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*Kalinga*

*Bi-monthly Newsletter of the  
Arnold Janssen Kalinga  
Foundation Inc.*

*Inside the Issue*

# DEAD MEN STILL TELL TALES: POSTMORTEM ANALYSES ON EJK VICTIMS RELEASED

*by Nirva Delacruz*



DR. FORTUN'S POSTMORTEM EXAMINATIONS WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT PROJECT ARISE'S EXHUMATIONS. | PHOTO CREDIT: RAFFY LERMA

Walking into the modest hall set up for the press briefing of sorts, Dr. Raquel Fortun has the stride of someone who knows exactly what she's doing.

From knee up, she strikes you as no nonsense, more military than medical—the short cropped hair, the navy blue polo.

But it's the high-cut boots that give her away.

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# CARING FOR THE POOR IS CARING FOR OUR WOUNDED NATION

*by Rev. Fr. Flavie Villanueva, SVD*

How do we even begin to love our beloved Philippines in her present state today? I dare say, it's quite simple and we can start today. Whenever we reach out to the poor or help someone in need, we care for our country.

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# Note from the Founder



WHILE THERE IS A NEED TO FEED THE BODY, THERE IS ALSO A NEED TO FEED THE MIND OF FILIPINO VOTERS.

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Most of us will never get the chance to serve in public office or get to be part of major initiatives, but we can all start somewhere. First, we can begin the healing of our wounded nation by voting in a way that will pave the way for the healing of the long-standing wounds of poverty, corruption, and anti-life issues.

The 4 Cs when choosing our candidate in the nearing May 2022 elections are still our go-to criteria:

1. **Competence.** Our candidate should have a proven track record of good and efficient work accomplished for the common good.
2. **Character.** The one who deserves our vote should be known for their consistent moral uprightness and virtue over time and not just during the election period.
3. **Compassion.** S/he is known to champion the cause of the poor, the marginalized, those who have no say in society. [VISIT PAGE](#)
4. **Capacity to Govern.** Often, intelligence and good will aren't enough. The Philippines needs someone who can take the heat of leading an entire nation of often competing interests and factions.

Why are the coming polls so important? They are crucial because when we care for the poor we need to see that our caring will eventually get to the root of why they are poor in the first place. Such a deeper level of caring can only lead us to advocate for justice and peace.

Ultimately, caring for the poor is about continuity. Caring for the poor by voting right won't end on election day. Whoever wins, our commitment is not a day event, it's a call to action every minute of every day. The problems of our country can only find light and solutions if every Filipino—and this doesn't include the President, the Vice President, even the local officials alone—gets involved to solve the problem.

We need a collective beating of the chest (“pambansang dagok sa dibdib”) for all of us to realize, “I’ve been remiss; I’m at fault too, but I’m ready to give a definite response to lift up our wounded nation.”

Caring for the poor starts with me.

Caring for the country starts with me. ■

Rev. Fr. Flavie Villanueva, SVD



EVERY TUESDAY, R BAKERY IS SURE TO SEND OVER PACKS OF BREAD PRODUCTS FOR MANILA'S HOMELESS.

## Champions' Corner

### BREAD DAYS WITH R BAKERY

by Nirva Delacruz

Every Tuesday at the Center is bread day.

Thanks to R. Bakery, homeless people who frequent the Tayuman area are familiar with all kinds of baked products.

From the crowd favorite pan de sal to the 2-foot long



PAULINE LIM, OWNER OF R BAKERY, IS ONE OF MANY SMALL TO MEDIUM BUSINESS OWNERS WHO FIND WAYS TO BE PART OF THE AJ KALINGA MISSION.

baguette; from classic pan de coco to whole wheat rye loaf, ube pan de sal and cinnamon buns, this generous corporate sponsor has been filling many grateful tummies. With its main branch in Parañaque City, in the southern part of the metro, R. Bakery, owned by Pauline Lim, is one of the Center’s mainstay donors.

*...from classic pan de coco to whole wheat rye loaf, ube pan de sal and cinnamon buns, this generous corporate sponsor has been filling many grateful tummies.* ”

From everyone at the Arnold Janssen Kalinga Foundation, a big bread bun thank you from us! ■



PAN DE SAL, THE FAVORITE FILIPINO BREAKFAST IS A HIT WITH THE HOMELESS OF MANILA WHO OFTEN GO TO SLEEP HUNGRY.

## HOW WOULD THE HOMELESS VOTE? WE FOUND OUT

by Br. Jorem Yap

If given the chance, how would the homeless vote?

This question—and its potential—is what inspired the Arnold Janssen Kalinga Foundation to prepare some of our formerly homeless beneficiaries for this powerful civic duty.

With the upcoming May national polls, the Arnold Janssen Kalinga Foundation, in cooperation with Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan, gave a voters’ education session for the Center’s volunteers as well as AJ Bahay Kalinga residents on February 20, 2022.

### Voters’ education intensified

“Voters' education should be intensified to guide us in selecting worthy candidates based on their moral values, government platforms, what they have done and can still do,” shared Marlon Panim, the Center’s resident cook, who was one of the 25 virtual attendees attending from two different locations.

Meanwhile Andy Fajardo, another volunteer, realized the need to "choose a good leader who is trustworthy, godly, and humane."

The speakers, Br. Francesco Janne, SJ and Br. Rico Jaen, first gave a national situationer on the different realities in the country like the economy, COVID-19 response, politics, as well as the moral state of society. The session also aimed to analyze the issues by looking at them through the lens of Catholic Social Teaching.

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RANDY DELOS SANTOS FINDS PURPOSE IN BEING PART OF THE PROGRAM PAGHILOM TEAM, WHICH HAS BEEN HELPING HUNDREDS OF EJK ORPHANS AND WIDOWS OVERCOME THE TRAUMA OF VIOLENT DEATH IN THE FAMILY. | IDEALS MEDIA

## RANDY DELOS SANTOS: PAGHILOM'S RESIDENT COMIC WITH A SERIOUS HEART

by Nirva Delacruz

When you meet Randy Delos Santos, he's easily the jolliest person in the Arnold Janssen Kalinga Foundation team.

### Never the same again

He has an easy laugh and can strike up a conversation with anyone from the local grave digger to the veteran British reporter who wanders in and needs a quick orientation about EJKs in the country. It's an inside joke that he needs "ferrous sulfate" (iron supplements) to sustain the free-flowing conversation in English though.

For all the self-deprecating humor, it's almost hard to believe Randy when says he "wasn't so talkative" before coming to join AJFKI. A former dispatcher at a trucking company and furniture sales agent, the first thing he'll tell you is that he "never imagined" being part of a mission like AJFKI's.

But who would expect your own 17-year old nephew getting gunned down in another case of Oplan Tokhang gone wrong? When Randy's nephew Kian Delos Santos was killed by masked men in 2017, he suddenly found himself thrust into the firestorm of a national issue. The cliché applied to him: His life was never the same again.



THE MURDER OF RANDY'S NEPHEW KIAN DELOS SANTOS IN 2017 DEVASTATED THE FAMILY BUT AT THE SAME TIME, PAVED THE WAY FOR A REDISCOVERY OF MEANING AND PURPOSE. | PHOTO CREDIT: RAFFY LERMA

### The serious heart

With Kian's sister, Krizzhia Rosero, Randy joined AJFKI's psycho-spiritual interventions for EJK widows, orphans, and bereaved family members under Program Paghilom. He became a volunteer for the program in 2018, and by September 2020, he was invited to join the regular staff.

Today, he considers his counseling training with the Center



CHILD AT HEART. RANDY (RIGHT) ENJOYS A CHRISTMAS PARTY ORGANIZED BY PROGRAM PACHILOM FOR EJK VICTIMS' ORPHANS. | PHOTO CREDIT: RAFFY LERMA

for Family Ministries (CEFAM) the most life-changing experience of his time with the foundation so far. “If before others would listen to me (my problems), now I’m the one listening to others, journeying with other fellow victim families,” he shares in Filipino.

Beneath the natural comic is a heart serious about caring.

Randy says he’s particularly grateful for the opportunity given to him to attend paralegal training, seminars on family dynamics, and other experiences. “These skills now help me care for others and become a healer to my fellow wounded victims,” he explains.

Now that’s something to smile about. ■

*It’s an inside joke that he needs “ferrous sulfate” (iron supplements) to sustain the free-flowing conversation in English though.* ”

## HOW WOULD THE HOMELESS VOTE? WE FOUND OUT

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### “Dapat, Baka, at Sana”

The second session “Dapat, Baka, at Sana” (Should-Maybe-Hope) encouraged participants to express their own thoughts about their expectations and hopes for their future political leaders. In an activity, the participants filled out their non-negotiables for their leaders, the “dapat” (Dapat \_\_\_ ang lider na manalo sa darating na halalan.) Here they shared what they expected their leaders to prioritize and focus on.

For “baka”, the participants shared their worries and second thoughts about their candidates. Lastly, “sana” focused on particular qualities that they hope their leaders will have. To concretize their renewed love and concern for the country, the attendees filled out a “Commitment to Accountability.” According to one of the organizers, it is a “concrete symbol of their commitment to participate more in the public sphere and to vote for leaders who have a real aspiration for the good of the country.” ■



MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA, STAKEHOLDERS, AND EJK WIDOWS AND ORPHANS ATTENDED A BRIEFING ON THE INITIAL RESULTS OF DR. FORTUN'S POSTMORTEM ANALYSES OF 46 DRUG WAR VICTIMS' REMAINS. | PHOTO CREDIT: NIRVA DELACRUZ

## DEAD MEN STILL TELL TALES: POSTMORTEM ANALYSES ON EJK VICTIMS RELEASED

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### A potent mix

The woman will go against the grain if she needs to and will challenge the status quo like it's easy Sunday driving.

As the first forensic pathologist of the country, she's a pundit not just for Twitterati but for mainstream Philippine opinion.

So when the US-trained Dr. Fortun came forward with initial findings from ongoing post-mortem analyses on 46 EJK victims' remains, the handful of people, who knew she had been working on the cases, waited for the results with a potent mix of curiosity and anxiety.

### Bullet holes vs pneumonia

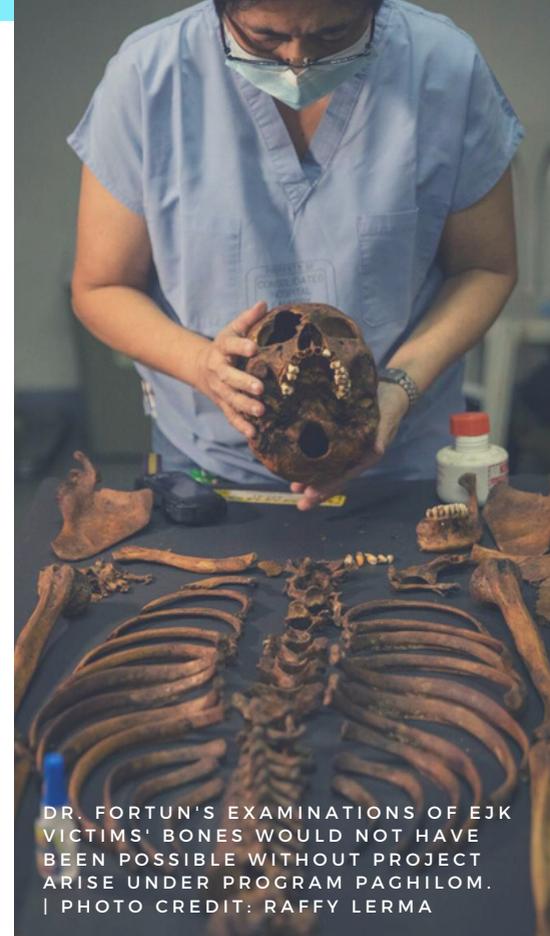
What more could be said about dozens of 6-year old cases of homicides that are officially tagged as cases of "nanlaban"?

Through the ways that only she could decipher them, dead men's bones still tell tales.

These are tales that would've been snuffed out if not for another individual—this time, a priest—who is also willing to challenge the status quo like it's easy Sunday driving, Fr. Flavie Villanueva, SVD, the founder of the Arnold Janssen Kalinga Foundation. This Catholic charity based in downtown Manila finds itself 7 years later championing the cause of two largely forgotten segments of society: the homeless and victims of the Duterte administration's war on drugs.

In death and even long after.

If not for Project Arise, an initiative that aims to exhume and lay the remains of EJK victims in permanent resting places, their bones risk being lost forever in mass graves when their families' leases on their public cemetery tombs expire.



DR. FORTUN'S EXAMINATIONS OF EJK VICTIMS' BONES WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT PROJECT ARISE UNDER PROGRAM PAGHILOM. | PHOTO CREDIT: RAFFY LERMA

*Through the ways that only she could decipher them, dead men's bones still tell tales.*



For comments or suggestions about the Kalinga newsletter, contact us:

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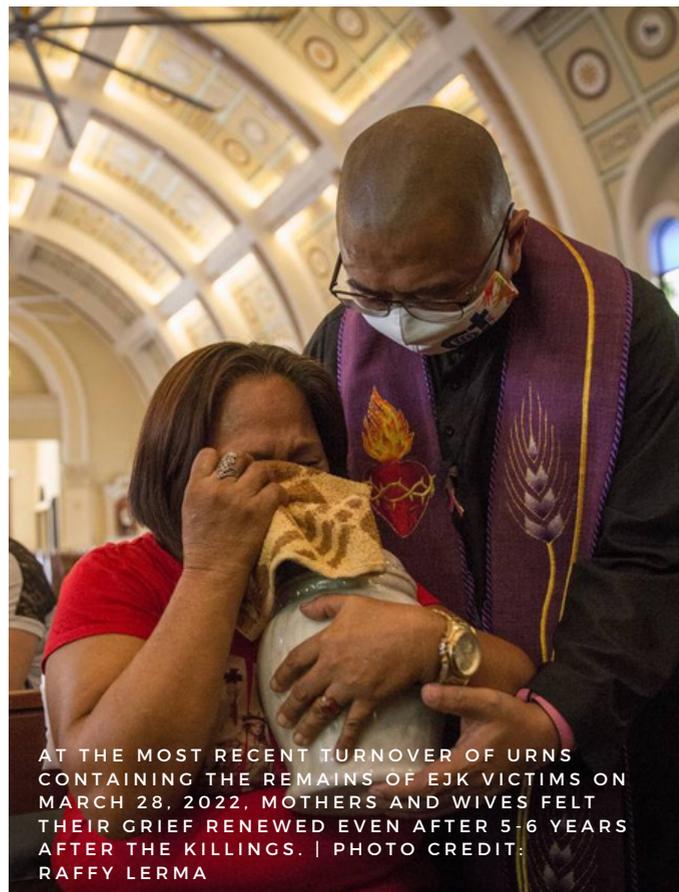
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[ajkalingafoundation.org](http://ajkalingafoundation.org)

When five years are up, the bones are usually chucked into sacks like garbage into mass graves virtually unidentifiable from the many other unclaimed bones.

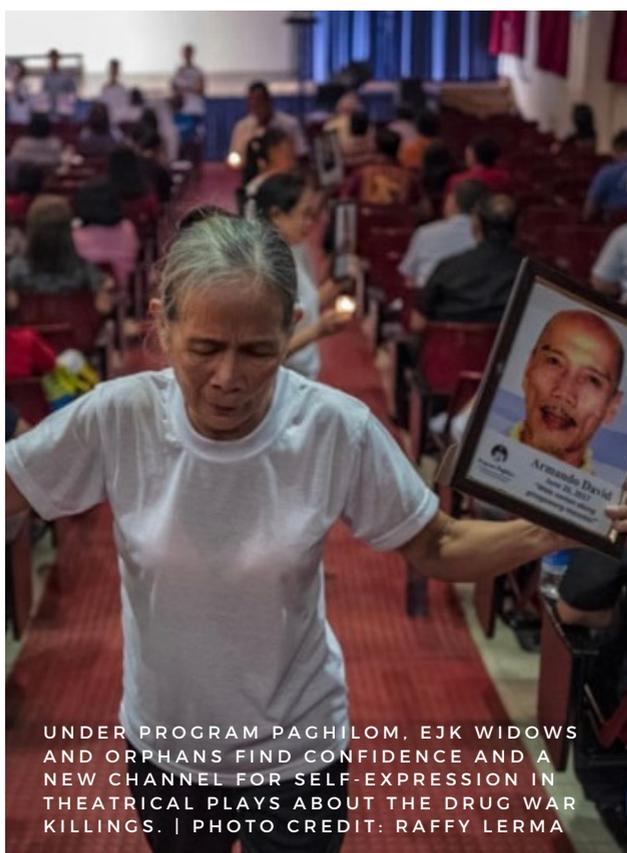
Here are a few quick points Dr. Fortun made during her 62-minute presentation to some members of the media, EJK victims' surviving family members, and other Arnold Janssen Kalinga Foundation stakeholders on April 12 at the Catholic Trade Building in Tayuman, Manila:

- **At least 7 of the EJK victims' death certificates cited natural causes as the cause of death even if their bones showed signs of a violent end.** The natural causes listed for the victims included sepsis, acute myocardial infarcts, pneumonia, and hypertension. Exit and entry bullet holes were identified in 24 bodies, particularly in the head region. Clear signs of blunt force trauma were also seen particularly on the back of 3 of the skulls examined. It appears that several of the victims were hit on the back of the head with a long, hard object like a metal bar or tube.
- **The Philippines has no clear system for investigation of deaths.** Most of the documents given to the EJK victims' families consisted of incompletely filled out death certificates, grainy photos, and ambiguous police reports. A proper documentation system should include multiple photos of different angles and details of the body, sketches of the crime scene, proper death certificates accomplished by an independent examiner, etc. that should also be available and easily accessible online. An X-ray of



the body should also be standard pre-autopsy procedure to locate bullets that could still possibly be lodged in the body.

- **There seems to be 'no intent' to solve or even properly investigate the drug war killings.** In several glaring cases, bullets were still retrieved in the bodies even after supposed autopsies done on them. Some death certificates were also marked with the phrase "For burial purposes only." Of the cases examined, 26 had incomplete death certificates and 1 had none. "This is how you get away with murder in the Philippines," she said damningly.
- **All those killed were from the poorest of the poor.** Looking at what remained of their teeth, it was obvious that those killed were so poor that they probably never even saw a dentist in their lives. Most of them had bad teeth. Very few had dentures or had some sort of dental work done on them. Looking at the official documents themselves, the occupations listed for the killed included: 4 construction workers, 2 scavengers, painter, housewife, driver, pedicab driver, electrician, vendor, welder, tireman, and a vattillo.





IN JUST A LITTLE OVER A YEAR, FR. FLAVIE AND HIS TEAM HAVE BEEN ABLE TO FACILITATE THE EXHUMATION OF THE REMAINS OF 46 VICTIMS OF THE DUTERTE ADMINISTRATION'S BLOODY WAR ON DRUGS.

## No words for grief

In the darkened room listening were five people who looked at Dr. Fortun’s slides, not with polite interest but with chilling familiarity with the details described, “gunned down on December 29, 2016”; “exhumed from Pateros”; “was shot five times in the head.”

\*Zelie, Philomena, Zita, Bernadette, and Louie all lost family members in the costly drug war. Zelie lost a son; Philomena a husband; Zita both parents; Bernadette a sister; Louie a sister-in-law. When asked to speak, their grief was still intense after six years; you could hardly make out their words. Injustice has a way of putting you in a state of perpetual mourning.

More than a case file, the statistic is an actual person they knew and loved. It all boils down to our scarred humanity and what we decide to do with whatever influence and skill we have to champion the interests and welfare of the poor and the powerless.

At the end of her presentation, Dr. Fortun admits as much. “I’ve never forgotten that I’m dealing with people. I do feel for the victims, the families. When I examine the dead, [I see that] they’re human, they were loved... It gives me some satisfaction that this individual is finally given a decent forensic examination, something which they had been denied...This is really for the families.”

In the end, this is what remains. “In the evening of life, we will be judged on love alone,” says St. John of the Cross. ■

\*Names have been changed to protect the privacy of the individuals.

*In the darkened room listening were five people who looked at Dr. Fortun’s slides, not with polite interest but with jolting familiarity with the details...*

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# BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN BEING HOMELESS TO HELPING THE HOMELESS

by Noel Feliciano



How do you bridge the distance between being homeless and helping the homeless?

Our experience at the Arnold Janssen Bahay Kalinga (BK) in Caloocan City is showing us it's not such a big leap. The Foundation first opened its stay-in residence, BK, on July 16, 2020, the feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, welcoming homeless people in the metro to learn new skills and undergo formation in an effort to help them start a new life. Initially, BK accepted homeless people who had already been seeking refuge in the seven (7) safe shelters the Foundation helped manage in Manila during the COVID-19 lockdowns.

## The distance of 28.4 kilometers

Soon it became clear that BK was a milestone which needed to take center stage in the equation of “systematic, wholistic, and dignified care” for the homeless. We soon realized that the formation cycle of the homeless needed a tweak, one that recognized a natural link between BK in Bagong Silang, Caloocan and the AJ Kalinga Center (KC) in Tayuman, Manila.



How do we work out the equation of “Kinalinga ako sa Kalinga kaya mangangalinga din ako sa iba ng may galak”? The answer is found at a distance of 28.4 kilometers: the distance between Tayuman and Bagong Silang. The so-called equation shows that there should be an exchange between BK and KC, with a focus on the integral formation of homeless residents under their care.

## ‘Come and see’

The formation team soon realized that the logical place to welcome the homeless was in BK. It would be where everything would start. For a homeless person to see himself and the world in a new way, he has to first feel that he has the personal agency to choose and decide for himself. People living on the street value freedom above many other things, including comfort, and this is why a “Come & See” program was designed. In this initial 5-day “immersion” in the life in BK, homeless people join the daily schedule and see what life is like there.

THE HOMELESS ALSO FIND AN OPPORTUNITY TO RECONNECT TO THEIR CATHOLIC FAITH THROUGH PRAYER AND THE SACRAMENTS.

They are then brought back to the streets to give them time to think about their commitment to take the first steps towards a new life. They would have to leave the hard life on the streets, but something new definitely awaits them.

When a homeless person decides to come back, they are then officially admitted and some of their more urgent needs are met.

This second stage includes:

- Catechetical formation;
- Psycho-spiritual interventions and Counseling;
- Alternative Learning System (ALS) classes;
- Skills Training;
- Employment and Referrals;

The formation in BK reflects the foundation's focus on wholistic and dignified care. "I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink" (Matthew 25:35). Feeding the homeless is the first step, nourishing their minds and hearts is the next. Imagine how grateful street dwellers are when their basic needs are met—and then some.

### Coming full circle

Meanwhile, the AJ Kalinga Center in downtown Manila becomes an intermediary destination for their continuing formation and re-introduction into mainstream society.

Since the goal of the entire track is to help the homeless become productive members of society and of the workforce, KC and its daily grind of feeding 1,000 homeless people is a perfect location for an on-the-job training experience for those who have graduated from the Kalinga values formation series in BK.

Emphasizing Jesus' words to Peter, "Go, feed my sheep!" (John 21:17), the KC experience gives the homeless residents of BK a chance to prepare, cook, and distribute food to street dwellers, leading them back to where they came from: the streets. They come full circle, this time, with purpose and a different lens to see the world. Homeless people often realize the difference between how they first received from Kalinga and their new reality of giving or feeding others also through Kalinga. Ultimately, the tweak embodies the foundation's motto: "Kinalinga ako sa Kalinga kaya mangangalinga din ako sa iba ng may galak (I was cared for in Kalinga that's why I, too, will care for others with joy)."

### Their deepest desires

To complete the formation cycle, after their stint at KC, the homeless residents would then return to BK for the "Moving Forward" phase. The final step, this is where the staff and formators help find them jobs, facilitate employment, and reunite and reconcile them with their families. The two unrealized longings of the homeless person are dignified work and family reintegration. In this last step, the foundation tries its best to fulfill both. ■