

POWER IN PRAYER

Teens from the island of Cebu in the Philippines tell about receiving answers to their prayers.

From left: Joselito, Joahanna, Rosa, and Ken gather in front of the Cebu City Philippines Temple.



By Paul VanDenBerghe

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Of the tens of thousands of islands on the earth, a cluster of 7,107 of them makes up the island nation of the Philippines in Southeast Asia. A running witticism common in the Philippines notes that while there are 7,107 islands, that's only during low tide. The number of islands actually drops to 7,100 at high tide, when some are submerged below the ocean's surface. So how do the young women and young men of the Philippines keep their heads above water when they're feeling overwhelmed? They turn to Heavenly Father in prayer.

There are times in our lives when we may feel alone, but if we remember that our Heavenly Father is always there for us—always ready to hear and answer our prayers—we can lean on that fact and feel the hope and confidence that knowledge brings.

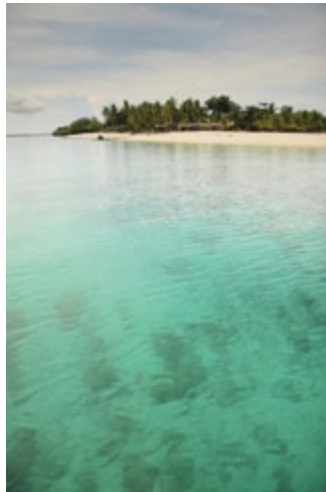
Prayer Brings Confidence

Joselito B. tells about being assigned to take part in a storytelling contest when he was 12 years old. His teacher asked him to memorize a 10-page script that he would have to perform in front of hundreds of other students and faculty. This can be a daunting task for anyone, let alone for Joselito, who usually gets stage fright.

“So the first thing I did was say a prayer and ask for guidance,” says Joselito. “During my prayer I asked that if I forgot part of the script, I could keep going and make up new lines that would work for my story. After I was done praying, I remembered my favorite scripture from the Bible in the Old Testament. It is in Proverbs 3:6, which says, ‘In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.’”

Joselito was nervous. But he worked hard for an entire week memorizing the script. And he prayed a lot every day. Finally the day of the contest arrived.

During the greetings that opened the contest, Joselito



was still very nervous. “But during the story I was fine,” he says. “I just did my best, and I knew that God would help me. I was frustrated and intimidated because there were so many students, but God answered my prayers.”

Not only was Joselito able to remember the script to his story, but he also performed it so well that he earned first place in the contest. Joselito says, “Prayer is the answer when you have no one around to comfort you. God is always there to help you.”

Prayer Brings Strength

As a young boy growing up in an active Latter-day Saint family, Ken G. had never had much trouble keeping his standards high. But when he started high school, things became harder and Ken sometimes felt isolated from the good influence of his family—especially at school.

“My high school friends were all really close to me even though they were not members of the Church,” Ken says. “We still had a strong connection. The problem was they started doing things that did not follow the standards of our Church.”

At home Ken never had a problem choosing the right, but he says that when he got to school and his family was no longer around to help guide him, he started making wrong choices. “I admit I did things that were not in line with the standards of the Church, so in seminary I always felt like I was the one being talked about in the lesson.”

That's when Ken realized he wanted to make a change, but he didn't feel strong enough to do it on his own. “So I made a resolution to pray for God to give me the strength and the courage to say no to my friends when they did bad things,” he explains. “And I feel that God answered my prayers. It became easier for me to say no whenever my friends asked me to do something wrong or tempted me. I already had the knowledge and knew



A RELATIONSHIP I CHERISH

“Not a day has gone by that I have not communicated with my Father in Heaven through prayer. It is a relationship I cherish—one I would literally be lost without. If you do not now have such a relationship with your Father in Heaven, I urge you to work toward that goal. As you do so, you will be entitled to His inspiration and guidance in your life.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Stand in Holy Places,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 84.



Watch a Video

See a video of Tania’s story at lds.org/go/72D.

what was right and wrong. But then, through prayer, I felt like I had the power and the gift to say no and to do what was right.”

Ken says the most important thing he learned from this experience is that “prayer is a sign of your humility, because you admit to yourself that you are weak and that only God can help you become strong” (see D&C 112:10).

Prayer Brings Blessings

Sometimes we need more than comfort or strength alone; sometimes the blessings we need are more tangible. Tania D. remembers such a time. Her family was facing an especially trying time financially. “It was a Saturday evening, and we had only 40 pesos [about US\$1] left for the week, and we didn’t have dinner or even charcoal for our stove at home,” says Tania. “My mother gave me a list of all these things we needed, and we needed 250 pesos to buy all of it. The first thing we needed to buy was charcoal so we could cook dinner.” Tania could see there was not enough money for everything. Then she realized they would not have money for bus fare to go to church the next day. “I told my mother that we didn’t have enough for the fare to go to church. But my mother is really faithful, and she simply told me that ‘God will provide.’

“On my way to the store I was crying because we didn’t have enough money for everything, and I didn’t know what to do,” Tania says. As she rolled up one of the 20-peso bills and put it into her pocket, she did the only thing she could think to do that would help—she said a prayer. “I prayed to Heavenly Father that we could somehow find a way to accommodate our needs.”

But when she got to the first store, she found that the price of charcoal had gone up from 5 pesos to 20 pesos.

“I was hesitant to buy it,” Tania says, “but I could feel the Holy Ghost whispering to me to buy it anyway, so I did. Now I had only 20 pesos left, but I still had many things to buy, including diapers for my brother and clean water to drink. So I went to the next store to buy food for our meal, and it was too expensive. I reached into my pocket where I put the 20 pesos, and there were five 20-peso bills in the roll. I started crying right in front of the store owner.

“In the end I was able to buy all of the things we needed,” Tania says, “and we had enough for fare to go to church the next day. When I got home, I went to my room and offered a prayer to God to thank Him for the blessing He had given to us. I know that God really lives and answers our prayers, especially those times when we need Him most and we offer a sincere prayer. He really will answer that prayer.”

Prayer Keeps Us near Our Heavenly Father

While we can be certain that our Heavenly Father hears and answers our prayers, we need to remember that our prayers are not always answered immediately and not always in the way we want them to be answered. Our prayers are answered according to God’s will and timing.

Each of these teens from the Philippine island of Cebu has learned that in good times and bad, when we’re in a crowd or all alone, whether it’s high tide or low, our Heavenly Father is always there for us. And if we turn to Him in sincere prayer, He is always ready to bless us. **NE**