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Brothers

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Diva to Modern
Magdalena

■ NEHA ANTONY AKKARA

Father of Delight

ANDREW COMISKEY





PRAY FOR US



O dearest St Joseph, I consecrate myself to thy honour and give myself to thee, that thou mayest always be my father, my protector, and my guide in the way of salvation. Obtain for me a great purity of heart and a fervent love of the interior life. After thine example, may I do all my actions for the greater glory of God, in union with the Divine Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary! And do thou, O Blessed St Joseph, pray for me that I may share in the peace and joy of thy holy death. Amen.

EDITOR'S ROOM



DR CHACKOCHAN J NJAVALLIL

X @readkairos

IT'S NOT GOD'S PLAN FOR FATHERS TO BE ABSENT FROM THEIR CHILDREN'S LIVES. BUT WHEN IT HAPPENS, IT CREATES GAPS IN THEIR EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND UNDERSTANDING OF LOVE, ESPECIALLY THE LOVE OF GOD AS A FATHER.

Missing Fathers

Many preachers talk about God as a loving Father, but it can be difficult for people to grasp this concept if they haven't had a positive father figure in their own lives. To truly understand God as a Father, one needs to have experienced a meaningful relationship with a father or father figure. Without that, the idea of God's fatherly love may feel distant or hard to relate to.

I remember visiting orphanages while I was in college with some friends. We would spend a short time with the children, sharing stories, playing games, and just being with them. When it was time to leave, it was always hard. Some children would cling to our hands, not wanting us to go. Others would cry, or keep asking when we would return. For those brief moments, they must have felt the presence of a father figure they longed for but didn't have in their lives.

In today's world, there are many situations where children don't have much time with their fathers. Some parents work in different cities, and the time the family spends together is very limited. For these children, it feels like their father is missing, even if he's alive and loves them.

There are also painful situations where the father is present but not in a good way. I recall a family where the father was an alcoholic. It was traumatising for the children and their mother whenever he was home. For these children, the memories of their father are filled with pain. Sadly, they know only too well the 'missing father' experience, not having received the emotional support and care that a father should provide.

In some families, the father may have passed away. Here too, the children face life's challenges without the presence of their father. This creates an emotional gap, a void that affects them as they grow.

We also see many families where the parents are separated. In most cases, the children live with their mothers, creating another scenario where fathers are missing. The trauma these children experience can be overwhelming, leaving lasting scars.

It's not God's plan for fathers to be absent from their children's lives. But when it happens, it creates gaps in their emotional development and understanding of love, especially the love of God as a Father.

As a society, we need to find ways to bring back the role of fathers in people's lives so that they can fully understand and experience the unconditional love of God the Father.



Also LOOK OUTFOR

14 Taking Responsibility for Healing

26 Navigating the Teen Years

36 Diva to Modern Magdalena



See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! John 3:1

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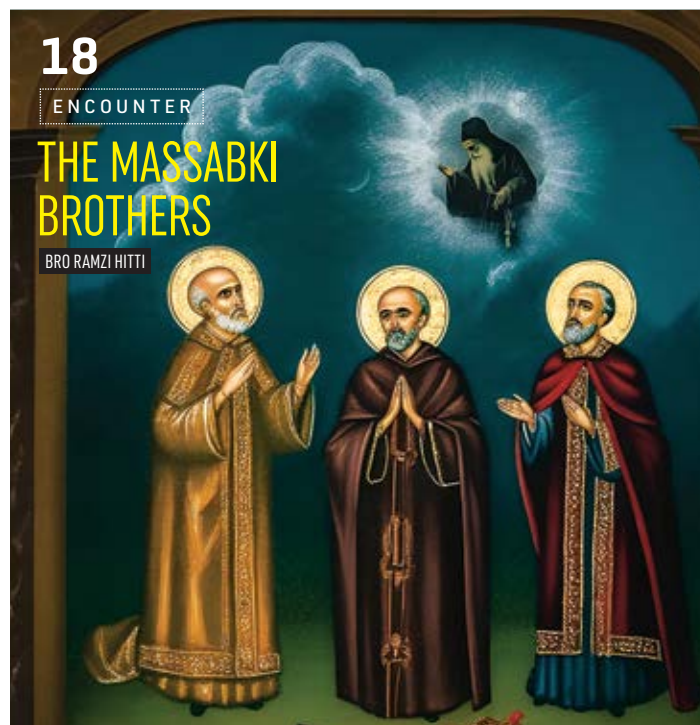
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ASK



FR. BITAJU

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Why does the devil persist in attempting to influence us, knowing he cannot defeat God, even if he manages to affect us?

Your question touches upon several theological concepts found within the teachings of the Catholic Church. Based on the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* we can expound the teaching regarding the nature of evil, free will, and the purpose of human life to provide a comprehensive understanding.

Nature of Evil and the Devil: According to the *Catechism*, the devil, or Satan, is a fallen angel who chose to rebel against God. This rebellion was a rejection of God's goodness and an assertion of his own will (CCC 391). The devil's existence and actions are rooted in his desire to oppose God and lead humanity away from Him, thus seeking to undermine God's creation and the divine plan for salvation.

Free Will: A fundamental aspect of human existence, as taught by the Catholic Church, is the gift of free will. Humans are created with the ability to choose between good and evil (CCC 1730). The devil seeks to exploit this freedom by targeting human weaknesses and desires, tempting individuals to turn away from God and choose sin.

The Battle between Good and Evil: The *Catechism* acknowledges that there is a real struggle between good and evil in the world (CCC 409). While the devil knows that he cannot defeat God, he can still seek to disrupt

God's plan by leading souls away from salvation. This is evident in the way the devil tempts individuals, attempting to sow doubt, and division among the faithful.

God's Sovereignty and the Mystery of Evil: The Church teaches that God is sovereign and that even the presence of evil serves a purpose within the divine plan (CCC 311). While the devil acts with malice, God can bring good out of evil and uses the trials and temptations faced by humanity to strengthen faith and virtue. The struggle against temptation can lead to spiritual growth and deeper reliance on God's grace.

Hopefully, it is clear from the above discussion that the devil persists in attempting to influence humanity not because he can defeat God, but because he seeks to undermine God's creation and separate souls from God. We have explored briefly the interplay of nature of evil, free will, and the ultimate sovereignty of God to understand this ongoing spiritual battle further. The Catholic Church underlines the importance of vigilance, prayer, and reliance on God's grace in resisting temptation and striving for holiness (CCC 2846). St Peter cautions us, *Be sober and be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour* (1 Peter 5:8).



YOU CAT 7

WHY DID GOD HAVE TO SHOW HIMSELF IN ORDER FOR US TO BE ABLE TO KNOW WHAT HE IS LIKE?

Man can know by reason that God exists, but not what God is really like. Yet because God would very much like to be known, He has revealed Himself. [CCC 50-53, 68-69]

God did not have to reveal Himself to us. But He did it—out of love. Just as in human love one can know something about the beloved person only if he opens his heart to us, so too we know something about God's inmost thoughts only because the eternal and mysterious God has opened Himself to us out of love. From creation on, through the patriarchs and the prophets down to the definitive revelation in His Son Jesus Christ, God has spoken again and again to mankind. In Him He has poured out His heart to us and made His inmost being visible for us.



DR. KOCHURANI JOSEPH

Prayer Intentions November

For anyone who has lost a child

We pray that all parents who mourn the loss of a son or daughter find support in their community and receive peace and consolation from the Holy Spirit.



Pope talk



You may have encountered many teachers over the course of your studies or work experiences, but the reference to the Gospel, while in sincere dialogue with everyone, guarantees you an exceptional master, Jesus, the only one who could say: 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.'

Imitate Blessed Carlo Acutis in prioritising the great gift of the Eucharist. As Blessed Carlo Acutis said, 'the Eucharist is the highway to heaven.'

More needs to be done to restore dignity to organised crime victims.



Pornography is a work of the devil; any cell phone has access to this brutality and other temptations accessed through the internet. While modern technology has many positive resources to appreciate, it also gives the devil an opportunity to tempt us and many people fall for it, there is a thriving market behind it.

Seventy-one years ago, on 21 September 1953, I felt the stirrings of the call to the priesthood as I passed by the parish, found a priest whom I did not know, and felt the need to go to confession. This was an experience of encounter: I found that someone was waiting for me. After confession, that something had changed, I was not the same. I had heard something like a voice, a call: I was convinced that I should become a priest.

JESUS YOUTH



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

When 'project' becomes an ugly word in Jesus Youth

→ 'Sorry! Is it the wrong time to talk to you?' Asked the girl at the other end. It was about 4.30 in the afternoon. The call came through Facebook messenger. Quite strange, as I have never received a call like that. 'Perfectly fine,' I said. But I noticed that she had already tried chatting with me and made a couple of unsuccessful calls.

Then it dawned on me: she was calling from somewhere in India, where it was about two in the morning. 'Have we met?' Oh yes. I realised, years back after a Jesus Youth training programme we had spent some time together.

Soon I learned, she was in a terrible mental state. Had no one to talk to. Was thinking to do the unthinkable. Somehow, she took her phone, saw me online and tried calling me. 'How can I call you at this time, I thought. But then something pushed me to dial. The Lord has a plan for me.' Then she went on, a long conversation. A lot of pouring out, her terrible situation after marriage, now six months pregnant and her husband far away. 'I was so active in Jesus Youth. Such a beautiful time in my life. But now I wish I had just anyone to spend a little time with, to share, to go and get me something to eat. I am so alone.'

WHEN THE FESTIVAL IS OVER, YOU ARE ALONE

I was trying to bring this into some context. She lives in an area where there are many active people I know. She was busy in a ministry and had many friends. But now in her darkest moment there was no one to turn to. If a miracle had not led her to make a call, she would have done something terrible.

Sure, when a big programme gets over or as you leave a joyful gathering, there can be a feeling of loneliness. Still, you think of people who love you. They say, even in a crowd you would feel lonely. But on the other hand, even when you are alone you can be surrounded by so much love. The heart of Christianity is to give everyone this deep sense of belongingness. I am loved by God and I am part of a network of people who love me. This is a joyful feeling. In Jesus Youth our goal is to build this Kingdom experience.

Last week an unexpected text message came from Jose, 'Hi friend, are we becoming an elaborate project? Have we lost our first love?' For me, that was like a sledgehammer blow. In the early 1980s when we used to gather regularly in the First Line group, one discussion point was about the youth organisations that we saw. They

were running after many programmes and projects. Most young people were not comfortable with them. 'We don't want to create one more like that. There are already too many,' we used to say. We wanted to come together and do something small, but something that would respond to the heart's desires, of the Lord and the young people.

THE TRAGEDY OF PROJECTS

Recently, there was a big flood in Kerala. After that in the public media the big discussion was on fund raising for reconstruction and rehabilitation. We would all have to contribute. But who should we give our money to? If we give our money to the government projects, it will be eaten up by the system and nothing will reach the people. But this is a complaint against all social service projects. Most of the resources are eaten up by the system and it never reaches the poor people.

In a way, similar is the reality with most other work, even youth ministry. We create systems and projects to reach out to the young people; then the whole focus and energy is spent on the systems. Finally, the young people are forgotten. No wonder a lot of good people don't want to be part of any teams or involved in organisational projects.



They say, even in a crowd you would feel lonely. But on the other hand, even when you are alone you can be surrounded by so much love. The heart of Christianity is to give everyone this deep sense of belongingness. I am loved by God and I am part of a network of people who love me. This is a joyful feeling. In Jesus Youth our goal is to build this Kingdom experience.

The other day someone said, 'When a phone call comes from a leader, I am sure it will be to talk about some programme or something that I must do. Never out of love for me. Never to ask how I am doing.' Of course, we may say, 'I don't want to disturb everyone by just calling and asking how are you.' But on the other hand, if I am seen only as a useful object, to serve some need, I will surely feel 'used' by everyone. Feeling useful is one thing, but feeling used is terrible.

LOVE MUST BE SEEN IN FLESH AND BLOOD

It is interesting how sometimes we miss the passages of friendship in the Bible. Many letters of St Paul addressed issues in churches, but he often took an effort to connect to individual friends and express his warmth of relationship. For example, a quick peek to Romans 16 will indicate his strong connections. There is a litany of the names of his friends. In the Gospels, Jesus' personal chats and home visits we know well. The first commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength (Mark 12:30). I am sure Jesus wants us to love those around us also, with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. At least he did it and all his great disciples did too. *Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends* (John 15:13).

Unfortunately, our families and groups gradually become like machines, and under the bulldozer of custom and routine, persons get trampled down and joy and love slowly die. But Jesus's Kingdom is all about love and joy. So how should we go about it? Maybe in our families, groups and wider church there must

be a balance among three important elements: checking on where each person is, celebrating community life, and doing the work of the Kingdom. Are organisations or projects bad? Should we throw away order and discipline? Surely not. The right approach should be: we need future orientation and structure but always watchful of projects trampling on persons and warmth of relationships.

About the girl I mentioned earlier. I met her in a ministry meeting. They were such a joyful young leaders' gathering, planning great things for other young people. That ministry is doing wonderful things now. But, unfortunately, there is no one there to think about people like her who fell down from that fast-moving ministry-express-train. It is terrible if we forget that *the Sabbath was made for man* (Mark 2:27) and forget to go in search of our missing friends who are in loneliness, pain and suffering. ■

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One of the pioneers of the Jesus Youth movement, an international preacher and author, **Dr Edward Edezhath** is a retired professor from St Albert's College, Ernakulam. He is presently a researcher at Amoris Christi in Florida, USA.

MISSION

TALK

THREEFOLD LOVE INSPIRED MISSION

Inspired by a sharing he heard, **Aji Thomas** and his family went on a month-long mission to northeast India. He shares his experience.

It was a blessing that our family attended the Jesus Youth Family Conference 2022 (JYFC22) in Thrissur, India, because Brother Santhosh Mathew's sharing about African missions ignited a flame within us.

Just as in a marriage, the husband and wife together with God form a sacred union, a mission requires a three-way commitment: us, our spouse, and God.

Matthew 28:19 says, *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.* With God's grace, we answered the call together as a family and along with the Jesus Youth Kerala Family Team, we committed ourselves to a one-month mission.

Stepping Stones to Mission

Our one-month mission journey began with fervent intercessions of 27 families united in prayer. We received training at St Mary's Forane Church, Thankey (Kerala), followed by powerful testimonies from experienced missionaries. Local house visits and interactions within the Thankey community provided valuable first-hand experience. Staying with Victor Martin and Jessy George's family in Kadakkarappally, we were warmly welcomed by parishioners. This initial step fostered unity and purpose, propelling us forward in our mission.

Faith Tested but not Broken

As we prepared for the mission, God presented challenges. A painful kidney stone emerged, followed by financial strain that threatened our participation. Yet, we clung to prayer. The Jesus Youth families rallied around us, offering support and encouragement. Brother Vinish Scaria, our mission contact person, advised medical precautions before embarking on the mission.

Inspired, the sisters at Lady Immaculate Convent and St Joseph's Convent, Ottapalam, and my fellow parishioners at Infant Jesus Church joined the prayer chain. A fundraising effort, fuelled by the generosity of those who tithe, brought us closer to our goal. By the 28th of March, through God's grace and the community's support, my health was restored and finances secured. We embarked on our mission, hearts brimming with gratitude and unwavering faith.

Embracing the Call: Farewell and Blessings

Our mission destination: Chaasa village, nestled within Longo parish, Arunachal Pradesh (north-east India). Before embarking, the Jesus Youth Palghat sub-zone hosted a beautiful farewell gathering at St

Author's family with mission contact person, Vinish Scaria and his family.



Joseph's Forane Church, Olavakkode. In a sacred atmosphere of adoration, Bishop Mar Peter Kochupurackal bestowed his blessings and well wishes upon us.

As dawn broke on the 28th of April, our mission journey commenced at 2 am. The Jesus Youth Palghat family, with Dr Sojan and Bindhu Sojan as our dedicated coordinating family, accompanied us to the railway station, their presence a source of immense comfort. As we boarded the train, a verse from Psalms 91:11 echoed in our minds: *For he will give his angels charge of you to guard you in all your ways.* This scripture served as a powerful reminder of God's protection as we embarked on this new chapter.

A Journey of Resilience: Dimapur to Longo

Our three-day journey on the Vivek Express tested our resolve. Limited sanitation facilities presented a challenge, but our faith remained unwavering. Reaching Dimapur was a relief, and the Don Bosco fathers' hospitality, including a much-needed bath, rejuvenated us.

The next day, Fr Shijo Simon Placheripurath, the gracious parish priest of Longo (our mission destination), welcomed us at the Krishu Jyothi transit centre in Tinsukia. Longo, situated 110 km away in Tirap district, awaited.

En route, we stopped at St George's parish, where we embraced Fr Francis Kurian's warm hospitality. Finally, we arrived in Longo parish, and from there we reached our mission place: Chaasa village. Reaching our destination left us with a sense of accomplishment, our hearts brimming with anticipation at the one month service ahead of us.

Chaasa: A Village Transformed by Faith

Chaasa village is one of Longo parish's diverse communities. Catholics, Baptists, and



Our journey continued to Tinsukia and eventually Guwahati. There, we connected with our mission contact person, Br Vinish and his family. Sharing our experiences ignited a spark within us. Br Vinish's mention of a long-term mission resonated deeply. We found ourselves drawn to the idea of dedicating more time to service, perhaps even transitioning into a full-time mission family.

Above: Assisting and judging events at the Longo Youth Convention.

indigenous tribes coexist harmoniously. The village, under the leadership of Mr Wanghe Rajkumar, boasted two churches: Catholic and Baptist, both situated in the 'Church Colony' or Paanphang Colony.

Our residence was in Tolow Colony, the highest point in Chaasa. This area grappled with electricity and water scarcity. Lohang Hongho's welcoming home became our base.

Wasting no time, we embarked on house visits the very next day. We carried a statue of Mother Mary to each house and recited a decade with each family. Respectful of local routines, we scheduled visits for mornings (6-8 am) and evenings (4-6 pm), avoiding disruption to villagers' primary occupation – farming. Their days started early, with most rising before dawn.

During these house visits, we extended invitations to attend Holy Mass held at our residence. Every day, Fr Shijo would join us, celebrating Mass in our humble abode. This drew the local community together, fostering a sense of shared faith.

Chaasa: Trials and Triumphs (13 Days)

Our first 13 days in Chaasa were a whirlwind of activity and challenges. We visited all the village colonies – Tolow, Paanphang, Tingnu, Hah Kho Rang, Ting Kap – reaching a total of 91 homes, including the Choi Nag Su indigenous family. This period tested our resolve. All our children fell ill with fever, vomiting, and diarrhoea. Thankfully, our mentoring family Wilson Kareerakattil and



Above: During a house visit at Chaasa village, Tolow Colony.

Mini Wilson in Palghat provided daily support and prayers, a lifeline during this difficult time.

Amidst these hardships, a beacon of hope emerged in the form of a youth crew: Laipha Wangpan, Laipha Wangsu, Chaaha Wangsu, Judi Wangsu, Choiran Wangsu, and Reetha – a total of 13 members. They became our constant companions. We even established a Jesus Youth prayer group in Chaasa, holding two meetings before May 12th. These gatherings drew notable figures like Paul Kamhua, the Longo youth president and Jaago conference attendee, and Timothy Lowang.

On May 12th, a momentous occasion unfolded. With the support of the Arunachal Pradesh Jesus Youth regional team, Fr Shijo anointed a core team of Jesus Youth members in Chaasa. This marked a significant step in spreading faith within the village. The day also saw us conducting an outreach programme for underprivileged families, distributing clothing items. Additionally, we identified students in need for the Jesus Youth child support programme.

As our 13th day drew to a close, the St Therese Church committee of Chaasa generously hosted a grand meal for us at our residence. The next day, we embarked on a new chapter, venturing out to visit other villages within Longo parish.

During these house visits, we extended invitations to attend Holy Mass held at our residence.

Longo Parish: Expanding Our Reach

Longo parish became our new home base, with St Mary's School providing comfortable accommodation. From here, we ventured out to explore other villages, primarily focusing on New Bera. Our house visits centred on promoting family holiness within the parish and identifying potential beneficiaries for the Jesus Youth child support programme. We covered a total of 126 houses in this endeavour.

A vibrant cultural experience awaited us on May 16th. We visited Bokhfom village for their Bihu festival, immersing ourselves in the unique traditions of Arunachal Pradesh. The villagers, adorned in their beautiful attire, warmly welcomed us. We even embraced the local custom by dressing in traditional wear. Notably, Bokhfom village boasts a pilgrimage site, the Calvary Mount.

The latter part of May (18th-20th) saw us actively participating in the Longo Youth Convention held at St Mary's Church. A

dedicated hour was allotted for us to introduce Jesus Youth to the assembled village youth. Beyond this presentation, we actively contributed by judging competitions like devotional songs and skits, even assisting with the Bible quiz. This experience proved to be a wonderful opportunity for cultural exchange and fostering connections with the local youth.

Mission Concludes, a Calling Awakens

May 23rd marked our departure for Miao. With an appointment secured at 11 am, we eagerly awaited a meeting with Bishop George Pallipparambil. Upon arrival, we were warmly received by the bishop, who blessed our entire family. A heartfelt thanksgiving Mass followed at the Miao Cathedral Church, celebrated by Fr Shijo.

Our journey continued to Tinsukia and eventually Guwahati. There, we connected with our mission contact person, Br Vinish and his family. Sharing our experiences ignited a spark within us. Br Vinish's mention of a long-term mission resonated deeply. We found ourselves drawn to the idea of dedicating more time to service, perhaps even transitioning into a full-time mission family.

As we documented our experiences to inspire others, a verse from Isaiah 6:8 echoed in our hearts: *Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'* (Isaiah 6:8). This mission ignited a fire within us, a call to consider a more permanent role in serving God's mission. ■

Aji Thomas lives in Palakkad, India, with his wife Lizi Das and their three children.



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EXPERIENCE



Taking
Responsibility
for

Healin

Dr Joseph Sebastian shares his experience of attending the Living Waters Workshop, earlier this year in Bangalore.

The Living Waters Workshop (LWW) in Bangalore, India, in March 2024 has been a transformative experience for me, even more so than my initial encounter with the charismatic retreat. It deeply influenced my perspective on spirituality, inner healing, and relationships, including sexuality and sexual orientations.

I came that they may have life and have it in its fullness – John 10:10. I strongly believe that each of us is called to have a fullness of life—whatever the vocation, status, situation, and circumstance one is in. But then I have also wondered, why is it that with so much spiritual involvement, practices, and deep desire, we as humans falter? In spaces that are not personal, we always try to show our best behaviour and interactions. However, in our interactions in private spaces and with our closest people, we are often far from being the spiritual persons we aspire to be. Is it because, as shared in Romans 7:18-19, *For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do?*

It seems it is the biblical thorn that St Paul talks about and prays for healing thrice. And we most often find consolation in *My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness* (2 Corinthians 12:9). Yes, the weakness may still be there, and the grace of our Lord is always there. So, should I not come closer to my Lord? Am I not to live a more fulfilling life that Jesus talks about in John 10:10?

We know that we will be complete and fully know God when we are with Him in heaven after our earthly life here. *For now, we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known* (1 Corinthians 13:12). All wrongdoing will be banished, and

everything caused by sin in this world will be gone forever. Illness and death will be destroyed; sorrow and disappointment will vanish; our character flaws will be transformed.

This is all possible because Jesus Christ took our sins away when He died on the cross for us (1 Peter 2:24). He came not only to forgive us but to cleanse us of our sins and prepare us for heaven. Ensure your commitment to Christ and celebrate that someday you will be with Him in heaven—fully cleansed of every sin and perfect in His sight. As the Bible says, *we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is* (1 John 3:2). Heaven is our hope, but God wants us to live joyfully for Him now. Is this your goal? Do you have faith and trust in Him, and believe that it is possible?

We know of saints who have had such experiences. St Francis of Assisi is renowned for his deep communion with nature and profound spiritual joy. He had visions of Christ and was known to converse with God and the angels, experiencing great spiritual ecstasy. St Teresa of Ávila is known for her mystical visions and ecstatic experiences of divine union with God. One of her most famous visions involved an angel piercing her heart with a golden spear, which she described as an experience of profound spiritual and physical bliss. St Padre Pio was known for his stigmata, bilocation, and ability to read hearts. He often spoke of his interactions with his guardian angel and other heavenly beings, experiencing great spiritual comfort and joy.

In our own midst, you may have known of common persons who live a saintly and deep spiritual life having genuine heavenly experiences. In essence, nothing prevents us from living a life of fullness, as promised by Jesus. For this, one key requirement is explained in Luke 9:23: *And he said to all, 'If any man (or woman) would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.'*

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This daily carrying of the cross also means a daily cleansing. For me personally, the Living Waters Leadership Workshop in Bangalore was a similar exercise and gave an additional tool, as Living Waters cleanses by gushing and clearing the clogs—if I consent.

The essence of this cleansing through Living Waters is initiated from the *Hesed* Love. *Hesed* comes from Hebrew and is a profound and multi-faceted concept that encapsulates the essence of God's loving-kindness, loyalty, and mercy. It is a love that is steadfast, generous, compassionate, and faithful, reflecting the deep and enduring nature of God's relationship with humanity. Our requirement is just being responsive to this love. God gives us free will to choose (and not to choose). 'God the Father through the Son initiates his healing and saving work in our lives; all that we can do is receive it.' (LWW). All along, our will to receive is critical; note it is the consent not so much the actions.

The beauty of the workshop was the very intimate open sharing we had in our small groups. The personal testimonies of the leaders and co-leaders during sessions and small group sharing not only touched each of us but removed any inhibitions to share openly.

We pray during the Holy Mass: 'I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters...' Yes, as Catholics, we do confess to the priest, but have we ever confessed to our brothers and sisters? This small group was exactly that space. We all were able to confess our sins, not just share as we usually do in most of our groups.

It was a very humbling experience and emancipating too—the healing processes were initiated. Sharing of sins; Binding to the Cross; Prayer for Mercy; and Prayer for blessing would be a gist of the processes.

Holy fear of our God and revering His presence liberates us from the burdensome habit of justifying ourselves in ways that bring shame. Instead, this fear empowers us to live openly and authentically, embracing His truth and walking confidently in His light, which illuminates our path with clarity and purpose. This awe and holy fear of God is the fountain of life, guiding us away from

In the midst of our brokenness and wounds lies a profound beauty: they can lead us toward greater wholeness. Pain serves as a beacon, revealing the areas where Jesus desires to bring healing, if we open ourselves to Him. We often try to avoid suffering and pain, yet Jesus invites us to embrace them with grace, allowing His love to illuminate our path.

all that could consume us.

We were urged, at LWW, to take more seriously Mark 9:42-50, where Jesus warns against leading others into sin and advises taking radical steps to avoid moral pitfalls. In several cases, it is this brokenness and these wounds that cause us to lead others into sin. For us, it came from others, but we lead others into sin, too. Jesus emphasises the importance of personal integrity and purity, suggesting it is better to make sacrifices to maintain spiritual clarity and chastity than to face the consequences of moral compromise. Jesus concludes by urging us to prioritise inner strength and harmony with others, using the analogy of salt to emphasise the importance of preserving our moral essence in today's world. We ought to understand that our authority comes from practising the chastity we preach, showing respect for God in everything we do.

In the midst of our brokenness and wounds lies a profound beauty: they can lead us toward greater wholeness. Pain serves as a beacon, revealing the areas where Jesus desires to bring healing, if we open ourselves to Him. We often try to avoid suffering and pain, yet Jesus invites us to embrace them with grace, allowing His love to illuminate our path.

Personally, I have been grappling with deep emotional wounds from past relations and events from my childhood onwards. Going to this workshop was to seek healing for them, as I knew that they were preventing me from being my whole self as the Lord made me to be.

As part of the workshop process, we were prompted to identify one of these wounds, spending time in Adoration. Although I initially thought others were more pressing, the Spirit of the Lord led me to recall a painful relationship from my school days with a senior boy who

deeply hurt me. Despite feeling uncertain because my memory of the incident was unclear, I chose to trust and share it with my small group.

As I started speaking about it (without even knowing all the details), a wave of emotions swept over me, and tears flowed freely. It was a powerful moment where I felt deeply moved and began to experience healing. Our group leader, Benji, helped me recognise that fear, anger, and hurt from this wound had long been buried within me, almost forgotten. Guided by the Holy Spirit, I brought these emotions into the light and found healing and peace through Jesus' love and sacrifice on the Cross. This process not only brought healing to that specific relationship but, over the months since then, I have observed that it has also transformed how I respond to other situations that once triggered irritation and anger.

Though I have been through many inner healing and growth retreats—both charismatic and contemplative—I had never realised that what manifested as rage was this reservoir of pent-up anger. It has been a profound journey of healing, and I sense the Lord leading me forward. I know I am vulnerable and may stumble, but with Christ, through the Cross, and His grace, I am determined not just to manage but to embrace life in its fullness.

The wound and brokenness may not be your fault, but healing is your responsibility—a healing to LIVE LIFE IN ITS FULLNESS! ■

Dr Joseph Sebastian is a professional social worker. He has been working with young people for more than three decades. He presently works as Chief of Party for a US Non Profit based out of Delhi and Kerala, India. He is married to Darlin and they have two children.



BIND US TOGETHER IN LOVE

Deep spiritual friendships are like a joint insurance policy, writes **Maria Teres Sebastian**, a circle of friendship that grows deeper in love.

There are days when I gaze at the Eucharistic Lord and feel my heart bursting with love— a deep desire to keep gazing at that tiny white host without blinking... But then, there are also days when I can't even raise my eyes and look at Him – all I want is to gaze at Him with much reverence, but no matter how hard I try, I can barely keep my eyes open. The worst days are when I don't even want to go in and see Him. It isn't hatred or a lack of faith in His love. It's an annoying indifference where you know His love, yet you choose to ignore it because wading through your pain and still choosing to stay by Him is too much work; the easy way out is to not enter into that process at all.

Whichever mode I am on, mostly on the latter two kinds of days, I open my WhatsApp or Instagram and drop a message in that top-pinned chat simply named 'CELL'. It has never crossed our minds to give it a fancy name, I wonder why...

When we started off back in 2018, the messages were frequent and long. All three of us were students with time to spare and fire in our veins. I had

already started backing off from the movement's forefront, but they were both in leadership positions of gravity. We were an unlikely triad, brought together not by similar interests or shared hobbies, but only by His divine scheme.

Over the years, that chat, though still pinned at the top, has grown considerably silent. The only messages that pop-up occasionally read: 'Girls... I need prayer' or 'I'm not OK, remember at Mass' or 'Thanks to Jesus I got that job' or 'I was at Eucharistic adoration, remembered you both'...

So it's to this place that I run whenever I lose it all and feel like I'm running away from Him at top speed. I know they won't have answers or advice to offer [I'm that person in our group :)] Most times, they don't even bring consolation, but I know that they care. I know that the next holy hour, next Mass, next Rosary, He will be bombarded with petitions and prayers for me.

Honestly, this isn't the only place I have. I've several spiritual spaces and people I run to when I am sure I cannot trust in Him anymore. These people tell me it's okay to lose trust and wander,

because they are here to trust 'for' me. They take me before the altar in spirit when they fail to drag me there in person. And they, in their kindness, show me that He has never left me alone.

Spiritual friendship is indeed a gift sans comparison and having a cell group is a sure way to make sure that you don't get to totally sever that thread that binds you to God. It's a joint insurance policy you take out, ensuring that none of you is left to fend for yourself in the event of an emergency.

The beauty is not just that they keep you anchored in Him. He binds all of you together in His love, slowly uprooting jealousy, anger, selfishness... and anything else keeping you from cultivating a circle of love that accommodates victories and weaknesses alike. ■

Maria Teres is a social worker by education, and writer by passion and profession. In her spare time, you may find her curled up on a couch crocheting, reading or sketching.

ENCOUNTER

The Massabki Brothers

NEW MARONITE SAINTS FROM SYRIA



Lebanese Maronite Brother **Ramzi Hitti** writes about the newly canonised saints – the Massabki brothers.

Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows (Luke 12:7).

Our Maronite Church has become accustomed, almost constantly since 1977 (the canonisation of St Charbel), to infuse the Catholic Church with the blood of new saints. Most of them were dedicated monks (Charbel, Rafqa, Brother Estephan Nehme, Al-Hardini). This was broken by the two

Patriarchs El-Howayek, and Blessed Al-Douwayhi (since 02/08/2024), and was completed by the layman, Youssef Beik Karam and the Massabki brothers. On 20 October 2024, the Massabki brothers were elevated to the altars of the Catholic Church as saints. Who are these new saints?

THEIR LIVES

The Massabki Brothers: Francis, Abdel-

Mooti and Raphael were Maronite martyrs who presented their lives, a burning sacrifice of love to Christ in Damascus, Syria in the year 1860.

Francis was a father of eight children, with vast wealth and a strong personality. A successful silk merchant, he was loved and appreciated by everyone, Christians and Muslims alike for his integrity, generosity and purity of heart. He was committed to praying the Rosary and participating in the Confraternity of Our Lady of Mt Carmel (Scapular Confraternity). He was over seventy-years-old when he was martyred. He always said, 'Prayer is more important than earning money.' Abdel-Mooti was a father of five children. Distinguished for his Christian faith and commitment, he was a teacher in the French School. In his teachings, he emphasised worshipping God, avoiding sins, and living a life of sacrifice. A few hours before he was martyred, he gathered his students, explaining to them the importance of the blessing of martyrdom and strengthened their resolve towards it. He too was over seventy when he was martyred. Raphael, the youngest, was not married. Like his brothers, he persevered in prayer and worship throughout his life. He was over fifty at the time of his death.

What exactly happened in Damascus in the Monastery of the Franciscan monks, on the night of 9 July 1860 that led to the martyrdom of the three Maronite Massabki brothers, along with a number of Latin Franciscan monks?

THEIR MARTYRDOM

In 1860, the Muslims in Damascus and the Druze in southern Lebanon revolted against the Christians. On the night of 9 July, our martyrs took refuge with a great number of Christians in the Franciscan monastery in Damascus. When the revolutionaries set fire to Christian neighbourhoods, the refugees entered the monastery with the monks: praying, confessing, and taking communion.

Francis, the eldest among the brothers, remained alone in the church, kneeling before the statue of the Sorrowful Mother. After midnight, a heavily armed mob forced their way into the monastery. The refugees panicked: some fled, others hid,

and the rest rushed to the church to take shelter. Then the mob started shouting: 'Where is Francis Massabki? We are asking for Francis.' Francis approached them undaunted, saying, *I am Francis Massabki, what do you seek?* They answered him: 'We have come to save you and your families on the condition that you renounce the Christian religion and embrace Islam, otherwise you will all perish.' Francis answered them: *We are Christians and we die for the religion of Christ. We Christians do not fear those who kill the body, as the Lord Jesus said. We have but one soul, and we shall not lose it.* Then he turned to his brothers Abdel-Mooti and Raphael, saying to them: *Be of good courage and stand firm in the faith, for the crown of victory is prepared in heaven for whoever perseveres to the end.*

They immediately declared their faith in Jesus the Lord, with these words: *We are Christians and we want to live and die as Christians.* Hearing this the mob fell upon the brothers with sticks, daggers and axes; the brothers surrendered their pure souls into the hands of God, preferring death to disbelief and choosing the crown of martyrdom. This happened in the early hours of 10 July 1860.

THE JOURNEY OF THEIR HOLINESS

As is known, a martyr sheds his blood for Christ; the cause for his canonisation does not require a miracle to prove his sanctity. The Massabki brothers were therefore martyrs of Christian faith.

On 10 October 1926, His Holiness Pope Pius XI announced their beatification, along with the Franciscan martyrs. On 1 July 2024, Pope Francis presided over an Ordinary Consistory of Cardinals, which approved the canonisation of 15 Blesseds, including the Massabki brothers.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THEIR HOLINESS IN OUR CURRENT ERA

The sainthood of the Massabki brothers is not just important because they were laypeople and not clerics, as our Maronite Church is accustomed to saintly clerics, monks and nuns. These martyred brothers were beatified before the beatification of St Charbel.

In addition, they are the first Maronite saints who were not Lebanese, but from

Syria, which opens the door for future Maronite saints from Cyprus or Egypt, or the originally Lebanese Maronites who have moved elsewhere.

Our Maronite Church celebrates the feast of the Massabki brothers on the 10th of July of each year; and will celebrate their feast in 2025 for the first time as saints. On that occasion, our Maronite Church reads Luke 12:6-10.

True, through their daily prayer with their families, their righteous upbringing, their work ethic of morality and integrity, and their Christian conduct, these new saints bore witness to Jesus and professed Him on earth, and He acknowledged them before God's angels in heaven.

These martyred brothers realised that they were better than many sparrows, so they understood the mystery of God and sought to live his kingdom on earth. ■

ABOUT THE CONFLICT IN LEBANON

The current situation in Lebanon is not new. It is something we Lebanese have become accustomed to for more than fifty years. The Lebanese-Israeli conflict is normal, just like that between any two countries with common borders; which will inevitably result in land disputes and a race to annex villages and expand borders. However it is unnatural or unjust to kill more than two thousand Lebanese, to displace more than a hundred Christian and Muslim villages from the south, and more than a hundred-thousand families: including the elderly, children, babies, fathers and mothers. It is a humanitarian catastrophe, and even more so, a massacre. Those displaced have moved towards safer areas in Lebanon; the Church has welcomed them into its monasteries and institutions, providing them with medicine, food, clothing, and most necessities, hopeful that they may be able to return to their homes in villages of the south.

Brother Ramzi Hitti is a life-committed brother of the Lebanese Maronite Missionaries Association. He works in the field of religious media and lives in the Monastery of St John the Beloved in Jounieh, Lebanon.

ENGAGE

WHERE ARE YOU?

Let us not put Jesus
for tomorrow, **Basil
DCunha** tells us.



When God called out to Adam after the first sin, Adam responded. 'I am naked.' Adam was naked because he had disobeyed but he pointed to Eve and Eve pointed to the serpent. Who will we point to?

Today we are in double jeopardy. The serpent attacks us when we engage in undesirable relationships, pornography, addictions to drugs/alcohol, social media and allied issues. The double peril, I referred to, was these attacks, have immediate impact on our relationships: parents, siblings, companions. Will our finger point to them? Who, indeed, are our serpents? Has the serpent made inroads into our hearts? Has the serpent enticed us with riches, unlimited pleasures? Who should be the fall guy?

Let's admit it – we are naked. We know that getting dressed is an option, but the serpent's stranglehold is so tight that we find it difficult to extricate ourselves. One common strategy the evil one uses is the time factor. We are led to believe we are young, there is a lot of time to change course. We can always cover our nakedness later.

Yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes (James 4:14).

We must understand that our time on earth is limited, but our time thereafter is forever. The term 'forever' means perpetuity or eternity. If we stay on the right course, we remain joyful and happy forever. But if we choose to remain on the wrong side, it means eternal flames/pain. If we do not accept this truth, we ignore what Isaiah says in 1:18. *Come now, and let us reason together, though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will*

be like wool.

Are you aware of two saints and a venerable, whose earlier lives were despicable? But they had learnt that the best option was joy forever. One saint had a mistress and an illegitimate child and was very fond of life with drinks and easy living. The other was an actress and a harlot. While the third was an alcoholic.

St Augustine took time to change – he had a mistress and an illegitimate child and continued with his wayward life for a long time. But, thanks to his mother, St Monica's persistence in prayer, he changed completely. He became a priest, later a bishop and one of the greatest saints and a Doctor of the Church.

St Pelagia was an actress of Antioch, celebrated for her beauty, her wealth and her loose life. During a synod at Antioch, she heard the sermon preached by Bishop St Nonnus of Edessa. She was so moved that she asked the Bishop to baptise her. She gave her wealth to the bishop to aid the poor and left Antioch dressed in men's clothing. She journeyed to the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, where she became a hermit and lived in a cell disguised as the monk Pelagius. There she lived in great austerity, performing many penances in ascetic seclusion which helped her attain many spiritual gifts. At her death she was buried in her cell. She was known as 'the beardless monk' until her sex was discovered when she died.

Ven Mathew Talbot was an alcoholic. He started drinking at age of 12 and would spend his entire salary at pubs in Ireland. However, one fine day he became bankrupt, and waited outside a pub in the hope that somebody would invite him in for a drink. After several friends ignored him without offering


a drink, he went home in disgust and announced to his mother that he was going to renounce drink. He went to Holy Cross College, Clonliffe where he took the pledge for three months. At the end of the three months, he took the pledge for a further six months, then for life.

Talbot found strength in prayer, and daily Mass to forsake alcohol. He preferred spending time reading religious books and serving others. He repaid all his debts and became a Third Order Franciscan in 1890. He ate very little. He stayed in a small house with very little furniture. He slept on a plank bed with a piece of timber for a pillow.

We need not choose extremes. Jesus in his goodness will direct us to the way best for us. He has given us talents. He will guide us to use those talents meaningfully. We should not be like the last servant in the Parable of the Talents, where only one talent was given to him, but he decided to bury it in the sand and say to the boss on his return – here is the talent back – I did not use it as I was afraid. Our job on earth is to love God and love our neighbour as ourselves.

If we relegate God to the bottom of our 'To Do' list, and end up having no time at all for Him, we ignore what Jesus: *Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be added unto you (Matthew 6:33).*

Mark in 6:31 tells us what Jesus' advice is: *Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.* Why does Jesus urge us to come to a quiet place for reflection? Unless we take time to talk to Jesus, we will never hear His response. St Paul puts it succinctly in 1 Thessalonians 5:1–3: *Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, 'There is peace and security,' then sudden destruction will come upon them as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.*

So what is your response to the Lord's question, 'Where are you?' 

Are you aware of two saints and a venerable, whose earlier lives were despicable? But they had learnt that the best option was joy forever. One saint had a mistress and an illegitimate child and was very fond of life with drinks and easy living. The other was an actress and a harlot. While the third was an alcoholic.

IN FOCUS



Father of

Founder Director of the Desert Stream/Living Waters ministries **Andrew Comiskey** reflects on various facets of what it takes to be a father.

Delight

Fathering is pure joy to me. It's who I am and how I am, made in the Father's image to generate new life and tend to it.

To tend to him or her, in particular. Therein, the joy: to look upon and seek to care in particular ways for the unique being before me, unrepeatable, utterly remarkable, full of treasure yet to be mined...

To have a hand in creating and coaxing out that treasure is a pure gift. And responsibility – a weighty one. Here I refer to my four biological children. Though I, like you, contribute to the growth of many of God's children, I will draw upon my history of biological parenting.

Father is a Child

By 'child,' I don't mean that this 'Daddy' is full of whimsy. I just mean that the integrity of my fathering is based upon my being fathered by God and His friends. I've a Father who fought for me from the beginning of time; He wouldn't let me lay down long in my sin and misidentifications. Through many faithful ones, He showed me Himself from whom I derive my sonship. And ultimately a sustaining grace to father well.

Grace is a good word because I squarely believe that my fight for the

integrity of my children is based on His fight for me. The clarity of the Father's love broke through persistent shadows over my manhood and freed me to be true to who I am: a man in good standing who can make and keep his commitment to a woman and the fruit of our love.

Father Loves Mother

More than anything else, the respectful love between parents is the wellspring from which love flows consistently to children. Kids become secure in love through marital integrity.

My children derived good meaning from the fact that Annette and I process our lives together out loud, usually not in shouts and tears (though not above either) but in earthy communion, always a work in progress.

Mom and Dad have minds (and words) of their own through which we work out compromises and express care. Above all, we convey respect. We are a united front based on difference: voila, our kids get a good glimpse of the dance of male and female; it helps them trust that God's image in humanity (man for woman, woman for man) is good. A healthy marriage also fortifies each child's early confidence in his or her own gift of self.

Father is a Brother

I am a good man; I am a weak man. My sexual brokenness ran deep, not as deep as the Father's unfailing love, but deep enough to warrant humble reliance upon well-chosen brothers with whom to walk free and stay free from unrealities like porn, isolation, hopelessness, and unhealthy friendships.

To be free to father means freedom from childish things that set in motion spiritual and psychological darkness that puts kids at risk. The Father made this clear to me during Annette's first pregnancy: as a result, no shadows, no secrets, and no lies greeted Gregory Drew Comiskey's entry into the world.

Father Lives Faith

I had an amazing conversation with one of my sons the other day. He is working out his life thoughtfully. I urged him to tell me how he viewed his growing up and what did or did not contribute to health, especially in his faith.

He was honest about some hard stuff I didn't know about (always painful for a parent but also fair: kids have a right to a world that excludes you), and we talked about that.

I feared the strength of his parents' faith may have been too much. More than anything, Annette and I wanted our kids to see something real about our reliance on this unseen God. We were most concerned about our kids choosing to follow Jesus, knowing we couldn't make them.

'Yeah, you guys were pretty intense but what mattered most is that you lived what you believed. You guys loved Jesus and you lived like that.'

My son hates hypocrisy and wants to live true. I think Annette and I helped by living true. That doesn't mean perfectly. It means working out life in an imperfect church with fickle friends and the occasional enemy (we had some noisy ones).

And here we are still: raising hands in prayer and praise, shouting out Easter and Christmas devotionals at noisy family

gatherings, laughing at our foolishness, thanking Him at every turn. My advice to parents who want their kids to come around to Jesus? Don't pontificate; just live like Jesus and friends are the best thing going, especially when it's hard. After all, our kids need to get saved, just like we did: over and over.

What a privilege to be a masculine force for the good! Fathers always impact children, for better or for worse. Dr Joseph Nicolosi (senior, though junior's no slouch—look him up at reintegrativetherapy.com) cast vision for that 'good' by powerfully describing 'salient' fathers as dads who leave a mark, not through misuses of power but by strong alliance.

Fathers whose force is long term, focused advocacy of a son or daughter empower that one to successfully face life challenges. Having sex? Easy. The real test of manhood is salient care of the one fathered.

Father Loves a Person

Each of my four children is different. Though I may desire Jesus-centric virtue for them all, each is a distinct personality that perceives and processes my input differently. An apt parallel is St John Paul II's (Theology of the Body) philosophy which combines 'personalism' with universal moral reality: yeah, the same rules apply to everybody but must be contoured to each one.

What does that mean? I must get to know the person who happens to be my son or daughter: (s)he tells me who (s) he is. Am I watching and listening? For example, how a dad handles the super responsible child who tends to 'please' is different from the kid inclined to push the limits at every turn.

I discovered the distinctiveness of my three boys and one girl. That meant spending time with each one, finding out what (s)he liked, what made him cry or her laugh, what each one could readily, or barely, hear.

I loved their range! I delighted in it, but also adjusted how I offered myself based on his or her differences.

Father Confirms and Envisions

The masculine voice confirms the good, true personhood of each child. That applies to sexual identity—one's unique expression of maleness and femaleness. A father can help him or her to integrate interests and goals with biological sex. Not that hard. Blessing the child's distinctly masculine or feminine attributes as they shine through relationships, skills, and interests helps build confidence.

Relatedly, I learned how to encourage each one when I could see that (s)he was deflated a bit due to peer injustices. Each kid suffers a bit and any father with memory has too. One's own stops and starts can help. Search him or her out when (s)he languishes: remind each of personal value and dignity that no one can take away. Slings and arrows of



The masculine voice confirms the good, true personhood of each child. That applies to sexual identity—one's unique expression of maleness and femaleness. A father can help him or her to integrate interests and goals with biological sex. Not that hard. Blessing the child's distinctly masculine or feminine attributes as they shine through relationships, skills, and interests helps build confidence.

rejection hurt but fatherly encouragement can empower another 'launch.'

Similarly, when I see self-defeating patterns of thought or action in my kids, I challenge them. How? By urging him or her not to quit the team, to work a little harder at school, to stretch a bit. Best way to encourage good action? Confirm real strengths and aptitudes. Every child has them. A good father knows what those qualities are and reminds him or her of them when (s)he is settling for less.

Father Refines

The truth is that kids tend to settle for less. Whether taking on an LGBTQ+ identification, a pot addiction (or porn), subpar friendships, or gaming instead of studying, kids veer off. A father can best intervene by raising the bar a bit and reminding the child what will best serve him or her. Porn and rainbow culture poison original dignity, pot demotivates, subpar friends and intemperate habits dull bright kids.

Keep envisioning him or her! Kids lose sight of that vision. Pray a lot then speak

a little. A father is a co-creator, which gives us authority to gently challenge a child who isn't aspiring to what is better. Pray more. Speak again.

Mom and Dad need to partner in parenting, submitting to each other. While mothers tend to protect the child, the father may need to challenge: 'don't settle!' As parents, give each other the grace of different rhythms.

Father Owns Force

Masculine presence is strong. Our voices and bodies can be intimidating. I've been surprised by the recollections of my kids that I scared them at times. Self-awareness 101: I just have a lot of power in their eyes, so I need not ratchet up the tone or the look. Meekness helps. A quietly confident father doesn't have to play G.I. Joe or Hercules.

Father Keeps Fighting, Joyfully

A child, no matter how old, belongs more to God than any human father. In that way, (s)he is inviolable—protected—from being fully known by his or her parent.



Only God knows in full! So rejoice in some authority and a lot of powerlessness, entrusting that child to the Father of all living.

It's not over. That child is a work in progress who will continue to grow and fail and stall and surpass his or her parents. Empower what is weak, plead Blood over blind spots, rejoice in beauty and real strength. Praise the One who entrusts us with a solid limited share in His treasure. ■

Andrew Comiskey has worked extensively with the healing of the sexually and relationally broken. He is the Founding Director of Desert Stream/Living Waters Ministries, a multifaceted outreach to the broken. Andrew's ministry grows both out of his own commitment to overcome homosexuality and his experience as a husband to Annette, father of four children and grandfather to five grandkids. He is the author of *Pursuing Sexual Wholeness, Strength in Weakness, Naked Surrender: Coming Home to Our True Sexuality* and the Living Waters healing program. Andrew seeks to equip the Church to be whole and holy, a bride ready to receive Jesus. Andrew serves at St Thomas More Parish in Kansas City, Missouri. After four decades in the ministry, Andrew still loves receiving and extending mercy to sexual sinners like himself.

NAVIGATING THE TEEN YEARS

A Checklist for Teens and Parents Who Want to Keep It Real

Teenage years need not be traumatic ones. **Nycil Romis** shares 12 ways for parents and children to have a deeper bond.

Teenage years can feel like a rollercoaster ride for both parents and teens. Other times, it's more like an awkward slow movie with barely any dialogue. Teens sometimes feel that their parents are on a different planet while parents worry more and more, wondering, 'Where is my child headed?' So, how do we survive this wild ride together? Here's a simple, no-nonsense checklist for parents and teens to enjoy this ride, keeping the peace and perhaps appreciating each other.

1. Listen, Don't Lecture

When parents talk to their kids, they often switch straight into 'alert mode,' offering advice and instructions—something teens usually can't stand. All they want is someone who listens without jumping into advice mode. When emotions are high, especially during those tough moments, just being there to hear them out makes a huge difference. Teens, don't be afraid to open up. Trust your parents, they care more than you think!

2. Time Together Doesn't Have to Be a Chore

For teens, family time can sound boring. But hear us out: spending time

together doesn't always have to mean sitting down for 'serious talks.' Instead, try doing something fun together, like cooking a meal, playing a game, or even tackling a project. These little moments help create memories and can be fun for everyone. Plus, it's a great way to actually enjoy your family.

3. Don't Skip on the Hugs

Physical affection doesn't stop being important just because children are getting older. Teens still need to feel that love—whether it's a hug, a close cuddle, a pat on the back, or even just sitting close while watching a movie. Parents, don't hesitate to show that warmth. And teens, it might feel awkward sometimes, but those hugs are comforting, even if we don't admit it!

4. Appreciation Works Both Ways

Everyone loves a little appreciation. Parents, give props when your teen does something well, and not just when they nail something perfectly. And teens, you can totally show love back too—acknowledge when your parents go out of their way for you. A simple 'thanks' goes a long way in keeping things positive.

5. Help Each Other Out

Here's the thing: what's important to teens may not always seem like a big deal to parents, and vice versa. But it's all about showing support. Parents, if your teen has a big school project or a friend drama, showing interest and offering to help will mean the world to them. Teens, offer to help your parents too. It builds mutual respect and can actually be pretty rewarding.

6. Give Teens a Seat at the Table

Teens are near adults, and they deserve a say in some of the family decisions. Parents, get your teen involved in things like planning a vacation or buying new furniture. Giving them a voice helps them learn decision-making skills. You could set some guidelines, like giving a budget range and a few options to consider. This way, it's easier for them to make a decision within those boundaries. It shows them their opinions matter.

7. Set the Rules, but Be Cool About It

Rules are still important, even if it feels like teens are always testing the limits. Parents need to set clear expectations and consequences of violations. You don't need to micromanage every detail, but casually keeping an eye on where your child is and what they're up to—while still respecting their boundaries—is just as important. Consistency is key. Teens need to know where the boundaries are, but they also need space to figure things out on their own. It's always beneficial to talk things



out and establish the rules together. When those rules are broken, discuss what happened and help them get back on track.

8. Say Sorry and Thank You

'I'm sorry' and 'thank you' – these simple words can work wonders in a family. Make it a habit to express gratitude and apologise when necessary; they foster respect and understanding in your home. You won't lose any respect from your kids when you say 'I'm sorry' or 'thank you.' And teens, saying these words at home isn't boring. It shows maturity and strengthens your relationships! Try using them often!

9. Chill on the Pressure

Parents, don't project your anxieties and dreams onto your child. It's easy for parents to have high hopes, but it's crucial to let your teen carve out their own path. Teens, remember

to keep things realistic sometimes. While it's great to strive for success, it's equally important to acknowledge that everyone's journey is different. Encourage each other to explore interests and passions without the weight of unrealistic expectations. Supporting each other's individuality can lead to a healthier and happier family dynamic!

10. Let's Talk Real Struggles

Parents, be honest about the tough stuff you deal with at work or in life. Share your challenges and how you overcome them—it's a great way to model resilience. This is also a great time to share how you're really feeling and how you navigate challenges through your faith and your relationship with the Lord. And teens, don't be afraid to talk about your problems either. Family time is a safe space to let your guard down.

11. Pray Together

Family prayer is a good time to share your worries and pray together. It's a great way to feel connected and bring some peace into the chaos of daily life. Keeping a prayer journal as a family can help you reflect on how your prayers have been answered over the years and see how you've overcome the tough ones. In doing so, we're teaching our children how to live their lives clinging on to the Lord, rather than on their merits.


12. Nobody's Perfect, and That's OK

No parent or teen is perfect—and that's totally fine. Stop stressing about trying to get everything right all the time. Teens, your parents are doing the best they can. They are not trained like professionals to be a parent. And parents, your teen is still figuring it all out. Embrace the imperfections and remember, you're in this together.

At the end of the day, being a family means supporting each other through the ups and downs. And if things get tough, you've got someone close by to lean on – St Joseph and Mother Mary – who are the best help in dealing with family challenges. **IK**

An academician by profession, Nycil Romis teaches at Rajagiri College. She lives with her husband and two kids in Ernakulam, India.





LIVING THE GIFT OF SPIRITUAL FATHERHOOD

Fr Shijo Simon Placheripurath shares personal experiences from his life as a priest, and how they have shaped him.

As priests, we are often called ‘Father’ not merely as a title but because we share in a profound spiritual fatherhood that touches the lives of the faithful. Our journey is filled with moments of joy, sorrow, forgiveness, and healing, much like that of a biological father with his children. Each experience, whether baptising a child or comforting a grieving family, deepens our sense of being instruments of God’s love and grace. Below, I share some of my most cherished experiences that reflect the essence of fatherhood in priestly ministry.

THE DAY I FIRST BAPTISED A CHILD

One of the most memorable moments of my priesthood was when I first baptised

a child in the parish. The parents were young, eager, and a bit nervous, holding their baby girl tight. As I performed the sacrament, I felt a profound sense of connection – not only to this child but to the generations of believers who had come before. This tiny soul, in her white gown, became part of the family of God. The water, the oil, and the prayers created an atmosphere of grace. Seeing the parents’ eyes filled me with tears of joy; I realised that I was not just performing a ritual but was initiating a new life into the Church. It was a moment of true fatherhood—guiding a soul from its very beginning into the faith that would nourish it for a lifetime. The experience was humbling and deepened my own

commitment to being a spiritual father.

A CONFESSION THAT CHANGED MY PERSPECTIVE

One afternoon, a teenage boy entered the confessional, visibly distressed. He spoke about his struggles with anger and disobedience toward his parents, feeling lost and unworthy. As he shared, I could sense his genuine remorse and pain. I didn’t just hear his words—I felt them deeply. After giving him advice, I offered a prayer of absolution, assuring him of God’s mercy. To my surprise, he looked up with eyes full of hope and gratitude. ‘Thank you, Father. I felt like no one understood me, but now I feel lighter,’ he said. This experience reminded me of



the true essence of fatherhood: offering understanding, forgiveness, and guidance when it is most needed. As he walked out, I silently prayed for his healing and strength. Moments like these make me realise that being a spiritual father means being a channel of God's grace to those who seek it.

COMFORTING A FAMILY IN MOURNING

I once received a call late at night from a family in my parish. Their elderly father had just passed away, and they requested my presence. As I arrived at their home, I found the family gathered around, mourning deeply. I could see that words would not suffice. I simply sat with them, listened to their stories, and

offered gentle prayers. After some time, I led them in the Rosary, invoking Mary's intercession for the soul of their departed loved one. As we prayed together, a sense of peace enveloped the room. The family members later told me that my presence was like a father's embrace—bringing comfort, strength, and the reassurance that they were not alone. This experience taught me that true fatherhood often lies in simply being there, sharing in others' pain, and helping them find hope in God's love, even in moments of profound loss.

WITNESSING A COUPLE'S RECONCILIATION

One evening, a couple came to me for counselling, their marriage on the brink of collapse. Hurt and resentment had built up over the years, and they were barely speaking to each other. As we began our sessions, I encouraged them to communicate honestly but with respect and patience. It was challenging, but gradually, they began to express their grievances without blame and to listen without interruption. After several meetings, they started sharing small acts of kindness and forgiveness. Witnessing their transformation was like watching a flower blossom in slow motion. At our last session, they both expressed gratitude and hope for their future together. I felt a deep joy, like that of a father seeing his children rediscover love. This experience reinforced my belief in the power of spiritual fatherhood to bring healing, especially when guiding people back to God's grace and to each other.

GUIDING A YOUNG MAN TO PRIESTHOOD

A young man in our parish struggled with discerning his vocation to the priesthood, fearing the sacrifices it would entail. We met regularly, discussing the challenges and joys of priestly life, and I shared my own experiences to guide him. Over time, his anxiety gave way to peace. He ultimately decided to enter the seminary, and is now continuing his vocation, flourishing in his calling to serve God's kingdom.

SUPPORTING A SINGLE MOTHER

One Sunday after Mass, a young single mother approached me hesitantly. She had been struggling to raise her child alone, facing financial and emotional

hardships. As she shared her story, I listened with compassion and offered her words of encouragement and support. I connected her with a parish group that assists families in need and assured her that the Church would stand by her. Over the months, I saw her confidence grow, her smile return, and her child thrive. Every time I saw them at church, the child would run up to me, calling out, 'Father!' I realised then that being a father doesn't always mean solving problems, but sometimes just being present, offering hope, and connecting people with the help they need. This experience deepened my appreciation for the quiet strength of single parents and my role in providing them with a sense of community and support.

THE JOY OF FIRST COMMUNION

One of the most touching experiences of fatherhood as a priest is guiding children through their First Holy Communion. I remember a little girl who was so eager yet so nervous on the day of her First Communion that her hands were trembling. I knelt beside her, calming her with gentle words and reassured her that receiving Jesus in the Eucharist was a moment of joy and love. As she received the Eucharist for the first time, her face lit up with pure happiness. After the Mass, she ran up to me, saying, 'Father, I felt Jesus in my heart!' Moments like these are precious gifts, showing me the innocence and purity of a child's faith. This experience reinforced my understanding that, as a priest, I'm called to nurture this faith and guide young souls toward a deeper relationship with Christ, much like a father would guide his children.

Each of these experiences has enriched my journey as a spiritual father, affirming the essence of priestly ministry as a loving, guiding, and nurturing role that reflects God's fatherly care. ■



Taking Over My Father's Business

Reflecting on the father-son relationships in the Bible, particularly that of Jesus and Joseph, **Rijo John** shares a powerful way parents can remain worry-free regarding their children.

‘Does the Bible really say anything about what Jesus did from the time He was found in the temple at age 12 until He began His public ministry at age 30?’ This thought-provoking question was posed one Sunday by the catechism supervisor who visited our class. I remember sitting in one of the benches, feeling unsure how to respond. But then, by a touch of grace, the answer came to me: *Of course, it’s in the Bible. My mind flashed to the scene of Jesus at the temple with the teachers and immediately to the verse that follows: And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour* (Luke 2:52).

I hesitated but blurted out what I had remembered. To my surprise, the teacher called me to the front and congratulated me. He mentioned that he had asked this question in many schools but had never met anyone who could answer it. I was grateful to God for revealing it to me at that moment; it wasn’t because I had prepared, but His grace alone.

Years passed after that incident. Many catechism classes came and went, but that verse in Luke stayed with me. It resurfaced one day while I was preparing to lead a session for a Teens Conference at St Michael’s Church in Sharjah. My topic was ‘Relationships with Others’ and I was focusing on the relationship teenagers have with their parents, especially fathers. As I reflected, my thoughts returned to

Joseph’s experience when Jesus was lost in the temple. I imagined Joseph’s worry and confusion as he searched for his son; his hopes, dreams, and fears swirling in his heart. How could he have lost Jesus for two whole days?

Then I realised that Jesus, at 12, was on the verge of His teenage years. He wasn’t a child anymore, and Joseph, like any parent of a teenager, was likely struggling with how to guide and protect Him during this time of change. Joseph knew he could trust Jesus, but doubt must have lingered—*Where could He be? Why did He go off on His own?* But when Joseph finally found Him in the temple, Jesus responded with words that would have left any parent pondering for life: **‘Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?’**

Jesus wasn’t lost—He was with His Heavenly Father. This realisation struck me deeply as I thought of my own teenage daughter. Like Joseph, I have dreams and hopes for her. But I don’t need to be anxious if she has a relationship with her Heavenly Father. As an earthly parent, my role is clear: I must introduce her to her true Father so that her life, even in the turbulence of teenage years, can be secure. Just as Jesus grew in wisdom and favour with God and others, so too can my child, if I help her remain close to God. Whether it’s by attending Mass,

encouraging family prayer, or simply guiding her to read Scripture, I need to lead her to her Father’s house—and leave the rest in His hands.

Reflecting further, my thoughts turned to other teenagers in the Bible who faced trials and emerged stronger through their relationship with God. Joseph, the son of Jacob, was only 17 when he had the dream that led his brothers to despise him. His father rebuked him, but Joseph remained steadfast in his faith. Even when he was sold into slavery and later tempted by Potiphar’s wife, he resisted, saying, *How then could I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* (Genesis 39:9). Far from home, separated from his earthly father, Joseph remained close to his Heavenly Father. His faith ultimately led to his reconciliation with his family, when he presented his father before Pharaoh and blessed him (Genesis 47:7). What joy Jacob must have felt, knowing his son had stayed true to God!

Another example is King Solomon, who, though young, was called to take on the great responsibility of ruling Israel. When God appeared to him in a dream, Solomon did not ask for wealth or long life. Instead, he asked for wisdom, remembering the faithfulness and righteousness of his father, David. Solomon’s prayerful upbringing had prepared him to desire exactly what his father would have wished for him.

These stories from Scripture remind us that parents need not be consumed with anxiety about their teenagers. Fathers need not worry, and mothers need not lose sleep. If we guide our children to trust in their Heavenly Father, He will take them by the hand, impart wisdom, and guide them through life’s challenges. Like Joseph and Solomon, our children can grow in wisdom and favour with God and others if we simply lead them to Him.

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The Assistant Coordinator of Jesus Youth UAE, **Rijo John** works as an engineer in Bosch. He lives in Sharjah with his wife Christeena and their three children.

Father's Love:

Gift and Blessing



Receiving a Father's Confidence

And you saw in the wilderness how the Lord your God carried you as a man carries his son, all along the way you travelled until you reached this place (Deuteronomy 1:31).

By God's grace, I cleared my NET exam (for college professors in India) before completing my post-graduation in literature and was appointed assistant professor in the same college within a couple of weeks. As a result, I became professor to my immediate juniors – which became quite a disturbing matter for me.

Whenever I am troubled, I run to the place I always find solace – the convent chapel, where I ask the intercession of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, my queen mother for assistance. But this time, I went to the church, sat before the altar and prayed fervently, 'Abba Father, hold me tight and lead me through and through.' I prostrated and offered my being into His hands and ended up falling asleep. A few moments later I was woken up by a fellow nun.

The tranquillity and courage I experienced after this incident was inexpressible. A surge of confidence overwhelmed me! I approached the classes with complete confidence, knowing that God, my Father would be there to catch me if I stumbled.

Sr Santhy Grace CMC, Assistant Professor, Vimala College, Thrissur, India

Home is where the Father is

He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents (Malachi 4:6).

To call the Church home, we must first accept God as our Father. It is crucial that we are filled with joy when we are in the church. During my initial days at the seminary, there were occasions when I would feel drained out after sitting in church for a long time.

It was during that time we had a five-day retreat at the seminary. During the retreat I prayed for the paternal care of God. On the last day, during the anointing prayer, I experienced the Slaying of the Spirit. This experience increased my faith and I felt the connection of the Triune God.

Life never stays the same from the moment God touches you. The biggest blessing was being able to call the Church, home and God as Father. After this incident my soul always wanted to pray. I was able to sit in my Father's abode for prolonged periods of time. I was amazed when I noticed myself losing interest in loose talk. I found great joy in all spiritual activities. I enjoyed reading spiritual books and in His grace I could complete reading the whole Bible. I was also blessed with tear-filled eyes every time I prayed. I am ever grateful for the love God showered upon me and how He chose me as His own.

Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift! (2 Corinthians 9:15)

Deacon Onai Manakkunel, Oblates of Sacred Heart, Kottayam, India

In Rushing Waters He provides Firm Footing

The sun will not harm you by day nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all harm, he will watch over your life (Psalms 121:6).

A few months ago, some of my friends and I went on an outing to a waterfall. While playing in the water, I realised that the flowing waters had carried me away from the others. In panic I began to drown. Gasping for breath and flailing about, I tried to stay afloat. Realising my danger, my friends rushed and tried throwing ends of towels and

clothes that I could grab and hold onto. Another friend who happened to be an excellent swimmer swam over to help me. But all their efforts were futile. They were horrified as I started sinking in front of their eyes. As for me, I saw death eye to eye. At that moment I lost all hope of being rescued and calmly prepared for my death. But suddenly a miracle happened. The rushing waters pushed me to a place where my feet found level ground and I could scramble upon. From there I was

able to move to a much safer spot.

Much later, after reflecting on the incident I realised that in life we come across situations where we feel like we are drowning, and we yearn for something to hold on to. In such trying times there is only one thing that we need to realise: our Saviour walks on water.

Fr Albin John C, Assistant Vicar, St Antony's Forane Church, Thrissur, India



The Father who sees a father's pain



But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all — yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me [1 Corinthians 15:20].

Quite recently I had a deep conversation with my mother. She shared the story of my childhood and how I was her miracle baby. When I was about a year old I became dangerously ill. My body was weak, fragile and there was only 1% chance that I would survive.

She recollected how there was a panel of doctors who held a meeting every day to analyse my medical condition and how my father would wait outside the room impatiently to know if his son would live. She told me how my father would put me on his shoulder and wrap me up with a towel so no one could see how weak and thin I was; and how he would hold me and pray often before the statue of Mother Mary in the hospital. As time passed, I stopped vomiting and started sleeping longer. From then on I had a slow recovery.

The whole time we spent at the hospital was a faith changing experience for my father. By the time he passed away, he had become a trustee of our parish. God the Father, who gave His son so that the world may be saved, would know the pain of a father who stood before Him, praying for his son's recovery.

Jisen Davis, Civil Engineer, Thrissur, India



Bonding with my Father

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him (1 John 3:1).

I've often heard people around me address God as *Appa* or 'Our Father'. Filled with this desire, I entered the chapel and on a whim, called God *Appa*. It was then I realised that there was something missing. Deep down inside my heart, it felt like I had called upon someone who was very distant from me. I couldn't experience the comfort everyone around me said they experienced.

Days passed, life got busier and I continued to pray. At one point in my life, I had to make a life-changing decision. My life had hit rock bottom and I couldn't find a way out. It was then my soul was reminded of the name it once wished to call upon.

I returned to the church, sat before the altar, and called out, *Appa*. At that moment I felt a surge of happiness in my heart. I sensed a bond of love between me and God. I felt as if God had embraced me in His love. From then on I pledged to live every moment of my life for Him.

Sharon Shoby, Thrissur, India

Fatherhood is not easy but the journey is worthwhile

Starting a family was one of the best dreams I achieved. I'm a civil engineer married to Sheila, my lovely wife, and by God's grace we have two lovely children, Gabriel and Ariana who've brought joy and a sense of purpose in my life.

Managing the family as a young father got me thinking and trying to figure out ways to unlearn techniques I had unknowingly picked up watching my parents. There were even tough moments when I wondered about how difficult fatherhood was, and why my father never let me in on it!

One thing that kept me moving was my commitment to live a JY lifestyle [six pillars]. I learnt to surrender all my worries and troubles to God each day. When Gabriel was born, the doctors in the hospital informed us that he needed three surgeries within six months to save his life.

Sheila and I were heartbroken and I had to stay strong for her. Yet, God took us through and my lesson from it was, *Be still and know I am God* [Psalm 46:10].

The ability to stay calm and composed during trying moments, I attribute to my surrender during daily Holy Mass. God provided the funds for all the surgeries from friends, workmates and family – something I never imagined.

There are days when I'm so tired and exhausted but one look at my kids and I thank God right there for His faithfulness and for the smiles and joy they've brought to our family. I've also taken the commitment to talk to my wife about each and everything that troubles me, even when I know I will not get an answer, trusting that God knows through her ears.

Martin Karuhanga, Kampala, Uganda



A Priest is also a Father



In most of our lives, the title 'father' is one we reserve for a select few. We bestow it upon the men who have nurtured us, provided for us, and protected us – those who have truly fathered us. Whether it be our biological fathers, familial figures, or our Father in heaven, the name 'father' carries immense weight and responsibility.

For many Catholics, the word 'father' comes so naturally when addressing our priests that we often overlook the significance behind it. I remember an instance during a youth Bible study with our chaplain, Fr Thomas. As he led the session, I suddenly had a question. Without thinking, I called him *Acha* (meaning 'father' in Malayalam) in the same child-like tone I used with

my own dad. It caught me off guard. In that small, innocent moment, I realised that I viewed Father Thomas much like a true father figure. He was always there for our families, showing empathy and kindness, embodying a leadership that made us feel at home. Through that relationship, I came to understand how he nourished my faith and spirit, just as a father would.

In today's world, with its many social challenges, there's a phrase often thrown around – 'fatherless behaviour.' Though it might sound like just another piece of social media slang, there's some truth in it. Now more than ever, society craves the love and guidance of a good father, our Heavenly Father. If we, as the body of Christ, can pray for our priests to reflect that love in their roles as spiritual fathers, I believe we'll begin to see a healing within the Church – and in the world.

Archana Jestin, Australia

The Father who went before me

The LORD your God, who is going before you, will fight for you, as he did for you in Egypt, before your very eyes, and in the wilderness [Deuteronomy 1 29-31]

I was nervous when asked to share an experience of God and His fatherly love because I knew there were plenty of individuals around me who had had far better encounters. However, that's when I understood that one should seize every chance to share Jesus. I'm going to tell you how God showered me with His love and affection, despite the fact that I deserved none of it.

There was a period in my life when my mother was unwell, and my younger brother was in the hospital. Those were the most difficult times in my life. At home, I had a ton of obligations. It was really difficult for me to juggle everything as a seventeen-year-old. Moreover, I was experiencing a spiritual crisis. At the time I went to those I knew and pleaded for assistance. They did everything they could to support me, but deep down in my heart I knew that their assistance was insufficient.

Once everything was over and I re-started praying and speaking to God, I realised how during my period of spiritual apathy, I had not prayed. Yet I sensed God urging me to talk to him about my troubles. I realised how through my difficult time, God was with me, guiding me and watching over me at every turn. He waited for me with arms wide open, like a father welcoming back His prodigal son. I still wonder how a stubborn seventeen-year-old who completely forgot about God and prayer in her trying times, became so worthy of His fatherly love and affection.

Jaseena P J, Student, Sacred Hearts CGHSS, Thrissur, Kerala

PATHFINDERS

Diva to Modern Magdalena



Neha Antony Akkara writes about the French actress of the late nineteenth century, whose notorious life was redeemed by that of Mary Magdalene.

More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ. (Philippians 3:8).

This article of the Pathfinders series explores why Eve Lavalliere, one of the world's most celebrated actresses turned her back after experiencing all that the world had to offer.

Witnessing the horrific death of her parents at the age of seventeen led Eve Lavalliere to bouts of depression. It was during one of her suicide attempts that a man talked her out of it, and seeing something in her expressive face convinced her to try out acting. He arranged an interview for her. Slowly she rose to stardom. Eve Lavalliere grew to be one of the most acclaimed actresses of France. She also had many affairs. It is believed that she had a child out of wedlock with a man named Samuel. Her daughter grew up to hate her. Samuel on the other hand was a womaniser. All these reasons slowly pushed Eve Lavalliere to depression.

When depression reached its peak she sought aid in Spiritism; she gave herself to Satan in exchange of fame and beauty. She says that she experienced everything the world had to offer yet Eve regarded herself as the unhappiest of souls. The audience saw a fascinating and witty Eve Lavalliere, but as the stage lights dimmed, the darkness was full of demons that haunted her. In 1916 when Eve was at the peak of fame, she had a series of performances in London. During one such performance soon after the audience gave her a standing ovation, she stepped down from the stage and walked straight to the River Thames with the intention of drowning herself.

Approximately a year later, Eve signed a contract to do a tour around the United States. This tour would bring her more fame and glory. Before starting off with her tour, Eve went to unwind in the French countryside. One day she happened to come across the local priest. After introducing himself, he asked her if she had attended Mass that day. It was

*On finishing the book, Eve surrendered herself wholeheartedly to God. In one of her letters, she wrote, **My resolution is made. From now on, only Jesus has a right to my life, for he alone gave me happiness and peace.***

then she realised that she had missed Mass for a very long time. The next day she went to Holy Mass. Later during a conversation with the priest she realised how shocked he was on hearing about her previous life. His reaction left Eve sleepless for countless nights. She slowly began to rethink her life and her ways. As time passed the spiritual friendship between Eve and the priest grew. He gave her a copy of a book inspired from the life of Mary Magdalene.

From the Gospels we can infer that Mary Magdalene was a very pretty yet 'proud' woman. Jesus cast seven demons out of her. When Mary Magdalene heard the news that Jesus was in the Pharisee's house, she bought a bottle of expensive perfume. As soon as she saw Jesus she fell to his feet and shed tears of repentance. After washing his feet with her tears and wiping his feet with her hair, she applied the expensive perfume that she had brought for him. When everyone around saw her for the grave sins that she had committed, only Jesus saw her heart. He forgave Mary Magdalene for her sins as she loved more. *Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little (Luke 7:47).*

Life after experiencing Jesus and his love was never the same. Mary Magdalene, became so deep rooted in faith that she stood with Jesus during his crucifixion and death. Even when the apostles ran away, Mary Magdalene stood firm in her faith and accompanied Jesus to the cross. After his resurrection, it was to Mary Magdalene that Jesus first appeared.

Eve Lavalliere read the saint's story with remorse. Mary Magdalene's life was a spiritual inspiration for her. On finishing the book, Eve surrendered herself wholeheartedly to God. In one of her letters, she wrote, *My resolution is made.*

From now on, only Jesus has a right to my life, for he alone gave me happiness and peace. The parish church at Chanceaux, has the following engraved in stone: *In this church Ève Lavallière converted and received Communion on 19 June 1917, brought back to God by Fr. Chestaigner.*

Casting aside her earthly fame and glory, she wished to enter a religious life but was rejected from many convents because of her notoriety. She sold all her wealth and gave the money to the poor. Then settled into a small country village and devoted herself to prayer and joined the third order of St Francis. She also became part of a lay mission team which nursed Arab children from Tunisia.

During this time, she became ill and her body slowly started deteriorating, she suffered from a medical condition that turned her blind and her eyes had to be sewn together. The surgery was performed without giving her anaesthesia, which caused her great pain and suffering. She responded by saying that since all her senses sinned they should suffer to redeem themselves. Her health worsened with the passage of time. She died at the age of 63. As per her request her grave had a small cross and these words engraved upon them:

I left everything for God;
He alone is enough.
O Thou Who didst create me,
Have pity on me

Just like the saint whose life sparked her own conversion, Eve turned her back to her old life and carrying her crosses of loneliness, illness, suffering and pain, returned to the Father who loved her. ■

Neha Antony Akkara lives in Kerala, India. She is a literature enthusiast who is currently pursuing her master's.

SOUNDREPLY



MOVIE

HACKSAW RIDGE

cultural doomsday. Faith and courage – they go hand in hand in any battle – whether physical, emotional or spiritual.

Hacksaw Ridge is an academy winning 2016 Second World War drama movie, directed by Mel Gibson and based on the true story of Desmond Doss, the first conscientious objector to be awarded the Medal of Honor, the highest military award in the United States Armed forces, recognising valour in battle, above and beyond the call of duty.

Brought up in Christian faith by his pious Seventh-day Adventist mother, the first half of the movie describes the childhood and adolescent experiences of Doss that shapes and matures the convictions within him. Desmond's dad is an alcoholic who fought in the First World War, only to lose all his mates in the war. And although Tom Doss returned home from the war, he returned a different man – the war had taken everything but his life. Desmond and his brother grow up seeing the impact of their dad's alcoholism and the consequent domestic violence, and its fear in their family. As any child growing up through this experience, naturally the seeds of hatred towards his father begin festering in Desmond's mind, yet we are shown a glimpse of how Bertha, his mom, helps him to see beyond, to judge a person not just by what he/she does, but to try and understand the reasons – in a way, seeing the person as God sees him/her.

Obviously, it would not be very wise to say that one or two childhood experiences form the

basis of all of a grown man's character – yet, through a few anecdotes from his childhood, Gibson is able to sketch the outlines of a bigger picture in the mind of the viewer, where one is able to figure how and why Desmond becomes the man he is. And for my part, I thought it was clever filmmaking – gentle, subtle, yet leaving a mark.

In spite of his dad's objections and pleading, Desmond enlists in the army as a combat medic, unbeknownst of the fact that even medics have to pass weapons training. Desmond refuses to even touch a weapon – 'thou shalt not kill' is the sixth commandment and as a man seeking to listen to and follow Jesus, it is his conviction that he wouldn't even go near anything that might cause him to have a fissure in that relationship. However, his superiors Sergeant Howell and Captain Glover don't take very kindly to his request – for it is their conviction that a unit is only as strong as its weakest link – and someone who is not capable of defending his comrades (with weapons) in a war, makes the whole unit vulnerable. Desmond's refusal to do weapons training is also seen as a sign of his weakness and cowardice. Initially through reasoning and then with threats, his superiors demand that Desmond leave the army and go back home, but when he refuses, they resort to violence and abuse (with the help of his unit-mates and Smitty as the ringleader) to break Desmond down and make him quit.

However, when nothing works they begin court-martial

Living as a Christian family in the postmodern Western world can sometimes be scary – every so often one realises the magnitude of the task at hand – with social liberalism extending its claws onto everything that a Christian family considers sacrosanct, we wonder, what kind of a world are we leaving our children! And yet, when the moment of darkness passes, the Christian realises that the real question ought to be – what kind of children are we sending into the world – for there is nothing we can provide for the wellbeing of our children, except for the *one thing necessary* – faith. Impossible as it may seem, only by courageously living the authentic Christian life with all its demands, amidst a culture that has lost its sense of direction can we arrest the slide towards the impending

REVIEW BY Joseph Anthraper

Joseph lives in Southampton, UK with Mahima, his wife and their 5 kids.

procedures against Desmond for insubordination, which results in him being jailed and missing the wedding with his fiancé, Dorothy. In his darkest hour, when God felt far away and no solace seemed forthcoming, divine help intervened in the form of his dad, Tom Doss who gets the commander he served under during WWI, to dismiss the court-martial and reinstate Desmond.

Onward and upward they go; Desmond's unit is deployed in the Battle of Okinawa, to take Maeda Escarpment, also known as Hacksaw Ridge. After an intense day of battle, Desmond's unit captures part of the ridge, and as night falls, rest in bunkers waiting for daylight to mount the next assault to move forward. Deep into the night Desmond and Smitty are busy rescuing the injured and moving them to safety and when they finally do take a break, Smitty apologises for doubting Desmond's courage and for all the abuses at the training camp. This is one of the most poignant scenes in the movie – where once again, through small anecdotes from the past of both Desmond and Smitty, we are given a glimpse of what has shaped either person's character. Desmond reveals to Smitty the time when he snatched the gun from his alcoholic dad who was about to kill his mom, and in a rage of anger pointed it at his dad. In Desmond's own words, 'In my heart, I killed him' – resolving then to never even touch a gun ever again.

As the next morning dawns, several hundreds of Japanese soldiers file out of underground



bunkers and launch a major counterattack, causing huge losses to Desmond's unit. Realising that they are unable to hold ground, Captain Glover orders the unit to retreat off the ridge leaving the wounded and dying there. As he is preparing to evacuate, Desmond hears someone calling 'medic' and returns to the middle of artillery fire to rescue an injured soldier. Yet, there are tens of injured soldiers all around him, and one by one, single handedly, all through the night, Desmond carries each injured soldier, even the injured Japanese soldiers, and lowers them down the ridge to safety and to medical help – with the prayer, *Lord, help me get just one more*, always on his lips.

The next morning, Captain Glover realises that the person on top of the ridge rescuing soldiers is Desmond and helps get Desmond off the ridge. The one they thought was the greatest coward turned out to be the one with the greatest courage – yet, Desmond knew and the viewer knows, that there is someone greater than Desmond at work – the one in whom Desmond trusts, and trusts unabashedly. Although

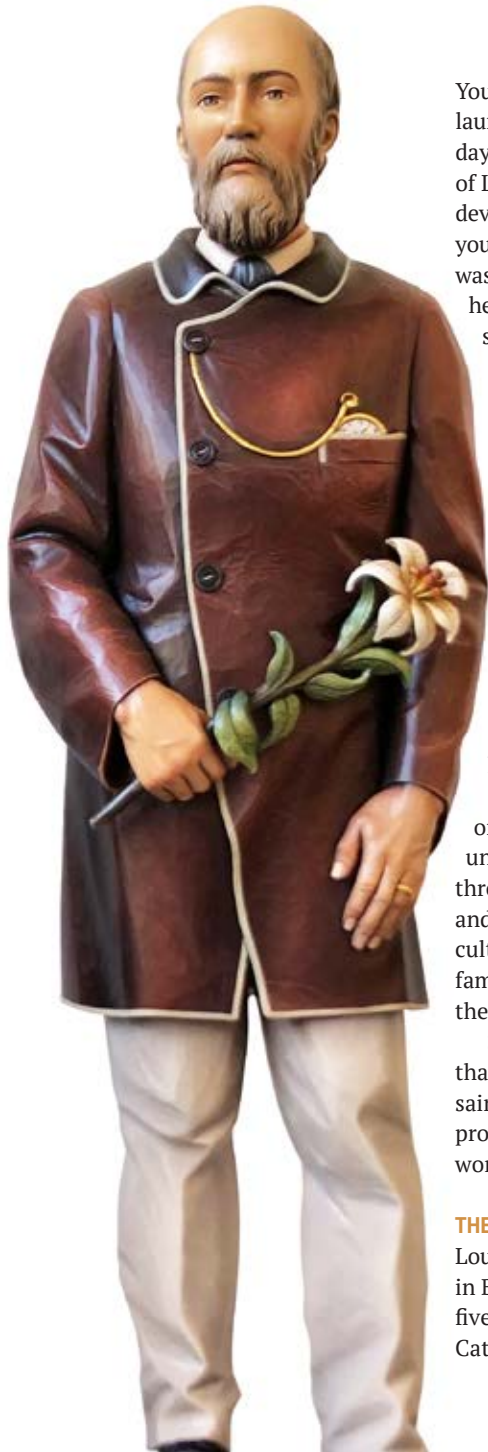
the injured of the unit have been moved to safety, the task remains – will the 77th infantry be able to finally capture Hacksaw Ridge?

Earthly fatherhood is a representation of the divine fatherhood of God – albeit an extremely imperfect one. Every dad (and mom) knows the enormity of the task at hand, how imperfectly we reflect God, the true Father. Although this might become a source of discouragement for some, for the Christian, it is also the avenue where, as St Paul experienced, we too figure that *His power is made perfect in our weakness*. And when one lets that happen, to paraphrase the great JP2, in fatherhood man finds the true meaning and purpose of his being.

It is not for nothing that the generation that fought WWII is called the Greatest Generation. Watching the movie, one realises the amount of sacrifice that the greatest generation made for future generations – and it is incumbent upon each of us to do at least an iota of what they did – fighting the evil in our midst, often without arms – but with no compromise. ■■

Chandeliers

✶ Saint Louis Martin: Father of Saints



The month of October is dedicated to exploring the virtue of chastity and its connection to love and responsibility. To mark this occasion, the Jesus Youth Teens Team of Palakkad (India) launched 'Chastity Radio'. On its first day, the podcast focused on St Therese of Lisieux, a saint whose purity and devotion continues to inspire countless young people. Reflecting on her life, I was captivated by the significant role her father, St Louis Martin, played in shaping her character and that of their entire family.

St Louis Martin was not just a devoted father but the head of a family of saints, whose legacy of holiness has enriched the Church. He led his family with unwavering love and a deep reliance on God, providing a strong spiritual foundation. His fatherly guidance enabled St Therese to embrace her 'little way' of doing small things with extraordinary love. She saw her vocation as love itself—a virtue she learned within her home.

The family's faithfulness, centred on the love of God, led to their unique witness of sanctity. It was through his own example of devotion and responsibility that Louis Martin cultivated an environment where each family member could pursue holiness in their daily lives.

St Louis Martin's fatherhood was more than a role; it was a calling that inspired sainthood within his family, leaving a profound impact on the Church and the world.

THE MAKING OF A DEVOUT SOUL

Louis Martin, born on 22 August 1823, in Bordeaux, France, was the third of five children in a devout and industrious Catholic family. His parents, Pierre-

François Martin and Marie-Anne Fournier, instilled in their children a love for the faith and a sense of integrity from a young age. Louis' upbringing was marked by a balance of discipline and affection, which shaped his sense of duty, resilience, and moral character.

During his youth, Louis displayed a contemplative nature and a deep sense of spirituality. His dedication to prayer and piety led him to contemplate a vocation in religious life. With this intention, he pursued entry into the Augustinian Monastery of St Bernard in the Swiss Alps. However, despite his sincere desire to serve God as a monk, Louis struggled with Latin, a requirement for admission. Unable to meet the criteria, he faced the disappointment of realising that his path did not lie in religious life.

Louis' inability to join the monastery was not a deterrent but a stepping stone. He accepted this with humility, recognising that God's plan for him was different and that his vocation was to be lived out in the world. This experience marked a pivotal moment in his life, teaching him the value of obedience to divine will and preparing him for a greater mission. Ultimately, it was his steadfast faith and resilience during these early years that laid the foundation for his future role as a devoted husband, father, and, later, a saintly example of Christian fatherhood.

A VIRTUOUS CRAFT

After realising his path did not lie in religious life, Louis Martin embraced the profession of watchmaking. With dedication and precision, he mastered the craft, earning a reputation as a skilled and trustworthy artisan. Establishing his business in Alençon, France, Louis's work was marked by integrity and meticulous attention to detail. His professionalism influenced his fatherhood, as he imparted values of discipline, patience, and honesty

By Aji Thomas

to his children. Through his example, Louis showed that work, when offered to God, becomes a means of sanctification and a path to holiness, deeply shaping his family's spiritual life.

MARRIAGE AND FATHERHOOD IN FAITH

On 13 July 1858, Louis Martin married Zélie Guérin, a skilled lacemaker, in Alençon, France. Both had initially desired a religious vocation but discerned that God was calling them to a shared life of marriage and family. Their union, built on a foundation of mutual respect and shared faith, became a living witness to God's grace in the vocation of marriage. Together, they welcomed nine children, five of whom survived to adulthood, including St Therese of Lisieux, one of the Church's most beloved saints.

Louis Martin's role as a Catholic father was defined by love, patience, and unwavering trust in God. Together with Zélie, he fostered a home grounded in prayer, moral values, and Catholic teachings. Louis guided his children's spiritual growth with gentle firmness, encouraging them to pursue holiness while modelling virtues like humility, responsibility, and hard work. Even through hardships, including the loss of four children and Zélie's illness, he remained steadfast in faith, leading with acceptance and serenity. His devotion profoundly shaped his children's spirituality, leaving a lasting legacy of holiness that continues to inspire Catholic families today.

A FATHER LEADING THERESE TO SAINTHOOD

Following the death of his wife on 28 August 1877, Louis Martin was heartbroken but remained devoted to his five daughters. He relocated the family to Lisieux, where he nurtured their emotional and spiritual needs. His influence was especially profound on his youngest daughter, Therese.

Together with Zélie, he fostered a home grounded in prayer, moral values, and Catholic teachings. Louis guided his children's spiritual growth with gentle firmness, encouraging them to pursue holiness while modelling virtues like humility, responsibility, and hard work.

When Therese expressed her desire to enter the Carmelite convent at just fifteen-years-old, Louis wholeheartedly supported her decision. He recognised her calling as a reflection of God's will and trusted in divine guidance, understanding the significance of her choice. His encouragement gave Therese the confidence to pursue her vocation.

Through his own example of humility, love, and total reliance on God, Louis inspired Therese to embrace her 'little way'—doing small things with great love. His fatherly guidance helped her see holiness in the ordinary. Louis Martin's loving support ultimately led Therese on her path to sainthood, making him a true model of a father who led his child to heaven.

DECLINE AND CANONISATION

Between 1887 and 1894, Louis Martin faced a series of strokes that led to a gradual decline in both his physical and mental health. Despite the challenges of his condition, Louis embraced his hardships with grace, demonstrating the virtues he had always taught his children, inspiring them to trust in God's providence.

Louis Martin passed away peacefully on 29 July 1894, at the age of 70. His life of devotion and love was recognised when he was canonised together with his

beloved wife, Zélie, on 18 October 2015, by Pope Francis. This momentous event marked them as the first married couple to be canonised together, symbolising their shared commitment to Christian family life and serving as a model for families striving to live out their faith in the modern world.

Thank You, Saint Louis Martin!

Dear Saint Louis Martin, Thank you for your blessed fatherhood and the remarkable life that demonstrated grace and unwavering trust in God's plan, even in the midst of trials. Your dedication to nurturing your children's faith and leading them to holiness has left an inspiring legacy for families everywhere. Your example encourages us to embrace our roles with love, patience, and perseverance, showing us that true fatherhood is rooted in holiness and devotion. You taught your children to do every little thing with great love for God, inspiring Therese to follow her 'little way.' We are grateful for your intercession and pray to follow your example of a faith-filled, loving home. ■■

Aji Thomas lives in Palakkad, India, with his wife Lizi Das and their three children.



Highest Good

Fathers play a tremendous role in the faith formation of their children. **Anil Israel** reflects on this and the role biblical fathers have played.

A young boy came home crying and told his mom that the priest to whom he went for confession gave him as penance to say 'two Our Father'. He was crying because he knew only one. True, we have only one father in heaven. Jesus introduced us to the Heavenly Father, by teaching us to call God as 'Father' – *Our Father in heaven* (Matthew 6:9).

Personal experiences of our earthly father mostly contributes to our having a distorted perception of the exceedingly ever-loving Heavenly Father. As we mature through life, we learn to accept our earthly father with their set of limitations and imperfections. By God's grace we can restore the distorted image and learn to abandon our fragile lives into His abundant providential care and protection.

If we have to ask some people whom

they have as their role-model in life, then some would respond it is their earthly father. Fatherhood is indeed an important and significant role in the upbringing of children, who in turn would assume the role of fatherly figures as they grow up.

A child's life is greatly influenced by the fatherly figures in his or her own childhood. The way we were raised as children tends to influence the way we, in turn, raise children we are entrusted with. We might unknowingly end up passing on a distorted perception of fatherly figures. Therefore, fatherhood brings along with it a weighted responsibility of enormous magnitude.

Let us take a look at some examples from the Holy Bible. *Abraham made Isaac carry the wood for the sacrifice, and he himself carried a knife and live coals for starting the fire* (Genesis 22:6). A loving father ensures the safety of his child, and does everything possible to keep them away from harmful and dangerous stuff. Responsible parenting would attempt to minimise screen time of their children in early childhood.

A father naturally owns up the role of being the bread-winner for the family. He tries to ensure that everyone's primary needs are met. He takes care to provide everything that is good and useful for the upbringing of his children. When Joseph's brothers were grazing their flocks near Shechem, Jacob sent Joseph: *Go and see how your brothers and flocks are getting along* (Genesis 37:14). Likewise, when Jesse's older sons were at the service of King Saul in the battle against the Philistines, he sent David: *Take this basket of roasted grain and these ten loaves of bread, and carry them quickly to your brothers... See how your brothers are getting along* (1 Samuel 17:17,18). A father is always concerned about the well-being of his children.

When Tobias was blind, and wanted to send his son Tobit to recover the ten

talents of silver entrusted to Gabael, at Rages in Media, he didn't want to send him alone. *Tobias went out to look for a man to go with him to Media, someone who was acquainted with the way. He went out and found the angel Raphael* (Tobit 5:4). A father is cautious to minimise the risk for his children.

Fathers are responsible not only for the temporal needs, but also for the spiritual well-being of their children. According to the *Catechism*, 'education of the offspring' is a vital part of the call to Holy Matrimony. This essentially also implies faith formation of the children. The family is the domestic church and the parents are the child's foremost faith 'formators'. The faith life lived by the parents is easily imitated by their children. Tobit sets a strong example in this direction. *Revere the Lord all your days, my son, and refuse to sin or to transgress his commandments. Live uprightly all the days of your life, and do not walk in the ways of wrongdoing* (Tobit 4:5).

Statistics show that when only the mother is a strong practising believer, then the children are proportionally less likely to follow. However, when they see their father setting a role-model as a strong practising believer, the probability of the children following is tremendously high. Surely, a child concludes if going to church is not important for dad, then it must definitely be unimportant and can be skipped. On the other hand, if a child observes that papa is a devoted church goer, then there must be something significant about it and they would prefer to imitate. When fathers are part of the family evening prayer or when children see their fathers reading the Bible, they too are prone to be influenced positively.

If mothers are the heart of a family, then fathers are the 'spiritual head' of the family. We have a strong affirmation from the life of St Joseph. It was not to Mary, but to Joseph that the angel entrusted

IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME › MATTHEW 6:9



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the task of naming Jesus: *you shall call his name Jesus* (Matthew 1:21). Again, the angel instructs Joseph to flee to Egypt: *Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you* (Matthew 2:13). Finally, the return from Egypt is also intimated only to Joseph: *Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel* (Matthew 2:20). Thus we see that Joseph being entrusted with significant responsibilities is a clear sign that in God's design, fathers are entrusted with the role of being the spiritual head of the family.

Praying for one's family is an inevitable essence of spiritual fatherhood. St Alphonsa's father used to get up

early every morning and kneel in prayer. Job too *would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings* (Job 1:5) for his ten children. When our fifth child was born, my wife Sunitha faced some complications. This episode convinced me that I too must pray a Rosary every day for my family. By God's grace I have been trying to be faithful to this decision ever since. Embracing the call to be the 'spiritual head' of the family is indeed the 'highest good' fathers can do for their children. ■■

Anil Israel lives in Mannheim, Germany, with his wife Sunitha and their 6 children.

NewsWatch



Abba Hridayam: Neal Lozano's Abba's Heart translated to Malayalam

On 19th October 2024, Kairos Media released its 30th book, *Abba Hridayam*, the Malayalam translation of Matt and Neal Lozano's *Abba's Heart*.

Abba Hridayam, translated by Jose Jacob, was released at SVD, Kaduthuruthy (Kerala, India). Fr Mathew Pundayil officially launched the book by presenting a copy to Dr Joseph Thomas, pioneer of the Unbound ministry in Malayalam. Also present were Jose Jacob, along with his wife Mini, Dr Chackochan Njavallil, Director of Kairos Media, and Sajjan CA, Manager of Kairos Media.

By Sam Biju

'The African Church is alive and full of faith,' declares Cardinal Hollerich



Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich, a key organiser of the Vatican's Synod on Synodality, praised the vitality and faithfulness of the Catholic Church in Africa after participating in a pilgrimage to Benin. Hollerich, who attended the Marian pilgrimage at the Notre-Dame d'Arigbo cave in Dassa-Zoumè, emphasised that the African Church is 'alive and full of faith.'

Reflecting on his experience, Hollerich said he came to Africa to learn and admired how Africans participate wholeheartedly in their religious practices. He noted the joy and deep faith evident in Africa's Catholic communities, adding that tradition is meaningful only when interpreted through faith.

Hollerich also touched on the more traditional and conservative stance of the African Church. Earlier

this year, African bishops rejected a Vatican directive that allowed for 'spontaneous' pastoral blessings for same-sex couples and other couples in irregular situations. The Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar made it clear that there would be 'no blessing for homosexual couples' in African churches. Pope Francis later acknowledged Africa's unique cultural perspective on homosexuality, describing it as something culturally intolerable for many Africans.

As the Synod on Synodality approaches its concluding session in October 2024, Hollerich emphasised his role in ensuring that the voices of all the faithful from different continents are heard, with the goal of fostering unity and eliminating political influences within the Church.

Pope Francis encouraged Catholics in Papua New Guinea to continue spreading the Gospel

On 7 September 2024, Pope Francis visited the Shrine of Mary Help of Christians in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, where he encouraged local Catholics to continue spreading the Gospel to marginalised and remote communities. Addressing bishops, priests, seminarians, and catechists from Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, the Pope acknowledged the challenges faced by 19th-century missionaries and praised their perseverance despite early failures.

Pope Francis was warmly welcomed by tribes from various provinces, with crowds enthusiastically chanting, 'God is good all the time.' Cardinal John Ribat, Papua New Guinea's first cardinal, and Bishop Otto Separy, president of the bishops' conference, greeted the Pope, highlighting the country's rich cultural diversity, with over 800 languages and thousands of tribes.

In his speech, the Pope recognised the faith and sacrifice of early missionaries, urging the faithful to continue their mission, especially to those in urban slums and remote areas lacking basic necessities. He also honoured saints and martyrs depicted in the shrine's stained-glass windows, including St Peter Chanel, Blessed Peter To Rot, and St John Paul II.

Pope Francis emphasised the Church's desire to be close to the most vulnerable, urging Catholics to emulate the saints by serving those on society's peripheries. During the event, the pope also listened to testimonies from local religious figures, including a priest, a catechist, and a lay delegate to the Church's Synod on Synodality.



INDIAN PRIEST PART OF THE NEWLY APPOINTED LIST OF CARDINALS

Monsignor George Jacob Koovakad, a 51-year-old priest from Kerala, has been appointed as one of the 21 new cardinals by the Vatican. Koovakad, who belongs to the Syro-Malabar Archdiocese of Changanacherry, has been managing Pope Francis' international travels since 2020. The formal ceremony for his elevation to cardinal will take place on 8 December, during the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

Koovakad began his Vatican diplomatic career in 2006, after completing his training at the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy. Over the years, he has served in various Apostolic Nunciature, including Algeria, South Korea, Iran, Costa Rica, and Venezuela. He held key positions such as Secretary of the Nunciature in South Korea and Iran, and Counsellor in Costa Rica and Venezuela.

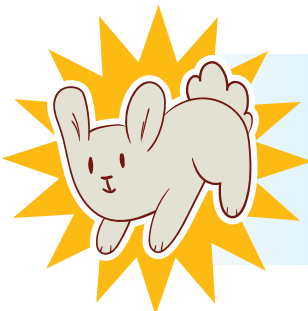
Born on 11 August 1973, in Thiruvananthapuram, Koovakad was ordained a priest in 2004. His extensive diplomatic service and his current role in overseeing the Pope's travels have made him a key figure within the Vatican's Secretariat of State. His elevation to cardinal marks a significant recognition of his contributions.



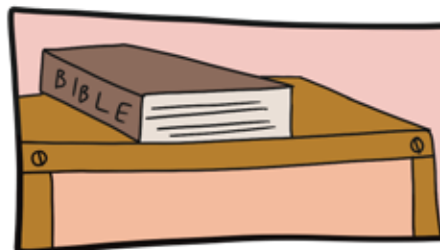
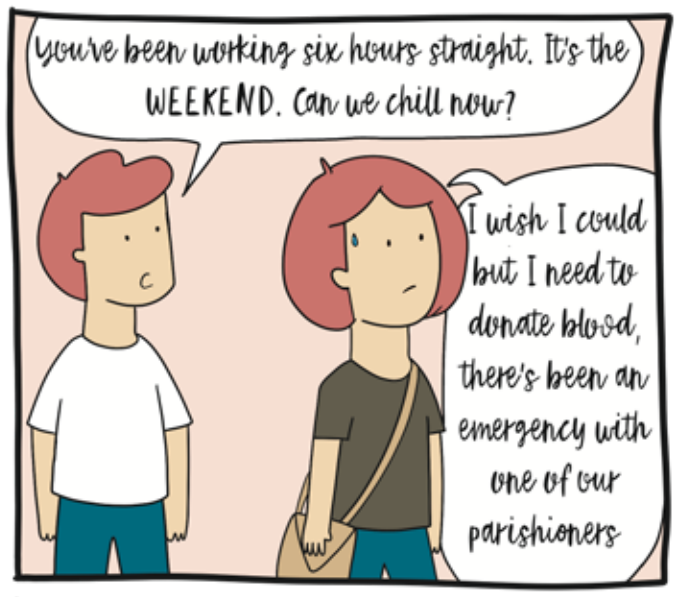
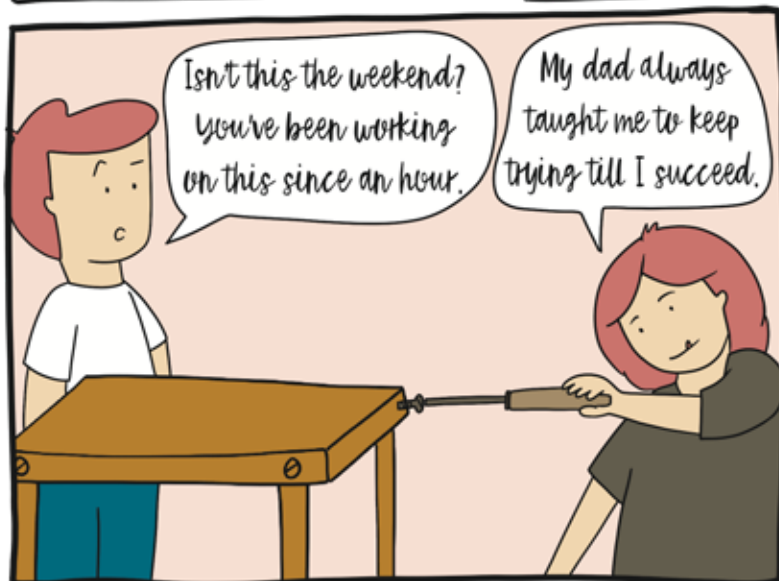
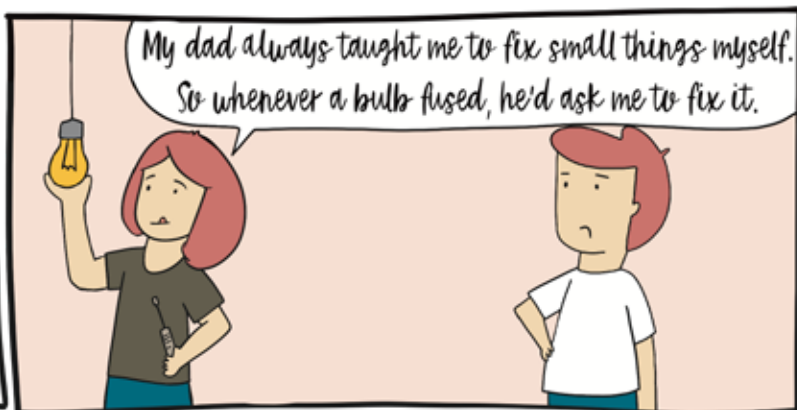
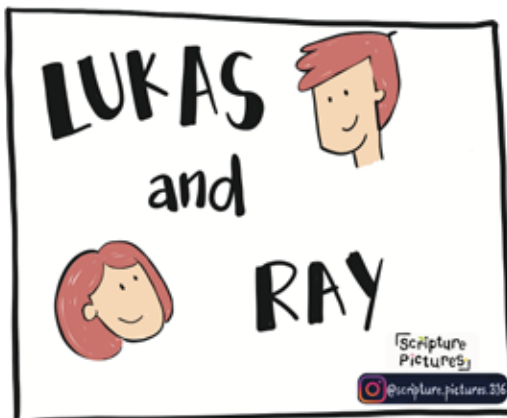
Take a picture of the solved image and send it to quiztime@jykaivosmedia.org before 25th November 2024.
The winner will be rewarded with 1 year subscription of Kairos Global



FIND 15 MISTAKES IN THE PICTURE



ALSO
Find 12 rabbits
in the picture





KAIROS
Buds

WHY THE CULTURE IS TARGETTING OUR KIDS

'Did you know that by the age of three, a child's brain is twice as active as an adult brain and it stays that way for the first ten years of life. From an intellectual formation standpoint these seven years are the most important. It's why reading to children is the #1 thing a parent or grandparent can do with their children to ensure success later in life. It is also why various factions in our culture are trying to win over kids during these formative years. The unfortunate side effect is there are fewer and fewer innocent books without an agenda.'

Kairos Buds is a Catholic magazine for children aged 3 to 12. Filled with faith activities and articles, DIY, crafts, cartoons and art pages, Buds' only agenda is to bring little children to Jesus.



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