

KAIROS

GLOBAL

PRIVATE
CIRCULATION
ONLY

ALSO ↓

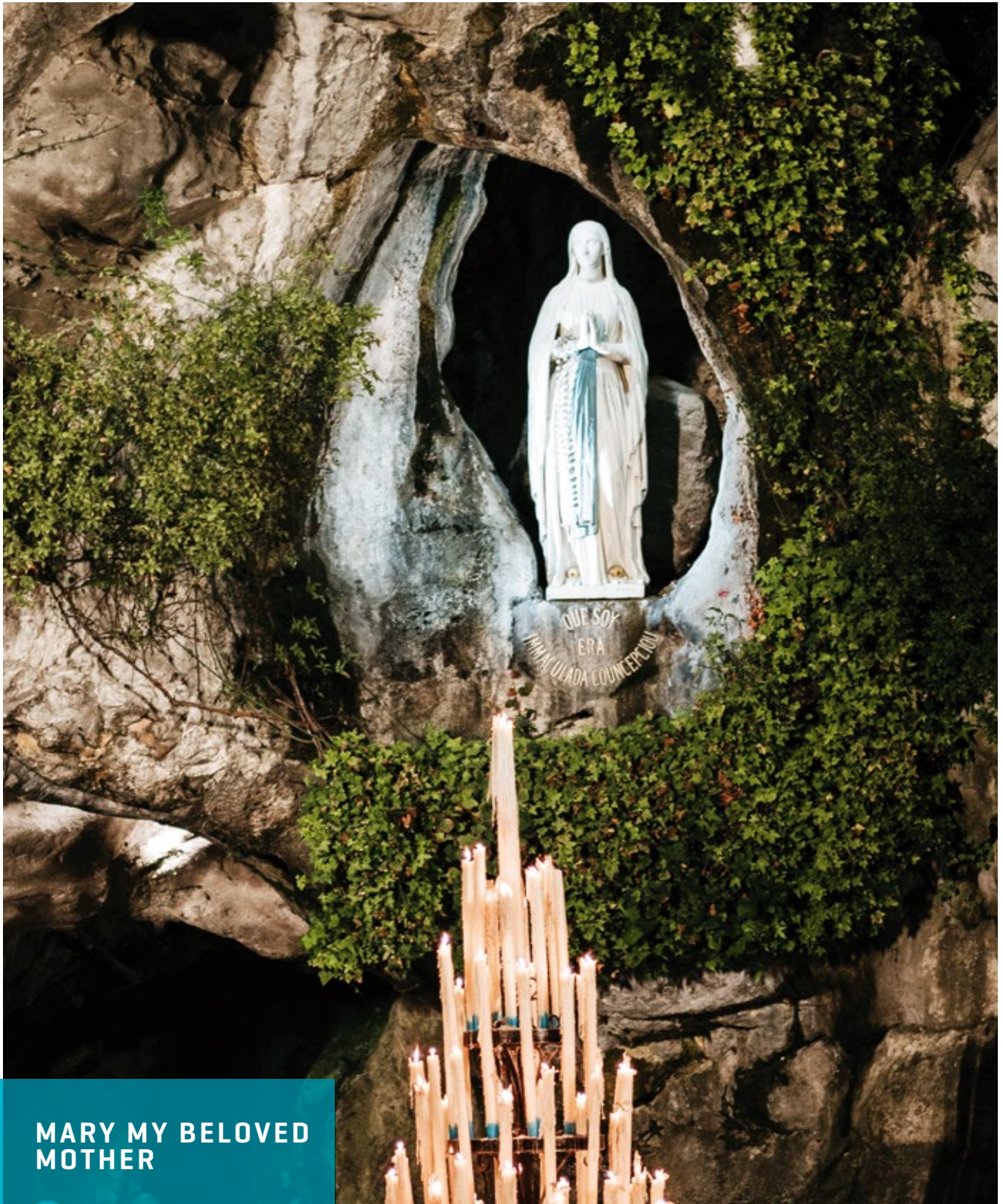
FAITH
DEPOSITS
IN GOD'S
UNIVERSAL
BANK

■ JOHNYKUTTY FRANCIS

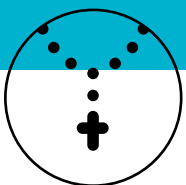
A Nalla
Ayalkkaran from
Panniyarkutty

■ POORNIMA SONY

MONEY & MATERIALISM



MARY MY BELOVED MOTHER



O Holy Virgin, in the midst of your days of glory, do not forget the sorrows of this earth. Cast a merciful glance upon those who are suffering, struggling against difficulties, with their lips constantly pressed against life's bitter cup. Have pity on those who love each other and are separated. Have pity on our rebellious hearts. Have pity on our weak faith. Have pity on those we love. Have pity on those who weep, on those who pray, on those who fear. Grant hope and peace to all. Amen.

EDITOR'S ROOM

DR. CHACKOCHAN J NJAVALLIL



AT KAIROS, WE
ARE CONTENTED
AND SATISFIED.
WE ARE THANKFUL
TO THE ALMIGHTY
AND TO ALL OF YOU
FOR LOVING AND
SUPPORTING US.

We are into the second month of 2021 and yet it is with eager expectation we await what lies ahead in the New Year and the surprises it may bestow. One of my favourite Bible verses is Romans 8:28, *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.* Even regarding the pandemic-ridden 2020, I believe that God had a certain purpose for it.

2020 was a great year for *Kairos*. It was a year of great achievement and satisfaction.

- *Kairos* could publish a well-appreciated book on the life and contributions of Fr. Abraham Pallivathukal, one of the pioneers of the Jesus Youth movement.
- Following the 2018 Kerala deluge, when our office got inundated, we had shifted premises close to the present offices of Jesus Youth National and International. But it was only towards the end of 2020 that we could complete furnishing it.
- Due to the pandemic and resultant lockdown, *Kairos* was able to capitalise on the sudden precedence for online platforms by successfully launching its webinar series.
- All the preparations to launch the new magazine, *Kairos Buds* for 3 to 12 year-olds took place in 2020.
- *Kairos* could successfully launch a subscription campaign which drew lot of attention and interest from a large number of people.
- Several books are scheduled for publication by *Kairos* which surely is a significant milestone in the history of the ministry which is in the twenty-fourth year of existence.
- *Kairos* could bring out another publication, *Kairos Buds Diary* which has become an instant hit among the target group.
- A new poster series, *Catholic Contributions* was launched highlighting Catholics' contribution to the field of science and technology.
- *Kairos* has become a notable presence in various popular social media platforms.

The list can continue with many more such blessings we were bestowed with in the year 2020.

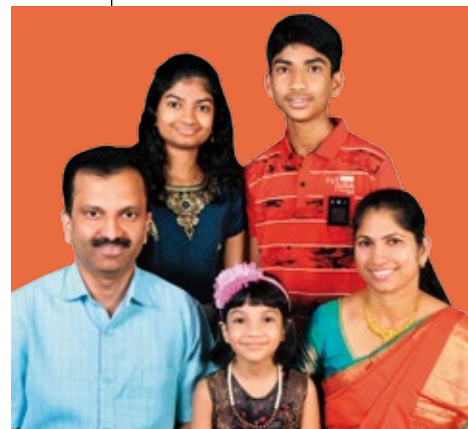
So, was it a year without challenges, pain and struggles? Of course not. It was a year in which we were subjected to extreme levels of hardships and struggles. But as we read in John 12:24, *Truly, truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed.* We are happy to be that small grain which died and bore fruit.

At *Kairos*, we are contented and satisfied. We are thankful to the almighty and to all of you for loving and supporting us.

We wish that you also live a contented life experiencing the caring presence of God throughout 2021 and life ahead.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

chackochan.njavallil@kairos.global



Also LOOK OUTFOR

- 14 My 'Yes Lord' Litany
- 28 Ten Commandments for Families
- 38 Unfading Wealth



Truly, truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed.
John 12:24

PATRON

Bishop Mar Raphael Thattil (Ecclesiastical Advisor, Jesus Youth International)

SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

Fr. Joseph Ezhumayil (Jesus Youth International Chaplain)

PRINTER AND PUBLISHER

Dr. Edward Edezhath

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Shoy Thomas (Jesus Youth International Coordinator)

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Dr. Chackochan Njavallil

MANAGING EDITOR

Joshy Joseph, Houston, USA (info@kairos.global)

EDITORIAL COUNCIL

Ammu Zachariah, Maryland, USA

Jilu Jacob, Boston, USA

Raifiel Cyril, Canberra, Australia

Sonia Kurian, Houston, USA

Tania Rose Josun, Kerala, India

ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE EDITORS

Divya Immanuel, Mumbai, India

Jiss Jose Thoppil, Kuwait

Jothesh Thomas, Dallas, USA

Ponny Sebastian, Dublin, Ireland

CIRCULATION COORDINATOR

Leena Shaju, Cochin, India +91 6238279115

ASSOCIATE CIRCULATION COORDINATORS**AUSTRALIA:** Mintu Vijoy,
Melbourne. +61 452538785**BAHRAIN:** Roshan George,
Manama. +973 36906995**CAMBODIA:** Sophearong Ravy,
Phnom Penh. +855 964265472**CANADA:** Joby Joseph,
Ontario. +12899 686 074**GERMANY:** Anna Paul,
Berlin. +49 176 83495451**INDIA:** Jackulin Sheela,
Mumbai. +91 9967329244**IRELAND:** Suresh V Joy,
Dublin. +35 3879630904**ISRAEL:** Jaison K Thattil,
Tel Aviv. +972 559425308**KUWAIT:** Anish Thomas Kappil,
Salmiya. +965 90063685**MALAYSIA:** Deepu James,
KL Sentral. +60 12649 4628**NETHERLANDS:** Jojo Varghese,
Utrecht. +31 684974552**NEW ZEALAND:** Derick Daniel,
Auckland +64 291270650**OMAN:** Jiju Paul,
Muscat. +968 99467516**PAPUA NEW GUINEA:** Abin Michael,
Port Moresby. +675 74794368**QATAR:** Jomichan P George,
Doha. +974 33688437**SINGAPORE:** Jilu Nobin,
Sengkang. +65 93294529**SWITZERLAND:** Joseph C Robert,
Zurich. +41 762499295**THAILAND:** Mary Harris,
Bangkok. +66 843138626**UAE:** Thomas Jose,
Dubai. +971 521316868**UGANDA:** Dominic Mathew,
Kampala. +256 757207200**UK:** Mathachan Madukkakuzhy
Stoke on Trent. +44 7969365686**USA:** Denny Joseph,
Houston +1 8326403106**FINANCE MANAGER**

Rani George, Cochin, India +91 9446563335 finance@kairos.global

DESIGN

Mustard Tree, Delhi, India

MAILING ADDRESS

Kairos International Inc.

3010 Mason Grove Ln

Pearland, TX, USA. 77584

info@kairos.global

+1 832 592 3675

Kairos Media,

No 8/174, Navodaya

Studio Complex,

Thengod P.O.,

Cochin, Kerala,

India. Pin: 682030

infoin@kairos.global

+91 9895711718

Kairos Media,

St Charles Street,

Sheffield S9 3WU,

United Kingdom

infouk@kairos.global

+44 7969365686

LOOK INSIDE

ISSUE 35

REGULARS

- 6 Ask Fr.Bitaju
- 7 Pope Talk | DR. KOCHURANI JOSEPH
- 8 Jesus Youth | DR.EDWARD EDEZHATH
- 10 Mission Talk
- 38 Our Daily Bread
- 40 Sound Reply
- 41 Chandeliers
- 42 Blooming Kids
- 45 Quiz Time
- 46 Lukas & Ray

IN FOCUS

22

FAITH DEPOSITS IN GOD'S UNIVERSAL BANK

JOHNYKUTTY FRANCIS





CONTENTS

34

ENCOUNTER

FAITH
FORMATION

PREM JOY

EXPERIENCE

- 14 My 'Yes Lord' Litany | SHALY LEO
 18 Charting a Journey to Baby Jesus | SHEEBA PRASAD
 20 A Nalla Ayalkkaran from Panniyarkutty | POORNIMA SONY

IN FOCUS

- 24 Money and Materialism

FAMILIA

- 28 Ten Commandments for Families | MATHEW JOSEPH

ENGAGE

- 32 A Turn of Transformation | SUMOL PIOUS

12

EXPERIENCE

THE LORD'S
RUNNER

BIJU VISWANATH



DISCLAIMER: Kairos Trust considers its sources reliable and verifies as much data as possible. However, reporting inaccuracies can occur. Consequently readers using this information do so at their own risk. While every effort has been made to ensure that information is correct at the time of print, Kairos Trust cannot be held responsible for the outcome of any action or decision based on the information contained in this publication/website. The publishers or authors do not give any warranty for the completeness or accuracy for this publications' content, explanation or opinion. Although persons and ministries mentioned herein are believed to be reputable, neither Kairos Trust nor any of its employees, sales agents or contributors accept any responsibility whatsoever for such persons and ministries' activities. No part of this publications and/or website may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form without prior written permission from Kairos Trust. Permission is only deemed valid if approval is in writing.

ASK



FR. BITAJU

Fr. Bitaju Mathew, O.S.S.T. belongs to the Order of the Most Holy Trinity and of the Captives (Trinitarians). He serves as the Secretary Vice Provincial of the Order in India and is currently the Chaplain of the Jesus Youth International Formation Team.

➔ **We are told not to consume food offered to other gods but doesn't the same apply to travelling in vehicles and living in homes blessed in the protection of gods of other religions. Can doing any of this be considered a sin?**

With the increased migration happening all around the world, we have no option but to live in an increasingly multi-cultural and multi-religious scenario. And your question becomes all the more relevant in such a context. I shall respond to your question considering the context in which St. Paul makes such a recommendation, the gospel message and the teaching of the Church in this regard.

St. Paul urged Christians in Corinth to avoid eating food offered to idols (1 Corinthians 8), not because he believed in idols or for the sake of the food itself. No food is, in principle, unclean. Jesus made it clear when he said, *'not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth...'* (Matthew 15:11). St. Paul also acknowledged that in principle no food is a source of moral contamination (Romans 14:14, 20). Yet, he recommended that eating food sacrificed to idols should be avoided respecting the consciences of less informed Christians (Romans 14:21). Because, there were new Christians who would have believed that idols were real if they saw their more mature brethren eating foods from pagan sacrifices. Therefore, St. Paul stated, *'if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble'* (1 Corinthians 8:13). Here, St. Paul was urging the members of his community to take a communitarian rather than an individualistic view of their Christ-given freedom. He wanted to remind them that many of the decisions that they thought pertained only to their private

relationship with God had, in fact, social consequences.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines scandal as 'an attitude or behaviour which leads another to do evil ... Scandal takes on a particular gravity by reason of the authority of those who cause it or the weakness of those who are scandalised' (CCC 2284 – 2285). Moreover, Jesus emphatically stated, *'whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea'* (Matthew 18: 6).

The natural moral law urges us in doing good and avoiding evil. As a result, each individual has to do good himself but also has to avoid his good actions being an occasion or providing a means for other to do evil.

To conclude, first of all, the above discussion makes it clear that the food, the means of transportation or the homes in themselves are good. As Catholics we pray and bless before we eat, travel or move into a new home, acknowledging Jesus Christ as the only Lord and Saviour of all. Secondly, in our choices to do even good we must respect and regard those who are weak in faith and do not cause scandal. Finally, the basic moral law is that we must seek and discern to do good and avoid evil in everything. One commits sin when he/she consciously goes against any of the above. Remember, we have no scruple in inhaling the air which we know is clearly filled with the incense from the altars of other gods.



YOUCAT 136

HOW DOES THE CHURCH VIEW OTHER RELIGIONS?

The Church respects everything in other religions that is good and true. She respects and promotes freedom of religion as a human right. Yet she knows that Jesus Christ is the sole redeemer of all mankind. He alone is 'the way, and the truth, and the life' (Jn 14:6). [841-848]

Whoever seeks God is close to us Christians. There is a special degree of 'affinity' to the Muslims. Like Judaism and Christianity, Islam is one of the monotheistic religions. The Muslims, too, revere God the Creator and Abraham as their father in faith. Jesus is considered a great prophet in the Qur'an; Mary, his Mother, as the mother of a prophet. The Church teaches that all men who by no fault of their own do not know Christ and his Church but sincerely seek God and follow the voice of their conscience can attain eternal salvation. However, anyone who has recognised that Jesus Christ is 'the way, and the truth, and the life' but is unwilling to follow him cannot find salvation by other paths. This is what is meant by the saying, *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus* [outside of the Church there is no salvation].



POPE talk...

Dr. Kochurani Joseph
Cochin, India



PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR FEBRUARY

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

We pray for women
who are victims
of violence,
that they may
be protected by
society and have
their sufferings
considered and
heeded.

serve her Lord completely and immediately. She could have asked for a little time to think about it, instead, she does not hesitate; she does not keep God waiting.

Those who pray never turn their backs on the world

Those people pray for the entire world, bearing its

Commit to take care of each other in 2021

We don't know what 2021 has in store for us, but what we can do together is to commit ourselves a little more to take care of each other and of creation, our common home. Things will get better to the extent that, with God's help, we work together for the common good, putting the weakest and most disadvantaged at the centre. Instead of complaining in these difficult times about what the pandemic prevents us from doing, let us do something for someone who has less: not the umpteenth gift for ourselves and our friends, but for a person in need whom no one thinks of!

'Bearers of gratitude' make the world a better place

Catholics can change the world by being bearers of gratitude. If we are bearers of gratitude, the world itself will become better, even if only by a little bit, but that is enough to transmit hope. Every event and need can become an offering of thanksgiving. The prayer of thanksgiving always begins here: to recognise that grace precedes us. The word 'Eucharist' derives from the Greek for thanksgiving. Even friendship is a gift for which we should always be grateful.

All families look to the Holy Family for 'sure inspiration'

It is good to reflect on the fact that the Son of God needed

the warmth of a family, like all children. Precisely for this reason, because it is Jesus' family, the family of Nazareth is the model family, from which all families of the world can find their sure point of reference and sure inspiration. Jesus' childhood was *unfolded in joy* with Mary and Joseph. Joyful families are also dedicated to serving others and committed to building a better world. They evangelise by the *example of life*. The pandemic experience has highlighted the central role of the family as the domestic Church and has shown the importance of community ties between families, which make the Church an authentic 'family of families'.

Mother Mary was not passive when she said 'yes'.

Mary found herself faced with a crucial decision: to say 'yes' to God, risking everything, even her life, or to decline the invitation and to continue her ordinary life. But the Gospel language does not just mean, 'let it be.' The expression indicates a strong desire, it indicates the will for that something to happen. In other words, Mary does not say: If it has to happen, let it happen. She does not express a weak and submissive acceptance, but rather she expresses a strong desire, a vivacious desire. She is not passive, but active. She does not submit to God, rather she binds herself to God. She is a woman in love, prepared to

sorrows and sins on their shoulders are like God's antennae in this world. They pray for each and every person: Whoever knocks on the door of God and prays finds a compassionate heart which does not exclude anyone. Prayer is not a form of escapism. If prayer does not gather the joys and sorrows, the hopes and the anxieties of humanity, it becomes a 'decorative' activity, a superficial, theatrical attitude.

Seek solidarity, not just profit

Those who work in agriculture should consider the relationship between Creator, man, and nature, striving to operate on a paradigm of solidarity, not profit alone. The relationship between man, nature and the Creator is one of profound balance and communion. The challenges in this field, for every person of goodwill, is to refocus all the more today, in the search not for the logic of profit, but of service, not of the exploitation of resources, but of care and attention for nature as a welcoming home for all. Those who work in this sector should look for new paths of charity and solidarity for a global and truer response to the phenomenon of poverty and inequality among peoples, especially in this crucial phase of world history.



JESUS YOUTH



Dr Edward Edezhath, one of the pioneers of Jesus Youth, gives us a glimpse of the growth of the movement.

Growth is all about continuity and new beginning.



There is a group activity that I try out during leadership training

sessions. I would ask the group to move around in silence and form clusters of similar people. It is interesting to then watch how the group reacts. Some would start quickly, but then slow down. Some would wait and watch for a while and then go about with a plan. Some others bring together different clusters. In brief, among us there are eager starters as well as faithful continuers. The challenge is, how to combine both these aspects in personal life as well as in our groups so that a balanced growth would be possible.

STARTERS VS. THOSE WHO HOLD ON

When in 1978 Fr. Fio asked the Kerala Charismatic Team to gather young people in our state, youth groups had already been quite active in many other states. Those early starters could boast of efficient leadership and colourful activities, but we were quite tentative and small. However, what stood out in our initiative was a simple affection for one another along with uninterrupted continuity. A few decades went by and then when we looked around many early starters were no longer on the scene while the humble yet continuous journey amidst us had branched out

well with a name and was bearing abundant fruits.

So we come to an important question: What is central to Jesus Youth fruitfulness? In a way at the heart of it there is a balancing between two very important aspects: promoting Spirit-endowed creative initiatives and ensuring their continuity. But there is a problem. When a group grows big and journeys through long periods of time, those who come into leadership would focus on continuity and may fear new beginnings. But the younger generation may want what is new and different. The hard thing is to balance the two, as someone said: 'change without continuity is chaos, but continuity without change is sloth – and very risky.'

When people ask me to talk about Jesus Youth movement, I naturally speak about different ministries, groups or other Jesus youth 'goodies' that have grown and spread. Surely, they are the good work of so many people moved by the Spirit. But there is another less discussed Jesus Youth list: things started in a big way but given up halfway. Some of them, like youth groups in different cities, talent projects, media initiatives, work for the poor, all began so beautifully with a lot of creativity but had an abrupt demise. I am sure those were responses to

some felt need and launched with much groundwork. But after a few gatherings, some visits or a few media episodes there came up some hurdles and finally each of them had an abrupt ending.

I am happy about the many things that have continued and as a result produced good fruits. On the other hand, I feel a little sad about the many things started well but dried up on the way. If only they could continue! Surely perseverance or steadfastness is a wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit that the Lord wants to cultivate in all of us. So, the big question is, how to make sure that what you begin will continue and grow?

ENSURING CONTINUITY AND GROWTH

Well begun is half done, but to build an initiative into maturity and help it bear rich fruits is a special art and a virtue. Here are some thoughts on seeing a seed of good work grow into a strong tree.

• **Look farther** – We start many good things responding to needs and problems here and now. Thus seeing many needy youth in a parish we start a group there. But only when we see an enduring need or challenges of youth in different places, continuity and growth



I am happy about the many things that have continued and as a result produced good fruits. On the other hand, I feel a little sad about the many things started well but dried up on the way. If only they could continue! Surely perseverance or steadfastness is a wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit that the Lord wants to cultivate in all of us.

become possible. Perhaps this is what the Bible means when it urges us repeatedly, 'Lift up your eyes and see' (Is 49:18; Jn 4:35).

• **Weather the dry-spell** – After starting some projects most of us lose the initial interest. Our friends also may slowly disappear. Gradually monotony, boredom and a feeling of stagnation can adversely affect the smooth functioning of what we start. The big challenge is to steadily move forward during these lean times.

• **Using changes for growth** – Change is inevitable. But to respond to it creatively one has to attend to the promptings of the Spirit and mend ways accordingly. So, if we are attentive to the Spirit all unexpected turns in our way including big persecutions can become occasions for growth.

• **Combining diverse styles and approaches** – 'If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.' Skill for starting something is quite distinct from the skill needed to build up the same and hence the need for a hand-in-hand approach. And so also the importance of having some clash of ideas and conflict of styles. Prophet Isaiah compares God's family as a place where all animals live in peace (11:6-9). But, of course, for this you need much tolerance and 'love for the enemy'.

• **Search, study and discuss** – For the smart beginnings to continue, grow and bear fruit we should be aware of good models from other times and other places; occasionally analyse different aspects and those interested should gather and discuss. This is how future plans take shape.

• **Readiness to die makes new life possible** – There is an opportune moment to end something, for a leader to vacate and give place to others and to uproot something to replant elsewhere. Real continuity is possible only if a grain of wheat falls and dies.

So, in a way the real continuity is all about ensuring uninterrupted and continuous change and growth. This becomes the true work of the Spirit in our personal lives as well as in the forward march of Jesus Youth movement.



.....

Dr. Edward Edezath, is a retired professor from St. Albert's College, Ernakulam. He lives with his wife Audrey in Kochi, India.

MISSION

TALK

JORDY MICHAEL

Jordy Michael realised his calling to mission from an early age. His travel and experience in mission areas showed him the conviction and total surrender to Christ of the missionaries and the deep faith of the local people.

My mission journey started when I was a school kid, where I was inspired by the organisation called Cherupushpa Mission League (CML) which was very active in the parishes of Kerala. It was through my encounter there that I learned more about St. Therese of Lisieux and how she became the patron saint of missionaries without even venturing out of the walls of her convent. She was a great motivation for me to become a missionary. During my school days, I would recite small prayers and surrender them for people working in the mission areas. My young self had a great desire to become a missionary without even knowing who a missionary was or what a mission place was.

Other than learning about them, there were

hardly any opportunities in CML to become a missionary. It was then that I got to interact with a few Jesus Youth, and I found great joy in becoming part of the movement. Being able to experience Christ on a deeper level, I also found more meaning to my missionary 'thirst'.

In those days, I found my mission places in my campus, my parish and my neighbouring areas. Slowly my involvement extended outside my immediate circles. Later, when I began travelling to different parts of India, my earlier experiences and convictions served as a foundation. I met a lot of people who surrendered their life for Christ and for their mission.

I remember a journey made from Mumbai to Nagpur in 2004 in a local compartment of a train. For this 18-hour journey, the train was



so packed that there was neither a seat nor space to put both feet on the floor. I just had enough space to stand on one leg. I could not communicate with anyone in the train because I did not know their local language, and I ended up not being able to have any food or even water. During the initial hours of the trip, people just stared and made fun of me. But with my long silence, they came around with sympathy and adjusted themselves to give me some space to sit.

In 2015, together with my wife and our three kids, we went for a month-long mission to Nagaland. My youngest child was only eighteen-months-old and taking her along with the older kids for the mission was tough. The long drive on rough roads, accommodations, food, climate, water scarcity, etc. made the mission difficult but in comparison to the zealous and courageous missionaries who spend their entire life in these mission areas, the troubles we experienced were nothing. The people in the villages looked up to us to learn from us but instead, we were learning a lot from them. The depth of their faith made a great impression on me and motivated me to deepen mine. They had to go through many difficulties just to keep their faith, and their courage inspired me. When we visited one of the families in the village, we realised that they did not have enough for even two meals a day and this was the family that was providing us with our groceries! Their way of prioritising spiritual activities led me to question my own priorities. Even though I had visited many mission places prior to that and had met a lot of missionaries, staying in that village was an unforgettable learning experience.

My travel and life with the many missionaries helped me to understand the depth and breadth of missionary life. Many times, I have wondered how these people



Many of these were ordinary people, but their thirst and conviction to share Christ were the reason behind their joyful attitude.

could make such sacrifices to be in their mission areas. Their depth of conviction made them stand firm during difficult times. Every hurdle was converted into opportunity. Their complete trust in Christ, the trust that the local people had on them, the words they spoke, the way they accepted struggles or opposition, all these were miracles to me. Many of them were ordinary people, but their thirst and conviction to share Christ were the reason behind their joyful attitude.

All of us are called to be missionaries but some are called to be sent out and some are called to lead mission wherever they are at. There are cases where the one who is called to go does not go, and those who are not called to be sent out, go out. This creates an imbalance in the overall mission purpose of the Church. Each of us needs to identify our mission: for some it may be in their school, in their college, at their workplace, in their family or in their community. For others, it may be at a distant place or at a difficult place. All these mission places are equally important to build God's Kingdom. God provides the grace and versatility to adapt to that mission place. It is up to each one of us to receive the grace and to go on mission.

Jordy Michael lives with this wife Dona and their four children in Ernakulam, South India. He works as a project manager in infrastructure development and has been involved in the movement for over two decades.

EXPERIENCE

THE LORD'S RUNNER

An unwillingly attended retreat changed Biju Viswanath's relationship with God. Today, he testifies that his life and work witness miracles because of an unwavering pact with the Lord.

But those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint (Isaiah 40:31).

This Word of God is very true in my life as I can truly say that what I am today is all because of him. Being born into a Catholic family of priests and nuns had its own advantages and disadvantages for my early faith formation. Even though I believed in God, I didn't want him to have a share in my life – he had his way and I had mine. But the Lord has his plans for me which was to give me hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11).

It was my uncle who forced me to go for a retreat to Assisi Retreat Centre in Bharananganam¹ immediately after my 10th standard exams in the year 1989. I am very thankful to him, despite all the 'unpleasant'

happenings which became a blessing in my journey with my Lord. Even though the retreat changed my attitude towards God, it didn't bring any change in my relationship with him. But the tragic death of my mother's elder brother who was a priest instilled in me the desire to become a priest, which helped me take decisions to build a relationship with the Lord.

When we make a decision to follow him, he will change our entire environment and others around us will begin to experience it, without our uttering a single word. I made the decision during the holidays after my first year of college. When college reopened – on the first day, at the first period itself, my teacher surprised me by saying, 'Biju, I see a change in you, keep it up.' One of the first decisions I made to come close to the Lord was to join a prayer group. So I began to attend the charismatic prayer group in my parish and the Jesus Youth prayer group in my college.

The friends in Jesus through my prayer groups were the greatest treasure of my life; their sharing, advice, love, etc. slowly started to clean the impurities in me. Some suggestions like put a chair for Jesus while you study and make the Bible one of the subjects you study, etc. really reflected in my results and started to earn me marks which I never even dreamt about. During my study time, the first subject I studied would be the Bible and only then would I study any other subject.



In no time, I fell in love with the Bible and began to read it while commuting and during the free hours in college.

Reading the Bible totally changed my perspective of the world – my life, people around me and my future. I started to live the Bible literally. Living the Bible makes others think that you are crazy and I was challenged by the life of St. Francis of Assisi who literally followed the words and life of Jesus. The most attractive chapters in Bible for me were Matthew 5, 6 and 7 which I think contains everything needed to live a Christian life. It helped me to be detached to everything in this world – wealth, fame and achievements. I have only one desire that is His kingdom and His righteousness, all others has been added up (Matthew 6:33).

As I walked with Jesus, he started to give me small responsibilities. Even though I was not a person with leadership skills or who could speak well, he started to use me. The Lord didn't want skilled people, he only wanted a 'donkey' to carry him wherever he wanted to go. The only thing I decided was never to say 'No' when the Lord asks, even if I was 100% sure that I could not do it. I believe that if I fail, it is Jesus who fails, so he will never allow me to fail. He can even make things right when I blunder. When I evaluate all the responsibilities undertaken, I know for sure that whenever I gave control to the Lord, I saw miracles

and whenever I tried to do things my way, they started to go wrong. I still remember, the first team I was elected to, the Trivandrum Zonal Campus Team. I never expected to be elected and when my name was called, I had trouble believing it. One thing that really amazes me in the Lord's calling is that he calls those who aren't expecting and those who expect, are never called.

Since the Lord loves and knows me better than myself, he always gives what is best for me. So in prayer, I never ask for my personal needs but share my thoughts

with him. Later, I find that he has given me that which I had never even dreamt about. I had always believed that it was the Lord's responsibility to find me a job as I was busy doing his work. So I never hunted for a job, this caused some problems at home as my parents and relatives began worrying about me. Anyway, at the right time, which is his time, he gave me a job, without my applying or even preparing a resume. When I was getting my visa processed for my job in the Gulf, the travel agent was surprised to know I got the job without any work experience. The funniest part about my job is that, I was on the interview board that interviewed candidates for the job I eventually took!

When in 2006, I got the offer for my present job in this Gulf country, I was very hesitant to take it for I was afraid that without the Sacraments and prayer groups, I would not survive. But through spiritual companions,

the Lord revealed that it was he who gave me this job and that he would take care of me. And yes, over the subsequent years, I saw how the Lord made me an instrument in building his kingdom in this difficult nation. As I was leaving for this country to take up the job, I remember telling my mother, 'Don't expect me back alive, I am going to become a martyr for the Lord.' Since the Lord had a different plan for me, I still continue to work for him. He uses my job, time, salary and myself, fully for his work. Since I had made a pact with Lord that I would do his work and he should do mine, I regularly see miracles. He gives me wisdom and knowledge to excel in my career as I give first priority to him.

The Lord gave me a special grace to forgive people despite how they may have troubled me. Even if they throw curses at my face, I am able to smile at them and say I love them. But once, I struggled to forgive a colleague. I used to justify my inability to forgive him to his being a non-Christian, attributing his troubling me to his religious belief. But then I began to feel the blessings from the Lord grow distant and I started to commit mistakes in all I did. When I shared this with my spiritual guide, she said that there was no way out than to forgive him. On my immediate vacation to India, I attended three retreats in a row for the strength to forgive. After forgiving him, I began to see everything fall into place and the blessings flow. He continued to give me trouble, and I kept forgiving and loving him. I started helping him any opportunity I got. Slowly, he started to acknowledge that if he needed any help he could come to me with the surety that I would help him better than anyone else could.

My journey with the Lord over the past three decades has not always been easy, there have been ups and downs, tiffs with the Lord, faith crises and spiritual struggles. Sacraments and fellowship helped immensely to overcome these struggles. One of the strengths I have from the movement is that whenever I become weak, there are many around who stand by me and raise their hands to heaven. The most beautiful moments of my life are the times of quiet prayer, where my soul and Jesus' become one. How beautiful it is to sit in the lap of Jesus and experience the warmth of his heart! Yes there is joy, there is peace and there is fullness. This is what motivates me to run for the Lord and never tire of doing so. Please pray for me to continue in my journey with the Lord and to receive the crown of righteousness (2 Timothy 4:8).

¹ Bharnanganam is an important Catholic pilgrim centre in South India.



Biju Viswanath works as an IT professional in a GCC country. He is part of the International Council and was previously the National Coordinator of the resident country.

'DON'T EXPECT ME BACK ALIVE, I AM GOING TO BECOME A MARTYR FOR THE LORD.'

MY 'YES LORD' LITANY



Can two words of a song change your life? They did for **Shaly Leo**, each time she prayed, 'Yes Lord.'

An auditorium full of students, everyone singing aloud, praising God. The preacher encouraging everyone to visualise a fount of grace above their head. The place resounded with shouts of praises – while I started crying at the top of my voice for not receiving a ‘spiritual experience’!

It was January 28th 1989, the last day of Brother Fritz Mascarenhas’ retreat at Mar Ivanios College, Trivandrum. Some volunteers saw my cry as evidence of high anointment and invited me to the prayer group. I jumped at the invitation with a deep longing for a spiritual experience. When the formation of a music ministry was announced, I was encouraged to join; me – with neither knowledge of music nor a good voice – joined great musicians. During a campus programme not long after, when the music ministry was at the chapel, my pride at being part of a big music team, was at its peak. In a fraction of a second, a message from the intercession ministry was read aloud, ‘There’s someone in the music ministry with pride; the Lord asks that person to repent.’ It was a big shock. That evening in my hostel room, I cried for hours and asked his forgiveness, holding the Bible in my hand. That was my first spiritual experience.

After the retreat, during my free time, I loved to sit near the hostel chapel and study. I scheduled ‘chapel-time’ every day. Every moment spent in the chapel would become spiritual experiences and I would come out wiping tears of joy. This was the beginning of my personal prayer.

One holiday, after breakfast, as I was studying near the chapel, I had an unexpected longing for coffee. It was 11 o’clock in the morning and our usual coffee was served in the canteen at 4 pm only. Suddenly, a hostel mate brought me a cup of coffee. I had not told anyone my need! This small incident was a great miracle for me.

I loved to attend all Jesus Youth



campus programmes, held in various colleges as a participant or volunteer. We started a hostel prayer group and I was blessed with a prayer partner, both of us would spend hours in prayer. My prayer partner suggested a listening time in silence. I tried to listen but was very distracted, but she shared her vision. She said, ‘I saw a heap of thorns... suddenly a towel flew and covered it entirely, moments later the towel was taken by somebody, the thorns turned to beautiful flowers, something was written on the towel, “Prayer is power.”’ This vision convinced me of the power of intercession.

After my graduation, I spent a year with my family, attending courses. No mentors, no prayer meetings and no prayer partners but daily Mass refreshed and energised me; I was also able to attend retreats. I grew closer to my siblings and helped them develop a close relationship with Jesus. Family prayer followed by reading many psalms, daily Holy Mass, reading spiritual books were joyful moments. Yet one question kept bothering me, what was the purpose of my life? Though I wanted to live a life seeking God’s will, I was not sure if I was doing

so. *Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus* (1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18). From the very core of my heart, I started reciting this word of God often.

I missed the JY fellowship during my post-graduation at Pune and afterwards while working in Chennai. But when I took up a new job in Cochin in 1996, cell groups, weekends at Emmaus volunteering for programmes or assisting in the kitchen, and meeting many zealous JY, all became cherished blessings. Personal prayer, daily Mass, intercession, spiritual guidance and attending various conferences and prayer meetings became my lifestyle. The Lord was moulding me for the professionals’ ministry.

Two years later, my marriage was fixed with a very active Jesus Youth. My relatives and family members had to travel from Wayand to Irinjalakkuda¹ for the marriage. Arrangements were made for me to stay at Irinjalakkuda the day before the marriage. There were no traditional celebrations the day before marriage but my Lord had arranged a special celebration for me that night – a special opportunity to sit alone in front of the Blessed Sacrament for a long time. He was preparing and blessing me for my new journey.

I was the youngest of seven children and had spent a great part of my life in hostels after my 10th grade and now got married to the eldest of a family. The traditions and customs of the place and house were entirely different from what I was used to. For the first time in my life, I had to do house chores. We had to leave for work early in the morning and arrived back late, there was no time for personal prayer, Bible reading, daily Mass and Adoration. In addition to that, I took the corrections from my in-laws as blame and this failure to live up to their expectations made me very sad, lonely and dejected. Life had become very mechanical and I didn’t have anyone to share my wounded feelings.



He asked me again, 'Are you happy?' With more firmness, I replied, 'No' again. Then my seven-year-old son told me, 'You can be happy if you sing the song, Yes Lord, Yes Lord.'

I tried to recollect the sessions from my marriage preparation retreat. 'If you love your husband, you need to love your husband's family.' I needed to love my husband's family as my own but it was not easy to practice it. I also didn't want to share my anguish with my husband, parents or siblings. My inner cry was increasing day by day. Then the Lord blessed me with a travelling companion. I requested her to help me love my husband's family. I enjoyed my travel with her and she still remains a constant companion in my life's journey – Mama Mary. She taught me to recite the Rosary for the world, Church, JY movement and so on. Personally, I started considering the Rosary as the seventh pillar of JY.

After a few months, we shifted to Cochin and I was able to restart many pillars of Jesus Youth. Repeating Word of God and reciting Rosary aloud became a habit when I did my house chores. The Lord also helped us to be part of a family cell, where our monthly meetings included praise and worship, Bible study, action songs by children and partaking of

meals together. It was a fellowship filled with joy and laughter. Picnics, pilgrimages and tours strengthened the bond among the families. We were blessed with a son in the year 2000. In the year 2003, we organised a retreat for our cell group. More JY families joined the retreat, which was named '*Thirukkudumba dyanam*' (Holy Family Retreat). The need to grow as a holy family was inculcated through that retreat.

My father-in-law suffered from severe asthma and was often admitted to the hospital, where he would be in ICU for 3 to 4 days every month. One day when I was with him in the ICU, he beckoned me close, laid his hands on my head and blessed me. Little did I know that it was his last blessing. The death of my father-in-law was untold grief to us all. My love, compassion and commitment to my husband's family began to grow more than ever before. And then in the year 2007, God blessed us with a daughter.

Most of the time when the children fell sick, my husband would not be present due to work and travel. When

our daughter was a year old, she got hurt badly and became very ill. As a baby, it had been a task to get her to take medication. Now, with this illness, I knew that it could lead to her hospitalisation and with worry, I took her to the doctor again. Near the doctor's residence, there was a bakery. When we reached there my son asked me, 'Are you happy?' I mistook his question for a ploy to get chocolates and replied, 'No.' As we were returning back in an auto rickshaw, he asked me again, 'Are you happy?' With more firmness, I replied, 'No' again. Then my seven-year-old son told me, 'You can be happy if you sing the song, *Yes Lord, Yes Lord*.' He taught me the song and we sang it together all the way home. The Lord was teaching me to say yes to him in all circumstances, with complete trust. My daughter took her medicines for the first time without any trouble, her wound healed quickly and the fever abated. That day I learned that the Lord could guide us through children too.

After much thought and discussion with my husband, I took a break from

my career. A chance to say 'Yes Lord' came soon. When my daughter was in kindergarten, an accident left her with a severe burn injury. She was in Burn ICU for nearly two months. I was there with her throughout and was witness to her severe pain. There were many dying in the nearby beds and I was able to spend time there in the ICU in praise and thanksgiving. Our parish priest who came to see us asked me, 'How can you be so peaceful at such a time?' The reason for my transformation was 'Yes Lord'.

Various retreats and talks I have heard since 1998 filled my heart with the awareness that a married couple should be happy together. We decided to attend a yearly retreat as a family as it would be a formation for our kids too. But planning the breaks for the retreat were difficult. When I would get leave from office, my husband couldn't make it. I began blaming him for not sacrificing his work and organising his priority. Though I tried very hard to practice what I learnt from the retreats, I failed many times. But I was amazed to see, without even attending any of those retreats or checking my notes, my husband would practice those learnings in his day-to-day life as a living example. When I became more focused on prayer, he was teaching me to witness Jesus in family, profession and society.

My prayer for the children has always been that they should not belong to the world. When they were small, I would make them write prayers, participate in daily Mass, Confession at least once in a month, five-minute personal prayer, reading Word of God, Family Rosary, etc. At different stages of their growth, I felt their happiness was found in worldly things. So I would seek the intercession of many saints, angels and specially their guardian angels. I prepared a list of Bible verses and together with my husband, we would recite them daily. Whether they follow a JY lifestyle or not, we surrender them to God to fulfil his plan for them.

When I passed the entrance test for Ph.D., I had to join as a full time research scholar for five years. My husband's sister began her post-graduation and she and my mother-in-law came to stay with us. During the initial three years, my husband was able to come home only for a couple

of days a month. My responsibilities were increasing. Many scholars, teachers and researchers advised that my high commitment, hard work and honesty was not required for Ph.D. Humiliation, loneliness, fear, bitter experiences and gynecological issues burdened me. Assignments for next day, dealing with the teenage issues of children, house chores, and heavy stress, all wrecked my peace. I began experiencing mood swings and wondered if I should indeed continue the study or drop it. In college, my lunch break was before the Blessed Sacrament in a convent nearby. I was confused as to whether this was the path the Lord wanted me to travel. When I opened the Bible, I would get two verses often. These were my survival medicines. *Call to me and I will answer you; I will tell you wonderful and marvellous things that you know nothing about* (Jeremiah 33:3) and *Thus says Yahweh, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: I am Yahweh your God and teach you for your own good, I lead you in the way You ought to go* (Isaiah 48:17). I tried to say 'Yes Lord', submitted my Ph.D. thesis in 2018 and was awarded a Doctorate in 2020.

Soon after my thesis, I had to undergo a complicated surgery and was on bed-rest. All my past experiences of rejection, injustice, being taken advantage of, all started clouding my mind and I regretted the sacrifices offered for many. During the rest period, I wrote down all those feelings, had open sharings with whomsoever I felt. I really wished for a sincere Confession to help me forgive. My husband helped me a lot during this time and the Merciful Lord provided me with a special opportunity for Confession and to receive the Holy Eucharist daily, while on bed-rest. It felt like the Lord missed me in church and came home to meet me.

As I was recovering, our parish unit elections were planned. The previous committee had been requesting me to take a responsible role in the family unit. But my plan had been to relax for a year, not to take up any job or responsibilities but to focus on my husband and children. Finally I decided to say 'Yes Lord' based on the conviction that I should not miss any small opportunity to serve him. I started praying for all the families of my

unit. From January 2020 till date, the Lord blessed me to undertake a number of initiatives for the overall wellbeing of the members of our parish family unit. Greening the parish unit was one such initiative based on one of the findings of my Ph.D. that joyful memories in the environment lead to pro-environmental behaviour.

When my daughter started attending a weekly English prayer group for youth, it began to bring me nostalgic memories of my college prayer group in Mar Ivanios. A few parents regularly joined this youth prayer group too and soon there evolved the need for a family prayer group of which I was a happy participant. Another 'Yes Lord' was when I was asked to be the coordinator of this weekly family prayer group named 'Connect'.

The Lord knew very well my longing to connect with old JY friends of Mar Ivanios College. By his grace, the JY alumni group were able to reconnect during this pandemic. The virtual gathering we had on 12th September 2020, with the blessing of the bishop, who had been a strong supporter of the JY movement during our college days was another great miracle like the 'coffee experience' 31 years ago. Our God is an awesome God. Yes Lord.

I cannot express my turning points or faith journey with particular incidents. It is an ongoing experience for me. His providence and guidance has been with me every step of my life. I believe he is sharing his suffering and joy with me to experience him day by day.

Day by day,
Stone by stone,
Build your secret slowly.
Day by Day you'll grow too,
You'll know heavens glory.



A Ph.D. holder in Social Work, **Dr. Shaly Leo** has worked in the corporate sector, national

and international development agencies. She lives with her filmmaker husband, Leo Thaddeus and their two children in Kochi, South India.

CHARTING A JOURNEY TO BABY JESUS

Sheeba Prasad was given the responsibility for last December's advent preparation for children. She tells us how the much-appreciated Journey with Saints was the fruit God's amazing care and providence



It was in September 2020 that I was entrusted with the year's Advent preparation for children. From that moment, I was anxious as to how to go about this huge responsibility. My prayer was, 'Lord if you have chosen me to fulfill this, please lay straight the paths for me.' The rest of September was spent in prayer.

October was the month of the Rosary and I held on to Mother Mary. By God's grace, we have been able to go for Holy Mass every day and so as I do for each special intention, I offered my new responsibility during each Mass. I offered my doubts, capabilities and my cluelessness about how to bring this out for children every day during Mass. My ardent prayer was that it be fulfilled according to how the Lord intended. The whole of October was spent praying so.

When I was given this responsibility, it was recommended that I select a few people and form a team for this. I had a few people in mind and some were suggested to me. I kept all of them in prayer along with the daily intention at Mass. On October 29th, at Mass, I asked the Lord to reveal to me that day, those who would be part of the team for this project. What I had in mind was, just as the Trinity is three, a three member team. But I had before me five members, including myself. I went ahead and called each of them up. Two of them said that they would not be able to join due to existing commitments but promised to help out in case of emergencies. This left three of us – just as I had prayed for! That was a great confidence booster for me.

During the past twenty-nine days of October, I had prayed hard for what the content would be and how would I put together the advent preparation. It also had to be different from the previous years' advent preparations as well. In prayer the answer came to me – child saints. Though I knew about a few young saints very well, I was clueless about how this would translate into content for each of the twenty-five days. But this revelation was on my mind day and night and I prayed very specially for it as well as the mode of content creation – would it be videos, text content or something else.

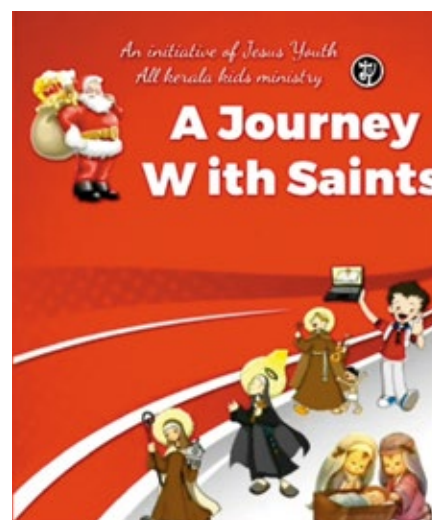
So I decided to share these thoughts

and ideas with the team – Suja Siju and Priscilla from Palakkad and myself from Kayamkulam¹. Though I had never met them, it became clear over the coming days that they were indeed handpicked for this by the Holy Spirit. We got together on an online meeting and I told them about the child saints idea. Little did I know that I was in for another surprise. When the meeting was convened, one of them was on the verge of quitting from this project due to other pressing responsibilities. But when she heard the theme, she knew that God indeed in his mysterious ways had been preparing her for it, several months ago. How? For the past six or seven months, she kept getting promptings about child saints. She did not know why these thoughts kept recurring with such persistence, and this 'troubled' her. It was only now that she realised that those promptings were the working of the Holy Spirit. I was amazed. Before we even thought about this advent preparation, God had already thought about it and planned it out!

We decided to bring the videos out in two languages – English and Malayalam. While Suja would take care of the Malayalam part, we did not have anyone to translate this to English. This intention was kept in prayer. Prior to the content creation, the JY Kids Ministry had prepared a brochure about it, which was circulated among all JY groups. Seeing this, Dr. Sindhu contacted me from Florida. She was very taken up by the idea and wanted to replicate it for children in the US as well. She also said that she would be happy to help out in any way possible. Here again, I got to see God's amazing care and providence. He was laying straight the paths for us! His words in Philippians 4:19 became a reality for us, *And my God will fully satisfy every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*

By November-end, most of the videos were ready. I was adamant that my children too watch them along with the others when released, with the same excitement and expectation and do the daily tasks with enthusiasm.

We hoped that *Journey with Saints* would be unlike previous years where the children had to depend on elders. We wanted the kids to be able to watch and do



My prayer was, 'Lord if you have chosen me to fulfill this, please lay straight the paths for me.'

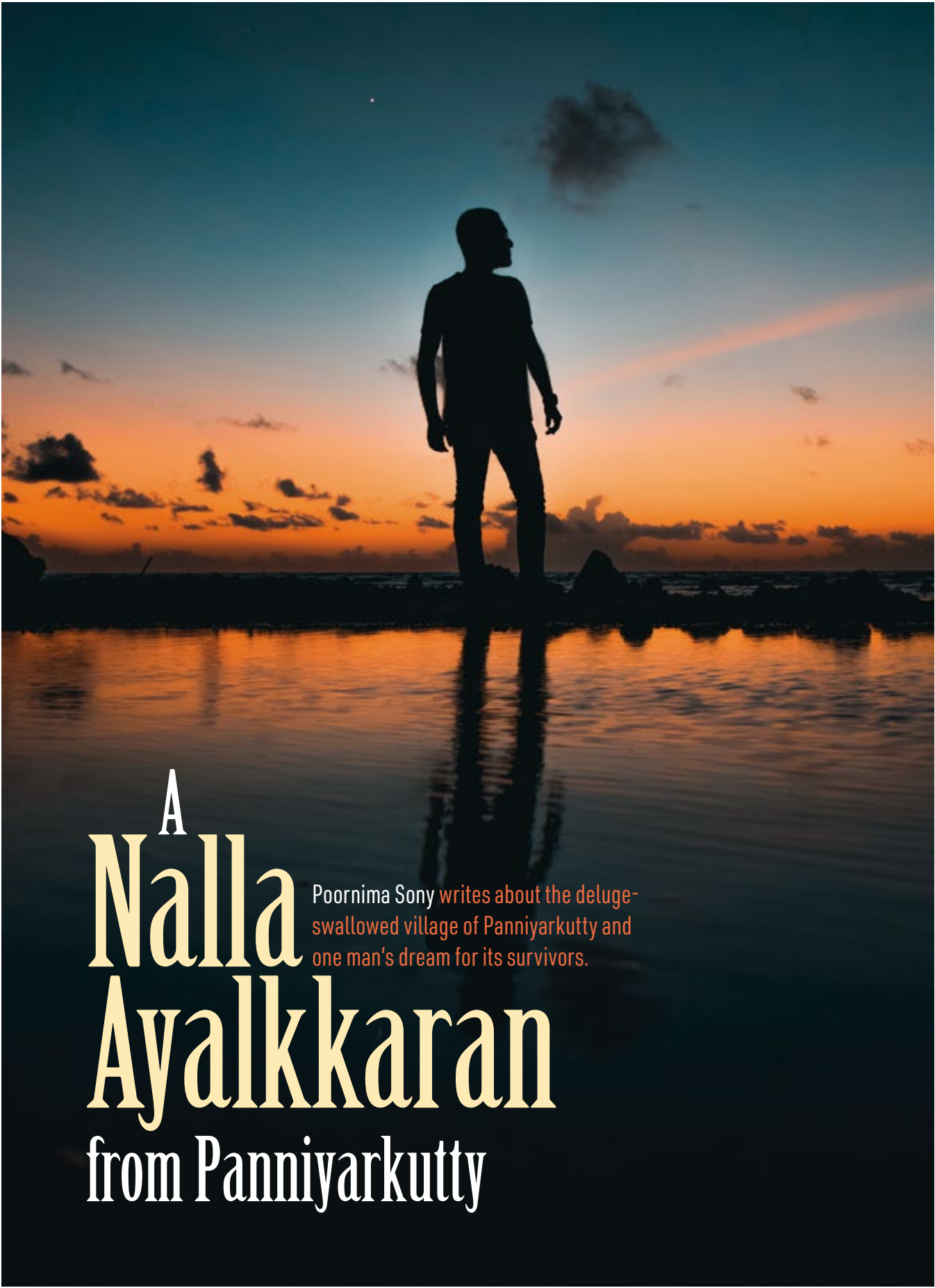
the activities and prayers by themselves. One of the instructions we had given at the beginning was to keep a journal and write about the videos and their experience of the advent journey. One of my great joys was that my children too prepared their journals for these twenty-five days completely. Their enthusiasm for this was so evident when each night they'd enquire about the next day's video and my clues would keep them guessing!

One of the things that my two older kids told me – and my joy at their realisation of this – affirmed the fruitfulness of this advent preparation. 'Amma, even though we are a bit naughty, we too can do it, right? We too can be saints.'

¹ Palakkad and Kayamkulam are places in India's southern state of Kerala.



Sheeba Prasad lives with her husband and three children in Kayamkulam, South India, where she runs a business. She is part of the JY Kids Ministry and has been active in the movement for more than two decades.



A Nalla Ayalkkaran

from Panniyarkutty

Poornima Sony writes about the deluge-swallowed village of Panniyarkutty and one man's dream for its survivors.

This may read as a fairy-tale but in fact is the story of a man who became a *Nalla Ayalkkaran* (good neighbour) to many. For a people, pain-weary, desolate and stumbling in the darkness, this is the story of those who brought the light of hope. In the midst of tragedy that engulfed a lifetime's work and effort, this is the story of the faithful, ever present love of God. For combatants for goodness, moving towards their goal's seemingly impossible summit on wings of fire, this is a story of extraordinary fulfilment.

The flood that devastated Kerala in August 2018, following unprecedented heavy monsoon rain, was the worst in nearly a century. Yet, the tone of resilience resounded all around.

Our story takes place in Panniyarkutty – a small village in the hilly district of Idukki, in India's southern state of Kerala. On August 24, 2018, an entire hill came down in a flash and buried the whole village of Panniyarkutty, virtually wiping it out. All that made up the village vanished in the blink of an eye. Today Panniyarkutty is a mere memory. Lost houses, forlorn lives, pain-wrought hearts, inundated eyes, life stands as a fiasco before the people of Panniyarkutty.

Saji Panniyarkutty – a young man responding to a call from God rewrote the destiny of nine families. He too had lost his home, hopes and dreams in the same flood. Yet, the pain and anguish of his fellow survivors gave rise to a dream – the construction of *Marian Valley*.

It was in response to the deluge and to reach out to rain-ravaged lives, Jesus Youth started the *Nalla Ayalkkaran* project. As part of it, twelve villages across Kerala were adopted for a period of one year to help the villagers get back to normal living, one of which was Panniyarkutty. Saji was the person heading the *Nalla Ayalkkaran* team at Panniyarkutty. During the initial days of the floods more than three hundred *Nalla Ayalkkaran* volunteers from all over Kerala reached Panniyarkutty and got involved in the rescue and relief operations there. With the financial assistance that came in from Jesus Youth across the globe, rehabilitation of many people could take place in all the twelve villages.

My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). This Word of God comes alive here. Pradeep (a Jesus Youth in UK), who hailed from Uzhavoor¹ made a turning point in the realisation of this project. He had a one-acre plot of land in Uzhavoor, inherited from his parents, which he decided to donate. Rajju and the team from *Nalla Ayalkkaran*, came forward to support and take this further. The plan of action was drawn – selecting the families, making the layout, raising finance, etc. But the execution of the project did not come easy. Due to the geographical layout of the land, it could not be easily divided into ten plots. Many engineers were

Today Panniyarkutty is a mere memory. Lost houses, forlorn lives, pain-wrought hearts, inundated eyes, life stands as a fiasco before the people of Panniyarkutty.

consulted regarding the scope of construction and finally a solution began to emerge.

By the grace of the Holy Spirit who arranges for happy meetings, the project was able to proceed with the help of a revenue department official, who happened to be the brother of the procurator of Mutholy² monastery. More than eleven lakh rupees (USD fifteen thousand) was spent for the earth works. God also brought Soman Theruvil to the team. Though a non-Christian, along with his empathic and secular vision, he became a strong pillar of the project. During a gathering Saji shared about this project with Sabi, a JY from Kannur and through him met his Regional Manager, Joseph (a JY from Calicut) of the Faisal and Shabana Foundation, a philanthropy foundation that provides humanitarian aid and assistance.

Awarding the contract for construction was another bigger issue. Many of the contractors who were approached for this project deemed it inviable. Due to the lack of a proper road leading to the property, loading and unloading of materials would be a herculean task. But God brings the right people at the right time and Xavier was appointed contractor for the project. However there still remained the hurdle of laying a proper road for material transportation. It was here that the tireless work – be it day or night – of JY volunteers paved a joyful path for Marian Valley. Jissmon, Ajo, Dinu, and Alexy became full-time support to realise the project. Pradeep's whole family supported the team, spiritually with prayers and as helping hands. This project became a tool of evangelisation for the locals when the road was extended to other houses nearby, who didn't have direct road access.

There were a lot of ambassadors of God who helped the project on its year-and-a-half journey. They came as financial supporters, prayer partners, free helpers, many offered food and shelter. The area MLA Mr. Mani C Kappan visited the site and appreciated the good work. The project was christened 'Marian Valley' by Bishop Mar Joseph Kallarangatt during the blessing ceremony and the Pala Diocese Social Service Society donated one lakh for each house of the project.

Many Jesus Youth have come forward to offer monthly support towards the debts of this project. And today, Saji – the *Nalla Ayalkkaran* from Idukki boldly says that all things are possible through the grace of Jesus Christ.

Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established (Proverbs 16:3).



^{1,2} Uzhavoor and Mutholy are places in India's southern state of Kerala.



Poornima Sony is an aspiring writer and an artist. She is currently pursuing her BTech in civil engineering from Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Technology, Kottayam, South India.

IN FOCUS

Faith Deposits in God's Universal Bank

Total surrender to God has been bedrock of **Johnykutty's** life. Through small and big instances, he testifies to God's steadfast love and providence.

And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19).

Total surrender to Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of my life. Along with that, the Jesus Youth movement played an essential role in shaping and transforming me as an ardent Catholic. My life in the movement started during college. My involvement and commitment for Christ mattered in my all-round development. The six pillars of Jesus Youth movement carved me out as a good human. Through all the ups and downs of life, I was always blessed by divine grace and love, which helped me to stay calm and patient in crises. The time, money and energy I spent for Jesus has returned back to me, tenfold. I strongly believe that the fortune I have today was the result of my full-fledged dependency on the Almighty God.

My marriage happened after a lot of prayer and preparation, at the age of twenty-six. The Lord blessed me with a charming, God-fearing girl as my wife. My financial situation was not stable and I was not well-settled during that time. I only had a small job in Trivandrum¹. After our first child was born, our financial condition became tight, yet the Almighty held my hands during those difficult times. In spite of the financial crisis, I was never put into a situation where I had to borrow money either from private money lenders or from the banks.

The financial prosperity I have today has been the greatest blessing from the Lord for my reliance on his will rather than mine. Every penny earned and spent was accounted for, which helped me not to spend on superfluous activities. In the midst of my financial crisis and family situation I got a golden opportunity to work abroad. Since God was my first priority, I politely declined the offer, also considering the advice of my spiritual father and elders. Though I had to face taunts and ridicule because of this, I remembered and upheld the words of Isaiah, *Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. Behold, I have graven you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me* (Isaiah 49:14, 15). I stand firm and confident before my friends, family and relatives surrendering to this Word of God.


I can do all things through God who strengthens me (Philippians 4:13), this Word of God became a promise fulfilled in my life. I had a dream to start my own firm after college, that would enable me provide jobs to others. By the grace of Jesus I ventured into the construction business, where, before long I was able to build a house for an orphaned widow. The tithes of mine and some friends' pooled together helped build it. Psalm 23, *The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want; he makes me lie down in green pastures*, is the maxim of our company which was established in 1995. It was the fruit of a year's prayers and dreams. I made sure to pay my employees regularly, without fail. Even when we faced financial crises, God arranged for everything to run smooth under his glorious protection. All my help and sustenance is from God.

There was an instance when I was dodged by a client. At first, I decided to file a case against him but after praying about it and considering his situation, I decided to forgive him. If I didn't he would have had to face legal consequences in his job abroad, which was his family's only source of income. The grace of that forgiveness helped me in many situations, especially paved the way for my children to study abroad in Canada.

The grace of that forgiveness helped me in many situations, especially paved the way for my children to study abroad in Canada.

I'm very joyful and grateful to Jesus for giving me five children who have strong faith in Jesus and live in humility, prayer and holiness. God blessed us abundantly as my children were growing up. People have asked my wife Sissy, 'How do you manage your five children in difficult situations?' We strongly believe in Jeremiah 29:11 in the case of our children, *For I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and hope.* Our elder daughter Anna Treesa was a JY full-timer. Shortly after completing her full-timer ship she got the opportunity to go to Canada for her higher studies. Though it was a time of severe financial burden, everything went well. Immediately after her studies, she got a job in one of Canada's most reputed banks. Through the immense mercy of the Lord, three of our children went to Canada to pursue their higher studies and without any obstacles.

During the pandemic, God blessed me with sufficient work and projects without any problem, while many of my colleagues envisaged serious draw-backs. Even when all of us tested positive for Covid-19 and went on home quarantine, we experienced the care of God through our neighbours, family and friends. This Christmas was an unforgettable one in our lives where we experienced the love of God in an amazing way through others. The abundance of God's love, care and protection towards his children is everlasting and enriching – which is what I am experiencing at this very moment.

I have never compromised on my personal prayer, Holy Mass, regular confession and tithing. I'm satisfied with what the Lord has given to me and I am happy about it. The complete surrender and trust in Jesus Christ is our only bank balance. He has provided for our daily deeds and has never left us in want. We do not have any worry or tension because we have a deposit of faith in God's Universal Bank. 

¹ Trivandrum is the capital of the southern India state of Kerala.



Johnykutty Francis and his wife, Sissy John stay in Kanjirapally, South India. They have five children, and have recently completed twenty-six years of married life.

MONEY AND MATERIALISM



**PERSPECTIVES TO
BE CHANGED**

What should the Christian attitude towards money be? How can we create a culture of sharing? What are the transactions and deals we should be careful of? Find answers to all these questions in this article.

In this modern world where people are busy building their castles of glass, amassing money and materialistic pleasures, our perspective towards money is very important. Although a certain amount of money is needed to live and people cannot be happy without it that is not the only thing our lives rely upon. We need money to live, but we must never live for money. Life and its various phases have taught me this lesson. Those who fear God and those who are protected in the hands of God must have a good knowledge about how to manage money. 1 Timothy 6: 10 says, *the love of money is the root of all evil*. The desire to amass money paves the way for many sins. The desire to lead an extravagant materialistic life will coerce a man to find means to amass money which in turn will force him to turn to sources that lead to sin.

To be detached when we use money is the best strategy that we can adopt. 'Money is important, but it is not for money that we live,' is a perspective that we have to embrace to lead a successful life. Matthew 6:24 says, *No one can serve two masters for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and Mammon*. Here mammon is a reference to materialistic pleasures, including money. Those who live a life according to the will of God, like the saints are capable of sacrificing all materialistic pleasures of the world as they are not allured by it. My experience has shown me various wealthy people, who renounced everything they had to lead a life of simplicity. The minimalistic way of life lead by some of the religious has influenced my perspective on money. Instead of adding extravagances to life they renounce everything and concentrate on leading a simple life. Cars, clothes, and big houses allure everyone. But having a minimalistic approach towards them is an essential lesson that we have to learn. The reasons for most of the sins we see around us like liquor and drugs, corruption, gambling, etc. springs from the desire to amass money and to lead a materialistic life. We have to learn how to develop a detached and balanced approach to money. This can bring miraculous changes in your life. Compared to people obsessed with money

and an extravagant life with all its frustrations, people who live a simple and minimalistic life lead a happy and peaceful life.

The Culture of Sharing Wealth

There are different types of people we see around us. People who spend all that they earn, people who keep a part of their income for the poor and destitute, those who are self-centered and never lend a helping hand to the poor. And then there are people who help the poor even when they cannot afford to. In Malachi 3:10, God says, *Bring the tithes in full to the treasury, so that there is food in my house; put me to the test now like this, says Yahweh Sabaoth, and see if I do not open the floodgates of heaven for you and pour out an abundant blessing for you*. The sources of money that you receive will be different but God is the owner of it all. He is the ultimate source. We are always answerable to God for everything that we value. Many good people around us help others in different ways, helping the poor and desolate, people with immediate urgencies, through groups from church and other congregations. Whatever the medium we have to keep a part of our income for the poor. We are just the custodians of the money that God has provided us with. We are answerable to God if our neighbor is going through difficult days. When we help them we are stepping into the shoes of the Good Samaritan. We can live a happy and peaceful life if we have the satisfaction of having done something worthy in our life. Youth ministries always try to keep their activities God-oriented by caring for each other. It is not sympathy we need to give to those with outstretched hands. We need to step into their shoes to know how it feels. Their welfare is a matter of our concern as we are answerable to God. We have to share what we have – like the widow's mite from the Bible. We have to build a culture of sharing wealth so future generations can also imbibe it.

Cash Transactions and Deals

Another important area is that of cash transactions and deals like money lending, etc. which have to be done with utmost care, especially by people who are close to God. Such transactions can lead to ruptures in relationships. Many friendships have suffered because of issues springing up from money-related problems. Borrowing money, especially from friends or family should be resorted to only if we are certain that we will be able to repay it and at the right time. If we are unable to do so, informing and communicating with them is very important.

Many years ago, a friend of mine lent some money to another person who was struggling financially and needed money. This person was so badly off that it was

doubtful if he would be able to return it. Fifteen years later, when we were travelling together, we happened to meet this person, who returned the money he had borrowed all those years ago. This was a very responsible attitude from his side.

We also come across people who won't attend phone calls and ignore those who had helped them before. This is not a good practice. This happens because of money management issues and an inability to handle expenses. There are those who fall into debt traps because of unwise expenses and unwarranted materialism. Such people need to budget their income by reducing expenses, avoiding unnecessary buying

and restricting to one's needs.

Recently, a person I know well fell into hard times because of the Covid situation. Some of us collected money and we went and gave it to him. A week later, this person called me and said that he had been going through some very difficult times and it was then that he received the money from us – providentially. He was very thankful and said that he would always remember us in prayer. We have to develop a habit of being grateful to those who help us. We have to return money borrowed when we are able to and we need to help others when we have sufficient enough, remembering those who've helped us in our time of need. ■

MONEY MANAGEMENT TIPS

THE FOLLOWING ARE A FEW TIPS WHICH MAY HELP REDUCE COST AND MANAGE FINANCE AT HOME:

- ▶ Cooking food only according to the quantity and specific requirements of the family members ensures no food is wasted.
- ▶ An important thing while managing finance is handling our ego. The number of children in most families are very few yet there will be a large collection of rarely used clothes. Spread the word at least among your close relatives and friends that you are open to accepting used clothes and you will be surprised at large packages reaching you. Some countries also have pre-owned clothes stores.
- ▶ If your family is planning to eat outside at a restaurant, it will be a good idea to order fewer dishes than the number of people. There is nothing wrong in sharing food and we need not be concerned about what others think. Only remember that it will not be the

others who will be paying the bill. Never be embarrassed at the idea of parcelling the extra food.

- ▶ Remembering to pay the bills, fees, etc. on time is a good way to reduce expenses in the form of fines.
- ▶ Batch shopping – prepare a list before you set out for shopping, even in the case of essentials, which will help in avoiding multiple visits to the shop.
- ▶ All resources, including money, water, and electricity are scarce, which should be shared with all God's children. Nobody has the right to be lavish with it or waste it.
- ▶ Never purchase anything on an impulse; always look for cheaper but equally effective alternatives.
- ▶ How much money do you spend in a week, month or year? Do you have a clear idea regarding that? Tracking your expenses is the best way to control it. There are many money management apps available now that can help.

Things to ponder about

- ▶ School reopening is usually a tough time for a family with several kids. But why don't some people anticipate and plan for it?
- ▶ Medical expenses upset the family budget severely. But why don't people consider insurance to overcome that?
- ▶ Why are some people permanently in financial trouble? Some people repeatedly get into business, despite a lack of acumen.

- ▶ A spouse who is least bothered about the family's financial struggle and goes on spending!
- ▶ Some people never understand the concept of 'no free lunch'; no business can exist or grow by constantly selling below cost.
- ▶ There is no alternative to working hard and in today's world the best form of job security is by continuously upgrading skills.
- ▶ Luke 14:28 – *Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?*

Attitudes towards money

- ▶ How can we develop the right attitude towards money? Mathew 6:24 – *You cannot serve both God and money.*
- ▶ 1 Timothy 6:10: *For the love of money is the root cause of all kinds of evil*
- ▶ Is it possible to avoid comparing with others regarding possessions? One should be basically looking at one's need and not at others.
- ▶ In countries like India, the government supports people in the form of subsidies, ration, etc. Some people, though they struggle, feel bad to utilise these facilities for fear of damaging their dignity. Making use of government-funded schools, government hospitals which provide practically free services is a good way to keep our expenses under control.

- ▶ Some people are clueless about how much money they should make or need in life but continue to slog even under harsh situations. These people need to realise the meaninglessness of that.
- ▶ Some people are too focused on amassing wealth for too many generations [Luke 12:16-21] but later it turns out that the same wealth spoils the children.
- ▶ Technology is always changing and some people are always obsessed with acquiring the latest gadgets available in the market.
- ▶ Do we really need it? Is it essential? In its absence, what could be the consequences? These are some questions to ask ourselves before spending money.
- ▶ Car-pooling is an excellent idea. There are situations where such arrangements fail when mutual respect and consideration about others is lost. Ego is a great money spender, handle it properly.
- ▶ Everybody should be able to have a comfortable life, but where is the limit for comfort? Is it possible to draw a line between comfort and luxury and a life pleasing to God?
- ▶ Public transport is always cheaper compared to private transport. Is it our convenience, cost or ego which determines our selection of the mode of transport and the type of vehicle we purchase?
- ▶ One question we need to ask ourselves constantly is whether money is our master or servant.

Money in my Personal Life



God has truly been merciful to us and provided for us when we went through financial crises. The greatest realisation I have had is that lack of money cannot destroy you. Never worry if you don't have money. Instead what you need to do is *trust in God*. Worry and tension cannot extend the length of our lives. So for a person who trusts in God, money is not a problem. The awareness that you are the son or daughter of a Father who is the owner of this entire world is a revelation that can help you to move ahead. So the purpose of my life was never to amass money. My experiences shaped my perspective on money.

I come from a lower-middle-class family and I have faced many difficult situations in life. My mother who was good at managing money was always a role model for me. The little money she earned and with which she managed necessities, even keeping aside a portion as savings from that scant money always encouraged me to follow her example. I still remember standing among the ashes of our shanty house that burnt down in an accident. But God intervened to restore what was lost. He came to us in the form of all those who helped us. We experienced God's providence in astounding ways. During that time I was ashamed of my life but later I realised how it shaped my perspectives. I even remember the time when I joined for B.Ed. with absolutely no money. It was the money that I borrowed from different people that helped me to grow to who I am.

God always brought surprises into our lives and one such surprise was when we shifted to a new place with more land during an extremely unexpected time. When I look back, I see it as God's great providence. Had I been alone I wouldn't have made it. But God always stood by me. I have spent a significant portion of my money on ministries and their activities. I faced many situations without even a penny in hand like my sister's marriage and her delivery. But God made sure to provide me in plenty. Even now, there are financial problems but I've never felt at a dead-end because I know that God will provide at the right time.

I have been blessed to be able to help people in need, people with the financial crises, marriages of poor girls, for treatment of the sick, etc. I was able to do this only because I went through those situations and discovered God's providence through friends, family, and others. The need to support others and its importance is a happy realisation. The miracles that have happened in my life are remarkable. I still believe that there are many more miracles yet to happen. For those who believe in him, he has wonderful plans. God will always make a way for those who trust in him. When we come to this realisation we will use all the riches we have to help others. Never say that God doesn't know my poverty because he knows what you need. All the sufferings that we experience are God's way of perfecting us. It is a part of his great plan. Praise the Lord!

FAMILIA

10

COMMANDMENTS

FOR FAMILIES



Mathew Joseph shares relevant pointers for living and witnessing Christ in the family.

Family is the domestic Church and marriage happens in heaven. But it is a challenge to live a family life witnessing Jesus every day and to bring children up in faith. I want to share ten challenges that we faced as a family. We practice them as Ten Commandments for a successful family life.

A SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE IS ABOUT FINDING A PARTNER WHO COMPLEMENTS YOU

I have seen many people looking for a life partner with similar interests, same profession, similar hobbies and tastes. Ours was an arranged marriage and we have totally opposite tastes and interests. But we enjoy those differences. We understand that our strengths and differences complement each other.

We have totally opposite food habits. My wife was a vegetarian at the time of marriage, and I was a non-vegetarian. But gradually she took a liking and now we both like non-vegetarian food.

We have totally opposite prayer styles. I like personal contemplative prayer while she likes praying the Rosary. Even now we continue to have this difference, but I join the family prayer where we pray the Rosary. I understand that, more than my personal preference, Rosary and family prayer are the unifying factors in our family.

We work in totally different professions and we have different interests and hobbies. But when we discuss our work, interests and hobbies every day, it is an opportunity to explore and understand each other. It helps to bring our relationship closer. In the midst of all our differences, we experience the love of God uniting us in our family.

CHOOSE THE FAMILY VOCATION AS A MISSION

Marriage is not the last option for people who do not want to become a priest or a nun. Rather marriage is a mission to witness Jesus in this world, build up the domestic Church and bring up the future Church through our children.

Before marriage, there was a period in my life when I used to contemplate and pray about my vocation. I seriously considered priesthood and prayed about it for a few months. I found that there were many holy priests in the history of the Church, but comparatively fewer married people who witness Jesus in the world. I realised that it was a challenge to witness Jesus in the corporate world with its corrupt and degenerating values. It is a challenge to balance family, work and social life and be a witness of Jesus in all these areas. I got this conviction and hence decided to take up the family vocation as a mission. I thank God for helping us in our family mission.

DO NOT SACRIFICE YOUR CHILDREN ON THE ALTAR OF YOUR CAREER

This is an era of double income, no kids. Fortunately, Christian families have children even though both husband and wife are working. Many of them leave their children with servants or in baby care homes. Parents these days rarely get time to care for their children, especially when the children need parental care the most. Children are the most precious gifts from God. If your family is faced with a situation where a choice is needed between career and children, do not sacrifice your children on the altar of your career.

When we had our first child, both of us were working as software engineers in Bangalore. There was an option to hire a servant to look after the child when we both went to work. But we did not want to leave our child in the hands of a servant. My wife decided to resign her job to take care of the children. She took a break from her career for seven years till our second child started going to school. Later she changed her career from software engineering to teaching and joined a school as a computer teacher so that she could give more time to the family. When we look back, this was the most important decision of our marriage, which gave strong foundation to our family and the formation of our children.

PRAYER CAPSULES FOR THE DAILY LIFE

Small children have the habit of eating small quantities of food, and that too only when they are hungry. Just as children grab a bite of food when they are hungry, we should pray whenever we are in the middle of a problem and are hungry for the Holy Spirit. One minute prayer capsules help us overcome the problems in our life.

In our family, we give Jesus as a solution to the problems that the children face. The problems vary for different age groups and hence the solutions also differ as the child grows. We teach them to pray for the little things happening in their life. We pray for our personal intentions during our family prayer. We pray for each child before they leave for school in the morning. We taught them to pray alone for every problem they encounter and for their studies. Our younger daughter started school at the age of three years. We used to pray to Jesus and Mother Mary every day before she went to school so that she would not fall down in school or while walking. We gave Jesus as a solution to this problem that she was facing as a three-year-old child. Elder children

pray for the exams and for their studies every day. They pray alone when they get tensed about their studies. They pray when they feel sad or frustrated. They are gradually building a personal relationship with Jesus and experiencing Jesus as a solution to their little problems every day.

PROVIDE A SPIRITUAL ECOSYSTEM FOR THE FAITH FORMATION OF CHILDREN

The character and the faith formation of children depend largely on their peer group, media, school and the culture they live in. There are many children from good Catholic families going astray due to bad influence of their friends and the media. So, it is very important to provide a spiritual ecosystem for the children during their formative years.

We used to watch Malayalam TV serials every day. But we later observed that those programmes were promoting distorted family values which were against the Christian faith. So we stopped watching them, sixteen years ago. Now we watch only good TV programmes. I used to read the *Times of India* newspaper from 1991. But during the last two decades, vulgar pictures started appearing in the *Times of India*. So, we stopped subscribing to it and have been reading *The Hindu* newspaper instead. We do not want pornography to enter our family every day through these newspapers. Our children like reading and hence we have subscribed to many Catholic spiritual magazines which help them in their faith formation. Our children use internet, social media and mobile phones only for study purposes and only under parental supervision. There is no consumption of alcohol or cigarettes in our family even during parties or celebrations. All these ensure that our children have the right environment to grow in their Christian faith.

PREACH ALWAYS; IF NECESSARY, USE WORDS

The present generation of parents have the habit of giving too much advice and imposing their ideas and dreams on their kids. The children today are fed up of the constant advice and continuous scolding. It is very easy to enforce our unfulfilled dreams on our children. What they need are examples and role models and not theoretical advice. So, do not bombard the children with advice and dreams, but practice what we preach.

We try to live our faith every day and let our life be an example for the children to learn the Christian life. We try to be a companion to the children to help them identify their talents and skills so that they can live their dreams. As St. Francis Assisi says, 'Preach always, if necessary, use words.' This is very much applicable in our families.



We are called to be witnesses of Jesus and practice our Christian faith and values in the world.

Dinner time is when our children talk about their dreams and future plans. We share our experiences and give our opinions to help them shape their dreams. We try to identify their talents and motivate and encourage the positives.

We have our daily family prayer in the evening, and it helps us to grow together in faith.

LIVE THE CHRISTIAN FAITH EVERY DAY, EVERYWHERE

It is very easy to be a good Christian on Sundays when we go to the church. It is easy to practice our faith in the church through all the rituals and celebrations. It is easy to be part-time Christians. But living our faith in the world, in the society and at the workplace is a challenge. That is the mission every family should take up. We are called to be witnesses of Jesus and practice our Christian faith and values in the world.

I am a mechanical engineer and started my career as an inspection engineer working with the world's largest inspection company. My job was to certify the export consignments to other countries from India. The export companies would offer bribes regularly to pass their consignments. I took a stand against bribe and never accepted it. It was a tough choice to stand for Christian values when everyone else



ABOUT MATHEW JOSEPH

One of the most sought-after speakers and thought leaders in the area of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, Mathew Joseph Kaniyampady firmly believes that for a Christian, professional excellence and a life of witness are inextricably intertwined.

An alumnus of the University of Chicago, Mathew Joseph is the Vice President and Head of Artificial Intelligence in Apar Technologies Pvt. Ltd., Bangalore. He has been a keynote speaker at the European Digital Conference France, World Cyber Security Conference, Singapore Digital Conference, World Machine Learning Conference and International Data Science Congress, London. He has delivered guest lectures on Artificial Intelligence to the Indian Institute of Managements (IIMs), Indian Institute of Technologies (IITs) and many other leading universities and industry bodies. Mathew is the official mentor for the Kerala Startup Mission, the key agency of the Government of Kerala for entrepreneurship development and incubation activities in Kerala.

Mathew is an active Jesus Youth for more than three decades contributing to different ministries. He was also instrumental in initiating Jesus Youth's email community, JOYnet, two decades ago. Mathew is married to Jincy, a teacher in Christ Academy and they stay in Bangalore, South India with their three children, Ann Maria Mathew, Albin Mathew and Andrea Rose Mathew.

was accepting bribes. Those seven years were a period of struggle but God helped me to take a strong stand against corruption.

The exporters hosted parties in star hotels regularly, where alcohol was always served. I was against consumption of alcohol. While everyone else consumed it, I would drink juice instead. I took it as an opportunity to live my faith and practice my Christian values. There were times when non-Christians would ask me why I neither accepted bribes nor consumed alcohol. Those were the opportunities for me to discuss my faith with these people.

TRUST GOD, TRUST YOUR FAMILY ALSO

It is easy to say that we trust in God. But trusting our own family is equally important. Trust your wife and children always. Trust your wife completely. The family is built upon this mutual trust between the husband and wife. Trust the children in financial dealings. It is a very important aspect of the faith formation of our children. When we trust our own family members, they

learn to trust others and learn to trust even the people outside our family and the society.

In our family, we have one common money purse and one common saving. We share all the money as a family and do not keep separate accounts. Whenever my wife or the children need anything, they are free to take the required money from the purse. They always inform us of their needs and have never stolen a rupee till now. Trust is reciprocal. When I trust my family members, they trust me too. They know the value of money and do not waste it. Before buying anything, we discuss about it and proceed with shopping only when we agree on it. If we don't trust our own children, who else will trust them? Trusting our family can work wonders and help the children in their faith formation and personality development.

DINING TABLE IS THE ALTAR OF FAITH FORMATION

The dining table is the family's faith formation place. It is here that the whole family comes together and shares love. Do not bring TV, mobile phones and other media to the dining table.

Dinner time is when we discuss about different secular topics, studies, faith related doubts, etc. We crack jokes, pull legs and share our dreams and problems. We have kept the TV and other media away from the dining room. Children ask their doubts about the Bible, their dreams and general topics during our dinner time and we discuss and clarify it together. It is a great way of sharing, caring and growing in faith together as a family.

Be honest with your children. Admit if you don't know something. They will appreciate your honesty.

SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE REST WILL BE ADDED UNTO YOU

Keep Jesus as the centre of your family and you will never fail in life. That has been our experience. I have been a Jesus Youth for over 32 years, active in different ministries. I refused to take bribe for seven years when it was easy for me to make money. But when I look back, God had provided everything we needed in our life. Good family, career, wealth and good children. We lack nothing.

Six years back at the birth of our youngest child in Bangalore, my wife had sudden medical complications. On the second day after delivery, she had sudden and severe internal bleeding. As the condition was serious, she was taken for surgery immediately. I was alone in the hospital when she was brought back, unconscious to the ICU. I stood near her bed in the ICU completely broken with nobody to help or console me.

Suddenly a nurse in the ICU came to me calling my name. She told me not to worry and assured me that she would take care of my wife. That was the first time I was meeting that nurse. But she told me that she had been a participant in the marriage preparation course that had taken place the previous week, where I had taken a class for them. Amazing are the ways in which God sends his angels when we are in dire situations.

As we are entering the year 'Amoris Laetitia Family', let's focus on our families and take the help of the Holy Spirit to transform our family into a domestic Church.

ENGAGE

A TURN OF *Transformation*

Sumol Pious attended her first JY meeting while expecting her third child. That turn, of experiencing Jesus as never before transformed her into a totally new person.



Every soul has a tale to share, a tale of their transformation in life – a turn that takes them to a life of peace and joy – a journey that comes with many ups and downs, an experience of bliss where you get the opportunity to love and to be loved by many other beautiful souls.

One such journey I took, though a little late in other's eyes, was the perfect time in His plan. I was called to a Jesus Youth meeting when I was pregnant with my third child. Those initial days in the movement I came to know about the beauty of sitting with the Lord for night vigil at our parish church. The first time I learned the song 'YES Lord', I offered my life to him. It was very different from what I had experienced before. The sharing of Word of God, quiet and serene prayerful moments, the praise and worship, the Adoration, all took me to another level of being with our Lord. It was first-of-a-kind in my life.

Through the initial retreat we became more involved in the movement and got to acquire the JY spirituality step-by-step. Attending the Leaders' Training was another milestone in my life where I met many leaders from around the world and where my perspective about my call changed. Many trainer's lives influenced and inspired me to run the extra mile and to break out of my own comfort zone. I can see now how the Lord used me, engulfing me in his grace in myriad ways. By being a part of various ministries, I enjoyed the beauty of fellowship.

Without my realising it, I was being made a new creation in Christ; He started to transform me – a process that is still going on. My personal relationship with my Lord became more loving and meaningful to me. I can see the Word of God urging me to do something good or to embrace the risk zone rather than just reading and leaving it, like the seed that fell on rocky ground. Now I can see good in all, understand others and accept them easily. I can see God's hand in everything that happens in my life. My Lord's grace has been overflowing in my life since I started to walk with him. He made all the difference in me and my life is now full of hope in him.

The best thing that happened to us was starting the Pakistani JY group in Muscat. They were very enthusiastic as they had no Urdu Mass or prayer meetings till that time in our parish. Many of them drifted to Pentecostal groups. By the grace of God, as a result of the prayer group, many people returned to the Catholic faith and our church began Urdu Mass for them once in a month. Every Friday their group gathers and as a part of their effort, a member who went back to Pakistan initiated a group there and JY is growing there too. It's beautiful to see how God uses us when we say a YES to him, he will take us to places we have

Those initial days in the movement I came to know about the beauty of sitting with the Lord for night vigil at our parish church. The first time I learned the song 'YES Lord', I offered my life to him.

never dreamt of in our life. He uses us to build his Kingdom in a wonderful way that we ourselves cannot comprehend.

That doesn't mean that my life is a bed of roses. I too went through a lot of rejection and dejection as a result of my near and dear ones. Those incidents were extremely painful that I even questioned my taking this turn in life. But instead of falling down completely, my Lord always made me stronger and even more perseverant. He convinced me that without his knowledge nothing happens and everything happens for my good. He taught me to embrace everything with a smile, to love my enemies or to forgive them and to do good to them. Even my attitude and perspective towards my work has changed since I found him. There is novelty in everything. It amazes me how my life has changed! I simply am not the same person I was a few years ago.

Being a mother of four and a working woman has always made me bite more than I could chew. But I feel happy and joyful to do anything that Lord asks me to. Our house is always open for all JY activities. My better half and my children do their best while I actively participate in my ministry and responsibilities.

Walking with the Lord is a journey where we can identify our true selves, and trusting him is like having a beautiful life with him in all its ups and downs. By acknowledging him as our Lord and Savior, he will transform us slowly and steadily into his own image – just as I became the precious daughter of my God. When we are under the love and protection of Abba Father, what else do we need in life? ■



Sumol Pious is a higher secondary school teacher working in Muscat, Oman.

ENCOUNTER

FAITH FORMATION

Prem Joy gives us some simple and practical steps to transform oneself into the image of Christ.



'Get Up...'

The voice of Roy's mother echoed throughout the house. Judging by the intensity of her voice and from past experience, Roy concluded that there was a 100% chance that the next probable course of action would be a lash on his back. *Gosh ... not the best way to start a day.*

'Coming... am brushing!'

Roy jumped out of bed and ran to the washroom. Got ready and rushed down.

There she is. Oh no! Her nose and ears are red! Bad day, bad day...

He fixes the best smile on his face and, before she can say anything, Roy hugs her and gives his mother a kiss.

'Come let's go, we are already late for Church.'

Whew! It worked... she has calmed down.

Even though Roy wasn't very particular about the 'church-going thing', the importance his parents attached to it and to every other religious practice had a deep impression on him. And, looking back at his life, he gladly admits that his parents laid the foundation of his faith journey.

I believe that we can all in some way relate to Roy. We have all had 'someone' in our life who was super concerned about our religious life, either our parents, siblings, relatives, teachers or friends and we would gladly admit that they had a great impact on our faith journey.

Faith, faith formation and living a life witnessing Christ are very important topics in these times. But, who should take the lead in imparting faith? Where should this start? Who is responsible for this?

It is very natural for us to put the onus of faith formation on the Church. This is the reason many of us get deeply disturbed when flaws and errors in the Church emerge. We expect the Church to be the model and perfection of Christian faith. But should faith formation start from there? Does the Church hold the primary responsibility in this? Let's try to look a bit deeper into this matter.

WHERE TO START?

Let's look at what the Bible says.

And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. - Deuteronomy 6: 6-9

Wow! Now that is pretty straightforward. We see that the Lord is commanding the Israelites to teach their children about his law and talk about his wondrous deeds. The Bible asks them to start and end their day invoking God, praising and thanking him and contemplating his commandments. The Bible tells us that the first place to start faith formation is the home, where parents take an active role in imparting faith to their children.

The second step is when the individual himself seeks the Lord. The Psalmist rightly points this out in Psalm 119:9, *How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word.* Each person has to meet his Creator in the Word of God and in his personal prayer. This is the manifestation of what his parents tried to inculcate in him.

And finally a young man who has found his Creator, praises and blesses him in the congregation, the Church. He celebrates his faith in the Holy Mass and nourishes himself with the Body and Blood of Christ. He builds on the foundation (of faith) laid by his family with the understanding gained through his personal encounter with God and the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Having said this, let's look at some practical and simple steps that can be taken to ensure that we are not missing out on this great mission that the Lord Jesus has entrusted to us, the mission of transforming oneself into the image of Christ.

TRAINING GROUND 1: FAMILY

An individual learns the nuances of faith from his home. Parents need to demonstrate faith in their words and deeds. Following are a few quick self-check points for parents:

Family prayer. Ensure that you do it devoutly. Kneeling at times would be a perfect example to show the importance that you attach to it. If possible do it at prime time (7 to 9). If this is not possible, at least teach a small set of prayers to your kids and encourage them to say it on their own at this time, later on to be followed by the main family prayer. Lovingly correct them when they sleep or become passive during prayer.

Word of God – read every day. Parents should explain the passage to their kids and make it a prayer too (for example, if the passage is about forgiveness, say a short prayer of forgiveness to all. If the theme is Holy Spirit, pray that the Holy Spirit fills the heart of everyone in the family).

Make it a point to pray for the common needs of the family, affirming that the needs are met by the grace of God and not by our hard work alone. Pray before and after meals, thanking God for his grace.

Invoke God in everything that you do. For example, by God's grace I was able to buy a car, by God's grace I have a good job or family or kids, etc. For anything good in your life, for every applause that you get, praise God openly.

Share your testimony with your kids. Share the wondrous deeds that God has done in your life with your kids.

Encourage your children to have real conversations with God. It may look funny in the beginning. But slowly, they will develop an attitude of sharing everything with God. This will form the foundation for their personal prayer (I have personally experienced this). Make them ask God for help in their needs instead of just the parents praying for them.

Do not cut down family prayer or personal prayer even when there are exams. There is a tendency to go to the shortest Holy Mass on exam days.

We all know that the ways of God can sometimes be beyond human logic. His ways are established when we are ready to walk with deep-rooted faith in him. It's when someone really understands this, they will say like Paul, what can separate us from the love of Jesus.

Don't encourage this. Rather, teach them that God is the one who provides and the little in God's hands can still serve thousands.

Demonstrate your faith publicly. Kneel and prostrate before the Blessed Sacrament, enter the church with reverence, tell your kids that Jesus is present in the tabernacle. Make the sign of the cross publicly when you see or pass by a church. Remember that your kids are observing you.

Watch your evening discussions: Avoid criticising the Church. It will only be counterproductive. Nobody can love something that they always criticise. Help children appreciate the goodness of the Church and their faith. Help them realise that the Church is the Body of Christ.

Encourage your family to attend Holy Mass whenever possible. Attend with devotion in the prayers and celebrations.

Perform acts of mercy along with your children. It can be as simple as giving money to your kids for a less privileged person. They need to understand that doing acts of mercy are also a thanksgiving for the blessings received.

TRAINING GROUND 2: PERSONAL EFFORT

Every God encounter has a prerequisite – the willingness of an individual to seek him with a humble heart. God can never be found with a proud or arrogant heart. But he reveals himself to those who earnestly seek him. If we don't encounter God in our life, we can easily fall from our faith. Following are some practical steps that can be taken.

Personal Prayer: This is where you make it loud and clear to God that you are seeking him. Family prayer cannot replace personal prayer. Personal prayer helps you to have an intimate and personal relationship with God. Personal prayer is not just a time of repeating learned prayer, rather it is a time of talking to and listening to God.

Reading and contemplating the Word of God: Be sure to call upon the Holy Spirit as you read and contemplate, as he is the author of the Word of God. Initially, start reading the Bible like a story book. Slowly, you will see it guiding your path. Remember, the Word of God is Jesus himself. Have a personal Bible. Underline the verses that touch you. Hold it close to your heart.

Sacraments: Make sure that you receive them regularly and with devotion. Be at Holy Mass, fully aware that heaven is open before you and you are receiving Jesus. Pray the prayers with devotion, contemplating as you pray. Your devotion will motivate the ones around you as well and it is a very good way of witnessing.

Try to practice what you are assimilating from the Word of God. Pray that your eyes be opened so that you can see God working in your life.

Make a conscious effort to accept and obey the advice given by your parents and elders. God will instruct you through them.

Witnessing for Christ through small and simple deeds. For example, making the sign of Cross as you pass by a church, refrain from abusive language (they may mock you by calling you a saint, but you are witnessing Christ).

Encouraging your friends to pray, inviting them to Holy Mass, reminding them about the hour of Divine Mercy, and spreading Rosary devotion, advising your friends about the path of virtue.

Be immune to the opinions of the world. You should guide your life based on what God has commanded you and not on the opinions of the world. Don't be afraid to stand alone. Remember when you stand for God, heaven stands with you. Remember the promise of Jesus, he will never leave you alone.

TRAINING GROUND 3: THE CHURCH

Having developed the foundation of faith through Training Ground 1 & 2, Training Ground 3, The Church, is where you will start building on the base of faith that you acquired. Your base will be plastered and made stronger and a beautiful superstructure will be built on it, which will be visible to all around you. But remember, if the base is weak or if it is not properly formed, you cannot build anything. It will fall apart easily.

If you have already developed your faith, the Church teachings and fellowship of community will further strengthen it. You will be nourished by the Sacraments. You will meet great saints, whose lives will inspire you and in union with them, you will praise and bless the Almighty God. And your life, will be one of witness.

We are dealing with a generation that is logical in their approach. There are pros and cons to that. If they really understand what they are asked to do, they will follow it whole heartedly. But unfortunately, they are less likely to believe when they cannot find logic. We all know that the ways of God can sometimes be beyond human logic. His ways are established when we are ready to walk with deep-rooted faith in him. It's when someone really understands this, they will say like Paul, what can separate us from the love of Jesus.■



A Chartered Accountant by profession, **Prem Aby Joy** is part of JY Dubai Formation Team and Music Ministry, UAE. He is married to Dr. Anu and they have been recently blessed with a baby.



KAIROS Buds Diary

**A Spiritual
Companion for
children through
2021.**

Order online at www.kairos.global

- ★ Monthly Calendar with feasts of the Saints
- ★ Learn a Bible verse every day
- ★ Daily inspiration from the Saints
- ★ Devotions for each month
- ★ Twelve special Saints for the year
- ★ Traditional prayers
- ★ Learn the Hail Mary in different languages
- ★ A special journal for kids



Unfading Wealth

Just as everything else in life, our finances too are a God-given gift, asserts **Anil Israel**, who takes us through the Word of God on finances and its management.



What do you have that you did not receive? (1Corinthians 4:7) Every good and perfect gift is from above (James 1:17). Whatever we think as ours is indeed a blessing bestowed on us as a gift from above. Our life, our health, our parents, our siblings, our spouse, our children, our friends, our education, our job, the place we call our home, our material and spiritual blessings, yes even our finances – are all God-given gifts. We might be tricked in believing that it is all my hard-earned money – the fruit of my labour. Remember that it is the LORD your God who gives you the power to become rich (Deuteronomy 8:18). Our strength, our intelligence, our achievements, our innovation, our creativity, our touch of perfection – everything is a God-given gift. For apart from me you can do nothing (John 15:5).


Whatever is entrusted to us, is not merely meant to be used exclusively for our selfish purposes. It has been given to us so that we can put it to good use for the benefit of others as well. St. Basil the Great reminds us, ‘The bread in your cupboard belongs to the hungry man; the coat hanging unused in your closet belongs to the man who needs it; the shoes rotting in your closet belong to the man who has none; the money which you hoard in the bank belongs to the poor. You do wrong to everyone you could help, but fail to help.’ Even the Holy Gospel proclaims: He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise (Luke 3:11).

This is a strong reminder that we are called to be Good Samaritans to the neighbour in need. Much is required from the person to whom much is given; much

more is required from the person to whom much more is given (Luke 12:48). For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good for them (Mark 14:7). Our wealth is meant to be shared with those who have none. The parable of the rich fool (Luke 12:13-21) further advises us against storing up riches for ourselves in this world. Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions (Luke 12:15). Besides, covetousness is idolatry (Colossians 3:5)

Indulging in reckless living, lavish spending on credit, in the pursuit of satisfying one’s selfishness at all cost, could easily lead one to the world of debt. The borrower is slave to the lender (Proverbs 22:7). If we don’t waste, we will not be in want. Embracing a lifestyle of

NEEDS OUT OF THE RICHES OF HIS GLORY IN CHRIST JESUS › PHILIPPIANS 4:19



Every time we
were prompted to
support someone
in need, we have
been surprised
by his showers of
blessings.

debt-free living enables us to be free of financial worries. The virtues of prudence and self-control prompt us to exercise financial discipline in dealing with our monetary blessings. Being aware of one's income and expense levels equips one to enjoy financial freedom by ensuring that our liabilities (what we owe) do not surpass our assets (what we own).

The ant has a powerful lesson to teach us. *It stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest* (Proverbs 6:8). It is said, failing to plan, is planning to fail. *Plan carefully and you will have plenty; if you act too quickly, you will never have enough* (Proverbs 21:5). An attitude of setting apart a little bit in terms of saving is a sign of being conscious in money-matters. Saving can be looked upon as asset-creation, which can come handy in emergency situations. I thank God

for being blessed with the opportunity to learn the importance of saving from my father. In the initial years of earning when one has few liabilities, one can truly benefit from developing such a useful habit. Responsible parenting encourages one to consider saving small amounts for each child from an early age itself.

When it comes to decisions involving huge investments which are not so frequent, one needs to carefully consider one's paying or repaying capacity and distinguish between needs and wants. Needs are life-seeking expressions, which in other words are essential and must be met. A want is usually a non-essential desire which we could even do without.

You cannot serve God and money (Matthew 6:24). *You are the slaves of the one whom you obey.* (Romans 6:16). Our lives are either ruled by God or by

whatever that takes the place of God in our life. We are either God-dependent or self-dependent. *Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, 'I will never leave you; I will never abandon you'* (Hebrews 13:5). *Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?* (Matthew 6:26)

Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD (Jeremiah 17:7). He shall never be disappointed. There are innumerable instances in the Holy Bible, where we can see Divine Providence at work. Personally, we have experienced how God arranged providentially to pay the initial installments when we wanted to invest in a house. Likewise, God made it possible for us to repay our housing loan within few months in ways beyond our imagination. Every time we were prompted to support someone in need, we have been surprised by his showers of blessings. It was God's loving care that prompted someone to leave behind an envelope with cash for us either in our post-box or tucked up beneath the windscreen wiper of our car.

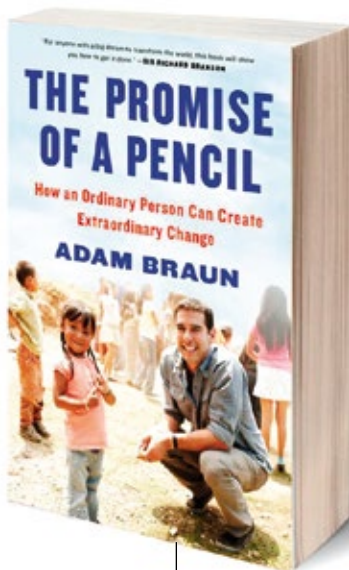
If riches are a desirable possession in life, what is richer than wisdom who effects all things? (Wisdom 8:5) Earthly riches will decay and fade. But heavenly riches are an *'unfailing wealth'* (Wisdom 8:18). God's treasury is *'uncounted wealth'* (Wisdom 7:11). Divine blessings are an *'unfailing treasure'* (Wisdom 7:14). My learning lesson in life: God desires we rely on him always. It pleases him that we trustfully abandon our daily cares to him. For, *my God will supply all my needs according to His riches in glory* (Philippians 4:19). God's provisions are truly an unfading wealth that never runs dry. ■



Anil Israel lives in Mannheim, Germany, with his wife Sunitha and their 5 children. He is the current National Formation Coordinator of JY Germany.

BOOK

THE PROMISE OF A PENCIL



When was the last time you felt determined to change the world but had not an iota of clue

where to start? Quite often we are lost in thought, amazed at myriad of ways people make meaningful impact in the world around them. Scientists, artists, entrepreneurs – we have them all around us. Despite countless stories of impact, we come back to the perennial question of where does one start. Where does inspiration lie? What does it take? Adam Braun, in his autobiographical account *Pencils of Promise* offers a glimpse into how a chance encounter of his, lead to setting up of a non-profit organisation that breaks ground for new schools every four days.

Born with many advantages and given an Ivy League education, Adam left a lucrative job at a Wall Street firm to apply his skills and learnings to make a change in the lives of the underprivileged. In this fascinating autobiography he shares his journey from growing up in a wealthy New York suburb to heading a 'for-purpose' organisation focused on building

schools, training teachers and awarding scholarship in the worlds most destitute communities. In what comes across as an honest retelling of the journey, Adam outlines his successes and failures that threw light on his ambitions, set his course straight and kept him motivated to go forth on his mission. Don't mistake this book to give you a glimpse of how non-profit organisations function, or how to secure funding for your big idea – because it clearly doesn't. Take it as the story of a real person (with a good number of odds to his favour) juggling with impact, uncertainty, purpose, networks and effort. Add to the mix some really interesting takeaways, some of which are predictable – the whole book makes up for an interesting read on inspiration, ideas and actions coming together.

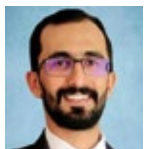
Despite having not the most captivating way of narration, the value of the book *Pencils of Promise* lies in the fact that little snippets catch your imagination and wonder every now and then. The entire account throws great emphasis on the value that people, and our community bring into our lives. If not for exceptional network that Adam built through emails and genuine curiosity in others work, the story of PoP would have been very different today. Reading through his account, one cannot overlook the impact of individuals like Dori, Rick, and his peers at Bain (Adam's previous organisation). Though the book often runs the risk of much beaten path of self-help books, it does a commendable job of convincing

Despite countless stories of impact, we come back to the perennial question of where does one start. Where does inspiration lie? What does it take?

the reader how inspired actions amplified through inspired individuals is the way to go about making meaningful impact in one's community and across the world.

Being sensitive to one's intuitions and a relentless commitment to ones cause or purpose would be my key takeaways from Adams story. The narratives occasionally take you through paths that might be a little unrelatable, but the key messaging remains intact – with a focus on people, possibilities and a ton of gratitude.

If you tend to write off millennials as entitled and self-absorbed, this readable lesson about good will and dedication could change your mind.



REVIEW BY
Noel Benno

A former William J. Clinton Fellow and TEDx speaker, Noel Benno is a Technology Strategy Consultant and enjoys cooking fish and meat while not busy with charts and excel sheets.

Chandeliers

FAMILY SAINTS

By Joseph Santhosh & Bijie Santhosh

✧ St. Sadwrn and St. Canna



✧

*Personal holiness
and prayer were
important for Sadwrn
and Canna to answer
the divine call. Their
children became
saints too. St. Crallo
was their son.*

✧

Feast: November 29 and October 25

This is the amazing life of a loving couple who were both saints and had children who became saints. Sometime in the late 5th century, the family of Sadwrn fled today's Brittany in France to Wales to escape Frankish invaders. Among those who immigrated were St. Cadfan; these men were destined to become founding saints of the monasteries and churches throughout the Welsh countryside.

Sadwrn Farchog, 'the knight', who was accompanied by his wife, Canna, a princess of Brittany, and their son Crallo settled in Wales. As an immigrant while living in Wales, Sadwrn felt the deep call to live a holy life which he shared with his

wife Canna. Husband and wife followed their own call to holiness. Sadwrn sought solitary prayer, settling in a hermitage on the Isle of Anglesey off the northwest coast of Wales. After his death, Canna remarried and had two children – St. Tegfan and St. Elian. She lived a holy life in solitary prayer and fasting. Late in life, she too entered a convent and founded a church at Llangan.

Despite their late and uncertain life, the veneration of these saints is commemorated in various places, names and churches in Wales. St. Sadwrn is remembered on Anglesey, where a church marks the spot of his ancient hermitage. Canna is honoured at Llangan in Glamorgan, where she is believed to have lived out her days. A nearby well, now

defunct, was a place of prayer and healing for hundreds of years.

The influence, lasting impact of generations of saints, holy men and women have carried the Good News across the world. Numerous monasteries have been founded during the 5th and 6th century and among them were the ones founded by Sadwrn and family. For us, it is a great inspiration to live holy lives and with the grace of God to form families where saints grow. The impact Sadwrn and Canna have made lasting impact in the land and this is clearly something that can be emulated.

Dear Jesus, help us to surrender our dear ones to your divine plan. Saints Sadwrn and Canna, intercede for us. ■



JOURNEY WITH SAINTS

Feedback from the little travellers!



The Advent *Journey with Saints* helped me because it spoke about interesting details of the saints.

In addition, the videos inspired me to tell other people about the saints, so Jesus can influence the world. Besides, I felt closer to God because I tried to do the right things like the saints.

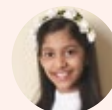
Riya George, 9 yrs., Baltimore, USA



Jesus Youth Kerala started a programme called *Journey with Saints*. They had posted videos about saints for the twenty-

five days of Advent, which were so inspirational that they forced me to live like a saint. When I learnt about their lives, I was so excited that I started to pray more. These videos were also helpful to know about new saints. After watching the videos, I too wish to be a saint.

Joseph Bobby Korah, 11 yrs., Mananthavady, India



At the beginning of last Advent, my mother told me that I should prepare for Christmas in a prayerful and meaningful

way. That was when Jesus Youth Kids Ministry introduced a new saints' activity. There were videos sent to us each day about a saint. We also kept a special diary to write a prayer, our decision and a good deed. The speciality about the saints was that they were all children. Having to make our own prayer and a new decision every day and to keep a record of our good deeds and offer them for particular intentions was fun. I even had one of my favourite saints, St. Germaine in it. I like stories of saints and this helped me know more about them. Because of these activities, last advent was a fruitful one and with the intercession of all those saints, I could prepare for Christmas.

Gianna Liz Mathews, 12 yrs., Abu Dhabi, UAE



It has been very hard in 2020 due to the Covid-19, but lockdown gave me more time to learn about different saints, and their journey. By

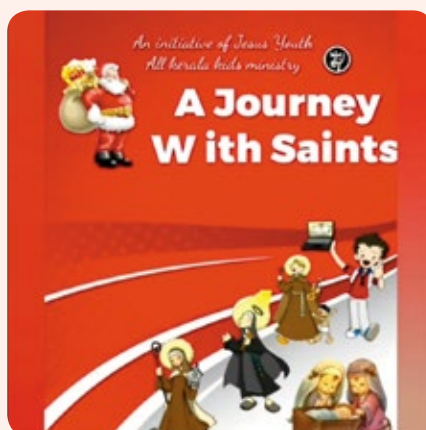
following Mother Teresa's footsteps 'do small things with great love,' we can be saints too. I thank everyone who helped make the videos for *Journey with Saints*.

Alannah Thomas, 6 yrs., Maryland, USA



It was one of God's greatest blessings that I was able to give my voice for *Journey with Saints* to Baby Jesus.

It felt like I was on a journey too, each day and was able to come to know more about many child saints. I had



In spite of the challenges of this world, then and now, they proved that we can live in holiness.



thought that the lives of saints were only about prayer and sacrifice. On this journey, I realised that they were like us too. That we too can love Jesus like them, along with our games and the joys of everyday life. For this and for everything, I am very grateful to God.

Drishya Preash, 14 yrs., Palakkad, India



While preparing the script for *Journey with Saints*, I went through the lives of almost a hundred saints, from which twenty-five saints below the age of eighteen were chosen. The first thing I felt on reading their biographies was humiliation, for despite being a couple of decades older, I did not even have one-fourth of their love for our Lord Jesus.

Many of them were uneducated but their knowledge of Jesus knew no bounds. These young saints were able to live holy lives for Jesus and were ready to die for

him. The price that they paid for Jesus was very high. In spite of the challenges of this world, then and now, they proved that we can live in holiness.

These little saints have transformed my life and renewed my spiritual journey. Their love, commitment and sacrifice for Jesus made me realise my unworthiness and this realisation kindled in me a fire to do more for him. My journey with all of the saints still continues and I can feel their presence, bond of friendship and protection for me. Even though humiliated, I know there is hope and I still can aspire to grow in holiness, like them.

Suja Siju, Palakkad, India (Suja researched about and prepared the content for *Journey with Saints*.)



Journey with Saints has changed my perspective in life, especially in those areas we dismiss as 'trivial'.

The common trait

among these saints was their passion for the Eucharist – this touched me and questioned my own love for the Holy Eucharist. They taught me the value of obedience – an area that I grapple with. What astounded me was the great things that these little kids did. It made me realise my lack of commitment that prevented me from doing, because I doubted my abilities.

Three valuable lessons I learnt from these little saints:

- What man may reject as worthless, God gives great value.
- Great tasks should be undertaken believing in the power of God.
- We need to be courageous to do what God asks of us. We are weak when we trust ourselves instead of Him.

Priscilla, Palakkad, India (Priscilla created the videos for *Journey with Saints*.)

Newswatch

GLOBAL CLUSTER GATHERING

To celebrate the thirty-fifth anniversary, the Coral Jubilee of Jesus Youth, a meeting of all Jesus Youth from around the world will take place through the Global Cluster Gathering from 5th to 7th February 2021.

What is Global Cluster Gathering?

It is a time of fellowship with Jesus Youth from across the world in small groups. It is a time for heart talk, to listen and to share with Jesus Youth from other regions

or countries. It is a time to cherish the memories of the years gone by, of the blessings and the marvels the Lord has worked through the movement and also a time to look forward to the amazing blessings yet to come.

Each cluster will consist of 15-20 Jesus Youth from different countries/regions, based on the registrations. There will be a leader assigned to each cluster. The cluster gathering will be for a duration of 2 hours.



In Memoriam

SHAJI CHACKO
1967 - 2020

BY SANTHOSH JOSEPH

It was with shock and great sadness that I received news of the sudden demise of my dear friend, Shaji Chacko on 4th January, 2021. Hailing from Kanjirapally, he was one of the members of the first Kerala Campus Team that was formed in 1986. Shaji was also part of the NYPT during that period and was actively involved in Dubai for several years.

I first met Shaji during the Jesus Youth 1985 Conference and then later on the next year for a youth encounter training program. In 1987 we were both selected to attend NYPT meetings and had our long bus journeys together. This started a close acquaintance for another five years till 1992.

His questioning skills and ability to critique were amazing. I used to wonder how so many questions could be generated. He helped critique many of my wild ideas on evangelisation and helped me find practical solutions to execute them.

While I was adventurous, he was more of a thinker. Once when we were travelling together in the heart

of India, our train broke down in quite a deserted place. We had to walk to the next station – a few hours away – along the track in sheer wilderness. On our way, we came across a remote village. Though strange, our conversation eventually led to, ‘how will Jesus be known to these villagers, how will they know the unconditional love of Jesus?’ These were common questions Shaji tried to answer.

Even when I met him in recent years our conversations were about how to be a full-timer while managing all the day-to-day needs of the family. He shared how he started a fellowship in Dubai. His heart was always set on spreading the gospel.

Now in heaven he must be enjoying the mystery with Jesus. Am sure his wife, Jacqueline and his children, Angel, Ashlynn and Antonio will continue the legacy he set up.

His friend and fellow Campus Team member, Santhosh Joseph writes about his experiences with Shaji Chacko.

Quiz Time



Mail your answers to quiztime@kairos.global before 28th February 2021.
The winner will be rewarded with 1 year subscription of Kairos Global



PART A

Who Said It?

1. 'Who will I release onto you? Barabbas or Jesus the Christ.'

Joseph / Pontius Pilate / King Agrippa / King Herod

2. 'Sir, if you have taken him at least tell me, where you have laid him, and I will take him away.'

Peter / Mary Magdalene / Martha / Matthew

3. 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails, and my hand in his side, I will not believe.'

Thomas / James / Peter / John

4. 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'

Heavenly Father / Jesus / Isaac / Jacob

5. 'I have seen the lord.'

Thomas / Martha / Mary Magdalene / John

PART B

Answer in One Word

1. How many books are there in the New Testament?

2. Paul was shipwrecked on which island?

3. In the Gospel of Mark, how does the Virgin Mary learn that she has conceived?

4. Who recognised Jesus as the Messiah when he was presented in the temple as a baby?
After Jesus fed the 5,000, how many baskets were left over?

5. Who wrote the book of Revelation?

PART B

Match the following

1. Do everything in love.

A. 1 John 4:8

2. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

B. 1 Corinthians 16:14

3. I have loved you with an everlasting love.

C. Galatians 5:13

4. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.

D. Jeremiah 31:3

5. Through love serve one another.

E. 1 Corinthians 13:13

ANSWERS TO QUIZTIME ISSUE 34

Who said it?

1. Judas; 2. Pontius Pilate; 3. Thomas; 4. David; 5. Martha

Fill in

Shepherd; Shadow of death; The Word; Season; Immanuel



Subscribe

Print Magazine/Online Magazine

eng.kairos.global



Instagram

www.instagram.com/jy_kairos



Subscribe

Audio Magazine / YouTube Channel

[www.youtube.com/Kairos Global](http://www.youtube.com/KairosGlobal)

[apple podcast/Kairos Global Audio Magazine](http://applepodcast.com/KairosGlobalAudioMagazine)

soundcloud.com/kairosglobal

[google podcasts/Kairos Global Audio Magazine](http://googlepodcasts.com/KairosGlobalAudioMagazine)



Twitter

twitter.com/readkairos



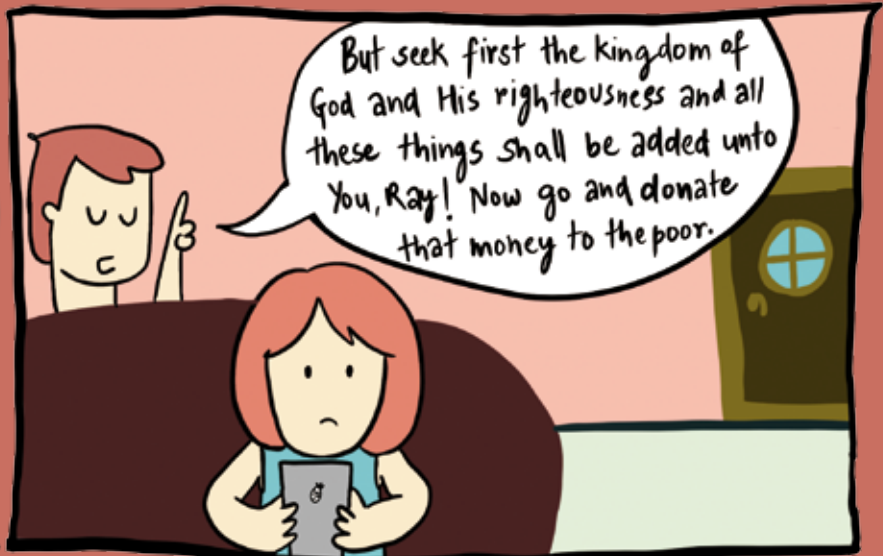
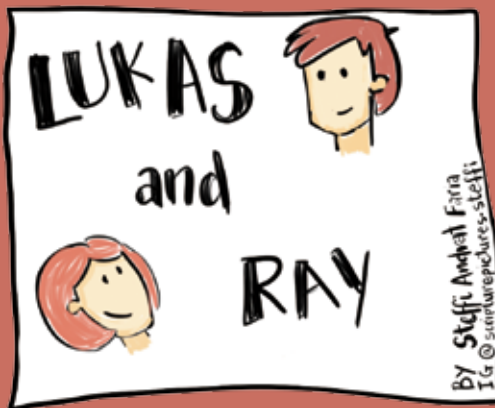
Facebook

www.facebook.com/ReadKairosglobal



Donation

www.kairos.global



KAIROS PRESENTS

KAIROS Buds

A new
magazine
for children
aged 3 to 12
years



Magnetic!

Vibrant design and eye-catching pages!
Every page is designed to captivate little readers
A visual treat from cover to cover



How cool is our Catholic faith!

Children learn how amazing their faith is through:
Cartoons – Bible stories, Lives of Saints and more
Activities – Fun DIY projects, colouring pages, puzzles and brain games
Pilgrimages – Getting to know famous churches around the world
Faith builders – On Science, Deeper faith, Childhood stories of Bishops, Q&A



Wholesome!

Encouraging healthy mind, body AND soul with:
Take care – Articles on health
Wings to win – Developing children's soft skills
Q&A – Answers to big questions from little ones
Luminous Library – Get introduced to new books, movies, online pages & apps



Perfect Gift!

For your own children to treasure
To inspire little friends
Extremely affordable @
INR 30 per copy and INR 330 per year/ USD 4 per copy and USD 40 per year

Order online at www.kairos.global