

MY PERSONAL ACCOUNT WITH CLIMATE CHANGE

The Distress. It was painful for me to glance back on this greatest ordeal, as I was trying to only maintain in my heart pleasant memories, and unpleasant ones are favour to take the back seat. Yet to strengthen my argument, with deep breath, I reminisced.

September 2009 was one catastrophic date for me and my family's life. We were one of those displaced by Typhoon Ondoy in Marilao Bulacan. I vividly recollect as it happened on a Saturday at around 2pm, when me and my kids were about to take a nap. Rain had been incessant for days, but we were complacent as flood never occurred in our place came strongest typhoons.

But that Saturday was no ordinary weekend. It was hardly surprising when water was soaring expeditiously because of the non-stop pouring rain. We've got no second floor, my grandmother who was alive then was in "Alzheimer's-stage" and incapable to walk and I've got two small boys who were 2 and 6 years old that time. My husband was abroad and only my mother and a nanny were with me; we were all female in the house. I couldn't comprehend where I seized my strength and unagitation that time, as we lifted appliances including the refrigerator and all other stuffs to higher portions of the house.

However, I decided that it was time for us to evacuate as water was fast ascending, and the scenario of us being trapped inside our house was what I opt to evade. A good Samaritan who's a stranger lent us a hand, and off he carried by arms my grandmother (she passed away a year after by the way, I miss you Lola. He was 96 years old). I carried my elder son while my yaya carried my younger son, but my boys were already frantic and were crying in fear. My Mother was equally terrified. I was at that exact moment when more than ever, "presence of mind" and "gallantry" were highly pursued from me. And so, I maintained calmness amidst the terrifying circumstance, without deliberately dropping my attentiveness of the situation. "We had to be safe; my family had to be safe." A resonance that was extremely loud inside my head and my heart, was braving hard to be unfazed.

We weren't able to bring anything but my bag with valuables and money inside. As we stepped outside, water was more elevated and we saw our car already inundated in flood water. Neighbours were similarly evacuating. The current was so strong that we had to grip to a rope laid by barangay officials and help us traversed to a safe higher ground. We stayed on our cousin's place several blocks from us, whose abode is more elevated than ours.

That night on my own, I decided to go back into our house. I was walking on the rain barefooted, going to and from our house. The flood finally descended. I checked the locks, secured important documents, and packed clean clothes for us. Water reached nearly three quarter high of our house, but when I came back that night it was down

to chest level. I never slept that evening. I was still in a state of shock or denial, concluding if we really just went through that kind of aberrant Mother Nature stricken adversity that is usually seen solely in movies. Then I realized I was too consumed to think things through, until that next day...

Realization. We were grateful that God is so good there were no casualties reported from our neighbourhood. The power was off the whole night and cellphone signals were down. The next day as power resumed; little did we realize as we watched the news, that hundreds of people were actually killed by Ondoy in different parts of NCR. On that instance, abruptly, I went down on my knees, and wept in silence hailing the Lord from keeping my family away from harm.

Since then, my outlook in life had changed. First, material things are temporary, our life is momentary. Everything can be taken away from us in just a blink. Better do good deeds “now”, before it is too late. Second, CLIMATE CHANGE is really happening. Ondoy is now the “new norm” that we need to adapt painstakingly. Places that were never been flooded before are now experiencing floods, landslides, and corrosions. Who will forget about super typhoon Yolanda; the recorded worst heat in the history occurred this year; and now, we are bracing with the only-God-knows effects of the incoming La Nina.

Desire. As I was contemplating my thoughts and drawing my perceptions and learning while completing this Term Project, it impacted me even more that as a parent I wouldn't wish my children not be able to bring their own children, and their own grandchildren, and their grand grandchildren, on tranquil places that we are enjoying today. If we are indeed living on a Climate Change as the experts maintained, I'm extremely terrified for what will be left for my kids in the next 50 years of their lives. And so, we must DO something NOW!

Let us rally to utilise solar power system for every household, with the hope of subsidization from the government for affordable rates for everyone. In furtherance, let us use inverter appliances that consume less energy than the traditional type. These propagations maybe a bit pricey, but can we put a price tag for our mother earth?

I pillar my hope that “ONDOY” and “YOLANDA” have served their worths for cognizance and improvement of the policies and our way of living as individuals. The rapidly declining price of renewable energy, particularly solar photovoltaic (PV) energy, provides a tremendous opportunity for nations around the world to adapt a sustainable, low-carbon economy. Our ability to develop sunshine into usable energy has become way cheaper far quickly than anyone had foreseen. For example, solar energy has been coming down in cost at a fraction of 10% annually over the past 30 years.

In several parts of the world, renewable energy is already cost-efficient than that of fossil fuels and in many parts of the world renewable energy is up surging fossil fuels altogether. These cost reductions are showing no signs of slowing down. My heart strongly desires, that my personal narrative with Ondoy, coupled with the different Climate Change Conferences for the past years, only corroborate the fact that it is imminent to “adapt and mitigate” NOW! Not only by the few, but imperative to be observed by EVERYONE! Let us go green, and switch to SOLAR!

Ultimately, as what US President Obama said, “Change depends on our action... on our attitude.” And that certainly, I believe encapsulates it all.

-TO G O D B E A L W A Y S T H E G L O R Y -

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