

## [If This Is Your Last Day On Earth, What Will You Do?](#)

Live Like A Dying Man  
By Bo Sanchez

One day, I attended Mass and the priest was in a hurry.

He either was very tired. Or had diarrhea.

Because he was going through the motions and doing it quickly.

So very different from my friend Bishop Honesto Ongtioco.

For years, I've admired how the good bishop celebrates Mass. He does it with so much passion. Like he speaks every word with fire. And he acts every gesture with love.

Two weeks ago, I had lunch with this great man.

I asked him why he does his Masses this way.

He said something so profound, I'll never forget it.

He said, "*I always imagine every Mass to be my first Mass and my last Mass.*"

For me, the key word is *imagine*.

He added, "What if I died in my sleep tonight? I really don't know, do I?"

Today, I invite you to take a very special 30-Day Retreat with me.

No, I'm not asking you to go to a Retreat House with me. You'll just do it wherever you are. (I'll talk more about it later.)

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Using the power of your imagination, you'll allow death to be your teacher.

Let me tell you how...

### **We're A Dying People**

Here's a fact: According to statistics, if you gathered a thousand 25-year-olds in a room, 241 of them will not reach the age of 65.

That's scary.

We're all a dying people.

It's just a question of when. Some sooner. Some later.

But all of us are dying.

But if people know they are dying, I've noticed that these dying people will live more deliberately, laugh more joyously, celebrate more happily, give more generously, serve more freely, love more intensely.

Here's my realization: *If you really want to live a spectacular life, you have to live like a dying man.*

This became true with my friend Alvin Barcelona.

### **Wham!**

Once upon a time, Alvin was a incredibly busy man.

Alvin, with his mom Aida, was running a flourishing school, the *Cardinal Academy*. He was in politics. He was in theatre studying under Laurice Guillien. He was also a rock singer with the likes of Freddie Aguilar. Plus, he and his wife Tess had a four-month-old baby boy they named Aio.

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Then it happened. First, he felt sharp stomach pains. Then he began to bleed. He went through medical tests the result of which would drastically change his life. The tests showed there were tumors in his intestines and his doctor told him he must undergo surgery. “Alvin,” the doctor told him, “you may not see the first birthday of your baby.”

Wham! Colon cancer crashed onto his life like a train gone berserk.

### **His Life Totally Changed**

Alvin says, “I was only 30 years old. At that moment, I understood the Pilipino saying, *pinagsakluban ng langit at lupa*,” Alvin recalls. “For I felt it. I felt heaven and earth enveloped me and crushed me.”

Alvin admits that at the outset, he thought of his family. “My wife and I always thought we’d grow old together,” Alvin says. His son—“He was just a baby. I thought I’d play with him, teach him how to ride a bicycle, fly a kite, play the guitar...”

Those days made Alvin realize what were essential in his life.

And he prayed like never before. He found himself visiting the Divine Mercy church in Marilao. And there he knelt and gazed at the image of Jesus clad in a long robe, His right hand raised up to His shoulders ready to bless anyone who would come to Him, His left hand resting on His chest where rays of hope from His Sacred Heart radiated down to His feet.

Days turned to weeks, and weeks turned to months. Alvin found himself in church the entire day. He opened the gates in the morning and closed them late at night. He begged to give him a second chance at life.

But then, on his journey towards death, something happened.

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## **“I’m Ready To Die...”**

“One day,” Alvin says, his eyes lighting up in wonder, “I simply felt the presence of God and I just knew I was ready—I was ready to meet up with him, to join him in heaven.” He was ready to die and surrendered his life to God.

Alvin underwent surgery for an hour.

When he woke up, his doctor, flabbergasted, told him the strangest thing. He said he did not see any tumor in Alvin’s colon. What was confirmed through a *Barium Enema X-Ray*—that Alvin had three tumors and spreading—had completely vanished without a trace!

It was Alvin who found something: A steadfast faith in God.

Today, Alvin’s 4-month-old baby is now 13 years old. And Alvin has done what he thought he wouldn’t be able to do—teach him how to bike, fly a kite, and play the guitar. And bless the world with his preaching and music. (Today, Alvin also leads the Marilao, Bulacan FEAST of my spiritual family, *Light of Jesus*.)

But here’s my point: During those precious months when he thought he was dying, Alvin changed his life.

Friend, you don’t need cancer to change your life.

You can do it right now by the power of your imagination.

### **If I Had Only 30 Days To Live, How Will I Live?**

Imagine that when you woke up this morning, the phone rings.

You’re still in your pajamas, drinking your coffee.

You stand up and pick up the phone.

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You hear your Doctor's voice. In a very somber tone, he says, "I have to say this to you because I'm your friend and I'm your doctor. I'm now holding in my hand the results your medical tests. I'm very sorry, but you're going to die in 30 days."

The shock is overwhelming.

The room around you starts to spin.

You sit down.

"Thirty days? But that's so soon..."

And a big question reverberates in your mind... *"If I had only 30 days to live, how will I live?"*

That's the question I want you to answer today.

And this is the big question for your 30-Day Retreat with me.

I repeat: I'm not asking you to go somewhere.

Wherever you are, take this 30-Day Retreat.

Just imagine that these next 30 days of your life are your last 30 days.

Believe me, *you'll live a different life in these next 30 days.*

Make this your big experiment.

In fact, don't just decide.

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Make it an agreement between you and God... (Print this out and sign this prayer. Or get a piece of paper and copy this prayer.)

**Prayer:**

*Lord, I will live the next 30 days  
like they were my last 30 days.*

Starting Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Ending Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

*Teach us to number our days aright,  
that we may gain a heart of wisdom.*

—Psalms 90:12

**What 10 Things Should I Do  
In The Next 30 Days—If They Were My Last?**

Get a pen. Answer this question: *What 10 things should I do in the next 30 days—if they were my last?* Write whatever comes to your mind. You'll be surprised at the stuff that'll come out. What will come out are the most important things in your heart.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
  4. \_\_\_\_\_
  5. \_\_\_\_\_
  6. \_\_\_\_\_
  7. \_\_\_\_\_
  8. \_\_\_\_\_
  9. \_\_\_\_\_
  10. \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Invite Friends To Take the Retreat With You!**

Get friends to take this journey of 30 Days with you.

Invite one or more persons to do it with you.

Each week, I'll be emailing you the questions you need to answer and share together. So each week, even just for 15 to 30 minutes, share your answers. Your experiences. Your realizations.

In our spiritual family, we've nicknamed this small group of friends as a *Caring Group*. Because it's really all about caring for each other.

In the next weeks, I'll send you Guide Questions, one for each of the 4 Weeks.

### **Props For The Retreat**

At our Sunday Feast, I gave people a tin can with 30 marbles inside.

Inside the can is a little card that says...

Step 1: Each morning, pick 1 marble and thank God for the gift of a new day.

Step 2: Carry it in your pocket to remind you to live your last days with love.

Step 3: Each night, thank God for the whole day. Set the marble aside.

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*When the can is empty, thank God for your life of love. Pray for more days...*

It doesn't have to be a can. It doesn't have to be marbles.

Find your own props.

Something to remind you of your 30-Day Retreat.

Have a great one!

May your dreams come true,  
Bo Sanchez

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