

**By Jesse Jose**

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

I am Catholic. I believe in the teachings of my faith.

But that doesn't mean I am deeply-religious. Far from it. I am a sinner. I sin everyday, in thoughts and in deeds. I am weak in resisting sins. I am a recidivist, *ika nga*. But I am no pedophile though, like many leaders of my faith, and many other kinds of irreligious leaders, educators, sports coaches, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts leaders ... and what have you, y'all get my drift?

To me, that sin is unforgivable. But I am not God ... or a priest in a confessional box to say what sins are forgivable and what sins are not. What I know is that God forgives all sins ...

Got your attention yet, Dear Readers?

Last week in my *Kapeng Barako* column, titled "[A Christmas Gift, a Christmas Story, and the Word of the Lord on Christmas Eve](#)," I wrote about how I became a lector in the church I go to. I said I immediately liked this church when I first came here to worship for it was a welcoming church. I liked its ambience "of family" and "of community." It has a *kapamilya* ambience.

Then one Sunday morning, while sitting and kneeling with my wife at our favorite pew, mumbling the prayers, "it called on me" to serve actively, instead of just mumbling prayers after prayers, while sitting and kneeling and standing, on cue. So I volunteered to be one of its ushers ... then later on, as one of its lectors.

Being a journalist at heart, I wrote the story, the complete story, the honest-to-goodness story ... the way a journalist like me, would tell a story. And I dedicated the writing of this story to my friend, Dawn, and

offered this story as a Christmas gift to her for the time and effort she unselfishly gave in training me as a lector.

But the response I've gotten was a snub, and I didn't understand why.

So, I emailed a note to my good friend, Gerry, a fellow parishioner and a fellow Knight of the Knights of Columbus of our church and the former Grand Knight, asking him of his opinion. I said to him that "I didn't invent my story and that It's all true." And that I forwarded a copy to Dawn, but she did not respond, when she was the reason for the writing of the story.

**GERRY'S ANSWER:** *Jesse, I believe Dawn may not be happy about the part of this story when you talked about being an usher. I know you were trying to explain what happened during your time as an usher, but your experience with the two new ushers and the usher on Saturday appears to put a bad light on Holy Family Church.*

□

*I know it was not your intention, you just wanted to tell the truth. However, often the better part of valor is to leave some bad experiences left*

*unsaid/unwritten. Because mail is personal, Dawn may have gotten the wrong impression on what you were trying to express.*

□

*I could be wrong, my good friend. This is just my impression. Someone who doesn't know you nor Holy Family Parish may get the wrong impression about some of the people in the church. There are always "bad apples" in every organization. There is nothing we can do about it. But "airing our laundry" to strangers often makes things worse.*

*What is done, is done. My hope is that she will come to the realization you meant nothing untoward about Holy Family, and you truly wanted to give her kudos for the training she gave you as a lector. Call me when you get chance and we can talk about this some more, if you want. Gerry.*

**MY RESPONSE TO GERRY:** *My friend, thanks for your feedback. I really appreciate it, good buddy. You hit it right on the head of the nail, so to speak. Especially in that part where you said that "it wasn't my intention" and that I only wanted "to tell the truth" of the matter and I "meant nothing untoward" to the Holy Family church. All true, my friend.*

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*But may I add a couple of things on your feedback and hear me out? As I said in my story, "I had a good feeling for this church" when we first started coming because of "its ambience of family and of community." From the first day I set my foot in this church, I liked it.*

□

*And that feeling has grown into love.*

□

*But I just couldn't agree with you that "the better part of valor is to leave bad experiences left unsaid/unwritten." And that "airing our laundry to strangers will just make things worse."*

□

*I am a journalist, good buddy. I write stories. I've been doing this for a long, long time. It's been my trade and my training, that it has become second nature for me to write whatever I fancy to write about.*

□

*And I like to write my stories the way I see 'em. NOT the way other people would want me to see and write 'em. If I had left out the "bad experiences" in this story, it would had been a DISHONEST story. Those "bad experiences" were an integral part in the first part of my story. It was*

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*the reason why I became a lector. I couldn't be an usher, so I endeavored to become a lector. Thanks to Dawn, I became one.*

□

*If it appeared like I was BADMOUTHING this church, that wasn't my intent; if it appeared like I was AIRING DIRTY LAUNDRY, it wasn't my motive. It wasn't THE church I targeted. I targeted only some CHARACTERS within the church: the "bad apples" as you described them. And targeting those people was NOT the gist of my story, as you know.*

□

*It's about how I became a lector. It's about portraying my deepest appreciation for all the time and effort that Dawn has given me. But those "bad experiences" had to be mentioned in the telling of my story. It was a part of the sequence of my story.*

*And it's sad, that that part part seemed to have become the ISSUE of my story. As the saying goes, my friend, can't win them all, ha? See you in church. And once again, thanks for your feedback. Jesse.*

**SISTER GRACE MARIE'S COMMENTS:** I also asked Sister Grace Marie

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for a feedback. SGM is a cloistered, Discalced Nun at St. Joseph's Carmelite Monastery in Shoreline, Washington. She's also my sister-in-law, and the older sister) of my wife. She wrote:

*Hi Jesse ... Thank you for sharing your Christmas story. It is very good. You did NO "badmouthing" of the Church. What you said is true. Things like these (power struggle) do happen since time immemorial. SGM.*

**ROMY MARQUEZ'S COMMENTS:** My cyberspace and prolific friend, Romy, a well-known journalist in Toronto, Canada, had this to say:

*Pareng Jesse ... I just finished reading your story and you told it as it happened. I don't believe you "badmouthed" the church and the ushers..You actually gave context to what otherwise would be a less-interesting story about lectors and ushers.*

*Surely your presence there had an impact on people. Your story is an INSIDE STORY. The mention of Dawn provided the balance. Why she was so patient, so warm and so good to you was another story ha ha ha .... Romy Marquez.*

It's the New Year *na*, so I agree with that laughter of Romy. He, who laughs at the world, laughs with him. So, let's laugh on, world. Surely, this is what the world needs. Laughter instead of anger.

**FROM SALVAHEY2:** Y'all know Salvahey2, right? I've written a couple of things about him. Many of his witty, outrageous and devilish comments have graced several of my Kapeng Barako writings. He claims to be the "devil," ahem, incarnate. Devil or whatever, he's a unique devil, because he's so funny. His repertoire of funny words and phrases, like "JosMaryusep!" had become classic expressions of wonder or delight.

When I sent in cyberspace a photo of the Jose-Navarro clan to few chosen friends, he commented:



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*JJ ... You look like a defrocked Asian-American Santa Claus.☺ Cute na cute at 72.☺ Talagang Kapeng Barako!☺ Nakakata-cute!☺*

*Happy New Year!☺ May you still be imbued in 2012 with a preposterously offensive mind-set (smiley) that you truly need in your barako-kind of writing.☺ And may all the tribes of your narrow-minded antagonists decrease! (smiley).☺ Happy writing, Barako!☺ Sincerely, Salvahey2.*

I told ya, Salvahey is funeeeeeee.

Dear Readers, going back to the title of my story: Did I really badmouth our church? My few chosen friends and a NUN all said, NO, I didn't. You decide. Y'all have a Happy New year! **JJ**

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