

Kadosh Marian Voice

Holiness Firmness Truthfulness Faithfulness



July | August | September 2021 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, the Hebrew meaning of Marian is “the precious one” or “unique from the word” or “Mariam”

Kadosh Marian Ministries is a non-profit organization with its roots across the world. It is also established since 1994 as an approved charitable trust in UK, subsequently in India and New York. Kadosh Marian Ministries obtained approval for the area of operation to include USA, Canada, Europe, Asia, Middle East and Africa with the following objectives: -

- Conducting certificate oriented theological courses duly awarded by Catholic Dioceses, and various international accredited universities.
- Conducting Charismatic Renewal services to revive the trooping spirit of the flagging faithful.
- Administering Sacraments by ordained Catholic Priests and Bishops.
- Promoting devotion to the 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.
- Participating to feed 200 poor people daily.
- Participating to provide pension to 75 widows monthly.
- Participating to provide scholarship for 302 children annually.
- Visiting refugee camps and providing food, clothes and medicines.
- Contributing to build five homes for poor families in a year minimum.

We welcome you to join 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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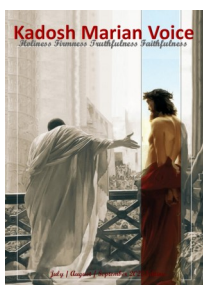
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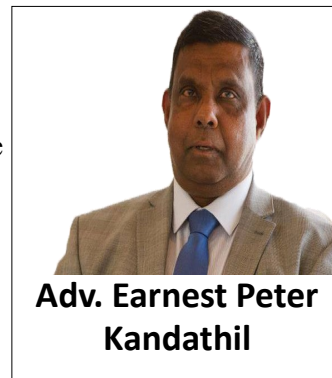


The cover page depicts the presence of Jesus Christ in the midst of Sufferings... Jesus’ response to suffering is an example for us to follow...

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This edition covers the months of July, August and September of Kadosh Marian Voice within which I would like to deal with the concept of “Suffering ”in this issue.

The word sufferings could be defined as: serious pain which someone feels in the body or in the mind. Its synonyms are: *pain, torture, distress, sadness, sorrow, ordeal, misery, agony, torment, hardship, anguish, affliction etc.* Interestingly some grammarians have also included the synonym *martyrdom*. Naturally the one who courts martyrdom is bound to undergo untold anguish and afflictions on account of the cause for which he or she is standing, irrespective of whether the cause is material or spiritual.



**Adv. Earnest Peter
Kandathil**

According to Buddha, who is known as ‘The Enlightened’ there are three kinds of sorrows.

- ◆ The first kind is physical and mental pain from the inevitable stress of life such as birth, old age, sickness, and death.
- ◆ The second is the distress we feel as a result of impermanence and change such as the pain of failing to acquire our aspirations or alternatively losing that which we cherished.
- ◆ Third is existential i.e. suffering the angst of being a human or of living, a conditioned existence or being subject to the rebirth. The root cause of suffering is **Craving** or **Attachment**.

Buddha articulates that cessation of pain and suffering can be achieved by non-passion and termination of that very desire itself. He suggests an eight-fold path to cease pain and misery. Simply put, they are:

- ◆ The right understanding.
- ◆ The right thought.
- ◆ The right speech.
- ◆ The right action.
- ◆ The right livelihood.
- ◆ The right effort.
- ◆ The right memory
- ◆ The right mindfulness.

These are basic tips from human perspective - after all Buddha himself was human - a homo sapiens.

The problem of suffering and pain has remained as a paramount challenge in the thinking mind. The challenge which ‘old-age problems’ presents is expressed in through words: *“The dilemma of Epicures is still with us. If God wishes to prevent evil but cannot then he is impotent. If He could, but will not, He is malevolent. If He has both power and the will, whence then is the evil.”*

The origin of sufferings is traceable to our first parents, Adam and Eve. They disbelieved and disobeyed their Creator and on the other hand, they believed and obeyed the Satan, despite specific instructions not to eat the forbidden fruit. Thus, the sin crept in and consequently led the path to sufferings. We need not completely rule out the old maxim: *‘The fathers have eaten unripe grapes; the children’s teeth are set on edge.’* This is to certain extent justifiable with Adam and Eve, though the concept is very much disputed by the scholars.

Although it is a digression, I would like to go back to a story attributed to Buddha, according to whom each person has four wives or four husbands.

Once there was a man who had four wives. In ancient times in India a social system prevailed one to have many wives. The Indian in question, towards the evening of his life, fell ill and was nearing his death. He felt very lonely and he asked his first wife to accompany him to the other world. He expected a positive response as she was the first in every respect. But to his utter disappointment, she flatly declined.

He then asked his second wife at his sick bed to follow him to the other world. The second wife also, to his dismay, gave a negative answer.

Disappointingly he approached his third wife and made the same request. Though she did not decline, she

agreed to accompany him up to the graveyard as she admitted that this was her last duty to the dying man. Again, he was left saddened at the rejection of his third wife.

Finally, with low expectations, he made a similar request to his fourth wife. She on the other hand, reminded him that though she had been treated very badly, she will follow him not only to the grave but even beyond it. The interpretation of this story is as follows:

The first wife is our body which we look after invariably - caring, nurturing and providing all the necessary comforts. The second wife is fame, fortune, possession and position which we must leave behind the frontiers. The third wife is our relations, friends and families. They would follow us with sobs and sighs- but only up to the grave yard and not beyond. As for the fourth, it is our mind or consciousness. When we observe that our anger, greed, dissatisfaction, commission and omission are the direct result of karma which we committed whilst on earth, we will have to invariably face its consequences by rebirth for the reparation of our sins and thus to suffer again.

But the point to note here is that the above-mentioned concept is fundamentally opposite to Christian belief. We read in the scripture that a prodigal son who repented has been forgiven by our heavenly Father. We also know that the thief on the cross prayed to Jesus: *“Remember me while you enter into your kingdom”*. The immediate response from the Lord was *“Today you will be with me in paradise.”* The response of Jesus was in the affirmative.

Thus, all the sins are forgiven. All the iniquities are washed away. No consequences are therefore attributable to Karma.

I knew a few non-Christians who believed that faith in Jesus is a passport to paradise, a panacea for our pain and a deletion of all residual sufferings emanating from past karma. Faith in the Lord is, according to them, not a blind leap, but an intelligent choice and a self-commitment to a guaranteed way of redemption and salvation.

Let us discuss this matter more in the light of the biblical context.

- ◆ Suffering is to discipline (Hos 10.10).
- ◆ Suffering is to instruct (PS 2.9 to 12).
- ◆ Suffering is to chasten (Jer 6.8).
- ◆ suffering is to humiliate (Num 24.24)
- ◆ and to be afflicted (PS 107.17 to 20)

Jesus presents no formula relating to the why and of its origin. He presented a way of **victory** in the face of suffering and He lived in triumph in the midst of it. The well-known secret of His triumph was His identification with the will of the Father through suffering. His submissive identification to the will of the Father enables him to handle the thorns of life in triumph rather than extract them.

If the breach with God can be healed, then no other discord under the sun can remain unresolved. The final solution of a mystery of pain which reverberates along every rim of the universe is reconciliation with God. The triumph of this oneness with the Lord brings with the realisation that all things work together for the good of the people who are guided and protected by the Lord.

In the Christian message we find the unveiling of a **‘Suffering God’**. The Cross, upon which the Lord hang, is the Christian apologetic, the sublime and majestic vision. It is in this cross that sufferings of this World have undergone a transmutation from pessimism to optimism; from confusion to clarity; from despair to hope; from unreality to reality and from death to life. It is in this Cross (+) that the wrong is righted (man and God reconciled vertically & man to man horizontally). It is in this Cross through which sin is cancelled out for ever and sufferings suspended.

Let us behold the man on the Cross- A theanthropic, undergoing agony, shedding blood vicariously for the sake of the world. Mankind ought to know the **‘Suffering God’** and it is our Christian duty to make it known to others about Him, and during the process, we ourselves become his true disciples. To propagate this fact of faith to the world is our burden and this yoke is obviously light and sweet. We should remember *‘Woe to me if I don’t preach the gospel’* for the kingdom of God is close at hand.

Let us ardently pray: Lord Jesus, return with pomp and power to establish a New Jerusalem -the City of Peace- the City of Heaven on Earth, so that the sufferings will disappear upon the dawn of salvific grace, sanctity and sanguinity.

Let us therefore earnestly hope and wait for the Parousia.



WHY SHOULD WE RESPECT OUR PARENTS?

Do we need it for our Eternal life?



Msgr Vincent S. D'Cruz (MA, M.Th, LLB)

Vicar General of Punalur Dioceses.
Chairman Board of Examiners, Kadosh Marian Institute of Theology

In the light of the fourth commandment of God (from the Decalogue) - our parents are to be honoured because they are God's representatives upon earth and great benefactors. The commandment means and includes that we have to honour both the ecclesiastical and civil authorities too. We are all children of the heavenly Father; He causes us to be nourished and reared up by our earthly parents. Thus the parents take the place of God with regard to the growth, education and development of the children. Parents are God's ambassadors and therefore the respect and honour due to God must be paid to the parents as well. Those who despise their parents, despise none other than God Himself. In the life of great philosopher and saint, Augustine, after his conversion bitterly regretted over the disrespect, he had shown to his mother, God had given

him, realising that he had shown disrespect not only to his mother Monica but also to God. Our parents are more over our greatest benefactors and well-wishers. The Son of God Himself honoured his Mother and His foster father. It is said of Him that He was subject to them. Jesus is the best example for us to honour our parents.

We ought to honour our parents, He commands us to love and obey them with respectful behaviour, vindicating love and obedience in words and deeds. Parents provide for our earthly needs such as food, clothing, and shelter; nursing us whilst sick and schooling us and doing everything possible for the growth and development of our personality. As a result, we the children, are bound to have a right orientation and a sound foothold in

life to earn our daily bread and butter without being a liability to others and on the other hand, being helpful to others in their necessities. All these achievements are attributable to sacrifices done by parents who have neglected their own comfort and convenience for the sake of their children's welfare. The children in turn have to compensate their parents by taking care of them in their old age, making them happy and enabling them to feel a sense of pride about their children's achievements, often gratefully thanking God for the will and strength given to them for the successful accomplishment of the task God has entrusted to them. The parents will have the satisfaction of having multiplied all the talents God has given them as faithful steward

How to demonstrate respect to our parents:



It consists of holding the parents in high esteem in our hearts as God's representatives and manifesting the esteem outwardly by words and deeds. Esteem for our parents must be authentic and it should emanate from the core of our heart. We see in the Gospel, Christ showed great respect for His mother at the marriage feast at Cana by revealing his first miracle. We must honour our parents whatever be the status of parents—economically, socially or otherwise. In OT we read that when, Joseph, was governor of Egypt, he showed great respect to his aged father Jacob. Although he was only a shepherd he brought him to the king and presented him before the king (Gen 47:7). King Solomon rose in obeisance from his throne to meet his Mother, although she was not the crowned queen- mother - he bowed to her and made her sit in his right hand. Pope Benedict XI received his mother with a warm welcome, in the most dignified and affectionate manner, when she visited him. Though she was only an ordinary servant in a humble milieu.

Even if parents do not lead a virtuous life, they still have a claim upon the respect of the children. Because of the position they hold, they regard themselves as God's representatives. The wise man says, 'Honour your father in word and deed in all

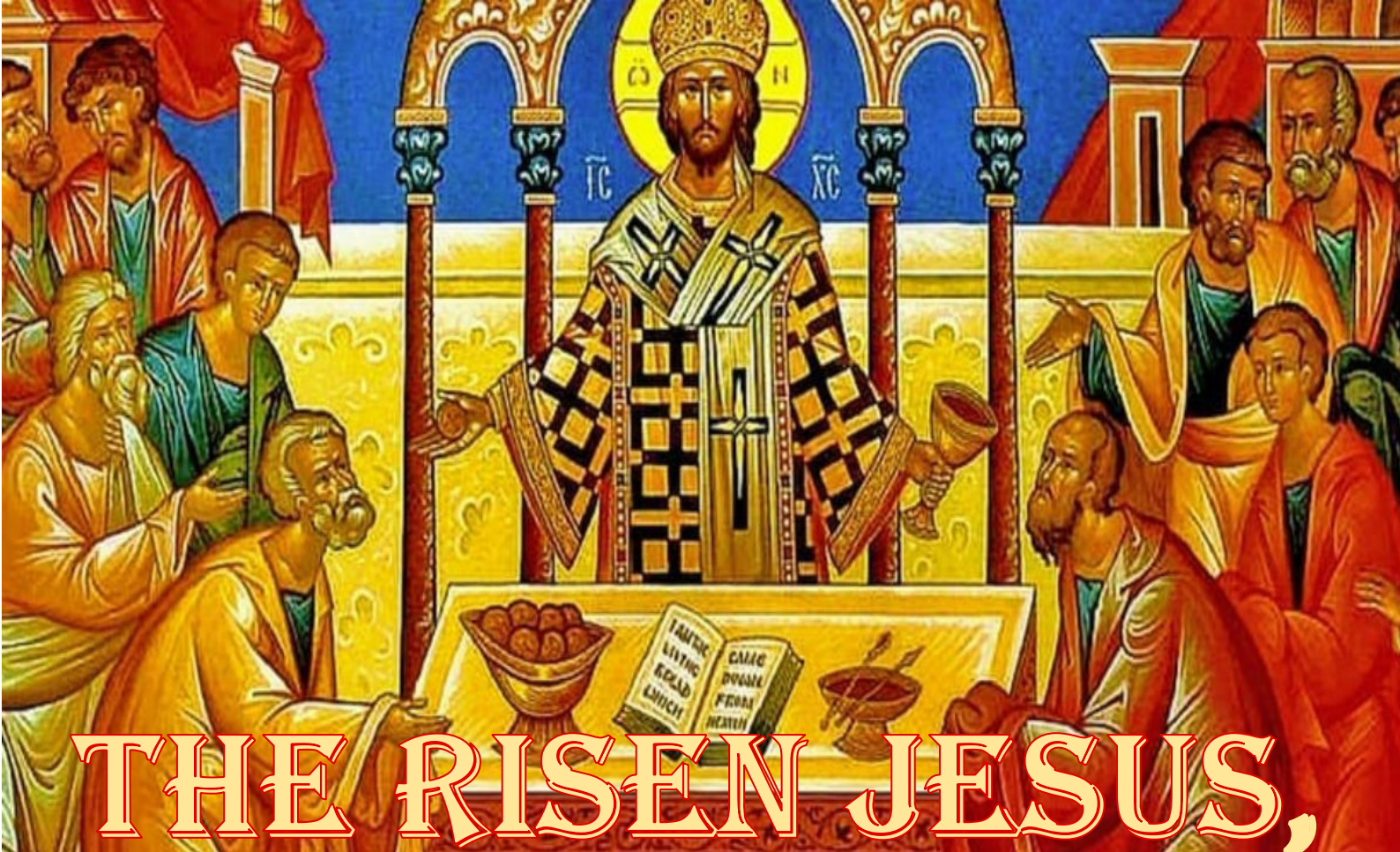
patience, we should share and consider with kind feelings and kind actions. Parents have a special right to have affection shown to them by us. They loved us entirely to make us grow and reach us to the present position and possession in this material world. Love consists in all kinds of sentiments and generous actions towards them. Joseph showed his affection to his old father, he fell on his neck and embracing him, he wept. We too have to love them in this world (1Jn. 3:18). We have to rescue our parents from destitution and from sickness and we need to pray for them.

When St. Thomas More had been put to death for the faith by the order of King Henry VIII of England, no one dared to bury his mortal remains. His daughter, Margret, alone had the mettle to inter his mortal remains. Giving due respect to her filial devotion towards her father, no one dared to interfere with her legitimate right to bury the dead. Even among the lower animals, we find examples of affection towards parents. The young lions share their prey with their old. The wise man say, "on support the old age of thy parents" (Ecc. 3:18). Remember, how our Lord on the cross provided for his Mother by entrusting her to the care of St. John (Jn.19:26). In short, children, you obey your parents in all things (Col 3: 20). From these examples we must make sure that we need to respect our parents for us to inherit eternal life.

From a practical point of view we should bear in mind that the children are looking forward to learning from you as their parents as to what are you doing towards to your own parents. If you are good to your parents, your children in turn are bound to be good to you. Your sacrifices will have its own rewards when your turn comes. You will certainly reap what you have sown.

Let us finally learn, particularly the children, a caveat in the proverb (30.17): "the eye which looks jeeringly on father, and scorns the obedience due to a mother, will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley and eaten by the vultures." It is therefore imperative that we deliberately modify our character, conduct and attitude towards our parents to avert a scenario of disastrous consequences. A sound educational system with Christian norms will cultivate a suitable atmosphere to inculcate in the minds of the children the values which will stand as columns to support the society. Thus these values will act as life boat in a rough sea of tumultuous life here on earth.





THE RISEN JESUS, THE KING OF THE UNIVERSE

This article is a humble attempt to prove the kingship of Jesus Christ. Pope Pius XI instituted this feast of Christ the King in 1925 for the Universal Church in his encyclical “QUAS PRIMAS”. It is a response to the growing secularization of the world. This feast reminds us that while the Government and Political parties come and go Jesus Christ reigns as King forever. Pope Pius XI believed in the institution of this feast would have the following effects.

That the nations would see that the church has the right to freedom and immunity from the state (Quas Primas, 32).

That the leaders would see that they are bound to give respect to Christ (Quas Primas,31)

That the faithful would gain strength and courage from the celebration of the feast, as we are reminded that Jesus Christ must reign in our hearts, minds, wills and bodies (Quas Primas,33)

Is Jesus Christ a King ? Answer to this question could be ‘Yes and No’. In Holy Bible especially in the New Testament, in three places it is mentioned that Christ expresses diverse reactions to people who plan to make him a King. Primarily, on the occasion of the multiplication of the bread people wanted to make him a King and Jesus so



Rev. Fr Joseph Xavier

dramatically moves away from the place. Secondly, the disciples so cheerfully welcomed Christ to Jerusalem shouting at the top of their voice “HOSANA. BLESSED IS THE KING OF ISRAEL”. Jesus did not respond positively to the overwhelming enthusiasms of his disciples. Thirdly when Pilot asked Jesus: If you are the King of Jews? Tell me that. Jesus answers him ‘You are saying so’. In this way Jesus places Pilot in a dilemma. On the other hand, it is reported in the Bible that Jesus does not deny that he is a king.

- (1) One of the gifts brought by the wise men from the east was GOLD. It represents the Kingship of Jesus.
- (2) As Jesus goes to a Pharisee’s house to dine, a woman came there and anointed him with a costly perfume. Jesus did not show any resistance to the action.

(3) One of the thieves hanging at the side of Jesus at Calvary says: Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom. Jesus so joyfully replied by promising that ‘today you will be with me in paradise. It shows that Jesus is a king and has a kingdom. Thus Jesus indirectly conveys that He is the King. On the analysis of these events, we come to the following conclusions about the Kingship of Jesus.

The peculiarity of the Kingship of Jesus is that he does not make any compromise with worldly principles and standards. After having adored the child Jesus, the three wise men from the east took another way to reach their places. After encountering Jesus, the eternal truth, they did not want to encounter King Herod, the falsehood. After having touched Jesus, the life, they did not want to shake hand with King Herod, the symbol of death and destruction. In short they did not want to compromise between ‘life and death’, ‘truth and falsehood’, ‘darkness and light’ simultaneously. Therefore, one cannot be called a King if one says I wanted to become both Jesus and Herod at the same time.

Another specialty of the Kingship of Jesus is that He is not moved by the whims and fancies of His disciples and His followers. He is not bothered about the views, comments, reactions and recommendations of others. Jesus is always faithful to the commandments of His Father in heaven and as

a result he could demonstrate mercy, compassion and kindness to His subjects in times of their need.

Finally, Jesus is always aware and confident of his Kingship and His reign. Jesus as a King and ruler in the spiritual world stands as a reminder to the totalitarian governments of Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin that Jesus Christ is the only sovereign King. Although, emperors and kings now exist mostly in history books and tombs, we still honour Christ the King as the King of Universe, enthroning Jesus in our hearts, surrendering our lives to God.

As a conclusion we have to recognize and appreciate Christ’s presence within us and surrender our lives to Christ’s rule by showing kindness, mercy, compassion and forgiving love with our fellow beings around us. Since Christ was a serving King we are invited to be his loyal citizens by rendering humble service to others, We are called to exercise our authority and powers in public and private realms according to the vision, attitude and example of Christ the King by bearing witness to Him. We need to accept Christ as the King of Love, who came to proclaim the good news of God’s love and salvation, gave us His new commandment of Love: “Love one another as I have loved you “(Jn 13:34), and demonstrated that love sacrificially by dying on the cross at Calvary which is the greatest glory and this manifestation of Christ, the King, is thus different from all sovereigns and rulers of the material world.



A Prayer to Christ the King

**O Jesus Christ,
I acknowledge You as universal King.
All that has been made,
has been created for You and by You.
Exercise all Your rights over me.
I renew my Baptismal Vows.
I renounce Satan, his pomp, and his works,
I promise to live as a good Christian.
And, in particular do I Pledge myself
to labour, to the best of my ability,
For the triumph of the right of God
and of Your Church.
Divine Heart of Jesus,
to You do I offer my poor services,
labouring that all hearts
may acknowledge Your sacred Kingship
and that thus, the reign of Your peace,
be established throughout the
whole universe
Amen**



25th Year Anniversary

Rev. Dr Laurence Culas

Hearty facilitations to you, the jubilarian, our beloved Rev Dr Laurence Culas on your silver jubilee year of priesthood.

We are delighted to note that you are an ideal bridge- builder and a true model, a great teacher using your talents for the glory of God.

May the Almighty God bestow upon you the unfathomable riches of Christ to continue to work in the vineyard of the Lord.

Kadosh Marian Ministries - Patrons, Chancellor, Director Board Members and Students

Long 25 years as a priest! Cannot imagine that time has passed so fast. Looking back to 25 years of priestly life, certainly, at the outset, a sentiment of gratitude fills my heart. Then, what lingers in mind is how I desire to live my pastoral life. Finally, what I cherish is a people-centred church.

Gratitude



Priesthood is a joyous experience. Jesus desired that priestly life has to be joyous. So he said after washing of the feet, “These things I have spoken to you that my joy be in you and that your joy may be full” (John 15:11). I experienced this joy mainly in prayer, while celebrating the sacraments, especially Eucharist and Confession and very significantly in the love and care of the people. This continuous joy is, undoubtedly, God’s grace and I am indebted to this surprising grace.

Priestly life is sustained by God’s providential care. I trust in God’s providential care. “He knows when I sit and I rise up. He discerns my thoughts from afar. He searches out my path and my lying down and is acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue he knows it altogether. He besets me behind and before and lays his hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain it” (Ps 139:2-6). I bow my head before God-given care.

Priestly life is full of opportunities. I remain indebted to various openings or prospects that have come on my way. The opening to specialize in Biblical Theology remains a turning point. Research at Saint Peter’s Pontifical Institute, Bangalore and Institute Catholique de Toulouse, France, has been moments of grace, God’s providence. God has opened an awesome opportunity to move closer to his treasure of revelation, increasing my desire for the Word of God. God’s graciousness is upon me. I bless his name.

Priestly life became more meaningful because of closer collaboration with people and associations. Collaboration in an alternative ministry – assisting in the education of poor children – enables me to connect with a group of like-minded people. Alliance with Catholic Biblical Association of India (CBAI) and Society for Biblical Studies in India (SBSI) assists in acquiring biblical knowledge. Teamwork with Catholic Priests Conference of India (CPCI) empowers me to think and act differently. I am grateful to all my collaborators.

Priesthood is full of surprises. Having specialized in Biblical Theology I had an aspiration to help others to understand the pages of Sacred Scripture. Soon after the studies I received surprising invitations. First call came from Bodhi Institute of Theology, Tillery, Kollam. Then a couple of women religious formation houses gave an unexpected offer to teach. Founding of Bible and Theology Schools in the Archdiocese was yet another surprise to enlighten the laity with secrets of Bible. And the latest surprise in the academic field is the invitation from Kadosh Marian Institute of Theology. I am greatly indebted to the chiefs of these institutes and centres for providing me the chance to update biblical knowledge.

The greatest surprise in my priestly life was the opening to involve in the national level. Appointment as the Executive Secretary of CCBI Commission for Catechetics paved the way for national level engagement. Working with the National Catechetical Resource Team to bring out the *National Catechetical Directory* and organize National Seminars was indeed a challenging task. Collaboration with the CCBI Resource Team to realize the *National Pastoral Plan* was another momentous mission. Assisting the Diocese of Sambalpur, Odisha, to prepare *10 Year Diocesan Pastoral Plan* was yet added assignment. I remain grateful to all who provided me this abundant prospect to engage in larger level.

Priestly life became most evocative while in parishes as pastor. Though I have limited experience as a pastor this is the greatest feeling I cherish. Love, care and understanding received from the people remain immeasurable. People greatly appreciate the good work done; they deeply understand human limitations; they express profound trust. People’s expectations from a pastor are high: a spiritual lead-

er, a role-model, a people-oriented person, an available person, tender and merciful one. I am really grateful to the faithful of the parishes where I rendered service as pastor.

Pastoral Life

Reflecting about pastoral life I ask myself, is it pos-



sible to adapt a new way of being a pastor. Echoes in the book, *With the Smell of the Sheep: The Pope Speaks to Priests, Bishops and Other Shepherds*, edited by Guiseppe Merola (TPI, Bangalore, (2018), gives plenty of insights on what it means to be a pastor. Pope Francis, through his speeches to the pastors, puts forward various thoughts on ‘new way of being a pastor.

First and foremost, to realize idea of new way of being a pastor, I must depict *pastoral proximity* or *pastoral availability*. Being a pastor means I become available for everyone in order to be close to them. Secondly, I need to become aware of my *pastoral joy*. The Lord anointed me as pastor with the oil of gladness and this anointing invites me to accept and appreciate this greatest gift: the gladness, the joy of being a pastor. Thirdly, new way of being pastor means to remain a *tireless pastor*. I may experience tiredness as I engage in the pastoral ministry. In those moments I must be aware that I never labour in vain because my weariness goes straight to the heart of the Father. Fourthly, to recognize the new way of being the pastor I am invited to show *pastoral mercy*. I need to become a witness and minister of ever-increasing abundance of God’s mercy. Ultimately new way of being a pastor demands the need of bringing the love of Jesus to people where they are.

Vision of the Church



I envision a Church that fosters and promotes laity in pastoral, social, political, economic and educational arenas. To this purpose there need to be a paradigm shift from the present understanding of laity to fundamentally radical ones. The Second Vatican Council’s emphasis on the participatory or collaborative model of church invites me to envision a church that moves *from hierarchical to participatory church*. The comprehension that lay persons are resourceful and full of varied charism (grace or talent from God) compels me to visualize a church that further shifts *from lay participatory to lay leadership church*. It is also possible to foresee a shift *from clergy-centred to people-centred church* through priest-lay collaboration, human resource development of laity through the implementation of the principle of decentralization. As members of the church, the laity has indeed a share in the whole mission of the church. Hence I envisage a church that moves *from priest theologians to lay theologians*. I hope to minister in the church recognizing the indispensable role of the laity in the mission of the church.



Let me conclude personalizing Pope Francis’ words: “Jesus’ love goes before *me*. His look anticipates *my* needs. He sees beyond appearances, beyond sin, beyond failures and unworthiness. He sees beyond *my* rank in society. He sees beyond this, to *my* dignity as *son*, a dignity at times sullied by sin, but one which endures in the depth of *my* soul. He came precisely to seek out all those who feel unworthy of God, unworthy of others.”





Married before God

Role of Prayer in Married life



Rev. Fr Thomas Chozhithara MSFS

**Missionaries of St. Francis De Sales,
Director of Mission Development Office, Rome**

Fr 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.

In Mt. 19: 5-6 “For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

Preliminary Considerations

Marriage is a sacrament that enables a man and woman to come together to found a family and move towards the goal of their life, that is God Himself. In this year of the family, it is important to reflect and study more about the significance of married life and the importance of daily prayers in the families. The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines, marriage as a “covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, it is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of off-

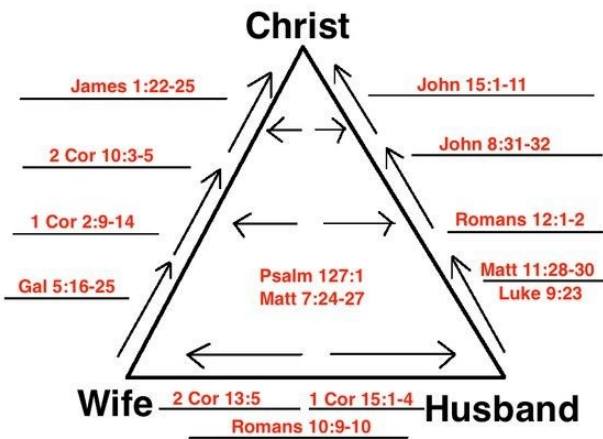
spring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament” (CCC 1601).

Traditionally, prayer is considered as a conversation with God, in which man opens up himself to God and God reveals Himself to man. For St. Therese of Lisieux, prayer is “an outburst from the heart; it is a simple glance darted upwards to Heaven; it is a cry of gratitude and love in the midst of trial as in the midst of joy! In a word, it is something exalted, supernatural, which dilates the soul and unites it to God.”¹ Prayer allows daily and regular communication between man and God in which man is made capable of being blessed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Marriage is based on conjugal love which is a result of an intimate relationship. Prayer is also based on an intimate relationship between man and God. Thus we can conclude that prayer -life intensifies

the relationship between the couple and with God and this teamwork empowers the married couples not only to resist the temptations of the world but also to live a life of holiness fulfilling their responsibilities as parents and members of the family.

“Three to Get Married”



Christian marriage is not merely a contract of convenience between a man and woman. It is rather a covenant of conjugal love between the man and the woman before God. It means, that the indwelling presence of the Trinitarian God is an essential element of the sacrament of marriage. According to Ven. Bp. Fulton J. Sheen, “Love of self, love of neighbour, and love of God go together and when separated fall apart.... In authentic love, the other is accepted not as a god, but as a gift of God. As a gift of God, the other is unique and irreplaceable, a sacred trust, a mission to be fulfilled.”²

When a man and woman, two imperfect persons, decide to marry each other and live together as a family, if they do not bring in God in their life of marriage, it can break up as a result of their egoism and other weaknesses. It is because, the world of today is so much obsessed with the powers of secularism, materialism, and relativism, which tempt people to live as if there is no God. Marriage covenant implies mutual self-giving of the couple, two become one. Such a generous mutual self-giving can be made possible only if they base their life on Christ the Saviour, who gave himself for the salvation of all. With a good prayer life, they will be able to overcome all the challenges and temptations of today’s world. If a family is centered on Christ, he will unify and illumine its entire life. Moments of pain and difficulty will be experienced in union with the Lord’s cross, and his closeness will make it possible to surmount them. In the darkest hours of a family’s life, union with Jesus in his abandonment can help avoid a breakup. Gradually, “with the grace of the Holy Spirit, [the spouses] grow in

holiness through married life, also by sharing in the mystery of Christ’s cross, which transforms difficulties and sufferings into an offering of love.”³

Impact of Prayer on the Relationship between the Couple

A good prayer life enables the couple to be aware of their own identity as human beings, as created images of God who are loved by Him and this is the basis of their dignity as human persons. This leads to consequences for the relationship:

Respect - It is related to the virtue of chastity. When respect is lacking in a relationship it is close to a shipwreck. If God is present in their lives, who is the foundation for respect, it is easier to respect each other. It also includes respect for other persons.

Forgiveness - Only God is perfect and only He can make us perfect. Therefore, the couple should forgive one another, and others, as it is closely linked to belief in God.

Reverence - It emphasizes greatness and holiness in the other.

Goodness - “No one is good but God alone.” (Mk. 10:18). God is the source of all goodness and whenever He is present in matrimony goodwill is more easily spread.

Humility - When whoever considers himself a creature will be more easily inclined to humility. Thomas. A. Kempis, in the 7th Chapter of Imitation of Christ, exhorts that, “Do not think of yourself as better than others, do not take pride in good deeds because God’s judgment differs from those of men and what pleases them often displeases Him...it does no harm to esteem yourself less than everyone else but it is harmful to think of yourself as better than even one.”⁴

Praying Together in the Family

Pope John Paul II narrates the characteristic qualities of family prayer. “It is a prayer offered in common, husband and wife together, parents and children together, Joys and sorrows, hopes and disappointments, births and birthday celebrations, wedding anniversaries of the parents, departures, separations, and homecomings, important and far-reaching decisions, the death of those who are dear, etc.-all of these mark God’s loving intervention in the family’s history. They should be seen as suitable moments for thanksgiving, for petition, for trusting abandonment of the family into the hands of their common Father in heaven. The dignity and responsibility of the Christian family as the domestic Church can be achieved only with God’s unceasing aid, which will surely be granted if it is humbly and trustingly petitioned in prayer.”⁵

The first means to assure God’s presence in mar-

riage and family is prayer. Prayer is a kind of seismograph indicating if God is present in a family. It is necessary for living a life of conjugal chastity, to live Christian virtues, and to pursue a Christian vocation. Prayer life strengthens the bond of love and friendship in the family, and enables them to stay together even amidst adversities. There is a popular saying, “Those who pray together stay together.”

Preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage

Sacraments are effective signs instituted by Christ of an invisible and real presence of His grace. At the celebration of marriage, the Lord is present and blesses the union. As a result, the fruits of their marriage will build up the Church. To live marriage as a sacrament means to recognize the primacy of God. When the couple received the sacrament of marriage, they are being consecrated by God to begin a new path of holiness together. Vatican II teaches that “therefore Christian spouses have a special sacrament by which they are fortified and receive a kind of consecration in the duties and dignity of their state. By virtue of this sacrament the spouses fulfill family and conjugal obligation, are penetrated with Spirit of Christ...advance the perfection of own personalities as well as mutual sanctification...to the glory of God.”⁶ As stated already, marriage is not merely a coming together or living together of two persons. It is a sacrament that leads to found a family life. To reap the fruits of this sacrament, and live a life of holiness in abundance, the persons who want to receive this sacrament require adequate preparation, not only spiritual but also human, formation of character, of virtues and values, of prayer life, of responsible attitudes, of an understanding of faithfulness and love.

This process of preparation or formation begins in childhood in the family. It is the responsibility

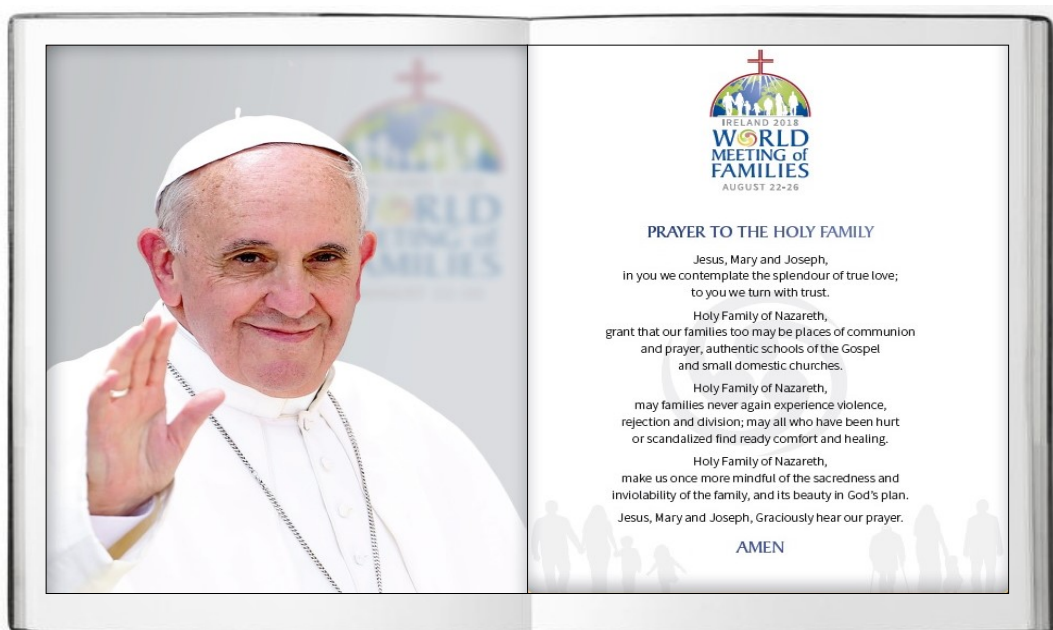
of the parents to form the conscience of the children based on the Word of God and the teachings of the Church. They should learn also the psychosocial dynamics of human relationships. If they fail to accept the strengths and weaknesses of each other, the building of a peaceful and joyful family will remain an unreachable ideal. Physical, psychological, or spiritual ailments can pop up among the family members. The couple should take these as challenges and seek the counsel of the professionals for treatment and care. Hiding such challenges under the pretext of divine providence may aggravate the situation.

Effects of Prayer in Family life

St. Thomas Aquinas teaches that charity is friendship with God (Prayer is also friendship with God) and the internal effects of charity are peace, joy, and mercy. The external effects of charity are beneficence, alms deeds, and fraternal correction.⁷ This leads us to the conclusion that a family that prays regularly is made capable of experiencing the healing and empowering presence of God in their lives. This will enable them to remain faithful to their call as a married couple to pursue the path to eternal beatitude for which they are created.

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How can we understand The Holy Trinity?

The Trinity is a lofty mystery and it is incomprehensible to a secular person. And, perhaps for this reason, it leaves him/her quite indifferent. Yet, it is the fundamental spiritual truth of Christianity – lived and taught by Jesus Christ. Christianity revolves around the Trinity and a Christian’s life is oriented towards the Trinity. For example, one becomes Christian by Baptism and is baptised “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” A religious Christian usually begins his day with the sign of the cross uttering “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” and in doing so, he believes that the divine Trinity will give him peace and strength, so that, it would be easier for him to pass the day, with various actions in righteousness and truth.



Rev. Fr Don Raphael Saji George

Assisi, Italy

Also, the church prayers and even the Holy Mass begin with the invocation of the Holy Trinity, i.e. “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

Trinity means that we believe in one God who is the embodiment of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

it. That means we have a God, in whom there are three Persons - perfectly distinct from each other, but all of them have the same and identical substance. Yes, there are three persons in the Trinity; however, there is only one God. Let's further understand with the help of an analogy, for it is not easy to understand spiritual mysteries without the Grace of God! Perhaps we can explain this concept of trinity, like the way it is done for children, by using the example of the clover leaf. The clover is a single leaf but with three faces. All three facades of the clover have the same colour and the same substance. In spite of its three facades, it is a single Leaf. With this example, children have a general idea of the Holy Trinity, but a secular adult, may look for more clarity and logic. And, St. Augustine was no exception.

Once saint Augustine was in a similar situation. Most of us know St. Augustine was a secular person, who turned into a great saint of the 5th century, a great philosopher and theologian. He has written many brick-books on theology and philosophy. He wrote one on the mystery of the Trinity and it is named *De Trinitate*. But, St. Augustine confesses that he himself did not fully understand the mystery of the Trinity and narrates an episode:

One day he was walking along a beach, meditating on the Mystery of the Trinity. Then St. Augustine saw a Child, who was taking with a bucket the water from the sea and pouring it into a small hole. The Saint asked him what he was doing and the child told him that he wanted to pour all the sea into the hole. Augustine exclaimed: "How can you think of enclosing the sea, which is so big, in a hole that is so small?" The child, surprisingly, replied: "And how can you think of understanding God, who is infinite, with your mind, which is so limited?" After telling that, the child disappeared! The words of the mysterious child kept echoing "Augustine, Augustine what are you looking for? Do you think you can put all the sea in your ship?"

We can understand the Trinity, using symbols. For example, we can imagine the Holy Trinity as a simple dove as it has two wings and a body. When the two wings work in perfect harmony the whole dove flies high. In God there is perfect harmony, and the perfect relationship between the three persons has only one substance. And if we think Mathematically $1+1+1=3$ and similarly Father, Son and Holy Spirit should be three God.

But we know there is only One God and it is also mathematically demonstrable. It is obvious by multiplication and the formula is $1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$. In the Trinity, no Person is above the other Person; they are not added one above another as in the addition formula but, they exist for one another in love. We also know well, that love eradicates every difference. For example, in the book of Matthew 19:6 "So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate". And, it becomes natural for God to be One,



because "God is Love" (1G v 4, 16).

Every man is also created in the image and likeness of the Trinity, and for that very reason we can finally understand why we feel good when we are in company with others who love us. In the same way, we can also understand why we feel bad and moody when we are in solitude. We read in the book of Genesis that the Lord God said, "it is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Hence we are made for relations and we are also called to love one another. The Trinity is our profound nature and our divine origin. And that is why Jesus prayed "so that they may be one as we are one" (Gv 17, 11). To be one we need to live in unity - to build peace - to promote the dignity of all - to be the great human family of the Body of Christ, members made for one another.

This is an ancient prayer of the Church - the act of faith, which every faithful person should rediscover - It is prayed like this: "My God, because you are the infallible truth, I firmly believe everything you have revealed, and the holy Church proposes us to believe. I believe in you, the only true God in three equal and distinct persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - The Father is my hope. The Son is my refuge. The Holy Spirit is my protector.





Educational outreach programme for the less fortunate tribal children in the villages of Bara Durgapur despite the Covid 19 Pandemic

The dreaded Covid 19 Pandemic has traumatized the whole world, without exception. Humans are the worst sufferers and there is no end to the misery in sight. As is always the case, the economically poor are always the victims of all kinds of calamities, natural or manmade!

In Jharkhand, during the Pandemic last year, it was not positive cases of Corona virus, or deaths that affected, but the rising poverty due to the Economic Crises attributable to the spread of corona in the global village.

The Bara Durgapur Mission is surrounded by poor Santhal and Paharia Tribal Brethren and other poor

Rev. Fr K.V. Joseph msfs
*Mission In-Charge,
On behalf of the Mission Team
at Bara Durgapur*



Brethren belonging to different traditional background. From the time Corona entered India, our Mission at Bara Durgapur has been at the service of the needy in and around our Mission, irrespective of cast, creed and religion. We have been privileged to be instruments for the Lord to get in to the mar-

ginalised, downtrodden and voiceless people in this area.

We, the Bara Durgapur Mission Team, consisting of MSFS fathers and brother (Missionaries of St Francis De Sales) and CSC sisters (Congregation of the Sisters of Charity) began our “Covid 19 - outreach Ministry” on 21st March 2020, by taking the **Blessed Sacrament**, the **Holy Statue of our Blessed Mother** and the **Holy Water**, in a prepared vehicle, through our Mission Territory, covering 58 Villages / Tolas of our **Santhal** and **Paharia Tribal** Communities. We recited the holy rosary all through our spiritual journey which lasted 6 hours and 20 minutes. We made it a point to stop at all the villages, in the main open space of the village, to make a prayer and to bless the entire village from there, with the **Blessed Sacrament** and **Holy Water**, in the presence of our **HOLY MOTHER**. Thus, we have interceded with God and our Blessed Mother to block the way for the Virus to enter the Territory. Since then no positive cases or deaths have been reported from our territory.



Our services were in various levels: -

- Supplying of prepared food to the hungry
- Providing Nutritious meal to the children
- Essential commodities to 2400 + families in 58 villages
- Outreach Education program to our 450 of 640 school children under the trees in their villages
- Free Text books with bags to those who could not afford to buy them.
- Free education to those children who were planning to discontinue due to financial crisis
- Christmas gift- Warm cloths to all our School

Children to keep them protected from the extreme cold.

During this pandemic period, in the initial stage, we could reach out to more than 2400 families, giving them a kit, each containing the necessary commodities like Rice, Cooking Oil, Masala, Dall, Salt, Onions, Potatoes and other necessary essentials. All these were possible through the timely contribution of some generous benefactors from India and abroad through NFC Nagpur.



Now, for the past ten months we have been organizing classes for the children under the trees in the villages, as online classes are not possible in this remotest village where people can't afford to have even ordinary mobile phones. We have taken this step to go to villages and teach the students, lest they fall behind in education or get deviated during this pandemic period. We have chosen 15 villages, where the students of 2 neighbouring villages can join every designated village. So, out of the total 627 tribal children of our School who are from 58 villages, some 420 to 435 were attending the regular classes in the selected 15 villages. From our SFS High School, animating and Organising team, consisting of 14 teachers, 9 teachers are engaged in the “Classes under the Trees in the Villages”. The teachers (gents) go on motor bikes through the hills and valleys to far away villages; the Lady teachers go on foot to other villages which are 2 to 3 kms from their homes. And we are happy to say that some School children belonging to government

Schools also come and attend the classes which are conducted under the trees.

Most of the students were unable to continue with their studies as their parents could not meet



the needs of their children for their studies like paying the nominal fee, buying copy books, text books, bags and other stationary items needed for the education. As we started helping them with the above necessities, the number of the children gradually increased in the groups, under the trees in all the 15 villages.

The 8th and 9th classes are held in the School class rooms as it was permitted by the Government. Those students, of the above said class, whose villages are far, are accommodated in our hostel and are cared freely, so that they too could attend the class and study well, spending more time. Their School exams are over but waiting to get the time table for the board exams, pending fixation of scheduled dates. There is a possibility of cancelling the board exams and alternatively there may be a prospect of “all promotion for all”.



We conducted one terminal exam and the annual exams, besides the occasional unit tests in all the villages under the trees. Children had no complaints to sit on the ground on a piece of sack or on a mat according to each one’s capacity. Witnessing this kind of education system in the present pandemic situation, the parents of those children who were admitted in the government schools, incident to admit them in our SFS School, as nothing is happening in the nearby government Schools which are up to 4th or 8th classes. The response of these parents are clear indication of their sense of commitment towards their children to provide good education as well as true appreciation of our services in the field of education in this missionary outreach

Thanks a lot, to the MDO Director, Rev. Fr Thomas Chozhithara msfs for the timely financial help from MDO, Rome for this very important and needed outreach programme to mould the less fortunate tribal children in the remotest villages. May God continue to bless our needy tribal children through organisations, families and individuals.

We assure our sincere prayers for all those who are concerned about our tribal children’s future. In a very special way, I thank Kadosh Marian Ministry President and Members for their generous donations for the Lodging and Boarding of 25 Girls for this academic year.

May God bless all our generous benefactors and all their endeavours.

Amen





Rev. Fr Vijeesh P. Dennis

SIMPLE FAITH

What is the best quality you like in Jesus? Is it His personality, capacity to perform miracles, His way of talk that shut the mouths of the opponents and attracted the hearts of simple people?

The majority of Jesus' followers in His time were in any of these categories. They all ran away from Him in His time of trial and suffering. A very few followed him attracted to His holiness and faithfulness to His heavenly Father. They remained even after the cross. The day of Pentecost rejuvenated the Apostles and they rushed to preach the living Christ. There occurred a transformation in their faith when they really experienced Christ through the Holy Spirit. They witnessed Christ through their life, to the extent of martyrdom.

Is faith everything? Is faith alone enough? Here I go along with St James who demanded both faith and action as the two wings of a bird. Faith can be divided into two in a general sense as simple and

complex faith.

Simple Faith

Simple faith is the faith of our parents, grandparents and forefathers. They simply believed without demanding any proof for the existence of God. They might not have gone through any theological books and sophisticated presentations. All that they might have heard were the simple homilies and prayers. St Monica, mother of St Augustine is a better person to be the model of simple faith. She spent her entire life in prayers and tears for her husband and son. She had no time to blame God when God's response was delayed, but spent time before Him and prayed unceasingly with perseverance until it was answered and even thereafter.

I happened to visit a catholic family during my ministry period. Something struck me during the visit was the pictures of Jesus fixed on the walls of

their house. There were plenty of pictures and I could not find there any picture other than the resurrected Christ. I asked them out of curiosity the reason behind the resurrected Christ alone and intimated the need to have a picture of Sacred Heart of Jesus in every catholic family. I thought that it was the ignorance of that person, but he really surprised me with his response. For him Christ is resurrected and needs only the Joy of resurrection. The crucifix disturbs him and the image of sacred Heart of Jesus also reminds him the suffering of Jesus. He doesn't want to see a suffering, but only the victorious Jesus Christ. There was another person I have come across, who goes only to the churches of Infant Jesus. He never goes to his own parish only because it is not dedicated to Infant Jesus. It seems to be funny, but for him Jesus is always an infant. He wants to remain in the joy of Christmas.

I was reminded of St Peter, who expressed his desire to stay back on the Mount Tabor during the transfiguration of Jesus Christ. Peter wanted to be there in the tent of comfort and glory forever. But Jesus was aware of the pain he needs to undergo before a greater glory of resurrection. Therefore, there is no greater glory without pain and suffering. Who am I to question and correct their simple faith? They remain with God in their own circles.

Complex Faith

Today we need proofs for the existence of God. The pandemic situation demands more proofs. In complex faith belief is possible only after proper enquiries and based on the live proofs and witnesses. St Augustine was in search of the mystery of Holy Trinity, because he was not satisfied with the answers and interpretations given by his fellowmen. He encountered that little angel near seashore, who taught him to be simple in his faith. His faith level was not simple as of his mother. He wanted more proofs to believe. Finally he realized that the complex faith may not guide him, but simple. Thereafter, he began to believe to understand. That made him a saint later.

Complex faith is the faith of people who are adamant to know the complete mystery of God to believe. What is wrong in having the desire to know God Completely? There is nothing wrong, but the problem occurs only when the desire of knowing God comes from purely rational realm. God reveals Himself to the people those who really want to know him with their heart. When a person experiences God, it cannot be expressed through the words, but only through life witness.

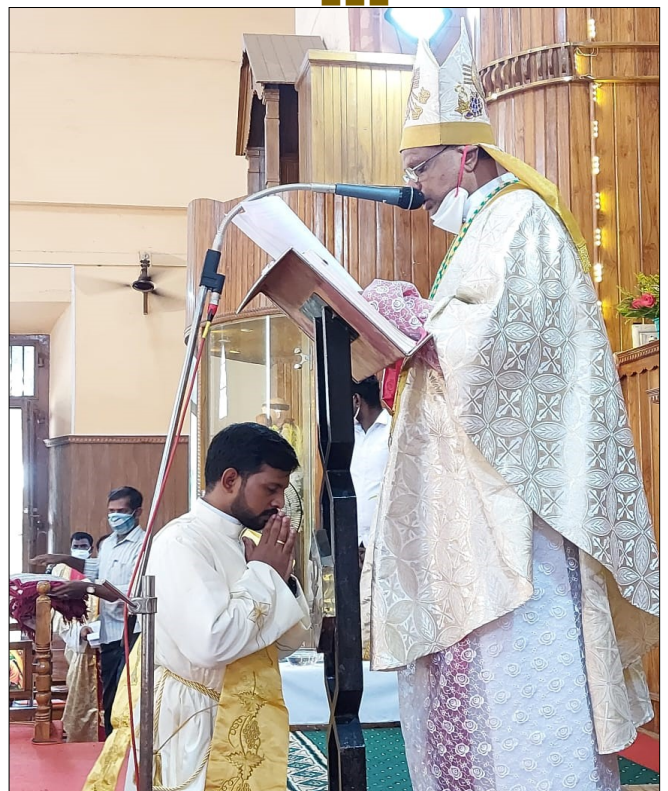
Holiness; Beyond All

There is a little story of a missionary who went to an island as a part of his mission. As the missionary entered the Island, he met three men sitting beneath a tree and asked about their prayer life as their conversation progressed. They were reluctant to share about their prayer life, but by compulsion of the

missionary they did. 'You are Three and we are three, bless us Lord' was their simple prayer.

The missionary stayed with them and taught many prayers and values. They provided everything to the missionary even before he asked. The missionary was astonished by the hospitality and behavior of those three men. Finally the day came for the missionary to leave the island. He began his journey after the farewell and reached into the ship which was away from the shore. He was shocked to see that those three men were running over the water and reached the missionary to make a little clarification regarding the prayers he taught them. The story concludes by saying that the missionary bowed down before their simple faith.

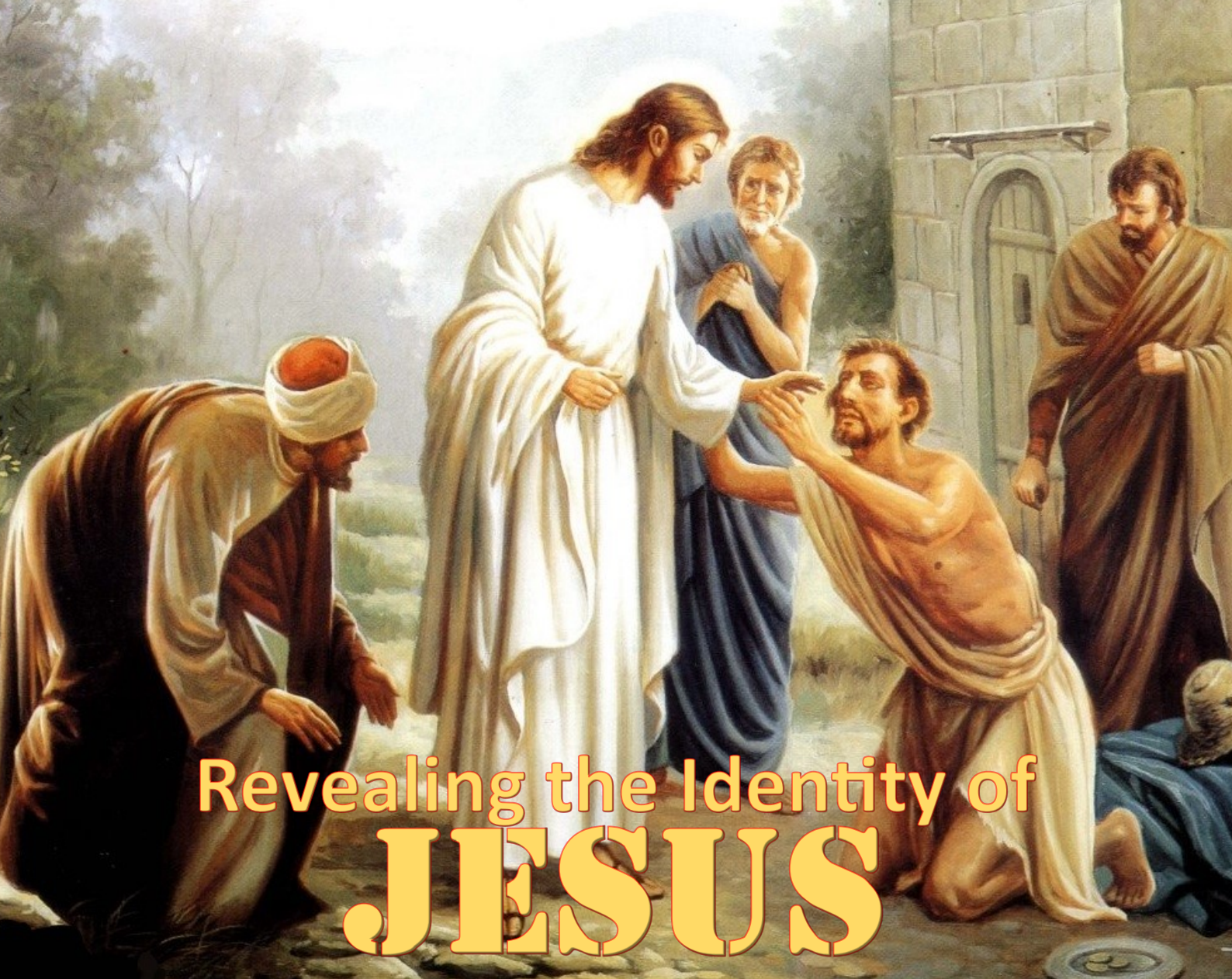
Jesus was pleased in the offertory of that poor widow that of the rich men; the prayer of the publican was more receptive to God than the prayer of the Pharisee. God demands simple faith which is purely based on God experience of heart and not of reason. Simple faith does not mean weak faith, but faith from the heart. Is faith alone enough? Faith must follow the holiness of heart. The One who is the person of simple faith and holy heart can feel God and do everything that God desires.



Rev. Fr Vijeesh P. Dennis's ordination was on 24th June 2021.

Your life has been set apart to celebrate the mysteries of Christ, to proclaim the good news of salvation, to lead the lost from darkness into light...

**Congratulations, Blessings and prayer from
Kadosh Marian Ministries
(Patrons, Chancellor, Professors, Tutors, Students
and Director Board Members)**



Revealing the Identity of **JESUS**

Human Blindness to the Divine Vision (Mk 8:27-30)

The gospels are full of questions. In the narrative of Mk 8:27-30, Jesus asks his disciples: “Who do people say that I am?” This is the most important question of the whole New Testament. The question Jesus asked on the road to Caesarea Philippi has proved durable. Over the centuries various answers have provoked a considerable amount of challenge and many have become martyrs. That Peter’s declaration of Jesus’ Messiahship as the watershed of Mark is upheld by a number of exegetes for it is the *terminus ad quem* of all that precedes (1:14-8:30) and the *terminus a quo* of all that follows (8:27-16:8). It is at 8:29 that for the first time a human being - Peter - declares Jesus’ identity: You are the Christ (*Messiah*). The section Mk 8:27-10:52 is a progressive development from the previous patterns of the gospel and it “serves as a bridge between the work in the Galilee and the final week in Jerusalem” (E. K. BROADHEAD, *Mark*, Shef-

Rev. Fr Arundas Thottuval

Rome, Italy

Research Student,
Biblical Theology,
Urbaniana University,
Rome

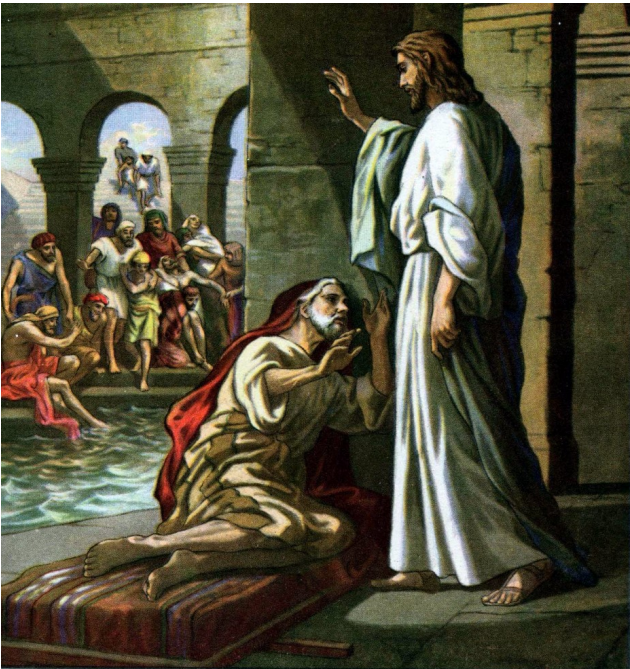


field: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001, 78). The focus of this section is primarily on the nature of discipleship and the challenge in fulfilling this calling. Moreover, an important advance in the character of Jesus is evident here. At the end of the section, Jesus and the struggling disciples stand at the gates of Jerusalem, where the culmination of the central themes of Christology, discipleship and suffering occur. As the healing of a blind man (8:22-26) precedes the section and the healing of the blind Bartimaeus concludes the act (10:46-52), we are exhort-

ed to connect these healing stories to the discipleship theme and to understand that true discipleship is the greatest of all miracles. Jesus' questions of his identity to the disciples and Peter's confession bear witness to this invitation.

The account of Peter's declaration is found in all three Synoptic Gospels: Mk 8:27-30, Mt 16:13-20 and Lk 9:18-20. Of the three, Matthew's account is the largest - as he adds: Jesus' response to Peter with a blessing (Mt 16:17), a name-giving (v.18) and a commission (v.19). This article entitled **"Revealing Identity of: From the Human Blindness to the Divine Vision (Mk 8:27-30)"** is an attempt to uncover the true identity of Jesus revealed in Caesarea Philippi episode.

Jesus' Retreat with His Disciples in Revelation of His Identity



Jesus continues his journey away from his enemies in order to enter into the final training of his disciples. From the context, it is clear that Jesus is moving from Bethsaida (8:22) to Caesarea Philippi (8:27) with an intention to move further to Jerusalem. It is very important as it symbolizes a major turning point in the ministry of Jesus. He has been working in Galilee: calling his disciples (1:16;19,20), teaching and healing crowds (2:13; 3:7; 4:1) and so on.

What captures our attention here is the Markan phrase "on the way" that indicates this is a journey of leading disciples into a clear sight/understanding. It appears seven times in the section 8:27-10:52 (8:27; 9:33,34; 10:17,32,46,52) and twice elsewhere (8:3; 11:8). The expression "on the way" in Mk 8:27 and 10:52 also creates a theologi-

cal framework that emphasizes Jesus' way towards Jerusalem, the way of suffering which leads him to the cross and his identity as a suffering Messiah. It is evident that Markan pattern of "on the way" (8:27) is in relation with the theme of discipleship. Jesus instructs his disciples on what they should take "for their journey" (6:8). The expression finally becomes a clear image of the discipleship in the story of Bartimaeus: "Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way" (10:52).

Jesus is raising question like the teacher in the Jewish rabbinic circles. In the synoptic gospels, there are many questions (Mk 7:17; 8:23; 9:16,11,28,32; 10:2; 12:18,34; Mt 22:46; Lk 2:46). But differing from all other questions, Jesus asked his disciples: "Who do people say that I am?" Matthew 16:13 has "the Son of Man" in place of "I" in Mark and in Luke 9:18. He often described himself as "the Son of Man". Certainly here the phrase could not mean merely "a man". They knew the various popular opinions about Jesus of which Herod Antipas had heard (Mark 3:21, Mark 3:31). It was now the turn of the disciples to reveal how much they had been influenced by their environment as well as by the direct instruction of Jesus.

An Inadequacy in the Understanding of Jesus' Identity

In all three accounts, Jesus first asks, "Who do people say I am?" (Mk 8:27) or "Who do the crowds say I am?" (Lk 9:18). The disciples answer with, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, (Jeremiah) one of the prophets" (Mt 16:14, Mk 8:28). Or, in Lk 9:19, instead of simply "one of the prophets," they say, "and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life". As Mark's Gospel is the oldest one, it becomes a major source for the Matthew and Luke. Keeping their own theological frameworks, Matthew and Luke, however, edit and expand the Markan gospel. Mark's account of Peter's declaration is brief and clear (8:27-30). Jesus asks his disciple what the people say about him. The disciples reply that he is being identified with John the Baptist or Elijah or one of the prophets. When Jesus directs the question to the disciples, Peter replies that Jesus is the Messiah. The account ends with a secret motif (Jesus' warning to the disciples not to publicize what is revealed about his identity). Luke also follows Mark (9:18-21) more or less faithfully. But in Matthew, the account is expanded. Jesus identifies himself with the Son of Man. In the reply of disciples, the name of Jeremiah is added. Peter

declares Jesus as, “the Son of the living God”. Above all, Matthew also adds a section in which Peter is praised and given certain promises of authority (cf. L. O. BRISTOL, “Jesus and Peter at Caesarea Philippi”, in *Foundations* 5/3 (1962), 198-205).

Kernaghan observes the identification with John the Baptist (after his death) as a superstitious belief that Jesus is someone “who returned from beyond the grave with superhuman powers” (R. J. KERNAGHAN, *Mark*, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2007, 157). He explains that this is a form of superstition that goes beyond the biblical tradition. The simplest explanation may be that people did not see Jesus as the resurrected Elijah or John, but as an Elijah or a John. These men represent the prophetic office in both the Old and the New Testament era. Those names are then just an indication that people considered Jesus to be an important prophet. The last group of people claiming that Jesus is one of the prophets is in that case not complementary to John and Elijah. All three terms are parallel expressions to say the same thing; the people say, Jesus is a prophet. All these response fail to understand the definitive role of Jesus associated with consummation and the achievement of salvation (Cf. W. L. LANE, *The Gospel of Mark: The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974, 289).

Peter’s Confession of Jesus’ Identity as Messiah



Mark wants the reader to identify with the disciples. The question directed to *humeis* serves a bigger goal than merely depicting what Jesus asked the disciples. It is used ten times in the Gospel of Mark. Three times it is an addressing of the Phari-

sees (7:11, 18; 11:17). The other times it is directed toward the disciples (6:31, 37; 8:29; 13:9, 11, 23, 29). The “you” in 8:29 is the only mention that is followed by a question from Jesus. It is a general call to the disciples to take a stance. The reader - through identification with the disciples - is called to do the same (S. KUTHIRAKKATTEL, *A Spiritual Journey: Following Jesus According to Mark*, Pune: Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, 2003).

That Jesus poses this question again to his disciples and that the phrase “*But who do you say...*” stand in contrast to the different expectancy from the people, suggest that Jesus is not satisfied with the answer given by the people. This does not need to imply that Jesus is not a prophet, but it does demonstrate that he is more than just a prophet. It simply underlines that he is not satisfied with the view of the people.

The Markan confession of Jesus as Messiah is modified in Matthew: **the Messiah, the Son of the living God** (Mt 16:16). But Mark also writes a gospel concerning Jesus Christ, the Son of God (1:1) whose identity and mission form the thrust of the gospel. This primary interest is unfolded in two stages: the progressive revelation of the mystery of Jesus’ Messianism (1:14-8:30) and the progressive revelation of the mystery of the suffering Son of Man (8:31-16:8) (S. KUTHIRAKKATTEL, *A Spiritual Journey: Following Jesus According to Mark*, Pune: Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, 2003, 30-34). Peter’s declaration of Jesus’ Messianism constitutes the watershed of the gospel: the theme of identity of Jesus travels through Peter’s declaration and the rest all that follows flow from it.

An Invitation to See Better Who Jesus Is: Theological Implications of Jesus’ Identity in Mk 8:27-30

There is no *one Christology* which can claim the full understanding of Christ. From a Christological perspective, there is a development of question, of identity of Jesus and opinions that Jesus brings up and that at Caesarea Philippi reach the first decisive point. Caesarea Philippi, the residence of Herod Philip and dominated by strong Roman associations, “it may be theologically significant that Jesus’ dignity as first recognized in a region devoted to the affirmation that Caesar is Lord” (W. L. LANE, *The Gospel of Mark: The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974, 289). The response of the people that Jesus is John or Elijah or a prophet means that ordinary people considered him only as one of the messengers of God who had appeared

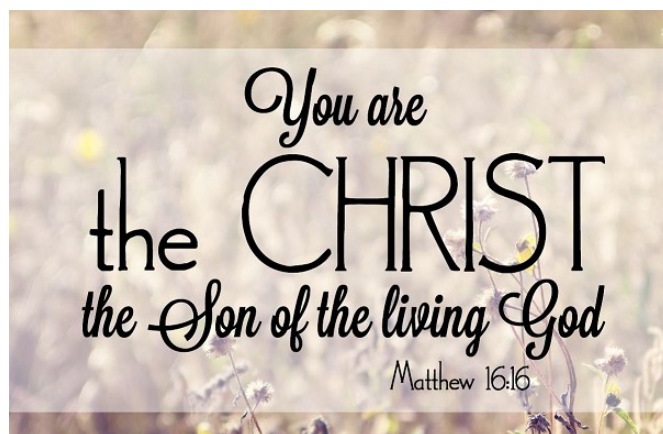
many times throughout Israel's history. In contrast, Peter's confession invites us to a more matured understanding: "Jesus was the appointed agent of God whose coming marks the fulfillment of the divine promise and the realization of Israel's hopes" (W. L. LANE, *The Gospel of Mark: The New International Commentary on the New Testament Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974, 291*). By making this confession, Peter shows that, like the blind man restored to the full vision, he *sees* things in a better light (cf. Mk 8:25). Moreover, as BEAVIS remarks, "there is a narrative progression from the dialogue in the boat (8:14-21), which highlights the metaphorical blindness (and deafness) of the disciples, to the healing of the literal blindness (8:22-26), to Peter's insight that Jesus is the Messiah, not simply a prophet, a resurrected John the Baptist (cf. 6:14-15), or even the eschatological Elijah (whose appearance would precede "the day of the LORD [8:38; cf. Mal 4:5])" (M. A. BEAVIS, *Mark, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011, 132*).

Conclusion



Jesus often asked questions to teach and make both his disciples and people think. He would often answer a question with a question, leading them to find their own answers. First, Jesus asked the disciples what *others* said about him. They responded easily enough, with a slew of hypotheses. But then Jesus turned the tables. "Who do *you* say I am?" What the world thought did not matter anymore. The mentality of the crowd was irrelevant. The whole NT search for the answer to this question: "Who is Jesus or Messiah?" It is quite obvious that "there is not and never was one single answer to that question" (E. B. HORNING, "Who is Jesus? Christologies in the New Testament", in *Brethren Life and Thought* 41/1, 1996, 22). Although Jesus imposed silence upon demons and prohibited the

beneficiaries of certain miracles from making the event known, this is not the attitude towards his disciples. As the narrative progresses, he manifests himself exclusively to them (cf. Mk 4:35-41; 6:35-44, 45-51) and he also demands from them to comprehend the significance of these revelatory acts (cf. Mk 6:52; 8:14-21). The evangelist dramatically presents this dialectic between Jesus' imposition of silence upon demon and beneficiaries of miracles and his instruction upon the disciples to understand him. Here the transition from blindness to sight, from incomprehension to understanding takes place, although inadequately, in Mk 8:29, where Peter declares in the name of the disciples, "You are the Christ".



Instead of Jesus' asking an open question about his identity and the response being that he is the Christ, the high priest asks him a closed question about his identity: "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" (Mark 14:61). Here Jesus responds by saying that he is the Son of Man, evoking the high priest to tear his garments. Even though Jesus does not answer the question of the high priest with a simple "yes", Jesus is mocked here as if he was. It forces the reader to shift from a distant observing to a sympathetic identification with the disciples. This identification demands a response to the question that goes beyond acknowledging Jesus as a prophet. He is the Christ. Mark illustrates this new identity of Jesus with the transition from the title of the Messiah (Peter 8:29) and the Son of God (9:7) through that, what Jesus himself attributes, the Son of Man (8:31,38; 9:12,31; 10:33,45), to that of a servant who gives life (10:45). Mark records the partial healing of the blind man to illustrate Jesus healing of his disciples partial understanding. Though the disciples see that Jesus is the Christ, they see this only in part. Jesus is the Christ but not at all the Christ of their expectations...!!!





CULTURAL HUMILITY

AN INEVITABLE VIRTUE TO BE EMBRACED

Cultural humility is a virtue based on respect and mutual trust that a person develops by being open to other people and their cultural differences. The spirit of cultural humility lies in its great servitude model that Jesus promotes, an inevitable lifestyle that He recommends to our age. It has been defined as a respectful attitude towards other cultures and challenging our own cultural preferences and preconceptions (Gonzales, 2017). In an ongoing self-reflection and critique of beliefs, values, attitudes, and cultural identity, the virtue of cultural humility enables a person to redress the imbalances and restoring the dynamic partnership with individuals and various cultures (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998).

Voices and choices of the people matter! Pope Francis has been continuously encouraging and challenging us to imbibe the true spirit of cultural humility. All along, my priority was to display knowledge and skills that I acquire in a given complex set of circumstances while working with people. The focus was more on personal contribution and a self-portrayal of delivering prescriptions to the community members, just like a doctor prescribing medicines to her/his clients and patients. What would be my strategy when faced with



Rev. Fr Pious Malliar
St. Joseph's Church,
Indianapolis, USA

strange and stark dichotomies? A greater realization now I have is to reposition my priorities, that is, to shatter the 'authoritarian model' and adopt a model that responds to the priorities of the community members and thereby listening to the opinions of the community partners while working with the people.

Our world is now in its critical moment facing millions of issues and challenges. What perpetuates the exercise of the virtue of cultural humility is an ardent desire for accepting the other with dignity and respect irrespective of race, creed, region, caste, and color. The promise that one makes here is not to humiliate and exploit another person for their whims and fancies but to celebrate the cultural diversities and differences. And that is the benchmark or signature of cultural humility! This pertinent gesture ultimately leads us to feel one

with the other and empathize with their vulnerable situation. It is indeed a great leap that inaugurates an environment to embrace life fully! Cultural humility should become an internal power for you to deal with conflicting moments, and it encompasses a climate of acceptance and openness. It is a profound gesture of going beyond the parameters and status quo. I will never call it a fantasy, but 'a great action with reflection,' a collective reflection which is to be operationalized in my practice and writings! As a learner, I begin to embrace the virtue by accepting the people's opinions and various cultural diversities at large.

There are three movements of cultural humility that I gaze at here:

1. Cultural humility is a movement of the people for a collective decision-making process.
2. Cultural humility is a movement of the learners and social workers with the community partners raising critical consciousness.
3. Cultural humility is a movement of the oppressed for transformation and cultural competency.



A collective decision-making process begins with a dialogue. It is not merely a discussion on a certainly designed agenda but a conscious effort of conscientization and unshakable solidarity with oppressed or vulnerable people. In his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire believes that dialogue is "an existential necessity and can not exist without humility" (Freire, 1970, pp. 88-90). He states that "the dialogue is broken if one of the parties lacks humility" (p. 90). He adds that any decision-making should be within a framework of action, infused with love and mutual trust between the dialoguers (Freire, 1970, pp. 89-91). Opinions can vary, but decisions are taken unanimously despite the differences and diversities. How do I work with the people for a collaborative action until reaching the goal of their transformation? Do I impose my biases and intentions while working with the community? How will I be able to enhance the participation of the members without looking into their demographics and educational standards?

Secondly, raising critical consciousness among the partners as "human beings are not built-in silence, but in word, in work, in action-reflection" (Freire, 1970, p. 88). An encounter among men and women targeted to achieve the results of the conscientization process. The process is to raise awareness and the advocacy opportunity. How do I respect my opportunity that is the privilege to be critical? Is that founded in love, mutual trust, faith, and humility? What is my motivation to seek this connection between the program and the vulnerability of the people? The dire need for awareness building could help the community emerge and fight against exploitation and manipulation.

The third movement of the oppressed people and their drive for transformation and cultural competency is within the lens of liberation. The perennial issues are being addressed while courageously turning off negativity and learning to separate things you can and can not control. Some questions to ponder over at this juncture are: what are the realistic outcomes that the community needs to look for? What are some of the short-term and long-term actions? The liberation is possible only by replicating each person's cultural humility and a profound building on the resources and strengths of the vulnerable community.

Cultural humility is a virtue that is indispensable for our ages. The liberation struggle continues! A transformation and empowered status is the goal that the oppressed ones are aiming at. There is no measurement scale used here, but only a genuine disposition to commit ourselves to enhance the quality of life of the poor people around us, without any conditions. Jesus says: "if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have?" (Mt. 5:46). In our introspection, let us keep asking more profound questions to challenge our attitudes and self-interested ways and begin to feel the beauty of cultural differences by celebrating the diversities. Let us struggle to resemble our Master and strive to practice the virtue in our everyday life.

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(Some of the reflections in this article are taken from my Reflection Paper I that I submitted for the course: Community Engaged Practice Research S732, at Indiana University).



YADA

לדעת



Which is easier to say: “I know God, or a human being, a creature, a machine, anything else that we have lived with and experienced?”

The Hebrew word ‘yada’ means to ‘know’. The word yada, is used in scripture, to reflect the ‘covenant relationship’ between God and His people. The meaning of the word is derived from the context in which it is used and cannot be interpreted alone. Yada differentiates: It is one thing to know someone, and another thing to know something, but to confidently say as Job did (19.25): “I know that my Savior lives” is where Yada fits in. God is confident, He knows us. Let’s see how, yada is translated as ‘know’ and ‘chosen’ in different contexts in scripture to express God’s omniscient attribute of knowledge and understanding, that we can imbibe:

Isaiah 11:2, the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord (fear here meaning deep love of God).

Many of us confidently testify to John 10:10a “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy;” because it’s so real and alive in this present pandemic year; however, in this storm, can we confidently also declare with the same breadth and



Lara J.M.
MA, MSC, MBA, LLB
Associate Editor
Bangalore, India

say: “I know’ (yada)” John 10:10b: Jesus came so that I can have life /eternal life, and have it abundantly.

How can we know God enough, to enjoy His abundance? - His ways, His thoughts, His statutes, His commands, His promises, His prophesy, His messages, His plans, His voice, His safety precautions, His power and might, His kingdom principles – 2 Pet 1:2 teaches how; ‘Grace and Peace can be multiplied’!

Practically, we can see yada in the life of David and Job. God reveals to David through His Word, that He knows each one of us - to show that God is overtly and intimately concerned about His people and has not forsaken us, allowing us to pass through fire, flood, fever and a vulnerable period of waiting, to give us a testimony of reliance, endurance and overcoming; His way. Yada is found many times in Psalm 139.

O LORD, You have searched me and known me .

You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar.

You watch when I walk or lie down, you know every detail of my conduct.



Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O LORD, You know it all.

I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well.

Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts:

The enemy keeps us so busy in our world, with stealing, killing and destroying, that most of our time goes in questioning God, trying to know and understand the enemy's plans, making us acrid towards God, instead of urging us to know Him better through the storm. Job, till chapter 35, doesn't hear from God, because he keeps raving and ranting about his opinions continuously. It is only when Job exercised his will to keep still (to stop it), and know that there is a God (Ps46.10), that is when, God spoke up, much to Job's amazement, out of the storm. God spoke: (38:2,3) "Why do you talk so much when you know so little? Now answer me!" And, God poses so many "Do you know?" questions to Job, leaving him humbled and acknowledging in surrender(42: 3): "I have talked about things that are far beyond my understanding".

Some questions, if posed to us, can we prepare the answers well in advance? let's recall a few: "How did I lay the foundation of the earth? Did you ever tell the sun to rise? Can you arrange stars? When did mountain goats give birth? Did you give horses their strength? Who created you? Can you catch a sea monster? What will you do when the sea monster sneezes? And many more questions..."

Job cried out "Lord, forgive me!" This yada experience comes with a reward! Job's eyes were healed and he was given the gift of visions, when he exclaims (42:5): "I heard about you from others; now I have seen you with my own eyes." And all the years of Job's torment and discourse is recompensed with joy and gladness – a waiting well worth the pursuit.

Throughout scripture, God reveals to His people that He knows us and He communicates to us through the Word of God, through prophets, signs, wonders, miracles, healing, bill boards, vehicle graphics, books, birds, animals, insects, plants, clouds, wind, storm- the pandemic.

In Gen 18:19, we see why God establishes a covenant relationship with Abraham: For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. Can we see the reason and the big plan behind, why we are called to fellowship! The lack of it is costly: Hosea 4:6 "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."

Thus, God wants us to know and understand him, even today. Will we like Job be still (stop) and know that He is God, yielding to His Spirit, allowing Him to talk and minister to us? Between the calling and the choosing, he went through a humbling and acknowledging phase. Like Job, we are called to bravely endure, and bear fruit that will remain; for the harvest is plenty, and the laborers are few. This is a time of pregnancy – a period of waiting upon Him (through the Holy Word) and listening to his voice:

Jeremiah 1:5 Before I formed you in the belly I knew you; and before you came forth out of the womb I sanctified you, and I ordained you a prophet unto the nations.

John 15:16 You did not choose (know) Me, but I chose (know) you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

Let's yada God, for He continues to yada us, the reward is worth the pursuit: God says : John 10: 27, 28 – "My sheep hear my voice, and I know (Yada) them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of my hand."





The Family Founded on Marriage



Rev. Fr Ben Boss C. C
University of Holy Cross, Rome

Introduction

“The Family Founded on Marriage” is a theme widely discussed among the canonists in the context of law of family in the Catholic Church. The concept is drawn from the pastoral constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, the apostolic exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio* and the letter by Pope John Paul II to the families and the Post-Synodal apostolic exhortation of Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*. As a student of Canon Law (Law of the Church), it is more relevant and appropriate to study and reflect on this subject at this present scenario of the twenty first century. In this article, I would like to portray the key concepts of the law of family in the Church, which might enable us to integrate the ministry in the Church with the integral understanding of the family relationships.

Family is the basic cell of a society. Family is a domestic church. It gives an identity and meaning to the life of a person for his existence. So the family is founded on marriage. Marriage is a covenant by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of their whole life, and which of its own very nature is ordered to the well-being of the spouses and to the procreation and upbringing of children (Cf. Can. 1055). It gives a person his or her human dignity and justice that one deserves (*res iusta*) according to divine law and positive law. In canon law, attention has focused primarily on the Matrimonial Canon Law but not on the Family Law. To speak of the “Law of the Family in the Church” certain key notions and understandings are to be analysed.

Value of Accompaniment and Forgiveness

Marriage and the family are natural institutions, which is an everlasting truth. But in the voyage of life, it becomes complex. Therefore, today it is even more necessary that canonists make an effort to avoid a reductionist view of the law of the Church on marriage and the family to the only norms they have to do with the process of declaring the nullity of marriage. As the Synod Fathers recalled, in the face of family crises the only one the solution is not the verification of the nullity of the marriage, that has failed or is in crisis, but a true work of accompaniment. It must be established for them by faithful and pastors also prepared in the juridical sphere, for example, through mediation structures, so present in the civilized minds of our day, but not set for peaceful separation but, first of all, to the reconciliation of couples in crisis. Some families succumb when spouses blame each other, but “Experience shows that with adequate help and reconciliation of grace a large percentage of marital crises is overcome satisfactorily. Knowing how to forgive and feeling forgiven is an experience fundamental importance in family life”. “There laborious art of reconciliation, which

requires the support of grace, it needs the generous collaboration of relatives and friends, and sometimes also of external and professional help”.

Relational Responsibility:

A small sector of canon law of the family consists of those positive norms concerning the remaining family relationships, the paternal-filial one (Cf. Cann. 1137 to 1140 CIC 1983). In the first place, they are analysed by the concept of “child”, the possibility or not of distinguishing different types of ‘filiation’, the legitimation of children, adoption, children’s rights towards parents, etc. From the perspective of the parents, the theme *parental authority* is central, as a juridical situation to the same active and passive time: active, since parents have to *demand* from their children what is appropriate for their human and Christian growth, passive because they are also obliged to their children. An integral part of the “canon law of the family” would also be that the norms that refer to both the teaching office of the Church (*munus docendi*) and the sanctifying office of the Church (*munus sanctificandi*). The education of children on the one hand and on the other hand, the administration of the sacraments of Christian initiation to children subjected to their parental authority, baptism, confirmation, the Eucharist.

Anthropological Dimension

Pope Francis shows with great clarity the indissoluble intertwining between marital relationship and paternal and maternal-filial relationship: The law of the family in the Church. Approach to a renewed vision, every child has the right to receive the love of a mother and a father, both necessary for its integral and harmonious maturation. The dignity of human person is one’s due to give justice to oneself and to others. Respect the dignity of a child means affirming his need and his natural right to have a mother and a father. It is not just about the love of the father and the mother taken separately, but also of the love between them, perceived as of its own existence, as a nest that welcomes and as the foundation of the family. Both man and woman, father and mother, are “co-operators of love of God the Creator and almost his interpreters” (GS, n. 50). They show their children the maternal and the paternal face of the Lord. Furthermore, together they teach the value of reciprocity, of the encounter between different people, where each contributes its own identity and knows how to receive from the other.

Family as way of the Church

When one analyses the “Canon law of marriage and the family” as canonical discipline, there is a difficulty in accepting the existence of a “Canon law of the family” as an autonomous canonical discipline. It is one thing to talk about the legal rules concerning marriage and family. It is another account to affirm: there is a science that can be called “canon law of the family”. Grasping the wealth of the teaching on the family that followed the Vatican Council II - especially the Magisterium of John Paul II in his Catechesis on human love - up to our days and even today has not been fully implemented either from theology or from canon law in the opinion of Prof. Franceschi. The richness of this heritage, as the Synodal Fathers, is immense, and

cannot fail to be studied with scientific rigor also by scholars of canonical science. Among the many references to the Magisterium, Pope Francis makes his own some considerations of the Synodal Fathers on the importance and richness of the Magisterium of St John Paul II, the Letter to families, *Gratissimam sane* and above all with the Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris consortio* ". In these documents, the Pontiff defined the family as way of the church"; it offered an overview of the vocation to love of man and woman; proposed the basic guidelines for the meal of the family and for the presence of the family in society.

Integration of the concept

Family, the domestic church is the constitutive structure of the church. John Paul II stated that the future of the Church passes through the family. The mission of the Church is in relation with marriage and family. So to say, family is the subject of evangelization. In the light of Cann. 204 and 208, the rights and duties of family is significant for existence of human relationships. The paternal and maternal responsibility of spouses are enunciated in the Can. 1134 and specifically Can. 1135 says: Each spouse has an equal obligation and right to whatever pertains to the partnership of conjugal life. Similarly, the human dignity and equality of spouses and their responsibilities are essential part of the family.

The responsibility of parents through their true paternity and maternity depended on their Christian vocation as parents. Can. 226§1 says that those who are married are bound by the special obligation, in accordance with their own vocation, to strive for the building up of the people of God through their marriage and family. §2 says that because they gave life to their children, parents have the most serious obligation and the right to educate them. It is therefore primarily the responsibility of Christian parents to ensure the Christian education of their children in accordance with the teaching of the church. Besides, Can. 1136 says that parents have the most serious obligation and the primary right to do all in their power to ensure their children’s physical, social, cultural, moral and religious upbringing. Finally, the dimensions of family through *munus docendi* (teaching function), *munus santificandi* (sanctifying function) and *munus regendi* (leading function) make us to understand that the law of family is an indispensable core of the Church.

Conclusion

A proper guidance such as pre-marital training programme for adolescence and youth based faith and Christian values, dignity of relationships, mediating accompaniment for young couples and enabling them to forgive and feeling forgiven would help to solve the issues of the family today. For this purpose, adequate guidelines and laws of family in the Church could be compiled and implemented because the family is the fundamental cell of society, the cradle of civilization, which is the family founded on marriage. Since we have marriage law, it could be appropriate to say that the law of family, which is founded on marriage.



Righteousness

Vs

Adam's sin



Ann Augustine

Jesus' finished work is the perfect example of righteousness

To understand concept of righteousness, let's first understand Romans 5:17-19, 'for as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one man's obedience many shall be made righteous.'

There was only one law in the Garden, 'Do not eat of the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil.' The failure to keep just one law brought a multitude of sins on all God's creation. The fall from Grace due to disobedience to God was the source of all the misery and affliction ensued in this world. We lost the garden of Eden which does not mean, we lost the place of delight and the pleasure park but, the plan of God was salvation for the entire mankind.

Due to the action of one man (Adam) sin crept into the world but due to the action of another man (Jesus), the redemption was made possible. Adam's sin is washed away by the blood of the Lamb.

The main point is what Christ has done for all who are in Him is far greater than what Adam did for all who were in him. Now the question comes: what has Adam done to his posterity other than making them fall from grace like him?

When Adam sinned, all his descendants were also held responsible and equally sinful, although they were not directly sinning. Due to Adam's sin, the descendants were also recognized with the same sin. In the same way, although we never committed an act of righteousness, we are made righteous, because Jesus sacrificed himself on the Cross - we were washed in His blood and made righteous - through our baptism and by the declaration of our Faith in Him

Therefore, we are righteous today not because of our deeds. We are righteous because of Jesus' obedience to God, and not our own obedience. According to Romans 6:16 when you surrender yourselves as slaves to obey someone, you are in fact the slaves of the master. Then you obey either sin which results in death, or obedience, which results in being put right with God.

Paul mentions that God freely gave to the believer through faith in Jesus, the free gift of salvation. The chaos that is seen in this present world - death, disease, murder and war. All that came through one sin. The gift of eternal life, which is by grace, through one Man, Jesus Christ, has been made available to all freely.

The sin that Adam committed is not worthy to be compared with the free gift of salvation. But salvation is of many transgressions unto justification. This means Jesus' death or crucifixion was for the justification of all who will believe in Him, regardless of their past, present and future sins.

Death reigned as king because of Adam's offence. Those who receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness shall rule or reign as kings in life through the One, Jesus Christ. God made it clear to Adam that the day that he would eat from the fruit he would die. Adam eventually died, at 930 years, but it was God's mercy that kept him breathing that long. What started was spiritual death, separation from God. You see it when he tried to hide from God. He separated himself from the presence of God. Jesus brought the free gift of righteousness so that we can rule and reign as kings with Him in life.

He said that He came to give life, and to give it in abundance (Joh 10:10).

God has done three wonderful things to make us perfectly righteous in His sight:

- (1) God has ended the burden of our old life through Jesus.
- (2) He has given us a new life in Christ.
- (3) He has given Christ to us as our righteousness.

God has ended the burden of our old life through Jesus.

According to Paul's letter to Galatians 2:20 'I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.'

Through the blood of Christ, God has removed our sins from us forever. He has cleared us of all charges against us. He has justified us freely by His grace.

God has given us a new life in Christ.

Having ended our old life by our death and burial with Christ, God says to us, 'I am now creating you as a new person in Christ' (2 Cor 5:17). Now, we have a new life in Christ! Our new life began with the resurrection of Christ. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. The Bible says 'You who have believed in Jesus are now new creatures in Him, for God have created you in Him. Your place and standing before Me is the same as Christ's place, for you are in Christ forever.'

The Bible says, 'For we are His workmanship, having been created in Christ Jesus for good works that God prepared beforehand so we may do them' (Eph 2:10).

God has given Christ to us as our perfect righteousness.

In ourselves we are not righteous, but God has made us perfectly righteous in His sight. How did God do this? He put us in Christ; we are made 'the righteousness of God in Him.' The Bible says, 'For He (God) made Him (Jesus) who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him' (2 Cor 5:21).

This verse says that we are "made the righteousness of God in Him." Just as God looks at Christ and sees Him perfectly righteous, so He looks at us and sees us perfectly righteous because we are in Jesus Christ.

When we think about ourselves and our failings, it is hard for us to believe that we have been made perfectly righteous in Christ. But this is true. We know it is true because we have the clear statements of God's Word.

Finally I would like to conclude this article with an observation as follows:

Romans 5:17-19		
	Adam	Christ
Act >>>	Due to disobedience wages of sin entered...	Due to obedience wages of righteousness entered...
Result >>>	Condemnation to all (Death)	Righteousness to all (Eternal life)

There is a school of thought entertaining the view that Adam's sin is a blessing in disguise for humanity in the sense that though the paradise is lost for Adam, thanks to Jesus, paradise is regained and the flood gates of heaven opened unto humanity. The words of Jesus to the thief hanging on the cross along with Him, "today you will be with me in paradise" is in an example of paradise being regained. The temple veil being torn from top to bottom is an affirmation of portals of Heaven is being opened unto us. God's plan of salvation is superb and no parallels so far in the history, nor will there be any in the future. The flow of the blood of the Lamb is perennial, powerful and purifying for all eternity and for all humanity.



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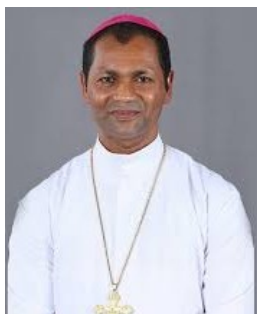
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This magazine is strictly for private circulation and free of cost intended for Evangelization and Renewal.

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