

A Silver Lining amidst COVID-19 Pandemic

The Covid-19 Pandemic is totally unexpected. It didn't just create a detour in our plans but totally erased our plans, forcing us to craft a new one. It has brought down the economy of the world. Personally, our small investment in stocks was greatly affected like all stock markets worldwide. Our stock portfolio has plummeted and I have no idea when it will recover. The pandemic has resulted to deaths and near deaths, of whom some are dear to me.

Still I refuse to let this pandemic bring me down. For all its negative effects, I see brightness and rebirth. The quarantine has brought our family to be at each other's faces 24/7. Thus we became more tolerant of each other's eccentricities. We became creative in the kitchen. I scheduled cooking duties to my daughters and they became creative in fixing meals. I too tried my hand experimenting in the kitchen as I cannot just run to the grocery store if I need a particular ingredient. We have only one pass for grocery shopping. Thus, we try substitutes.

When before we can just order a birthday cake or buy a ready made one, now we have to content ourselves with baking it from scratch and decorating it which was really difficult. As I said, we make do with what is available. Oreo cookies crushed to serve as frosting decoration, nips in lieu of M&Ms. My husband even experimented with his own tuna sisig and I could really say that it tastes really well.

The difficulty in going out to buy groceries and other food supplies made us more cautious about wastage. Our practice of cooking many types of viands is now a thing of the past as we try to ration what we have and limit to just 1-2 viands per meal. And I fully appreciate my Ilocano mother's mantra: Save, Save, Save for the rainy day. Alas, it is not just a rainy day but really BAD stormy days.

Gardening became the in thing which is a welcome development for us in the Agriculture sector. Alas, even houses in subdivisions, like where we belong, are now planting in whatever containers they can find. At home, we have very little space so I have to plan what to plant. Our small frontage has 1 squash plant which continues to give us flowers and edible tips every single day. It also bore fruit which I haven't yet harvested but will surely tide us for a few days. We have a four tomato plants, 4 pechay plants, 4 eggplants, 2 ampalaya plants, at least 10 kangkong plants, spring onions or scallions and just about a little of everything. We have 1 blue ternate that bears flowers everyday, giving our family daily juice. We mix it with herbs from our garden. My son Gab who has autism loves planting. He helps plant our small garden, a wonderful diversion to ease his boredom.

While at the start of the quarantine my children and nieces were tied to their phones and the television, after a month they started to detach themselves for a few hours and started the "do-it-yourself" house fixings. They continue to badger me to buy paint so

they can paint the kitchen and the veranda. Their clothes cabinet are neatly arranged compared to the usual mess that we are all accustomed to. The times outside gadgets are getting longer as they immerse themselves to their projects. And while we have always found time to go to Church twice a week without fail before, we have become spiritually more mature. We now do daily devotional prayers compared to our usual once a week. Gab, for his part is very particular about the exact time for prayer. He is our walking alarm clock as he reminds us that "Its time to pray to God to stop Covid and for Pres. Duterte to lift the ECQ".

Indeed, every cloud has a silver lining.