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Headline: Global warming is upon us full blast

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Global warming is upon us almost full blast. The series of unusually strong typhoons, heavy rains, storm surges and, in summer, very hot droughts are proof of that. And weather disturbances will get worse as more greenhouse gases trap more of the sun's heat and melt the ice caps. The huge volume of melted water will raise the levels of the oceans and seas. Islets and islands will be submerged, including Boracay, and waves will swamp coastal areas.

This is already happening in Australia where residents of low-lying islets are being evacuated. As for the Philippines, it will cease to be an archipelago of 7,100 islands. The remaining islands will be very much lesser in number.

Meanwhile, the storms will be stronger, the tides higher, the floods and droughts more severe. Have you noticed that unlike before, floods and landslides have become more frequent? Areas that were not flooded before are now being submerged in deep waters. And houses at the foot of steep slopes are no longer safe. Blame the loggers for that.

By cutting the trees in mountainside forests, the loggers removed the roots that hold the soil together. When the soil can no longer absorb excess water, then mud, rocks and water cascade down the hillsides and bury the villages below. After several days of heavy rains, the soil is supersaturated, and floods and landslides follow.

That is why even when it is no longer raining and the sun is shining, floodwaters continue to rise. Do not blame the release of water from the dams as the cause. The waters are coming from the Sierra Madre and Cordillera mountain ranges. It takes a while for the waters to reach the valley of Central Luzon. That is why it is only now, when the sun is already shining, that the low-lying areas of Bulacan, Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, Pangasinan and parts of Metro Manila are being submerged.

As for the release of water from the dams, that is to prevent a worse disaster from happening. When a dam breaks due to excessive water pressure, all the water in its reservoir will gush down uncontrollably to the areas below, overflow the banks of rivers and flood the countryside. The torrents will sweep away everything in their paths.

Squatters like to build their houses along riverbanks. Even homeowners in middle-class subdivisions like the lots beside the creeks because the location puts them in a position to easily steal the easements on them. But those are the worst places to build houses.

During heavy rains and floods, these waterways overflow, thus inundating adjoining areas. Many homeowners are already experiencing this.

How can we prevent, or at least slow down, global warming? By reducing the emission of greenhouse gases that are spewed by automobile exhausts, factories, open fires and a thousand and one seemingly innocent practices or technologies—like air-conditioning, refrigerators, cooking fires, burning of leaves in backyards, etc. If we all do this, maybe we can still save Mother Earth. And us with it.

* * *

SM got a black eye with two separate fatal shootings committed inside two of its malls—the first, by a scorned housewife; and the second, by a scorned teenager. Not the fault of the malls but of the government for its very liberal gun laws, and of the security guards for their lax screening of shoppers. So what are our hundreds of handsomely paid legislators doing? They should pass a strict gun control law immediately. We are already No. 1 in the world when it comes to gun-related violence.

As for SM, I was requested to write, for balance, the other side of the mall chain: its social corporate responsibility.

Not many know this, but SM takes care of communities by constructing school buildings, giving scholarships, establishing community health centers and recreational centers for the elderly and children, conducting medical missions, and bankrolling livelihood programs.

Recently, SM also established a blood bank for its employees and relatives. Several days ago, it initiated a mass blood-letting among its employees at the Mall of Asia. This was just the first of a series of blood-letting activities in SM's various departments.

The blood bank was originally intended for the emergency needs of SM employees and their relatives but because of the huge volume and limited shelf life of the blood donations, the bank is now donating blood for the emergency needs of dengue patients in government hospitals. The blood donations, however, shall be credited to the organization and will be replaced and made available at all times.

The collected blood will be deposited with the Department of Health Blood Center and will be made available to SM employees and family members any time as needed, free of charge.

The blood donations and the recent donation of IV fluids to several government hospitals are an indication of SM's willingness to collaborate with national and local government agencies under the concept of public-private partnership.

Former QC Vice Mayor Connie Angeles, executive director of SM Foundation's Health and Medical Program, said that the blood bank was a response by the Sy family to the seemingly overwhelming dependence of the public, SM employees included, on paid blood donations during emergencies.

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TODAY'S JOKE: When Filipino couples want to have a baby, they go to Sta. Clara.

When the hopeless need help, they go to St. Jude.

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Those who want to escape the criminal charges against them go to St. Luke's.