**REUNION SPEECH**

**FOR**

**ANGELITO CADIENTE**

Hello everyone!!! Well.... some more time has passed, we’ve gotten older, we’ve added some new members along the way throughout the years, but one thing is certain, we have a big, beautiful, wonderful, complicated, fascinating family!!! There are a few acknowledgements I’d like to make... first of all, I want to thank the strong, smooth, Johnny Walker Black for boosting me up and giving me just enough attitude adjustment to be able to speak to all of you this afternoon (**Wait for the laugh**). I would also like to recognize the presence of our cousins, Ed and Louisa Lizardo, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, from Mom’s side, and from Dad’s side, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I’d **LIKE** to recognize them, but my friend **Johnny Walker Black**..... well you know.... (**Wait for the laugh**).... of course I’m kidding... Welcome and thank you for being here with us!!!

To everyone, thank you for joining us on this very special occasion, the celebration of the Cadiente family reunion. Also for those who worked together to coordinate this event, and in particular, Jennifer and her chosen group, you did a wonderful job in spearheading the planning and execution of this terrific celebration. We all really appreciate your efforts and attention to detail (**Do you want to applaud?**). There are some people that think “it takes a village...” Not when a Cadiente grabs the reins!!! Jennifer and her crew got it done!! Thank you Jen!!

So much has been said about families by people more famous and more expressive than me, but their thoughts touch me. It’s been said that the family is one of nature’s masterpieces. Bishop Desmond Tutu said, “You don’t choose your family. They are God’s gift to you, as you are to them.” Others remind us that the bond that links us is not necessarily blood, but the joy and respect and true, deep emotions we feel for one another.... and then, of course, there are people, like the comedian, George Burns, who said it “like it is...” “Happiness is having a large, loving, caring, close knit family...in **another city**...”. Sorry!! Not **THIS** **WEEKEND**!! (**Wait for the laugh**).

Welllll... **THIS** weekend, we have...

* **TWO** parents... Thank God...
* **EIGHT** siblings and their spouses... that’s seventeen (**should this be 16? Please check the match**).
* Their children and **THEIR** spouses ...that makes an additional **THIRTY FOUR**
* and **TWENTY SEVEN** grandkids!!!!

**WOW**!!!! **SEVENTY EIGHT PEOPLE**... (**check this total... see above**). (**Do you want to add**). And we would all be able to pick out each one in a line up... not that we should ever have that challenge... and some of the kids... they’re young and they **BETTER** stay out of trouble!!! (**And wait for the laugh**). (**Or you can say**) ...At the very least, with **THOSE** numbers, we should be able to start our **OWN** soccer league!!! (**And wait for the laugh**). We really have **A LOT** of blessings...

Although our roots go way back, there are two people who are responsible for this strong family that is bonded by love and faith. They have given us our foundations. They’ve demonstrated the values that guide us in life. They’ve shown us that no matter where we are... in life... in the world.... in love...in crisis... we are **FAMILY**..... and that is an unbreakable connection that stretches to include all of us, our past, and the future children and grandchildren yet to be born. These two people have shown us where to find our strength, how to survive in a complicated world.... and even though their lives were fairly simple, they had the instincts to get us through the challenges. Here, at this reunion, they get a chance to see all of us together, each one of us reflecting a different, meaningful part of who they are, and the amazing legacy they have built... from almost nothing. Wow... that’s deep... it’s a lot to take in... Mom, Dad, if I were a different kind of person, I would introduce you to my friend, Johnny Walker Black, so you would be able to calm down a little and take it all in, **BUT**... **ALL GONE**!! (**Wait for the laugh**). We have a pretty impressive gathering this year, and **NONE** of us would be here to enjoy this time without our parents, Angel and Regina.... Mom and Dad, on behalf of everyone, thank you for life. Thank you for teaching us to live and survive and thrive with love and faith and joy. Thank you for showing us the way. ... and, even though I’m one of the older kids, thank you for letting me have a cocktail!!! (**Wait for the laugh**).

Each one of us has a story, and most of us were there as first hand witnesses as the events and circumstances formed us. Of course we weren’t there for the important parts... like when Mom and Dad met and married, so I thought I would do a brief review... and don’t worry... there will **NOT** be a test... (**If one of your parents is tougher than the other, pick the tougher one and say**) unless\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **insists** on asking some questions to see if we were paying attention!!! (**And wait for the laugh**).

Our hero and heroine met in 1946 at Union College in Manila. They were married in 1948 at Sta Teresita Church in Quezon City... and then they got “serious...” they sacrificed their personal interests (**can you name 2 or 3 of those interests**) like\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to set up their lives to prepare for and welcome us, their kids.... Dad became the Principal of the High School Department at Pacifican College in Villasis, Pangasinan and Mom was the Dean of Women and President of the Ladies Club... **IMPRESSIVE**!!! The first nine years of married life proved their theory that if they would get serious, the fruits of their labor.... or should I clarify, **MOM’s** labor (**Wait for the laugh**) would be abundant... and so we meet Star, Walter, Yours truly, and Oliver, more commonly known as their “First Crop.”

In 1957, the family migrated to Narvacan, Ilocos Sur, and the “Second Crop” made its appearance.... that part of the team included Ronald, Robert, and Cherry. In 1965, Mom and Dad sold the house and moved to Solano, Nueva Vizcaya... we had a bigger family but a smaller house... but it was built with the love and caring of Dad and us older siblings.... in 1966, Richard was born, and while some may refer to him as the “one who completed the second crop,” for anyone that loves baseball, let’s say he came in to “bat clean up...” (**Wait for the laugh**). I mean, we had almost enough for a baseball team at that point, didn’t we?

The milestones followed soon after... In 1972, I was lucky enough to be accepted and enlisted into the US Navy. In 1977, I initiated a petition to bring Dad over to the United States and he was followed by Mom and the rest of our “clan...” Me? I was still on active duty, but the Cadiente’s had arrived!!! ... or as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ would say, “Shout out to you Brod. Sika to gapuna apay nga adda kami amin ditoy. Thank you very much. We love you.” (Translation: It was through you how we all got to America.)

Throughout the years, each one of us has built a life... in descending order of age... not by favorites... (**Wait for the laugh**)

* Star Concepcion, our first, has been happily married to Teo for **FORTY EIGHT YEARS**!! Talk about **GOALS**! With three kids and **TEN** grandkids, they may be in the running for “most productive” (**Can you say**) or should I say, **REproductive**... (**and wait for the laugh**)... Star sums it up like this, “Every time our family spends time together with a complete attendance is always considered significant. Strong faith always keeps our family ties closer together. I’m appreciative of the gifts that life provides us.”
* Walter is 67 and is married to RUTH. They love and have guided three children and five grandkids...their son is a US Navy Senior Listed personnel and their other two kids are healthcare professionals... Nurse and LVN.
* Then there’s me... married to Loida for forty three beautiful years... we have two grown kids and FIVE gorgeous grandkids... all I can say is... “Having been married to Loida for over 43 years with two kids with great achievements along with their spouses is the best gift of life I’ve ever had. Yes indeed, we have so much to praise the Lord for.” I’m happy to say that our kids make us proud every day as a Business owner (MBA), a Healthcare/Medical professional (RN/PHN), a Veteran, a Military US Navy Officer (Lt/USN), and an Accountant (MBA) and Independent entrepreneur... it’s good to have these blessings!!!
* Oliver is married to Winona. They have three kids and one grandchild. And while Oliver prefers to invoke his 5th amendment rights at this time (**Wait for the laugh**), their kids’ achievements betray Oliver’s discretion!! One is in the US Navy as a Senior Enlisted Professional and their daughter (?) is graduating in the professional healthcare sector as a PHN.
* Then there’s Ronald, the head of the “second wave” who is married to Sonia Moncera... they have 2 kids and 1 “starter” grandchild (**Wait for the laugh**). With one child in the US Navy as Senior Enlisted personnel and the other an attorney, they have plenty to be proud of! Ronald has fond memories: “I remember as a young Boy faced with life difficulties, our parents were always there for us. Their hugs were always comforting and assuring.”
* Robert is married to Alma. He was born in Narvacan, Ilocus Sur. He and Alma have three kids and two grandchildren... Robert and Alma’s kids do them proud... two are nurses and the youngest is a full time student.... Robert reminds us, “The best and happiest moment are seeing my \_\_\_\_\_\_ (**missing word**) growing up in their worst and great times and in achieving their dreams”
* Cherry, the **SEVENTH** sibling, has one daughter, one grandkid, and “one in the wings...” it appears that Cherry has spoken to Oliver’s “advisors” because she, too, has chosen to “plead the fifth” (**Wait for the laugh**)... Cherry’s child is a Corporate Executive... perhaps Cherry signed a confidentiality agreement!! (**Wait for the laugh**).
* And then we have Richard, the Kimmot, the **EIGHTH** wonder of the Cadiente family... married to Caroline... with three kids...a nurse, a teacher, and a full time student, and two grandkids, he has these recollections... “What I remember about Dad was his active participation with the Masonic Organization as a Master Mason. In the early 1980s when I was attending my 2nd year of high school in Orosi, I would see Dad leave home towards the end of the day, on a regular basis, in his coat and tie, carrying this manual typewriter. Little did I know that he was the Secretary of the Masonic Temple at the local Lodge in Orosi. I now realize how difficult it must have been taking minutes of their meetings using that manual typewriter. But he did it!! My curiosity was answered when I became a Master Mason, and I’m entering my second term.

Yes... the Cadiente’s have made their way in the world... literally... and have found success and fulfillment on our own terms. It’s clear that education was important to our family, but while we also see that life provides priceless lessons, we look to our children and grandchildren to make an even greater mark on our family and this world... and by the looks of things, we are going in the right direction! Thanks to the Filipino values retained by our parents and lovingly applied and practiced within the family and throughout the generations, I am eager to see what the future holds.

I’m proud of my Filipino heritage and even happier to share our noble values ... they center on maintaining social harmony, belongingness, and caring about what others think, say or do are strong influences on social behavior among Filipinos. This was inherited from the Americans and Spaniards, and in a world filled with division, the harmony that exists within us works to heal and foster good will.

With values like respect, family solidarity, optimism and positivity, faith, resourcefulness, dedication to our jobs and tasks, hospitality, responsibility... as individuals and as parents, we, as a culture, possess the keys to harmony in life. Filipinos are respectful especially to their elders. The “*mano po*” traditions, with a simultaneous utterance of “*God Bless You*” by the elder reveals a unique ethical practice to show love and respect in times of arrival and upon leaving the home. We believe the family is extended even up to the second cousins and elderly are cared for in their homes. We find time for family reunion, gathering together, and family bonding. We respect the value and importance of being close to family. Our optimism is a trait that instills joy and humor... even in the midst of challenges. This serves as the “coping technique” as expressed in the Pilipino song, “*Tawanan Mo Ang Iyong Problema*” (just laugh at your problems) which makes a Filipino flexible, adaptive and creative. We have strong faith in God and pray anytime of the day... especially during Holy Week. Our resourcefulness gives us the ability to survive with whatever we have with an extraordinary ability to make something out of almost nothing for the sake of survival. We persevere to accomplish what we set in our minds to work on and we’ve proven that we are a people with an industrious attitude. We are are warm and friendly and we always welcome friends, neighbors, and family to our homes. We are responsible parents ...women are expected to be caring and nurturing mothers while fathers are expected to assume the role of being the source of income and financial support of his family.

Being Filipino is a lot to take in, but it’s meaning and implications run deep... Though we are now somewhat westernized, it is very evident that the family values I have mentioned are clearly present in our family clan. These values have become a unifying factor that bond our family as a whole.

“We owe our success from the teachings and pieces of advice from our Dad and Mom, and moreover to us, their children, Star, Walter, Lito, Oliver, Ronald, Robert, Cherry, Richard, and their spouses.

Lastly, let us acknowledge that God above all with His grace and love, has guided us to where we are now. Let us remain humble before God and men.” May the Cadiente clan grow and prosper!!! Thank you!