

Protest, petition, passion and praise

THERE are four essential gestures to live meaningfully I would like to share with my readers, my version of four Ps: protest, petition, passion, and praise.

The first gesture is of protest: Resist! Fight! Laban!

There are many things that we must not accept in the world and for our country:

Injustice. Inequality. Poverty.



Human rights violations.
Extrajudicial killings. Torture.
Development aggression.
Destruction of the environment.
Sexual abuse of minors. Sexual harassment of the vulnerable.
Disinformation.

We must combat all forms of

hatred, discrimination, racism, corruption, and chauvinism.

We must also fight our own selfishness, control our anger, reject despair.

The second gesture is prayer. To ask for mercy. To petition the Lord.

Panginoon, maawa ka. Kristo, maawa ka.

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To ask for the intervention of God in the challenges we face, for our suffering and illnesses, for when our hearts are broken.

To ask Mary and Joseph and the communion of saints to pray for us.

Here is a good prayer for those who are searching:

“My Lord God, I have no idea

where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.

“But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it.

“Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never

leave me to face my perils alone.”

The third gesture is that of passion. To love fully and unconditionally. Umibig! Magmahal! Amping!

There are two people I would single out who lived loving lives: Monette Ledesma, my fellow Jesuit Volunteer and UP Law contemporary, and Bishop Ben Almoneda, a priest of the Notre Dame Di Vie Institute and spiritual director of the seminarians of the Redemptoris Mater Seminary.

They entered heaven these first days of the year and now they pray for us.

We must love always our country, our family, our significant

others, our friends, and yes even our enemies.

As Ben and Ben sings in the song Leaves, we must learn to forgive and all will be alright in time.

Or to borrow, from Taylor Swift’s State of Grace, a brave and wild love can be a ruthless game, but it is a worthwhile fight.

Finally, the fourth gesture is that of Praise. Thank you Lord! Salamat!

Some of you have asked why I am always posting pictures of myself with arms outstretched.

That is the Laudato Si gesture, in imitation of Saint Francis of Assisi who praised God for all

creatures and even for his own suffering and impending death.

Here is the Canticle of Creatures which Saint Francis composed 800 years ago:

Most high, all powerful, good Lord. All praise be yours, all glory, all honor and all blessing. To you alone Most High, do they belong. No mortal lips are worthy to pronounce your name.

All praise be yours, my Lord, with all your creatures, especially Sir Brother Sun, who brings the day and light you give us through him. How beautiful is he, how radiant in his splendor! Of you Most High, he is the token.

All praise be yours, my Lord, for

Sister Moon and the Stars; In the heavens you have made them, Bright and precious and fair.

All praise be yours, my Lord for Brother Wind and the Air, and fair and stormy, all the weather’s moods, by which you cherish all that you have made.

All praise be Yours, my Lord, for Brother Fire through whom you brighten the night. How beautiful is he, how gay, robust and strong!

All praise be Yours, my Lord, for Sister Earth, our mother, who feeds us, rules us and produces various fruits, flowers and herbs.

All praise be Yours, my Lord, for those who forgive for love of

you and endure infirmity and tribulation.

Happy are those who endure them in peace for by You, Most High, they will be crowned.

All praise be Yours, my Lord, for Sister Physical Death from whose embrace no mortal can escape.

Woe to those who die in mortal sin! Happy are those she finds doing your most holy will! The second death can do no harm to them.

Praise and bless my Lord, and give him thanks, and serve Him with great humility.

I have been praying this prayer of Saint Francis every morning for 42 years. I credit my being

an environmental justice lawyer and climate justice advocate to the Lord hearing me pray this and inviting me to share in the mission of protecting the planet, people, and the Philippines.

These days, it's San Francisco's praise for suffering, sickness, and death -- lines he added to the canticle when he became sick and dying -- that I have prayed most passionately.

Everything is grace. My heart is filled with gratitude for that.

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