and that, additionally, I would not have to undergo chemotherapy. Sister Raquel told me we were both going to ask the Lord for total healing, not bother Him with piecemeal requests.

On the roadside leaving the Healing Center, I noticed a sign which read Chuck Cheme. I do not know what their business was, but to me it could only mean a sign that God had heard our prayers. It meant I was to chuck or do away with chemo.

True enough, in a week's time the results were all in and I was declared free of recurrence or metastasis. I told Dr. Caguioa that the idea of chemo filled me with dread and she assured me that she would not prescribe the treatment for me since all the signs showed I could do without it. She prescribed *Tamoxifen* daily for five years and I have had a blood checkup every six months since then.

I feel in my heart that I have been cured of my cancer, that the Lord, through the intercession of the Virgin Mary and Mother Ignacia, has granted me total healing. I make it a point to go to the Healing Center every week to pray with and be prayed-over by the nuns there – Sister Raquel, Sister Gloria Ross and Sister Rosita Fernandez, in particular. Through them I have found serenity beyond my expectations. I have experienced a deep awakening of faith in God; and I am more aware of the sufferings of others, especially those – and there are thousands of them – who frequent Mother Ignacia's Sanctuary for healing. Letty Locsin

Dear Sister Raquel.

Praise the Goodness of the LORD!

Truly no one can predict GOD's mighty power. I myself had felt the healing hand of the LORD. Yesterday I received the document containing the directions to your place and the three published articles about you. Instead of reading it on the computer, my Tita Edna told me to print it because it was quite long, and so I did. Tita browsed through the articles but did not have the chance to read it because we were about to leave for the mall with my sister and cousin.

When I returned home, the first thing on my mind was to read the articles. So I rushed to the room but before reading it, I had first to massage my back because the pain was there again. And so, I finally got to read it. In the first few lines, I immediately felt shivers all over my body. Then after the Hail Mary, I read the lines:

"HEALING IS BETWEEN THE LORD AND THE SICK. SISTER RAQUEL IS ONLY A BRIDGE. PREPARATION FOR HEALING MEANS SPIRITUAL CLEANSING, WHICH INCLUDES FORGIVING ALL WHO HAVE OFFENDED YOU, BEING SORRY FOR THE PAST SINS THAT HAVE OFFENDED THE SACRED HEART".

I felt the pain on my left thigh down to my toes. I paused and examined my heart and recalled the things and the people who have caused me pain in the past, and then in a loud voice, I said that I forgive them all! Then something "*nakakakilabot*" (strange) happened. I felt a strong pulse on the nerve on my left forehead, and my heart started pounding stronger by the minute. I felt the blood flowing through my left thigh, down to my toes.

Then the pain suddenly vanished. Tears started to flow from my eyes and I started crying. I was healed. The LORD touched me and took away the pain from my system. I continued reading, and, at the end of each testimony, I burst into tears and kept on thanking God for His goodness. After reading the last line, I decided to follow it up with a rosary as my thanksgiving for the miracle that I have experienced. It is really the 'miracle of the article'. God made use of the article so that I could be healed spiritually, and eventually physically! I thank you, Sister Raquel, for the prayers and the enlightenment you have brought to my life. Thank you again. May God continue to use you as His bridge to bring us back to Him.

We will attend your healing session together with my mom and Tita Edna this coming Wednesday. See you there! GOD BLESS YOU! Truly yours, Ryan E.

A true story told to Sister Raquel

I had a tumor at the base of my skull. The pain was so excruciating beyond tolerance, as if a sledge hammer was pulverizing my brain. I could no longer see or read. I needed to be supported to walk. I am the only bread winner for my children. What will become of me, Lord? I came to the healing center the evening before the healing session. I slept in the nipa hut and prayed – Lord I leave it all up to you. My only request is i live day by day. I refuse to be operated. The risk is too great, yet there is a big chance I will become a vegetable. But I needed to be operated on, otherwise I would become blind forever. Lord, be my doctor and operate on me. I never lose hope on You, never – not in my deepest darkness. You are here with me.

Now, You have healed me totally instantly, Lord of the universe. You changed my darkness to blinding light. How can I begin to thank you. I feel no more pain Lord. You have made me whole once more. You have brought me close to You by making me sick. What power and gentleness You have. Why is it so easy to receive your healing grace? Who are You really? Your servant.

Dear Sister Raquel,

My sister Clarita has cancer in her neck. It has been there for the last ten years. We brought her to the doctors and she was treated with cobalt and chemotherapy. Her doctor gave her last chemotherapy a few months ago. *Lumalaki na ang kanyang bukol parang holen.* (Her lump is growing to the size of a marble.) Only a miracle can cure her. Last Sunday, I read in the Inquirer about you. I cut the article to let others read it.

Last night, *ang ginawa ng kapatid ko, nilagay niya sa leeg ang ginupit na **section** at nagdasal siya.* (my brother placed the cut article on the neck and prayed.) Amazingly, *kinabukasan, hindi na masakit ang kanyang leeg at medyo hindi na gaanong mapula ang bukol* (next day, the pain

in her neck was gone and the lump was no longer reddish). *Laging umaasa* (always hoping), Robert T.

My miraculous healing.

I, Yolanda S. Espedido, married to Antonio R. Espedido, testify that I was healed of Parkinson's disease and microaneurysm through the intercession of Mama Mary and Mother Ignacia del Espiritu Santo. I am a diabetic and, as such, Dr. Augusto D. Litonjua, who is my doctor, instructed me to consult an ophthalmologist for fundus evaluation for hemorrhages and microaneurysms within the inferior vascular arcade. (In layman terms, a tiny bleeding in the eye.)

Based on the above instruction, I went to see and consulted Dr. Eunice Monica R. Batac on September 10, 2000. She made a thorough examination and submitted a report to Dr. Litonjua of her findings that I had sclerosis cataracts in both eyes. The dilated examination of the fundus showed microaneurysms and hemorrhages within the inferior arcade of the left eye.

Sometime in June 2001, my youngest sister, Filipinas S. Litonjua, who had cancer of the colon, mentioned the healing center of Mother Ignacia in Bagumbong, Novaliches, Caloocan City. Because of her condition, we decided to go to the healing center. There, we met Sister Ma. Rosita Fernandez, who interviewed us and listed our names in her record book. After the interview, she referred us to Sister Raquel, who gave us a wait-list number. She later prayed over us. Our concentration was on my sister Filipinas as she was then scheduled for operation. She was subsequently operated on July 3, 2001. However, I continued going to the Mother Ignacia Healing Center. I was prayed-over twice, July 7 and 14, 2001, by Sister Raquel. During that time, my two hands were shaking (due to Parkinson's disease). After every session with her, I felt at peace and relaxed. Sister Raquel taught me how to pray and on July 18th, I noticed that the shaking of my hands stopped, and I could now use both of them. Thank you Lord!

On August 18, 2001, I was prayed-over again by Sister Raquel. I also had a one-on-one talk with Sister Rosita. It was a very enlightening talk, and I learned a lot from her. On August 25, 2001, Sister Gloria Ross prayed over me. Her prayers gave me so much peace and comfort. Then, on September 2, 2001, I consulted Dr. Batac, who again made some tests and a thorough examination of my eyes. After evaluating the results, she informed me that it was now clear and the microaneurysm and hemorrhage seen on two previous visits in my left eye had vanished.

I have many other ailments such as diabetes, bone tumor on my forehead, and varicose veins on my legs, which I believe and continue to pray, Jesus the Healer, through the intercession of Mama Mary and Mother Ignacia, will also heal.

Praise and thank you, Jesus, that you have healed me. Yolanda S. Espedido

Excerpt from the letter of Dr. Batac to Dr. Augusto D. Litonjua
Internal Medicine – Endocrinology, Makati Medica Centre
6 September 2001

There was no note of hemorrhages or exudates. The microaneurysm / dot hemorrhage seen along the inferior vascular arcade of the left eye on two previous visits was not noted at this time. Dr. Eunice Monica Batac, Healthway Medical Clinics, Alabang

18 October 2001

Dear Sister Raquel,

Good day. Greetings in the wonderful name of Jesus. Sister, I'm not taking my medicine. Instead, I just go to church and receive the body of Christ daily as my maintenance medicine, which now heals my brain tumor. Thanks and more power to your healing. God's love, Regina Francisco

6 November 2001

Dear Sister Raquel,

My husband Ansel III has end stage renal disease and is therefore on dialysis three times a week. He also has polycystic liver. My main recourse nowadays is PRAYER. *Kung minsan nga Sister, pudpod na ang daliri ko at gasgas na ang dila ko sa kakadasal* (Sometimes my fingers and tongue grow numb from praying). I still have faith in Him that He will give my husband a new lease on life. Ching Roman

22 October 2001

Dear Sister Raquel,

I have a lump in my throat. I take Chinese medicine and DXN Ganoderma mushroom capsules. I go daily to Holy Mass for Eucharistic healing. The handkerchief you blessed which Mides Buensalido gave to my Sister Teresita, I tie around my throat when I pray my rosary every morning. The lump is slowly getting smaller. I pray the lump will be completely gone and I will be totally healed in God's grace and mercy. God bless. Yours in Christ, Antonio Sonido

May 1 2006

Dear Bernie, Six months ago, I wrote you asking for prayers since I was diagnosed with cancer. Praise the Lord, the cancer cells have disappeared after chemotherapy. Thank you very much for your support and prayers. I know you sent out the request to your prayer warriors. Keep up the good work that you are doing. You are an instrument of God. Sincerely, Marilyn Bengzon St-Pierre.

Hi Brother Bernie, Gel here.

Had received already the disc with gratefulness in my heart! Brother I will try all the best I can to be also one of the instruments to have this circulated around. Please do pray for me as I have a big financial crisis right now. In as much as I wanted to fly there to place my wallet in the altar

to help me pay all my debts off, my work won't allow me to. I do pray this email request will help me get through this crisis with the help of my faith. My favorite verse in the bible is "MARK 11:24: Whatsoever your heart desires, believe and never doubt in your heart that you will receive it and you will receive it". God bless you! Gel Alo.

Dear Brother Bernie, Good Day! First of all I would like to thank you for sending me a beautiful message through foodforthesoul. It helps me a lot and it is one of the things that change my life. Everytime I read it, I feel that I closer to the Lord. I hope that it helps others also the way it helps me. God Bless. Ghie Melliza.

Dear Bernie,

I printed the literature you sent on your first message and we both read them. I could only tell you how helpful they are already. From what we learned from them, it seems that a spiritual healing from within ourselves should transpire before we can speak with Sr. Raquel. So in a way, it will give us time to prepare, especially my husband.

Personally, upon reading the testimonials, I was seized by some great emotion to rectify some relationships that were severed in the past. **I immediately wrote down letters of reconciliation. It didn't matter who did what to whom or that most of them were not my own doing. What matters most is the humility to reach out and bridge the gap.** Somehow, one have already responded favorably. My husband also had some reckoning of his own. Mostly pain from tragic and sad incidents that have marred his life. **If its true what Sr. Raquel said that most sickness and diseases are borne out from psychological pain, then that must be the source of our illnesses, esp. my husband.** From childhood he suffered from severe asthma. At the moment, he is having a major flare-up with his ulcerative colitis, along with it, serious complications. He lost both parents, separately, in tragic circumstances. We went through years of infertility and now our son has a fatal peanut allergy. Lots of curve balls, if I may say so. After more than a decade of marriage, it is only now that I learned that my husband has some "tampo" with Jesus. Anyways, thank you for the prayers and the testimonials you've sent us. If I may ask, may I share those with others? Thanks and God Bless! Genevieve.

Bro. Bernie,

Good day! This is to say Thank You to Our Father Almighty, to all the people who helped us pray for my dad and to Sister Raquel. If you recall, you said you've never known of anyone cured thru e-mail... well, I in behalf of my family would attest that even thru e-mail, thru the articles you've sent my dad is now on his way to recovery.

The day i received your messages was Thursday, the day before the scheduled operation of daddy. As you've instructed, let my dad read all the articles. But due to his condition, I just read it aloud, with the whole family holding hands...in a circle hand in hand.... dad and

everybody listened as I read. A few hours after, the doctor called off the operation because of some abnormalities in his medical exam. Last minute the doctor decided to postpone the operation for Monday, 18th of November. My sisters and I felt somewhat happy... We don't know why...But later we figured it out that God had his purpose in postponing the operation. We believe so because that Thursday, dad was not in a good mood. He was sad, silent and in deep thought. I presume he was nervous too..... So...Friday, Saturday the articles were on his leg/hip that was to be operated...Amazingly, one early morning, my sister was surprised to see him sitting..of course with difficulty ..But that was a surprise because he was always lying in bed and would complain of the pain when he would sit..... Also since he had emphysema, he had a hard expectorating.... So I told my sister to put the articles on his chest... Again, the day before the operation, he was A okey....in high spirits and was ready to undergo the knife....Today, he's now in his regular room, recovering, trying to get back to normal... We know that it will take a longer time before he gets up and about...

But we believe that OUR FATHER, thru JESUS AND THRU THE INTERCESSIONS OF MAMA MARY AND SISTER RAQUEL, our prayers have been heard and that daddy will be home with us one of these days...Thank you Bro. Bernie... I know thank you is not enough but prayers are our only way of saying thank you....We hope one of these days, when everything's A okey, we could personally go th SISTER RAQUEL. God Bless. Jojo A.

I believe that even if i couldn't go and visit sis. reodica i am being healed of my ailment with my esophagus. i am getting a second opinion as my acid reflux due to my dysfunctional esophagus is not getting better despite medication. if the esophagus gets eroded it could turn to cancer. but as i read your words today, i know, i believe i am healed. AMEN..... Jin.

Sister Raquel and all the other gentle people of eastwind---chalking up four years of helping others, in your own fashion trying to alleviate the misery of the world, is a milestone, indeed. maligayang bati sa inyong lahat! praise GOD, thank you all and Him! Gloria

Healing Guidelines

Prayer for Healing and Rebirth

by Sister Raquel Reodica, RVM

At 8:00 a.m. every morning, find a quiet place. Attune your spirit to Jesus through His blessed Mother Mary. Read slowly with your heart this prayer. Express silently your deep desire for complete healing. This is your one-on-one prayer with Jesus.

Our Father in heaven, Creator of my body, wherein I (state your name) dwell and through which I live, make me realize in the name of JESUS that my present bodily ailment is a result of my own sins, my wrong doings, my wrong thinking, my transgressions against Your laws.

I ask forgiveness, Jesus, for these wrong doings, and promise to change my ways. Make me realize, in the name of JESUS, that Your creative power, which fashioned my body, is still in me, in my consciousness, in my mind, ready to serve me at any time of need. Make me realize that I, in my free will, now have control over this creative power within me which I can direct to act for my own well being, but only if my thoughts and feelings are attuned to You. In full realization of this, I NOW CALL UPON YOUR CREATIVE POWER within me, O Lord God, in Jesus' name, to correct and eliminate any and all my bodily imperfections and diseases and discomforts.

I KNOW AND EXPECT THAT MY REBIRTH IS NOW ACTIVELY TAKING PLACE WITHIN ME because of Your creative love and mercy, and Your healing grace in my every cell and nerve and gland and tissue and fiber and organ, especially my: (state any or all sicknesses). In accordance with my vision and my active FAITH IN YOU, MY ALMIGHTY GOD, CREATOR AND LORD, IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF MOTHER MARY, through the intercessions of MOTHER IGNACIA DEL ESPIRITU SANTO and all Your saints, I am healed. Amen. Amen. Amen.

After praying, remain in silence for 15 to 20 minutes in the presence of the Lord, and in meditation of receiving His healing.

Preparations for Healing

eastwind

First of all, healing is between you and the Lord. Sister Raquel, holy water, blessed towels, or any other medium are just tools of the Lord for healing you. They do not heal by themselves but are ‘bridges’ of the Lord to you. Sister Raquel does not have the power to heal, only the Lord through her.

Without spiritual preparation and spiritual transformation, there can be no healing. Healing cannot happen in a snap or a simple pray-over. It is not like turning a switch off and on. It involves a spiritual process. The person to be healed must undergo a SPIRITUAL CLEANSING prior to healing. Spiritual healing precedes physical healing. Return first to the Lord and submit to Him your entire being so He can heal you. People who were healed by Sister Raquel all speak about the change in their lives, the loss of impatience and sudden anger, the goodwill for people, and most

especially the consequent inner peace derived from this spiritual transformation or cleansing. Here are simple guideline from Sister Raquel –

*pray and meditate often
talk to Jesus in a casual conversation
He is beside you more than you know*

*pause for a moment and think of your past sins
whom did you hurt or exploit or maltreat
a housemaid, a friend, a spouse, your children?
whom can you not forgive for things they did to you?
without forgiveness it is hard to be healed
even with all the prayers and healing visits you make
ask for forgiveness for injustice and hurt you have done to others
and forgive others who have hurt you no matter how serious
resolve to correct your sinful ways*

*resolve not to be cranky or impatient with people
especially small people such as maids, drivers, workers
help and give to others according to your capacity especially the poor
do not just give money or material items
give yourself, your goodwill, and your time no matter how busy you are*

*only then can you ask the Lord to heal you
when you are spiritually clean
once you are pleasing to the Lord
your healing is already in process
as soon as you begin to pray and ask Him for healing
invoke the intercession of Mother Mary, St. Joseph, and Mother Ignacia*

Another form of preparation is to read the stories of how others have been healed in the chapters of this book, or the testimonials at the start of the book. Reading these healing stories is already a form of prayer and meditation in the presence of the Lord because you begin to understand how He healed others and can do the same for you. If you have someone who needs healing but cannot read this book, read it to him or her aloud.

Long Distance Healing

There is nothing better than the physical presence of the sick to receive healing energy from the hands of Sister Raquel personally. However, if it is the last resort and the sick is desperate, then this

option can be considered.

If someone is too sick or too far to come to the healing center, there is such a thing as 'long distance healing' either by telephone or by proxy. Healing by telephone is discouraged as it is difficult for Sister Raquel to convey healing energy at great distances. It does not always work. Also, she does not give her telephone to the public or in announcements as she might be flooded by calls the whole day. Also, in an appointment call, it is hard to synchronize the exact time when one should call. You have to send an emissary to the healing center and talk personally to Sister Raquel and request for her telephone so she can talk directly to the sick. The healing can be done through landline or cellphone calls. In some cases, she may refuse healing by telephone for personal reasons. Long distance healing by telephone from anywhere in the world is possible. Sister Raquel has a cellphone but only through an assistant. It is not given here or announced because she may be flooded with calls. You have to ask for it personally when you are at the healing center, and not pass it on to others.

Long distance healing by proxy is easier and more practical. A relative or close friend of the sick acting as proxy can come to the healing center and be prayed-over by Sister Raquel in behalf of the sick who may be in a distant place. In this case, both proxy and the sick must be spiritually prepared for healing. It is better that the sick also talk to Sister Raquel over the telephone during proxy healing, if this is possible. If not, the sick must at least know that the pray-over is in progress so he or she can pray with both proxy and Sister Raquel. A simple telephone call by landline or cellphone can do this, or a pre-determined time can be agreed upon. If Sister Raquel is far from the landline at the healing center, cellphone is more practical.

There have been a few rare testimonies of people who were healed by simply placing the news article about Sister Raquel or even e-mail printout of the same articles on the part of the body which has an ailment. Please read the e-mail testimonial in this book. It must be clarified that it is not the article or printout that heals but the Lord together with the faith and resolve of the sick person in the presence of the healing Lord.

Introduction

History of Sister Raquel's Gift of Healing

*my thoughts are not your thoughts
my ways are not your ways
as high as the heavens are above the earth
so are my ways above your ways
and my thoughts above your thoughts*

*for just as from the heavens
the rain and snow come down
and do not return until they have watered the earth
making it fertile and fruitful
to give seed to him who sows and bread to him who labor
so shall My Word*

isaiah 55:1-11

Before we begin with the book proper, it is good to give a short history of the healing power that Sister Maria Raquel Reodica, RVM, has received from the Lord. RVM refers to the Catholic religious congregation of women called the **Religious of the Virgin Mary**.

Back in June 1991, right after the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo, when Sister Raquel did not have healing powers yet, a Filipino woman, a visionary, approached her. The visionary said that she will soon receive healing power from the Lord. Sister Raquel brushed off the idea with a laugh. She said who was she to get such a gift. Whether the visionary's words were true or not is not the contention of this book. This book merely recounts a story told by Sister Raquel herself. It is up to the reader to believe the words of the visionary or not.

The visionary instructed her to go to Botolan, Zambales, a remote village at the foot of Mt. Pinatubo in the province of Zambales. There, the visionary said Sister Raquel was supposed to pray to Our Lady and 'pick her up'. In Botolan, a six-foot statue of Our Lady made of cement fell to the ground, half buried in ash because of the violent Mt. Pinatubo eruption. Twenty odd men tried to put the statue upright but they could not. The statue was just too heavy.

When Sister Raquel finally went to Botolan, she prayed to Our Lady for guidance concerning the words of the visionary. She was thinking what the visionary meant when she said she was supposed to 'pick up Our Lady'. When she reached Botolan, she asked the people where the statue of the Lady could be found. The people said that a military helicopter was requested by the local government to move the statue to higher ground. The pilot scratched his head, saying the helicopter was not powerful enough to lift such a heavy cement statue. Everyone asked him anyway to try. So he did. Like a feather, the helicopter lifted the statue with ease. The pilot later reported that he was surprised that the helicopter instruments registered that the statue had a weight of 'zero'. This author could not verify the story from the pilot himself, and simply reports this story as told by the local government and by Sister Raquel. And so Sister Raquel did 'pick up' Our Lady there. The statue was named *Ina Poong Bato*, or Mother Poong Bato. A replica stands at the Mother Ignacia

Healing Center, donated by the local government.

Sister Raquel believes that it was from *Ina Poong Bato* that she received her healing power. For in a few days, the Lord was able to heal the sick through her hands. In fact, she told the story of how she prayed to stop a second eruption of Mt. Pinatubo. Refer to Chapter 16.

It is hard to take the word of an unknown and self-proclaimed visionary casually because he or she may be an instrument of the devil rather than the Lord. Who are we to know? One has to be extremely careful. As of this writing, there were about eight visionaries who have talked to Sister Raquel.

In all cases, their predictions were considered but there was always room for doubt. For Sister Raquel, they may or may not happen. She believes strongly that the hand of the Lord is her final and absolute guide in all these. It is His will which will finally prevail, not the words of visionaries. So let it be, she says. If she is an instrument of the Lord, the Lord will make ways to make it so in His time and in His way. So Sister Raquel is never worried, even though she proceeds always with caution.

A French lady came from Paris, looked everywhere for her for a whole month, and found her 'accidentally' at the RVM headquarters in Cubao, Quezon City. She said Sister Raquel would one day be involved in 'global evangelization', whatever that meant. Another visionary predicted that one day she would receive the gift of prophecy.

As the author of this book, to whom Sister Raquel has recounted hundreds of stories, I believe Sister Raquel's healing power is related to a cataclysm, namely the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo. And the gift of prophecy, if it will indeed be hers, may be a third eye to see future cataclysms in order to give a message to Mankind, the same message of the Bible throughout the Old and New Testaments, the same message of all the Marian apparitions of 450 years or almost half a millennium, from Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mexico in 1531 to Our Lady of Medjugorje, Yugoslavia in 1981.

This message is really so short and so simple, a child cannot miss it, namely, pray, return to the Lord, repent from sins in order to receive His blessings and avoid His wrath and punishment. Cataclysms were in many biblical events as much as they are today, just like Pinatubo. It is really the combination of the theology of fear and love, of punishment and salvation. Since the time of Abraham and Moses, this message has always be the same. It is also the message of the healings of Sister Raquel. Every terminal cancer she heals has the same message as the Bible, return to the Lord and be blessed. Healing is a product of conversion, of returning to the Lord.

And so, after Pinatubo, Sister Raquel was swept into a whirlwind of healing beyond her imagination. The Lord has healed thousands, many of terminal diseases, cancer of the brain, breast, bone, leukemia, lupus, even leprosy through the hands of Sister Raquel. The Lord has healed the blind and the deaf through her intercession. It is their stories, not Sister Raquel's. The stories in this book are simply their testimonies.

After her first healings, her fame spread like wildfire. She conducted healing missions in 10 countries around the world in the next four years, Spain, France, Taiwan, Thailand, Hongkong, Italy, Canada, United States, Japan, and England. In 1992, she covered five countries in three months. Her second and third trips were in 1993 and 1995. Filipinos from California to New York flocked to her.

She was swept into the violent vortex of media coverage, interviewed by radio, television, and the press. Thousands came to her for help. She was offered her own radio and television program, but she refused, not knowing if she was ready for such a high-profile lifestyle.

After a few years, the frenzy died down. After the storm was the lull. Sister Raquel settled in a quiet remote place. She became the superior of the RVM-run **Mother Ignacia Retreat House** in Novaliches, Caloocan City. Occasionally, some people came for healing, but the storm had left and the big crowds had vanished.

On September 8, 2000, on the birthday of Our Lady, an article written by the author of this book was published in the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, entitled *You can see forever*, in Pilipino, *Tanaw mo ang walang hanggan*, which is the story of Chapter One in this book.

After that article came out, the second storm in Sister's life came. Like a deluge after the drought, many came to Sister Raquel once more, some from as far as Davao and Taipei. When the article came out, the telephone rang the whole day. Suddenly, the big crowds came to the once-quiet Novaliches retreat house.

The focus of this book is not so much on Sister Raquel but on her healings as the hand of the Lord. Her hands, as she explains, are not hers but the Lord's. This book is about the Lord, who is called 'the hound of heaven', not so much about Sister Raquel. His voice echoes through the wilderness, through the dark dungeons of human life, seeking souls for salvation, which are lost in the spiritual wastelands of modern civilization. This book is a collection of published articles on the healings of Sister Raquel, and the testimonies of those who were healed.

History of Mother Ignacia and the RVM
by Sister Maria Anicia Co, RVM

*the Christ of love and mercy
is the Christ of fear and punishment
He is the gentle storm
and the violent breeze*

*He jolts us in our indifference
soothes us in our despair
He is the lull and the storm
He greens our pastures that He will burn*

*He makes us see in our blindness
yet He blinds us to make us see
He gives wisdom and healing
through anguish and pain*

eastwind

The mustard seed that Jesus talks about in the Bible is so small, you can hardly see it. Mother Ignacia del Espiritu Santo planted that seed in 1684, more than three centuries ago, and today, that tiny seed has grown into a gigantic tree spreading its branches across the entire Philippine archipelago. That tree is the **Religious of the Virgin Mary** or RVM. The few primary sources and historical documents available yield enough information to reconstruct the story of Mother Ignacia and the community she founded.

Mother Ignacia was born during the Spanish colonial era in the Philippines. The precise date of her birth is not known. Her baptismal record mentions only the date of her baptism, March 4, 1663. This confirms the statement of Pedro Murillo Velarde, who later wrote about Mother Ignacia, that she was 21 years old in 1684. Ignacia was the sole surviving child of Maria Jeronima, a Filipina, and Jusepe Iuco, a Chinese immigrant from Amoy, China, who was converted to the Catholic faith in 1652 and resided in Binondo, Manila.

When Ignacia was 21 years old, her parents wanted her to marry. Heeding a call deep within her but not wanting to disappoint her parents, Ignacia sought counsel from Fr. Paul Klein, S.J., a Jesuit priest from Bohemia, who arrived in Manila in 1682. She underwent the **Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius**, a Jesuit retreat of prayer and meditation, under Fr. Klein. After this period of solitude and prayer, Ignacia decided to 'remain in the service of the Divine Majesty' and to 'live by the sweat of her face'. She left home and brought with her nothing but a needle and a pair of scissors. She started to live alone in the house located at the back of the Jesuit College of Manila.

Her life of prayer and labor attracted other Filipino women who also felt called to the religious life but could not be admitted into other existing congregations. Mother Ignacia accepted these women into her company and the first community was born. They became known as the *Beatas de la Compania de Jesus* (religious novices of the company of Jesus), since they frequently received the sacraments at the **Church of St. Ignatius**, performed many acts of devotion there, and

had the Jesuit fathers for their spiritual directors and confessors.

Mother Ignacia centered her life on the sufferings of Christ and tried to imitate Him through a life of service and humility. She conducted a life of prayer and penance as a way to the Lord. Her spirituality of humble service was expressed in her capacity to forgive, to bear wrongs patiently and to correct others with gentleness and meekness. This type of spirituality fostered peace and harmony in the community, love and care for each other, and the commonness of heart, which became a witness to the love of Christ and the maternal care of the Blessed Mother.

This spirituality sustained the *beatas* in their moments of difficulties, especially during times of extreme poverty, when they had to beg for rice and salt, and scour the streets for firewood. The *beatas* continued to support themselves by the labor of their hands, and sometimes received some financial help from pious people. In all these, they did not cease to thank God and to trust in divine providence.

The growing number of *beatas* called for a more stable lifestyle and a set of rules. A daily schedule was drawn up and community practices were defined. Following the spirit of St. Ignatius, Mother Ignacia exhorted her *beatas* to live always in the presence of God and to develop great purity of heart. She emphasized charity in the community, which was dedicated to the Blessed Mother. The spirit of Mary ran through the rules which were written for the guidance of the *beatas*. Her type of leadership drew inspiration from the Blessed Virgin Mary. She strove to be the living image of Mary to her companions and exhorted them to take Mary as their model in following Jesus.

Mother Ignacia gradually realized that the community in the *beaterio* (convent for novices or aspiring nuns) was called by God to a life not only of prayer and penance, but also of apostolic service. The *beaterio* admitted young girls as boarders, who were taught Christian doctrine, as well as works proper to them. Mother Ignacia did not make any distinction of color or race but accepted natives, *mestizas* (half-Spanish half-native) and Spaniards as *recogidas* (recruits). The *beatas* were also involved in retreat work, and helped the Jesuit Fathers by preparing retreatants to be disposed to take the **Spiritual Exercises**.

Mother Ignacia submitted the 1726 Constitutions of the *beaterio* to the archdiocesan office for approval. After the approval was given in 1732 by the Fiscal Provisor of Manila, Mother Ignacia decided to give up her responsibility as superior of the house. She lived as an ordinary member until her death on September 10, 1748. Murillo Velarde saw this as a great sign of her utter humility. She had no desire to command and control. In his estimation, she was a 'true valiant woman' who overcame the great difficulties which she met in the foundation from the beginning to the end. She was 'mortified, patient, devout, spiritual, zealous for the good of souls'.

A few months before her death, the Archbishop initiated a process of securing royal protection for the *beaterio*. Mother Ignacia died without knowing the response of the Spanish King, but her long life in the *beaterio* must have taught her to trust in the providence of God. Little did she expect that the mulberry seed, the *beaterio*, would become a giant tree, the nationwide congregation of today, more than 200 years after her death. Thus, the **Religious of the Virgin Mary**, is a living testimony to her life as God's handmaid who opened the doors of religious life to native women in the Philippines. She proved that God is the God of all people, of whatever color or race.

The royal protection granted in 1755 guaranteed the safety of the *beatas* but it did not recognize the *beaterio* as a community of religious women. It was ordained to remain as a pious association. In spite of this seeming setback, the *beatas*, faithful to the spirit of their foundress Mother Ignacia, continued to live the religious life even without being officially recognized as such.

The expulsion of the Jesuits in 1768 was another blow to the *beatas*. They lost their spiritual guide. But they continued to enjoy the support of the Archbishop of Manila and other Church officials. In the spirit of Mother Ignacia, the *beatas* lived by the sweat of their faces and persevered in their service to God through education and retreat work. Despite attempts by the Governor-General to change the nature of the *beaterio*, the *beatas* remained true to the vision and charism of Mother Ignacia and survived the dark years.

The growth of the *beaterio* into a congregation and its response to the apostolic challenges of the times show the vitality of the spirit of Mother Ignacia. Indeed, her lamp continues to shine today as her daughters courageously strive to respond with zeal to the call of different mission works.

The story of the congregation that has grown from the small *beaterio* of Mother Ignacia continues to unfold. It bears witness to the enduring vitality and strength of the foundation, the spirituality of Mother Ignacia. The lamp she lit to guide the path of native women aspiring for religious life and the maturity of faith continues to shine. It remains undimmed. The life of this lowly native and the fruits of her spirituality proclaim the immense goodness of God, whose generosity is unbounded. Mother Ignacia trusted in the loving providence of God and she was never disappointed.

*late have i loved You
o Beauty ever ancient ever new
late have i loved You
You were within me but I was away*

*there within of late
i searched for You
in my un-loveliness
and You touched me*

st augustine

*jonathan livingston seagull
was always learning and practising his flight
trying so hard to achieve perfection
but because he was different
from the rest of the other seagulls
he was sent away to live as an outcast
he later attained perfection
only after he knew about love
for there are no more limits to flight
when one has achieved love*

bernadette lopez

CHAPTER 1

You can see Forever

Reprinted from *Philippine Daily Inquirer*
18 September 2000

*if your heart is kind
you can see forever*

sister raquel reodica, rvm

*if i touch even just
the hem of His tunic
i am healed*

matthew 9:20

Sister Raquel Reodica, RVM, is a reputed healer of terminal diseases. She is a Catholic nun who has been featured in my columns a few years back. A few months ago, she called me up and told me this strange story.

In the afternoon, as she was resting, sparks suddenly emanated from the electric plugs in the entire house. This was accompanied by a sizzling sound associated with the sparks. Sister Raquel was scared, wondering if there was a short circuit or some electrical problem. The electric bulb lighting an adjoining toilet began to flicker, making her more scared. This occurred for about twenty minutes.

When the sparks and flickering died down, she decided to call an electrician to fix the problem. She was surprised that the electrician reported that there was no problem. The plugs and the electric bulbs were all in perfect condition.

After a couple of months, Sister Raquel recounted the same story to a scientist who said that the universe was full of some form of mysterious 'energy', which we can call 'cosmic' in nature in the sense that it comes from nowhere but is everywhere, some sort of 'cosmic energy'. He said that Sister Raquel somehow became a 'conduit' or 'medium' of that 'cosmic energy'. According to the scientist, the intense energy emanating from Sister Raquel caused the electrical disturbance.

Strangely, Sister Raquel never knew she may have caused all that. She was aware she had healing powers. She had healed many in the past, terminal cancer patients of all sorts. She was featured on television and radio years back. But she never knew it was she who may have caused the electric disturbance.

Whatever the explanation, the fact was that Sister Raquel had some special power, some form of energy which could heal. This was manifested by extremely warm hands, which is normally attributed to healers of all types. There were even times when her patients would jerk in reaction upon feeling her 'hot' hands touching their skin when she prayed over them.

In spite of her apparent gift or power to heal, Sister Raquel attributes the phenomenon to the

hand of the Lord. Healing, she says is between the Lord and the patient. She was simply a 'conduit' or bridge to the Lord. She was somehow chosen, like the few others worldwide, to receive the healing energy and to heal people with it.

She says that since healing is between the Lord and the patient, the patient must be ready to receive the Lord or the 'energy' of the Lord through her hands. This is why her 'style' or approach to healing sessions begins with long informal stories where patients are made aware that healing needs a spiritual preparation to receive the Lord's energy.

During these informal sessions before the ritual of praying over patients, Sister Raquel explains that this preparation consists in purifying oneself.

If one has hatred for people who did one wrong, there must be forgiveness before healing can be effected. If one wants vengeance, this must first be replaced by reconciliation. If one forgets to love, one must 'remember' once more. Forgiveness, love and spiritual well being, says Sister Raquel, are the absolute prerequisites to healing. To Sister Raquel, the theology of healing revolves around establishing a relationship with the Lord rather than just a process of ritual and physical recovery. Spiritual recovery must precede physical recovery.

About six years ago, Sister Raquel was approached by a woman lawyer in her forties, accompanied by many close friends. Earlier, she suddenly had become completely deaf for some mysterious reason.

Sister Raquel told them, "Allow me to talk to her."

The lawyer's friends retorted, "But she is deaf."

Sister Raquel repeated what she said and they simply gave subdued smiles because of her 'ridiculous' notion to talk to a deaf person. Sister Raquel asked the lawyer what her name was. She immediately answered, shocking the others. Everyone started to weep. Sister Raquel asked the others to leave them alone and she asked the lawyer more personal questions, all of which she answered.

She was probing on the history and cause of her deafness. She found out there was a time the lawyer was so exasperated with people around her, she simply refused to listen them. Her psychological and emotional state dictated to her ears to stop listening completely. Sister Raquel said that sometimes people trigger their own physical sickness through psychological or emotional decisions. The lawyer, realizing her unkindness caused her deafness, started to weep. Sometimes, you can get a fever by simply thinking you have a fever. It is the mind dictating to the body to become sick.

Says Sister Raquel, "If your heart is kind, you can see forever." Discernment, insight and wisdom emanates not only from the mind but from the heart and the soul, something new in philosophical thinking. It is a spiritual seeing, not a physical one. In the gospel, Christ speaks to a crowd:

*hear me, all of you and try to understand
nothing that enters a man from the outside
can make him impure
that which comes out of him from the inside and only that
constitutes impurity*

let everyone heed what he hears

*wicked designs come from the deep recesses of the heart
theft, murder, adultery, greed, deceit, arrogance
all these evils come from within
and render a man impure*

mark 7:1-8a, 14-15, 21-23

Inside us is the storm that rages and the silence that soothes. The key to healing is inside us as much as the key to illnesses, whether physical or spiritual is also inside us. Healing is achieved once inner spirit is touched by an energy from without but only if that spirit is ready to receive that energy.

CHAPTER 2

A Message of Deliverance

Reprinted from the *Philippine Star*

*here we are, Lord, a planet at prayer
attune our spirits that we may hear your harmonies
and bow before your creative power
that we may face our violent discords
and merge with your Energy
that your hymn of peace may echo in every heart*

*here we are, Lord, a planet at war.
transform our fears that we may change
our war fields into wheat fields
our arms into handshakes
our missiles of loathing into messages of peace
our hatred into love*

*here we are, Lord, an exploited planet.
heal our hearts that we may conserve
our dwindling earthly riches
hold priceless our people and feed our hungry children
an abundance of daily bread
in the midst of man-made famines*

joan metzner, MM

As the nation's economy gradually sags and life becomes harder by the day, there is a general feeling of despair and gloom and even anger in our helplessness to control our destiny. Perhaps it is a good time to do some soul searching, to assess who and what we are, where we are and where we are going, not only as a nation but as individuals.

When St. Joan of Arc led the French army against the English, deliverance from conquest began with a blood bath. When St. Joan saw the thousands of dead all around just to achieve victory, she could not imagine the glory of deliverance, only the pain of it. But she could see that everything was all part of God's plan.

Sometimes, one needs to pass through pain in order to achieve deliverance. Sometimes, pain is a tool for conversion of sinners. Our idea of 'God's will' is different from God's will. His way can be mysterious and odd to us. He can make people He loves suffer because pain is an instrument of keeping one within the fold.

Sister Raquel Reodica, RVM, reputedly has the power to heal. Cases tagged by doctors as 'terminal' were healed by Sister Raquel. Many who sought Sister Raquel's help, have achieved deliverance from extreme pain. Many have been healed from terminal cancer, lupus, or suddenly did not need to have a heart-bypass. But Sister Raquel says she is not the healer, only the instrument of

the Healer who is our Lord through His Mother Mary. Sister says healing has the prerequisite that the sick first restore their faith and be spiritually cleansed.

She tells the story of a teenage shabu addict. One day, he tried to kill his own mother for not giving him money for his vice. Realizing he would destroy the family, the parents sought the help of Sister Raquel to heal him.

From just a few questions, Sister Raquel instantly knew the problem. It was not the son but the parents who were the problem. They somehow failed to give their son the love and attention he deserved, which they gave to his other brothers and sisters. And this rejection made him turn to drugs.

In a gentle manner, Sister Raquel made the parents, who were from a prestigious family, realize their mistake. Like being hit by a thunderbolt, the entire family saw that it was not he who was the problem but themselves. In tears, the parents and the other children promised to change. Their act of repentance was the spiritual cleansing that was the precondition for healing of their son.

The very next day, the shabu-addict son called Sister Raquel and thanked her. She asked why. The boy told her that he was cured. He lost the urge for the drug totally and instantly. There is no such thing as instant cure in shabu rehabilitation. Most often, shabu addicts have to pass through painstaking rehabilitation which takes months and even years. And even after 'rehab', there is no assurance he will not return to drugs.

The family reported later that the boy lost his urge for drugs in the blink of an eye, like taking off a shirt.

Sister Raquel said it was the love of her family rather than her healing powers which saved him instantly. But the boy insisted she had a 'hand' in all that happened.

In another instance, there was an old man with six different serious sicknesses, including diabetes, asthma, and cancer. He went to Sister, expecting to be healed like the many others.

After just one visit, he was not healed. He was not only impatient, he perhaps lacked faith. He said Sister Raquel 'failed' to heal him because she was 'losing her power', because she talked too much and was becoming proud of her powers. He blamed Sister Raquel, not himself for not being healed.

True, she gave lengthy sermons in her healing sessions to show the importance of spiritual cleansing before healing is effected. It was true she told stories of her healings but not in boast but to make people realize they also can be healed by their faith.

He was looking for the dust in Sister's eye and never saw the plank in his own. And so he was never healed. He perhaps failed to cleanse his soul as a prerequisite to cleansing his body.

When I told Sister Raquel what he said, she simply smiled and said, "I am not the healer. He is. He chooses whom to heal. I am merely a 'bridge' in the physical and spiritual aspects of healing. It is faith that heals. So Sister Raquel prays, "Lord, my hands are your hands."

Does God create diseases and suffering so we can go to Him for healing? Is suffering sometimes a vehicle for repentance and prayer? Why do so many people suffer? As I see the many people flock to Sister Raquel, seeking solace, I can discern His grand plan of suffering as the way to conversion. Why does the Lord give healing power to people like Sister Raquel and make a lot of people sick so she can have a lot of 'patients'?

The Lord gave Padre Pio the stigmata, the bleeding wounds in the hands, a reminder of the

Crucifixion. Padre Pio praised God for giving him the privilege of the wounds as a manifestation of His love. But the wounds would often bleed and throb with pain. After decades of bearing the stigmata, he was having a hard time. Pain is thus a form of prayer, a form of cleansing in preparation for deliverance from sin.

Pain and suffering are often the way the Lord seeks us, as much as joy and peace. When we feel the gloom rather than the glory of Christmas because of a crisis, we often fail to understand God's ways. But the message of our suffering is perhaps His way of telling us to change, to repent and to pray.

Many of those who have been healed by Sister Raquel say her hands are hot when they touch their skin. God acts through her hands and gives His energy through her hands.

The Theology of Pain dominates our consciousness when we are suffering. And the Theology of Love does the same when we are joyful. But it is often the joy that makes us forget and the pain that makes us remember that life is not forever, that, in spite of fame, fortune and power, we will all turn to dust one day. If we gain the whole world but lose our souls, then the world we own is nothing. The business empires we can build and get heart attacks for are nothing. These empires are merely passed on to our children as we pass away.

It is a strange message, this Theology of Pain. And we understand it only when we are healed and the pain is gone.

CHAPTER 3

Conversing with Mountains and Wind

*Dear Jesus, as Creator of heaven and earth
it is so easy for You to heal me.
In the name of Your Mother Mary,
and St. Joseph, and Mother Ignacia,
I ask You, I implore You to heal me.
In return, I promise to change my ways
and live a new life dedicated to You.*

sister raquel's healing prayer

1991. Mt. Pinatubo erupted in one great cataclysm, considered the biggest eruption of the century. When the ash, looking like a nuclear blast's mushroom cloud, reached the stratosphere, a violent storm scattered it far and wide across the entire earth.

Ash fell like a drizzle in Thailand and Indonesia. The black cloud spread all the way to the polar regions. In the Antarctic region, an American scientific research station reported that their many years of research on global warming was disrupted. There was a dramatic cooling of the planet because of this one 'small' volcano in the Philippines, the scientists said.

A few days after the eruption, volcanologists warned that a second eruption was evident. Temperatures in fissures and vents around the volcano were rising rapidly. Steam forced its way through the cracks in many places. People at the foot of the mountain were bracing themselves for a second eruption.

Hundreds of kilometers away, Sister Raquel, having read the news, slipped alone into the quiet of their small community chapel. She stayed there the whole day, concentrating and praying for the Lord to spare the people from another eruption. The next day, the volcanologists reported that they were surprised that there was a dramatic cooling down of the vents. No more eruptions came again.

We are not sure that it was the prayers of Sister Raquel which stopped the second eruption. We will never know. But considering the subsequent healing power the Lord gave her, her prayers perhaps contributed to it.

A few weeks later, Sister Raquel received her gift of healing from the Lord. A life of healing lay before her. Initially, she was swept by a media storm. By September, she had a huge crowd at the Araneta Coliseum for a healing concert. Radio, television, and newspapers hounded her everywhere she went. In a few more months, she went on a world healing mission, going to Japan, China, the United States, and other nations.

There is another story about Sister Raquel's conversations with nature. One day, a storm was blowing violently. Thunder and lightning interrupted wind and rain. It was dark even at mid-morning. Sister Raquel was upset. There was a big healing session scheduled and a special birthday celebration for one of the sisters, Mother Aurea. But there was a deluge worse than Noah's, the sisters surmised, along the path to the healing center where they would all converge.

At noon, the sisters assembled at the chapel, not able to build their ark for the deluge. Sister

Raquel asked the other sisters to pray with her. She said, "Lord, we got a big problem here. Many people are coming for healing to the center today. And it is Mother Aurea's birthday. Thunder and lightning, I command you in the name of the Lord to stop."

As if making fun of Sister, the wind and rain grew stronger. Sister Raquel was undaunted, repeating the prayer more loudly. The lightning and thunder suddenly stopped. Gradually the wind and rain weakened until they stopped completely.

Sister continued, "Sun, you have to come out now and dry the wet paths to the center. Remove the clouds and shine on us in the name of the Lord. Lord, please help us."

The sisters heard people screaming. The *cursillo* retreat attendants at another floor of the building, who did not hear Sister praying aloud for the sun, shouted with joy when the sun suddenly, out of nowhere, came out of the dark sky, shimmering in its noon glory. And so the healing and the birthday party ensued.

This type of experience of 'talking to nature' has happened to Sister Raquel about five times now. In this third story, it was the same wind and rain, a storm as bad as the first one. Sister Raquel was nervous. She was not sure if she could make it back to Manila from Davao where she held a healing session that just looked endless.

She could not miss the evening appointment because the group also requesting healing came from a very far place. The other sisters kept saying she should leave the next day. But she insisted. It would be embarrassing if she missed the appointment. The sisters said they would understand. She had less than an hour left. She decided she would exert her best effort. The other sisters accompanied her to the airport.

On top of wind and rain, the traffic was not moving. Everyone was fidgety. Sister Raquel asked the driver to open the window. He asked what for. The rain would come in and get everyone wet. She insisted, saying she needed to talk to God, and He may not hear her. The driver reluctantly opened a window.

Peering at the dark skies as the rain blew into her face, Sister prayed aloud, "Lord, I need to go back to Manila as I promised to heal someone. Please stop the storm, Lord. In Your name, O Lord, let the traffic move, even just our lane. I do not mean to be selfish but this is for You, Lord, not for me."

Instantly the wind and rain stopped. And only the lane of the vehicle carrying Sister Raquel moved very fast. The other sisters were speechless. They were at the airport in no time, but still a bit late. Sister ran to the counter. The man manning the counter turned around and left. Sister shouted at him but he did not hear.

Sister prayed, "Lord, make him come back, please."

As if he heard the prayer, the man turned around to Sister. He smiled, and said, "I am sorry, sister, there are no more seats".

"And what do you call that?" she pointed to the lone stub on the rack, amazingly a number one.

The man scratched his head in shock. And so Sister Raquel ran as fast as he could and got the best seat in the plane.

Sister said, "Lord, I am Your number one, and You are my number one."

The message in all these stories is not the greatness of Sister Raquel, who is nothing but a servant of the Lord, and she knows it. The message is the greatness of God, creator of the universe,

who has the power over mountains and winds.

CHAPTER 4

The Power to Heal

Reprinted from the *Business World*
18 March 1999

*when you ail He heals
when you moan He comforts
when you flee He seeks you*

*in darkness He gives light
in despair He gives hope
in sin He gives salvation*

*in drought He is deluge
in famine He is nourishment
in blindness He is vision*

*when you are alone He is there
when you are lost He shows the way
when you thirst He gives life giving water*

*linger in our midst o Lord and give us strength
in the pain of our bodies
in the poverty of our spirits*

eastwind

Sister Raquel Reodica, RVM, has healed many terminal cancer patients in the past who were branded by doctors as beyond help. She has gone to Japan on a healing mission and was acclaimed by many. She has been offered radio and television programs.

Sister Raquel stresses that there are basic preconditions to receive healing. First, one must believe and have faith. That seems obvious. Second, one must hold ones peace with the world and with God in one's heart. One must not hold any hatred in one's soul. The heart must have forgiveness and love.

Many times, forgiveness can be hard. If someone killed your mother, can you forgive instantly in your grief and anger? The depth of the wound makes it hard to forgive. The woman knew that if she failed to forgive, she would die of cancer. So, everyday, she prayed for the grace to forgive, to overwhelm her consuming hatred. It took time and many months of prayer, but she did it. And her prize was her own life.

Visiting Sister Raquel with friends once, we sat down for a healing session. There were many people in the group, a couple with a child with a swollen head, and an old man who could hardly walk. Many were accompanied by relatives. We were about thirty in the group.

She told stories of people who were healed, how their faith saved them. The healing session

itself was short compared to the preparations, the period when one must understand the process of healing.

There was a feeling of spiritual well being among all who attended. I could feel it. We, all strangers to each other, were suddenly conversing warmly as if we were friends for a long time. Sister told a lot of jokes which made all of us laugh.

That was how Sister Raquel ushered us into a strange special 'room'. It was a strange room with many large windows and doors. Only special people who were ready to be healed could enter that room. It was not a physical room but a spiritual one.

It took months for the woman with breast cancer to enter this sanctuary of sanctuaries. But the moment she forgave her husband, a tremendously spiritual feat, she entered that special 'room'.

An Irish priest who was an exorcist once told me that the slightest notion that one had the power against the devil is very dangerous. It is at that moment of the slightest ego that one loses the power to exorcise. For it is God's power, not ours. It is at that moment, he said, that the evil spirit may transfer from the possessed to the exorcist. The power to exorcise, as in the power to heal, is not Man's but God's. Man is simply a vehicle and must never think of himself as the source of power. Otherwise, he loses that power instantly.

A book on healing reads: "The power to heal comes from the Lord. The first step is to have faith in Him. Then His energy can flow into your hands until it becomes so hot, your patients will feel it. You must go inside the soul of your patient in order to heal him. There, you will see his sickness, both physical and spiritual. HEAL FIRST THE SPIRIT and body sickness will be easy.

"Spiritual sickness comes from envy and greed, vengeance and hatred. Sometimes these are harder to heal than cancer or diabetes. The true healer sees the universe and a million stars in a single soul, no matter how distraught or ailing. Only the humble and peaceful can have the power and wisdom to heal."

Terminal cancer can be a gift from above. It is a way to make us change. The most powerful are humbled and the wealthiest are impoverished by the thought of imminent death. It is a way to bring us back to the light of the Lord from a dark material world.

It is a way to remind people that, in our fast-paced world, our bodies are finite, and power and wealth vanish in the blink of an eye. We are immersed in a crowded world where spiritual values vanish slowly in the frenzy of everyday survival. We tend to elbow our way through. The irony of it all is that the billions of pesos we try to amass in sleepless nights of hard work may be the very thing that would bring us closer to the end. What will you do with your wealth if you are dying?

CHAPTER 5

Healing the World

Reprinted from the *Business World*
25 March 1999

*i envy those who were sick
and have been healed by You Lord
for they have been touched
and they know You more intimately*

eastwind

This is a sequel to last week's column on healing based on anecdotes about Sister Raquel Reodica, RVM.

She has an anecdote about a woman psychologist, Anita (not her real name) who had an advanced stage of eczema on her entire scalp area. All the expensive medicine could not heal her. She spent sleepless nights due to the discomfort.

Sister Raquel, after probing, discovered that the cause of the problem was an inefficient house maid who bothered her constantly. Anita was super-sensitive about her drinking glass. It had to be completely washed before every meal. Even after constant instruction, the maid failed to do so, which put the psychologist on the verge of a nervous breakdown.

Sister Raquel first suggested she buy a dozen glasses instead of replacing the maid. For the problem was not in the maid but in Anita's attitude towards her.

Sister said, "Of course, maids can be hard-headed. That is why they are maids not bank executives."

Sister Raquel suggested that if the maid repeated the mistake, that she repeat carefully the instructions without flying off the handle and with a smile, not a forced one but a real smile. Anita just had to accept the maid as she was, a human with weaknesses to be constantly corrected. True enough, the change of attitude healed Anita. Her eczema vanished. How do we relate such physical healing to spiritual change? Sometimes it is hard to comprehend.

Anita thought that healing was simply a matter of instant physical change coming from the Lord. She failed to see that healing had a holistic character, that healing the body had a prerequisite of healing first the spirit. Healing needed a lot of preparations of prayer, a change of spirit, a self-cleansing of the soul before the cleansing of the body.

Healing for Sister Raquel also involved not just placing her hands over people and praying. It may involve hours of probing for the spiritual root causes of the problem, as with Anita. It involves complicated self-analysis and a reassessment of faith. Preparations can take months while the healing process only a few minutes.

In our ever shrinking world with its power of high technology and its emphasis on self-survival and material needs, the first to vanish are spiritual values, the concern for others, even for our own family. Lives are often dictated by projects rather than projects dictated by lives all in the name of survival. Dehumanization is a natural process in an environment of rapid technological

advancement and population growth.

There must be a conscious effort to warm and humanize a world, heal a world that gets colder by the minute. Sickness is manifested in warped family relationships, taking children for granted, and a seemingly insignificant thing like an inefficient maid who can't wash drinking glasses. Sister Raquel says that, from her experience with people she heals, in more than 90 percent, human relations is the problem which needs healing.

The most precious commodity in our frenzied world today is not more money to feed our ever increasing needs but spiritual peace which is becoming more and more elusive. And the lack of peace, the inner turmoil, is often due to bad human relations. Sister Raquel points out that spiritual peace is a key ingredient to healing, without which there is nothing. No one can buy spiritual peace, not the wealthy who are most often the first to be beset by inner turmoil. It is a product of constant inner reflection and correction of our spiritual ways, our relationships with people, no matter how stupid or obnoxious they are.

During one big healing session of about 80 people, Sister Raquel asked who among them had problems whose root causes were inner turmoil and human relations. Almost everyone raised their hands.

The affluent Japanese complain that they are often beset by inner turmoil because of their regimented social environment. They admire the Filipinos who are 'poor and happy', in the words of Ernest Hemingway.

Yet, Filipinos envy the Japanese because they are affluent. Filipinos want to go to the "paradise" that is Japan where money is easy while the Japanese want to go to the "paradise" that is the Philippines where people are happy. Why is the grass always greener on the other side of the fence? Why are we always unsatisfied with what we have? Why do we take for granted the treasures we have? Why is inner peace so elusive in our frenzied world today?

CHAPTER 6

Spiritual Renewal

*Lord heal our hearts and our minds
our hurts and our relationships
the hurts we give to each other
the hurts we receive from each other
remove our bitterness
fill our empty spaces with Your love and forgiveness*

eastwind

Today, we live in an age of frenzy: population explosion, Internet power, dwindling resources, environmental pollution, mass lay-offs due to recession. Time is condensing rapidly and the entire planet is shrinking. The Earth is getting crowded. It is the time for retreat and soul searching, for spiritual renewal in an age where the focus is material concerns if only to survive in a shrinking jungle.

In terms of the Catholic faith, spiritual renewal or going back to spiritual basics consists of returning to things we take for granted because we are so 'busy'.

Sister Raquel, during conversations, said that three of the most important basic devotions in the Catholic Church today are 'under attack', the Holy Mass, the Holy Eucharist, and the Blessed Virgin. These precious tools of faith are vanishing slowly. They are under constant siege from within and without the Church. From within, they are taken for granted by many Catholics. From without, they are ignored and even laughed at by the many new movements emerging such as the non-Catholic 'born-again' and 'charismatics'.

The Holy Mass is an essential part of faith. Yet, many say they pray anyway, so they need not go to Mass. Holy Mass is the *sine qua non* (meaning, that without which there is nothing) of our faith. If one does not go to Sunday Mass, one is considered a non-practising Catholic or a Catholic simply by name. Yet, many, because they have become so busy surviving and riding the frenzy that besets global society today, have abandoned this important practice. They have time for material pursuits and have abandoned the spiritual.

The Holy Eucharist or the practice of taking Holy Communion, an essential part of the Mass, is many times also taken for granted. It is what makes Catholics different from Protestants and non-Catholic born-again and charismatics. Communion, as the word implies, is a 'communion' or 'dialogue' with Jesus. Many say, they commune with God through prayers and meditations anyway, no need for communion. But these two are very different.

The sacraments of the Church are two fold, external and internal. Both are important. The external is the physical manifestation, water in Baptism, salt in Confirmation, and the bread in the Holy Eucharist. Without the external, according to Church dogma, there is no sacrament. Of course, the internal is more important, cleansing of original sin in Baptism, strength from the Holy Spirit against Satan in Confirmation, and 'communion' with Jesus in Holy Communion.

The Holy Eucharist therefore is very different from intense prayers or meditation. It is a sacrament, and as such, has greater spiritual value, having both internal and external requirements of a sacrament. It is indeed the true way of attaining intimacy with Jesus.

Another devotion which distinguishes us from Protestants and other sects revolve around the Blessed Virgin. Protestants, as well as non-Catholic born-again and charismatics, reject Our Lady. They do not believe in Holy Communion and the Blessed Virgin and the Saints as objects of prayer. The Church considers the Blessed Virgin as a 'mediatrix' or a bridge to Christ and encourages prayer to Her as a way to get to Christ. But the Protestants and others consider this as giving divine attributes to Our Lady which they consider 'idolatry'.

As a result, the *iconoclasts* advocate for the destruction ("clas") of statues and images (icons). In the Middle Ages, iconoclasts went on a rampage, destroying precious paintings and statues all over Europe. This movement has re-emerged today. Some non-Catholic born-again are destroying images all over the country, from priceless antiques in Ilocos to rare statues in Metro Manila churches.

Thus, for Catholics, the Our Father is followed by the Hail Mary. Devotion to Our Lady, after all, is in keeping with Filipino culture, which teaches us that the way to the top man is through someone who is *malakas* or 'connected'. Through the rosary, we become '*malakas*' or connected to the Lord who cannot refuse His own Mother.

The emphasis of non-Catholic born-again and charismatics is mainly external: communal songs with body movement, or a charismatic leader who speaks eloquently. These are not bad *per se*. This does not mean they have nothing internal, but too much emphasis in external color has its weakness. It may inhibit rather than induce internalization of faith. It is the lesson of the Pharisee. The internalization of the Holy Mass and Holy Communion are the essence of our faith, not the songs or rituals which are only their external manifestations.

Church history shows crisis and renewal are nothing new. The Reformation led by Martin Luther or the birth of Protestantism was precisely a large splinter from Catholicity as a reaction to a Church which lost its lustre, which was losing credibility due to 'deviations' of bishops and even the Papacy, a Church in crisis needing renewal and reform.

Ironically, crisis is sometimes needed to achieve reform. The Reformation actually woke up a sleepy Church into action. The Jesuits spearheaded the Counter-Reformation which attempted to correct the Church's 'deviations' and weaknesses. There was a great effort to refine Church teachings. Philosophy and theology, as a result, flourished and had its renaissance, giving rebuttals to the heresy of Protestantism.

Perhaps we need a new Counter-Reformation today as we see the many born-again and charismatics grow rapidly, doing a repeat of the Reformation of Protestantism. They miss the external color in our 'drab' or 'boring' Mass, not aware that the internal essence of the Mass or Communion is not in the songs or the rituals. They surround their faith with 'externalities' which can be good only if they internalized.

Spiritual renewal also consists of avoiding the pitfall of double standards. How can one go to Mass and Communion and at the same time shout at the maid, cheat in his office, or cheat on his wife. Yet, it happens everyday. People exude sanctity externally but are not sanctified internally.

The essence of this spiritual renewal then, this new Counter-Reformation, is not inventing new colorful rituals, composing new songs which are nicer and more modern, or focusing on charismatic speakers. Spiritual renewal consists of internalization. It consists of going back to spiritual basics such as Holy Mass, Holy Communion, and devotion to Our Lady. Renewal is in the heart not in the songs or rituals.

CHAPTER 7

The Blind Farmer

Reprinted from the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*

*the Father has blinded their eyes
and hardened their hearts
so that they may see and be converted
and turn to Him for healing*

john 12:39-40

On January 4, 2001, an 80-year-old farmer came to Sister Raquel at the Mother Ignacia Retreat House in Novaliches, seeking help. He had advanced cataract in both eyes and was almost completely blind, seeing everything as a total blur.

He had heard about Sister Raquel from other people who had gone to her after reading an article from the *Inquirer* (featured here). He was determined to see her even though the trip would be an ordeal. He came from a remote village somewhere in Bulacan. He asked his teenage grand-daughter to accompany him.

When he arrived, Sister Raquel asked him to pray aloud for God's blessing. His prayer went something like this, "Lord, I am a very poor man and I cannot afford an operation of my cataract. So please heal my eyes and do it right away because I cannot afford to come back and see Sister Raquel again. Surely, if you could heal many cancer patients, a simple cataract will be easy for you. So I ask you to please remove the pain and the itch in my eyes as I cannot bear it any longer. That is all. Amen."

Sister Raquel chided him, saying, "Why don't you ask Him to restore your eyesight, not just remove the itch."

The old farmer replied, "Yes, you are right. Lord, if You can, please restore my eyesight."

Sister Raquel put her hand over the old man's eyes and prayed for the Lord to restore his eyesight. Instantly, the pain and the itch were gone. Tears flowed profusely from the old man's eyes. His granddaughter also started to weep. For him, it was the kindness of the Lord that moved him. He wiped off the tears of joy but he could not help but cry some more. More tears flowed.

Sister Raquel placed her hands once more over his eyes and told him to pray again, this time silently.

When Sister Raquel removed her hands, the old man opened his teary eyes and said, "Bless the Lord. Sister, your garden is so beautiful. It is only now I realize that the sky is so blue. How green is the grass under the sunlight. And the flowers are so nice."

Even Sister Raquel was surprised by the sudden healing. Sister Raquel recounts how the blur of his pupils vanished instantly. It was washed away by his tears of joy. The Lord is good to this poor humble old farmer because his prayer was very simple and his faith was very strong.

And the Word was made flesh

Sister Raquel once encountered a young lady in her forties who had cancer of the bones. It was in an advanced stage and the cancer cells started spreading to her other organs.

Sister Raquel prayed over her, "Cancer cells, stop spreading in the name of the Lord. Leave this person at once."

After two days, the doctors were surprised that, indeed, the cancer stopped its spread to other parts of the body.

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us", Sister Raquel said.

"Here, we see the power of the 'Word' when I commanded the cancer cells to stop from spreading in His name. The 'Word' of the Lord is enough to move heaven and earth, what more to stop a few cancer cells. For Christ is the "Word" and the "Word" is with us to this very day."

Having isolated the cancer cells, the doctors succeeded in eventually removing them completely and healing the lady.

Divine Radiation

Sister Raquel has handled many terminal cancer and lupus patients whom she has healed.

The reason Sister Raquel can heal is because she is gifted by God with 'cosmic radiation' in her hands. Many of the people she has healed talk of her extremely 'hot' hands.

Sister Raquel says the radiation she has is similar to the ones used by hospitals against cancer. Only hers is better because it comes direct from God to the patient whereas the radiation of the cancer machines in the hospital comes from nature, from the sun and stored in the machine. Both can heal but Sister's radiation is better because it is of divine origin.

Once, a scientist with a gadget that can measure the energy in the human hand asked Sister Raquel if the energy in her hands could be measured. She agreed. So the scientist first measured other people's hands. From a scale of one to one hundred, the other people had measurements of from five to a maximum of fifteen. When Sister Raquel placed her hand on the machine, it registered 60 instantly and was climbing up to 100.

This is not Sister's energy. It is God's. She is simply a tool of His love and His power.

CHAPTER 8

Stories of Healing

*Jesus began to preach
'repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand'
He went to the synagogues
proclaiming the gospel and healing the sick*

*great crowds assembled
from galilee to decapolis - jerusalem to judea
paralytics and those possessed came from beyond jordan
His fame spread across syria*

matthew 4:13-17, 23-25

On February 3, 2001, there were more than a hundred visitors who came to Sister Raquel for healing. News about her healing power spread so fast that Sister Raquel appointed one day a week, Saturday, as healing day. This was so that many would not come anytime and disturb the normal operations of the retreat house of which she was the superior.

Two old women came. They were, Sister Raquel surmised, poor from the way they looked and dressed. They came up straight to Sister Raquel, ignoring the long line of people who wanted to be prayed over. The older one, an 80 year old woman was deaf and blind. Her companion led her.

The companion said, "We have heard so much about you, Sister. They all say that anyone who comes to you who is sick goes home well. God must be in this place if there is so much healing happening here. So we came so you can heal us instantly like the others."

Sister answered, "It is not true that all who come are healed instantly. Yes, there were occasions that that happened, but there were times when people had to come three to four times in a span of months before they were healed. And there were times when no healing ever happened. It depended on their faith. I am not the healer but the Lord. I am just a bridge."

Sister Raquel let the two women go ahead of the long line. The others did not mind because they were amused by the candid ways of the two. She prayed over the old woman who was deaf and blind for only two minutes, when she started sobbing. Sister Raquel asked why.

She answered, "Because I can now see."

The others screamed with glee. Many times, even instant healing took ten to thirty minutes. But this one took only two minutes. Even for Sister Raquel, this was very rare.

The old woman must have a lot of faith in the Lord to be healed so fast. But real faith is really very simple, said Sister Raquel. It asks no questions. It has no doubts. It is instant, strong, and whole.

Her companion was next, a 75 year old woman who had extreme pain from arthritis.

She said, "Sister, just touch my knee with your hands. That is the most painful part."

She did and, instantly, the pain was gone. Everyone screamed with joy once more. The two went around to the others in the long line, telling them to have faith and not to have doubts because that was the way they would be healed. They were doing the sermons for Sister.

Sister Raquel prayed over each and everyone of those who came individually until 10 p.m. More than a hundred came on that day. She did not seem to get tired.

She said, "The Lord gave me strength. Healing saps a lot of energy from a healer which flows from my hands to the sick. But I did not get tired. Somehow, the Lord energized me."

It was a good day for healing. Sister Raquel healed many people. It was the first Saturday of the month, a day of devotion to Our Lady, a day of healing. Perhaps Our Lady chose this special day to show the love of Her Son to people who were suffering.

A bishop called Sister Raquel once to please come over to his residence to pray over a friend, a Muslim VIP who had four types of sickness. Sister Raquel readily obliged. The VIP gave her his calling card. Sister Raquel read 'Secretary General' written on the foreigner's card. She said to herself that he must be a big man of a Muslim worldwide association of some sort, an articulate and well-educated man who spoke perfect English.

The Muslim VIP asked, "Why she, why not you, Bishop? You are senior to her, aren't you?"

The bishop smiled and retorted, "Don't ask me. It is Jesus who chooses His healers, not me."

"Sit down, sir, and please just do everything I say", said Sister Raquel, "I have to explain that I am not the healer but Jesus?"

The conversation, from Sister's recall, went something like this: "Jesus as God is the healer, okay?" she repeated.

"No, Jesus is only a prophet, not a God. Only Allah is God."

"We have a problem here. Jesus as God will be the one to heal you."

"Can't you just heal me?"

"No, tell Jesus you don't believe He is God."

"I can't say that."

"Talk to Him right now man to man. Tell Him what you want since He will be the one to heal you."

Foreseeing a *cul de sac*, Sister Raquel started praying aloud, "Lord Jesus, he does not believe You are God."

The Muslim answered, "No, don't say that."

Sister continued, "But don't count that against him, Lord."

"That's better."

"It is up to you and Jesus."

As Sister started placing her hands on him, she said, "These are the hands of Jesus, not mine."

After the pray over, in an instant, the Muslim VIP's back pain disappeared. Before, he could hardly walk straight. Now, he walked in strides. He was surprised.

"Jesus is wonderful." said Sister Raquel.

"No, you are wonderful."

"Jesus also."

"Sister, give me time. Since I was a child, I was taught there was only one God, Allah. I cannot change instantly, right?"

They went out to the garden and passed a statue of Our Lady. Sister Raquel said, "She is

Mary, the Mother of Jesus".

"I know."

"And since Jesus is God, she is called the Mother of God."

"No. That cannot be. God has no mother. Sister, please give me time. Please don't confuse my mind now."

The point of Sister was not to force a non-Catholic to believe. It was only for her to make people she heals understand that her powers are not her own but the Lord's. The story shows that the Lord heals everyone, regardless of religion or social class. Somehow, the Muslim was healed by his faith in Allah, the same God as that of Sister Raquel's, to my mind. There was no conflict of faith but harmony.

CHAPTER 9

Dancing for Mother Mary

Reprinted from the *Business World*

a true story related to sister raquel

*i have a tumor at the base of my skull
the pain is so excruciating beyond tolerance
as if a sledge hammer pulverizes my brain*

*i can no longer see or read
i need to be supported to walk
i am the only bread winner for my children*

what will become of me Lord?

*i came to the healing center
the evening before the healing session
i slept in the nipa hut and prayed –*

*Lord i leave it all up to you
my only request is i live day to day
i refuse to be operated*

*the risk is too great
yet there is a big chance
i will become a vegetable*

*i need to be operated on
otherwise i become incurably blind
Lord be my doctor and operate on me*

*i never lose hope on You
never not in my deepest darkness
You are there with me*

*now You have healed me
totally and instantly
Lord of the universe*

how can I begin to thank you

*i feel no more pain Lord
You have made me whole once more*

*why is it so easy
to receive your healing grace
Who are You really*

what power and gentleness You have

a servant of the Lord

*hunger and pain when spiritualized
are prayer and meditation
exhaustion and ailments when sublimated
are healing and rebirth*

eastwind

It was a strange evening. When known healer Sister Raquel, was telling me the story of this ballet dancer over the phone, she could smell the strong scent of *dama de noche*. Strangely, her residence did not have that particular plant. I felt bad that I could not smell it. Anyway, she went on with her story.

Catherine Lee, born of a Filipino mother and Chinese father, was the star ballet dancer of the *Ballet Theater Philippines* in 1991. She began dancing the ballet when she was grade four. Now, at age 28, she was married to a famous Russian ballet dancer.

Months earlier, Catherine had an accident. During a performance, she was descending a staircase. Her partner failed to catch her while on a split position. She had a bad fall and sprained her hips. Local orthopedic experts said she could not do the ballet any more or do the split for that matter for the rest of her life. Undaunted, she went abroad for a second opinion. The bone experts said the same thing. In the blink of an eye, she lost her entire career, the only thing she lived for.

When she heard of Sister Raquel's healing power, she sought her desperately. She arrived at 8:30 in the evening at the RVM Mother House in N. Domingo, Quezon City. Sister Raquel was tired. She told Catherine to come back another day. There were days allotted to healing sessions. Sister Raquel could not possibly be on call 24 hours a day.

But when Sister Raquel saw the tears in Catherine's eyes, she decided to give her 30 minutes. That was all that was needed. Catherine was healed instantly. That very evening, Catherine tried to dance, and she did before Sister Raquel without music. Sister Raquel asked her if she could dance a ballet number for Mama Mary at the Araneta Coliseum where a huge healing session was scheduled in three weeks time. How could Catherine refuse Mama Mary who gave her back her career instantly? The next day, Catherine's parents were shocked to see her practising.

Interestingly, Catherine recounts to Sister Raquel that, in the middle of her despair,

someone told her "You shall dance again." She dismissed the thought completely for she knew every expert in the world told her her dancing days were over. But it was those very words that urged Catherine to see Sister Raquel. Somehow, she felt the words would come true when she heard about Sister Raquel's healings.

And so, Catherine danced away in a jam-packed coliseum where tickets were sold out. The crowd gave her a violent applause, and she was back in the only thing she cared for in life, namely, expressing herself both physically and spiritually by dancing.

The gift of healing is for people from all walks of life, farmers or executives. The Lord does not distinguish between rich or poor, educated or uneducated, artist or lawyer, beautiful or ugly.

Memories from Flowers

As the smell of *dama de noche* persisted, there was no stopping Sister Raquel recounting more stories over the telephone. Like a machine gun, she fired away. The ink of my pen tried to catch up.

There was Angelita in 1992, a paralytic who could not move both legs. In a year of healing sessions by Sister, she was walking. Today, she has one child. She testified on a GMA7 program about her healing. Sister Raquel said, "Rise in splendor, Angel."

There was Raul Tangco in 1993. He had tumor of the brain. When he was healed, he came to Sister Raquel on her birthday with a cake, as big as his gratitude for his new life. Sister Raquel said, "In praise of His name".

There was Susan Dorado, wife of a consul general to Africa, who had breast cancer. It dried up completely and her half a dozen doctors were all in awe. Sister Raquel said, "Shout the name of God on the mountain tops."

Did the smell of flowers bring back memories in stark clarity? Sister Raquel could not stop.

There was this Cebuano 'ex-communist', whatever that generic word meant, who, when he was healed of terminal tuberculosis, started working for the bishop. Sister Raquel said, "I will follow You again, my Lord."

Sister Raquel herself was healed by her own prayer. She said, "Shelter me under your wings, O God."

'Auto-suggestion' or Miracle?

Two doctors came to Sister Raquel. The son of one had epilepsy. Of course, the end of the story is obvious. He was healed. And so the two doctors were talking to Sister Raquel.

The father of the ex-epileptic said, "Sister, is it possible that my son healed himself by auto-suggestion?"

The second doctor was angry, "How can you say such a thing after Sister has helped your son? Tell me, can you heal by auto suggestion as a doctor?"

Sister replied, "No, no, it is alright. No need to argue about it. What is important is your son is healed. Whether it is by auto suggestion or by the Lord is not important, right?"

The first doctor said, "Auto suggestion is possible."

The second doctor answered, "It depends. The one suggesting must be credible to the one being healed."

Hoping to stop a potential technical confrontation between the two scientists, Sister Raquel said, "It is not important to whom to attribute the healing. The mechanism of the brain is God given. If it was the power of auto-suggestion, then it is God's will, that is what is important. Even God can work through auto-suggestion. Finally, by His direct intervention or by auto suggestion, it is still God's work, right?"

The first doctor could not answer. The matter was settled instantly. The Lord heals in many ways. Man finds ways to attribute healings to nature, not to God. But God acts through nature many times, and seldom through divine intervention. Those of little faith can see only nature, not God. It is hard for someone whose faith is weak to understand about God's ways, which are not our ways.

CHAPTER 10

'I'd rather die than forgive.'

*forgiveness frees the soul
from hatred that consumes
forgiveness heals wounds
and untangles knots
transforming turmoil into inner peace*

eastwind

'I'd rather die than forgive.' This was said by Rica (not her real name) who had a fourth degree cancer of the breast which was starting to spread through her body. She had read in the newspapers about a healer who was reputed to have healed all types of terminal diseases like lupus and cancer. She decided to visit Sister Raquel.

She was so confident Sister Raquel could heal her. She had a strong faith, was very religious, went to mass often, and prayed a lot. But after the first visit, nothing happened. She called up Sister and complained that her sickness was becoming worse.

Sister Raquel said that the prerequisite for healing was peace of the soul. And peace of the soul meant forgiveness. Sister Raquel felt that this was the problem. She asked if something was bothering her. She replied quickly that her husband committed the gravest sin against her and she hated him so much.

"You must forgive him if you want to be healed," Sister Raquel said.

Spontaneously, Rica replied, "I'd rather die than forgive him."

That was how intense her hatred was for her husband. And so Rica left in tears because she could not forgive her husband. It must have been a heinous crime, that she could not forgive her husband.

After a month, she called up Sister Raquel to tell her the cancer was now spreading to her liver and spine and brain. She wept as she was dying because she could not forgive. But her hatred overpowered her fear of death.

Two months passed. Sister Raquel got a sudden call from Rica. She said that after all these months, she had finally learned to forgive her husband. She said she was ready for healing.

And so Rica went to Sister Raquel who prayed over her. It was like her first communion. When she was healed instantly, silent tears flowed. Suddenly, the cancer was small and contained. In a few months, it was gone totally. Forgiveness heals. Forgiveness heals the soul, then, it also heals the body. To forgive is so powerful and all encompassing, yet it can be the hardest thing in the world to do.

Gerald Cruz (not his real name) was a rich doctor whose father and two brothers were all gunned down separately in a clan feud with another rich family, the de Guzmans. Their ancestors have been killing each other in the last hundred years. Hatred had reached such a high momentum, that the four-year-old daughter of Gerald, Sarah, knew all about it, who killed whom, or how gory the ambushes were. At age ten, she would rattle off casually both murderers and victims and the tales of horror.

One could not possibly imagine the storm that went on inside Gerald, losing father and

brothers in separate ambushes. Terror mixed with hatred - that was what Gerald felt when his youngest brother of ten lay in a pool of blood in their common bedroom.

And so time went by. Sarah was now a lovely lass of eighteen surrounded by men. She was fresh, innocent, a blank paper ready to be written on by the world of men who surrounded her.

Cris de Guzman, a rich vegetable trader, also has deep wounds. His mother had been killed by a Cruz a year ago. The wound was still fresh. The thought of his mother lying face down at the market place, shot in cold blood in public still lingered in his subconscious.

Cris's son Steve, about the same age as Sarah, witnessed the killing of his mother. He was so shocked he could not cry. He did not speak for three whole months, and just stared at the wall.

Sarah and Steve were good children. One could not see a trace of spirits battered by a century-old culture of vendetta and violence. On the surface, they symbolized youth, overconfident, decadent, intelligent, arrogant, irreverent, experimenting, tasting the feel of brinkmanship. But they were never vindictive nor vengeful. They were half in and half out of the world of family. The other bigger half was school life and then later a professional career.

And so the inevitable happened. Steve and Sarah met in a party and fell in love in the blink of an eye. They did not even know they were 'arch-enemies' and they fell in love.

And the other inevitable happened. They accidentally discovered they were 'arch-enemies', one Cruz and one de Guzman that were like oil and water, as dictated by their blood lines. Sarah recounted Cris' uncle killing his father. Cris recounted Sarah's grandfather killing his mother.

Suddenly, they looked at each other, smiled, shrugged their shoulders, and embraced each other. They condemned in one act of love all the hate of a century building up into their lives, one act of love against a hundred years of vendetta and hatred.

One day, Cris was shot by a rival who was jealous over Sarah. Sarah brought the dying Cris home to ask her father doctor Gerald to save his life. As Gerald looked into the youthful face of the bloodied Cris, he saw nothing but the violence his family had endured. The storm inside instantly raged. He could not possibly 'save the enemy', not for a million pesos.

In tears, his lovely Sarah begged on her knees to save her loved one. The hurt of Gerald was two-fold. First was the killing of his family. Second was the enemy had stolen his precious daughter.

Sarah threatened to kill herself if her father refused to treat her dying boy friend. It was a Romeo and Juliet situation. He would not save Steve for a million pesos but he would save him for her beloved daughter. And so, Gerald suffered saving the life of someone he hated for his daughter, a feat not very many people could do.

Steve's father, Cris, came rushing in to pick up his wounded son. And there it was, Gerald face to face with his arch-enemy Cris. Gerald wanted to pick up a knife and kill him on the spot. As they stared at each other, Gerald and Steve, for a millionth of a second, time froze into eternity. They both saw the violence and the hatred of a hundred years compressed into an atom of time.

Cris smiled and awkwardly thanked Gerald for saving his son. In that awkward forgiveness, in that fleeting smile, a hundred years of hatred vanished. Forgiveness is so powerful because it is the shadow of love. The chain of hatred was broken by a semblance of love, love of a father for her daughter, and forgiveness of a father for someone who saved his

son. A hundred-year-old feud of vendetta and violence was stopped in one clean stroke by an act of love.

CHAPTER 11

Hope in Time of Despair

*the worst ailment such as terminal cancer
can be induced instantly by hatred
and can be healed instantly by forgiveness*

*for both body and spirit
forgiveness heals and strengthens
hatred consumes and weakens*

eastwind

Joanna is a vibrant attractive Filipino stewardess at *SaudiAir*. Her smile makes the day for hundreds of Overseas Contract Workers (OCWs) going to the Middle East. She is like a rose with fresh dew in the early morning sunshine for those who suffer extreme conditions abroad to support their families.

One day, like a lightning bolt, something took away her sunshine smile instantly. She contracted cancer of the breast. In a very short period, her breast turned bluish and hard as steel. The team of doctors all agreed. She had only a year to survive. The cancer began to spread to her entire body. She started losing her hair from chemotherapy. She had to stop working. Not only did she lose her luster, one could see the anger in her face for what fate had done to her in the prime of her youth. She looked like an old emaciated woman.

Reading an article about the healings of Sister Raquel, she decided to see her. After a few sessions, nothing happened. But she persevered. She fought off despair that kept lurking into her consciousness. She kept praying and hoping in a time of despair. She continued her visits. Many who came to Sister Raquel and knew Joanna did not see her for a long time and started wondering what had happened to her.

One Saturday, during a regular healing session, she suddenly appeared, radiant as the morning sun. Her color was back. Her sunshine smile emerged like a sudden dawn after an endless darkness. Everyone was surprised. It was like resurrection or rebirth. It took a long while of hope in time of despair but she won in the end. She was completely healed by her own faith.

Virgie, in her thirties, had a bad operation of the spine. She ended up a paralytic enslaved to a wheelchair she had to borrow as she could not afford one. The doctor gave her two braces, one for the upper torso that he said she had to wear the rest of her life, the other for the lower torso that she had to wear for a long time. Every evening, she had to suffer having the braces removed so she could sleep.

As with Joanna, the doctors were the sources of despair. But we cannot blame them for being honest. They are scientists who are morally obliged to tell the truth to patients. Virgie's doctors said there she had to wear her upper brace the rest of her life.

As with Joanna, Virgie read an article about Sister Raquel, and decided to see her. After three arduous visits to a far place infested with hopeless traffic, nothing happened. All Virgie's relatives, including her husband, started to lose hope, but not Virgie. She was a strong-willed

woman and her faith was like a rock. Feeling that the healings were useless, the husband declined to take Virgie to Sister, asking Virgie's sister to take his place.

On the fourth visit, Sister Raquel told Virgie not to lose hope and said that she had a second doctor, the Lord Himself.

'Kay Jesus tayo kakapit' (let us cling to the Lord), Sister Raquel said to Virgie. She nodded in agreement. Sister Raquel advised her to try walking no matter what. She followed Sister Raquel's advice. She felt she could walk alone and hated depending on others for support while walking.

On the fifth visit, she came without her borrowed wheel chair because she had to return it. It was three months since her first visit. She could now walk but with assistance and had no more lower brace. She could sit for a whole hour on a monobloc chair during the healing session, something impossible before.

On June 16th, on her sixth and latest visit, and a day before Sister Raquel told me the story over the phone, Virgie came, accompanied by her husband who had to muster courage to join them as he was ashamed of his lack of faith. They were all smiles. Her upper brace which doctors said was to be worn for life was gone. She walked without any assistance. Everyone applauded. She moved left to right to demonstrate that the pain was all gone. Her doctor had asked who this Sister Raquel was. Where could she be reached?

Virgie had a second sickness. Because of her paralysis, she had a problem with her bladder and had to wear a catheter for involuntary urination. Sister Raquel recounts how the bag would be full by the time she was going home during her first visits. On that sixth visit, the catheter was gone. The Lord gives misfortune as much as He takes it away, if only to bring us close to Him. Suffering and sicknesses are paths to the Lord. The preconditions are faith and hope, strength of spirit to persevere, to discern the glimmer of light in the darkness which may suddenly turn into blinding light.

These two tales are stories of hope in times of despair, of light in times of darkness. Often, the Lord wants to test our faith. Healing does not come instantly. He waits for our prayers and a manifestation of faith before He heals. There is a period of spiritual cleansing as a prerequisite to healing. It is hard to have hope when you have had three to four visits and nothing happens. We often have false expectations of sudden lightning when there is a gradual dawn. Often, we are impatient. The Lord's time is not our time.

Sometimes, healing is not complete. A leper Sister Raquel healed got back her nose but there was a gap on the nose bridge. A six-year-old boy with an open heart from birth was healed but the hole did not close completely. Many are tempted to ask the Lord why. Perhaps it is His way of making people not lose their faith. Sister Raquel says that perhaps there is still something to make up for, a broken relationship to patch up or some spiritual weakness to be corrected.

No matter what we all think or speculate, our ways are not His ways. He has His ways of making us veer our paths towards Him. He seeks souls crawling in vast deserts or lost in dark forests.

CHAPTER 12

Agony and Ecstasy

Reprinted from the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*
8 September 2001

*I empty your body so I can fill your soul
I make you poor so I can enrich you*

*I burn your home so you can seek My shelter
I make you sick so you can seek My healing*

*I make you lose your way so you can find My path
I bring darkness so you can seek My light*

*I give deliverance only after pain
I am the hound of heaven in search of lost souls*

*first I sanctify you by making you share My cross
then I make all things beautiful for you all in My time*

eastwind

Emerito was a lawyer from Batangas in his mid-forties, too young to die. He was tall, handsome, and strong. Both of his kidneys were in an advanced stage of failure, functioning at 25 percent. On top of this, he had ulcers and high blood pressure.

There were only two solutions to Emerito's problem. He could get either a dialysis on a daily basis or a kidney transplant. Only one kidney could be transplanted. The other just had to 'die'. Still, Emerito could live on one borrowed kidney. He could not afford either solution. Out of the question. The opinions of three of the best doctors in town were all the same. Emerito's case was 'irreversible'.

On September 8, 2000, the birthday of Our Lady, while in his extreme agony, Emerito read an article in the *Inquirer* entitled 'You can see forever', also featured in this book. His heart jumped with joy. The article was about Sister Raquel Reodica, RVM, a Catholic nun who had healed many terminal diseases since 1991. Emerito clutched a copy of the article and went straight to Sister Raquel.

Emerito prayed aloud, "Lord, You are my only hope through the hands of Sister Raquel."

Sister Raquel replied, "Trust in the Lord, Emerito. Surrender yourself and your sickness to Jesus."

For three months, Emerito came to Sister regularly. In fact, he came too often, Sister was getting a bit annoyed. She no longer had time for herself with so many coming with no appointment. But Sister Raquel could not refuse the persistent Emerito.

For another three long months, Emerito vanished. Then, suddenly, out of nowhere, he came to Sister with a smile extending from ear to ear. He put up a victory sign. Both kidneys

were mysteriously functioning 95 percent. His creatinin fell from 3 plus to almost 1.5. There was no need for a transplant or dialysis. His ulcer was gone, and his blood pressure was normal. All three doctors were amazed that this 'irreversible' sickness was reversed. They asked where this sister stayed as they also wanted to see her. And so, Emerito took his arduous trip from agony to ecstasy. It was a roller coaster ride, a deep low to a towering high.

Chinchin was four months old when I saw her at Sister's place. Her mother Ellen came all the way from San Pedro, Laguna, for her fist visit. Ellen's first baby died in her womb of *hypoxia* (lack of oxygen) because she was always upset and crying due to some emotional problem she did not want to talk about.

The trip took about three and a half hours. Chinchin, her second baby, suffered from a congenital heart disease. I could not understand but Ellen said Chinchin's heart was 'inverted' and had 'two holes in it'. She suffered from attacks an average of twice a day for three to four minutes each wherein she turned blue from lack of oxygen. The veins to her lungs were abnormally small. The doctor said she needed an operation right away wherein he would put artificial veins to the lungs. It could not wait. But Ellen could not afford the operation as her husband was jobless. So she went instead to Sister Raquel after reading the same article.

Chinchin, a jolly baby in spite of her agony, would have violent hiccups for ten minutes if she laughed. How could a bit of joy be a source of such pain? She sweated so profusely that two electric fans were not enough. Just a little cry and she would sweat profusely. Once she had an attack at midnight for 10 to 15 minutes. Her fingernails and feet were blue. This was one baby who had eye bags. She was the epitome of agony at such a young age.

Before Sister Raquel prayed over her, Chinchin was asleep all the while. After a very short pray-over, she started to laugh and look around, smiling and cooing at everyone. It was an amazing case of instant healing.

I caught everything on my video camera, before, during, and after Sister Raquel prayed over her. When Sister Raquel placed her hand on Chinchin's chest, she awoke and squirmed, as if Sister was reaching into her chest for her heart. I asked contacts at ABS-CBN if they could show the very short but precious footage for the public, but they had a policy that they aired only footage from their own cameras. [GMA7, are you interested?] Perhaps it can wait if we get some funds for a mini-documentary we were planning.

[After this article came out in the newspaper, ABS-CBN immediately called me up. They eventually featured Sister Raquel in *Magandang Gabi Bayan* on Saturday, September 15. And GMA7 said it was interested to also do so after a few months.]

I called Ellen after a week to ask how Chinchin was doing. Ellen said Chinchin had only two attacks since she saw Sister. From twice a day for about three to four minutes, her attacks became twice a week and only for 30 seconds. I would call that instant healing, ecstasy for the mother.

Sister Raquel complains that many who were healed whom she asked to come back to have their testimony documented never returned. I am not referring to Emerito or Ellen. Only one of ten lepers Jesus healed came back to see Him. It seems it is the same today, two thousand years after. People who are sick have time to be healed, but when they are healed, they become too busy to return.

The first *Philippine Daily Inquirer* article I wrote changed everything for Sister Raquel.

A deluge of phone calls came, some from as far as Cebu, Davao, and even one from Taipei. Life was never the same for Sister after September 8, 2000, Our Lady's millennium birthday. The remote sleepy retreat house she was a superior of was transformed into a very busy and crowded place, especially on Saturdays. On some sessions, the crowds stayed up to 10 at night and even up to midnight.

September 8, the birthday of Our Lady, has always been a special day for Sister Raquel. She started healing people in 1991. And on September 8, 1991, she had a huge crowd of about 15,000 at the *Araneta Coliseum*. Earlier, she healed a premier ballerina who broke her hip in a bad fall during a performance. Her partner failed to catch her. The half a dozen or so doctors she consulted (she could afford it) all said she could not dance anymore for the rest of her life. But she did for Sister Raquel on that fateful day at the *Araneta Coliseum*.

If you plan to visit Sister Raquel, just remember, healing is between you and the Lord. Sister Raquel is simply a bridge. And healing requires your unquestioning faith.

CHAPTER 13

Thief in the Night

*amen I say to you
beware for you know not
the day nor the hour
matthew 25:12-13*

I did not want to cross the river raging with lahar even though the depth was only above the knee at the deepest. They say lahar has ten times the power of ordinary water because it is more solid than liquid. I saw the others run, stop and go, trying to beat the next wave which came every 30 seconds.

Finally, I said what the heck. My two Aeta guides were on my left and right sides. We started crossing. I was a bit nervous. At the middle of the river, a big wave caught us. The force was so powerful, I fell on my knees and could not get up. My two able-bodied guides pulled me up with all their strength. The few seconds felt like years. I knew that if I could not get up, I would be swept away and they would pick up my body a kilometer downstream. If I were swept away, I would be mangled by basketball-sized rocks. In one minute, I would not have the strength to stand up even though the lahar was only knee-deep. I would be dead by then for sure, my guidelater told me. My loved one's faces flashed through my mind at the thought of death.

Finally, I was able to stand with the help of the two Aetas. I made it. My knees were trembling when I reached the bank. I sat on the sand for a long time, praying and thanking the Lord for my new life. Being near death can make you pray. It can change you and turn the most evil person into a saint. Nothing is the same again once you experience facing death in the face.

To reach out into the souls of students, the Jesuits have annual 'retreats' using an ancient formula called the Spiritual Exercises designed by its founder, St. Ignatius.

St. Ignatius was a genius in spiritual transformation. His first step in his Spiritual Exercises is to 'terrorize' the student with death, to instill the Theology of Fear. The Theology of Love can come later. Fear is the absolute medicine for the beginner. The power of fear electrifies the indifferent or the skeptic. For death is not a theory but a reality for us, for we will all die someday.

My freshman high school retreat was unforgettable because the late Fr. Raymond Gough, SJ, our retreat master, began with simple stories of people who died suddenly and without notice. Within the span of an hour, four simple stories of sudden death had changed our mood from playful jokes to deadly silence. The extreme consciousness of death stopped us dead on our tracks of 'living' life. This was really a 'retreat'. For the thought of death influences how one lives his life. In a sense, the awareness or proximity of death is the best way to achieve sanctity and salvation. After that retreat, the thought of death would come to me whenever a friend or relative would become seriously ill or have an accident.

Tony Mendoza was a classmate in high school. We joked together, went to parties and ogled at girls together. Tony became a career soldier, a colonel. Making an arrest one day, he placed his captive at the back of the jeep. He sat in front beside the driver.

Suddenly, the captive placed his handcuffs around the neck of the driver and pulled with all his might. The jeep had a head-on collision with a truck. They brought Tony's shredded body

to the hospital. He was screaming in pain.

While sobbing, he shouted without shame, "Lord, forgive me for all my sins."

He repeated this until he finally died. I thought how lucky Tony was, even in his violent and sudden death, for he stole heaven instantly with a very simple prayer.

Tony Camus was the marksman in ROTC back in college. He was an expert with guns. After college, he put up a security agency and was doing well.

One day, one of the guards he employed killed an ex-soldier attempting to rob an armored car they were escorting. The ex-soldier's brother vowed revenge. He promised to get even with the security agency which killed his brother.

One day, as Tony backed up his car out of the gate of his house, he was riddled with armalite bullets at close range. His eldest son witnessed everything from the seat beside the driver. When it is your time, you got to go no matter what. It cannot wait.

I have many more stories about classmates who have died - Boy Santiago, cancer of the lungs, or Bert Miranda, cancer of the brain. During an Ateneo alumni homecoming, there was a joke that there was only one guy left from the class of 1922.

Then someone shouted, "We're all going that way, brother."

There was silence as the joke turned to something serious. They say that death is the absolute neutralizer of the ugly versus the beautiful, the poor versus the rich, the helpless versus the powerful, the stupid versus the intelligent, those in extreme pain versus those in extreme comfort. Salvation was not achieved by beauty, wealth, power, or intelligence. In fact, these could be hindrances to salvation.

Death is, as the bible says, a thief in the night. It can happen suddenly to a two-month-old baby or a septuagenarian.

But suppose you are lucky enough to know you are going to die soon. What do you do? Would you go on a world tour, a spending spree perhaps? No. These are nothing to death-conscious people. Let me guess. You would probably pray, pay all your debts, give your most precious possessions away, forgive people you hate, love more the people you have failed to love properly. All of a sudden, crisis situations would no longer be crisis. The next meal or pay check are nothing. The material world would be the first to vanish, a world we are so immersed in, a world which ironically occupies at times 99 percent of our time. How lucky are those who have cancer and know they will die soon. At least, they can prepare.

Sister Raquel is a healer about whom I have written dozens of articles. She faces death everyday among people who come to her for help and who are mostly dying of terminal diseases, suffering extreme pain, people with cancer, kidney failure, and many more.

Many are healed and are able to cheat death, at least for the meantime. There were dramatic changes among those who have cheated death and were healed. Facing death changed their attitude. All of a sudden, things that matter are reduced to a handful of things we take for granted all our lives, love, respect, humility, sacrifice.

It is amazing how closely related spiritual renewal is to the thought of death. Yet, many people do not want to think about death. They want to preoccupy themselves with living, not with this depressing negative thought of death. But it is good to once in a while, after we have achieved wealth, fame, or power, to neutralize these 'misfortunes' with the thought that our bodies will one day turn to dust, and that we cannot bring to the next life the fame, fortunes, or power we have achieved.

CHAPTER 14

Maria Esperanza, Visionary

*discernment is seeing in total darkness
or in blinding light
it is knowing a person
without speaking to him*

*discernment is understanding the essential
without knowing the peripheral
it is knowing
without being taught*

*discernment is having the answer
before the question is asked
it is giving
without any suspicion*

*discernment is believing
without seeing
loving without asking why
trusting complete strangers*

*discernment is wisdom in the Lord
of the heart not of the mind
understanding by intuition His divine will
and accepting it without question*

eastwind

The story of Maria Esperanza was told to me by Sister Raquel based on a book.

Maria Esperanza, 70 years old as of this writing, mother of seven, is a famous Italian visionary. She had a vision of a great cataclysm which would occur after the year 2000. And out of the destruction will emerge conversion of sinners.

At the early age of sixteen, she entered the convent. She recounted that, after two years in the convent, St. Therese, appeared to her in a dream and told her that the convent was not for her and that she would be a courier of Marian messages in the future.

Maria, following the voice that haunted her, left the convent. In another dream, she saw the face of her future husband. True enough, one day, a man came to her. She knew he was the man in her dream. The man courted her and, true enough, she literally married the man of her dreams. He was a wealthy businessman who believed in the visions of Maria.

In another dream, Maria saw a farm house. The message of the Blessed Virgin in that dream was for her to buy this farm because it would be the place where the Virgin would give her many messages for the world. She and her husband went around, looking far and wide for the

farm house. They never found it and gave up.

The dream was almost forgotten. Seventeen long years passed. Maria by this time had children who were now grown up. One day, unexpectedly, two men came to her, offering to sell a farm. Maria and her husband visited the farm. Her dream came back in a flash. She knew right away it was the farm in her dreams. The husband bought the farm right away, and they moved in.

Maria waited and waited for the messages from the Blessed Virgin to come. There was nothing. Finally, after two more years, her visions of the Blessed Virgin began. When the messages came, it came not in trickles but in a flood. After the drought was the deluge. After waiting 19 long years, at last the vision was fulfilled. Maria had constant visions and the messages came like machine- gun fire, as if the Blessed Virgin was impatient and in a hurry to get the messages out to a troubled world.

Like Padre Pio, Maria developed stigmata, replications of the five wounds of Christ on the cross, in the hands and feet and in the lower rib. Every First Friday, the wounds would bleed and ache, sending a message that prayer and penance are the only way to avoid punishment for sin. Maria also performed healings of people beset by terminal diseases.

At one time, two doctors witnessed an opening on her chest, out of which emerged a tiny fresh rose complete with stem and leaves. This would happen 14 times in her lifetime, according to the book written on her.

The Lord works in His time, not ours. It took 17 long years for the farm to emerge. It took another two years for the first messages to come from the Blessed Virgin. If Maria had no faith, she would have given up and said her earlier visions were just mere figments of her imagination. But the visions came almost two decades after she knew they would come. And when the visions came, they came almost everyday, filling her life to the brim.

The messages were simply a confirmation of earlier messages in Fatima and Medjugorje. The messages spoke of the coming of World War III, the emergence of terrible disasters where fire would reach the inner recesses of homes (perhaps this would be the fires cause by lava of volcanic eruptions), bloody wars and pestilence destroying crops resulting in massive hunger and famine.

Some of these predictions are now happening. Earthquakes and volcanic eruptions have occurred in this current decade, including the biggest so far, Mt. Pinatubo. El Nino came in 1999 like an angel of death, spewing tornados in California, floods in Japan, China and South America, triggering droughts in the Philippines and Siberia. The ethnic wars in Yugoslavia which was preceded by messages at Medjugorje have left hundreds of thousands dead. NATO forces discovered mass graveyards and summary executions of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, a repeat of Bosnia and Croatia.

There is a potential nuclear war in the India-Pakistan conflict. There are half a dozen flash points worldwide today - India, Korea, Taiwan, the Middle East, Indonesia, some of which may suddenly explode into a regional war which may be the beginnings of a world war.

Maria spoke of the "three days of darkness" which was also mentioned at Medjugorje. Some theorize that this could be caused by a large asteroid hitting earth that would scatter debris from the explosion into the stratosphere and darken the earth for several days a hundred times more intense than what Mt. Pinatubo's eruption did.

Finally, the destruction of the World Trade Center and the cry of the great superpower for war is an omen of dire things to come. This grim disaster perhaps heralds the coming of a great

cataclysm. The Arab world will meet the American onslaught head on.

In this century alone, Marian messages have continuously spoken of a common theme of sin, punishment and deliverance, and the need for prayer and penitence, just like the Old Testament stories of Noah's ark and Sodom and Gomorrah, just like the Marian messages in Guadalupe, Fatima, Lourdes, Medjugorje. There are reports of new Marian visions in Vietnam.

The point of all these is not so much to dwell in prophecies of doom to scare people but more to wake people up into prayer and penitence. Perhaps, the era similar to the period before the deluge of Noah or the fires of Sodom and Gomorrah are at hand.

CHAPTER 15

No Contest for Kuya Germs

Reprinted from *Business World*
22 November 2001

*return to Me with your whole heart
with fasting and weeping and mourning
rend your hearts not your garments
return to Me your Lord your God
for gracious and merciful am I
slow to anger rich in kindness
relenting in punishment*

joel 2:12-13

Sister Raquel once told me and some friends an interesting story. But let me begin with a short background.

Sister Raquel received her power to heal in July 1991, a month after the Mt. Pinatubo eruption. In fact, I have a theory that her healing power is related to the Pinatubo cataclysm. For it was in Poong Bato (literally, 'the Lord made of rock'), an Aeta village devastated by the eruption where her powers began. She asked ten men to raise the fallen cement statue of Our Lady. Earlier, twenty men could not raise it because it was too heavy. With Sister's bidding and prayer, ten men raised the statue. In a few days, she received her healing power.

In August 1991, a month later, there was a big plan to launch a gigantic healing concert at the Araneta Coliseum on the birthday of the Blessed Virgin on September 8. The people helping Sister Raquel were all excited. But there was a big snag. On that day, the coliseum was reserved for another show, produced by television personality German Moreno, popularly known as Kuya Germs.

For many days, Sister Raquel and the people around her searched and searched for the telephone number of Moreno in vain, to make an appeal to him to move his show. But it seemed he was hard to find. Everyone was getting nervous because the days kept dragging on and September 8 was just around the corner. They were almost giving up.

Sister Raquel met with the coliseum management. But they said sorry that they could not help her. She just had to find Kuya Germs herself. Tired and hungry, almost losing hope, Sister Raquel, accompanied by a friend, entered a small unknown eatery in San Juan to take a snack after the meeting. At the eatery, they ordered *halo-halo*.

While waiting for their order, Sister Raquel bowed in prayer, "Lord, what are you doing to us? Why is it so hard to find this guy? This show is for You, isn't it? This is not for us. You better help us find this person. Please, Lord, there must be a way." (That was the way Sister prayed, as if talking casually to her father, sometimes even jokingly.)

Sister raised her eyes and accidentally saw someone at the table opposite theirs. She could not believe her eyes. She asked her companion to look behind and confirm if what she is seeing is real. There he was, Kuya Germs himself, in a small unknown eatery in a city of millions, a needle in

a mountain of hay. It could not be an accident. The hand of God was at work. Kuya Germs was with a group of people, probably his production staff.

Sister composed herself, hesitating to approach the famous Kuya Germs. Then she mustered courage, stood up, approached him, and with a smile as big as God's will, she said as casually as she could, "Aren't you Mr. German Moreno?"

Kuya Germs replied cordially, "Yes, sister, what can I do for you."

Sister said, "You know, Mr. Moreno, I am going straight to the point."

"Go ahead, sister. I am all ears."

"Well you see, We're planning a grand healing concert on the birthday of our Blessed Virgin, but there is a problem."

"Yes?"

With a smile, Sister went on, "Well, we cannot do it because you have a show on that day at the Araneta Coliseum. Can I ask you to move your show for Our Lady?"

Kuya Germs was taken aback by the quick, short and very frank request spoken so nonchalantly, and with a child-like smile, on such an accidental meeting. He was completely shocked.

Instinctively, he said, "Well, you could have it later."

"No, Mr. Moreno. It has to be on her birthday. What do you think? This is not for me. It is for Our Lady. It is our birthday gift to her."

Kuya Germs looked at Sister in silence for a moment. Then he and his entire staff could not help but laugh. It was not to ridicule Sister. They simply could not help see the humor of it all, a complete stranger coming out of nowhere while he is taking a snack in a restaurant, and asking him to move a show he has planned for so many months. It was as if a beggar came to him asking for his car. There was silence as Sister waited for a reply with a smile, unmoved by the laughter.

The face of Kuya Germs turned serious, contorting with pain, as he said, "What is all this? What is happening to me? Am I being punished?"

Sister Raquel was silent, and just kept on smiling. The staff of Kuya Germs was shocked speechless, waiting for their boss give a reply.

"Sister, do you think there is anyone who is willing to defy the Virgin? What can I do? Tell me, sister, can I go against our Blessed Lady?"

Sister said, "I suppose not."

Kuya Germs became weak, saying, "You win, sister. I will move my show. But not for you."

"Of course, for Mama Mary, right?"

Everyone was silent. End of story.

In that short five minute encounter, we see the hand of God move a mountain not even a top rate impresario or an influential television director could do, which was to ask Kuya Germs to give up his play date for his show. But it was done by an unknown sister working for the Lord.

In spite of the very short time to mobilize and organize the healing concert, it was a tremendous success beyond anyone's dream. The coliseum was jam-packed. About 17,000 people came even though there were only 15,000 tickets.

Sister Raquel performed group healing on the massive crowd. They all went home happy. The next day, Sister Raquel received hundreds of calls. They were thanking her that they have been healed, many of them with terminal diseases such as cancer. On that fateful birthday of the Virgin, the Lord gave His Mother the perfect gift, thousands healed instantly.

If He can move mountains, what more a mere show (no offense meant, Kuya Germs). The Lord works in mysterious ways beyond our imagination. Thank you, Kuya Germs, that you cannot defy the Virgin, but I am sure She has paid you back a hundred fold, right?

So let me end in a Bible quote, "My thoughts are not your thoughts. My ways are not your ways. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so are My ways above your ways, and My thoughts above your thoughts. For just as from the heavens, rain comes down and returns only after it has quenched the parched earth, giving seed to him who sows so he can eat bread, so shall My word." (Isaiah 55:1-11).

CHAPTER 16

The Gift of Self

Reprinted from the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*
12 January 2002

*what men crave for most
power and fame and fortune
are the very tools of his damnation*

*what men abhor most
pain and sickness and want
are the very tools of his salvation*

eastwind

This is a true story told by Sister Raquel. A very rich couple approached her, asking for help. They had a problem with their only daughter who was 25 years old. The rift kept on widening between child and parents, who were at a loss on what to do. Perhaps a healer could help solve the 'mystery'.

The mother broke the ice. She said they had given their daughter everything that she needed. She had gone to the best school and was well provided. She had all the material comforts of a rich family. The mother said they had given her all the love parents could possibly give. They had not been remiss in rearing her. Yet, the daughter kept moving farther and farther away from them. The parents were at a total loss.

Knowing the presence of Sister was crucial and seeing the opportunity to get off her chest everything she had kept inside her in the last two decades ever since she was a child, the daughter said her parents indeed gave her everything, except their time and her spiritual needs.

Before she could continue, the father objected in anger instantly. He said they went out in expensive dinners regularly. They gave their two children, a son and daughter, their precious time in spite of their busy schedules.

The daughter was undaunted by the anger. Sister was her shield. Now that the bottle had been uncorked, everything simply had to flow out. Pain overcame her fear of her very strict father. She said that in those precious dinners, all they talked about was business, interrupted constantly by talking and texting on the cell phone. Son and daughter would simply wink at each other furtively when their parents were lost in conversation over their cell phones.

The conversation was leading into a parent-child tussle right in front of Sister. The daughter said their home was like the barracks. There were so many 'rules' that she, in her exact word, 'could no longer breathe'. She said this with such emotion, the father shifted in his seat. Embarrassed by her brutal frankness about very personal things, he objected that she should not talk in front of Sister that way. But she was like a volcano erupting. All these years of pent up emotion was cascading down from her chest. There was no tremor in her voice. The words came out so brutally simple and bare. And Sister Raquel was the silent observer in the unfolding drama.

Suddenly, tears rolled down the mother's eyes, tears which admitted their folly. She asked,

'Why didn't you say so'? All these years, the daughter could not tell her parents what she said in three minutes in front of Sister Raquel. Both parents suddenly realized, in spite of the father's pride, their mistake. They gave their time, true, but not themselves. They mistook their providing everything materially as a manifestation of their love. All this time, they thought they were giving all the love they could possibly offer to their child. Yet, the child was so wanting.

The mother said that, all this time, she wanted to be close to her daughter and did not know how until now. She admitted she was often busy, but that she gave 'high priority' to her relationship with her children. The realization was like a lightning bolt for both parents, the shock, the initial anger, the internal admission, the tears, then the guilt. The problem of two long decades emerged in a very few precious minutes. In that instant, such a protracted problem solved itself by simple frankness. Sister Raquel did not lift a finger. Her presence and the respect she commanded was enough.

Sister Raquel said this type of family problem was so common among people who came to her, especially the rich. But such problems were not a monopoly of the rich, she added. Among the poor, the problem was the same although the circumstances could differ. Sister recounted the story of a father who spent the mother's earnings from three days of doing laundry in one night out with his *barkada*. Among the poor, it was the material aspect, not the spiritual that ate into family relationships.

I commented that a healer, I could see, did not just heal cancer, lupus, or leukemia, which Sister Raquel did. It did not just entail preempting heart bypasses. Sister talked about a ten-year-old deaf-mute from birth. The child returned after three days with her parents. When Sister said 'good morning', the child echoed the same two words, so sweet to the parents' ears. The Lord is kind to many who are suffering, whether physically or spiritually.

Healing relationships is crucial because more than half of people's problems revolve around relationships, not just physical sickness. Suffering also comes from not knowing how to deal with a daughter or a wife. Love is elusive sometimes, even for those who try hard. Children turn to drugs because they feel un-loved. Parents impose discipline at the expense of intimacy. Parents do not realize that, all this time, it is their fault and children do not speak out in fear. They fail to see that you give your self, not just your time, that reaching out is not just providing material needs.

Sister Raquel says total or 'wholistic' healing involves healing of both body and spirit. Healing the spirit is a prerequisite to healing the body. A person who cannot forgive may not be healed. A person who has not reconciled may not be healed. Sister Raquel repeatedly stresses that she is not the healer, it is the Lord who simply uses her hands. She says it is the Lord who requires that one's soul must be ready through forgiveness and reconciliation before He heals one's body.

More and more, Sister is becoming not just a healer but a family counsellor. There are, she says, just as many needing counsellors to heal families as those needing healers for breast cancer and kidney failure. This is true for both rich or poor, jeepney drivers or CEOs, Filipinos or Americans.

CHAPTER 17

Miracle of the Rain

Reprinted from the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*

*the people who walked in darkness
have seen a radiant light
upon those who dwelt
in the land of gloom*

*You have brought them o Lord
abundant joy and great peace
and they celebrate before You
as in a harvest and as in the spoils of victory*

*for the yoke that burdened them
the pole on their shoulder
and the rod of their taskmaster
You have smashed as in the days of midian*

isaiah 8:23-9:3

Another story has emerged about Sister Raquel, the healer in the name of the Lord who was featured by two television networks, *Magandang Gabi Bayan* (MGB) of ABS-CBN in late 2000 and by GMA7 in February 2002. In the last few weeks after the New Year of 2002, an 'explosion' of healings of cancer, heart, kidney, liver ailments occurred, that it would seem that this is not the year of the horse but the year of our Lord, who has showered the nation with His blessings/ I kept wondering why the Lord is showering mankind with so much blessings. Perhaps the Philippines will truly be a global spiritual center, as Medjugorje predicted.

After the MGB feature, visitors quintupled, so that Sister Raquel had to move the venue out of the rear healing center in the RVM compound in Novaliches to the more spacious front courtyard, which she has duly labelled the 'open cathedral'.

The open cathedral is, however, subject to rain and sun. The first time it rained, Sister Raquel prayed aloud through the *karaoke*, "Lord, can You not postpone the rain so we can have our healing session?" Instantly, the rain stopped and the hundreds of people attending clapped. In another session came the intense sun. The *kaimito* or star apple and mango trees failed to shade the people who spilled over the cathedral. Sister prayed, "Lord, it is too hot for many. Can You not give some shade?". In a while, clouds blocked the sun, but it did not rain. Again, the people clapped. Finally, on a hot windless day, Sister Raquel prayed, "Lord, please give us some wind to cool us, some natural electric fan." Soon, a gentle breeze came, blowing continuously. Again, the people were awed by the Lord's 'aircon' (air-continue).

January 16, four days before the feast of the *Sto. Nino* or Holy Child, was a Wednesday, the day Sister Raquel would douse people with water, one pail per person, in her healing sessions. She had a water tank erected right beside the altar. There was a drizzle. Sister Raquel prayed, "Lord,

please stop the rain for our healing session." The rain, however, became a heavy downpour. The Sto. Nino image, placed on a marble altar, and the people were all drenched to the bone. The people said that perhaps the Holy Child also wanted to have a healing bath like them.

Sister Raquel told the crowd to pray the *Our Father* aloud. The people looked up at the sky, closed their eyes, the rain pouring on their faces. They opened their palms towards the sky and prayed together aloud. Many were healed on that day, as they reported on the following Saturday healing session. There were testimonials of asthma, jaundice, and hemorrhoids instantly vanishing. The people called it '*paligo ng langit*' (shower from heaven) and '*milagro ng ulan*' (miracle of the rain). The children shouted, '*Ang Batang Hesus naligo rin kasama natin*' (the Holy Child has joined us in the healing bath). Sister Raquel admired the strong unquestioning faith of people.

Everyone was soaking wet. But one lady noticed that Sister Raquel's habit did not look wet at all in spite of the heavy downpour. She touched the hem of her habit and gave a soft scream. It was dry in spite of the rain. The next day, many people called and told her there were no wet roads outside. It seemed the heavy downpour was limited to the RVM compound. If Medjugorje and Fatima had their 'miracle of the sun', Novaliches now has its 'miracle of the rain'. For the skeptics, perhaps it is better you see for yourself.

Miracle of the Wallet

Then came the 'miracle of the wallet'. In the past, people placed on top of the marble altar their towels, drinking water, and even medicine to be blessed by Sister Raquel. On one particular healing session, a lady, who had a financial problem, placed her wallet on the altar. Sister was surprised as this was the first time a wallet would be blessed. After two weeks, the lady came back and told the crowd she received an unexpected P88,000 and was able to pay off her loans and house repair.

The next healing session, the marble altar was overflowing with wallets. Recession has made many wallets of Filipinos thin. Sister Raquel blessed a mountain of wallets and bags of all shapes and sizes. The next Saturday, there was an avalanche of testimonies of unexpected receipt of money. A mother said her son asked for her wallet and placed P10,000 in it. Normally, she received only P500 to P1,000 from him. Another witness who recently had an operation she could not afford said her wallet was now always full and never empty.

Irony of ironies. Sister Raquel decided to have her own wallet blessed by her the next time, as the funds of the retreat house she ran was drying up. Unfortunately, she forgot to bring her wallet. After the blessing, a man came up to her, an executive of SM Mall, saying, "Sister, it is my turn to give you a blessing." He handed her a check of P10,000. Sister Raquel did not need a wallet.

The story is not over. A lady decided to place a piece of paper on top of the pile of wallets and bags on the altar. The paper contained a list of people who could not pay their loans. She was praying they would pay her back. The next session, she reported that three did pay and a few more called out of the blue, saying sorry they had not paid but would pay very soon. And so, piles of IOU lists came next on the marble altar.

This marble altar is a story all its own. A young businessman from Romblon who made marble furniture came to Sister Raquel. He was at the 'pre-departure area', having five terminal diseases, cancer of the prostate, advanced ulcers, diabetes, double kidney failure, and high blood pressure. It is unimaginable how one man could have so many diseases. The Lord was kind to him.

In a few weeks, he was completely healed of all his ailments. Many were surprised how so many sicknesses in one man could vanish in the blink of an eye.

In appreciation, he donated the marble altar, one I have never seen before, a good two-inch solid aqua-marine marble top held by a single stout solid marble base, no parts, no frills, just good old marble, the best money could buy. But it was nothing compared to his rebirth, a new life in the Lord.

The stories of healing overflow in such a short time for some reason. But reasons are not needed because healing is its own reason. There must be a hidden message in all these. But life and rebirth and health are all their own reasons.

The open cathedral has the sky as roof, trees as pillars, and rough stony ground as floor. Yet, it seems to be immune to the forces of nature, but only when there are people around in prayer. Sister Raquel says the cathedral is not made of roof and pillars, or even sky or trees, It is made of people in prayer.

CHAPTER 18

Spiritual Transformation

Reprinted from the *Business World*

*I will show you the way
which surpasses all others*

*love is patient
love is kind
love is not jealous
it does not put on airs
it is not proud
love is not rude or self-seeking
it is not prone to anger
it does not brood over hurt
love does not rejoice
in falsehood but in truth
there is no limit
to love's forbearance
to its trust and its hope
its power to endure
love never fails*

*there are in the end
three things that last
faith and hope and love
and the greatest of these is
love*

1 corinthians 12:31 / 13:4-8,13

When I went on a visit to Sister Raquel recently, she introduced me to Eva (not her real name). She had a Ph.D. and was a professor at a prestigious university. She had cancer of the breast. Sister was praying over her and placed her hand on her chest. Suddenly, I saw Sister jerked her hand away from her. She said she felt a strong electrical current. She said that this was a good sign that she was being healed.

Eva told me that before she went to Sister Raquel for healing, she had advanced-stage cancer of the breast, evident from the strong foul odor of the liquid coming out of the lesions of her breast. Her breast was bluish and had hardened like a rock. Her immunity level, like most cancer patients, was way down at 20. Her hemoglobin count was low at nine.

At the time I met Eva, it was her third visit to Sister Raquel. After two previous visits, her immunity level jumped to a normal of 50, then to 70. Her hemoglobin count also jumped to a normal of 12, then to 14. Yet she was still positive for cancer. The attending doctors were perplexed. They

never had a cancer patient before whose immunity level and hemoglobin count were normal. It was their first time to experience this bizarre pattern.

Gradually, the fluid at the lesion was lessened and there was no more foul odor. The breast softened and returned to its flesh color. Although at the time I met her, she was not yet fully healed, she knew she was on the way to recovery. Her energy level went up. Before the healing sessions, she would be tired after only 30 minutes at the computer. Now, she could last two hours and not get tired. And there was no more pain in her breast. The darkness she felt inside her became the radiant light of the Lord that had transformed her utterly, both physically and spiritually.

Sister Raquel said healing is a form of energy and triggers a 'physical transformation', such as what Eva felt that astounded her doctors. The spark Sister felt was also a manifestation of this energy. Sister also said people who are healed can, on occasions, transmit that healing energy they received from Sister and also heal others. Helping to heal others also heals the healer. Sister encouraged those she had healed to also try to heal others.

It is a *karmic* principle. In other words, the love you give also heals you somehow. A ton of holy water used for healing works less than the love you can give to someone, a stranger in need perhaps. This transformation is thus not just on a physical plain. It is a *spiritual transformation, a spiritual renewal* that triggers physical transformation. So spiritual healing precedes physical healing for those who are sick. Sister says this 'energy' is not hers. It is the Lord's and she is merely an instrument of divine energy.

Sister Raquel said that the opportunities to help others is everywhere, but most often, we have, by habit perhaps, made ourselves insensitive to them. The intent to help is a matter of heart. 'If your heart is kind, you can see forever.' That was her line to people who came for healing.

Healing Street Children

Sister recounts being invited to a house of orphaned street children. This was a bunch of rowdy noisy kids. There was this *bulilit* who was all over the place. Sister showed her fist to him jokingly. Everyone laughed, never quieting down.

'Okay, *mag-group healing tayo*', Sister screamed so as not to be drowned by the noise. '*Sino ang mga may sakit?*' (Let's have group healing. Who feels sick?). Pandemonium and screams. A dozen hands went up. They complained of headaches, toothaches, etc. *Bulilit* pointed to his aching swollen belly button. Sister rubbed his stomach and shouted, 'Out ang sakit! Sundin ako, out!'. Everyone shouted, 'Out, out'. True enough, the pain in *Bulilit's* belly button vanished. So did the headaches and toothaches. For the first time, astounded by Sister, the rowdy children fell utterly silent. The adult teachers were amazed. Nobody ever got the attention of these children before. Sister said it is so easy for the Lord to heal the children whom He so loved, children without families, abandoned by parents, extremely in need of being loved. These are the love-thirsty souls the Lord cannot resist to bless.

'*Palakpakan si Jesus*', Sister shouted. A resounding applause echoed. Then complete silence once more, their eyes glued on this amazing nun that could heal them instantly.

A boy raised his hand, '*Sister, ang nanay ko po may kanser. Sana puntahan ninyo.*' (Sister, my mother has cancer. I hope you can visit her.) Sister was so touched how children in extreme pain still loved the very parents who abandoned them.

The Visionaries

From the onset of her healing powers two weeks after the Mt. Pinatubo eruption in 1991, about a dozen 'visionaries' have sought Sister Raquel. Sister was cautious as she refused to be an instrument of the devil. They may claim they are visionaries and may simply be using her for their own ends. Thus, Sister often took the messages of alleged visionaries with a grain of salt.

One was a wealthy French woman from Paris named Nicole (not her real name) who was searching for Sister Raquel for months. As related by Nicole to Sister, she had a dream to seek out a someone from a Third World nation. First, she went to Africa but found no one. She then tried the Philippines. She had a strange feeling the person she was looking for was in this only Christian nation in the entire Asia. At the airport, she approached a man and told him she was looking for 'someone', perhaps a religious person. It so happened that the man just finished a retreat at an RVM convent in San Fernando, La Union. So he told Nicole that that might be a good place to start.

The RVM sisters at San Fernando were kind enough to accommodate Nicole. For a whole week, she scrutinized the face of every sister, looking for a 'sign'. The sisters were beginning to get annoyed being stared at. Finally, the sisters told her that she might try the RVM mother house in Quezon City. Nicole, still resolute in her quest, took the advice. Again, she stared at each sister's face in vain. Just as she was about to give up after a week, Sister Raquel arrived from a long trip from out of town. Upon seeing her, Nicole knew right away it was she whom she was looking for and who was in her dreams and visions.

Nicole told Sister Raquel that she would be involved in 'global evangelization', that people from other nations would flock to her to seek her healing. Sister Raquel laughed off her vision as ridiculous. How could she, a lowly nun, be involved in such global concerns, she asked herself. Nicole added that many Marian groups would coalesce and rally behind her in her global mission, that international journalists would come to her aid and feature her healing in global media.

But Sister Raquel could not forget Nicole and her vision. It would haunt her when thousands would flock to her for healing, when she began the many healing missions abroad, to China, Japan, Spain and the U.S., when she declined offers from local television and radio stations to have her own regular program because she thought she was simply not ready for such things. It began to dawn on Sister Raquel that Nicole's vision may be true. But she simply said that she was an instrument of the Lord's love, and would do anything He wanted. She resigned herself to His will and said, "Lord, Your will be done." Whether the visionaries were real or not, whether they were true or not, it did not matter. Only the will of the Lord mattered for Sister Raquel.

I asked Sister if she was perhaps an omen of doom because her healing powers was somehow related to the biggest volcanic eruption of the 20th century. Her powers came at a time of cataclysm. 'On the contrary, the message I bring is salvation, not punishment', Sister replied. There was an urgency in her voice, as if she was asking people to start giving themselves to others now, starting this spiritual renewal, not tomorrow but now, to change their ways, to catalyze this spiritual transformation 'before it is too late'.

She recalls the ten foolish virgins whose lamps ran out, and when they went to buy more oil, the groom arrived and they closed the gates. She feels the effort to do good is so urgent now during our time of population explosion, rapid technology changes, widening gap between rich and poor, declining global economy, and a general trend towards materialism and greed instead of sharing as the answer to survival. The planet is starting to percolate.

CHAPTER 19

Human Chain

Reprinted from the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*

*He brings you strength in your weariness
and healing in your infirmity
He clothes you in your nakedness
and nourishes you in your hunger
He makes you see in total darkness
and hear His whispers amid the roar of thunder
He gives you a deluge in your drought
be not restless then for so silently He is in you
eastwind*

Sister Raquel now talks about a new dimension in her healing ministry, a new discovery she wants to share with everyone. This is the communal dimension of healing. Healing is no longer just the personal touch of her hand on people who are sick, but the touch of the entire community at prayer on each other. She tells this amazing story.

At any given Saturday, the only healing day in the week when people can come without appointment, there is an average of about 600 people at the Mother Ignacia Retreat House in Novaliches. On this particular Saturday, it was now early evening and Sister Raquel was tired. The whole afternoon, she was praying one-on-one over people, but there were a lot more. The queue seemed endless.

She decided to shift to group healing as time was running short. She gathered those who had not yet been prayed over and asked them to hold hands and form a human chain. She held the microphone with her left hand and held another's hand with her right. She instructed the crowd that the chain must not be broken, that no one should let go of the other's hand during prayer, no matter what happens. The human chain extended for about a quarter of a kilometer, snaking around the open cathedral which had trees as its roof, gravel as its floor, wind as its air-conditioning, and sick people as its community. At the center marble altar stood the statue of the **Sto. Nino** or the Holy Child.

Sister Raquel told everyone to close their eyes and repeat a prayer after her. And so they did, praying intensely, holding each other firmly. A 34-year-old engineer, Richard (not his real name), suddenly went into a violent convulsion, as if he was having an epileptic attack. His wife to his right and the man to his left, remembering Sister's instructions, tightened their grip. The wife timed his convulsion. It went for more than ten minutes.

At the end of the group healing, Richard was sweating profusely. He asked his wife to wipe his back with a towel. The wife started sobbing, for she discovered that Richard's advanced scoliosis (abnormal curving of the spine) was completely gone. His spine was instantly normal and straight.

Several weeks after the human chain incident, two women came up to speak during the healing session. The first woman related that she had her eyes closed while they prayed when they formed the human chain. She heard the footsteps of someone approaching her who stopped in front of her. At first, she thought it was Sister Raquel. But Sister said that was impossible. She was at the

end of the human chain, holding the microphone and dictating a prayer. With eyes still closed, she felt someone stroke her gently on her cheek, the soft touch of a small hand, a child's hand. She was sick with 'palsy', according to Sister Raquel, a type of rare skin disease that was on her entire face that made people shun away from her. While relating her story, the woman showed her smooth face to the crowd. Her skin disease was gone. It vanished slowly after the child's hand stroked her face. Everyone clapped.

The second woman said she had a terrible stiff neck. She could not turn her head or even move it. She recalled the same footsteps in front of her while she closed her eyes in prayer, but instead of gentle strokes, she received two strong slaps on her left and right cheeks. But her stiff neck was gone instantly.

The two women asked if the strange invisible healer have been the Holy Child, the Sto. Nino, whose statue stood at the altar? The hand they felt was that of a Child. The Holy Child is known to be a 'naughty boy' playing pranks on people, like the slap the second woman got.

One story about the Holy Child goes like this. When St. Theresa of Jesus was going down the convent stairs, she was surprised to meet a small boy going up. The child asked her, 'Who are you?'. She was amused as she should be the one asking what a child is doing in a cloistered convent.

She replied anyway, 'I am Theresa of Jesus.' She added, 'And who might you be?', in a castigating tone, since the place was not open to outsiders. The child replied, 'I am Jesus of Theresa'. And the boy vanished.

Sister Raquel laughs when she says the Sto. Nino was forced to do the one-on-one healing on people in the human chain because she was too tired. The spirit was willing but the flesh was weak. And so, the Holy Child came to her rescue and went on His pranks.

The human chain is like a highway, only it is not cars that pass through but a strange healing energy that emanates from a source. It is not just Sister Raquel whom the Lord uses to heal people, it is everyone together at prayer, the community. The communal aspect of healing is a strange new phenomenon. People together, if they have the faith, if they pray together, somehow have the power to heal each other.

Sister Raquel says those who have been healed can sometimes also heal. Shirley is such a person, whom I interviewed. Healed of diabetes and advanced glaucoma, she reports that she has also healed her daughter. Before going to Sister Raquel, she was virtually blind, seeing everything in a blur. Now she can see clearly and uses no glasses.

Many observers see the protracted Israeli-Palestine conflict as an omen of dire things to come. They say the attack on the birthplace of Christ, at the Church of the Nativity, is a message of a future cataclysm from an angry God on a sinful world, a cataclysm that would dwarf that of World War II. This doomsday scenario, they say, may be in fulfilment of the Revelations (Protestant) or Apocalypse (Catholic). It may come now or twenty years from now, no one knows.

A purported visionary once told Sister Raquel she will have the gift of prophecy, which she brushes aside today. Although she discerns the hand of God in the current Middle East war, she focuses not on sin and punishment but on repentance and the return to God, not on past mistakes but on present atonement. She says the Lord's healing has a role of bringing back people to God, the return of countless prodigal sons to the His welcoming arms. Today, Sister Raquel is the only emerging woman evangelist in a world dominated by men.

Thus says this woman evangelist, the Lord heals to bring back His flock to Him. The Lord makes people sick only so they can seek His healing. He brings darkness so people can seek His

light. He lets them get lost in the desert so they can find His path. Pain and sickness are instruments of the return to the Lord.

CHAPTER 20

The Theology of Cancer

Reprinted from the *Business World*

*I am the alpha and the omega
the beginning and the end
to the thirsty I offer life-giving waters*

revelation 21:6

During an interview with RPN-9 and PTV-4 for Holy Week telecasts, Sister Raquel Reodica, RVM, explained the spiritual aspect of cancer. From her view, there are spiritual causes and cures for such a deadly prevalent physical sickness.

In her many cases of healing of terminal cancer, Sister Raquel probes deep into the lives of people because she believes cancer is not simply a physical phenomenon of bad cells that only doctors can look into.

There was the case of this PR lady afflicted with fifth stage cancer of the breast. Her breasts were as hard as steel, giving her constant agonizing pain. She came to sister pleading for her to pray over her. She did, but nothing happened. Sister Raquel began probing, 'Is there something bothering you?'

The woman replied, 'Nothing really (long pause). Well, there is this close friend I really hate so much.' And so it emerged, this spiritual cause for cancer. Sister Raquel said that perhaps her healing will begin if she forgave this hateful person. Hate consumed her whole being. It made her tremble and the color of her face changed at the thought of this person, sister recounted.

But she could not possibly forgive because the crime was so 'unforgivable'. She recounted to sister that after she took pains to pedestal this person into the limelight of show business, after she became a famous actress, she dropped her like a hot potato. Once she got what she wanted, the actress acted as if she did not exist. She simply used her.

Sister Raquel castigated her. If Jesus could take insults left and right, what more you, a simple person. The woman was silent. Then she burst into uncontrollable sobs. She suddenly realized that everything was up to her, that she had control over her consuming hatred, that she could forgive if she wanted to. 'I have not cried for so long, perhaps about five years now, sister.' she uttered.

'Then cry away,' Sister Raquel chided her, 'Let it all out. Go ahead. Let your tears flow'. And so tears flowed like a waterfalls, tears which cleansed the spirit. Her shoulders trembled from her sobs. In no time, the woman was healed, not so much by Sister Raquel but by her own forgiveness, by her shedding off deep anger and hatred, which was very hard to do, if one does not pray for strength. Cancer was healed not by medicine or doctors but by forgiveness and prayer.

Sister Raquel defines cancer as bad cells attacking good cells. That was on the physical level. On the spiritual level, the essence of cancer is the same, destruction. There is cancer on an individual level, and on the social level. Even society can be afflicted with cancer, says Sister Raquel. When majority of people in a given community become exploiters, users, when they become cold and

unfeeling of others around them, when they act only for their own survival at the expense of others, then society becomes ill with cancer. Sister Raquel, the woman evangelist from Laguna used precise Pilipino words, '**makasarili**' (selfish), '**magalitin**' (cranky), '**mapusok**' (impetuous), words that made listeners look into themselves.

On a higher plain, a nation can also be afflicted with cancer, Sister Raquel adds. A nation which bullies a smaller poorer nation, is afflicted with cancer, a nation which gives aid only when its interests are met, forcing a small nation to have huge debts on ridiculous projects only to earn interest. There are more examples - the use of force, superior weapons people are helpless to fight back against, economic sanctions against a single tyrant that make millions hungry. These are all manifestations of a cancerous nation.

And so I asked Sister Raquel, if there is cancer, what is the cure. Her answer was astoundingly simple. If cancer is essentially to destroy, the cure is essentially to build. And what builds except love. The spiritual cure for cancer is love, the opposite of **makasarili**, **magalitin**, **mapusok**, meaning, **mapagmahal** (loving), **matiisin** (patient), and **mapagbigay** (giving). On the individual level, the moment the PR woman forgave her hateful actress friend, her cancer was on the way out.

And so, the last step is global cancer, a planet where the dominant force is evil, as in the time of Noah, Sodom and Gomorrah, and Jeremiah. Today, we see everywhere how physical cancer has spread. In one Saturday healing session alone of Sister Raquel, I looked into the log book. There were 99 cancer patients out of 410 seeking healing, almost a quarter.

So many people are suffering from cancer everywhere, rich and poor, Filipinos, Americans, Europeans. It is everywhere, as ubiquitous as the sun at day time. Is it possible that cancer is a reminder to a sinful planet? People afflicted with cancer feel helpless against this deadly disease. But if cancer is the way back to the Lord, conversion, the return of the prodigal son, then the Lord perhaps gives cancer to get souls back into His fold.

It seems that way in the case of Sister Raquel. The people afflicted with cancer were healed only when they achieved spiritual transformation, when they forgave, reconciled, loved the people around them, even their most hateful enemies. A womanizing lawyer was healed when he dropped her two mistresses. A rich businessman who was the CEO of four companies was healed after he shed off the insecurity and envy he had towards his older brother and sister.

An astounding case was a woman who had breast cancer. The breast which was cut off during an operation failed to stop the spread of cancer. When she went to Sister Raquel, her faith was so strong that, not only did her cancer disappear, her missing breast started growing again.

In another case, Rosa had total failure of both kidneys. It seemed suicidal that, when she visited Sister Raquel, she stopped buying her expensive medication. After three months of weekly visits to Sister Raquel, she was so totally healed that her doctor, after giving her a barrage of tests, said, 'The Lord is kind to you. He gave you new kidneys.' It is amazing how faith can trigger physical regrowth, a form of rebirth.

When the blind see, the lame walk, failing kidneys and liver are revived, lopped off breasts grow again, when hopeless cancer disappear, there must be some important message somewhere, a message of repentance, of hope, of a return to the Lord.

CHAPTER 21

The Miracle of the Newspaper

Reprinted from the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*
3 November 2002

*i have waited
waited for the Lord
He stooped towards me
and heard my cry*

*He drew me out of the pit
and out of the mud
He raised me on a rock
and held firm my steps*

*He put a new song on my lips
a hymn of praise to our God
many shall look in awe
and trust in Him*

psalm 40:2-4

This woman from Cabanatuan had cancer of the ovary. She was in constant extreme pain. She saw an article cut out from an old issue of the *Inquirer*, entitled 'Miracle of the Rain'. It was so tattered that if she did not hold it properly, it would fall apart. The article was about a certain Sister Raquel Reodica, RVM, who could heal terminal cancer in the name of the Lord.

She wanted so much to go to Sister Raquel but the article did not give any directions. Even if she knew the way, she did not have the money nor the transport to go to such a distant place. In desperation, she placed the tattered article on her stomach, and pleaded aloud, 'Lord, please heal me through Sister Raquel and Mother Ignacia.' (ie, the founder of Sister Raquel's order, the Religious of the Virgin Mary, undergoing investigation in Rome for beatification as of this writing.)

In 30 minutes, the pain vanished. After a week, she had a second check up at her doctor and the cancer was gone, vanished into thin air. Subsequently, she was able to go to Novaliches and meet Sister Raquel in person. When people were asked to give testimonies about their healing experiences, she grabbed the microphone and told her story. The people clapped their hands and called her tattered article 'paper that heals'. But it is really the Lord that heals.

A second Cabanatuan woman who had cancer of the throat could no longer eat. She received nourishment through a tube. She lay inside the hut in Sister Raquel's retreat house garden. A towel wet with water was blessed by Sister Raquel and wrapped around her neck. She was so weak, she could not stand up without help. When Sister Raquel prayed over her, she immediately stood up on her own.

Sister Raquel explained that it was not the article that really healed, not the piece of paper,

but the Lord. She said the Lord uses earthly instruments to heal, for example, the water or towel they use during healing sessions, physical objects by which the Lord gives His blessings.

She said, 'In all these stories of healing, there is only one message the Lord wants to give to the whole world, the Truth of His interest in each one of us. All you need is to pray, and He will bless you. It is between you and the Lord. I am just an instrument, a bridge. Ask and you shall receive. Pray to Him and you are connected to Him. These instruments are His way of reaching out to us. **Kahit among hilingin mo, ibibigay Niya, isa lang ang kondisyon, magpakabait ka.** (He will grant you any request under one condition, that you are pure in spirit.)'.

A woman with psoriasis of the feet came to her. She had to go barefoot because of the pain, and she could hardly walk. Her feet were like roasted eggplants, black, swollen, and scaly. She asked to be healed. Without batting an eyelash, Sister Raquel instinctively asked, '**Masungit ka ba?**' (Are you cranky?) She was not surprised at the question but answered instantly, '**Ay Sister, napaka.**' (Yes, very much.)

'Why are you cranky anyway?'

'Sister, I have a small store at home. Everyday, my two nephews ask for five pesos, bunch of freeloaders.'

'Your eczema is a reminder of your being cranky. You must stop being cranky if you want to be healed.'

'Okay Sister, I will try. I promise.'

And so, she did try. When the nephews asked for money, she gave it with a smile. They were surprised at the sudden change of their aunt. In the beginning, it was hard, but prayer made her change. After her fifth visit, she came wearing Japanese slippers for the first time. She still had a bit of eczema but her feet had improved a lot. The money, which she saved not buying any more expensive lotion for her psoriasis, she gave to her nephews. On her sixth visit, she testified that while taking a bath, she suddenly looked at her feet and, lo and behold, her psoriasis was totally gone. Her feet were as smooth as silk.

A father asked Sister Raquel if his son had a chance of being healed. He had a hopeless case of advanced psoriasis across his whole body, except for his face. They had to sweep a dust pan full of scales everyday. He was one big wound. He was healed. Ask and it will be given to you.

A man who was deaf came to her, asking to be healed. She asked him, '**Gusto mong gumaling?** (Do you want to be healed?) He answered, '**Opo**', not realizing his hearing came back to him instantly. His wife wept profusely.

Sister Raquel has started to collect medical results as indisputable evidence of the Lord's kindness. The cancer in a woman's breast had spread to her bones and brain. Her records later read, 'cancer free'. The cancer in another woman's breast had spread to her colon, threatening to spread to her bones. Her records later read, 'cancer free'. In another case of cancer of the breast, after a month, her active cancer cells became 'silent'. After two more months, her records read, 'cancer free'. Sister Raquel said, 'Jesus did it. **Siya ang boss.**' (He is the boss.).

Many expensive operations have been pre-empted. Surlita from Southern Leyte needed P550,000 for an operation on her four large tumors in the brain. Her husband had already mortgaged their small farm. She had an excruciating headache the whole day. She had sudden fainting spells. Even her speech was impaired. After so many visits to Sister, she was healed, no more pains, no more fainting spells. They returned the loan immediately. She refused to have a check up because it would cost P6,000 and she knew she was already well anyway. She advised everyone to visit Sister

Raquel before an operation, not after.

A man in Cagayan de Oro had a malignant tumor of the prostate scheduled for operation the next day. In his despair, he asked for his daughter, a Carmelite nun, who requested for Sister Raquel's help. As Sister Raquel prayed over her, he placed a picture of Jesus on his crotch. Sister Raquel said she would not leave for Manila until she knew if he would still go for an operation. The next day, he requested the doctor to make a quick check up before he finally cut him up. The doctor gave in to such a strange request just to please his patient. He was shocked. There was no need for surgery, no more tumor. His prostate was as normal as could be.

By word of mouth, people flock to Sister Raquel's healing center in the outskirts of Novaliches. The *Inquirer* articles are a big factor. So many photo-copies of 'the paper that heals' have been made and distributed. Some have been laminated to preserve them. When *Inquirer* articles come out, there are emails and telephone calls as far as the Middle East and Europe.

On occasions, Sister Raquel performs long distance healing for sick people from abroad by telephone, or even locally if they are not ambulant. You can request for an 'appointment call' from *The Marian Telephone Brigade* above. Long distance healing however can be difficult. Nothing can replace physical touch as the healing energy of the Lord flows to her hands. Yes, it can travel also along telephone lines but the effort for Sister Raquel is draining.

CHAPTER 22

Towards a Global Ministry

Reprinted from the *Business World*

*I am the light of the world
he who follows Me
shall not walk in darkness
but shall have the light of life*

john 8:12

In a recent two-month marathon of a healing mission in the U.S., Sister Raquel Reodica, RVM, went to fifteen different parishes in California, Boston, New York, New Jersey, and Chicago. Although she was hosted by Filipinos and the RVM convents, the thousands who flocked to the healing sessions were mostly "black, white, and brown", in her own words. By the time she was leaving, telephone calls of those who were healed started to pour in at her base in New Jersey.

In her scheme, Sister Raquel established a relationship with parish priests, who gave her all-out support. Most of the healing sessions were done in the parish churches. The schedule to accommodate Americans, who were busy during both weekdays and weekends, was 7:00 in the evening onwards. Most of the time, the healing sessions would end at midnight or 1:00 in the morning. Sister Raquel would sleep the whole morning, go on tours accompanied by Filipinos in the afternoon, then "work overtime" in the evening for the Lord.

The healing bath she employs in the Philippines could not be done in America because, in autumn, people would freeze to death in such an open-air bath. Also, it was impractical to splash a lot of water inside the churches. Instead of using cold water, she used holy oil.

Sister Raquel employed a new technique which she says came as an inspiration from the Holy Spirit. She began appointing "extension healers". This was because there were so many sick everywhere and she could not cater to all in her short stay in America. It was a way of extending worldwide her limited healing ministry.

She blest with holy oil an average of 350 extension healers in each of the fifteen parishes where she held healing sessions. She has commissioned about 5,000 to extend the healing of the Lord to the many afflicted with cancer in America today. Sister Raquel formed five crosses representing the five sacred wounds of Jesus with holy oil on the hands of the new extension healers one by one. It is too early to know if any of these extension healers were able to heal. Perhaps not all are expected to become healers, but if some do, the news will surely spread like wildfire not only in America but also here.

Sister Raquel employed the same *pranhic*-style ritual she uses in the Philippines wherein, while she verbally dictated a prayer, the people rubbed the parts of their bodies which were afflicted, "scooped out" the disease with their hands, "threw" it to the ground, and stomped their foot hard on it while shouting "out, out". She noted this caused pandemonium in the church much worse than in the Philippines only because the Americans had bigger feet and mostly wore boots. Many parish priests commented that it was their first time to see healing sessions so full of fun and noise. The people had a grand time stomping their feet and screaming at children to do the same.

There were a lot afflicted with cancer who came. Sister Raquel says many of those who had cancer of the chest, throat, or brain were on a computer almost the whole day. A few of them vowed to change their careers or jobs.

The Filipinos began duplicating a 55-minute documentary in VCD form, which was earlier produced in the Philippines by this author and Surf Reyes, a fellow freelancer, before Sister Raquel left for the U.S. This was in fact aired several times at RPN 9 during and after Holy Week this year. The VCD version has spread like wildfire among the Filipinos in America. Copies were "burnt" in their computers, and passed on.

A Filipino doctor offered to have the documentary aired worldwide at EWTN in Alabama, where there is a Filipino priest close to Mother Angelica, founder of this Catholic ministry cable station. If this is successful, it is one big step in truly elevating Sister Raquel's healing ministry to a global level. Right now, English subtitles are being incorporated into the documentary for general audiences in preparation for global broadcast.

Although this may take a bit of time, the RVM Sisters will be looking for volunteer doctors and nurses to run the hospital facilities. Calling on doctors, nurses, and other hospitals who may want to help in Sister Raquel's healing ministry, please send an email to the address below.

One story of healing worth mentioning is that of a Las Vegas housewife dying of cancer and in a coma, whom Sister Raquel describes as in a "hopeless stage". She was in the ICU of a hospital and could not go to the healing sessions. Sister Raquel prayed over her husband and family by proxy at the healing session. Later, Sister Raquel received news that the woman was now out of the hospital and "feeling better". This long-distance healing was a rarity.

In Los Angeles, a Filipino woman teacher who had a "stage four" cancer, recovered after the healing session and is now past the critical stage. In Boston, at the Church of St. Peter parish, an American woman who had extreme pain in her shoulders and back, which all types of medicines could not relieve, was planning a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal for healing. The day before her departure, she went to Sister Raquel's session and instantly the pain vanished. She was sobbing that her agony for two long months seeing so many doctors was suddenly gone. Sister Raquel advised her to continue her pilgrimage to thank Our Lady.

We are now beginning to see the global role of the Novaliches healing center. With the possible airing of the documentary in a worldwide cable station, the global awareness for the healings of the Lord through Sister Raquel will be realized. The hospital facility will perhaps play a critical role if foreigners with cancer are to visit Sister Raquel.

Meanwhile, the new healing center in the Novaliches compound is almost ready. The Fine Arts Department of the University of Sto. Tomas has offered to paint the huge church mural in January. It seems things are moving fast. It is the Lord who is orchestrating everything at a time when the world needs so much to do some soul searching in this era of chaos and rapid changes, an era of cancers and computers, of economic decline and abject poverty. When hopeless cancer disappears, there must be some important message somewhere, a message of repentance, of hope, of a return to the Lord.

CHAPTER 23

Miracles, continued

Reprinted from the *Business World*

*there is a large room in your soul
where anyone is welcome
a smaller room only for friends
an even smaller room only for loved ones
but the tiniest room of all
extends to the horizon
and the outer rim of the galaxy
in this vast tiny room
there is only you the Lord and destiny*

eastwind

After a long spell, I sat down with Sister Raquel Reodica, RVM, to get an update on the *Mother Ignacia Healing Center* in Novaliches. Things had quieted down from the frenzy of 2002 when as many as 3,000 visitors had caused crowd control problems. This was because of television coverages triggered by the Inquirer articles. Now the visitors are a comfortable one to three hundred, fuelled by word of mouth rather than media coverage. It is perhaps better because frenzy is hardly conducive to prayer and meditation. Small quiet crowds are also more manageable.

In the quiet of such a sacred place, in plain view of the new healing church donated by people who were healed, and soon to be blessed, Sister Raquel started updating me on the latest stories of healing, the “miracles, continued” as a sequel to previous articles, which I am sharing with readers. All names used are true names.

Ronnie, 21 years old, mysteriously started getting cross-eyed gradually since he was 12 years old. The doctor said it was a rare disease because the eyes moved 'outward' rather than inward towards the center (the reason it is called cross-eyed). Ronnie had gone to many doctors, and they said he could not wear glasses and he just had to wait inevitably for total blindness. His last doctor said nothing could be done for him, only a miracle could restore his vision. He had terrible migraines which he described as '*parang nilalagare ang utak ko*' (as if my head was being cut by a saw).

He had seen Sister Raquel on television. He said it was his only hope left. He just had to go and visit her. At the first pray-over, Ronnie's migraines vanished into thin air. Because he was from Tatalon, quite a distance away, he requested to stay in the modest temporary facilities at the center. In the one month he stayed there, Sister Raquel prayed over him daily. She talked to his eyes, ordering them to move to the center, or else ...(she showed them her fist).

She tested if healing was in progress by making him water the plants with a hose. He always missed the plants, watering the soil instead. Mother Remy asked if he was crazy. Sister Raquel said - no, only cross-eyed. They had to stop him as he was wasting a lot of water. So they just made him sweep the grounds with a broom instead.

True enough, only a miracle restored Ronnie's eyesight. After a month of daily pray-over, his eyes slowly moved to the center. This time he could water the plants. He said he wanted to become a

priest, a missionary. Sister sent him to the *Christ the King Church*. Having finished only Grade Six, he was qualified to become a brother for the Society of Divine Word (SVD). At this moment, he is taking a five-day seminar which will decide if the Lord is calling him. Sister Raquel said the Lord sometimes impares the vision in order for people to 'see', meaning his vocation in life, if Ronnie is really being called serve Him.

Filadelfo, a 65 years old Makati businessman, had cancer of the brain. He was too old to risk an operation. He went to the healing center without miss every Wednesday and Saturday healing sessions for two whole months. His persistence and faith bore fruit. He is today totally cancer free. His doctor was totally amazed. His wife donated the orchids which now adorn the center.

Rosy, a government worker, could hardly walk due to sever arthritis on both knees. All the medication given her had no effect. In one week, after three pray-over, she was fully healed. Even after three months, her pain never came back. She could walk straight without any help. Her husband was also healed of cancer of the prostate after three long months of attending healing sessions. It was a case of 'conjugal healing.' Now, husband and wife are volunteers helping out at the healing center that changed their lives. It was the same for a 50-year old NBI official, healed of third stage cancer of the prostate which was spreading through his entire body after three months of healing sessions.

Mr. X, a young branch manager for Metrobank, had advanced psoriasis. His entire body was one whole wound from the fingertips to the toes. The doctor said he was just waiting to die of infection from the open wounds. After only three healing sessions and three healing baths, he was completely healed. There was no trace of psoriasis. His skin was as smooth as a baby's. Only yesterday, his father called Sister Raquel to tell her the good news that he is now back at the bank, busy as ever.

Rainier, a young professional in his 30s from Quezon City, had aneurism, the bursting of small veins inside his brain. He was operated on, but still, as a result, he could neither talk nor walk. The doctor said it was impossible for him to walk again. His ailment was incurable. His wheel chair would last a life time. As for his speech, it would take many years or never for it to return.

For one whole month, he never missed the healing sessions, rain or shine. After one month, he was able to talk. After three months, he was able to walk straight long distance without anyone's help. Rainier donated seven rattan walking canes to the center. The center is a place where the Lord is doing the impossible, restoring eyesight, speech, brains, prostates, healing skin diseases, but most of all, spirits maimed by life.

There were three cases of diabetes which were healed, the soaring sugar count lowered to normal levels - two women and a man, in a span of two months. **Jess**, a 60-year old from Bulacan who maintained his own small family business, was completely healed of asthma, tuberculosis, high blood pressure, and heart ailment all at once in a span of two months of pray-over and healing baths.

Esther, in her early 70s and from Makati, had a 'totally dilapidated back'. Her spine could not hold her body. She wore a heavy metal brace from neck to waist, looking like a stiff knight in shining armor. The doctor said she had to wear this for five years or more. After two months of healing sessions and healing baths wherein Sister Raquel poured water inside the brace into her back, she went to the doctor who asked what happened. Her back was now strong and the brace was removed. The doctor asked for the address of Sister Raquel. Sister Raquel stresses that it was not the water that healed her. Jesus heals and uses the water, or a towel or Sister Raquel as a medium or bridge for His healing. He heals His children who are precious to Him.

Aida, a mother in her 40s, had fourth stage cancer of the breast that had started to spread to her entire body. She had spent a fortune in doctors and medication. In utter despair, having heard about Sister Raquel from television and news articles, she stayed at the center's temporary facilities for two weeks. In that time, she was healed completely.

One of the most disturbing is the many cases of spiritual turmoil that Sister encounters, storms raging inside the spirits of people. For instance, there were three cases of acute depression, caused by family or work relationships. They had insomnia, grim faces which could no longer smile, no inspiration, no appetite, no direction in life. They stared into empty space like zombies in a trance. In no time, the smile came back to their faces. They were again in touch with reality. They ate well and slept well, but most of all their spirits were transformed by healing.

In truth, healing the body is only an 'attraction' of the Lord, Sister Raquel says, an attraction to return to Him. It is thus the healing of the spirit, the conversion, the spiritual transformation which is the more important concern of the Lord, says Sister Raquel. She says that in 95 percent of those she had healed, this spiritual transformation was evident. Men dropped their mistresses. There were less anger and impatience and more forgiveness. There was a change in the lifestyle. As a result, there was inner peace, the most coveted virtue today in our fast-pace chaotic world. These are simple stories from simple people blessed by the Lord. They are a witness to the Lord's healings in our modern age.

CHAPTER 24

A Healing Center Rises

Reprinted from the *Business World*
November 25, 2004

After all these months, the Mother Ignacia Healing Center of the Religious of the Virgin Mary (RVM) congregation is finally having its blessing at 10:00 a.m. on November 27 at Novaliches with a concelebrated mass by Bishop Tobias and two Jesuit priests who were healed from cancer. Everyone is invited.

Strangely, the center was built totally by people who were healed. No one asked them to help. There was no campaign for funds. They offered on their own initiative. As one devotee put it, the center rose from the ground by sheer will of the Lord with no one lifting a finger.

It all began with an architect who was healed. He saw the makeshift healing center with canvas as roof, open to wind and rain, where people got wet or perspired in the scorching sun, with the cramped space, and the wheelchair traffic jam. A site for healing deserved a better place conducive to prayer and meditation, he thought. After all, this was sacred ground where the Lord came to heal His people. And so he painted his vision of a healing center that could be erected at a nearby open space. He put it in color on a large canvas and mounted it near the future site for everyone to see. People looked at it and asked when it would be built. The answer was always nobody knew. It was just a vision of one who was healed by the Lord.

That was when the technical specifications were done by an engineer-contractor who was healed. He drew the blueprint, and gave a list of what was needed in detail, how many hollow blocks, steel bars, sacks of cement, volume of sand, and so on. He gave the plan and the list to Sister Raquel Reodica, RVM, who was the Lord's instrument to heal cancer patients.

People who were healed asked about the nice painting and they were shown the blueprint and the list. On their own, with no one asking, they offered to give an item or two. One offered to take care of the sand, another the hollow blocks, another the steel bars, another the laborers. The people the Lord healed, strangers to each other, never meeting one another, became a powerful force in the building of the healing church.

In no time, the superstructure rose from the ground. People were impatient seeing the unfinished work. More offered help, the paint, the roof, the finishing materials, the tiles for the floor, more labor. It was taking shape and acquiring color on its own with no one in charge. Someone donated the huge expensive glass mosaic, a replica of Mother Ignacia. The fine arts students from the University of Sto. Tomas painted the murals. The statues of Mama Mary, St. Joseph and the Christ Child, and the Sacred Heart all came from donors.

It is reported that Our Lady of Medjugorje gave a message saying that the Philippines will one day be a global spiritual center. It is hard to imagine how a poor Third World nation, 70 percent of whose populace is below the poverty line, would be a spiritual mecca for an ailing world full of wars and chaos. But if you consider that the Lord chose sinners to be His apostles, if you consider how His lineage is from King David, a murderer and adulterer turned prophet, then you can begin to see perhaps how His ways are not our ways, His wisdom not our wisdom.

Is the healing ministry of Sister Raquel and the RVM sisters the first step towards fulfilling the Medjugorje message? Nobody knows. There are other healers at the center, who prefer to

remain low profile, like Sister Gloria, and Mother Remy. It is not important to have expectations. But it is good to be aware of things that may come.

Mother Ignacia, who founded the RVM order in the late 19th century, is being considered for beatification. A papal committee came to investigate last year. If she will be beatified, it will be partly due to all the healings of the RVM sisters attributed to her, who is invoked in their healing prayers. She will be the first woman in the Philippines to be beatified, if she indeed will be.

Many people claiming to be visionaries have approached Sister Raquel. A French woman who sought her years ago said that Marian groups nationwide will converge and work for her healing ministry, and that this ministry will spread across the globe. Sister Raquel laughs, a skeptic about purported visionaries. She says if it will happen, it will happen, but she has no expectations. She says she is simply an instrument of the Lord, nothing more.

But it is truly spreading. Sister Raquel has made half a dozen healing missions to China, Korea, Japan, Europe, especially Spain, Canada, and the U.S. Because network coverage of the healing center by ABS-CBN and GMA7 and RPN9 reach California and New York by cable, many balikbayans now troop to the Novaliches center. This article which appears in the *Business World* website, is also read worldwide. The author has received inquiries from Bahrain, Kuwait, Switzerland, and other places.

Here is a letter from Saudi Arabia. "Hi, good morning. I have been your subscriber for quite sometime now. I am here in Saudi Arabia with my husband and two kids (ages 5 & 4). I would like to ask your help on how I would teach catechism to my children while we are here. As you see it is not allowed to practice the faith here. That is the reason why I appreciate your emails. (I send free-subscription short prayers and meditation posters, WEEKLY FOOD FOR THE SOUL, to thousands who inquire about healing.) To tell you the truth I don't even have a bible here. A friend tried to send me one thru mail but it did not reach me and maybe it is the reason why my mails then were opened. My only consolation is having my rosary in my bag everyday. I do get asked by my son sometimes 'Mama, bakit c Jesus nasa kuarto lang?'. He is referring to a crucifix given to us by a friend who went home for good. We get to pray together as a family every night before we sleep. Would appreciate any suggestion. Many thanks. D."

Once a dying mother of 67 from Bulacan came. She was almost falling off her wheel chair and could not even talk. Sister Raquel asked why they had to bring her to the center if she was dying. Sister, scared of people dying at the center, kept pleading to the crowd, "Paki-usap ko, mga kapatid, huwag magdala rito ng mga nasa coma na at baka maging period, e hindi ko alam ang aking gagawin. (Please do not bring people in coma here as they may become 'period' and I do not know what to do.)

The woman pleaded for Sister to bathe her. Sister could not refuse them. She went over the bathing area and bathed her and her family while the rest of the crowd waited in the church. Sister poured buckets and buckets of water at her request. A small deluge was developing. Later, as was squeezing off water from her hair, she told her family, "Sabi sa inyo dito ako gagaling." (I told you I will be healed here).

Sister Raquel says the Lord is the Healer, not her. She knows she has no right to size up the situation. She has to leave that to the Lord. She says she has to surrender everything to the Healer who decides whom to heal. She is a mere instrument. It was the strong faith of the sick which healed them in spite of Sister Raquel's fears. It was the same strong faith for one who had been deaf for four long years. They said they came to Sister because they have no money for hearing aid. They had no

hesitation, no doubt that he would be healed. Today, his hearing has been restored. Sister Raquel is amazed at the faith of the people who come to her. She says, “We do not explain. We only experience God, and His power over us and our illnesses.”

Thinking of the Medjugorje message, I thought how much we Filipinos can really be the center of spirituality. We are the only Christian country in Asia. The churches in Spain and even Italy are tourist centers, ours are still prayer centers. We may be poor, but our wisdom and wealth are of the heart. If the Lord wants a Christian mecca in a world of wars, He must have found a perfect place.

CHAPTER 25

The Healing Oil of Mt. Banahaw

Reprinted from the *Business World*
March 17, 2006

Here are some reflections for Holy Week, a bit scary but they are really meant as a 'call to prayer', says Sister Raquel Reodica, RVM, the healing nun. This is a sequel to two previous articles in this column on earthquake predictions.

Sister Raquel called me recently because there have been eerie events lately which she wanted to share. For some strange reason, she has been attracting visionaries. As far as she can recall, there have been ten visionaries who have come to her, three of whom she met abroad during healing missions, a Canadian, an American, and a Spaniard. She met a French woman here, who was searching for her for months. The rest are locals. Sister Raquel refuses to name names to protect their privacy. Of particular interest are three visionaries. The French woman let us call Yvette. The old Filipino lady let us call Rose. And the third, a much younger Filipino lady in her 30s let us call Lisa. Rose and Yvette met each other. The rest came separately to Sister and never met each other.

The visions of Yvette, Rose and Lisa were amazingly similar. Yvette and Rose told their visions to Sister before they met each other, so they did not influence each other's stories. Yvette said that somewhere in a mountain, there was a cave with oil stored in vats which have been lying there for centuries just waiting for Sister Raquel to use as healing oil. It is guarded by a 'spirit' in the form of a large snake. No one can touch the oil except her, Yvette said. The oil is to be used for "global healing". Separately, Rose and Lisa confirmed the same story. They both mentioned a mountain and people lining up to Sister to be healed with oil on the forehead. Yvette said that international journalists would help Sister spread her healing globally, and that Marian associations all over the Philippines would coalesce and converge towards her healing ministry.

Sister Raquel originally took Yvette's story with a grain of salt because there was no way, she said, she would face a snake or enter a dark cave. It has been years since these three visions came out. Sister Raquel has simply shelved them at the back of her head. But two recent events placed everything back into focus, and baffled Sister Raquel.

The first incident was an old lady who came up to her, inviting her to stay at her resort at the foot of Mt. Banahaw. The invitation rang a bell for Sister Raquel. Could this be the beginning of the fulfillment of the visions of Yvette, Rose, and Lisa?

The second incident was another old lady who was a known *manghihilot*. Let us call her Josie. It so happened that Mother Remy, the superior at the healing center had arthritic pains in the knee. Strangely, she never had this ailment before, and strangely, the old lady was called to massage Mother Remy's knee. This was when she started telling Mother Remy that she hoped she could go back to Mt. Banahaw to do penitence. She described a clearing at the foot of Mt. Banahaw called the *jusgado* where penitents converged during Holy Week. Josie started to tell her experience to Mother Remy.

She said she 'felt' the presence of the cave while passing by and was curious and afraid all at once. The cave's door was small and hidden, that was why no one gave it notice. She felt a

strong urge for her to go to the cave even if she was scared. There was an old man, a hermit guarding the cave. He asked if she really wanted to see the cave. She slid through the small narrow door. There was light from a kind of lamp hanging. The place was dim, about six-by-six meters. In a triangle position were three gallons of oil. She saw the large snake and was not scared. She mustered enough courage to ask the snake to give her some of the oil, which she knew must be very precious. The snake spat at her and her face was sprinkled with oil. She smeared her hands with the oil. Upon leaving, she complained to the hermit that there was no way the large gallons could go through the small door. The hermit simply said that if the Lord wanted it out, He would have a way to do it somehow. Mother Remy told Josie's story to Sister Raquel. It was hardly coincidence that another woman invited her to her resort in Mt. Banahaw, which Josie said was not far from the caves. End of story.

There were other grimmer stories from other visionaries. The ninth visionary, a man from Samar, joined the healing sessions at Novaliches. He spoke of "World War III". He saw fire everywhere. Japan would enter that war. He said the war would start from Syria and the Arab-Israeli conflict. He also saw "melting ice" which would flood many countries, perhaps the result of global warming. He saw earthquakes in the Philippines wherein the highways undulated like waves of the sea. This would happen anytime in the years 2005 to 2007 to 2010.

Very recently, the tenth (and last so far) visionary, a young woman, told Sister that Mount Fuji would explode and the earthquake would affect the whole of Japan. Some parts of Japan would disappear. Not only that, it would affect Manila Bay, hinting there would be tsunamis. As pointed out in past articles, another visionary said people from Metro-Manila would seek refuge in high grounds of Batangas, Laguna, and Quezon. The visionary told Sister Raquel to tell the bishops to consecrate the nation to the Holy Spirit to avert cataclysms.

Sister Raquel feels that the Lord has appointed her the "spokesperson" of these many visionaries. They went to her because she was a respected healer, someone close to the Lord. Sister says she is not afraid to be a messenger. She also says that if the visions are not fulfilled, it is perhaps because people have returned to the Lord. As earlier mentioned, her attitude is 'positive indifference', meaning, it is not important to ascertain if the visions are true or not, but to believe that, if true (make the assumption), it is a 'warning' from the Lord, a 'call to prayer' to avert His wrath and appease Him. One visionary told Sister Raquel that she would eventually achieve the "third eye". She would be a visionary herself, not just a "spokesperson" of visionaries.

There were many other grim and scary visions which I will rattle off quickly here. Many parts of the US would be destroyed. Storms and tsunamis would hit the U.S. in general, in the Pacific, Los Angeles, San Diego, and Las Vegas, Northern California (between the year 2010 and 2024), and in the Atlantic, Cape Cod. Tsunamis would hit Japan, China, and other Asian countries (some of which have been fulfilled). There would be global and cosmic disturbances in terms of earthquakes, storms, forest fires (already fulfilled in California). The possible dates for great earthquakes around the world include 2004-2005, 2006-2008, 2008-2010, 2012-2026. In all these, Sister Raquel has only one message to all concerning all these visions, "It is a call to prayer, a call to conversion, and a return to God. This is the only way to make God change His mind."

Sister Raquel, as a healer, has had strange experiences – light bulbs conking out which she attributes to healing energy, blinding light surrounding her, being electrocuted while

touching people, which she says is a sign of healing.

CHAPTER 26

Healing Cancer

Reprinted from the *Business World*
August 11, 2005

They say Roco's protracted cancer of the prostate finally did him in due to 'stress'. Two non-medical people offer theories on the causes of cancer. Ed Guevara, an environmentalist, says cancer is the rebellion of the body against itself. It is like insurgency. When the body can no longer withstand the toxins it is ingesting, the body simply turns against itself and destroys its own immunity system. Cancer cells are the rebels, the immunity system, the police.

Sister Raquel Reodica, RVM, gives a different view which perhaps fits Roco's case. Although she is aware of physical causes, she focuses on the spiritual causes, citing cases in her healing ministry wherein people were healed only after they overcame spiritual turmoil. A woman with breast cancer was finally healed after six long months only after she forgave her womanizing husband. It took her a long time to forgive. Hatred, vengeance, and stress which consume the spirit, also consume the body, causing cancer by weakening the immunity system. Forgiveness and peace of mind heal cancer.

The day I went to the Mother Ignacia Healing Center in Novaliches, there was a small crowd of about 60 people. Sister Raquel, the healing nun, asked all those with cancer to come forward. To my shock about 15 came forward and sat in a row facing the crowd. I discovered later that about 80 to 90 percent of those who come to the center had cancer, the deadliest global disease of the 21st century. Sister Raquel is becoming a cancer healer for the Lord.

They were of all sizes and shapes. The young woman bald from too much chemotherapy refused to wear a veil. Some were ambulant, many on wheelchairs. A husky guy did not look afflicted at all. An old woman was held by her daughter so she would not fall off her wheel chair. It was a gruesome picture of pain and suffering. Yet you could see the hope in their eyes, the energy to survive in their half-smiles.

Gerry (not his real name) had cancer of the liver. It was spreading to his other organs. The wife was told by a St. Lukes doctor that he had no more hope, given a few days to survive. When he got out of the hospital, the wife brought him to the healing center, the last sanctuary for the hopeless.

He could hardly alight from the car. As Sister approached, in his extreme pain, he moaned, "Lord, kunin mo na ako. Di ko na kaya." (Lord, take me as I can no longer bear it.) After praying over him, Sister said he should go home. On the way home, he collapsed and fell asleep. When he woke up, there was no more pain. In the ensuing check up at St. Lukes, the doctors and nurses were shocked. He was cancer-free. The malignant tumor in the liver vanished into thin air. Sister said to Gerry the Lord loves him.

There were a dozen more cases. Sister Raquel could not stop telling stories. A teenage boy from Zamboanga underwent open brain surgery. Although he had no cancer, he had many pea-sized tumor 'droplets'. He took the arduous trip to the center. The 'droplets' melted and vanished.

A housewife afflicted with brain cancer did not want an operation in spite of the doctor insisting to save her. The husband instead brought her to the healing center. All her pains and symptoms vanished. Convinced she was healed, she refused to have a checkup. The doctor insisted to operate to save her. He convinced the husband, who was also not sure if she was healed, to go

ahead with the operation, but he would pay only a miniscule amount if she was found to be negative. The operation, estimated to take several hours, was done in 45 minutes. The doctor could not believe it. She had no cancer, no tumor. The housewife testified at the center, saying, "May Diyos talaga. Si Hesus nagmimilagro. Hindi si Sister Raquel, si Hesus." (There is a God. Jesus, not Sister Raquel, performs miracles.)

A woman with stage 4 cancer of the stomach did not want to go to the center because she was convinced she was a hopeless case. Her neighbors practically 'forced' her to go. Sister Raquel placed her hand on her stomach. The woman complained that Sister's hands were very hot. In five minutes, the pain was gone, but the swelling was still there. After the healing bath, the swelling was also gone. The subsequent check up at the UST hospital revealed she was cancer- and tumor-free. She came often to the center to testify because she wanted to let others know that the hopeless still had hope like her.

Letty (not her real name) is an employee at the Ateneo. She had tumors in her ovary which she did not know to be cancerous or not. After the healing bath, she placed her hand on the statue of the Sacred Heart. When she closed her eyes, she saw a figure in white, then felt a strong tremor. She thought there was an earthquake. When she opened her eyes, her hand had moved on the statue. Her tumors were gone instantly. These are just stories perhaps for those who are skeptical. One has to see for one's self what is really happening at the Novaliches healing center, now considered as sacred grounds where thousands of healings have occurred in the last ten years.

For extreme cancer cases or those from distant places, the RVM sisters have set up modest overnight accommodations. Sister Raquel says the next step is to build small cottages with comfort rooms for cancer patients, complete with some low-tech medical facilities, once some funding flows in. They would call it 'Igancia Caring Unit' (ICU). The RVM sisters never ask for donations. Those who are healed voluntarily give. A big chapel was built entirely from donations of those who were healed without fund campaign. People offer to give. You can say it was built by the Lord.

CHAPTER 27

The Gift of Healing, part one

Reprinted from the *Business World* website
April 13, 2006

Our Holy Week reading is about how a former activist nun became a cancer healer for the Lord. When Sr. Raquel Reodica, RVM received her gift of healing, there were two big hurdles before she would accept the gift. First, is the gift really from the Lord? Second, would the Church approve of it? For the first time in Church history, in a span of days, the two hurdles would be bridged. It took the Church 20 long years to approve the Fatima miracles. Why was the Lord in a hurry to heal the world through Sister Raquel?

First is the hurdle - is the gift really from the Lord? The gnawing question echoed in her mind - has the Lord indeed chosen her? How would she know?

A rich French woman visionary named Caroline came up to Sister Raquel two weeks after the Mt. Pinatubo eruption, "I have been looking for you for so long. At last, I have found you."

Sister Raquel was startled, "Who me? Why?"

"Jesus told me to look for you and give you His message."

Sister studied the woman carefully. She did not look crazy, and seemed normal in spite of her seemingly ridiculous statement. She was ready to dismiss her as she was tired, but out of curiosity, she asked what the message was. The woman said the Lord has chosen her to have the power to heal in His name.

"How do you know all this?", she asked.

Caroline replied, "He told me. I am only a messenger. He will give you a sign so you will have no doubt whatsoever."

For three hours, the woman related her story, months of searching through Africa. She stumbled into the Philippines. By accident, she ended up in the RVM convent in Ilocos. They sent her to the headquarters in N. Domingo. She was on verge of giving up, until Sister Raquel arrived. Caroline knew instantly somehow and without doubt it was her in her vision.

Bothered that there may be some truth to the vision, in spite of her skepticism, Sister Raquel did the only thing she knew. She went to the RVM Mother General and asked what was she to do. The Mother General said, "Go ahead. Try it. If it is not the Lord, we will find out. If you cannot heal even a toothache, then it is all a farce. But then if you can, we will know for sure, right?"

Sister Raquel admired the wisdom of the Mother General. To believe or not was not important at that moment. The task was to find out. So let it be. There was no need to speculate, just bow in obedience.

Sister went to the garden to meditate, saying, "Lord are you there?" She felt a strong presence to her right. It was His silent reply that indeed He was there.

"What do I do? Am I to be Your healer? What is your agenda? Suppose You are not God and I promote you, what happens to me?" The question was logical and challenging.

Sister recalls the reply that came in the deafening silence, "Go ahead, heal in My name."

Sister recalls how most of the prophets in the Old Testaments refused the call but they had no choice if they were chosen. Suppose she was indeed chosen. She asked, "Are You telling me the same thing You told all those prophets? Why me? Why not the Cardinal or Mother General or the

Carmelites? Why me?"

Sister knew the answer in her heart. She just had to obey the Mother General who said, like the Lord in silence, "Go ahead. Try it out."

The chance to prove if Caroline's message was true came like a lightning bolt. Sister Raquel was then the national coordinator for social action, a former activist during martial law. That very evening, one of the RVM sisters in her staff from Cebu suddenly appeared. She was in extreme pain and the Mother General told her to go to the hospital after she reported to Sister Raquel.

Sister Raquel asked, "Lord, is this it?"

She told the sick nun to stand before the statue of the Sacred Heart and close her eyes. Sister Raquel prayed, "Lord, here are my hands. They are now your instruments."

Sister Raquel touched the nun on the forehead and on every part of her body which was in pain. The nun jerked when she touched her lower spine, complaining how hot her hands were. All her pains vanished instantly. In her excitement, she told the Mother General, who said she did not have to go to the hospital, and to keep the incident a secret.

Jesus told a leper not to tell others that he was healed. Like the leper, the nun told everyone anyway. The news spread like wildfire. Many sick RVM nun came to Sister Raquel. From then on, the whirlwind began. Her world changed instantly and profoundly. Within two years, she would circle the world many times in healing missions, China, Japan, Spain, California.

Today, 15 years after, she wants to hear from Caroline but she never replied to her letters. Caroline, if you will somehow read this in the Internet, please come and visit Sister Raquel.

The second hurdle was - would the Church approve. For Sister Raquel, who knew the history of the Church and the turmoils surrounding Fatima, Lourdes, and Medjugorje, she was scared of this second hurdle. In these three cases, archbishops and cardinals became the hurdles by playing devil's advocate, which was their role. For they would not risk the Church endorsing a farce.

So the day of reckoning came. A month after she received the gift of healing, when the news had spread like wildfire, the late Cardinal Sin invited her for breakfast. His car picked her up, which made her more nervous. Was the Cardinal angry at her that he was not informed of her healing activities?

The Gift of Healing, part two

Sister Raquel was nervous when Cardinal Sin invited her for breakfast. She asked herself, "If the Cardinal says he does not believe in my gift of healing, what will I answer him? Perhaps I should say, whatever you say, Cardinal. No problem. If he says I should stop, I will stop in obedience. No problem." Sister Raquel prepared herself with all sorts of answers to all sorts of imagined questions. She was afraid that the Cardinal was angry that she did not tell him about her healing activities, if the Church approved of them. But the fact that she had the go signal from the Mother Superior comforted her. Still, this was the Cardinal, the highest Church official in the nation, to whom her congregation was beholden as the agent of the Pope.

Cardinal Sin greeted her with his famous smile as wide as the Cagayan River. Instantly, Sister Raquel's fears vanished, but still some apprehension remained. The Cardinal told her to go to the dining area for breakfast. There, he was greeted by a host of priests asking her to heal them after breakfast.

Later, after breakfast, she sat down with the Cardinal who said, "I have heard you are into

healing." Sister nodded her head nervously.

"Let us go into the chapel. My shoulders are heavy and painful. Be kind enough to heal me."

Let me put it without drama. In a few minutes, all the pain vanished, and Cardinal Sin said, "I give you my blessing to heal in Jesus' name."

And so what took the Fatima miracles 20 years to bridge ecclesiastical hurdles, Sister Raquel took a month. With the two hurdles bridged, the first - was it really a gift from the Lord (part one), and the second - does the Church approve, Sister Raquel was ready for the world.

But why did it seem the Lord was in so much hurry to get Sister Raquel going in her healing ministry? Is it perhaps because of our era of many disasters due to Man's sins? Is the Lord in panic to make people pray and return to Him, otherwise there will be more, tsunamis, bird flu, hurricanes? Is it Agape, God's love for sinful Man who will be the object of His wrath if he does return to His fold?

Later, Sister Raquel would have the gift to talk to nature. When she prayed for Mt. Pinatubo to not erupt once more, which the late Punongbayan predicted, the high temperature and steam at the crater suddenly vanished. When she ordered a super-typhoon to make a detour, suddenly it did. This was featured in many news reports. When she prayed for SARS to go away in a global telecast with Julie Yap Daza, Time Magazine reported two weeks after that SARS suddenly and mysteriously vanished as fast as it emerged. Skeptics doubt if all these could be attributed to a lowly Filipino nun in prayer. But the thousands who have been healed in the last 15 years believe she has the power to talk to nature as much as she has the power to heal them.

GO AND SIN NO MORE

The theology of healing, says Sister Raquel, revolves around these five simple words that Jesus said to the many He healed, implying that sin is related to sickness, and that once you heal your soul by forgiving and being kind, it is easy for the Lord to heal your body. They go together.

Sister Raquel marvels at the amazing faith of ordinary people that has led to healing. Leo, a blind paralytic from Cotabato, took the arduous trip to the healing center and asked Sister Raquel, "Do you think the Lord can really heal me?"

Sister Raquel, recalling this powerful faith of ordinary people, answered without hesitation, "Yes."

She asked the mother of Leo what was in her mind. She answered, "That my son be healed and walk home."

It seemed at second thought to Sister Raquel to be a tall order, instantly healing a blind paralytic. She said to herself and to the Lord Healer, "Napasubo ata ako. [I have put myself on the spot.] Lord, do not disappoint these people. Your name is at stake."

Sister Raquel gathered the 200 odd people in the chapel and appointed all of them to be her co-healers. She told them to raise their hands towards the image of Jesus. Then they gathered in a big circle around Leo and pointed their hands on him as they prayed together. Sister Raquel commented that the circle is the symbol of the Lord - no beginning no end.

Sister Raquel prayed aloud, "In Jesus name, Leo, I command your eyes to open. I command you to stand up and walk.", and to herself, "Napasobra ata ako Lord. Nagkasubuan na." [Perhaps I over did it, Lord. We are on the spot.]

And indeed, Leo opened his eyes, stood up and walked. There was pandemonium. Sister Raquel herself was in shock. People screamed. Leo's mother wept uncontrollably. In their hysteria, the others said, "Ako rin, ako rin, Lord." [Heal me also, Lord.]

Sister Raquel later called this mind boggling event "experiencing the beyond".

At the beginning, there was a subconscious resistance for her to accept the gift of healing, like the prophets. It came suddenly as a whirlwind and she knew it would sweep her off her feet and catapult her into the unknown, a global ministry not of her own doing. Earlier on, she was asked to have her own television show but she refused, saying she was not yet ready for that. In spite of the media limelight she enjoyed then and today, Sister Raquel has no air, no illusion of power. She knows she is a mere instrument of the Lord's mercy and love for Man, an instrument for Agape. She knew she had no choice, if indeed the Lord chose her, for deep in her heart there was a single tenet in her vocation as a nun, "Your will be done, Lord. Nothing else matters."

CHAPTER 28

Global Healing Via Satellite

Reprinted from the Business World
September 22, 2005

For the first time, there are reports of people who were healed half way across the globe while watching Sister Raquel Reodica, RVM, in a global telecast. For the first time, healing has transcended geographic boundaries. The Lord reigns even in outer space through satellite communications.

Although Sister Raquel was told by people claiming to be visionaries back in 1991 that one day she would go into 'global healing', she brushed this notion aside. Now, 14 years later, it has happened. In fact, she never knew it has happened until witnesses took the microphone at the healing center, quite to everyone's surprise.

The first case is a Filipino from Sacramento, California, who was scheduled for a heart bypass operation. Let us call him Jojo. The whole family prayed with Sister Raquel on the tube. After a week, on a routine pre-operation examination, the doctors were surprised to find that the clogs on Jojo's heart had simply vanished into thin air.

Jojo's wife took a trip to the Philippines just to tell Sister Raquel the good news. She walked into the healing session, raised her hand, took the microphone, and told her story in tears. The crowd fell silent before bursting into applause. Even Sister Raquel herself was surprised.

The second case is another Filipino from New Jersey, a friend of the RVM sisters there. Let us call him Pete. Pete had cancer of the lungs. When he saw Sister Raquel on television, he prayed with her for healing. He went through the motions of Sister Raquel's style of prahnic ritual, wherein one rubs one's hand on the part of the body in pain or where the ailment is, while praying to Jesus through the intercession of Mama Mary, St. Joseph, and Mother Ignacia, founder of the RVM. This is followed by shouting 'out, out', telling the 'disease' to go away, scooping it with one's hand, throwing it on the floor, and stomping on it. In Pete's subsequent tests, the doctors declared him cancer-free.

The relatives of Pete, like Jojo, took an expensive trip to the Philippines just to tell their story to the crowd at the Novaliches healing center. That was how the first two known 'global healing' were reported. There may have been other unreported cases. During a live interview on camera, Sister Raquel said it was possible that viewers praying with her on television would be healed by the Lord. With faith and prayer as the only prerequisites, nothing is impossible to the Lord, she added.

Earlier, TJ Manotoc's *Magandang Umaga Pilipinas*, a morning news show of ABS-CBN, featured Sister Raquel in an exclusive interview, which included live footage of the actual healing rituals and the bath. The live prayers pleading for healing echoed across the planet through the so-called *The Filipino Channel* (TFC) under Jeff Remigio, a satellite broadcast facility which reaches out via cable telecast to the homes of millions of Filipino families all over the world - the U.S., E.U, the Middle East, Australia. This reaches out to our three million-odd overseas workers. This is the new emerging dimension in broadcast media. The global telecast was complimented by a nationwide simulcast of ABS-CBN and ANC, its cable affiliate.

CHAPTER 29

Towards a Global Healing Ministry

Reprinted from the *Business World*
December 22, 2003

In a recent two-month marathon of a healing mission in the U.S., Sister Raquel Reodica, RVM, went to fifteen different parishes in California, Boston, New York, New Jersey, and Chicago. Although she was hosted by Filipinos and the RVM convents, the thousands who flocked to the healing sessions were mostly "black, white, and brown", in her own words. By the time she was leaving, telephone calls of those who were healed started to pour in at her base in New Jersey.

In her scheme, Sister Raquel established a relationship with parish priests, who gave her all-out support. Most of the healing sessions were done in the parish churches. The schedule to accommodate Americans, who were busy during both weekdays and weekends, was 7:00 in the evening onwards. Most of the time, the healing sessions would end at midnight or 1:00 in the morning. Sister Raquel would sleep the whole morning, go on tours accompanied by Filipinos in the afternoon, then "work overtime" in the evening for the Lord.

The healing bath she employs in the Philippines could not be done in America because, in autumn, people would freeze to death in such an open-air bath. Also, it was impractical to splash a lot of water inside the churches. Instead of using cold water, she used holy oil.

Sister Raquel employed a new technique which she says came as an inspiration from the Holy Spirit. She began appointing "extension healers". This was because there were so many sick everywhere and she could not cater to all in her short stay in America. It was a way of extending worldwide her limited healing ministry.

She blest with holy oil an average of 350 extension healers in each of the fifteen parishes where she held healing sessions. She has commissioned about 5,000 to extend the healing of the Lord to the many afflicted with cancer in America today. Sister Raquel formed five crosses representing the five sacred wounds of Jesus with holy oil on the hands of the new extension healers one by one. It is too early to know if any of these extension healers were able to heal. Perhaps not all are expected to become healers, but if some do, the news will surely spread like wildfire not only in America but also here.

Sister Raquel employed the "rub your hands" ritual she uses in the Philippines wherein, while she verbally dictated a prayer, the people rubbed the parts of their bodies which were afflicted, "scooped out" the disease with their hands, "threw" it to the ground, and stomped their foot hard on it while shouting "out, out". She noted this caused pandemonium in the church much worse than in the Philippines only because the Americans had bigger feet and mostly wore boots. Many parish priests commented that it was their first time to see healing sessions so full of fun and noise. The people had a grand time stomping their feet and screaming at children to do the same.

There were a lot afflicted with cancer who came. Sister Raquel says many of those who had cancer of the chest, throat, or brain were on a computer almost the whole day. A few of them vowed to change their careers or jobs.

The Filipinos began duplicating a 55-minute documentary in VCD form, which was earlier produced in the Philippines by this author and Surf Reyes, a fellow freelancer, before Sister Raquel

left for the U.S. This was in fact aired several times at RPN 9 during and after Holy Week this year. The VCD version has spread like wildfire among the Filipinos in America. Copies were "burnt" in their computers, and passed on.

A Filipino doctor offered to have the documentary aired worldwide at EWTN in Alabama, where there is a Filipino priest close to Mother Angelica, founder of this Catholic ministry cable station. If this is successful, it is one big step in truly elevating Sister Raquel's healing ministry to a global level. Right now, English subtitles are being incorporated into the documentary for general audiences in preparation for global broadcast.

One story of healing worth mentioning is that of a Las Vegas housewife dying of cancer and in a coma, whom Sister Raquel describes as in a "hopeless stage". She was in the ICU of a hospital and could not go to the healing sessions. Sister Raquel prayed over her husband and family by proxy at the healing session. Later, Sister Raquel received news that the woman was now out of the hospital and "feeling better". This long-distance healing was a rarity.

In Los Angeles, a Filipino woman teacher who had a "stage four" cancer, recovered after the healing session and is now past the critical stage. In Boston, at the Church of St. Peter parish, an American woman who had extreme pain in her shoulders and back, which all types of medicines could not relieve, was planning a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal for healing. The day before her departure, she went to Sister Raquel's session and instantly the pain vanished. She was sobbing that her agony for two long months seeing so many doctors was suddenly gone. Sister Raquel advised her to continue her pilgrimage to thank Our Lady.

We are now beginning to see the global role of the Novaliches healing center. With the possible airing of the documentary in a worldwide cable station, the global awareness for the healings of the Lord through Sister Raquel will be realized.

Meanwhile, the new healing center in the Novaliches compound is almost ready. The Fine Arts Department of the University of Sto. Tomas has offered to paint the center's mural in January. It seems things are moving fast. It is the Lord who is orchestrating everything at a time when the world needs so much to do some soul searching in this era of chaos and rapid changes, an era of cancers and computers, of economic decline and abject poverty. When hopeless cancer disappears, there must be some important message somewhere, a message of repentance, of hope, of a return to the Lord.

Epilogue

Mary as the Bridge to Jesus

by Fr. Rio Evangelista

*my heart proclaims the greatness of the Lord
my soul rejoices in Him my Saviour
for He has looked with grace
on me His lowly servant*

*from this day hence
all generations shall call me blessed
because of the great things
He has done for me*

*He stretches out His mighty arm
to humble the proud
and cast powerful kings
from their thrones*

*He lifts up the lowly
and fills the hungry
with nourishment
while He leaves the rich destitute*

luke 1:46-55

The relationship between Jesus and Mary is the basis of our devotion to the Blessed Virgin because She is the so-called **mediatrix**, the way and the bridge to Jesus. To understand fully the intimacy of this relationship between Mother and Son, we need to know its biblical basis.

With the words of the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary at the Annunciation, the heart of Mary was united to the Heart of Jesus, '**Behold, You will conceive and bear a Son You shall call Jesus.**' (Luke 1:31)

The first union of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary was forged in Mary's words, '**Be it done to Me according to Your word.**' (Luke 1:38)

In that instant, the life and love of Mary was most intimately merged to the life and love of Jesus. This intimacy is based not on human and physical considerations but on the divine and metaphysical will of the Father.

It is no wonder then that at the temple, the prophetess Anna exclaimed to Simeon the prophet, '**Behold, this Child is destined to fulfil the rise and fall of many in Israel ... And the sword of sorrow will pierce Her Mother's heart.**' (Luke 2:34-35)

Jesus' joy was Mary's joy. Jesus' sorrow was Mary's sorrow. Every movement, emotion, passion, desire, and thought of one Heart were those of the other heart. It is a union not to be duplicated in human history, as Luke points out, '**Jesus went down with His parents to Nazareth**

and was obedient to them, and His Mother kept all these in Her heart.' (Luke 2:51)

Throughout Her life, Mary was conscious of this union. At the wedding feast at Cana, when She told Her Son that they had no more wine, Jesus could not deny His Mother, even though He said at first, **'My time has not yet come.'** Mary simply told the servants, **'Do whatever He tells you.'** She knew in Her heart Her divine Son. Jesus thus worked a miracle for His Mother. Her will was His will and His will was Her will. (John 2:5)

Jesus asked people listening to His sermon, **'Who are My Mother and brothers?'** Looking around at the crowd, He proclaimed, **'Here are my mother and brothers. Whoever follows God's will is my mother and brother and sister.'** (Mark 3:34)

Mary conformed totally to the will of the Father, and therefore with the will of Jesus. Mary truly was most intimately united to the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

As Mary, the apostle John, and Mary Magdalene stood by the cross of the dying Jesus, He said to His mother, **'Woman, behold Your son'.** And to John, He said, **'Behold, your Mother.'** (John 19:26)

At His death, He asked His most trusted disciple to take care of His beloved Mother.

The work of salvation of the whole of Mankind began at the Annunciation, continued through Jesus' ministry and the Last Supper, and culminated in the Paschal Mystery of the Cross and the Resurrection. Throughout these events, Mary stood by Jesus, just as She did at His cross. The union of their Hearts prevailed to the end. When Jesus offered His heart at the Last Supper, He also offered His Mother's heart. She suffered His sufferings at Calvary. When He was buried, She too was buried with Him. Even Michaelangelo's inspiring *Pieta* is but a poor mirror of this reality. When Jesus rose from the dead in the Resurrection, She too rose with Him.

When the Holy Spirit descended on Pentecost, all those loyal to Jesus were gathered together. Mary was the first believer, who said at the onset, **'Be it done to me according to Your word.'** (Luke 1:38)

She was thus at the heart of the Pentecost event. Her heart was where the Heart of Jesus was, at the heart of the Holy Church. Thus, She is today called the Mother of the Holy Church.

Our love for the Hearts of Jesus and Mary is central and fundamental to Church theology, dogma, and liturgy. Our love for the two hearts is essential to Christian devotion. For in the union of these two Hearts, we find the life and love of God Himself.

The last 400 years of Marian apparitions from Guadalupe (1530s) until Medjugorje (1980s) show the key role of Our Lady in the relationship of Man to God, in the same way that dozens of Old Testament prophets and kings did for thousands of years before.

Mary is indeed the mediatrix and prophet and queen of modern times, only because Her heart is intimate with the Heart of Jesus.

Ad majorem Dei gloriam

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