

**By Jesse Jose**

***A Cup O' Kapeng Barako***

I delete them all, especially "forwarded" items that I find in my e-mail box. With my pointing finger, I rapidly punch on the button, "delete," and I delete, delete, delete, MOST ESPECIALLY e-mails from people, who I consider as "toxic people." I don't even wanna read what they have to say.

But now and then, I'd get something interesting and worth my while reading. And they usually come from positive people that I consider "friends," in the truest sense of the word. I have very few such friends. That's the way I like it. Only a chosen few, like the U.S. Marine Corps motto.

Now, this one came from Gerry Garrison. He's a friend, truly a friend. He's a fellow Knight and the former Grand Knight of the Knights of Columbus, Auburn Council of our Holy Family Catholic Church here in Auburn, Washington. Gerry has recently been promoted as KofC's District Warden of District 12, a district that covers three cities.

## A Friend Named Gerry, a Church Choir, a Carrot, an Egg, and a Cup of Coffee - MabuhayRadio

Written by Jesse Jose

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He's a retired U.S. Navy Chief like me. He's not completely retired though from working. He's still earning his keep, so to speak, and works for QWEST as Network Operations Manager.

A sizable number of fellow Filipinos comes and worships in our church. And growing steadily in numbers, too. Every Sunday, at mass, I'd see a couple of new faces. So, our parish priest, who we fondly call, "Father Tim," suggested that perhaps a Filipino choir be formed.

The good Father of our church called for this choir, and we heeded his call.

**And, as if guided by the invisible hand of the Lord, one Sunday morning after mass, this choir was formed. A handful of us, regular church-goers, got "pulled" by this Hand into one little corner of the church and we just simply agreed to meet for our first practice. I suppose it was meant to be formed, for each of us who agreed to meet, showed up.**

**Thus this choir was born. And in honor of the one and only Filipino saint, we named our group, San Lorenzo Ruiz.**

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**So, there's Josie Hurst and Jocelyn Ortega, who are both guitar players; Jun Ortega, who is Jocelyn's husband and their piano-playing 15-year-old-son, "JJ."**

**And Debbie Collantes. And Malou Malonzo and her husband, Rico, and their 13-year-old daughter, Kate. And Maribel and me, and our son, Jonathan.**

**And Gordon Bennett, a half-Filipino, half-American, who grew up in Pampanga and who speaks three Filipino dialects: Ilocano, Pampango and Tagalog. When I first met and briefly talked with Gordon, I thought he was born in the United States. He speaks like a native-born American.**

***Walang*  
accent.**

**Josie, the leader of our group, said to me during one of our practice meetings, and I'll never, never forget it: "Jesse, 'when you sing to the Lord, you pray twice to the Lord,' as St. Augustine said." □ □ □ □**

**And then, last but not least, there's Gerry and his beautiful granddaughter, Tarhata.**

**Though he's a "white dude," Gerry, I told the group, is also at heart, a Filipino. He's married to a Filipina, named Tara, and like most Filipinos, he eats rice and Filipino *ulam* everyday. So that's close enough to being a Filipino.**

Also, he knows how to speak a few words of Tagalog, like "salamat," "kumusta," "walang anuman," "mahal kita." He's fluent though in understanding Tagalog, because whenever I speak to him in Tagalog, he seems to understand what I am saying.

And he's a good singer. He knows all the songs that are sung during mass. He's a good man. He easily smiles. I am honored to have won his friendship.

Whenever his wife, Tara, and my wife, Maribel, see each other on Sundays after church, *hindi matapos-tapos ang kuwentuhan nila*

. We all have gone out to dinner a couple of times, and we would talk and talk and talk, and laugh and laugh and laugh, like endlessly.

I talk too much . . .

Here's what Gerry forwarded to me. The lesson taught here is priceless. Happy reading, Dear Readers.

### ***A CARROT, AN EGG AND A CUP OF COFFEE***

***You will never look at a cup of coffee the same way again.***

***A young woman went to her mother and told her about her life and how things were so hard for her. She did not know how she was going to take it and wanted to give up. She was tired of fighting and struggling. It seemed as one problem was solved, a new one arose.***

***Her mother took her to the kitchen. She filled three pots with water and placed each on a high fire. Soon the pots came to boil. In the first she laced carrots, in the second she placed eggs, and in the last she placed ground coffee beans. She let them sit and boil, without saying a word.***

***In about twenty minutes she turned off the burners. She fished the carrots out and placed them in a bowl. She pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl.***

***Then she ladled the coffee out and placed it in a bowl. Turning to her daughter, she asked, "Tell me what you see."***

***"Carrots, eggs, and coffee," the daughter replied.***

***Her mother brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. She did and noted that they were soft. The mother then asked the daughter to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard-boiled egg.***

***Finally, the mother asked the daughter to sip the coffee. The daughter smiled, as she tasted its rich aroma. The daughter then asked, "What does it mean, mother?"***

***Her mother explained that each of these objects had faced the same adversity: boiling water. Each reacted differently. The carrot went in strong, hard, and unrelenting. However, after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak. The egg had been fragile. Its thin outer shell had protected its liquid interior, but after sitting through the boiling water, its insides became hardened.***

***The ground coffee beans were unique, however. After they were in the boiling water, they had changed the water.***

***"Which are you?" the mother asked her daughter. "When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg or a coffee bean?"***

***"Think of this: Which am I? Am I the carrot that seems strong, but with pain and adversity, do I wilt and become soft and lose my strength?" the mother continued.***

***"Am I the egg that starts with a malleable heart, but changes with the heat? Did I have a fluid spirit, but after a death, a breakup, a financial hardship or some other trial, have I become hardened and stiff? Does my shell look the same, but on the inside am I bitter and tough with a stiff spirit and hardened heart?"***

***"Or am I like the coffee bean? The bean actually changes the hot water, the very circumstance that brings the pain. When the water gets hot, it releases the fragrance and flavor. If you are like the bean, when things are at their worst, you get better and change the situation around you. When the hour is the darkest and trials are their greatest, do you elevate yourself to another level? How do you handle adversity? Are you a carrot, an egg or a coffee bean?"***

***"May you have enough happiness to make you sweet, enough trials to make you strong, enough sorrow to keep you human and enough hope to make you happy.***

***"The happiest of people don't necessarily have the best of everything; they just make the most of everything that comes along their way. The brightest future will always be based on a forgotten past; you can't go forward in life until you let go of your past failures and heartaches.***

***"When you were born, you were crying and everyone around you was smiling.***

***"Live your life so at the end, you're the one who is smiling and everyone around you is crying . . ."***

PS: This mother is a very-wise parent. You might want to send this message to those people who mean something to you; to those who have touched your life in one way or another; to those who make you smile when you really need it; to those who make you see the brighter side of things when you are really down; to those whose friendships you appreciate; to those who are so meaningful in your life.

May we all be COFFEE!!!

**BTW, this is Gerry's logo in his e-mail to friends:**

**Life is short.**

**Forgive quickly.**

**Kiss slowly.**

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**Love truly.**

**Laugh uncontrollably.**

**And never regret anything that made you smile.**

E-mails from good people and good friends, like Gerry's, are the ones I never "delete" from my e-mail box. **JJ**

{xtypo\_quote} Editor's Note: Perhaps after reading this instant column of Jesse Jose, readers may like to browse another article, which carries several lessons about life, especially about coffee cups or mugs, [Parable of the Retired Rector's Cup o' Kapeng Barako](#) {/xtypo\_quote}

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