

# Painting one's faith



An oil painting that depicts ordinary people in fervent prayer in front of a crucifix in the Sto. Niño basilica is the winning piece in the International Eucharistic Congress painting contest.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Since he was a child, Mark Lloyd Belicario loved to paint.

However, his father didn't think it was practical.

"Papa didn't want me to pursue painting because, according to him, I won't get anywhere with that," Belicario told **CEBU DAILY NEWS** in Cebuano.

Last Friday, he proved his father wrong.

Belicario, 27, won the grand prize in the first painting contest of the International Eucharistic Congress (IEC), besting 81 entries from different parts of the Philippines.

His oil painting shows a throng of people praying before an image of Jesus on a cross inside the Basilica Minore del Sto. Niño, a scene that unfolds daily in the centuries-old stone church in downtown Cebu City.

"I visit the Sto. Niño basilica often. I'm inspired by the devotion of the Cebuanos," said Belicario.

He pursued a degree in electronics and communications engineering at the University of San Jose-Recoletos before he decided to stop schooling several years ago to focus on painting.

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The Eucharistic Congress is a gathering of clergy, religious and laity of the Roman Catholic church held almost every four years in different parts of the world. The purpose is to bear witness and to deepen understanding about the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, a basic tenet of the Catholic church.

About 15,000 foreign and local delegates are expected to gather in Cebu City, with a soon-to-be-completed Pavilion behind the Mabolo seminar as the main venue of the conference.

The last IEC was held in Dublin, Ireland in 2012.

As a preliminary activity, two other contests were held for the logo design of the 2016 IEC and theme song. Jayson Jaluag of Mandaue City got the top prize in the IEC logo competition, while Jay-arr Felisilda Librando of Lapu-Lapu City won the theme song contest.

Belicario took home P100,000 as the top prize for the painting competition during award rites last Friday at the Ayala Center Cebu activity center.

Malvin Lim won second place with P75,000, while Rolando Yakit finished third with P50,000.

Five merit awardees received P5,000 each while the 10 finalists got P10,000 each.

Cebu Archbishop Jose Palma said he was touched by the different artworks.

"As I view these paintings, I can only thank God for the talents of these artists. Our spirits are lifted up. What's mundane can become sacred," he said.

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All the artworks will be displayed at the Eucharistic Pavilion in Mabolo during the conference on Jan. 24 to 31, 2016, said Msgr. Agustin Ancajas, chairman of the special events committee of the IEC.

The paintings will also be offered for sale. SENIOR REPORTER ADOR VINCENT S. MAYOL



Cebu Archbishop Jose Palma with the winners of the International Eucharistic Congress Painting Contest. Beside him is Mark Lloyd Belicario who won the grand prize, Malvin Lim who won second place and Rolando Yakit who finished third. With them (far right) is renowned painter Jun Inpas.

CON PHOTO/ADOR VINCENT S. MAYOL

## LOREEN SARMIENTO

## Survivor



It's my turn

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When tragedy strikes, all our eyes focus on and our hearts feel for the victims.

2015 started with the gruesome deaths of 44 members of the National Police's Special Action Force (SAF). What was originally a mission to serve arrest warrants on high-ranking terrorists became a misadventure, or was it a massacre? Since January 25, that question still hangs in the air as relatives continue to grieve and vent their frustration.

Last month, also on the 25th day, a devastating 7.8-magnitude earthquake rocked Nepal killing more than 9,000 people and injuring many more. We watched in horror and shook our heads whilst looking at the dead bodies scattered everywhere.

Then just four days ago, fire engulfed a rubber slipper factory in Valenzuela, Bulacan after chemicals used to make the slippers exploded. This incident claimed 69 lives.

And as expected, media capitalized on the

tragedies by filling people's ears with heart-tugging stories of the victims' final moments. It was told that one SAF trooper managed to kiss the photo of his daughter one last time before he was gunned down. In the Nepal earthquake, one victim was said to have been taking a shower in his seventh-floor apartment when the building suddenly collapsed and he couldn't get out. And in the Valenzuela fire, the victims' screams for help went unanswered as the wrought iron grills barring the windows foiled would-be rescuers from getting them out.

Obviously, the sources of these stories are the survivors. They're the ones who carry the scars from having to witness their companions' painful end. Daily they relive the experience and continuously suffer from survivor's guilt.

A Mamasapano survivor still cannot sleep and talks endlessly about how he managed to escape death. A pregnant woman who dug

herself out from the rubble after the first Nepal earthquake gave birth to a healthy boy but her joy is sometimes overcome by sorrow. A mother is guilt-ridden for failing to save her two children who died in the Valenzuela fire. She recounts being pulled to safety out of the burning building and how she couldn't go back inside to save her children because the fire engulfed the factory in mere seconds. She regrets not exerting more effort to get them out.

Just as we mourn over the victims, we should also help prop up the crushed spirits of survivors. If not, they could very well be the living dead. Their body scars will eventually heal in time. But more than the physical pain, the survivors' guilt is tougher to get rid of because of the trauma imprinted in the mind and heart.

Survivor guilt or the survivor syndrome is a mental condition that occurs when a per-