

Liwanag - Tanglaw

International

Soul-Searching

We say we make mistakes all the time. But when we do we find them hard to admit. Saying, “I was wrong,” never comes easy.

It may be because we associate error with clumsiness, ineptitude, and other negative traits. Our errors, after all, can cause highway accidents, opportunities to be missed, or put others’ lives in peril.

There are times, however, when errors can be funny, too.

Think of the time you wore your T-shirt backwards, when you banged your head against a low beam (not funny to you but funny to others), or the man who thought he was slicing cheese from a bar of soap.

But whether funny or gravely serious, in the end, our errors give us a feeling we don’t want—intellectual inferiority.

According to the book, “Being Wrong” (2010) by Kathryn Schultz, error does not have to make us feel that way. Instead, error may be seen as part progress. Errors are helpful—indeed may sometimes even be necessary—in finding out truth.

Take, for example, sci-



Bro. Sixto Roman's garden in Elizabeth, New Jersey.

ence. One way science moves forward is by making false assumptions. These assumptions or “postulates” are then reasoned out to be wrong one by one until what’s left is what’s true. Another way science progresses is by collecting inaccurate measurements (say, positions of a star in the sky using a telescopes with some inaccuracies) then aggregating them to come up with a clear pattern (the planet’s elliptical orbit). In other words, through repetition of error science gleans at truth.

Art works in a similar manner. An obvious example is modern art. If you are ever moved by abstract art (a Van Gogh, for example),

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Truth and Honesty

Citicorp’s latest pride, the towering 59-story Citicorp Center with the slanted roof on 53rd and Lexington in Manhattan—the seventh tallest building in the world at the time—was completed in 1977. In 1978, the skyscraper’s structural engineer was thinking about suicide. The building he designed, he found out, will not withstand

the winds of a storm that hits New York City once every sixteen years and will simply topple down into the neighboring buildings below.

How that can happen after all the careful planning not to mention the strict building codes to comply with was complex. But it all started with a church.

Citicorp wanted the whole

block. But a church on the corner wouldn’t give up its spot. So Citicorp struck a deal—it will replace the old church with a new one that matched the skyscraper’s architecture. It was a deal so good that the church jumped on it.

To clear space for the church, the four columns that

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**East Coast
Next Sesyon:**

June 11 – Saturday, 5:00 p.m.

Pag-gunita at pag-alaala sa pag-alis sa laman ng KGG na Gran Superma, Dr.Rosa Pena Tongko. Gaganapin ito sa tahanan ng mga kapatid na Bro.Eddie at Sis.Lota Cantada, sa:

3117 Bangor Drive,
Chesapeake, VA 23321
Tel. (757) 483-2103

West Coast:

Maaring tumawag kina:

- Bro.Louie & family: (619) 264-4251
- Sis.Fia Zabat Swartz: (619) 656-3138
- Sis.Amor & Bro.Salvador Pia: (619) *82-656-0325, or Fax (619) 421-5240.

Soul-Searching

then you may have gleaned at a truth through something that blatantly distorts reality. Even realism (DaVinci's Mona Lisa, for example) does not faithfully render reality. The artist makes subtle changes to achieve a perfection not discernible in the real world by our human senses.

As art and science make use of errors to glean at truth, so, too, do we.

When we make a mistake we change. We may do this instantly as when a revelation occurs or slowly through time as we age through the years. (Remember when as a teen you felt invincible, were always right, and knew everything, and now that you're an adult, you're not so sure?) Our mistakes make who we are.

However quickly or gradually we change, when we discover our mistake we essentially replace a false belief with a (hopefully) better one.

But what happens when we find a belief wrong but have no new one to replace it with? According to the book, it's not a place we'd want to be in.

As an example, the book tells the story of Anita who grew up in a devoutly Christian family. As an eight year-old, she engaged actively in church activities. But although her faith was sincere, she was having doubts about some of the teachings especially about hell. Would she go to hell? Would her friends go to hell? Would Rapture take her mom to heaven but not her?

When Anita grew up, she went to New York City to attend art school. There she started dating an atheist.

Slowly but surely, new ideas were intro-

duced to her and she moved farther away from her childhood church's teachings.

Then one day her boyfriend left her. Not only was she devastated romantically but she was also caught between old beliefs that she was turning away from and the unknown because she had no new beliefs to replace them with.

Not a day passed when she didn't agonize over the meaning of life. For the first time in her life, she found herself totally alone—physically, mentally, and emotionally.

What Anita found in her aloneness was that however terrifying it might be, it could strengthen us. Without it, we might never look inside. And once we come out of our "soul-searching" experience, we tend to look again at the world with fresh new eyes and see our place in it.

It is said that this material plane is just one stop among many along a soul's path to progress. It is also said that to err is human or that we all, one way or another, sin. Whatever their true meanings, we could infer one message. Not only should one not stand tall over another because we could all be here to err, but also through errors that we make we might learn humility, and through errors made by others we might learn forgiveness. In learning those two traits—humility and forgiveness—saying, "I was wrong," may become easy and be the first step we take in moving on.

Reference:

- Schulz, Kathryn. *Being wrong: adventures in the margin of error*. New York: Ecco, 2010. Print.

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Overheard...

The Homeless

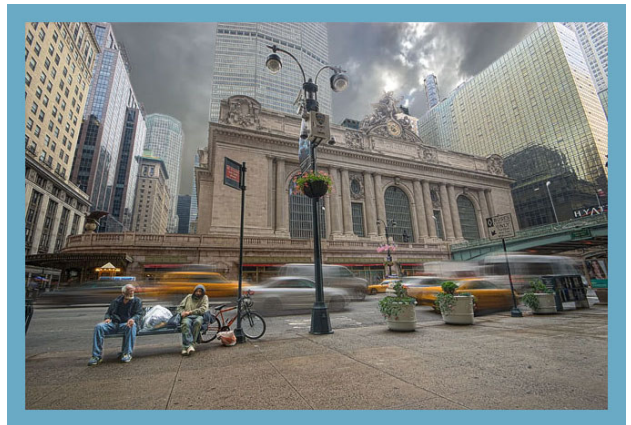
Working at the Veterans Affairs Hospital for many years, I was able to interact closely with our homeless veterans. Each of them had a story to tell. Aside from their addiction or psychological issues, you meet with one who followed all the rules, became very successful, and then had suddenly fallen hard when life handed him a difficult role.

We are so fortunate, having heard Templo Sol's teachings, that when we do meet with some adversity in life, something that can put us down to our knees, we are able to get up quickly and understand why this was handed to us. We do not get bitter or blame God.

Sis. Fiel relayed to us the bamboo stalk story. Someone asked- Why is it that when I place ripe and sweet mangoes inside a bamboo stalk, out comes sour and bitter mangoes on the other end? The answer he got was- The sour mangoes are those you have put in before, but if you keep putting in those sweet mangoes and never tire of it, eventually the sweet mangoes will come out.

"There is acceptance, the understanding of karma, and knowing that God is just and merciful."

—Sis. Grace Santos



The Newsletter is hungry for your contributions!

Essays, poems, photos of your garden or other peaceful place especially those that touch on spirituality are welcome. Announcements of birth, death, wedding, education, and others are welcome, too.

Starting with this issue, we are also introducing a new section, "Overheard...", where you may voice your testimonials, affirmations, appreciations, and whatnot about our teachings and how they affected you. What you write does not have to be a full-fledged article. We look forward to hearing from you!

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*A Moment of Silence***A Most Generous Gift**

By Sis. Lulu Lorenzo

Casimiro Lorenzo was born on January 25, 1940. Growing up in Manila, he loved to play basketball and loved going to parties. He was friends with everyone. He danced with all the girls in the neighborhood and tutored classmates who didn't like doing homework in college. Cas, as he was known to family and friends, wanted to become an accountant. But his father influenced him to becoming an engineer instead. He earned his Bachelor of Science Degree in Mechanical Engineering from Mapua Institute of Technology in 1963.

In the 60s, during a trip to the U.S. where he worked as a ramp employee for Pan Am, he saw the vast economic opportunities of working there. On September 27, 1970, he set off on his own and emigrated to the

United States. He worked as a mechanical designer for Davy McKee, an engineering and construction firm in San Ramon, California.

Three years later, he met Lulu Lorenzo—"Sis. Lulu" to our church members—in San Francisco and the two got married. They had two children and the family lived in the same house in the city of South San Francisco, a suburb 10 miles south of San Francisco, since December 20, 1975.

Cas was a smoker of many years. As stories circulated about the negative effects of tobacco on health, he remained reluctant to quit. But when his children, Ed, 13, and Emily, 8, asked him to stop, he did so promptly in exchange for a promise that the children

keep their rooms clean. Even though the kids probably would not keep their rooms clean, Cas never returned to smoking. He was determined, selfless, would do anything for his family, and a man of his word.

On February 9, 2011, Cas passed away from an accident. He was 71. He is survived by his wife of 38 years, our Sister Lulu, his children, Ed and Emily, and the family's pug, Cooper, whom Cas adored and, according to Sis. Lulu, made him so complete. Cooper regularly slept on his chest while both took naps.

In life, Cas was very health conscious. He took care of his body and mind by eating right and enjoying Sudoku puzzles. He loved to travel, politics, and golf. His love for parties continued into his later years as

he also became an avid ballroom dancer. His friends describe him as the life of the party, a great friend, and an honorable man. In the home, he reminded his family to always believe in themselves, to not strive for perfection, and instead enjoy life. He reminded them, too, however, to strive for perfection in the eyes of God.

Although his life ended suddenly and unexpectedly, through Cas and the memories he left behind, his family believes that they have been given a most generous gift.

"We are eternally grateful to our brothers and sisters in IEVES for their generous love, prayers, and support. I and my children will not be able to cope without God, families and friends."

— Sis. Lulu.



Bro. Cas Lorenzo in 2009.

Truth and Honesty*Continued from p.1*

supported the skyscraper—normally placed at the corners of a building—were placed in the middle of each side instead. The skyscraper was then raised nine stories above the four columns with one corner protruding over the church's roof. In essence, the skyscraper was cantilevered on top of the church on four stilts. It was an engineering marvel that made the skyscraper seem to hover.

The unorthodox design did not escape a Princeton architecture student and his professor. The student called the building's structural engineer challenging the building's soundness in the face of a "quartering wind". A quartering wind blows diagonally instead of perpendicularly thus hitting a building on its two sides at once.

Nonsense, was the structural engineer's reaction. He sent the student material about the building's design to lecture him on his unfounded fear. But inside, the structural engineer was curious. He plugged the student's numbers into his equations and found that, indeed, the student was right.

Still, there was no cause for concern. His design called for "welded" joints—far stronger than a typical building's "bolted" joints. There was also the "mass damper" on the roof that, although designed to attenuate a building's swaying during an earthquake, could also lessen tension on the structural members during a quartering wind.

The mass damper, however, needed electricity. And the engineer knew that during a storm the city's power could be knocked out.

To make things worse, when the engineer called the builders to confirm, he learned that, despite his specifications of welding joints, the builders opted to bolt them instead. The change was due to cost factors and was standard practice in the building industry. Welding was expensive and needlessly strong when bolted joints did the job just as well. The city's Building Commissioner allowed the change because building codes only specified structural strength against perpendicular winds—not quartering winds.

What the structural engineer faced was a nightmare. In each passing year, there was a one-in-sixteen chance that his one-hundred-seventy-five million dollar structure would collapse. Lives will be lost. Litigations would follow and lead to his bankruptcy. He would never again design another building. In short, at the pinnacle of his career he was no good at what he did. It was thinking these thoughts that he considered driving

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his car at 100 miles per hour into a bridge abutment to end his life.

But occasionally, a spark occurs inside one's darkened mind. With the knowledge he now had of the building's weakness came also the solution. And with only him knowing about the problem, he felt immense power in his hands in turning this story any way he wanted. So he decided to blow the whistle on himself.

He approached Citicorp's Chairman. He approached the city's Building Commissioner. He faced lawyers and insurers every step of the way. And each time he told the whole truth.

Everyone acted promptly. The Citicorp Chairman offered support for quickly getting it fixed. The city's Building Commissioner certified the construction firm's welders without delay. Links were established with the weather bureau and the Red Cross to coordinate weather patterns



and evacuate the building and the surrounding neighborhood should the sixteen-year storm come while the building was being repaired.

Work started immediately. Power generators were installed on the mass damper. Welders worked seven days a week—from dusk till dawn when the building employees were gone. Independent and top-class engineers all the while re-evaluated the whole skyscraper's strength.

In two months, the fix was complete. The building, with bolted joints reinforced by welded steel plates—a band-aid fix, in essence—now stands even stronger.

Despite his initial fears, the structural engineer's name wasn't tarred. Instead, the Citicorp Center crisis of '78 is now cited in engineering textbooks worldwide as an example of an engineer's social obligation.

Looking back, had the structural engineer remained silent after the student's call, the building surely would have collapsed—it was just a matter of time. With all those years in college wasted and the lives lost forever tormenting him, ending his life now appeared inviting. Surely others have done so for less.

But instead he faced the truth. Being imprisoned by the prospect of career ruin, he wielded truth like he had nothing left to lose. As a result, instead of his name being tarnished, it was more than restored—it was enhanced.

In the end, the Citicorp crisis would seem to suggest that an age-old adage proves itself timeless. Even in this day and age of complex, powerful, and materialistic institutions, the simple truth, when given the chance, can set a person free.

Reference:

- Morgenstern, Joe. "The Fifty-Nine Story Crisis." *The New Yorker* 29 May 1995: 45-53. Print.

Alay Sa'yo

ni Sis. Gwen Ciego

Alay ko'y tinig na magpapagaan
Sa kanyang tila hapong katawan

Wagas na pagmamahal
Haplos sa isip na pagal

Awit na buong lambing
Handog sa pusong nahihimbing

Papawiin ang sakit
Maglalaho ang pait.



Photo above is the second place winner in the "Live Life, Love Life, Insure Your Life" photography competition, Black & White category, sponsored by the Philippine Life Insurance Association (PLIA) in celebration of the Life Insurance Consciousness Week on October 11-17, 2009. The photo was taken by Bro. Nardeo Ciego, son of Sis. Gwen and Bro. Joselito Ciego. Shown in the photo is Sis. Lilia Viola, mother of Sis. Gwen Ciego, and a grandchild.

Coming Sesyons

Agosto 20 – Sabado, 5:00 p.m.

Pag-diriwang sa anibersaryo ng pag-angat sa kalagayang relihiyon ng Institution. Gaganapin ito sa tahanan ng mga kapatid na Bro. Virgelio at Sis. Vi Carpio, sa 5 Fortune Road, East Middle-

town, NY 10941. Tel. (845) 692-4561

Oktobre 8 – Sabado, 5:00 p.m.

Pag-diriwang at pag-alaala sa pag-silang sa laman ng KGG na Gran Superma, Dr. Rosa Pena Tongko, at gayon din ang kapanganakan sa

laman ng ating Gurong Ispirital, Dr. Vicente Morales Zabata. Gaganapin ito sa tahanan ng mga kapatid na Bro. Angel at Sis. Grace Santos, sa 390 Chestwick Drive, Martinsburg, WV 25401. Tel. (304) 267-7248