



I FEAR

Kathlyn Q. Barrozo
Class of 1991, University of Santo Tomas
B.S. Medical Technology

Albert Einstein was once quoted thus, “ It was the experience of mystery—even if mixed with fear—that engendered religion.” This reminds me of something my younger brother and my second son laughingly told me about getting into the country’s premier state university: they both learned to be extra prayerful once they had gotten in. That was simply because trying to stay within the walls of the university entailed great arduous tasks. I’m proud to say that thanks to great perseverance and genuine hard work, my brother was able to hurdle his board exams successfully and my son is poised to start his final year this term. And yes, they have both become more prayerful, not religious but still prayerful.

The funny thing about the human race is that we do not learn to pray on bended knees until we get reduced to groveling for something. I, for one, had always felt invulnerable to hypertension, even laughing the whole thing off with a dismissive shrug and an if-I-die-then-I-die attitude. Working myself off with late nights and endless stress as companions had been my usual cup of tea, aside from having at least two cups of coffee to keep me awake the whole day. I had felt strong and incapable of feeling fatigue. That was all before January this year, when chest pains that went through my left side left me virtually unable to do anything for a week. When admitted to hospital, I was informed that my blood pressure had steadily gone up and my hemoglobin had crashed to dangerous levels, drastically dropping below half of normal. That really woke me up, you bet; really jolted me awake to the fact that I was but a frail human being.

Because of this episode, I have lain low for several months now. I fear endlessly for my children, who have survived without a father for nearly six years now. I fear for my mother, who has been helping me immensely in my role as provider for my seven kids. I fear for my sisters and brother, who have been helping me in the best ways possible to survive. I fear for all I love, who have come to believe that I am dependable.

I fear that I may not entirely be relied upon to give more of myself in the years to come.

But that has not stopped me from facing life more squarely this time. My children still get mad when I eat what I shouldn’t eat, or partake of things like watching movies late into the night on Fridays and Saturdays. But somehow, the fears I now possess have fueled me to make wiser choices along the way.

Fear has taught me to pray harder that my fears remain unfounded.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Has any particular event in your life made you fearful in one way or another? Talk about that event in detail.
2. What are some of the things you personally fear? Why do you fear them?
3. Why is fear sometimes necessary?
4. How do you deal with your fears?
5. Explain: There is nothing to fear but fear itself.