

IV World Ultreya
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I would like to share with you a story, a memory actually, a memory that has always been in my mind of my parents and their Catholic life. This memorable story encourages and motivates me to do works that I consider as Catholic action in this stage of my life.

Eight years ago, I returned to Vietnam to visit my parents, sister and brother. Due to age and many sicknesses, my parents had not been able to attend Mass at the local church for many years. Every Sunday morning at around eight o'clock, a man from the parish took Holy Communion to my parents.

By chance, at early dawn, one Sunday morning, I woke up and walked to the kitchen for some water, passed the lounge room and saw my parents were tabling the altar, they were just about to light up the candles to get ready for Sunday morning prayer. I stopped and asked why they were preparing so early, there were still almost four hours before receiving Holy Communion? My mother answered almost instantly that she and my father had been preparing to receive Holy Communion nearly a week since last Sunday morning, not just for a few hours this morning as I thought, . . hearing what my mother said, . . . with surprise, . . . I slowly walked back to my bed.

In Brisbane, Australia, for the past six years, every Sunday morning I visit and bring Holy Communion to patients and the aged in hospitals, nursing homes and private houses. From the feeling of joy of being able to do this work, I always have a happy and peaceful Sunday morning. Sometimes, people question my motive for doing this work with commitment and patience. To be honest, I did not know how to answer at first. Later, I recalled the memory of my parents on that early Sunday morning eight years ago in Vietnam. And from that instance, I have had a sincere answer that "I appreciate and respect the Christian virtue of the patients and the aged who, every day and every hour, had been patiently waiting to receive Holy Communion. Furthermore, I sense and feel their happiness and joy in those moments. Also, I am thankful to God that He has allowed me to be an instrument bringing God's love and peace to others.

Then one Sunday morning in the nursing home, a nurse waited for me at the exit door and asked some questions with the intention to find out a bit more about me and the work I have been doing. After a few minutes, the nurse seemed to summarise the conversation as follows: "I think, the thing that motivates you in doing this work consistently is because you see the images of your parents through the aged and patients in this nursing home". The nurse's summary came so suddenly, I had no time to react nor saying anything, I realised that her thought was correct . . . but incomplete. Then, at that same instant, she added: " and ... possibly, there must be the presence of God, therefore I had always seen your face beaming with joy while doing this work".

I . . . felt joyful in hearing what she just said, I seemed speechless, . . . and could only say "thank you", then quickly walked out.

That morning, on the drive back home, I was deeply thankful to God and said a lot of prayers for my parents.

De Colores!