

"*come, you who are blessed by my Father...*" (Matthew 25,34)

Beloved wife Freddie,

Dearest children: Jing and her husband, Tagan

Sid,

Victor,

Jorge and his wife, Rheena

Lucy,

Christina and her husband, Atan

Dinky and his wife Desi

Dearest grandchildren and great grandchildren

The Diocese of Balanga, the province of Bataan is one with you on this sad moment in your life. We are with you with our prayers and Holy Masses for eternal repose of our founder, DM Consunji. Your loss is our loss. Your sorrow is our sorrow. Not only the province of Bataan has lost her illustrious son, but also our country will surely miss the passing away to eternal life of DM Consunji, "*the father of contemporary construction industry.*" But much more the Philippine Catholic Church has lost her faithful and God-fearing Church builder, DM Consunji.

My brothers and sisters in Christ,

There are realities in life which are very difficult to accept, very hard to understand. They will happen to us and we will surely experience. One of these is that life has an end.

Everything will come to pass. We are just temporary residents here on earth. And we are therefore on pilgrimage to God. Heaven is our true home. To be with God is our ultimate mission. To live with God for eternity is our final goal, our supreme happiness.

And this is, my dearest friends in Christ, what we witnessed with our beloved founder, DM. His life has come to an end and He goes home to God the Father. He now resides with God forever.

Reflecting about his exemplary life and with our inspiring encounters with him we have learned from these beautiful lessons in life.

First. He always returned to his roots. And his root is his native town of Samal. His root is the province of Bataan. He never forgets us. He has not left Bataan. DM Consunji always remembers with affection, with pride our place, our people even our place and we, his people, are just ordinary and insignificant.

His remembrance of us goes with his good works. He brought us help and hope. He built up Samal and Orani. As he formed the Suhay Foundation, established Villa Esperanza and created Tamarind Groove DM Consunji redeveloped Bataan. He makes us known.

We will never forget his caring marching order as our Virgen Milagrosa del Rosario College Seminary in Balanga would be constructed, personally telling VP Gerry, Engineer Marjorie, Delfin and Benny "*let the laborers be from Samal, from Bataan. Give them works. With employment their life is*

secured and will prosper." He always returned to his roots. He always remembered his place and his people, always doing and giving what is best and beneficial to them.

My brothers and sisters, we have this very emphatic Pilipino maxim, which goes like this, "*ang hindi lumingon sa pinanggalingan ay hindi makakarating sa kanyang paroroonan.*" Like DM with all humility let us return and remember our place. In spite of his numerous achievements and outstanding accomplishments, like him, we must still return and recognize those people who have been part of our life.

Yes we will also return to our eternal and final root, and that is Heaven. We will also go someday, and return to God, whom all of us come from. And like him let us return to God with good works from our hands, and thus we have something to say and to show to God when our time has come to an end.

DM is God's builder. Aside from those beautiful homes he has built, there are also so many monasteries, retreat houses and churches he has gratuitously constructed. And now returning to final rest, to be with God surely our Lord has prepared for DM the most beautiful dwelling place in Heaven. And our Lord with His loving and merciful verdict will tell DM, "*come, you who are blessed by my father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you*" (Matthew 25,34).

Second. He always referred everything to God. His refuge is God. In our conversation with the former City mayor of Balanga, Celso Valdecanas, he narrated to us on our way to 2281 Chino Roces Avenue to visit DM, the reason why DM Consunji took the challenging responsibility and huge burden of building a grand concrete cross at the top of Mount Samat situated in the town of Pilar in Bataan. Accordingly it is not only to commemorate the heroic sacrifices and the gallant stand of Filipino and American soldiers in defense of freedom, and not only to promote the idea of universal peace and friendship among nations. But much more DM in his idea that putting a huge cross on that historic mountain with elevation of 544.7 meters anyone and everybody going to Bataan and seeing that cross will eventually "*look up to God.*" It is to raise our sight to God, to focus our vision to God.

My brothers and sisters when we are tested and troubled let us look up to God with trust. And when we have been fortunate and fruitful let us look up to God in gratitude.

And this has been the faith of DM to God. He was deeply rooted with God. He always took refuge to God. As we priests in Bataan have been told that during his review and days of Board Examinations in Engineering, DM would ever let a day passed without going to Manila Cathedral to pray to our Blessed Mother, the Immaculate Conception. Was it not an act of gratitude and moment of grace that DMCI took the historic restoration of the said Minor Basilica, the so called Manila Cathedral?

With his faith is seen with his fidelity to God. The construction of the Holy Sacrifice chapel in the University of the Philippines is living testament to it. It was raining heavily for that week, with the pouring of cement schedule on that very next day. And it was still raining on that early morning. Everybody was worried. Should they stop? Or should postpone when weather permits?

But with his solid faith in God and resorting to God's power, DM assured the American Jesuit chaplain, "*father, please do the praying and we will take care of the pouring of cement. And everything will be just fine.*" True enough the rain stopped and there was a successful completion.

My brothers and sisters in Christ, our fidelity to God leads us to being fruitful. From its foundation year of 1954, DMCI has grown like the proverbial mustard seed that *"any once it has fully grown, it is bigger than garden plant"* (Matthew 13, 31). And now DMCI is known as quadruple A among all construction companies.

Indeed with his faithfulness to God and being fair with his people seeds of his good works comparable with the parable of the sower *"grew and increased and yielded grain; some produced thirty times as much, others sixty and one hundred times as much"* (Mark 4,8).

A young lady engineer, one of the many successful scholars of DM from the town of Bagac, that all, young and old remain and would not leave DMCI. And what is the reason? She said, *"he is not only a founder. He is father to us. And DMCI is a family."*

My brothers and sisters, reflecting deeper we have not lost DM Consunji. We just allow and send DM to his final root, to his home in Heaven. He still remains in our hearts. And all around us-roads and bridges; power and energy; homes and monasteries- are legacies of his love for our country and for our Catholic Church.

DM Consunji, we the people of Bataan are privileged and honored to have known and met you. Thank you so much for showing us that even as simple, ordinary and common we are, we can also be like you rise up from our humble condition and stand tall like the cross of Mount Samat. Thank you so much, DM Consunji, for teaching us that whatever and wherever we have reached and achieved in life, we have to remember God and our people, to look up on the Cross, return to Heaven, our true home.

+Ruperto Cruz Santos

Bishop of Balanga and Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines

Episcopal Chairman for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People

Saturday,09 September 2017 at the Santuario de San Antonio in Forbes Park, Makati City