

## Black Friday in Makati City - MabuhayRadio

Written by Conrado "Ben" Sanchez, Jr.

Wednesday, 31 October 2007 11:52 - Last Updated Thursday, 07 October 2010 16:22

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No, I was nowhere near the Glorietta blast. Neither were any of my relatives nor friends, thank God. Eleven died and more than a hundred suffered injuries as a result of the disastrous explosion that severely damaged three floors and blew up the roof of Glorietta 2 Shopping Mall in the Central Business District of Makati City. October 11, 2007, will forever be known hereabouts as "Black Friday".

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To get a close view of the destruction, here's a video of the damage from inside the mall:

{moseasymedia media=http://www.youtube.com/watch/v/OVAy80QueuE}

Youtube gave the video clip from ABS-CBN Channel 2 five stars for excellence. Even early in the investigation, the Philippine National Police is putting up a smoke screen by calling it an "industrial accident". Engineering professors from the University of the Philippines dispute this.

One tragic victim of this incident is young Mrs. Leslie Cruz. She was standing by the entrance of Glorietta 2 when the shocking thing happened at around 11:30 AM last Friday. She was to meet her husband, Carlo, by the door to the Mall. Let her husband tell you the rest of the story.

I came across this letter from an e-mail I received. Carlo wrote it four days after the catastrophe. It is so deeply moving. I was really touched and thought of forwarding it to you.

QUOTE.

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23 October 2007

From Carlo Cruz

Good day everyone,

I wish I were writing under different circumstances. I would like to inform you that my wife Leslie Cruz was one of the fatalities in the Glorietta 2 Mall bombing in Makati City, Philippines. She was supposed to have a minor out-patient surgery at Makati Medical Center at 2:30 PM.

I had taken a leave from work to accompany her there. We dropped off our daughter, Amber, at my parents' place in Quezon City at around 10 AM. We then proceeded to Makati arriving there at 12:30 PM. Since she had been fasting in preparation for her procedure, she wanted to move around so she could listen to some music while I grabbed a bite to eat. We parked at the basement of Park Square 2, and headed for the Glorietta 2 entrance. After parting at the top of the escalator, she turned right toward Filbar's while I went left in the direction of the restaurants. That was the last time I saw her.

Around 1:20 PM, she had called me so that we can meet at the Glorietta 2 exit just in time to make her appointment. As I made my way there from Glorietta 1 through the connecting hallways, and was about to turn the corner, I heard two deep thumps and the shock-wave from the blast hit me. At that moment my heart dropped as I knew that the origin of the blast came from the same place where we were supposed to meet. I tried getting to where my wife was, but the dust was too much and it was as if I was staring at a white wall.

I still tried to convince myself that she was able to make it out, and that after ringing her mobile without a response only meant that she dropped it in the confusion. After six hours of searching from Makati Med to Ospital ng Makati, the blast site, and back again to MMC (Makati Medical Center) – with the help of all the people I could get hold of, that I was able to get confirmation about what state my wife was in.

My Dad and Uncle signaled me in from the ER of MMC. My Uncle (who's a doctor) asked me to describe Leslie's appearance to another group of doctors. I saw in the eyes of one that the description made sense. The doctors huddled together and then brought me to a small examination room. It was only through a digital camera that I was able to confirm (and deny) that Leslie was indeed gone.

I have so many regrets. I should have met her sooner. I should have run instead of walking briskly. I shouldn't have parked where I did. I should have braved the dust and went into the blast site. I should have ...

Today is the fourth day. It is still terribly difficult to breathe, let alone wake up realizing that your source of strength, your best friend doesn't lie beside you on your bed. This is my deepest worry: What shall I tell Amber when she starts asking for her Mama?

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I am glad that Amber's too young to understand the loss and pain. In time I would like to tell her the details of how her mother died, but more importantly I would like to raise her the way her mother lived – a loving person, strong willed, decisive, caring, and nurturing. She has always cared for her family and friends, and sacrificed her career to become a full time mom and home maker.

Like other couples we had our ups and downs – none of which I regret not going through. The sweet is never as sweet without the sour. For almost four years of marriage, we've finally hit our balance in life only to be taken away in an instant. I have no regrets about our marriage. She has loved me and Amber beyond her capacity. I will always love her.

It is the first time I write my e-group as I've lurked and watched e-mails being sent to and fro. For all the couples here, all I want now is for them to cherish each moment spent with their loved ones. Pretty simple to say; very easy to take for granted.

Thank you all for your prayers. I would still like to ask you to please include Leslie in them until her fortieth day so that the path to God's kingdom is well lit and she is no longer in the dark.

Sincerely,  
Carlo Cruz  
UNQUOTE.

Let us pray for Leslie, Carlo and Amber and the many, many more victims whose lives were cut short through senseless acts of violence. Let us also pray that the barbarian bombers with evil intentions be touched by God's grace and be converted.

Take every opportunity to express your love and appreciation, especially to those who matter most to you – lest you lose your chance.

The bottom line tells us that eternity smiles on the good ones.

Editor's Note: The columnist can be reached at

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