

## Lasallian Workplace Spirituality: From Hanap-Buhay to Ganap-Buhay

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**Abstract:** The view on the nature and meaning of spirituality in the workplace abounds research trend today. Its significance reveals tremendous importance both to the organization and to the individual worker. This article explores the role of spirituality in the workplace as a way to happiness at work. It proposes that the Filipino term for work as “hanap-buhay” contributes to the understanding that meaningful work leads to “ganap-buhay / buhay-na-ganap” or fullness of life.

**Key Words:** spirituality; spirituality in the workplace; Lasallian formation; happiness at work; vocation; Filipino Lasallians; De La Salle Philippines

### 1. INTRODUCTION

*“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”*  
-John 10:10

A person who is fully alive is a highly effective person moved by the “Spirit” in the workplace (Ortigas & Perez, 2009, p. 31). The “Spirit” enters and permeates the workplace and move workers into a dimension of faith that is understood as a relationship not only between the workers and the organization but as well between each member of the organization or community or even within oneself. The faith that is referred here is beyond the dogma and doctrines of any organized religion. It is the faith that would answer why we do the things that we do in the workplace.

However, the reason on why we do the things that we do in the workplace seems to be superficial, that is, separated from the core of our being as persons. In our Filipino culture, we are bombarded and formed by the dictum “*Walang personalan, trabaho lang.*” It means that for workers there is a great separation of their work life and personal life. In another cliché one could say, “We struggle to earn a living from our jobs so that we can live better lives outside our jobs.” Morato explains further that the culture of the workplace often

desensitizes us from what is truly meaningful where we act out our external life in the workplace and our internal life in the privacy of our thoughts, feelings and homes (Morato, 2009). Affirming Morato, oftentimes we as workers live double lives – external life (work life) and internal life (personal life). Thus, this could make people live a disintegrated life.

It is as if one could say that in the workplace, what we find is but only a job or a work that could be a source of bread and butter to sustain our needs. Work becomes just a means to an end, that is, a sustenance of life’s needs. However, in our Filipino context, the way we understand work as “hanap-buhay” would mean differently. When we say “hanap-buhay”, we do mean more than a job or a work. “Hanap-buhay” would mean that we have found a life at work or we have found a life in the workplace not just a sustenance for life. And in finding life in the workplace one could have a sense of fulfillment and fullness of life. In Filipino terms, *ang hanap-buhay ay nawa maging daan tungo sa buhay-na-ganap o ganap-buhay* translated as may our work be our way towards fullness of life. The Catholic Church would claim that work is more than just making a living, that work is good for man for work could be a way to make lives reach its fullness (Laborem Exercens, #9). I believe this could be the meaning of living, especially in relation to work, that

is life lived into its fullness because living life into its fullness in the workplace is a way to happiness at work. Furthermore, Pethe affirms that the permeating spirituality in the workplace transforms workplace from merely being a place to get enough money to survive that is from just earning our daily bread to being a place of “livelihood” (Pethe, 2015). By livelihood, Pethe would mean a place where we both survive and are fully alive for the reason that our spirit fully expresses itself. This confirms our Filipino understanding of work as “hanap-buhay” that is finding life at work is expressing fully one’s spirit.

Some authors, like Morato, would say that indeed, spirituality in the workplace is considered oxymoron, a contradiction in terms (Morato, 2009, p. 81). Maybe it is, but could it be the opposite? This would mean that spirituality should permeate and is necessary in the workplace instead of a contradiction. Furthermore, spirituality goes hand-in-hand in the workplace towards the growth and well-being of the workers. If it is the opposite, could spirituality in the workplace be a way to happiness at work? Could our Filipino understanding of work as “hanap-buhay” contribute in living life into its fullness or “buhay-naganap or ganap-buhay”? A way of collapsing the two questions is: could workplace spirituality be a way from *hanap-buhay* towards *ganap-buhay* that is happiness at work?

To give light to the questions above, there is a need to understand spirituality in the workplace or known also as workplace spirituality, its scope and impact as a way of happiness at work vis-à-vis the role of formation specifically Lasallian formation.

## 2. TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY

We begin our journey towards our answer to the questions above by first understanding the definition, scope and impact of spirituality in the workplace or workplace spirituality.

The term ‘workplace spirituality’ refers to employee or worker experiences of spirituality at the workplace (Pawar, 2009). With the exact nature of these workplace spirituality experiences of employees in workplace include aspects such as sense of meaning, community, and transcendence. I affirm

that one of the elements of the sense of job satisfaction among workers would be fulfillment of spiritual needs at the workplace. It has been noted that there is a growing desire among workers to have a sense of meaning and a sense of purpose at work that is to have a spiritual dimension to organizational life (Duchon & Plowman, 2005).

Moreover, some authors noted three different perspectives on the workplace spirituality as: (1) the application of personal spirituality in the workplace, i.e. the transfer of the individual spiritual ideals and values to the work setting (2) organizational spirituality, i.e. organizational spiritual values (the individual employee’s perception of) and (3) interactive workplace spirituality, which entails the interaction of the individual employee’s personal spiritual values with the spiritual values of the organization (Kolodinsky, Giacalone, & Jurkiewicz, 2008).

In a nutshell, workplace spirituality has relevance and significance to the well-being of individuals, organizations, and society (Sheep, 2006). Thus, workplace spirituality could be an avenue or a means towards the fulfillment of the individual worker, of the organization, and also of society. This affirms a Catholic understanding of workplace spirituality where spiritual well-being is the affirmation of life in a relationship with God, self, community, and the environment that nurtures and celebrates wholeness. Spiritual well-being means an openness where one integrates one’s spirituality with one’s relationships and with other dimensions of one’s life.

The challenge now is constructing ‘a meaningful workplace’ (Steenkamp, P. & Basson, 2013). It is a workplace that would have a sense of fulfillment both for the worker and for the organization and ultimately for the society through the means of having a sense of meaning and a sense of purpose at work and at the workplace. This means worker connected to the workplace, where it could make workers happier and better and more productive. Furthermore, worker’s connected at work and to the workplace describes workplace spirituality in terms of an employee experiencing a ‘sense of wholeness, connectedness at work and deeper values’ (Milliman, J., Czaplewski, A. & Ferguson, 2003, p. 426).

Although some authors would argue that this description and meaning of workplace spirituality is vague, because workplace spirituality is used interchangeably with 'spirit at work' and 'spirituality at work' (Komala, & Garnesh, 2007, p. 124-129) . Thus there is a need to have a more universal, friendly and inclusive definition of workplace spirituality. Morato initially defines spirituality as simply the human spirit transcending the self in search of the ultimate purpose (Morato, 2009, p. 82). Taking this into context, being human is to become fully human, i.e., to have fullness of life or to be fully alive. Given this definition of spirituality, we can now try to understand spirituality in the workplace where people spend most of their waking lives, where they get their social status, and identity; where they receive their affirmations and rejections; where they develop a social or communal purpose larger than the family and their immediate neighborhood; where they link themselves to the global community through their products, services and organizational linkages (Morato, 2009, p. 82). Taking all of these into account, spirituality in the workplace could help workers become creative, versatile, and be persons with a sense of vision, and develop in them spiritual intelligence. Spiritual intelligence, referred to as SQ -- can refer to an individual's attempts to live his or her values more fully in the workplace (Danah, & Marshall, 2001).

With all the things that had been said, spirituality in the workplace is, therefore, about integrity, professionalism, being true to self, and to others. It is also about workers seeing their work as a spiritual path, as an opportunity to contribute to an organization, community and society in a meaningful way. To be more specific and concrete, spirituality in the workplace is about learning to be more caring and compassionate with fellow workers, with bosses, with staff and customers; in the academic setting with fellow teachers, with students, with superiors, with academic and non-academic staff and last but definitely not the list with our external service personnel (Neal, 2015). The question now is how does spirituality express and manifest in the workplace?

### 3. TOWARDS APPRECIATING EMPLOYEE SPIRITUAL FORMATION

The environment of the workplace today could be so demanding. With the fast-phase technology and the multi-task demand, both local and global, workers would certainly not have enough time to reflect and take stock, and might even lose their sense of meaning, community and transcendence. Moreover, with the preoccupations and pressures of the working environment, workers would tend to do the things that they do just for the sake of doing it. Things they do in the workplace are separated from who they are. Hence, the need to have a balanced lifestyle in the workplace is significant towards the wellbeing of workers.

It is worth noting that more and more private universities have integrated strong "spiritual formation" programs not only for its students but also for its workers. De La Salle University Manila, for instance, has made it its mission to involve the whole academic community, including non-teaching personnel, in the formation of Christian and Lasallian values. . Formation programs such as regular recollections, retreats, morning prayers, celebration of the Eucharist and other Lasallian-based Programs assist workers to further continue to be fully functioning not only in their responsibilities at work but in the practice of their faith. Consequently, these faith formation programs dictate the nature and character of the community's spirituality in the workplace (Ortigas, & Perez, 2009, p. 33)

Grounding itself from the *Foundational Principles of Lasallian Formation*, De La Salle University (DLSU) is committed to the assurance of "the vitality and continuity of the Founder's mission by providing a genuine Lasallian formation to all members of the Lasallian Family in the Philippines" (*Guiding Principles of the Philippine Lasallian Family*, 2009). This is within the process of "enabling persons to acquire the *vision, values, attitudes* and *practices* that support collaboration with God's creative and redemptive action in the world." These four elements of the process of Lasallian formation, intended for all members of the Lasallian community including all the workers, are

likewise what make workers authentic Lasallians and help them nurture and celebrate spirituality in the workplace. De La Salle University is indeed committed to work towards the fullness of life of everyone in God's plan. Thus, De La Salle University in its formation programs permeates spirituality in the workplace and working towards the fullness of life of each Lasallian workers that would contribute to social development (*Guiding Principles of the Philippine Lasallian Family*, 2009).

As a Catholic University, De La Salle University is called to offer opportunities to the members of the Lasallian Community "to integrate faith with life" as part of the mission of the Church within the University (*Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, #38). And the University is bound "to give a practical demonstration of its faith in its daily activity, with important moments of reflection and prayer" (*Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, #39).

The European Commission on Lasallian Formation (*CEFL*) explains that Lasallian formation is a process which helps people to internalize the elements of Lasallian spirituality through discovering oneself, discovering the poor and discovering communion as a way of life (*The European Commission on Lasallian Formation (CEFL) September*, 2001).

Lasallian formation is deeply anchored in a shared mission. Sorvaag affirms in his annotation on the work of Br. Michael Tidd, FSC entitled, "*An Examination of the Effectiveness of Formation Programs in Fostering the Values of Lasallian School Culture in Lay Educators in Lasallian Secondary Schools*" that Lasallian formation is deeply connected to the context of "Shared Mission" (Sorvaag, 2013). Br. Michael Tidd, FSC further elaborates that, "the desire of the Brothers to ensure the continuity of their institutions' distinctive spirit, their growing redefinition of their mission as one shared with laypeople, and the desire of their lay colleagues for a deeper sense of themselves as teachers in what were increasingly known 'Lasallian Schools' created the imperative for programs of integral formation." (Tidd, 2001).

Br. Francis Tri Nguyen, FSC calls this Lasallian formation of employees or workers as "Lasallianization" (Nguyen, 2009). Nguyen believes that Lasallianization means, "to create and maintain community practices based on a common vision and

supported by organizational coherence, presidents of Lasallian universities have organized Lasallian workshops and retreats for their collaborators (2009)." They have urged their collaborators to participate in various local, regional and international Lasallian formation workshops and conferences. ...participants who endeavored to reflect on and to apply the Lasallian writings to their own situation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century have shown deep personal transformation (Nguyen, 2009). The formal and informal Lasallianization have transformed many employees into community members, from users of the university resources pursuing their own needs to supporters of activities sustaining university Lasallian mission, from employees with a me-first ethos, who look out for themselves and their individual interests to members whose primary obligation is to the institution mission-especially to their students and colleagues. Most of these participants, however, have experienced transformative learning; they have been Lasallianized and have gradually reached higher levels in the Lasallian identity development.

Reinhardt claims that in the context of formation of Lasallian identity, "that the first service which Lasallian university renders is evidently that of formation" (Reinhart, 2011). In the formation of the Adults and Personnel of the Universities and of the whole Lasallian network, Reinhardt urged Lasallian District and Region to develop elements of formation program (Reinhart, 2011). Some of these elements are to offer formation programs in regard to human resources so as to always aim for improvement of teaching and competence of persons, to put means at the service of the Lasallian formation (history, charism, spirituality, pedagogy...) not only to teachers but also of administrators and other personnel and to study the means for putting these programs at the disposal of the greatest number.

With all that had been said above what could be the vision of this formation or Lasallian formation, to be precised? Could one say that this is the permeating spirituality in the workplace with the affirmation that spirituality and the workplace in the Lasallian community is not a contradiction at all, rather, permeating spirituality in the workplace is itself part of the Lasallian formation more than a manifestation? Could one say that spirituality itself

is vital to the Lasallian formation? Could workplace spirituality be a way towards happiness at work?

#### 4. HAPPINESS AT WORK: THE LINK FROM *HANAP-BUHAYTO GANAP-BUHAY*

Happiness in the workplace could result to actually having happy workers. Workers that could find life at work or in the workplace are people that could find meaning and purpose in the workplace. Finding meaning and purpose in the workplace is finding a sense of fulfillment in life. And finding a sense of fulfillment is experiencing a sense of happiness. And may this work to each Lasallian workers specially the last, the lost and the least. And in times of difficulty in finding a sense of happiness at work, let our prayer be, "Lord the work is yours!" And this is indeed, I believe incarnating the Lasallian formation. This could be a vital starting point for Lasallian workers (aside from choosing to be happy) to be happy at work is to recognize and realize that their work is "livelihood" and work of God/Spirit.

With such manifestation of spirituality in the workplace, one could say that it is a vision of the formation for the worker to maintain a balanced life and be happy at work with higher productivity, quality of service, and with higher sense of belongingness to the Lasallian community. This is also in line with the invitation of Baldoz (2013) "to make workers happy and productive" in urging companies to implement Department of Labor and Employment (*DOLE*) *Family Welfare Program* where one of its dimensions would be *spirituality and values formation*. This would clearly imply that there is indeed a need not only an interest to bring happiness in the workplace experiences.

Being happy is of great importance to most people, and happiness has been found to be a highly valued goal in most societies (Diener, 2000). It is as if saying being happy is of great importance to workers and happiness has been found to be a highly valued goal in the workplace. In other words feeling or being happy is indeed fundamental to human experiences.

Happiness has been defined in a variety of ways by philosophers, psychologists, theologians, and social researchers. There are two major perspectives

in defining happiness. First is the *hedonic* perspective of happiness as pleasant feelings and favorable judgments. The second is *eudaimonic* perspective of happiness involving doing what is virtuous, morally right, true to one's self, meaningful, and/or growth producing (Ryan, & Deci, 2001). The type of happiness we are pertaining to is the latter, that is, the eudaimonic perspective. This is in line with our understanding of spirituality in the workplace which is workers' desire on the sense of meaning, sense of purpose, sense of belongingness and sense of transcendence. The view of happiness as involving pleasant feelings and judgments of satisfaction, eudaimonic well-being, self-validation, self-actualization, and related concepts suggest that a happy or "good" life or a life in its fullness involves doing what is right and virtuous, growing, pursuing important or self-concordant goals, and using and developing one's skills and talents, regardless of how one may actually feel at any point in time (Ryan, & Deci, 2001). In nutshell, happiness that this paper pertains to is the happiness that could and would contribute to the sense of meaning, sense of purpose, sense of belongingness and sense of transcendence.

The question now is what causes happiness at work? Could spirituality in the workplace be a contributing factor for workers to have happiness at work? Let me begin answering the questions with the statement of Gavin and Mason, "In order to achieve the good life people must work in good organizations" (Gavin, & Mason, 2004). It means creating a healthy working environment that would include all workers, supervisors, staff, administrators and bosses etc. Furthermore, The Great Place to Work Institute suggests that employees are happy when they "trust the people they work for, have pride in what they do, and enjoy the people they work with." (Levering, 2015). Trust in the employer, built on credibility, respect, and fairness, are seen as the cornerstone of happiness at work.

Sirota, Mischkind, and Meltzer (2005) agree that three factors are critical in producing a happy and enthusiastic workforce: equity (respectful and dignified treatment, fairness, security), achievement (pride in the company, empowerment, feedback, job challenge), and camaraderie with teammates. Certain research in psychology provides evidence that individual level perceptions of affective, cognitive, and instrumental aspects of organizational

climate are consistently and strongly related to happiness in the form of job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Carr, Schmidt, Ford, & DeShon, 2003). Further analysis showed that five climate dimensions of role, job, leader, work group, and organization were consistently related to job satisfaction and other job attitudes (Parker, Baltes, Young, et. al, 2003).

A person's individual disposition is actually another factor that could affect happiness at work. This would include a worker's positive perspective on the job itself, pro-active attitude towards authority, or consistent work ethics, and good relationship with co-workers. Morgeson and Humphrey have expanded this idea of personal disposition to include motivational factors that actually influences happiness at work (Morgeson, & Humphrey, 2006). There is also evidence that a healthy attitude towards authority is a contributing factor towards happiness at work. Trust in the leader is a strong predictor of satisfaction and commitment that would give way to happiness at work (Dirks, & Ferrin, 2002). Another significant factor is good relationship with people at workplace. Baumeister and Leary absolutely affirm the central role of interpersonal relationships that is known to play in human happiness and well-being (Baumeister, & Leary, 1995). Dutton in his work *Energize your Workplace* affirms that interpersonal relationships in the workplace have begun to attract some attention, and it appears that "high quality connections" with others may be important sources of happiness and energy for employees (Dutton, 2003).

In summary, factors and contributors towards happiness at work are categorized into either environmental or personal. There may be other factors and contributors than those mentioned above. However, the environmental factor and personal factor in general would be important elements in discovering that spirituality in the workplace could be a way to happiness at work. Spirituality in the workplace is about the relationship of a worker (personal) and an organization (environmental) with a vision to have and live a work-life that is with purpose. To be happy at work is to have fullness of life at work. In our Filipino culture, it's about finding a life at work (hanap-buhay) in the workplace where one experience a life that is full, whole and complete

(ganap-buhay o buhay-na-ganap).

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Spirituality in the workplace could help us understand and live the "why-ness" on why we do the things that we do in the workplace. This could help workers build an integration of worker's work life and personal life. It is also significant to note that spirituality in the workplace is a continuous dialogue and interplay of personal spirituality of the worker and of organizational spirituality of an organization. This has relevance and significance for the well-being of an individual worker and also the well-being of an organization (since what compose the organization are the individuals) that would found a meaningful workplace where there is a sense of fulfillment and sense of purpose both on the part of the individual and of the organization.

If spirituality is simply the human spirit transcending the self in search of the ultimate purpose, then bringing spirituality in the workplace would mean an avenue to realize and actualize this ultimate purpose in a form of happiness at work. Thus, spirituality in the workplace could help workers become more creative, versatile and be a person with a sense of vision and develop in them a sense of fulfillment of a happy-good life.

Lasallian formation expresses and manifests spirituality in the workplace. Lasallian formation as manifestation of spirituality in the workplace is process which helps people to internalize the elements of Lasallian spirituality through discovering oneself, discovering the poor and discovering communion as a way of life. This formation in the context of Lasallian association is part of the process of handing on the Lasallian charism and heritage, where it means providing for the spiritual growth of everyone involved in the Lasallian mission by accompanying him or her on their Lasallian journey. This is to help and guide workers that in their work, they are allowed to grow and fulfill a sense of happiness at work.

Spirituality in the workplace incarnated through Lasallian formations could be a way to integrate environmental factors and personal factors towards happiness at work. Lasallian formations could serve as avenues of actualizing work not as a

job, that is, a means to an end (paycheck), not as a career that finds meaning from gratification of ranks (promotion), but as a vocation where for one is called to do the work for the work sake not for payment and promotion. This is indeed spirituality in the workplace through Lasallian formation be a way towards happiness at work. This is indeed “hanap-buhay”—where one finds life at work and works for the fulfillment of one’s life and happiness “ganap-buhay/ buhay-na-ganap.” In the words of Parker J. Palmer,

“Those in a vocation feel that their work has an effect on the greater good and an impact beyond themselves. They believe that their work truly utilizes their unique gifts and talents. This is what they were meant to do. When it comes to life satisfaction and happiness, those with a job are the least satisfied, then those with a career, and those with a vocation feel the most satisfied. No surprises there. A vocation encompasses more than the work you are paid for; it taps into your whole life purpose. When you’ve found your calling, you know it—your life is full of joy, satisfaction, and true fulfillment (Palmer, 2015).”

Let me further conclude by saying permeating spirituality in the workplace is permeating happiness at work. Permeating happiness at work is welcoming a life into its fullness.

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