

KADOSH MARIAN VOICE

Holiness Firmness Truthfulness Faithfulness



July | August | September 2020 Edition



ABOUT KADOSH MARIAN MINISTRIES

Kadosh “In Jewish thinking, “The Holy One, blessed be He” (hakkadosh, barukh hu) is one of the most commonly used designation for God.” **Marian** ”is a given name, Hebrew meaning of Marion is the precious one or unique from the word or Mariam”

Kadosh Marian Ministries is a non-profit organization headquartered in UK and spread all over the World. Currently working with and within catholic Church, adhering to the norms, traditions, ethos and values. We are established since July 1994 as an approved Charitable Trust under the UK law with the responsibilities: -

- Conducting certificate oriented theological courses duly awarded by various international accredited universities.
- Conducting Charismatic Renewal services to revive the trooping spirit of the flagging faithful.
- Administering Sacraments by the ordained Catholic Priests and Bishops.
- Promoting devotion to Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary.
- Conducting guidance, counselling and healing through deliverance services to the needy, lonely and the afflicted ones.
- We participate to feed 200 poorest people daily.
- We participate to provide pension to 75 widows monthly.
- We participate to provide scholarship for 302 children yearly.
- We visit refugee camps and provide food, clothes and medicines to them.
- We contribute to build five homes for the poor families in a year minimum.

Join with us, slake the thirst, and enjoy the abundance of Spirit of the Sovereign Lord – Immanuel. All the above charitable activities are routed in consultation with Catholic Priests and Bishops.

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Front Page depicts the idea that
'We need to cling to the Wood to
cross over the ocean of life'

4 **The Editorial**
Adv. Earnest Peter Kandathil

6 **St. Paul's Preparation for
his Ministry**
Rev. Dr. Jacob Prasad

8 **Who is Jesus Christ**
Rev. Thomas Chozhithara MSFS

11 **Music in the Sacred Scripture**
Rev. Jackson Sebastian Mavelithayil

14 **Worship in Spirit & Truth**
Chyrel Fonseca Fernandes

16 **The Width of Life**
K. J. Mathew

18 **Wife: a Peculiar Treasure**
Rev. Dr. Nicholas Tharsiuse

20 **Humility & Obedience**
Alia Anthony

22 **God's helpline is Toll-Free**
Jennifer Miranda

24 **Spiritual Warfare**
Dr. Thomas George

30 **We Too Can't Breathe**
Jasmine James

EDITORIALY

It is with great pleasure that I write these words about one of the saints of our Church. Our affiliation to the ethos, traditions and values of the universal Church obviously encourages writings to edify the readers about heroic virtues of the saints. I would like to choose the biographical sketch of **St Catherine of Alexandria** and I will share with you the reason for this choice as well.



Adv. Earnest Peter Kandathil

In the year 2016 I had the opportunity of again visiting Holy Land (Israel, Jordan and Egypt). Our group comprised of pilgrims from New York, London, Cochin and Bombay. We all assembled at Dubai Airport as per previous instructions given by the travel agent, to accompany and proceed as a group. We had the service and expertise of an experienced guide. He took us to various important sights including the monastery of St Catherine of Alexandria in Mount Sinai, near the place where Moses received the Decalogue from the Lord. The guide gave us a very sensational and authentic narrative of the significance of this place with the brief history of St Catherine. Since then I have been harbouring an ardent hope to research, write or speak about St Catherine of Alexandria.

Catherine was born in A.D 287 in Alexandria, Egypt which was then under dominion of the Roman Empire, to Constatius, who was the governor of Alexandria during the reign of Maximien (286 to 305). She devoted her time for needle work and erudite studies. Catherine was endowed with exceptional beauty and some knights wooed to her. But she declined all, making the point very clear to all: "Find for me a husband who is wise, handsome, noble and rich."

But one night in her dream she saw Holy Virgin Mary with her child Jesus in her arms, who asked her: "Catherine, will you take my son as your bridegroom?" and turning towards Jesus she asked "You, my son, will you take this maid as your bride?" The child Jesus replied "No. Because she is not a Christian." She was further told that if she is allowed to be baptised as a Christian, He would then put a ring on her finger, accepting her as his bride. She immediately consented to her baptism and shortly after in her room she saw a host of angels and saints standing in the room with Jesus putting the ring on her finger.

At that time Maxentius was the emperor. He commanded the people of Alexandria to worship gods and offer sacrifices to idols. From the rooms where she was praying, she should hear the chanting of priests and lowing of cattle brought in for slaughter. She went into the square and in front of the temple confronted the emperor to whom she asked "How can you be so foolish as to order these people to worship the idols? You admire this temple because it is built by the hands of workmen. You admire these precious ornaments, which are nothing but dust that will be swept away by the wind. Instead you should admire the heaven and earth and the sea and everything that is there. And when you have learned all that you should ask yourself who is its creator. It is our God. The God of Hosts and the God of Gods."

The emperor had her brought to his palace. For he admired her both for her learning and for her beauty. He summoned no fewer than fifty learned men and said to them, "A daughter of mysterious spirit tells me that our gods are nothing but demons. I could have forced to her to sacrifice or I could have punished her. But I found it better that she should bend before the strength of your arguments. If you can triumph over her, you can return home loaded with accolades and awards."



Dream of Saint Catherine

Before the disputation took place, the arch angel Michael appeared to Catherine and told her that she would be victorious and receive from Christ the hope and the crown he confers upon those who fight for him. An amazing truth turned out. The learned doctors were defeated by her learning, wisdom and eloquence, and the fifty learned men informed the emperor that due to her persuasive arguments, they had no other alternative but to become Christians themselves. The emperor flew into rage and put all the fifty learned men into fire. He then turned to Catherine with benevolence and told her that if she sacrifices to gods she would have a place in the palace after that of the empress and her image would be erected in the city and worshiped as that of a goddess.

Catherine replied, "Let there be an end of such talk. It is a crime even to think thus. Christ Jesus has taken me for his bride and he is my whole love, my whole honour, my whole joy." The emperor sentenced to her death. She said, "Jesus Christ sacrificed himself for me. It is a great happiness for me to be permitted to be sacrificed as an acceptable burned offering for the honour of his name. The emperor ordered her to be flogged with rod and put in a dark dungeon with no food or drink. He left on a voyage. But the empress, who was a pagan saw a vision in which she saw Catherine surrounded by brilliant light. Angels clad in celestial light stood beside her. Catherine took a crown from the hands of one of the angels and placed it on the head of the empress and told her, "This is a crown

from heaven in the name of Jesus Christ my lord and God.” Upon the return of the emperor he heard all that happened. Catherine told the emperor, “I wish nothing more than to sacrifice my flesh and blood for Christ.”

Emperor was so furious that that he ordered to make an instrument of torture; four grazing animals to tear body to pieces. But an angel crushed the instrument and its very splinters were powerful enough to kill the bystanders of the scene. This is known as **Catherine wheel**. The empress having seen the torture came down and rebuked the emperor who then flew in to a fury and asked the empress to worship the idol and on her refusal to do so, he punished her having her breast torn off and her head severed. Before the executioners have led her away, Catherine encouraged her saying, “Rejoice O Queen, beloved of God, for today you will exchange a perishable kingdom for an eternal one; a mortal bridegroom for an internal one”. After the execution of the empress, the emperor approached Catherine and told that she could be first in the palace if she repented of having caused the downfall of his mistress/ empress by the “**magic**”.

According to the emperor the magic was: Empress embraced Christianity at her persuasive tongue and logical arguments based on Christian teachings and doctrines. Catherine refused to obey him stating that she would embrace death rather than worshipping idols. Catherine’s statement was, “Do what you have decided so that I may take my place among the maidens who accompany the Lamb of God.”

Catherine was inevitably imprisoned; she was scourged so bitterly that her body was swollen with bruises and blood flowed like a stream. Her imprisonment was rigorous so as to go without food and drink. She was to starve to death. She stood bravely without betraying signs of sufferings. Sometimes the angels salved her wounds and the doves fed her with food. Christ also visited her in the prison and promised her the crown of eternal glory.

She raised her eyes to heaven and prayed, “Jesus, the hope of salvation of the faithful, the maiden’s honour and beauty, I pray to thee that everyone who appeals to thee in memory of my martyrdom may have their prayers answered at the hour of their death and in all dangers”. A voice heard from heaven, “Come my beloved bride. The gate of heaven stands open for thee. From above I promise help to all those who appeal to me through thee.”

Catherine courted martyrdom meted out by the executioners at the command of the ruthless emperor and Catherine went to receive her last reward in AD 305. Amen .

There was an instrument of torture to crush Catherine and this is subsequently known as Catherine wheel which was similar to that of a chaff- cutter. The pyrotechnic Catherine wheel which rotates with sparks flying in all directions, took its name from the saint’s wheel of martyrdom. Catherine’s relics have been shifted in AD 800 to the Catherine’s Monastery in Mt. Sinai and it is said that it is still preserved there and venerated all along these years.

The Church celebrates her feast on 25th November. She has been considered as the patroness saint of needle workers, women students and Universities. Universities like Oxford and Cambridge have named some of their colleges after her name on account of her exceptional depth of erudition, eloquence and sagacity.

Being provided with classics in abundance like this, the priests and monks spoke of these incidents in the life of Catherine in their sermons as exhortatory to the youth as well as to parents: for the youth to emulate and for parents to advise their children in the formative period of their life for children to have a good Christian living and catholicity.

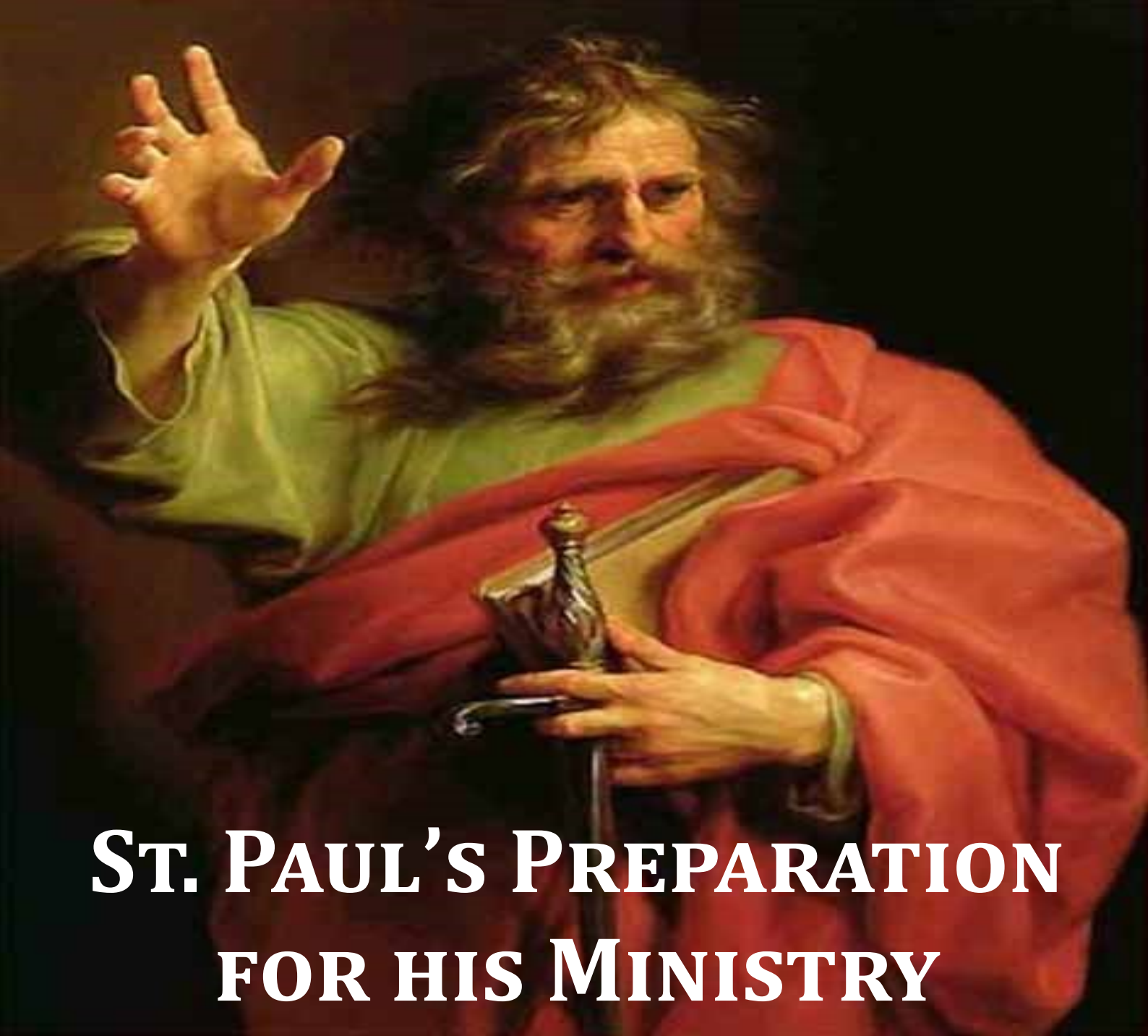
‘Catherine’ means ‘pure’. Some parents, for the sake of their children are praying, during this turbulent time the following: ‘May our youth with the guidance of St Catherine retain the purity, as a virtue, in all their conducts, behaviour and intentions and stand for our Lord so that the Lord will certainly protect them in all their troubles and tribulations of this temporal world.’

We also read in the biography of Joan of Arc that Catherine used to appear to Joan quite often, in the company of St Margaret sometimes daily during the course of her trial to exhort Joan to proceed bravely in the trial at Ruen and linger on, in adherence to the Truth.

There are a number of facts concerning the life of Catherine, which I am not dealing with here due to economy of space. Hopefully I will do it on some other occasion. I wish all the very best to our readers and may the Lord bless you all in plenty.



St. Catherine disputing with the Fifty Philosophers from Alexandria



ST. PAUL'S PREPARATION FOR HIS MINISTRY



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When did Paul's conversion take place?

Acts 7,58; 8,1; 9,1 associates Paul's persecuting activity with the aftermath of the martyrdom of Stephen. Gal 1,17-18 seems to indicate a three-year interlude between Paul's conversion and his going to Jerusalem, that is, the interval when he was in Arabia and Damascus. (Arabia does not mean Saudi Arabia but the Nabatean kingdom running south, through the Transjordan to the Sinai. See the small map included in the introduction to

Galatians 1 ¹⁷ I did not go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went into Arabia. Later I returned to Damascus.

¹⁸ Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Cephas^[a] and stayed with him fifteen days.

the Gospels in the *New Revised Standard Version*).

2 Cor 11,32-33 reports an escape by Paul from Damascus when King Aretas tried to seize him.



2 Cor 11 ³² In Damascus the governor under King Aretas had the city of the Damascenes guarded in order to arrest me.

³³ But I was lowered in a basket from a window in the wall and slipped through his hands.

The Nabatean King Aretas was given control of Damascus by the Roman Emperor Caligula (37-41 AD). (We should remember that at that time most of the small countries of that region were under the Roman Emperors; the kings of those countries were vassals of Rome). Therefore many interpreters date Paul's conversion around 36 AD, and his escape from Damascus and going to Jerusalem around 39 AD.

According to Gal 1,18-19, at Jerusalem Paul visited and conversed with Peter and saw James the brother of the Lord, but none of the other apostles. At times in his letters Paul will mention what he received *from the tradition* about Jesus (see 1 Cor 11,23; 15,3). It has been suggested that it was in this period that he learned some or all of that tradition. The stay in Jerusalem was brief (Gal 1,18), and then he went off to Tarsus in Cilicia (Acts 9,30). (In Gal 1,21 Paul speaks of Syria and Cilicia. That might mean Antioch [Syria] on the way to Tarsus). How long Paul stayed there is not clear, but it may have been several years. About this time he must have had the vision to which he refers in 2 Cor 12,2-4; it occurred 14 years before 2 Cor was written but can hardly be equated with the conversion experience on the road to Damascus. According to Acts 22,17-21 Paul had an ecstasy while praying in the Temple of Jerusalem during his first visit to Jerusalem. What is implied is that the Lord was guiding Paul through visions. In Acts 18,9 it is said, **“And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision”**

The three years, between Paul's initial experience of

Acts 18 ⁹ One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: “Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent.

conversion effected through his encounter with the Lord and his going to Jerusalem, which he spent in Damascus must have been the years of his preparation and maturing for the proclamation of the Gospel, although of course even later the Lord continued to instruct him through visions. Those years must have been years of prayer and reflection. We may remember that it was when Paul was praying in the Temple of Jerusalem that he went into a trance in which the Lord gave him instruction (Acts 22,17-21).

Paul's study of the Jewish Scriptures (the Old Testament) should have also brought to him the knowledge concerning the Messiah, when they were read in the light of the conversion experience he had. Surprisingly, it is Paul a late-comer, the “untimely born one” (1 Cor 15,8), who understood the depth of

1 Cor 15 ⁸ and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born .

the Christ-event and insisted on the Gentile mission without judaizing tendencies, and persisted on it all through. He had probably understood it in a way better than those apostles who had walked with the Lord for three years during his public ministry. That which enabled Paul to come to such conclusion was, therefore, his thorough study of the Scriptures as a Rabbi. In fact it is the study of the Scriptures that brings one closer to Christ, for as St. Jerome says, “ignorance of the Scriptures is the ignorance of Christ” (*Commentary on Isaiah*. The Prologue; see *Dei Verbum* [II Vatican Council's document on “Divine Revelation”], 25). The study of the Old Testament is very important in this perspective, for as St. Augustine says, “The New Testament is hidden in the Old Testament, and the Old is made manifest in the New” (see *Dei Verbum*, 16).

For reflection: Read the texts of the Bible included in the text; go also through the texts of the Vatican Council II indicated.

Q. Do we meet Christ in prayer and in the study of the Scriptures?



CHRIST. COMFORTER. COUNSELOR. CREATOR. DEFENSE
 DELIVERER. DESPISED & REJECTED. DOOR OF THE SHEEP
 DWELLING PLACE. EMMANUEL. ETERNAL GOD. FAITHFUL
 FIRST BEGOTTEN. FORTRESS. FOUNDATION. GIFT OF GOD
 GOD WITH US GOOD SHEPHERD. HIDING PLACE. HIGH TOWER
 I AM. IMMANUEL. INTERCESSOR. JUDGE OF ALL. JUST ONE
 KEEPER. KING OF GLORY. KING OF KINGS. LAMB OF GOD
 LIFE. LIFTER OF MANKIND. LIGHT. LIVING BREAD. LORD
 MAKER. MAN OF SORROWS. MASTER. MEDIATOR. MESSIAH
 NAME ABOVE EVERY NAME -PHIL 2:9
 PHYSICIAN. PRINCE OF PEACE. RABBI. REFUGE
 ROCK. ROSE OF SHARON. SACRIFICE. SALVATION. SAVIOR
 SHELTER. SHEPHERD. SON OF GOD. SON OF MAN. SONG
 TABERNACLE OF GOD. TENDER PLANT. TREASURE. TRUTH
 UNDEFILED. UNSPEAKABLE GIFT. UPRIGHT. VERY GOD OF PEACE

WHO IS JESUS



Fr. Thomas Chozhithara MSFS
 Missionaries of St. Francis De Sales,
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Fr. Thomas Chozhithara MSFS is actively involved in African missions of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales since last 20 years. At present he serves as the director of Mission Development Office in Rome.

Since more than two thousand years, the question about the real identity of Jesus Christ is confronted by millions of people. This question can be answered many ways depending on how one looks at the person of Jesus. However, to be a genuine Christian, an authentic follower of Jesus, and in order to develop a profound relationship with the person of Jesus, we need to have a personal answer to this question because my vocation to be a follower of Christ demands that I confess my faith in Him whom I follow. If I do not know Jesus and if I have not undergone a transforming experience with Him, I will not be able to follow him in an authentic manner.

We see the historical evidence for the existence of Jesus Christ not only in the Bible, but also in the writings of the early Christian writers such as Ignatius, Irenaeus, Clement, Justin, Paul and Polycarp, and in the early historical books of the Jewish, Greek and roman world.

Even during the time of Jesus, there were confusions about the identity of Jesus.

"Where did this Man get this wisdom and these

mighty works? Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?" So they were offended at Him. (Matthew 13:54-57)

"Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." (Matthew 16:13-14)

"Who is this?" So the multitudes said, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee." (Matthew 21:10-11)

"Is this not He whom they seek to kill? But look! He speaks boldly, and they say nothing to Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is truly the Christ? However, we know where this Man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from." (John 7:25-27)

And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who

such as prophet, priest, or king. Anointing indicated not only that God had chosen this person, but also that God would give the person the ability to fulfill the role.

But when Peter said, “You are the Christ,” he was going one step further—a giant step. Israel had, for many years, been looking for God to send a savior—someone like King David of old, who had led Israel to greatness. Israel was looking for God to send a Messiah to do that again—to make Israel great again—to save Israel from oppressors such as Rome, who ruled Israel during Jesus’ lifetime. When Peter said, “You are the Christ,” he was saying, “You are the savior for whom we have waited for centuries. You are the one sent from God to save us.”

While the New Testament accounts of Jesus’ baptism don’t include the word “anoint,” some scholars think of his baptism as his anointing (see also Luke 7:46). The New Testament speaks of Jesus as filling the three roles for which anointing was appropriate: prophet (Matthew 21:11; John 6:14; 7:40), priest (Hebrews 3:1; 4:14-16; 8:1) and king (Matthew 27:11, 37, 42; Revelation 17:14; 19:16).

We cannot know what the disciples thought when they first left everything to follow Jesus. Presumably they have grown in their understanding as they followed him day by day. This, however, is the first time that a disciple has acknowledged that Jesus is the Christ.

“the Son of the living God” (v. 16c). We first heard that Jesus is the Son of God at his baptism when God



announced, “This is my beloved Son” (3:17). Jesus has spoken of himself as Son (11:27). The disciples earlier called Jesus the Son of God when he walked across the water to their boat and stilled the storm (14:33).

Today there is a lot of knowledge about Jesus is available. Some say he was one of the prophets, some say

he is a God, some say that he is one of founders of the religions like Buddha, Muhammed etc. and others say that he was one of the iconic historic persons like Martin Luther, Nelson Mandela or Gandhi.

“Do you love me?” John 21:15

I find a connection between these questions of Jesus. “Who do you say that I am” and “Do you love me”. These both questions are somehow associated with the person of Peter, the intimate follower of Jesus and the first Pope. These two questions also are connected with the vocation of every follower of Jesus, because loving and following Jesus presupposes an important responsibility. After every question Jesus entrusts with Peter, different duties he has shoulder: ‘you are the rock, and upon this rock, I will build my Church” and “feed my lambs”.

To “know” someone and to “love” someone are two different things. We know many things about Jesus but do we know him personally? Do we grow really in love with Him? We can bear fruit in our Christian life only when we begin to love him and to be loved by Him. If our following of Christ to be authentic, we should personally encounter him daily by falling in love with Him, the saviour of the world.

The need to be Apologetic!

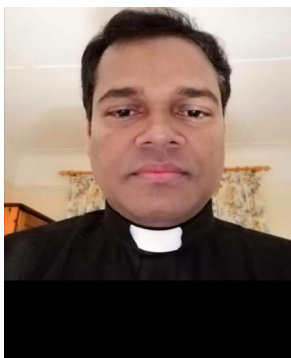
The word “apologetic” comes from the Greek word “apologia”, which means “speaking in defence”. The apostles, the fathers of the Church and the first missionaries of the Church were great apologetics. They defended the teachings of Jesus and the teachings of the Church against heresies. One can be an apologetic only when one knows the fundamentals of our faith and convinced of it. If we are not deep rooted in our faith, we will not be able to stand for it in any circumstances. Today we live in a world in which the person of Jesus is ridiculed and reduced either only to a historical or even to a mythical figure; or his identity is reduced to one of the men of history. Some people look for opportunities to tarnish the face of the Church and the church leaders at any cost by fabricating fabulous stories. Jesus calls us to witness his life in the world, by following the path of TRUTH because He is the “way, the truth and the life”. The first way to be authentic follower and apologetic of Christian faith is to “love” him and to be loved by him; and to live this love wherever we are!

Vive Jesus!





A BRIEF SKETCH OF MUSIC IN THE SACRED SCRIPTURE



Fr. Jackson Sebastian Mavelithayil is a Roman Catholic Priest originally from Kerala, India. He was with the Diocese of Kannur Kerala, India. He completed his Philosophical and Theological studies at St. Joseph's Inter-Diocesan Seminary Mangalore, India. Subsequently, he completed his Master's Degree in English Language & Literature and completed Bachelor's Degree in Education and Diploma in Guidance and Counselling. He was training the youth and teenagers and holding talks in Personality Development and Self-Esteem Empowerment Programmes in various institutions and schools. He was teaching English and Music in the different schools in Kannur, Kerala, India and was giving special training to students to play Musical instruments like Keyboard and Guitar for the liturgical choir. Presently, he is Assistant Parish Priest with Our Lady of the Annunciation, Bingham Road, Addiscombe, Croydon, England, United Kingdom.

As we explore and enquire the enchanting enthrall of the Advent of Music in human beings and in the history of Salvation, it is easy to ask a question as to what is music and what isn't because the ambiances of music is everywhere and in every fibre/cell of this whole cosmos.

The concept of music and its speckled rays are beyond the horizons and that hovers over the highest heavens.

So what is Music? 'Music can be any voice or sound which pleases one's ears. It can be human voices, sounds of animals and birds or any natural endeavours like the fall of raindrops, current streams, gushing of fountains, gentle breeze, roaring of waves and the whisperings of the reeds etc.

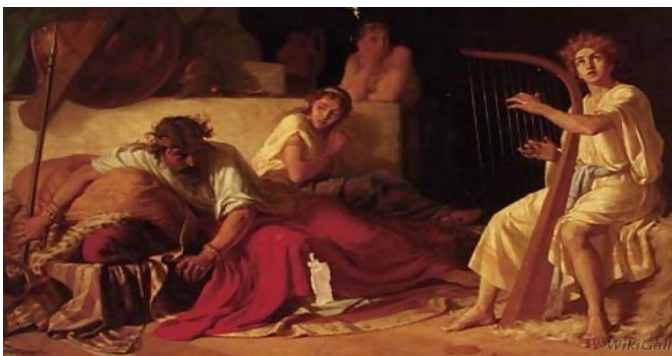
The origin of music and the origin of worship in human beings are inter-twined. Different forms of music have

been with mankind on the very day he began to exist on this planet. He has used his own vocal cords as the first musical instrument to communicate with other human beings animals and nature. Even though there are different phases of the developments in the deep ocean of music such as Prehistoric period of Music, Ancient, Biblical, Early, Medieval and Renaissance, Classical, Romantic, Modern and Post-modern periods of Music.



Music has a pivotal and priceless role in the Christian worship, especially in the Roman Catholic Liturgical worship. Can you think of a Sunday Eucharistic Celebration without hymns and the symphony of choir? Even at this pandemic, online masses and the other liturgical services are attached with recorded hymns.

So to say, Music is the inevitable part and parcel of worship. There are hundreds and more references of praising God in the Bible with songs, and musical instruments. With the Second Vatican Council and its constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 'Sacrosanctum Concilium', the role of music is being established to enhancement and explosion in the liturgical worships of the church.



David playing the Harp before Saul

In the book of Genesis 4:2, Jubal was the inventor of musical instruments. In the book of Exodus chapter 15: we read the songs of Deliverance of Moses and the children of Israel when they crossed the Red Sea.

The Golden age of Music in the Old Testament was known at the reigns of David and Solomon. There were professional singers and a band of musicians in Solomon's Temple (2Sam:19:35). The whole of the psalms and the Song of Songs are the charismatic musical com-

positions for various circumstances. The songs and dances were in Hebrew heritage. That is why they had songs of every kind. It was innate that, they were deliberately transferring it to their next generations. The Rivers of Babylon in (Psalm 137) is beautifully sung with melancholic notes whilst Israelites were in captivity.

The first pages of the New Testament opens with praise songs of different personalities, such as Mary's Songs of Praise or The Magnificat (Luke: 1:46), Zechariah's prophecy or the Benedictus (Luke 1:67), Chorus of the Angels, praises of Elizabeth, prophecies of Simeon etc. Here one would say that, Jesus was a good singer and John the Baptist was a good dancer. Even in his mother's womb John began to dance!.



THE SONG OF MARY: MAGNIFICAT: Luke 1:46-55

In the silent happenings at the Wedding at Cana we might think in this way that, Jesus might have danced with his disciples. There were always songs on Jesus's lips that when he went to the Mount of Olives, he went with songs of praise to face his pangs of pains with joy. The last words of Jesus, whilst on the cross was also the cry of parting, "Eloi, Eloi, Lema Sabachthani!"

Jesus in his public ministry met a good number of peo-



ple who were singers and instrumental players. In the gospel of Mathew Chapter 9:23-24, we read when

Jesus came into the house of Jarius a synagogue leader, he saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion, he then said: "Go away! for the girl is not dead but sleeping". In the same gospel, when Jesus was talking about John the Baptist, people were reluctant to accept him, so Jesus made a comparison. "But to what will I compare this generation?. It is like children sitting in the market place and calling to one another, 'we played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn,' (Mathew: 11: 16-17; Luke: 7:32). When St. Paul gives the attributes of Love and the necessity of holding God's love in one's life he says. "If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal". (1Cor:13:1).

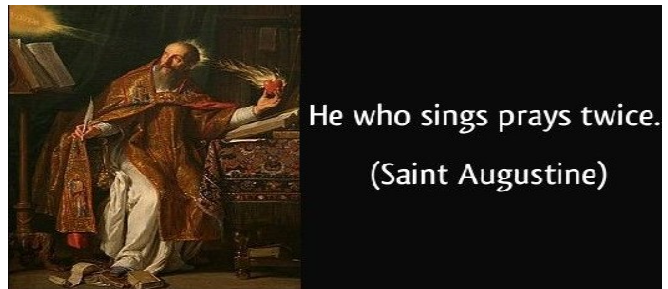


Music is like waves of the ocean, it never ends, it goes on and on, one after the other, in a rhythmic cycle. When St. John the Apostle was expelled and exiled to the Patmos Island, God gave him celestial visions, the symphony of the multitude of the chorus of angels of heaven. It has been unravelled in the book of Revelation, since his vision was a heavenly event it was so imperceptible and invisible to the eyes of all and also the harmonious orchestras of the trumpets were also muted to the public because it was also a private vision for John himself.

There was a belief in the ancient world among both the Greeks (e.g., Pythagoras) and Romans (e.g., Cicero) that the created universe was filled with music. It was called "celestial harmony" or "the music of the spheres." Pythagoras in particular tied music in to his theories of mathematics and even colour.

In Cicero's De Re Publica, Book 6, there is a remarkable scene in which the narrator is given insight into this hidden musical universe. He is told that the human situation is like the people who live next to the cataracts of the Nile River. The thunderous roar has caused them to be deaf, unable to hear anything. Likewise, he is told, we

have become deaf to the beautiful harmony of the universe and cannot hear it. (Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, Social-Science Commentary on the Book of Revelation (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 97, 98.)



The seven hymns in the book of Revelation from Chapters 4 to 7 are the heavenly experience of St. John that can be understood as sayings as well as mysterious songs given to St John. The fifteenth chapter of the book of Revelation gives the account of the praise of the triumphant, as, 'And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations!. Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."' (Rev: 15:3-4, English Standard version ESV)

Let's try to always keep music in our life, which is medicinal for our psyche as it will prevent the deterioration of our memory cells and stimulate our energies to keep us robust in soul, mind and body. Just as St. Augustin said "He who sings praises twice!."



Today, science and technology are pursuing after the aids of music as therapy. Music can heal us just as the Bible heals and changes one's life, when one reads it frequently. The Bible is the love song of God to the wounded humanity for the relief and salvation of souls. Therefore, let us approach and read

the Logos (Word) of God in our daily life. Music can help us to overcome all the ups and downs of life with a smile!





Praise and Worship in Truth & Spirit

There are times when we come very close to the one who made us and there are times when we feel a great cloud between us and the Creator. All of us have had this experience at some point or the other. I love this Jesus that the Bible speaks about not because I am born in a Christian family but because I have a very good reason to, why wouldn't I love someone who loves me so much that he gave up his life for me and bore the burden of my sins. I believe he is real because he lived a very human life like one of us so I can relate to Him. But question still daunts me whether I really love Jesus truly? Do I really love his values and if I did I would follow it with all my heart at all times. And if I did follow it with all my heart I would have a deeper encounter with our loving Creator Abba Father at all times. Many may say we have always had a very wonderful relationship with God, but may deny the hidden truth that there are times when human heart begins to get frail in times



Chyrel Fonseca Fernandes
UAE - Dubai

of anxiety, arrogance, self-obsession, obsessions for fame, attention, power, or simply the need to be loved. Ironically the bad news is that there is no way we can be fully satisfied even if all the desires of our flesh were to be satisfied, there will still be a void, an emptiness in our hearts, as long as we are not filling our hearts with the right diet, i.e. the teachings of Christ and then observing it which contradicts to all of the above mentioned desires, because as per **Romans 8-6**, "**To set the minds on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace**", death here is not the mere physical death but the death of one's conscience, death in the spiritual realm and life here is not mere physical life on earth but life in perpetuity with the Creator. When a car runs out of fuel, there is a need to fill up the fuel tank, in the same way when our hearts are worn out spiritually and begins to feel a void and emptiness, loneliness, depression, and all sorts of anxiety, hatred, bitterness, insecurity it's time to refuel our hearts with the fuel of God's unconditional love by seeking it through **PRAYER AND WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH**. The good news is that we see in **Romans**

For I am convinced that neither death nor life,
neither angels nor demons, neither the present
nor the future, nor any powers, neither height
nor depth, nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us from the love of God
that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:38-39

Suicidal cases are on the rise and I am not surprised why, because we fail to fuel our hearts with that love of God and unfortunately these vulnerable souls have had not known the love of Christ as yet or anyone in their life who reminded them of this unconditional love of God with them so there is much to mourn over souls like these than to mourn over someone dear we have lost if that person knew about God's love and mercy and strived to follow Christ teachings all his life which is the only ultimate way to one's salvation and true happiness.

Why pray and what is the meaning of worship in Spirit and Truth? All of us here will have our own opinion about this, with our own limited understanding and knowledge, but Jesus is the only one who explains the truth to us – He is the Truth that can alone set us free from all the idolisms, ideologies, wrong philosophies of this world and take us on to a whole new level, a new journey to meet our Creator and unite with him in Spirit. He did this not by just words, but through actions, He suffered like us, he wept like us, He laughed like us, but he didn't pray like us and because he didn't do that, he didn't sin like us. He allowed the Spirit of God to work with his human spirit within him and prayed; hence he could listen to the voice of God and obey it. Yes brothers and sisters we ought to do the same, we all have a spirit within us – **Job 32:8, "but it is the spirit in a man, the breath of the Almighty that makes him understand"**. Jesus prayed like a Son of God should do, that is by humbling himself, in pain and anguish, with a heart of love he has for the Creator and for all humanity, all of God's creation, he prayed for strength and wisdom to shepherd the flock that God had put him in charge of on Earth. We are the flock! He looked for God's purpose in his earthly life and submitted to that in obedience to the point of death. **Luke 22:42 "Father, if thou art willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done."** A prayer of submission, a prayer for strength not with a goal to be exalted but to save and help us come closer to the Creator in obedience and enjoy a unique and beautiful relationship of friendship and Father children relationship with the Almighty God, for the glory of God alone. This divine gift of son ship for us is made possible through Jesus' sacrifice.

Spiritual Worship is about surrendering oneself completely to the Creator and allowing the Spirit of God to move within and guide ones soul to obey the plans of God without doubt and without force and praising his name with all his inmost being, like David wrote, **Psalm 146: 1-2**

God does not take delight in sacrifices but seeks a contrite and broken heart.

Psalm 51- 16:17, "You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise."

John 4:24, "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

Mark 12: 30 – 31, "and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'" There is no other commandment greater than these."

That means that we can only worship God in spirit and truth if we are able to Love God and others including ourselves with the love of God. Why did Jesus stress on loving God with all our heart, mind and soul? With my limited human understanding brothers and sisters I think it is because Heart, mind and soul are interconnected and have all to do with one's emotions, feelings, morality, and conscience, a deeper aspect of being a human. Spiritual praise and worship is not about a set of rules to follow but to pour out ones heart and soul to the Almighty and praise the Creator with Joy, Hope and trust that victory is on the way for me and I am set to accomplish the purpose that God has for me no matter what comes my way and irrespective of my limitations and downfalls, I will continue to pursue, to love like Him and to be persistent in doing the right thing even if it costs my friendship, my family, my possessions at a given stage. Friendship with the worldly ways is enmity with God – **James 4: 4, "Unfaithful creatures!**

Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with

God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." because the world is under the rule of the enemy of God so we got be alert at all times, while we enjoy the beauty of God's creation and be the vessels of His love and mercy for others, we must be on guard that we don't become an instrument to please the ungodly but rather help them come closer to God by acting in a Godly way ourselves. **This is only possible if we allow the Spirit of God to transfigure and transform us within into a person of Jesus Christ.**





THE WIDTH OF LIFE

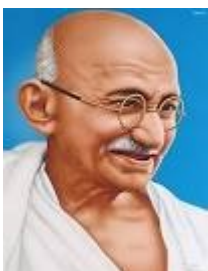


K. J. Mathew : An educationist with vast experience in teaching and administration at various levels including prestigious schools in India and abroad. Started his professional life as a Lecturer in the prestigious St. Thomas College, Trichur, Kerala. Later he moved to Africa (Nigeria & Botswana). In Nigeria, he taught at Mary Knoll College and in Botswana he taught at Moeding College and also in the University of Botswana. After about 18 years, he returned to India and worked as Headmaster/Principal at several premier ICSE/ISC schools in South India. Notable among them are: Good Shepherd International School – Ooty, Mar Thoma Residential School – Tiruvalla, Kerala and Kalabhavan Talent Residential School – Cochin. He is the Founder Principal of Mysore Public School. Authored three books. He is a member of various Indian and foreign professional organizations and has attended several educational conclaves worldwide.

“I don’t want to get to the end of my life and find that I lived just the length of it. I want to have lived the width of it as well”

[Diane Ackerman]

Always when something is written about great personalities who lived and died, it is customary to indicate in brackets the year of their birth and the year of their death. For example:



Mahatma Gandhi
(1869 – 1948)



Rabindranath Tagore
(1861 – 1941)

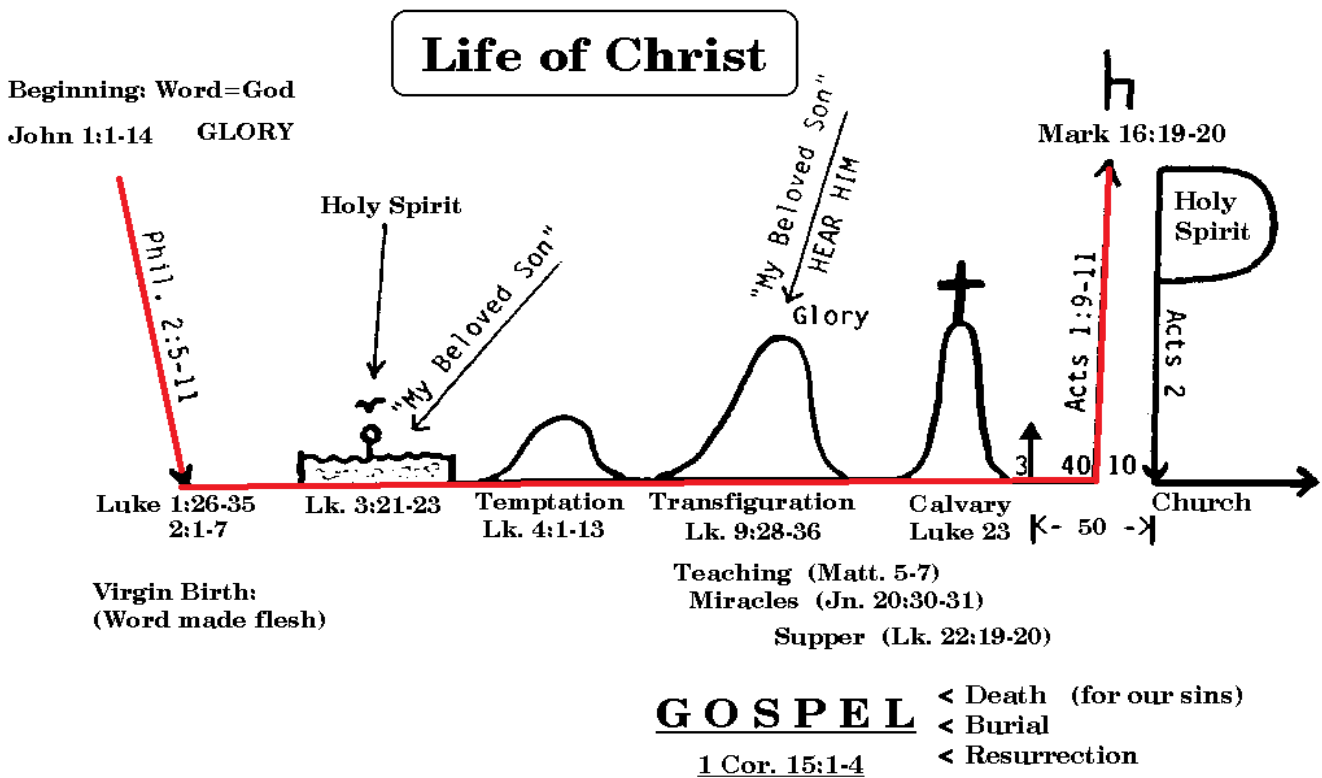


Issac Newton
(1642 - 1727)



Florence Nightingale
(1820 – 1910)

It is worth thinking if it is the two figures or the small line in between that is more important. More than the year of birth, the year of expiry and the span of life, the quality of life that one lived is important. The word 'quality' here does not represent the affluence of life but the meaningfulness of their lives to the world around them.



Aadi Sankara lived for 32 years, but the spiritual greatness that he attained during this short period of time was remarkable. Jesus Christ lived for only 33 years, but he could rectify the corrupt practices in the Jewish community around him and he is worshiped as God by millions of Christians. Emperor Alexander the Great conquered the world in a short period of 32 years. John Keats whose name is immortal in the History of English Literature lived only for a short period of 25 years.

We should be able to accept this **life as an immensely great gift of God** and make it meaningful to the world around us. "Life is a spark from the womb to the tomb". We should not fear death. We cannot increase the length of our lives, but we can increase its width by making it meaningful. There are people who boastfully say that they are "self made". This is a misleading statement. Everybody directly or indirectly receives help or support from the world around them at some stage of life.

The American Media man Brian Tracy noted : "As we try and help others, more help automatically comes into our life".

Mark Twain wrote: "In spite of our civilization, we fight wars and kill innocent people who could otherwise be of potential help to us".

Albert Einstein said: "My private and social life has been built on the efforts of many people living and dead. I am bound to give it back".





WIFE: A PECULIAR TREASURE



Rev. Msgr. Dr. Nicholas Tharsiuse
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Father serves as a visiting professor in seminaries St: John's Seminary (Hyderabad), St: Joseph's Pontifical Seminary, Malankara Seminary (Kerala) and St: Joseph's Major Seminary Telegana. He also conducts seminars & orientation programmes for different age groups. He has authored several articles and two books, one in English (The Way of Life) and the other in Malayalam (Yesuvae Purathu Varika—Jesus Come Out).

Adam's first love letter: "**the bone from my bone and the flesh of my flesh**" (Gen 2:23). Bone signifies strength while flesh denotes weakness. Bone and flesh cannot survive separately. They must be joined appropriately. That is why God decided to make a suitable mate for Adam (Gen 2:18). Flesh and bone are not each other's properties, they belong to each other.

When Adam's love letter was written, women didn't have much value and position. A wife had two main duties: she had to satisfy the sexual desires of the husband. He could discard her after that. Like the cup of an ice cream she is thrown away. Her second duty was

to make babies of the husband. So those who couldn't make babies were deemed unworthy since babies are a gift of God (Lk 1:25,57).

Henceforth they are not two but one (Mt 19:6). They are united in mind, heart, thought, emotion, word and body (Mt 19:5). It is a great event when God joins people. It is a miracle. It is a blessing. It is a divine sacrament. Without proper joining, there will be leaks. God joins, it is Satan who splits apart.

Marriage has survived the variations of time, nationality and culture. It is the mutual involving of the husband and the wife. They are one just like the number one

multiplied by one gives one. They are integrated mates. They are inseparable like the mind and the heart. The relationship must be vibrant and transparent. The heart cannot survive without the head, neither the head without the heart. So vital is their mutual dependence.



One of the eyes never cries, sleeps or wakes up by itself. The eyes always behave together. Husband and wife must also live so in tandem.

Your partner is within you, not outside. As Jesus said, abide in me and I in you (Jn 15:5).

They must reside in each other and together in Christ. The spouse who doesn't abide in the other and in Christ, becomes a property. Property can be transacted. The warmth disappears. So we must humbly recognise that our partner is not our property, but our own.

[Couple must travel together seeking heaven.](#) The sa-



cred path of the sacred life. Being grateful to God in times of plenty and depending on Him in times of need. They must accept each other's equality in this journey. There is no hierarchy in this journey. Only mutual respect and worship (Mk 10:45). They are not each

other's property but Segulla (Ex 19:5). Segulla means the treasured possession of maximum value.

In the court of justice, she may be his property but in Heaven's court they belong to each other. It is a life of sharing, caring and nurturing. Christ is with the couple till the end. All other relationships are worthless and ridiculous. Also recognise that it is Satan's handiwork. With such a realisation, the journey becomes joyful.



In the court of justice, husband and wife are free. But in God's court, they are not. The freedom of the spouse extends only till their partner. Husband is the freedom of the wife and wife is the freedom of the husband. Anything beyond that is not sacred for the union. When the jackal comes in sheepskin, it must be recognised. Laws should be interpreted by the apathy of their letters but by the inspiration of their spirit. Marital bliss blooms at the spot of belongingness. Depth of dedication and warmth of relationships is where the togetherness of life begins. Here it is not the law of letter but law of love. In the laws made with love, there is no economics, only togetherness. That's where married life blooms.





HUMILITY AND OBEDIENCE



Alia Anthony

Bahrain

Humility and Obedience go hand in hand. Without one, the other is nearly impossible. It's like the example of a child, when told to clean their room, who stomp down the hall and slams the door. Eventually, the child has a choice. He can either humbly accept the parent's instruction, or clean his room, or he can remain stubbornly defiant.

We, too, have a choice. When called by God to do hard things, we can cross our arms in defiance, or, we can humbly accept the command. It may take some wrestling through prayer, just as Jesus portrayed in the garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-50), but ultimately, true obedience will follow humility.

Humility grows when faith matures. Faith strengthens when you obey. Obedience is easy when there is love. Transformation is brought about by love.

To fulfil God's plan to save man from sin Jesus was sent on earth. Jesus carried all the pains and suffering and humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death on the cross. (Philippians 2:8). Jesus humbles himself many times and in many ways during his life on earth. At the age of twelve, he humbly obeyed his parents by leaving the temple and return home to his father's business (Luke 2:42-52). The baptism of Jesus at the river Jordan (Mathew 3:13-17), Jesus humbled himself when being baptized by John, though Jesus very well knew baptism was not for HIM, but still Jesus walked on the river Jordan only to save us from sin and to fulfil the purpose of his mission on earth.



The washing of the feet of his disciples (John 13:1-17) explains us the depth of humility and obedience of Jesus. There was however no greater example to humility than that of Jesus obedience to death on the cross. Jesus chose to be humble himself despite the immense battle raging within his soul.



Humility and submission go hand in hand. God's word tells us that as Christians we are to submit to one another in lowliness of mind. At the same time, Humility is not being a 'doormat' and allowing people to walk all over you. Instead it is an understanding that every human is equally valuable. It is a recognition that you are worth no more or less than anyone else. Real humility enables people to see real limits and accept others as their equal or even their Superior in any given situation. Humility is needed to lead because it helps us to trust, and have faith in others to do the work they have the potential to do. To walk in humility with God, we remind ourselves we are followers. We don't initiate or design the way we follow it. We don't continue to "turn our own way".

How can we as Christians develop humility?

1. *Spend time listening to others*
2. *Practice mindfulness and focus on the present*
3. *Be grateful for what you have*
4. *Ask for help when you need it*

5. *Seek feedback from others on a regular basis*

6. *Review your actions against the language*

Obedience to God demonstrates our faith and work in God. It is the key to our success and it is the sure and promised way for unlocking blessings for our lives.

How can we imply obedience in our lives?

We have to immerse ourselves in His word and keeping our thoughts pure. Spend time with the bible and pray daily, avoid gossip and negative situations, stop watching, reading or listening to things that don't align with His principles.

If we truly believe God is real and Jesus is Lord then we should obey God's word. We should not presume to know better than God. The mark of humility before God is our willingness to obey his word.

Mathew 16:24 – teaches us that we as Christians, the fact that we deny ourselves from many worldly desires and choose to follow Christ, that is obedience.

Luke 1:30 – "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word"

Mary the Mother of Jesus, who, without hesitation gave herself over; as the handmaid of the Lord. She surrendered herself and was always ready to fulfil any further wishes never using her unique position to promote herself on her own ambitions.

How many of us have undertaken personal quest because we are driven by our own pride. We might perceive ourselves as great singers, athletes, writers, doctors and even jealous of those who attain loftier positions or more praise than we do. If we step back and do our best to look at the Blessed Mother's humility, we see that all she ever did was to love and serve God always and at every moment. Everything Mary did was out of obedience and for the glory of God. Let us contemplate on our Blessed Mother more each day. Let us also strive to follow even though unattainable her virtue of perfect humility.

Let us keep Mary as our role model and surrender our 'Yes' to lead a good Christian life and lead to live in humility and obedience.

Proverbs 11:12 says – **When pride comes then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom.**

Humility means submission but not grovelling.





GOD'S HELPLINE IS TOLL-FREE AND AROUND THE- CLOCK.

Proverbs 15:33 *"The fear of the Lord is described as the "discipline" or "instruction" of wisdom. ... It is a fear that comes forth out of love for the Lord".*

The most common emotion in the lives of human beings is fear. Fear is a response that seeks to avoid threatening danger. Fear is our reaction when danger threatens.

Fear "is an attitude that harms us. It weakens us, diminishes us. It even paralyzes us."

A person who is afraid "does nothing, doesn't know what to do." He is focused on himself, overly concerned that nothing bad will happen." Fear, the Pope said, "brings you to self-centered selfishness and paralyzes you." He continued, "A fearful Christian is a person who has not understood the message of Jesus." This fear is built in mortals towards worldly things.

But the fear of God is an attitude of respect, a response of reverence and wonder. It is the only appropriate re-

sponse to our Creator and Redeemer. When the Bible talks about fearing God, it is usually referring to an attitude of reverence and respect,

not outright terror. The Greek noun "Phobos" can mean "reverential fear" of God, "not a mere 'fear' of His power and righteous retribution, but a wholesome dread of displeasing Him" This is the type of positive, productive fear Luke describes in the early New Testament Church. It is really awe and respect for the majesty and holiness of God. It is a godly reverence. Reverential fear is awe for the heavenly Father. It is a fear of displeasing God. The reverential fear of the Lord is designed to help us grow to become more like God—to grow in love. And this growth removes any need to be terrified of God's judgment. God wants His laws written on our hearts.



Jennifer Miranda

For example, even if we had no fear of being caught, we should choose to never steal from others—because we love them and God. Reverential fear is a good kind of fear. It is always right. David speaks of this fear as being clean and pure. The writer of Proverbs says that godly fear is the beginning of all true wisdom. It is this kind of fear that enables human beings to respect God’s authority and to obey His commands. Psalm 2:11 says, “Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.” Proverbs 16:6 says that “by the fear of the Lord, men depart from evil.” Fearing the Lord means to be in awe of his holiness, to give him complete reverence, and to honor him as the God of great glory, majesty, purity and power. True fear of the Lord causes believers to place their faith and trust in him alone for salvation.

There are also two more kinds of Fear which are Constitutional and Carnal Fear. Constitutional is a fear that is necessary for the preservation of humanity. Constitutional fear is a normal God-given emotion. God has built into each of us an instinctive alarm system that is designed to protect us from harm—from drunken drivers, rattlesnakes, hardened criminals, and fierce storms. These are normal fears which are necessary for our protection, and for the preservation of life. Carnal fear is a senseless dread and nagging anxiety. This is a fear that is always evil. It is a craven and base kind of fear. The Greek word carries with it the idea of an unhealthy, destructive kind of dread. Many examples of carnal fear are found in the Bible:

It is the fear expressed by Adam when he had sinned. Adam ran and hid, and when he was asked why he was hiding, he said, “Because I was afraid” (Genesis 3:10).

According to Pope Francis, “The fear of the Lord, the gift of the Holy Spirit, doesn’t mean being afraid of God, since we know that God is our Father that always loves and forgives us,. It is no servile fear, but rather a joyful awareness of God’s grandeur and a grateful realization that only in him do our hearts find true peace.

When we fear mortals or anything that is against God,

we live in darkness and gradually paralyze ourselves spiritually, physically, and mentally. Also, we fall into committing sins, inferiority complex, Self-Hatred, Anxiety Attacks, no peace, and ultimately, we lead our lives that please Satan. The Bible describes the fear of man in terms of a trap: “The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe”. When we fear man, we are walking into a dangerous place, because we’re no longer trusting in the Lord.

Simultaneously if we live our life by trusting him, you will experience his miracles in your life, because he is our rock, our Refugee, Fortress. Nothing is stronger than God and therefore, God alone is sufficient to deal with our fear. The Lord told the king Ahaz that his fears were unnecessary, and God could defend him. “Pay attention, keep calm, have no fear; do not let your heart sink.” God’s helpline is toll-free and round-the-clock. He is available anytime when you seek him and they shall be no unwavering faith, So ask Him to open your eyes to the armies of angels who fight on your behalf, trust that His plan for you is good, and go forward without fear, Our God is faithful!

We also see mighty changes in Our life when we live our life with Reverential Fear. if we truly fear the Lord, we will obey his commands, live according to his Word, and say “No” to sin. One reason why God inspired fear in the Israelites at Mount Sinai was so that they might learn to avoid and reject sin and to obey his law. God instructs his followers to teach their children to fear him by training them to hate sin and to love God’s commands. A Christian’s basic goal for his or her children should be that they learn to live by God’s principles of wisdom. And the fear of the Lord has a sanctifying effect on God’s people, just as applying the truth of God’s Word does. So my brothers and sisters, Whenever Fears overpowers you turn to the Lord and ask his grace and protection and most important trust him and offer your fears into his hands and you will find Peace which is eternal also when you lead your life by following his words and commandments you will never fear for mortals because you take our Lord Jesus as our refuge and fortress in life.





Spiritual Warfare

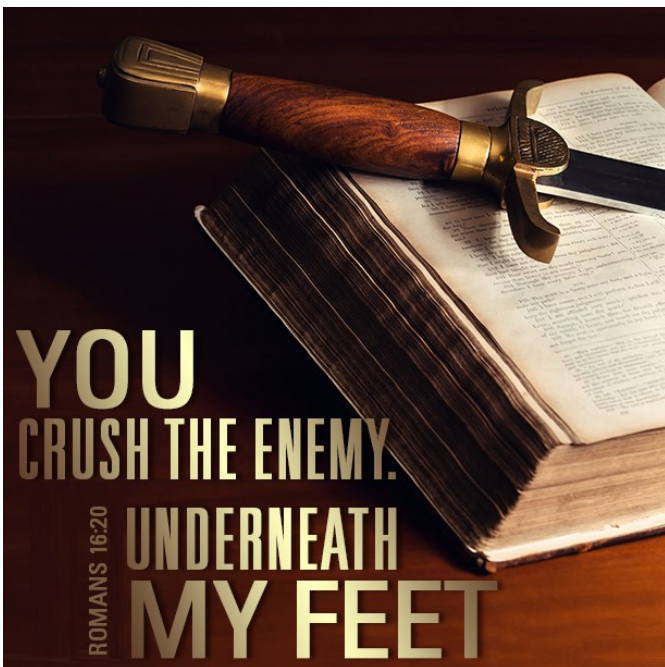


Dr. Thomas George

The concept of Spiritual Warfare gives us an idea on where, how and what the battles look like in our daily lives.

Many people, including Christians are reluctant to use the word 'warfare'. They are either afraid or lack of knowledge about it. Through this article, we are attempting to enlighten the readers about 'spiritual warfare' and 'how to equip to have a victorious life in the spiritual realms'. St. Paul says in **2 Corinthians 2:11** 'in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.' It is obvious from this statement that all believers must be aware about their enemies and their schemes. It is the well-known fact that when you come to know the truth, the truth will set you free.

According to St. Paul **2 Cor 4:18** says 'So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.' From this, it is clear that there are living beings available in the 'seen' and in the 'unseen' realms. It is also true that there is an invisible world as well as an invisible war. However the results of the invisible war are very visible.



Who are our enemies?

God created everything, both seen and unseen. Remember that everything is visible for God and nothing is hidden from Him. But when we are in the human form, we will not be able to see everything. The unseen is eternal and seen is temporal. God created angels and they are not usually visible to mankind.

Angels are classified as Cherubims (Gen.3:22-24), Seraphims (Is.6:1-3), Archangels (Jude 9), Living Angels, Angels and a few of angels are called chief princes (Dan.10:13).

The duties of angels are clearly described in the Bible and Jesus Christ also mentioned about their existence. I would like to give a brief idea to their duties.

Angels worship God. They are ceaselessly involved in praising God (Rev.4:6-11) with proclamation of His attributes (Is.6:3) and singing praises (Rev.5:8-9).

Angels minister to Christ. They announced Jesus' birth (Luke 1:26-33; 2:13). protected Jesus (Matt.2:13), strengthened Jesus (Matt.4:11; Luke 22:43), and explained to men about Jesus' resurrection (Matt.28:6) and His ascension (Acts 1:10-11).

Angels carry out God's government as God's servants (Ps.103:20; Heb.1:7) and also acting as messengers (Luke 1:19; 2:8-14) of God.

Angels can also be involved in controlling nature (Rev.7:1; 16:3,8,9), nations (2 Kings 19:35), and Satans and demons (Dan.10:13,21; 12:1).

Angels support future judgment for God (Matt.13:3a; Rev.15:1; 16:1-21).

Angels minister to God's people. They protect God's people. Angels are deputed to serve believers (Heb.1:14). They also protect the godly people (Ps.34:7; Dan.6:20,23). They oppose our enemies (Ps.35:4,5). Sometimes, angels are specifically assigned as guardians of individuals (Matt.18:10).

Angels are God's agents in answering prayer (Acts 12:7) and bringing physical provisions (Gen.21:17-20; 1 Kings 19:5-7). They support, assist and protect believers (Psalms 91:11).

Angels can assist God's people even at the time of their death (Luke 16:22; Jude 9). There are more than 34 books in the Bible with reference to angels and their allocation of duties.

Mysteries behind the vision of Jesus 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven' (Luke 10:18).

All angels have offices according to their duties. Certain group of Angels who had 2 offices to perform, they are that of Cherubim's and Archangel's office which were led by Lucifer. These angels were created and anointed and bestowed with perfect beauty. They worked for

God and walked in the presence of God. They then thought they could ascend to heaven, raise their throne above God, sit on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon, ascend above the tops of the clouds, and become like the Most High. They were then brought down by God from the heavens due to their hubris and arrogance. Since then, these groups of angels and the devils prowl around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour human beings like us who are created in the image and likeness of God.



Why are these enemies targeting the children of God?

Fallen enemies can't regain their previous positions, they are defeated by Jesus, they can not either occupy or acquire any heavenly thrones. They know very well that Jesus has kept the highest throne to share it with His children according to **Revelation 3:21** 'To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne.' It is a fact that **Spiritual warfare is real and true** and the people who have victory over the warfare will enjoy the rest of their life with Jesus Christ and it will be glorious!

The Scriptures speaks of spiritual warfare in several places, but most directly by Paul in **Ephesians 6:12** 'For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.' Here, it is very clear that we have warfare in the invisible realms and we should not fight against any other human beings.

The most important truth about spiritual warfare is 'battle is not belongs to people but it is for the Lord'.

The Devil is already defeated and lost. **The Son of woman already crushed the head of the serpent and He regained the authority legally.** As the appointed time is not yet reached to eradicate these enemies completely, the Devil is trying to take as many with him as he can, apparently just to hurt God and God's own children. As they can not occupy or acquire any heavenly thrones, they don't want any humanity to enjoy heavenly realms. The more Devil succeeds in doing this, the more God is hurt - like a parent who is hurt by losing a child, is what the devil feels.

Now the Triune God wants His children to defeat the enemy so that the heavens will rejoice. The Almighty Father has delegated His entire authority to His Son Jesus Christ, and Jesus delegated His authority to His chosen people to defeat and cast out the enemy.

Let us stand still and enjoy victory in this race and fight by applying the heavenly weapons of Light.

In my experience over the last two decades, I have realized that many of us simply accept the facts without raising any questions that life is full of conflict, struggle and battle.

When our trials increase, we need to grow stronger in our faith, our resolution and our love for the Triune God. Our commitment to God must be stronger and our dedication to Work for God's kingdom must be stronger as well.

All Christians, especially ministers, must be faithful to their Captain, Jesus Christ, with a determination to conquer the enemies. The great mission of a Christian must be to please God, is the way to defeat the enemy. At the same time, we need to overcome the mastery of our lusts and corruptions. We cannot expect the reward from God unless we obey and follow His Word. We must make sure that we do everything good in the right manner. The will of God must be adhered before we makes ourselves worthy to receive the promises of God.

Warriors

Here, we stand in the midst of a fallen world, while the spiritual battle rages all around. All Christians are called to be the warriors of Christ. **1 Peter 5:8** 'Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.' Peter is giving a clear warning to all Christians that the enemy is

trying his level best to trap God's chosen people. He also works to prevent the Christian warriors from advancing the Kingdom of God.

Every Christian's life is a warfare with principalities, powers, rulers of wickedness. It's a constant warfare of world and it's lusts. Imagine the life of a minister of the Gospel, who is called to meet the adversary in the gate. **The enemy cannot touch those who are protected by the power of God through faith unto salvation;** but enemies are eagerly looking for any lost sheep that may have wandered from the fold.

Ephesians 6:12 says 'For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.' Here, we can metaphorically connect the Christian life to a wrestling match in the Olympic Games. It is not a difficult game if the team captain, Jesus Christ is with you. Jesus Christ defeated the enemy and He is asking us to join with Him to defeat the real enemy from our daily life. Exodus 14:14 says, **'The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be stand still'**. Let me emphasize the above Word and say, if you are ready to join in the team led by Jesus Christ, you are bound to succeed. Because your Captain will play and bring victory to you.

The Bible emphasizes continuously that the Lord wins all wars. We can find many passages in the Holy Scripture testifying this, especially in the Old Testament where Yahweh is called the Lord of the host or God of the host. Here 'host' means army. Always remember to make God our captain when we go on a battle.

Be a good team player with Jesus Christ. The Christian warrior always should remember 2 Timothy 2:3-4 'Share in suffering like a good soldier of Christ Jesus'. No one serving in the army gets entangled in everyday affairs; the soldier's aim is to please the enlisting officer.

Pre-Adamic Age

I had been yearning to learn about the pre-Adamic world. I believe it is worth sharing the age prior to Adam's times. I believe God's judgment against rebellion could have taken place much prior to any of the six days of restoration as explained in Genesis. It might have happened between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2.

Now I bring your attention to the Word of God in a different order. The Pre-Adamic Age was the age when angels were the key focus of God's dealings. It is scientifically proven that the earth is much older than six thousand years.



When God created the heavens and the earth, in the beginning, He created the earth in such a beautiful and perfect condition that the angels responded with joyful singing and shouting.

In Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth". **The heavens mean the whole and complete universe consisting of billion galaxies with billions of stars and planets.** Our minds cannot even begin to grasp the wonders and unbounded powers of God, that the universe displays.

In this very first verse of the Bible, God singles out the earth as the most important planet in the entire universe. This is because God had a tremendous purpose to use the earth as the centre of the universe. It is on earth that God will establish His Eternal Kingdom of the New Heaven and the New Earth after He has first refined and cleansed the earth during the Lake of Fire Judgement Age.

So, how did God create the universe and the earth in the beginning? The Bible says that God simply commanded and they were created.

God is the creator and He is the only sign of perfection. Let us find a few verses from the Holy Scripture

God cannot create anything imperfectly because Jesus Christ says in Mathew 5:48 **Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.**

Psalm 148:2-5 says **Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts! Praise Him, the sun and the moon; Praise Him, all you stars of light! Praise Him, you**

heavens of heavens, And you waters above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the LORD, for He commanded and they were created.

Psalms 18:30 says This God—**His way is perfect**

Isaiah 45.18 says **The Rock, His work is perfect, and all His ways are just and perfect.**

Ecclesiastes 3:11 'He has made everything suitable for its time'. There are many passages substantiating God's perfect creation. As God is perfect, he can't make anything imperfect.

The above passages illustrate that God is perfect, so that all His creations are perfect.

All the angels shouted for joy when God created earth.

God created angels before He created the earth and they shouted for joy when God created earth (Job 38.4-7)

God created everything for Him and by Him

According to St. Paul to Colossians 1.16 '**For in him, all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.**'



As God can't make anything imperfectly, I believe, It will be interesting to understand how earth became formless and empty according to Genesis 1:2 'Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.'

It is to understand that millions of years have passed by between the period of Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2

In this connection, I draw your attention that initially, God created everything perfectly including earth, angels, towns, sun, moon, creatures etc. But when a group angels rebelled against God, they have thrown down to earth (Isaiah 14:12-15). In Luke 10:18, Jesus says 'I saw satan fall like lightning'. This falls indicates the fall of satan from the highest heaven after Genesis 1:1 and before Genesis 1:2 during the interregnum.

After the fall of angels, they tried to inhabit the earth with the race like leviathan etc., then God's fierce anger hit the earth - He shakes the earth (Job 9:6), turneth the earth upside down, and scattereth the inhabitants thereof (Isa 24:1), He moves mountains without their knowing it and overturns them (Job 9:5), He speaks to the sun and it does not shine; he seals off the light of the stars (Job 9:7). In short, God destroyed everything as per Genesis 1:2— thus the earth became formless and empty, darkness prevail over the surface of the deep and Spirit of God was hovering over the water.

In Genesis 1:3 onwards, God restored everything.

Spiritual Warfare in the present world

There are many ways we may be fighting spiritual battles in our lives and world today, but here are a few examples from Scripture that may reveal you're under the attack of spiritual warfare :

1. Sudden or extreme onslaught of various troubles, losses, and trials (Job 1-2).
2. Attacks of physical danger, illness, life-threatening loss (Job 10, Daniel 6).
3. Increased temptation and luring towards sin or wrong choices (Mathew 4:1-11).
4. Feelings of overwhelming despair, darkness, and fear (1 Kings 19), like wrestle with shadows.
5. Deep confusion, feelings of condemnation and guilt, dulled spiritual awareness (1 Corinthians 14:33, Romans 8:1).
6. Slip between lip and cup and failure in family, business, loosing hope, suicide tendencies, living in the midst of a set of lies (John 10:10).
7. Living in sin without sacraments.

How to 'Stand Firm' against the spiritual attack?



The most important key to stand firm is to understand the truth and then the truth will set us free.

Declare the faith

As soon a person believe and declare the truth (profession of faith), God will make them as the children of God. Once a person belongs to Christ's family then none of the weapons of satan will work against him because believers are secured in God's hands.

The gift of the Holy Spirit

All believers must welcome Holy Spirit to their life because you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you (Acts 1:8). The Holy Spirit always helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. (Romans 8:26). God always fills believers with strength, wisdom, and discernment through His own Spirit to stay strong in the battle.

Armour of Light

God tells every believers to take up His full armor in order to stand against the enemy's schemes. Each piece has a specific purpose and is designed for believer's protection and covering. Just as a soldier would not go to battle unprepared, we also should be fully ready against the onslaught (Ephesians 6:11-17).

Establish and maintain a relationship

God invites believers to have a permanent relationship with Him, He desires everyone to spend time in His presence. He tells believers to pray without ceasing (Ephesians 6:18). The Holy Spirit, saints and angels also intercede to God for us believers.

Word of God

God arms every believers with the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, to stand against the enemy's lies. When Jesus had an encounter with the enemy, He used the Word of God and gained the victory. Similarly the Lord wants every believer to learn and meditate on the Word of God to sustain a victorious life.

Thanks giving, Praise and Worship

God dwells close to every believer when they express their heart's feelings to Him. Thanks giving, Praise and Worship is a powerful weapon which makes the enemy flee. It pushes back the darkness the surrounds, and blocks the attacks and hissing lies over us. God dwells in the praise of His people.

Cross of Jesus

By the divine exchange of Jesus Christ, He canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; He has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross (Colossians 2:14-15). Believe this truth and victory belongs to ours!

The blood of Christ and the word of our testimony

We are overcomers in this life because Jesus has overcome. And our lives are hidden in Christ with God. No enemy or obstacle can touch our souls. When we have been set free by the blood of Christ and the power of His sacrifice by death on the Cross, we have a new identity in Him. We've been bought with a price, we are not our own, but belong to God therefore, He covered by the grace and forgiveness of Jesus.

Love of Christ

It is the truth that we live victorious, and no demon or darkness can ever separate us from the love of God which is in Christ our Lord.

Name of Jesus

As soon as a believer applies the name of Jesus, battle is handed over to the office of Jesus. Once it is handed over to the Lord, the Lord wages the war and the victory become ours!

Holy Angels

God always releases angels to guard us, support us and guarantee our victories.

Christians triumph over Satan when they stand firm in their beliefs, words, values, attitudes, and actions based on the teachings of Christ. It is the truth that God never forsakes any believers in a dark world, but He reminds them that He is constantly with believers and offering divine victory at all the time.

Rejoice always, Pray unceasingly and Give Thanks to God

at all the time in Jesus Christ because that is the will of God in Jesus Christ about us to have a peaceful and victorious life.



WE TOO CAN'T BREATHE

*Both breathless, died of asphyxia.
One, gasping for air; the other, when
Water entered her lungs and trachea.*

* * *

*One, held down on his neck with a knee.
We heard him say, "Man, I can't breathe."
None listened to his pleas, unfortunately.
Brutal repression.*

Eight minutes, 46 seconds.

* * *

*The other, held down her trunk in the river.
Roamed pitifully in hell, 3 weeks.
Mouth exploded, excruciating pain.
Couldn't eat or drink anything again,
While maggots feasted on her injuries.*

*Her stomach was empty,
The post-mortem revealed.*

* * *

*Both black and so beautiful.
One, father to a little girl;
The other fostered in her womb
A precious pearl.*

* * *

*The fate of one sealed by
A firecracker-stuffed feed.
And the other, by the weight of a fair knee,
Swollen with pride and apartheid.*



Jasmine James is a freelance textile designer, illustrator, editor and visiting faculty of design from Trivandrum, Kerala, India. She holds Bachelor's Degrees in Textile Design from National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), New Delhi and English Literature from University of Kerala.

Jasmine is the author of 'Tamed Horses', a self-illustrated anthology of 50 poems and 50 life thoughts, published by Notionpress in 2018, available in Amazon, Flipkart, Barnes & Noble, Snapdeal & Ebay.

'We Too Can't Breathe' is a poem she wrote in response to the #justiceforgeorgefloyd and #justiceforkeralaelephant campaigns, when a pregnant wild elephant of Kerala was mortally wounded after accidentally consuming a fruit filled with explosive crackers.

The below photos show the Covid 19 relief work undertaken by the Guwahati Province of the missionary Society of Francis De Sales associated with Rev Thomas Chozhithara and Kadosh Marian Ministries.





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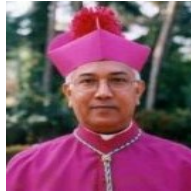
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