

PRIVATE
CIRCULATION
ONLY

ALSO ↓

DAD REMEMBERS ANOTHER BIRTH!

■ **SHAJI CHACKO**

**Once a JY,
Always a JY**

DR. KOCHURANI JOSEPH

GROUND BREAKING GRASSROOTS

PROF. CC ALICEKUTTY



MARY MY BELOVED MOTHER



O Holy womb that bore our Lord Jesus Christ! Mould us as expected by your beloved Son. Let our families inculcate good virtues. Let thy peace fill our families. Let faithfulness be strengthened among couples. Let the voice of vocation be heard and answered. Let wisdom, understanding and knowledge be implanted in our children.

EDITOR'S ROOM

DR. CHACKOCHAN J NJAVALLIL



IS THERE A NEED TO REDISCOVER THE ORIGINAL SIMPLICITY IN POLICIES, ACTIVITIES, LEADERSHIP AND RELATIONSHIPS?

CORAL JUBILEE AND BEYOND

For a second year undergraduate student hailing from a remote village in Kerala, India, Jesus Youth '85, for me was breathtaking and unforgettable. To think that thirty-five years have passed since that groundbreaking experience is definitely hard to believe. But for the two thousand men and women who participated in it, it still remains an incredible event, out of which evolved the unique and remarkable youth movement.

The name – Jesus Youth, its emblem, the meaningful and exciting Malayalam theme song, the unique Jesus Youth style which blends youthfulness and creativity, fun and friendship, the realisation that witnessing Jesus through our lives is the sole purpose of our existence... all these evolved out of Jesus Youth '85.

The accomplishments of Jesus Youth over the years are extraordinary and marvellous. Several thousands of teenagers, youth and young families are involved in it. It has spread to almost all continents, and several cultures and communities. Inspired by the movement, many are joining priesthood and consecrated life. Innumerable people's lives have been influenced for the better and numerous evangelisation initiatives in various spheres have sprouted from it.

One remarkable aspect of the movement is the dedication and commitment of a large number of youth who are seldom appreciated or celebrated. At *Kairos* too, the amount of work we do and the hardships we endure to bring out the various magazines, and the varied related responsibilities are scarcely noticed, understood or appreciated. This is true for most of the people associated with the movement, though there are a few exceptions.

The thirty-fifth anniversary of Jesus Youth – the Coral Jubilee is here. While celebrating it and acknowledging the providence of God in its journey, this is also a time to recollect and reflect on whether any course correction is needed for the movement.

Are we still dynamic and creative enough to cater to the needs of today's youth and teenagers? Is the youth movement becoming more and more institutionalised and losing focus?

Is there a need to rediscover the original simplicity in policies, activities, leadership and relationships? These are some questions to ponder while efforts are made in furthering initiatives.

Wishing each of you a meaningful Coral Jubilee and a Merry Christmas.

The Christmas Gift

Dear Readers, this month we are reaching out to all our patrons with a massive 'Christmas Gift'. We encourage each of you to make use of it and introduce it to as many people as possible. Details are given on pages 46 to 48.

Kairos Buds

We are also releasing a new magazine for 3-13 year-olds – *Kairos Buds*. This new English magazine intends to reach out to children the world over. Along with *Kairos Buds*, **Kairos Buds Diary** is also being made available which we hope will accompany our children in their faith journey. We seek your prayers, blessings, encouragement and support.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

chackochan.njavallil@kairos.global



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PATRON

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

SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

Fr. Joseph Ezhumayil (Jesus Youth International Chaplain)

PRINTER AND PUBLISHER

Dr. Edward Edezhath

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Shoy Thomas (Jesus Youth International Coordinator)

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Dr. Chackochan Njavallil

MANAGING EDITOR

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

EDITORIAL COUNCIL

Ammu Zachariah, Maryland, USA

Jilu Jacob, Boston, USA

Raifiel Cyril, Canberra, Australia

Sonia Kurian, Houston, USA

Tania Rose Josun, Kerala, India

ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE EDITORS

Divya Immanuel, Mumbai, India

Jiss Jose Thoppil, Kuwait

Jotheesh Thomas, Dallas, USA

Ponny Sebastian, Dublin, Ireland

CIRCULATION COORDINATOR

Leena Shaju, Cochin, India +91 6238279115

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

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

DESIGN

Mustard Tree, Delhi, India

MAILING ADDRESSKairos International Inc.
3010 Mason Grove Ln

Pearland, TX, USA. 77584

info@kairos.global

+1 832 592 3675

Kairos Media,
No 8/174, Navodaya
Studio Complex,

Thengod P.O.,

Cochin, Kerala,

India. Pin: 682030

infoin@kairos.global

+91 9895711718

Kairos Media,
St Charles Street,
Sheffield S9 3WU,

United Kingdom

infouk@kairos.global

+44 7969365686

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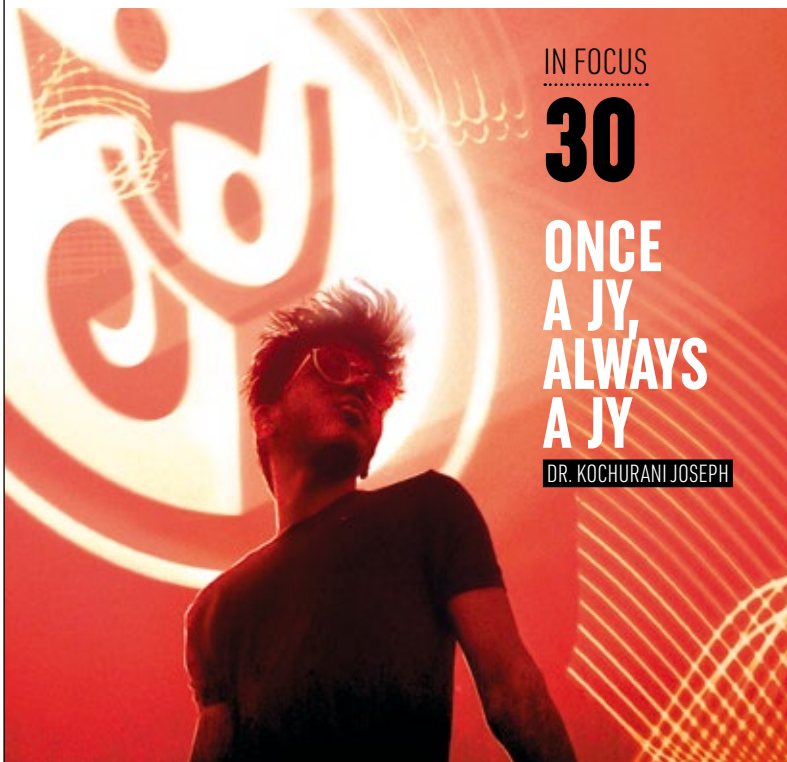
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**ONCE
A JY,
ALWAYS
A JY**

DR. KOCHURANI JOSEPH



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TO HIM
BE ALL MY
GLORY

JOMY ABRAHAM

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ASK



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

FR. BITAJU

➤ **People like to have security in life, be it through vaccines or insurance. From a Christian point of view do we need these securities in life?**

JERIN VAKAYIL / BANGALORE, INDIA

The entire salvation history is a journey from insecurity to security. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament presents the people of God journeying from insecurities of this world to the security of a life with God. The people of Israel in Egypt made a long journey from their land of slavery, insecurity, to the promised land, an abode of security, a land flowing with milk and honey (Ex 3:8). The prophets unceasingly reminded the people of God of the promise of the Messiah, who would give them permanent security and everlasting peace in their lives. At last when the Messiah, Jesus Christ, arrived he invited people to place their trust in the Kingdom of God, or providence of God, which would give them lifelong security (Mt 6: 25-34). Yet, the constant temptation of the people of God, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament was, and still is, to seek security and comfort in created things rather than the Creator himself. This would mean that the Sacred Scripture constantly sought to assure and provide security for the people of God. It is in this backdrop that I shall respond to your important question.

Your question is all the more relevant during this time of the pandemic, COVID-19, where the entire world is in a great crisis and an apt vaccine and insurance are eagerly sought-after. The key words in the question, namely, 'security', 'vaccine' and 'insurance', denote some investment for the future, in order to secure one's life and assets. The Christian view in this regard is very evident in the fact that the Church could be the

single organisation that has invested so much of her human and material resources for securing the life of the people all over the world in sectors like health, education, culture, economy, etc. The number of health care centres, educational institutions and the dedicated personnel of the Church vouch to this fact. Because, the core belief of the Catholic Church is that 'life and physical health are precious gifts entrusted to us by God. We must take reasonable care of them, taking into account the needs of others and the common good' (CCC 2288). Vaccination, insurance or any other security sought for life and assets must be based on this core belief. While reaffirming the providence of God, careful management and wise stewardship of our lives can be sought in buying some insurance or taking proper vaccination, that can be an act of love for neighbour and personal responsibility, doing what we can, not to be a burden on others (1 Thes 4:12, 2 Thes 3:8). The temptation of too much insurance, too much reliance on vaccines, or a wrong attitude, would lead to a deceptive feeling that we can control our own future and live alone without God. Our Christian belief is that God stands directly with us and for us, even in the midst of suffering and pain. Lack of happiness or security, does not mean a lack of God. Just like many other aspects of our daily life, choosing measures for security in life like vaccines or insurance too calls us to a life of prayer, spiritual discernment and loving action.



YOU CAT 389

WHY IS IT A SIN TO TAKE DRUGS?

Using drugs is a sin because it is an act of self-destruction and thus an offense against the life that God has given us out of love. [2290-2291]

Every form of a person's dependence on legal substances [alcohol, medication, tobacco] and even more so on illegal drugs is an exchange of freedom for slavery; it damages the health and life of the person concerned and also does great harm to the people around him. Every time a person loses or forgets himself by becoming intoxicated, which can also include excessive eating and drinking, indulgence in sexual activity, or speeding with an automobile, he loses some of his human dignity and freedom and therefore sins against God. This should be distinguished from the reasonable, conscious, and moderate use of enjoyable things.



POPE talk...

Dr. Kochurani Joseph
Cochin, India



PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR DECEMBER

FOR A LIFE
OF PRAYER

We pray that
our personal
relationship with
Jesus Christ be
nourished by the
Word of God and a
life of prayer.

lies in consecrating the Eucharistic bread, the centre of the lay mission consists in consecrating the world according to God's plan. He also warned Church leaders against the temptation to 'clericalise' the laity and said it was vital to recognise lay people's specific vocation.

Prepare Lord's banquet for everyone

The Lord's mercy is for the just and sinful, good

and bad, intelligent and uneducated. The habit of mercy, which God offers us ceaselessly, is a free gift of his love, and it should be received with amazement and joy. We must promote the integration of women in the places where important decisions are made. Let us pray that, by virtue of baptism, the lay faithful, especially women, will participate more in institutions of responsibility in the Church by the lay charism bestowed upon them.

Concrete commitments and spiritual combat is required to grow in holiness

There is no path to holiness without some renunciation and without spiritual combat. This battle for personal sanctity requires grace to fight for the good and to fight against temptation. It also requires the willingness to do our part and to come to live in the peace and joy of the Beatitudes. In the Catholic tradition, spiritual combat involves an internal 'battle of prayer' in which a Christian must fight temptation, distraction, discouragement, and dryness. Spiritual combat also entails cultivating virtues to make better life choices and exercise charity towards one's neighbour.

Pope Francis says ...

- If we do not strive to forgive and to love, we will not be forgiven and loved either.
- The family is the first and essential place of education.

Bear witness to Jesus to the people of our times

Catholics, by virtue of their baptism, must affirm to the world God's primacy in human life and in history. To pay taxes is a duty of citizens, as is complying with the just laws of the state. At the same time, it is necessary to affirm God's primacy in all spheres of life by respecting God's right over all that belongs to him. Hence the mission of the Church and Christians is to speak of God and render therefore to Caesar, the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. This verse of Jesus gives clear and mandatory guidelines for life.

Every Christian is called to be a Weaver of Fraternity

The mission of all believers of all times, is that by baptism, we are called to be a living presence in society, inspiring it with the gospel and with the life-blood of the Holy Spirit. We are weavers of fraternity. Everyone including priests, religious, and lay missionaries need to sow the gospel in the great field of the world. This requires humility and courage, along with a commitment to building the civilisation of love, where justice and fraternity reign.

True happiness is found when one puts God first

Blessed Carlo Acutis, a Catholic teen with an aptitude for computer programming and a great devotion to the real presence of Jesus in the

Eucharist shows today's young people that true happiness is found by putting God first and serving him in our brothers, especially the least. It is true that the digital world can expose you to the risk of self-absorption, isolation and empty pleasure. But let us not forget that even in the digital world, there are young people who exhibit their creative genius. That was the case with Blessed Carlo Acutis. Carlo was well aware that the whole apparatus of communications, advertising and social networking could be used to lull us, to make us addicted to consumerism and buying the latest thing on the market, obsessed with our free time, caught up in negativity. Yet he knew how to use the new technology to transmit the Gospel, to communicate values and beauty.

Laity should take a step forward

The time is now. The mission of the laity is not the privilege of a few and it involves total dedication. The laity themselves are asked to be joyful in self-giving and prayer and to grow and operate within the Christian community. They are to share and support each other's faith journeys and mutually exchange gifts aroused by the Holy Spirit. It is an important co-responsibility of the laity in the building up of the Church, as highlighted in Pope St. John Paul II's 1988 exhortation *Christifideles laici*. If the heart of the priest's identity

JESUS YOUTH



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

Jesus Youth '85 — A dream come true and seed for the future



Last month the leaders of different talent initiatives of Kerala met together, and wanted to hear my thoughts on how to move forward. These core-team members of young artists, musicians, media enthusiasts and theatre related initiatives have been coming together for many months, but now they were asking 'what next?'. Over the years I have seen the same thing happening with many such groups. For a time, they go forth with much creative enthusiasm bearing abundant fruits, and then suddenly find themselves out of steam, wondering which direction to take.

I began sharing my old memories of a late evening meeting at Vimala College, Trichur, South India, in early 1985. The meeting was to finalise details of the forthcoming conference. We were six of us, Jos Jacob, the coordinator of programme team, its members Fr Jose Palatty, Sr Cleopatra and Alicekutty; I was there as the conference convener and Sr Chrisologa to see to our needs. We had with us the many suggestions of the First Line group for the big gathering that was to conclude the International Year of Youth – suggestions on themes, its name, dynamics, preparations and so on. First, we took up suggestions for its name. Fr Palatty blurted out, 'Why don't we call it "Jesus Youth 85" and

give a rhythm, "tantrara-tantrara" that will be a marching slogan for youth.' 'Wow, Great!' Everyone agreed. Quickly I jotted down on my notepad and then shared with the group, 'So, the first day we will have the theme, *Youth World 85*, the second day, *Jesus World 85* and the third day, *Jesus Youth 85*; first looking around, then reflecting on the Lord's plan and finally talking on our call today.'

With the Talent Coordination group, I went on to share how this became not only the plan for the 85 conference but the core elements of the vision of all that we have been doing in the Jesus Youth movement. Sure enough, a zealous and well-oriented discussion ensued in the group, concluding with clear plans for the future.

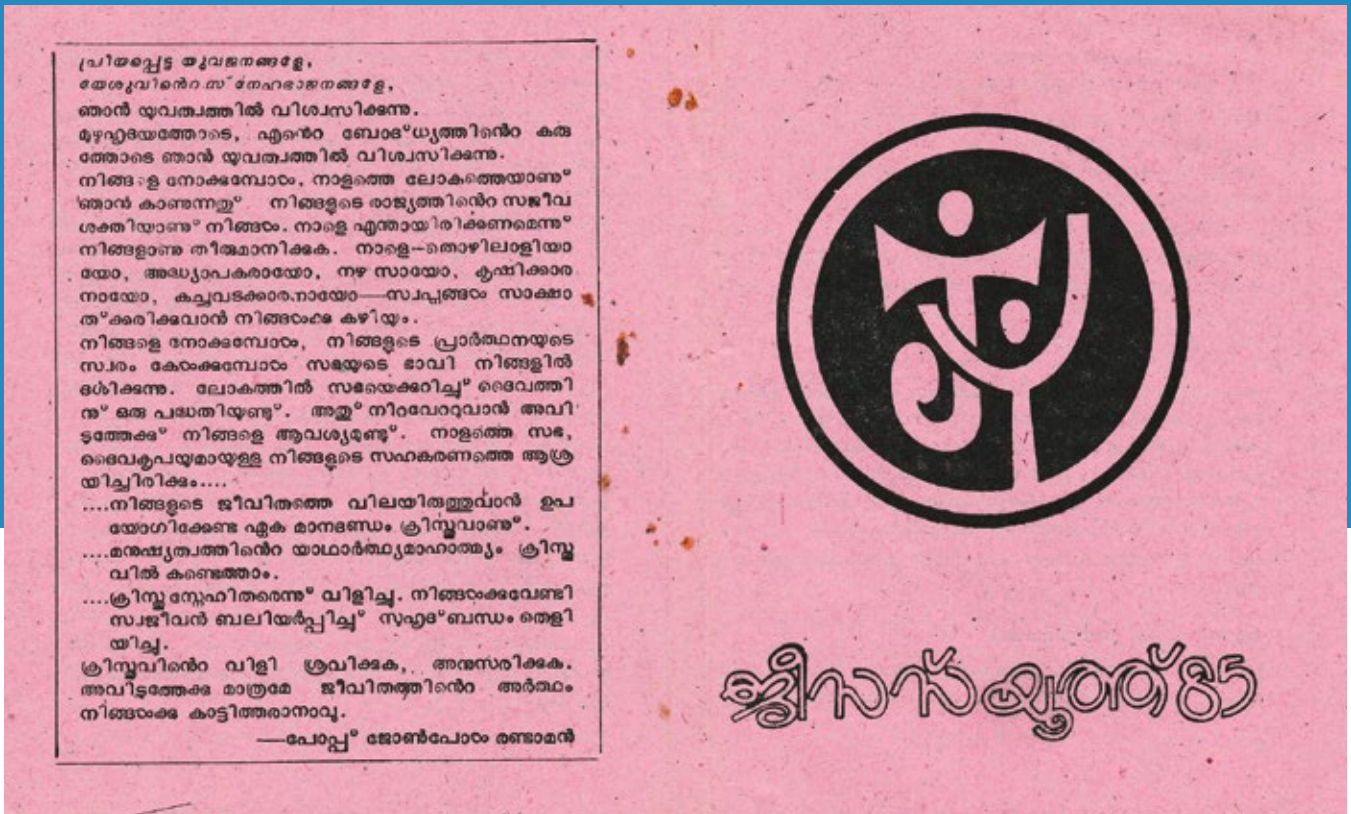
CULMINATION OF A LONG JOURNEY

Jesus Youth 85 was, for many of us who worked behind it, a culmination of a long journey that started in 1976. Our initial localised youth evangelisation efforts and social outreach initiatives became well-networked from June 1978. The first big youth gathering that year was a conclusion of many retreats, trainings and planning meetings. By 1981 we all felt the need for a clearly envisioned and well-coordinated youth network. That year, a coordinating team was formed all over again, and

fourteen zones came into existence. Preparing a plan and vision document through many consultations was the first step, followed by a few leadership trainings.

Two important characteristics of these 'foundational years' were, first, a sense of being guided by the Lord in small and big ways and second, being part of a committed friendship network. One example of the first was an oft-quoted prophecy. The context was the 175-strong youth gathering on 11th October, 1981 at Vidyaniketan Auditorium in Ernakulam, South India. This was part of a series of youth gatherings in search of clear directions for the future. Through two messages received in prayer, the Lord seemed to tell the group that there is a bright future for the fast-growing network, the way ahead would be ridden with challenges, but the Lord would guide it step-by-step to be a light in the Church.

Another big step was on 25th July 1982, at SH College, Thevara, Ernakulam. The training for about 200 leaders was concluding that day. In consultation with CC Alicekutty, a list was drawn up of eighteen active leaders who had long been involved in the youth ministry with incredible dedication and perseverance. Both of us sat in a corner room and called



Then, in 1978 even as we were hammering out a network and getting ready for a big coming together, the young and energetic JP2 appeared on the horizon. When he announced 1985 as a year dedicated to youth we got a clear plan of action consolidating all that we had been dreaming for years.

each of them to ask if they wanted to commit themselves to gather and grow together through the coming years. Without exception everyone said a big 'yes' and on that day the 'First Liners' group came into existence. Years of third-weekend meetings of this group resulted in the building up of a wide network of youth leaders and initiatives, and also in all the glorious dreams that culminated in that big event called 'Jesus Youth 85'.

IN THE PATHWAYS OF VATICAN TWO AND JP2

Many of us were enthusiastically equipping ourselves through the many national trainings of the Renewal. The Second Vatican Council and its path breaking renewal efforts were

the recurring themes there. The catch phrases were, 'openness to the spirit', 'new vision of the Church', 'mission of the laity' and 'evangelisation'. Then, in 1978 even as we were hammering out a network and getting ready for a big coming together, the young and energetic JP2 appeared on the horizon. In all our ensuing discussions there was this 'charismatic Pope who loved youth' and his vibrant vision. His writings and great example were the main input for discussion in our First Line group. Then, when he announced 1985 as a year dedicated to youth we got a clear plan of action consolidating all that we had been dreaming for years.

'Jesus Youth 85' was an event of numerous dimensions and implications. Officially the Kerala Service Team of the Charismatic Renewal was the organiser and in that capacity the Chairman, Fr Abraham Pallivathukal invited everyone, formally dialogued with the bishops and headed all major coordination activity. But behind the scene there were hundreds who actively collaborated and took significant decisions in all fourteen different zones and fourteen major organising committees and many other

creative initiatives. No wonder a lot of preparatory materials, merchandise and other creative steps preceded the actual event. We really wanted the traditional ways including the prayer and input modes to be replaced by Spirit-directed new ways. In brief the year-end conference became a path breaking and memorable event for the participants and for the wider community.

Jesus Youth 85 and its impactful ripples continue to be felt even after three decades. The name, the logo, the songs, the vision behind it, its approach to gather youth, many of its dynamics and much more continue to have enduring influence and is being rediscovered with ever greater meaning and renewed implication. May this enkindling of the Spirit for contemporary times and the dedicated efforts of many who offered themselves for God's Kingdom continue to bear fruits, a hundred or even a thousand-fold.

.....

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

ENCOUNTER

J O Y F U L WITNESSES

Fr. Tomy Philip describes the instrumental role of the Christian community in nurturing vocations, using the Jesus Youth movement as a case, in the light of the recent group vocations from Technopark, Trivandrum.



The Bible speaks about the different vocations initiated by God and responded to by many individuals. The lives of the people of God have been greatly influenced and conditioned by recognised vocations, both during the Old Testament period and the New Testament that extends to today. It is a call and a response. No vocation is derived of itself or designed for itself, because all the vocations germinate in the heart of God, grows and then flowers in the conducive environment of the lives of God's people.

The whole Christian community is involved in helping an individual discern his/her vocation because of its influence and prayerful living, at various levels. Though the response is made at a personal level, the communitarian aspect of Christian vocation cannot be ignored. Only from a good Christian community can we expect good vocations. This is clearly explained by Pope Francis: 'I urge all the faithful to assume their responsibility for the care and discernment of vocations. When the apostles sought someone to take the place of Judas Iscariot, Saint Peter brought together one-hundred-and-twenty of the brethren (Cf. Acts 1:15); and in order to choose seven deacons,

a group of disciples was gathered (cf. Acts 6:2). Saint Paul gave Titus specific criteria for the selection of presbyters (Titus 1: 5-9). Till today, the Christian community is always present in the discernment of vocations, in their formation and in their perseverance.' (29 November 2015)

A spark is insignificant unless it gives rise to a flame. It is a joy to see many young people nowadays discerning their vocation; some to the priesthood, others to the consecrated life, some to the possibility of remaining single and the vast majority being called to marriage. The Jesus Youth movement is playing a great role in nurturing vocations. Many joined the consecrated life from the platform of Jesus Youth over the past two decades and the number of young missionaries who discern their vocation and have joined seminaries or convents has also considerably increased. Many made radical decisions to leave highly reputed professions to be numbered among God's chosen people and proclaim the gospel to the ends of the world.

Vocation is a radical call to follow Jesus, discerned in a person at a certain important moment in life. It is a gracious gift born out of love and is connected with one's origin and destiny. The call is personal and unique. While some recognise this call in a clear way, for others it remains in a dormant state. However, it involves the totality of the person. In the context of Jesus Youth, one can say without doubt that all those who joined the religious life have been inspired and formed by the guidance and witness of many leaders and collaborators, who have been





‘Consecrated life is... a living encounter with the Lord in his people. It is a call to the faithful obedience of daily life and to the unexpected surprises from the Spirit.’

instrumental in helping the candidates discern their vocation. All these candidates found themselves in the company of other Jesus Youth, who wholeheartedly offered their time and energy in journeying with them, praying for them and helping them discern all aspects of their vocation including the congregation or diocese to belong to. The Christian community’s role in vocation promotion is very much present in the Jesus Youth movement. Thus, the missionary movement at the service of the Church becomes like a lighthouse in making missionaries among missionaries.

‘Consecrated life is not about survival, it is not about preparing ourselves for *ars bene moriendi* (art of dying well): this is the temptation of our days, in the face of declining vocations. No, it is not about survival, but new life... It is a living encounter with the Lord in his people. It is a call to the faithful obedience of daily life and to the unexpected surprises from the Spirit. It is a vision of what we need to embrace in order to experience joy: Jesus’ (Pope Francis, World Day of Consecrated Life, on February 2, 2019). The sole motivation of these young engineers, doctors, nurses, techies and college students who embrace the religious life is none other than Jesus, who is the source of unending joy and fulfilment.

Pope St. John Paul II considered priesthood as the channel of grace made available to the people of God. He said, ‘Do not forget that today too there is need of holy priests, of persons wholly consecrated

to the service of God’ (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 46). This invitation has been wholeheartedly accepted by many Jesus Youth in recent years. When media highlights the absence of expected holiness in every sphere of Church’s life, it is delightful to see how these young men stand in line to respond to God’s call to holiness in general and to act in *persona Christi*. Many congregations and dioceses have been made colourful with the presence of these young Jesus Youth seminarians and priests, who consider their educational excellence, career background and social status as nothing, compared to the knowledge and love of Jesus.

‘I am counting on you to wake up the world, since the distinctive sign of consecrated life is prophecy’ (Pope Francis, *Witnesses of Joy*). Jesus Youth can rejoice because it is not only becoming the evangelical trumpet, calling everyone to participate in the apostolate and mission of Jesus Christ, but also waking many young women to become religious sisters. These young missionary women willingly give up their high yielding professions and attractions of the world, ‘to be prophets who witness to how Jesus lives on this earth’ (Pope Francis). When the whole world mocks religious life, these young women stand up with the uncompromising conviction that only Jesus Christ can satisfy their existence with his love. They proclaim to the world that there is an alternative way of life to be joyful always – to be a consecrated person!

The principal concern of these candidates should be the willingness to walk along with Jesus in all circumstances. Only through this personal walk with Jesus, can they know him more clearly, love him more dearly and follow him more nearly. But this walking along with Jesus is a long process with many possibilities of stumbling. Just as a vine passes through every stage of growth to reach fruitfulness, in all persons there is a need to develop in every stage of the formative journey. For its proper growth, the vine needs to be nourished with water and manure and for better production it needs to be pruned. Similarly, these young candidates to priesthood and religious life need to be nourished with all the spiritual and material elements, without excluding the regenerating process of proper ‘pruning’, which may be very hard and painful. But the promise of God remains always very relevant – ‘Do not be afraid, for I am with you until the end of the world!’

If Jesus Youth has generated many young priestly/religious candidates, then it is our responsibility to offer constant spiritual and moral support for all of them. We need to continually raise prayers for these candidates, who are the face of the movement in different walks of religious life. With our encouragement and prayerful support, they will be strengthened in their adherence to the new life style, with unshaken commitment to the person of Jesus, the Eternal High Priest, and find their vocational fulfilment.

‘Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses’ (Pope Benedict XVI). Let us wish and pray that all Jesus Youth priestly/religious candidates may joyfully witness the Son of God who loved us and gave himself up for us.

As a gesture of our love and appreciation, Kairos Global will send a year’s subscription of the magazine to the seminary/convent/formation house of all those candidates who have given up their professional careers for the consecrated life. Kairos Global invites these candidates to contact us on this WhatsApp number: +919633589269.



Fr. Tomy Philip SAC belongs to the Pallottine congregation and is the rector of Pallottigiri Minor Seminary in Trivandrum, South India. He is also the chaplain for the National Family team and Trivandrum Central Campus team.

In Memoriam



SEBY JOSEPH

1984 - 2020

Seby Joseph, a deeply committed and active Jesus Youth from Tirur, Thrissur passed away in Niagara, Canada while battling cancer. A young and vibrant person who had a deep love and passion for Christ, Seby always had a big smile, even during the most difficult situations. When the second wave of cancer hit him hard, he was very confident that Lord would heal him and restore his health to share the testimony and be a witness to many. Despite the pain and suffering of the last couple of weeks, he was never irritated nor did he curse his condition or question God.

When the report of the last CT scan revealed that there was nothing more to be done, Seby's words were, 'I am still in love with Jesus, I have deep trust and faith in him.'

His priority was always to work for the kingdom of God. During his ministry life, if any one of us were indolent for the ministry initiatives, he was the one who'd motivate us and get us geared up. A few weeks before his condition worsened, discussions were on about a video shoot for a music album, *Nee Mathi* written and composed by Nelson – a close friend of his, in which Seby would play the role of a person suffering from cancer. Those days he was undergoing chemotherapy and despite the tremendous pain, he had said, 'At any situation in my life, I will never miss an opportunity to proclaim the kingdom of God.' Even at the last stage – intubation, to put him on a ventilator he was very firm that Lord would bring him back and his faith was resolute. We always had a blessed and saintly experience while taking care of him during his last days. Many of us have felt that after his passing, our prayers for Seby's soul weren't as fervent as our prayers for his recovery. That is only because of a firm faith and blessed assurance that he is up in heaven with God interceding for each one of us.

May Seby's soul rest in peace!



EXPERIENCE

TO HIM BE
ALL MY

GLORY

Jomy Abraham recounts how his life's journey became purposeful after his encounter with the living God and deepened through the fellowship in the movement.



MY journey on this earth started in 1967, as the eldest of four children. A deeply religious family, my early childhood memories are centered on seeing my parents attending Holy Mass daily, where I sometimes accompanied them just to see the sights while walking there. In addition to family prayer together, I also have fond memories of seeing them pray together in their room in the morning and at night. Several elements of Catholic faith were slowly ingrained in me by observing them, listening to them, and praying with them. I started going for daily Holy Mass from ninth grade onwards – because we moved to a house that was just a stone's throw from church – became an altar boy, and attended all the church activities. Part of this was due to my mother's insistence, part due to the 'good boy' tag that it brought among my neighbors, and a very small part due to the mystery surrounding all that was happening during Holy Mass.

It was during a low point in my life, when I failed to get through the engineering entrance exam in 1985, that I really started thinking about the purpose of my life. God led me to a charismatic retreat, where I came to the realisation that I have a heavenly father, who knows me and my needs more than anyone else ever could. I was fortunate to attend the Jesus Youth '85 convention and become a Jesus Youth. Along with a group of friends who are still close to me, we started a youth prayer group and began going around various parishes in Trivandrum, either to start new prayer groups or to help conduct existing ones. Our close-knit fellowship was a strong pillar of support in almost all of my needs, particularly when struggling with the world and its ways as a youth. We met every week to share our trials, joys, victories and hopes, to pray for each other and to motivate each other in our faith journeys. We spent time together in front of the Blessed Sacrament and undertook fasting and penances to keep us in the protection and providence of the Lord. God in his mercy and faithfulness, has led each of us marvelously in ways we could not have imagined, as 'His ways are higher than our ways.'

Throughout university and further studies to become a certified accountant, all of my time aside from studies was dedicated to Jesus Youth activities. I was active in the music ministry, and later became a part of 'Rex Band' in its initial days. God surprised me in unimaginable ways for being faithful to my small talent and giving back in his service, by taking me to foreign countries and stages, including the World Youth Day 2002 in Toronto.

In 1995, I married my wife – a fellow Jesus Youth – and together we said, *as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord* (Joshua 24:15). We migrated to Dubai in 1997 as God blessed me with the perfect job. As we prayed about this move, God spoke to us clearly about our call and mission in the United Arab Emirates. Daily Mass and regular confession were the bedrock of our faith, with the growing conviction of God's special call to us. God blessed us two children who have been our greatest gifts. In our walk with the Lord, he has allowed all kinds of hardships, and each time we have been strengthened by these words, *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that in due time he may exalt you. (1 Peter 5:6)* and *We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)*.

While working as the General Manager of a company in Dubai a few years ago, I faced a difficult situation. We had bagged a prestigious contract which had extremely strict delivery timelines,

I came to the realisation that I have a heavenly father, who knows me and my needs more than anyone else ever could.

and precise quality parameters. I was particularly proud of getting the contract and though I knew this was the work of God, somehow, I felt it was the fruit of my intellect, skill and ability. As the work progressed, despite our best efforts, we were falling behind on deliveries. We faced the dire situation of not only losing the contract, but huge financial loss for our company, large fines and the prospect of legal action. Unable to find a solution on my own, I finally came to the realisation that I had been holding back acknowledging the contract as God's blessing and taking away the glory and honour that belonged to God alone. We as a family went on our knees in prayer and repentance, seeking the mercy of God. Soon, the situation improved, with our deliveries exceeding the expectations of the client, both in terms of time and quality. This incident reaffirmed the value of humility and the need to acknowledge that it is his grace that enlightens our human intellect. We are just stewards of all he has given us in his abundant love.

There have been many crises, with no visible light at the end of the tunnel, but God in his infinite grace and mercy carried us on his shoulders. Like the Good Shepherd, he took us to 'green pastures' and 'quiet waters', refreshing and restoring our tired souls. As part of the Jesus Youth family, we enjoy the fellowship, communal graces and the fraternal correction that keep us focused on our call and mission, to be the 'salt and light' of the earth. I praise and thank God for his greatest blessings - our family, friends, colleagues and fellow missionaries - who are on this journey with us to build God's kingdom here on earth.



A Senior Finance Manager by profession, Jomy lives in Kochi, India with his wife Roma and children, Abraham and Maria. He is the International Finance Coordinator and a member of the International Formation team.

God's Purpose for my Unique Life

Every good and bad experience in life was visibly connected, says Lijo Varghese, into a life of grace and close communion with the Lord.



From my early childhood, my parents led me to live a life of faith and Christian values. They also encouraged me to associate closely with my parish and the society. I came from a financially humble family, who had lost most of their wealth in the previous generation. My childhood was quite unpleasant as my inferiority complex often unsettled me amongst my rich relatives and friends. Over the years, my primary goal was to have a great future, to become a wealthy and well-known person. Indeed, this intention found a primary place in my prayers.

My life was blessed with many opportunities. Before I turned twenty-one, shortly after my bachelor's degree, I was appointed to a job in Thailand. A couple of years later, I moved to Dubai for another job. After five and half years of work, I got admission into an MBA programme from a European University. During those years, I would regularly attend Sunday Holy Mass and continued my prayer life, while at the same time depending more on my ability, skills and experiences to pursue my dreams. During my MBA, I was sure that, with my work experience, I would easily find a suitable job after the course. Life literally changed 'downside up' when my job hunting extended to eleven months.

I had to leave that country after my studies, so I decided to search for a job in the UAE. I reached Dubai on a visit visa and began my job hunt. Finally I got an offer from a bank. I returned home to Kerala and waited for my job visa to come. It did not. The response from the bank was that the openings were temporarily suspended due to a lack of visa quota. Those were tough times, as they totally disrupted my plans for the future, disrupted me financially as well – I did not have an income for the two years of my studies, for which a considerable amount of my savings was already spent. *I became weaker and started depending more on prayers to gain strength.* Those were the times when

Eventually I started the practice of asking his will and listening to him. The Lord's directions are always surprisingly great and give me peace to accept the outcomes, even if they seem difficult at first.

the Lord really touched me and revealed that he was executing his plans perfectly in my life. And I began acknowledging his blessings. My next visit to Dubai was truly a journey with the Lord, and those two months helped me to encounter him. On the last day of my visa, as I travelled back, I had with me the confirmed offer letter from the same bank and a heart full of thanksgiving for my Lord. My life of eleven months, which I initially considered as the darkest period of my life, offered me the greatest opportunity to encounter my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Since then, I have been on my journey through the Jesus Youth Movement. Jesus Youth UAE helped me to experience the Lord in an awesome way through the JY lifestyle, formation courses, fellowships, roles in the movement and through a cell group. Those were the moments I responded sincerely to my Lord because of my love for him. *Eventually I started the practice of asking his will and listening to him.* There is always the inspiration to make space and time for him to intervene in my responsibilities, family life, aspirations and every situation, and guide me through his ways. The Lord's directions are always surprisingly great and give me peace to accept the outcomes, even if they seem difficult at first. During these years of close communion with the Lord, I've realised that almost all of my experiences in life – including my eleven-month job hunt – were visibly connected. Many of the instances, which I thought were part of suffering, actually turned out to be my stepping stones for growth.

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28).

My life has been re-designed according to these revealed inspirations, which helped me a lot even during the tough times of Covid-19. Jesus Christ has been blessing my spiritual growth while participating in Holy Mass, spending more time in prayer, digging deeper into the Word of God and its reflections, and to become active in a different dimension of fellowship. Jesus Christ provides me hope and peace in all circumstances. I could experience all the situations of my life working together for my spiritual journey with the Lord. These times helped me to pray more over my charisms, new direction and personal mission. I realise Jesus Christ has mighty plans for my future, mightier than just my dreams for material possession. His purpose for me is revealed in *Jeremiah 29:11 – For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.*

Our God is always in control. He synchronises all our life situations with perfection to mould his plan for our welfare. The saints are our role models, who loved Jesus and acknowledged his mighty purpose for them, and for them everything worked together for good. Let us also love our Lord and trust in his plans for our welfare.



Lijo Varghese is the UAE National Youth Coordinator. He lives in Dubai with his wife and two kids.

A Christmas Gift

Tania Rose remembers the uplifting power of a carol which turned a bleak Christmas in her life into a blessing.

The Christmas of 2019 will definitely stand out. Due to my physical circumstance – a severely prolapsed disc which left me unable to stand, sit or walk and on bed rest for several months – I was unable to attend Holy Mass on Christmas Day for the first time in my life.

As Christmas drew near, carols filled our home, especially at night, when the peaceful piano instrumentals would hush us to sleep. During the day, I would play all the songs but somehow something was missing; my heart was still searching for that one carol – that one meaningful, heartfelt carol.

On Christmas Eve, after my family went for midnight Mass, I lay in bed, prayed for a while and then found myself thinking of all the Christmases in my life so far. I could not remember some of them, but many of them were still fresh in my mind, the memories of which suddenly made me cry. It was a while before the flood behind my eyes subsided. When it did, I looked for and played some

of the old carols of my childhood. While doing so, I stumbled upon a treasure. And I don't think that any other carol can outdo this in portraying the true meaning of Christmas.

Through the mesmerising voice of Susan Boyle, I was introduced to Christina Rossetti's 'In the Bleak Mid-winter'. I have lost count of the number of times that this rendition was played last Christmas season. But each time, it tugged at my heartstrings and took me by the hand to baby Jesus in that manger in Bethlehem. And then, by a smile of coincidence, Christina Rossetti also happened to be one of my favourite poets. Now wasn't that a wonderful Christmas gift 'in the bleak mid-winter'!

In the bleak mid-winter
Frosty wind made moan;
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter
Long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold Him
Nor earth sustain,
Heaven and earth shall flee away
When He comes to reign:
In the bleak mid-winter
A stable-place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty —
Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him, whom Cherubim
Worship night and day,
A breastful of milk
And a manger full of hay;
Enough for Him, whom Angels
Fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel
Which adore.

Angels and Archangels
May have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim
Thronged the air;
But only His Mother
In her maiden bliss
Worshipped the Beloved
With a kiss.

What can I give Him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a Shepherd
I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man
I would do my part,
Yet what I can I give Him,
Give my heart.



Tania Rose lives in Kerala with her family, their books and pets.

Living life

Christmas Joys

Growing up in Kerala, our family's celebrations began with decorating the house, the Christmas tree, setting up the crib and stars, followed by Midnight Mass. Relatives would come and we would have a joyous time of togetherness and fellowship. One Christmas, my Dad came home for vacation from Dubai. It was the first Christmas in a very long time that we were together as a family. Dad suggested that we invite another family too, to celebrate Christmas with us. They were not related to us but were from our hometown. So we invited them for Christmas and spent time sharing the joy and love of Christ. Two years later found me working in Dubai alone. Dad had retired by then and had gone back to India. That Christmas I faced the lonely and dreadful option of celebrating within the limitations of my bachelor bed space. But unexpectedly, a family invited me home to celebrate Christmas with them! In his wonderful way, the Lord fulfilled my desire to celebrate his birth with a family and not alone. I then thought of the family we had invited few years ago. I am sure that just as I felt the Lord's love through this family here in Dubai, they too would have felt the same through us. This Christmas let us invite someone home to join our families to celebrate Christ's birth. As Psalm 18:30 says, *This God – his way is perfect; the promise of the Lord proves true; he is a shield for all who take refuge in him.* May our Lord Jesus Christ bless you all abundantly.

RUDY JACOB / DUBAI, UAE



When I think of Christmas the first thing that comes to mind is family – spending time together putting up the Christmas tree, crib and all the decorations, in spite of our different ideas and little fights over what to put where. Christmas Day starts with Mass followed by a grand breakfast, breaking the fast of advent quite literally. The rest of the day would involve visits to family, friends and relatives. As I grew older and moved away from home, Christmas did not change much but the definition of family did. It became my friends, fellow parishioners and JYs. For me the true meaning of Christmas is the togetherness and joy that comes with it – a Christian's true calling.

TONY ANTONY GEORGE / NEW ZEALAND



Christmas a time of joy, cakes, cards, wines, stars, lights and festivities. Everyone will have a memory of a Christmas that is close to the heart. Yet after all those celebrations and colours, how many of us can find Christ born in our hearts? Have we felt real joy? We see in the Bible that the heavens celebrated when Christ was born. Someone once said that if Christ was truly born in

our hearts, we too would be able to hear the heavens. The Christmas celebration that stands out in my memory was during my 12th standard, when all my friends got drunk on Christmas night,

behind the church where Christmas Mass was being celebrated. It was a Christmas filled with celebration but empty of Christ. From there to the Christmas of last year has been a long journey – one in which a teenager was called to be madly in love with Christ. It took me many years to know the real joy of Christmas, years spent walking slowly with Christ on a journey of many ups and downs, to finally realise that Christmas was actually celebrated in a manger. Being called and touched by Christ himself, waiting for Christ to be born in my heart makes it a real Christmas.

ALAN JOSEPH / INDIA

UP CLOSE



'HE QUALIFIES THE CALLED'

In the light of Jesus Youth's Coral Anniversary, **Geo Roncy** talks to Jilu Chengat on her role as the JY USA National Coordinator, being a working mom and deeper encounters with the Lord amidst time-consuming responsibilities.

When was your first encounter with the Lord?

My first personal encounter was at my first retreat as a twelve-year-old.

When did you first encounter the Jesus Youth movement?

I encountered the movement in its early days in the US, back in the early 2000s. My first stay-in retreat was a Jesus Youth retreat. It was followed up by regular gatherings every other month.

What aspect of the movement captured your heart and made you want to be a part of it?

To be honest, in the beginning, the chance to meet friends from other states was the primary motivating factor. I really enjoyed these 'bimonthlies' as they were called. Later, after my conversion experience in college, I began to see the beauty of the movement from a whole new perspective. First, I met God the Father in a deep and personal way. I saw his love reflected in the Church and in the many people who gave their lives for him. I came to appreciate the witness of JY families

and my peers in the movement, for the fellowship but furthermore because it provided a foundation where a daily journey of faith was challenged and inspired.

There were many times I wondered if I was called to remain a Jesus Youth. During each of those times, the Lord reminded me of how much I had received and grown through the spirituality of the movement, in community and in knowing the Lord.

How has the movement helped you grow in your relationship with the Lord?

My life in the movement has been such a powerful source and space for me to grow in my relationship with the Lord. I think my peers, JY families, and the space that I found to simply be myself are some of the greatest gifts of the movement in my life.

Did you ever see yourself taking on the role of national coordinator?

No, I never would have thought of myself in this role. Over the past three years, I have grown into the role, but when I first began, I felt like a child who had suddenly been given all responsibility of the family. However, we believe that the Lord doesn't call the qualified, he qualifies the called. In the months prior to the National Council election, the Lord was moving in my heart. My husband and I started praying the *33 Days to Merciful Love* and consecrated our family to the Merciful Heart of Jesus at the National Shrine of Divine Mercy on the day before the election. It was very providential and part of the Lord's preparation for myself and my family to take up this role and service for the movement.

Earlier, I desired to be a full-timer but was unable to do so. Then, when I took up the role of coordinator, I felt that it was an answer to a prayer from many years ago. Now, I could give three years – not just one, supported by my husband, kids and extended family. I felt that the Lord was responding to the desires of my heart to serve Him. He continued to prepare and purify me through various struggles over the years, but the privilege of being able to give back to a family that had nurtured me and supported my journey in the Lord has truly been a blessing.

What does a national coordinator do? Not many people know what the role entails?

Every day is different, but to fit my lifestyle and family, I usually set aside a few hours in the morning and late afternoon. Typically, there are night calls a few times a week. And when I was able to travel, I would probably travel at least one weekend a month for regional gatherings, or to attend other meetings. Depending on the need, I am involved in various aspects of finance, programme planning or ministries. I would say that most of my time goes to calls – either individual or conference calls of various ministry teams. The movement has always been very communal, so I've found the importance of giving time to building relationships, both inside and outside of ministry. Outside the practical commitment, I would say most of my heart goes to prayer, interceding or praying for the direction of the Lord. I learned very early on that my personal prayer would orient any work that I was called to undertake.

What are some challenges and blessings of the role you play in the movement?

More than anything, I feel my role is a calling to facilitate and nurture the work of the Holy Spirit that is already working and moving in the grassroots. Along with the National Council, it is such a blessing to be able to see the movement of the Spirit and to be able to map it onto the realities that are to come. In that sense it is a blessing to be able to be the hands and feet of the movement and of the National Council. On the contrary, the challenge of my role is that it is so undefined. I have plenty of people I can consult or ask for advice, but I need to be internally motivated and driven to be able to see what areas of the movement need attention. Prayer has played a pivotal role here, both personally and communally, as the Lord continues to reveal where in the movement he is calling to serve.

You are also a mother of two kids. How has being a mother shaped your relationship with the Lord and how has it impacted your everyday life?

Actually, being a mother has been one the primary defining roles during this term of coordinator-ship. I began my term when my second son was nine months old and my older daughter was over two years. At that time, I had just started getting to love and appreciate the small daily realities of being a mother. It was not an easy transition for me. But just as soon as I started feeling comfortable in that role, I began my role as coordinator and between my limited hours working as a nurse, I had become a full time working mom!

There were times where I felt I was failing at all my responsibilities and that there wasn't enough time in a day to be a good coordinator, be a good wife and mom. But over time, God helped me redefine my understanding of 'good' and success. I learned to



surrender more, pray more and realised the beauty of the spiritual motherhood that God was inviting me to in my role as coordinator. In both practical and spiritual ways, I realised that I had to change and adapt to what God had placed before me.

How are you balancing the role of being the national coordinator, being a mother, and growing in your spiritual life?

There would be no balance if I couldn't rely on my husband, Roger and my -in laws. Roger's parents live with us and play a huge role in taking care of the house, food and kids. Their practical and spiritual support has been a huge blessing and place of rest. Part of the balance also comes when I can step away from the role – maybe for a weekend, or a week, or for time to take a retreat. Those times allow me to give priority to my spiritual life and also the needs of my family.

But this has been a difficult journey and there were times, especially in the beginning when I felt like such a failure in all my responsibilities. As I gave more priority to prayer in the middle of my 'work' schedule, I saw that God didn't necessarily need more of my time; he asked for my whole heart and the primacy of him working in and through me – whether they be mundane tasks or spiritual responsibilities. I began to appreciate more the ordinary, lay responsibilities that each of us are called to undertake. For me, faithfulness in those areas actually led to more fruitfulness in areas of my spiritual life and ministry.

How do you handle the difficult moments that come up in life?

Running to God! Probably the greatest difficulty and greatest graces that I have experienced, throughout

life, but especially during this term, was poverty. Not financial poverty, but poverty in many other senses – different inabilities, physically, spiritually, etc. In all of those poverties, God had a beautiful and powerful lesson to teach me. Sometimes the lesson was that I needed to review my inability not through the eyes of the world, but through the eyes of God. Many times, when I (finally!) surrendered to God, I also received a grace to work despite the limitations of my nature or physical abilities. In these years as coordinator, the Lord stretched me beyond my human capacities and revealed the great treasure and wellspring of life that awaits us when we begin to tap into the supernatural abilities that the Lord desires to give us.

What have you noticed in this generation of the youth? What are the positives and negatives you have noticed?

I have noticed that there is a certain excitement in many young people today – a desire to change the

there is a great challenge and opportunity for those who walk with and form young people.

What is the best way to support and uplift the youth of today to fulfill their true potential?

Love, patience and sacrifice. When I look back at my journey in Jesus Youth, in addition to my parents, there were so many people who provided the love of their open homes and family lives, patience in not valuing my importance in my skills or what I had to offer, and many, many hidden sacrifices. These sacrifices may not have been directly visible to me at the time, but now with a family of my own, I see the beautiful and challenging sacrifice that is required of a family to be a joyful witness, open to sharing the joys and struggles of life. That sacrifice is deeply rewarded in turn by being surrounded by youthfulness and all that comes with the joy of being young.

What is your message to the youth about how they can encounter the Lord?

The Lord desires to speak to you personally and specifically. Many times, young age or youthfulness will make us question what the Lord can do in and through us. Salvation history points to many times where young people were given great responsibilities and the Lord qualifies them. He calls them, anoints them and sends them. There may be many moments of confusion and doubt. There may even be long periods of awaiting the fulfillment of those promises in our lives, but the Lord continuously wants to speak. Like young Samuel in the Bible, who hears the voice of the Lord several times without recognising it, we may also need people like Eli, who direct us back to the Lord.

This story reminds us that the Lord is so personal. Eli did not hear God's voice, he just knew that his role was to direct Samuel back to the voice of the Lord. Likewise, he calls us each uniquely and specifically. My mission may not look like your mission. The voice of the Lord in my life may direct me differently than the voice of the Lord in your life. Yet in this discovery of the same Lord and the unique ways that we are called to serve Him, he WILL speak. We just have to wait and respond, 'Speak Lord, for your servant is listening.' ■

There were times where I felt I was failing at all my responsibilities and that there wasn't enough time in a day to be a good coordinator, be a good wife and mom. But over time, God helped me redefine my understanding of 'good' and success.



world. Though the unrealistic idealism of that needs to be refined, the raw energy of that can be nurtured to contribute to the Church and the world in very significant ways. Especially through virtual media, so many restrictions or limitations that young people faced in the past no longer limit them today. In that,



Geo Roncy is a second-year Finance student at the University of Houston, USA. He has been living in Houston for the past ten years.



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PRINTED BOOK

GROUNDBREAKING GRASSROOTS

Prof. CC Alicekutty remembers the events that led to the 1985 Conference, the evolution of Jesus Youth, the road traversed and the milestones the movement has achieved.

During the International Youth Year in 1985, the annual gathering of the youth in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR) in Kerala happened to be a historic event, which initiated a glorious missionary youth movement.

It was at the suggestion of Fr. Fio Mascarenhas SJ - the first chairman of the National Service Team (NST) for India - that the first gathering of the youth in the charismatic renewal happened in 1978. Dr. Edward Edezhath and I were members of the Kerala Service Team from the beginning and were blessed with opportunities to be involved in regional, national and international levels. The Kerala Service Team appointed a five-member team to care for the youth. Following the 1978 gathering, there were annual, regional, zonal, and local gatherings, and many formation programmes for the youth. The one-week formation programme for the youth leaders in 1981, conducted by Fr. Gino Henriques CSsR, the then National Chairman, gave new momentum to the

movement. We gratefully remember the commitment of Fr. George Thekkemury and Fr. Jose Anjanickal for the 'Youth Encounter Jesus Programme,' which awakened college campuses throughout Kerala. Together with the All Kerala Coordinating Team, we had the first and second line youth leaders and pastors, elders, and animators like Fr. Abraham Pallivathukal SJ, Fr. Sebastian Mundencherry OCD, Fr. Justin Pinheiro, Fr. Varghese Manavalan, Sr. Cleopatra CMC, Mr. James Abraham, Mr. V.T. George, etc., accompanying the movement. The Jesus Youth movement is, of course, the work of the Holy Spirit and many of us were instruments. The growth and development of the movement owe much to the guidance, support, leadership and accompaniment of the regional service teams and many national leaders like Fr. Fio, Fr. Rufus Pereira, Fr. Marcelino Iragui, Fr. Dominic OCD, Bro. Fritz Mascarenhas, etc. Praise God! The Kerala Service Team was very much involved in the growth of the youth wing of the CCR. Even today, the Regional Youth Coordinator and

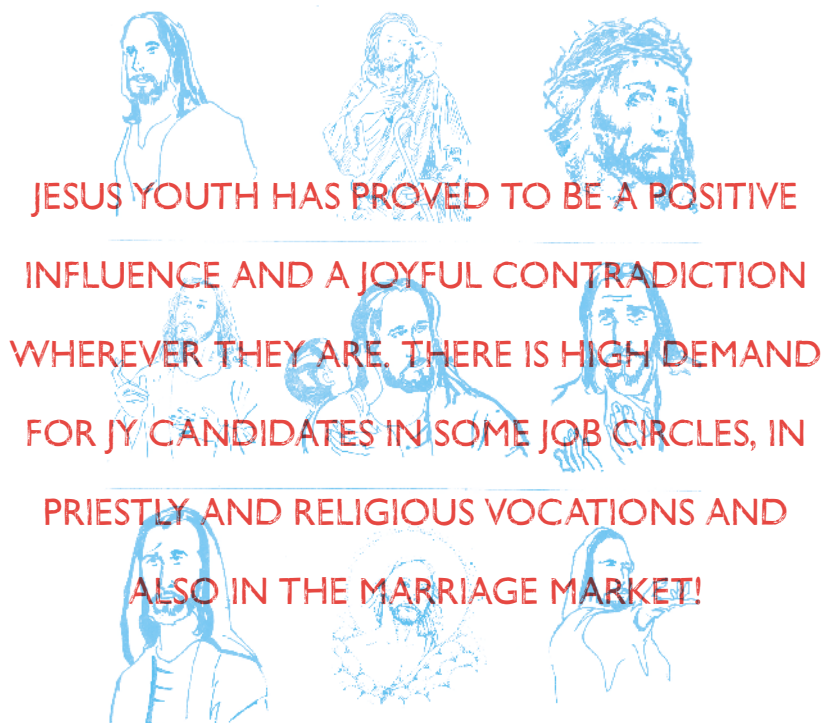
Animators are members of the KCCRST (Kerala Catholic Charismatic Renewal Service Team). This working together combines youthfulness and maturity to the renewal in Kerala.

JESUS YOUTH '85

The year 1985 being International Year of the Youth, the youth gathering was very significant. It was in a joint meeting of the youth leaders and the KST that details of the conference were planned. Fr. Jose Palatty, CMI first suggested the amazing name of the conference as Jesus Youth '85. The theme was developed into daily topics as: the youth world today, Jesus world and Jesus Youth world. The theme developed so well at the conference that the participants went back declaring, 'I am a Jesus Youth', to the mission of transforming the world into the kingdom of God. All were convinced that Jesus is alive in everyone (2 Cor.13:5 and Galatians 2:20). Thus the youth wing of the Kerala Catholic Charismatic Renewal was baptized (received its name) and started its missionary journey as 'Jesus Youth.'

BEGINNING OF MINISTRIES

Through the sessions, workshops and group interactions, different ministries were formed. Campus, parish, children, and outreach ministries, and also ministries for different charisms like teaching, intercession, music, etc. Leadership teams were formed for each ministry. Jesus Youth started growing deep and wide. In his papal exhortation to the youth, 'Christ lives', Pope Francis speaks about the need for the growth of popular youth ministries, but in Kerala, that happened four decades ago with Jesus Youth! Glory to God! Many formation programmes like Junior Evangelisers' Training Team (JETT), Senior Evangelisers' Training Team (SETT), Discipleship Training Programme (DTP), Final Year's Training Programme (FYTP), Youth Encounter Jesus (YEJ), Full-timers, Professionals-for-Mission and various ministries started. Leadership evolved and the movement deepened its roots and spread its branches far and wide. We watched in amazement the commitment of the youth, their resourcefulness and their hard work.



The campuses proved to be a very fertile background for many ministries and new initiatives to develop.

JOURNEY TO MATURITY AND FRUITFULNESS

The various formation programmes like the full-timers training, evangelisation trainings and different packages for the various categories of the youth (+2 students, final year students, parish youth, professionals, nurses, young families, missionary outreach programmes, etc.) fostered the missionary spirit of the participants and leaders. Special focus was given to the six pillars, membership in prayer groups and regular participation in the household. Spiritual guidance, sharing cells, prayer groups, Bible study groups, and involvement in the various ministries helped them to keep their personal life holy and missionary spirit vibrant.

Jesus Youth has proved to be a positive influence and a joyful contradiction wherever they are. There is high demand for JY candidates in some job circles, in priestly and religious vocations and also in the marriage market!

Many Jesus Youth couples have large families with more than four or five children and many families home school

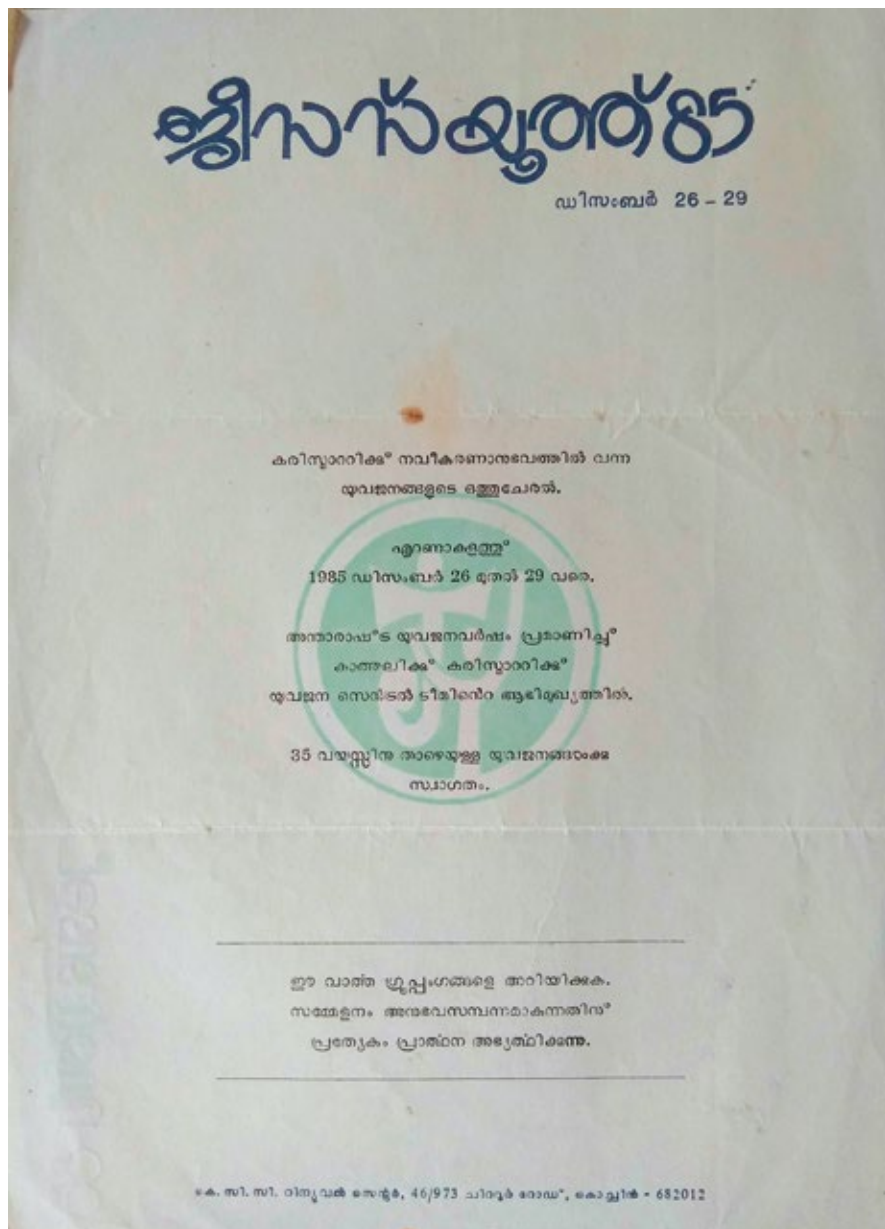
their children. They prove to be very good leaders in their parishes and in different areas in the church and society. While baptism is sending individuals for mission ('baptised and sent'), JY couples prove that the sacrament of matrimony is for forming the families as missionary teams. There are many missionary families in the Jesus Youth today conducting evangelisation programmes together as a family and also families fully committed to the missions. Sunil and Dr. Sindhu, Santhosh Joseph and Bijie are examples.

MISSIONARY PROJECTS AND TEAMS

Many missionary projects and ministries committed to the mission owe their origin, development and fruitfulness to the Jesus Youth initiative and participation. Santvana Community of Missionaries, Shalom Ministries, Fiat Mission, Angels' Army, Christeen Ministries, Holy Home, etc., are examples. There are many mature vocations to priesthood, religious life, family life, and to single dedicated life from among Jesus Youth.

SOCIAL COMMITMENT

During various natural calamities, like the flood, earthquake and epidemics, Jesus Youth were good samaritans with



all possible help. The 'Child Support Scheme', helps thousands of poor families irrespective of caste and religion in the education of their children. As Pope St. John Paul II called for a missionary conversion of the Church, Jesus Youth is playing a vital role in the evangelisation of the world and with Pope Francis, the movement is committed to environmental conservation also.

A BLESSING TO THE CHURCH AND THE NATION

The vision of Jesus Youth Movement is constantly developing and continuously

being clarified. The appreciation, acceptance, encouragement, support, recognition, demand, and of course criticism and corrections – all help in the growth of the movement. The constant and continuous accompaniment of a number of mature leaders and elders has always been a great blessing.

INDEPENDENCE AND INTERDEPENDENCE

I remember the words of the national leaders who said years back that when a ministry grows mature and becomes full-fledged with good leadership

and activities, they should be allowed to be autonomous. Freedom and interdependence are important for growth, fruitfulness and effectivity. Now as an approved Pontifical Association, the Jesus Youth Movement contributes greatly to the missionary spirit of the Universal Church. In Kerala, however, it is still part of the wider renewal movement with the regional youth coordinator and animator being members of the KCCRST. Pope Francis reminds us of the interdependence of the whole universe and we know that the Church is a communion of communities. This fact is important about the various ministries growing and functioning in the background of Jesus Youth and the wider renewal circle. The movement was not without tension and struggle concerning the development of some ministries. At times, the leaders wanted to keep everything under the same umbrella, fearing that they may go wrong if given the freedom. The parents have to let their children go free to build their own lives and families when they grow mature, of course, without breaking away from the family relationship.

CONCLUSION

Even when we thank God and take pride in all that is happening, we know that there are still 'miles to go'. If we remain in Jesus and let Jesus live in us, he will surely take us to incredible heights. Let us always remain united to the leaders in the renewal, in the Church, and in the society at large, working in cooperation, collaboration and complementing instead of in contradiction and competition. May the movement be able to make Jesus present in every area of today's and tomorrow's world and may his kingdom come soon! *Those who believe in me will do all that I do, and much more* (John 14:12). May Jesus Youth be a loud proclamation that '*Christus vivit – Christ Lives!*'



Prof CC Alicekutty hails from Kozhikode, India and is one of the pioneer members instrumental in setting up several initiatives of the movement. A single layperson, she has dedicated her life to the Lord for God's kingdom in the Catholic Church.

Dad Remembers Another Birth!

From a Dad to his children, Shaji Chacko reminiscences to his three children how and why Jesus Youth '85 was pivotal in his life and to the Jesus Youth movement.

Tell the coming generation, the glorious deeds of the Lord. (Psalms 78:4)

My Dearest Angel, Ashlynn & Antonio,
Hope this note finds you in good cheer and happiness! I know that there's been much trepidation all over because of the pandemic. Having your college and school classes completely off-campus and fully online, is something quite unheard of in our times, I must say. Let's hope and pray for a swift solution, as the world finds its way through these uncertain times.

Speaking of which, I think I must recount to you of a similar time of uncertainty in my youth, like you do now.

It was of course different and charged with another kind of global apprehension. Although that period now seems so far removed and tucked away in the annals of history, it actually is very much in the recent past.

The year was 1985. The Cold War was already on. And I was eighteen then (might seem like ancient times to you!). The world's allegiances got torn between two superpowers – the US & USSR (the erstwhile Soviet Union). Capitalism vs communism and vice-versa, each threatened the other, as a better philosophy of life. The Berlin wall deeply, distinctively and monumentally divided humanity in two camps. It shackled hope, trust, freedom and above all, the

human dignity. The Iron Curtain was drawn. Defense budgets sky-rocketed from millions to billions of dollars, as nuclear arsenal fast replaced the Second World War's armory. Undoubtedly, at the cost of hunger, poverty, illnesses and unemployment around the world. Proxy wars in the Caribbean, South America, Europe, Africa and Asia were happening almost simultaneously. The spy novels and movies of those years, never failed to capture the almost true narrations of the intensity and dangers of the Cold War. Both of the superpowers 'promised' swift retaliations, wiping the 'enemy' off the map, at the perception of the tiniest threat. There was an unmistakable gloom and a fear of an imminent extinction each morning as you read through the newspapers. I used to wonder which president would be the first to push the nuke button!

However, in the bleakness of life sometimes God surprises you with a spring! And that's what happened to me in the very same year of 1985. It was significant in many ways, both globally and personally.

I don't think it a coincidence anymore that globally both the Pope and the UN, chose to declare 1985 as the 'International Year of Youth'. That had to be God's plan and intervention in human history! And personally for me, two awesome events happened in my life that very year.

First, I had a personal Jesus encounter experience on the 28th of August, 1985. It was truly epic and an absolute turning point in my life! To this day I get goosebumps thinking of that moment. It happened on the *third day* of an All Kerala Youth Camp, attended by two hundred of us. The Kerala Youth Central Team (KYCT) of the Charismatic Youth had organised the gathering during the Onam holidays of 1985, at the Sacred Heart College Thevara, Ernakulam. Biblically you know

6/2/1985: Shaji
My Dear Angel - Ashlynn & Antonio
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the *third day* has much significance!

Second, owing to my pivotal Jesus encounter I got very involved in the forthcoming Jesus Youth '85 Convention, scheduled from 26th to 29th December 1985 during the Christmas holidays. The organisers once again were the wonderful KYCT of 1985!

Jesus Youth '85 was a first of its kind in Kerala and India in many ways – a residential youth festival of two thousand youth (wow!), with lively praise & worship sessions, Word of God sharings, workshops, momentous Holy Masses, profound Adoration and inner healing sessions, hilarious and thought provoking skits and an unbelievable Music Ministry sweeping us off our feet. It was simply, one long awesome breathtaking moment!

At the beginning and end of each session with great gusto we would sing the theme song:

*Yeshuvin Yuvakkal Naam,
Yeshuvintay Pathayil
Neengindum Yuva Thidambukal
Lokathin Prakashamayi,
Bhoomi Thannil Uppumayi
Theernidenda Christhu Saakshikal
Snehapalaka, Jeevadayaka
Shaktiyeki Kaathukolka.....*

The workshops were really amazing too! I attended some and spoke at some. I remember there was much joy and laughter as I spoke to a group of hundred-and-fifty pre-degree students (today's +1 & +2 students). It was because we were all so united in heart and spirit. I spoke about witnessing to a Christian life in the college. Another workshop I spoke at was about evangelisation through correspondence (letter writing). Yes, both were on evangelisation.

Actually, Jesus Youth '85 instigated a few ground-breaking ministries. I am very blessed to have been one of the pioneers of the first ever All Kerala Campus Team. Our first team meeting was at the convention itself, after dinner one evening. And we were so overwhelmed with excitement that we wished if only the Lord would use us to set hearts on fire for him. And so he did! Today we see the Holy Spirit has worked mightily through this ministry, setting aflame many young hearts across the state, nation and over the seas. Your own involvement, my dear children in the JY Campus and Teens

However, in the bleakness of life sometimes God surprises you with a spring! And that's what happened to me in the very same year of 1985. It was significant in many ways, both globally and personally.

ministries testifies that God has been consistently answering our prayers. How can we ever thank the Lord enough for his graciousness! Other inspirations of the convention were the Parish Team, Children's Ministry, Media Ministry, Music Ministry, Outreach Ministry, etc., to name a few.

To me Jesus Youth '85 Convention was definitely the ray of hope in a world threatened by nuclear politics. No question that the main reason was Pope St. John Paul II. Through the International Year of the Youth he reached out to all of us worldwide. We clung to every word in his apostolic letter to the youth, *Dilecti Amici* published that year. It is now being revisited worldwide in its thirty-fifth jubilee. We just loved him. His smile and blessing hands are our treasured memories. And can you imagine our joy when we heard of his visit to India and Kerala the next year? Wow! His Holiness's views I must say, have helped us forge the vision and mission of Jesus Youth.

Jesus Youth '85 indeed was a Pentecost of our times. A milestone-event in every sense. How do we know that? In the thirty-fifth year of its convening, let us run a check, shall we?

1. Gathered at one place? ✓
2. Waited in prayer with oneness of heart, mind and soul? ✓
3. Received a huge anointing of the Holy Spirit? ✓
4. Incubation centre for evangelisers, disciples and leaders? ✓
5. Initiated numerous ministries locally and globally? ✓

6. A bouquet of vocations, religious life – priesthood and nunhood, committed singles, holy matrimony? ✓
7. Fostered second generation leaders from Jesus Youth families? ✓
8. A catalyst in the evangelisation of cultures? ✓
9. Follows six pillars of spirituality: Personal prayer, Word of God, Sacramental life, Fellowship, Evangelisation and Option for the poor? ✓
10. A missionary movement at the heart of the Catholic Church? ✓

The proximity of Jesus was the biggest miracle at Jesus Youth '85. Every talk, session and song brought us closer to Jesus. I knew he was with me, and with each one of us. And when we sang the action songs, it was hilarious, fun and so from our heart, especially:

It's me, it's you, it's us,
It's we who build community (2)
Roll over the ocean, roll over the sea,
Go and do your part to build community....

Thirty-five years down the line, when time has flown in the blink of an eye, I believe, yes, collectively Jesus Youth movement has rolled over ocean and sea and has built communities, sharing the beacon of light to many, in near and distant lands.

So, my dear children, I am so glad to have had the opportunity to place on record Jesus Youth '85 for you! The historical background gives you a clear idea, as to how it became a new day of Pentecost for our times. I am so humbled to be one among the many who would *tell the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord*. (Psalms 78:4)

I want to leave you with the three slogans that we chanted at the ending moments of Jesus Youth '85,

**Be Jesus,
Live Jesus,
Proclaim Jesus...**

With lots of love and hugs,
Yours in the Lord,
Dad



Shaji Chacko works in Dubai and was one of the pioneer members of the campus team in Kerala. His wife is Jacqueline and they have three children.

A man with glasses and a beard, seen from the back, looking up at a large, glowing Om symbol. The background is a vibrant red with abstract, swirling light patterns and a grid-like structure on the right side.

ONCE AJY, ALWAYS AJY

Dr. Kochurani Joseph, one of the pioneer JYs goes back to the Jesus Youth '85 Conference and remembers the key elements of it.

My journey with Jesus Youth began in 1982 – almost four decades ago. It was a small gathering of few young people who met once a week as a prayer group and also on weekends for reflection and sharing the Word of God. All of us had only one wish – to share his love with everyone and also to be committed to Jesus, his Church and society. Many of us had and still do, a radical commitment to society in doing social work, charity, etc. In one such gathering we were prompted to have a wider conference of youngsters. The name of that conference was Jesus Youth '85; slowly the term '85 faded and the movement got its name.

I often come across the question, 'how come you are a JY even now?' Also I find some people saying, 'I was once a JY'. It seems ridiculous to hear such statements. This is because JY is a lifestyle centred on Jesus and his Church. Youth and those who wish to take part in this youth ministry, or any person who takes the youth ministry seriously as a vocation is part of JY. There is neither the state of 'Past JY' nor 'Present JY'. It may happen that at a particular period of time, many of us had been quite involved in JY but later could not do as much due to various reasons. That does not mean that they have ceased to be a JY anymore. Of course in the present scenario, a JY needs to go through various formation modules to become a 'confirmed JY'.

In the 1985 conference, the lines that caught everyone's mind and heart were the first two lines of the theme song. Translated, it goes: we are the youth of Jesus, following his footsteps, we go forward in youthful exuberance ... (in Malayalam it is – *Yesuvin Yuvakkal nam, Yesuvinte pathayil, neenghidum yuvathidambukal...*)

I was part of the Literature Ministry for the JY 85 Conference. During the conference, we were asked to choose one particular area for evangelisation. Some opted for teens, some for teaching, some for music, some for social work, etc., and thus many ministries were formed. I was always preparing some literature for the movement like leaflets and study materials which I continue even now in the form of Pope Talk in *Kairos Global*.

In my association with JY, I was blessed to be part of the movement as animator of Kerala JY Council, animator of Kerala Professional Ministry and animator of National Professionals Ministry. Currently, as the secretary of Kerala Charismatic Service Team (Kerala Service of Communion KSC), I am in charge of Kerala JY Council and its activities in the Kerala region. So my journey with JY continues even now, though I am a retired professor and grandmother. It keeps me young throughout my life.

The key elements that I found in the JY 85 Conference are manifold, some of which are worth mentioning.

FOCUSED VISION

One of the important highlights of the JY '85 Conference was that all participants had a single mind with focused vision. The vision was that of being united with Jesus and sharing the good news that he loves everyone, especially to the youth they meet. As Pope Benedict XVI says there is no other happiness than knowing Jesus and sharing him with others. All the participants were zealous about this focused vision.

JOYFUL SPIRITUALITY

Something that was very noticeable among the JY who participated in the conference was the joyful spirituality at the individual and collective level. It underlines what the psalmist says, *I rejoiced with those who said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the LORD.'* (Ps. 122:1). Many are continuing this state of life of joyfulness which is essentially the fruit of the Holy Spirit who dwells among them. It radiated out of faith, grace, gratitude, hope, and love.

DIFFERENT JOURNEYS. ONE HOME.

The participants of the conference were from different walks of life. Most of them were students, few professionals like teachers, software employees, business men/women, etc. After the conference they wished to become witnesses of faith in their respective roles. They were sure about their journey of life and had a strong desire to become warriors of his mercy and love in order to reach the one eternal home.

RADICAL COMMITMENT TO CHURCH.

One thing I noticed after the conference was the deep desire among the participants to be loyal to the Catholic Church. It was rooted in their sacramental lifestyle and commitment to Catechism teaching. Also many were interested in studying Church documents seriously in order to have a better ecclesial vision about the Christian way of life.

SOCIAL COMMITMENT

Many participants were deeply convinced that love of God should be manifested in loving the neighbour. So many of them opted to carry out various social work projects in various slums, public hospitals, and among poor and abandoned children around.

Thus the '85 Conference not only paved the way for naming a movement but also carved a joyful lifestyle rooted in Catholic spirituality. Even now there are numerous living examples, spotlights in the movement proving that once a JY is always a JY. ■



A former Professor of Economics and HOD at Bharat Mata College, Kochi, India,

Dr. Kochurani Joseph is an active Church leader, author, orator and columnist. She is currently the official spokesperson of the Syro-Malabar Church and the secretary of the Kerala Catholic Charismatic Renewal Service Team.

FAMILIA

TAKING
THE
NARROW
PATH

Reena and Antony share a few incidents from their lives where, when they put God first, He took care of their every need and answered their prayers.



But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well. (Mat. 6:33)

The above Bible verse has been a motivation in our lives. We take this opportunity to enumerate some of the experiences from our walk with the Lord as a family, on the road less taken!

We got married in 2001 and ever since, it had been our dream to have our own house. We were confident that the Lord would provide all the needed blessings at the right time. In 2004, after a long search we found a house which we felt was the one God intended for us. Since both of us were working, we hoped to get a loan but we did not have any savings for the token amount. On a Sunday, the token money was decided at one lakh rupees, which we had to pay by Monday. There was only three thousand rupees in our savings account which Antony withdrew for a JY programme ending the same Sunday. When Antony came home and told me this, all I could say was, 'If you have given everything, then the Lord will provide.' So, we prayed, and the Lord showed us the name of one of our friends. When we called him, he not only agreed to lend us the required amount but also gave us enough time to repay it. *And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. (Phil 4:19)*

We have been blessed with three children, but it was not an easy road in a place like Delhi for a working woman to proceed on *three* maternity leaves (of which one was unpaid). Our eldest son, Jonathan, was born in 2003 and our second child, Joshua, in 2004. That is not viewed favourably in private sector banks! I had conceived again when our eldest son was only eight months old and many well-meaning friends suggested that I should go for an abortion if I needed to keep the job. My boss left me out of the promotion process for almost *seven* years. I had joined the bank in 1999 and the first promotion that I got was in 2006. It was difficult for me to continue working but I kept the faith and somehow clung to the job. In 2006, I got pregnant with our third child, Michelle. My immediate supervisor, a Catholic lady, told me not to reveal the pregnancy immediately since my boss had discussed my promotion with her earlier that year. So unknowingly, he recommended my promotion in 2006. When my colleagues from other departments and branches came to know of my third child, and about how I chose life, many of them confessed with tears about the abortions they had carried out to keep their jobs. They regretted not having chosen life. Some of them even went on to have more children. On the job front, I got promotions in the subsequent years and went on to become senior to all those colleagues. Currently, I work as Deputy General Manager and Head of a branch in Haryana. *Only, live your life in a*

manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel. (Phil 1:27)

There were so many instances in our lives which reminded us that our Lord is taking care of us as promised. Bringing up children is one area where we as parents face the biggest challenge. As responsible parents, we assumed that keeping technology out of our children's reach would be a good decision. So, we convinced (or so we thought) our children that we would give them mobile phones after their 12th standard.

Our son, Jonathan, was not happy with this decision as he was the only one in his class without a mobile phone. Each time he brought up the subject, we would list the problems associated with mobile phones like how addictive it was and that it would distract him from his studies. However, towards the end of the 11th standard, he grew frustrated and his behaviour became quite disturbing. We thought that it was part of growing up and that he would recover from it. But in his heart, he assumed that his parents did not trust him enough to give him a mobile phone. One day, I saw a second-hand mobile in his bag and when I inquired about it, he just got up and left the house. It was around 8:30 pm. Antony went looking for him but returned worried and helpless. Our anxiety knew no bounds. Just when we were deciding on what to do, he returned home – around two hours later! On seeing him, all of us started crying and he too cried. I apologised to him for not understanding him enough. He got rid of the mobile and deeply regretted his behaviour. Not long after, we got him a mobile, but unfortunately, he soon got addicted to it and to all kinds of social media. The change in his behaviour was dramatic – quick to anger and lack of respect. He stopped studying completely and even failed in a subject. Since we could not do anything about it, we decided to fast and pray for our son's change of heart. We started reciting all the four mysteries and completely surrendered him to Mother Mary. And then the miracle happened. One day, he decided it was enough and gave the mobile back to us. He quit all social media accounts and started focusing on his studies, being in the 12th standard. His behaviour returned to how he was before, an extremely sweet and charming child. He passed his 12th grade with 94% marks and secured admission in a reputed engineering college in Kerala. We were reminded of Mother Mary's promise to Blessed Alan de la Roche, *You shall obtain all you ask of me by the recitation of the Rosary*. Our God is a God who hears our cries!

My dear brothers and sisters, these are just a few incidents from our lives that have shown us how our God takes care of us. Every day we get to see miracles and his loving presence in our lives. Words cannot express the gratitude we have to our kind and mindful God. When he said that we need not worry, he meant it! All we have to do is only seek his kingdom and his righteousness and every other thing will be taken care of by our Father God.

Amen.



Reena and Antony have been married for nineteen years and live with their three children in Delhi, India. Antony is a member of the International Council, and the couple has been in the ministry for around twenty-five years.



A living sacrifice of love

Do you want to celebrate Christ and make him known, seen and heard this Christmas? Just love one another.

Raifiel beautifully explains the oft-heard verse, 'God is Love.'

Have you seen God? I haven't. From the time I first fell in love with Christ, I have often begged and beseeched him to allow me a glimpse of him. But so far this has not happened. Many people in Jesus' thirty-three years got the opportunity to physically see, hear and touch him. But sadly most of them, disciples included, didn't really understand who he was, until he had returned to his eternal home. Perhaps that is why Jesus said, "blessed are they who do not see and yet believe" (John 20:29). That is us! Yes, truly in Spirit we are able to experience Christ more deeply than the disciples did in person. What a blessing! Through a personal relationship with God, we can have fellowship with him.

Even so, there are times in my life I have longed for his tangible presence, to break through the chasm between my physical body and his and touch him. On earth it can be compared to a long-distance relationship. There are letters, phone calls, gifts and flowers but the person is far away. Love calls for union, togetherness and closeness. This is perhaps why long distance relationships are so hard to maintain. Being physically distant goes against that powerful, dynamic and selfless force that is love.

Unlike human relationships though, God is never physically distant from us. He lives in us as Spirit, comes to us in the Eucharist and is present when we call on him. His word and teachings allow our soul to meet him, our spirit is intimately connected to him and our physical body receives his body and blood. He has truly taken care that we are fulfilled. But I am sure you know what I mean by longing for his presence. This is the natural longing of a person for the lover of their soul and can perhaps only be experienced in fullness in eternity.

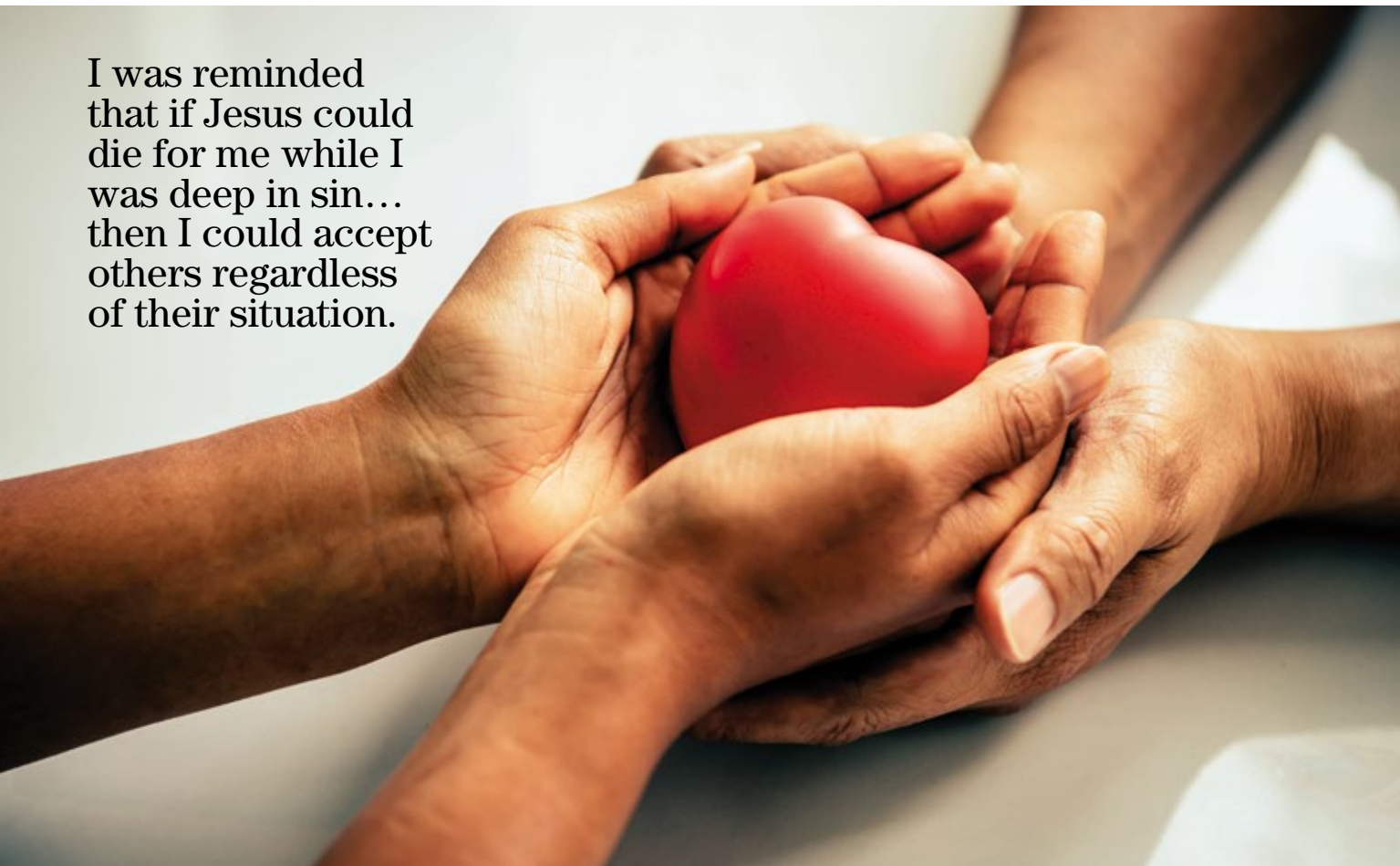
But there is one more way.

In my relationship with the Father, I have found that he loves to teach me on specific topics over a period of several months (probably 'coz I am a slow learner). This teaching usually comes in the form of circumstances, Bible study, books and other media sources that all come to me by divine appointment at the same time on the same topic. This is when I know the sign is up in my heart that reads, 'Caution: God at work'. It started with the Bible verse, 'offer your body as a living sacrifice' coming to me from a million different places enough for me to slow down and ask God, okay what are you trying to say to me?

A living sacrifice is obviously in connection to the Old Testament 'dead sacrifices'; animals who were killed and their blood sprinkled for the propitiation of sins. Now, I am called to give my life as a sacrifice. In other words I am dead. My life is to be poured out for others. Like a dead animal I no longer live for myself, or use my senses for my pleasure but my sole purpose of living is for others. I do not have a voice, do not complain, do nothing except bear fruit for others to pick. Yes, for others. God started moving in my heart to stop living for myself, fighting for myself and seeking comfort for myself. He started moving in my heart to begin to truly love one another. He taught me the first lesson of love was accepting the other just as they are. I was reminded that if Jesus could die for me while I was deep in sin, denial and rebellion, then I could accept others regardless of their situation. I was reminded that if Jesus could wash the feet of those who he knew would betray and abandon him, I could too. I could love 'living sacrifice' style. The wonderful thing about this new style was that when I started accepting others with no concern

ARE MY DISCIPLES, IF YOU HAVE LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER › JOHN 13:35

I was reminded
that if Jesus could
die for me while I
was deep in sin...
then I could accept
others regardless
of their situation.



about myself, I felt as though I was set free to love in a new and powerful way. A love that was no longer hindered by the weights of my expectations or desires.

And then I was studying the three letters of St John. I am now in the last letter and zero marks for guessing John's favorite topic: love. And here in these chapters was fulfilled my quest of meeting God.

No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us...

And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them...

We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does

not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister. (1 John 4:12,16,19-21)

Yes I haven't seen God, but guess what? Each time I love another, God lives in me and his love is made complete in me. Moreover, I can't really love God unless I love the people God has placed in my life. God is LOVE. Where love is present, God is. The closest you and I can get to experiencing God is in loving our brethren. A few weeks ago during a session on marriage we were attending, the presenting couple asked us to reflect on how people who have never known God can experience him through our

love for each other. Jesus said, *'By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another'* (John 13:35.)

This is what St. Paul made clear in the 'love chapter': 1 Corinthians 13. Greater than faith, greater than prophecies, greater than knowledge, greater than speaking in tongues is love.

If you want to celebrate Christ and make him known, seen and heard this Christmas, love one another. ■



Raifael lives with her husband, Cyril in Canberra, Australia. She is a writer and counsellor, as well as being a member of the Jesus Youth Australia

National Council, and a part of the Kairos Global Editorial Council.

SPECIAL

Fratelli Tutti:

'Don't just read it, Live it'



Dr. Sunny George explains the essence of Pope Francis' new encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti* and its importance for our times.

The new encyclical of Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, released on October 4, 2020, is a strong denunciation of the physical, ideological, emotional and intellectual barriers that many of us set up to prevent meaningful encounters with 'others'. The letter also serves as a thoughtful proposal and antidote to break them down. Over eight chapters and 92 pages, the Holy Father offers a remedy for self-destruction and despair, which inspires openness to love, charity and kindness, and a rejection of war, nuclear weapons and death penalty. The Pope describes it as a 'social encyclical' which borrows its title from the 'Admonitions' of St. Francis of Assisi, who used these words to address his brothers and sisters, and proposed to them a way of life marked by the flavour of the gospel. In the background of the letter is the Covid-19 pandemic, which, Pope reveals, 'unexpectedly erupted' as he was writing this.

Dark clouds cover the world

Holy Father gives a thorough description of the darkness he sees in the world today. He raises serious concern that 'the sense of belonging to a single human family is fading, and the dream of working together for justice and peace seems an outdated utopia.' There is distortion and manipulation in every walk of life. These global problems call for global action. He insists that, 'isolation and withdrawal into one's own interests are never the way to restore hope and bring about renewal.' On the contrary, the Pope proposes the remedy: 'closeness is the culture of encounter.' He reiterates the way of life for all Christians – that of selfless and unlimited love. This is the very heart of the gospel message, and of the redemption that Jesus offers to the members of the human family who are made in the image and likeness of God.

Universal fraternity

Through the culture of fraternity, Pope Francis calls each and every one to love. The theme that runs through the encyclical – love of God and love of one's neighbour – is, Pope Francis tells us echoing Jesus' words, one and the same. The deepest meaning of love is self-giving, despite feelings or circumstances. It is at the heart of every marriage, family and relationship. In these relationships, we are one with and at the same time, loving God. The Pontiff warns that if the human dignity of disabled people, the poor, or those who do not have access to education is menaced, then fraternity will be but a vague ideal. He also believes that individualism does not make us more free, equal or fraternal, and that what is needed is a universal love which respects the dignity of every human being. He also notes that individualist consumerism carries the possibility of rapidly degenerating into a free-for-all,

which would be worse than any pandemic. To achieve universal fraternity, our social ethic will be a call to solidarity, encounter and gratitude.

Stranger on the road

A herald of hope beautifully emanates when the Holy Father describes the story of the Good Samaritan. Through the meditation of the parable, he charts a common course for humanity: through commitment to peace, the rejection of war and capital punishment, encouragement of forgiveness, and reconciliation within societies and care for our common home. The parable is a lesson not solely about charity, but also a transformative encounter of mercy. As the Holy Father provides a detailed description of each character in the story, the reader can ask, 'Who am I, who are we, in this narration?'

In an unhealthy society that turns its back on suffering and that is illiterate in caring for the frail and vulnerable, we are called to become neighbours to others and a voice for the voiceless. Love builds bridges and we are created for love. Christians are called to recognise the beautiful image of Christ in the face of every excluded person. The Holy Father urges us to speak constantly of hope, and of that which will not pass away. There is no need to become fraught with worry and despair or even impatient at the problems of the day. We must search tirelessly for the goodness in ourselves and in the people around us. The love of God will flow from us if we speak the good news of love, of patience, of courage and confidence, of hidden sacrifices and joy.

Community of Belonging with no Borders

In this letter, Pope Francis offers authoritative teaching on migration and on the gifts that migrants bring to the communities that welcome them. A solidarity that is worthy of our time and resources is paramount. We live in a time where so many feel unworthy, unimportant, and even subhuman. See the migrants fleeing from war-torn areas of the world or natural disasters, with the hope of new opportunities, but are exploited, separated and uprooted, leading to the fragmentation of communities. We tend to blind our sight to these people and go our own way. But we are called to build bridges of love and compassion with the less fortunate and wherever there is division and separation between rich and poor, between people of different faiths, between different cultures and nations.

We must travel the Road of Closeness

The road of closeness is the perfect road we must travel into the future on. This road is marked by a culture of dialogue and encounter which is mutually enriching. It requires getting in touch with and widening our experience by contact with the materially poor and

Individualist consumerism carries the possibility of rapidly degenerating into a free-for-all, which would be worse than any pandemic

the marginalised, organising our experience through research and social analysis, engaging a theological reflection, practicing spiritual-communion and apostolic discernment. The road of closeness invites us to embrace the stranger, to enter into the suffering of others, to identify ourselves with the vulnerable and to have the openness to be changed by others who are different from us. Only when we reach out to others by coming out of our comfort zones, can we truly be transformed.

An open world - an open heart

While a lack of fraternity creates self-love, hostility and a closed world, the gospel message calls for an open world and open hearts. We need to continuously strive for God, for a world without borders, where people are not rejected, and where there are no strangers. Only a better kind of politics will create an open world with open hearts. The Holy Father underscores that the politics we need is one centered on human dignity not finance, because the market place by itself, cannot resolve every problem. The task of politics is to find a solution to all that attacks fundamental human rights such as: social exclusion, the marketing of organs and tissues, weapons and drugs, sexual exploitation, slave labour, terrorism and organised crime. The Pope makes an emphatic appeal to eliminate human trafficking, a 'source of shame for humanity,' and hunger, which is a crime, because food is an inalienable right.

Pope Francis believes that the religions of the world can be at the service of fraternity. He firmly hopes that the believers of the different religions know that our witness to God benefits our societies. The effort to seek God with a sincere heart helps us recognise one another as traveling companions and brothers and sisters.

Two lenses to view the world

Laudato si' and *Fratelli Tutti* are not typical papal encyclicals. They both address people of all faiths and places. *Laudato si'* is a cry from the heart that calls for reconciliation with the creator. *Fratelli Tutti* pleads for reconciliation, dialogue and solidarity among all humanity as brothers and sisters. They offer a profound way to look at our world and the wounded humanity. These two encyclicals are two powerful lenses through which we ought to look at everything. The glasses are by no means colourful or catchy, but both lenses are tinted with the virtues of faith, hope and charity.

Fratelli Tutti is a marvelous encyclical. It can transform minds and hearts, and it can surely renew the face of the earth!

PRAYERS FROM POPE FRANCIS

A Prayer to the Creator

Lord, Father of our human family,
you created all human beings equal in dignity:
pour forth into our hearts a fraternal spirit
and inspire in us a dream of renewed encounter,
dialogue, justice and peace.
Move us to create healthier societies
and a more dignified world,
a world without hunger, poverty, violence and war.
May our hearts be open
to all the peoples and nations of the earth.
May we recognise the goodness and beauty
that you have sown in each of us,
and thus forge bonds of unity, common projects,
and shared dreams. Amen.

An Ecumenical Christian Prayer

O God, Trinity of love,
from the profound communion of your divine life,
pour out upon us a torrent of fraternal love.
Grant us the love reflected in the actions of Jesus,
in his family of Nazareth,
and in the early Christian community.
Grant that we Christians may live the Gospel,
discovering Christ in each human being,
recognising him crucified
in the sufferings of the abandoned
and forgotten of our world,
and risen in each brother or sister
who makes a new start.
Come, Holy Spirit, show us your beauty,
reflected in all the peoples of the earth,
so that we may discover anew
that all are important and all are necessary,
different faces of the one humanity
that God so loves. Amen.



Dr. Sunny George is the Founder-CEO of two startup companies focused on sustainable agriculture. He travels extensively to propagate organic farming and on pilgrimage to Marian apparition sites across the globe. He lives in Kerala with his wife Mini and their four children.

TEEN TALK

Going Back to Him, Over and Over

As a teenager, **Tresa Alex** understood how guilt could affect one's relationship with Jesus. She says that we don't have to brew in our own guilt. We only need to go back, over and over again to him, who never condemns.



Before I start writing about my journey with Jesus as a teenager, let me ask you a question. How many times have you adored being in your own little pity party? How many times have you loathed the feeling of guilt in you? Now what if I told you, the very reason Jesus died for you is so that you don't ever have to feel this way?

Coming from a Catholic family where Jesus was the center of it all gave me a solid foundation in him. As I grew, I started understanding the world and also how important it was to hold on to what I was taught as a kid, and what I'd heard from all the retreats and prayer meetings I had been to.

As I grew up, there was one thing I was clear about regardless of where I was – that I loved Jesus. That became my identity. I was and still am known as 'Jesus girl'. I wasn't embarrassed about it or threatened, in fact I had no problem being referred to like that. The people you surround yourself with play a huge role in how you perceive yourself. By the grace of God, I have a bunch of wonderful friends who respect the person I am. So, don't ever sell yourself short; if your friends don't respect your relationship with Jesus, then you should probably make them understand or find people who will respect your love for the Lord.

Those are the ones who will be by your side. As you grow, God will teach you how to express your love for him. So, don't be intimidated by the questions the world puts forward. It is important to ask questions, but it is equally important to be understanding. I had questions, a lot of them. But I never doubted, I could never doubt. God had been so wonderful to me in so many ways that it would be a crime if I ever doubted him or said, 'It was a coincidence.' There are no coincidences, what Jesus wants done is what will happen.

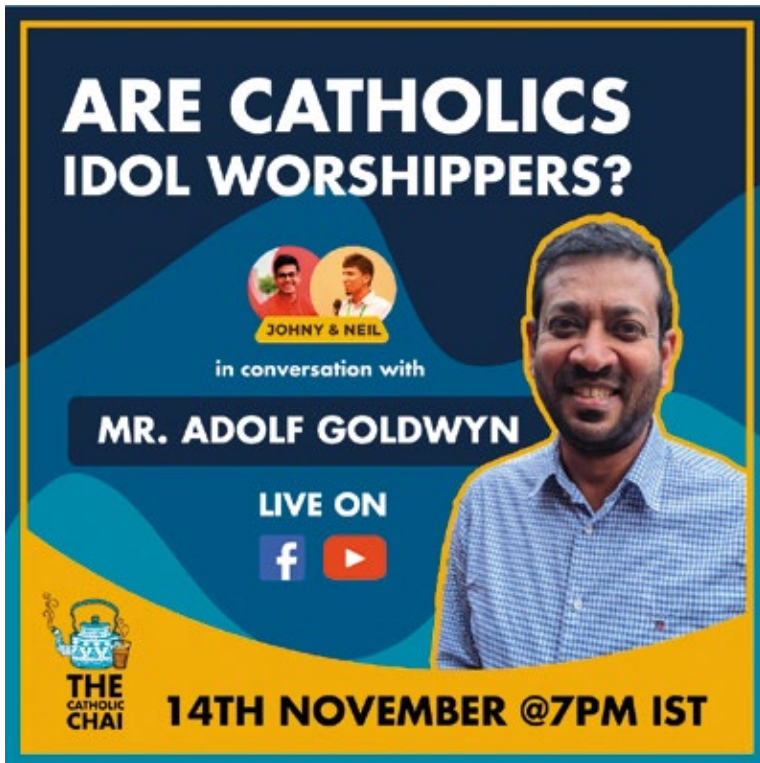
I can't begin to explain how many times I've deviated from the path of the Lord and how Jesus has so lovingly pulled my ears and put me back on his track. The decisions you make as a teenager are so important. You won't understand it then, but Jesus takes you so seriously. Every word you say, every deed you do, every intention in your heart, he listens to. You are so important to him, it's unfathomable how much you affect him. It took me a while to understand, that regardless of my sin, he has my back. What always brings me to tears is that when I go against him, he is still the one who has my back even after that. Who does that? Who comes to you and says, 'It's okay, let me pick you up,' after you've hurt them, again and again? I finally understood why I needed to repent. I needed to repent so Jesus could come fully. He wanted the best for me.

I was seventeen when I understood the power of guilt and how it could shake one's relationship with Jesus. It is very important to understand that guilt doesn't come from God. Jesus doesn't condemn you for what you did. He just wants you as you are. In all your filth, he craves for your love, for you to pray your broken prayers. I never understood when I was told, 'to go to God as I am'. I thought I was going to him as myself. Sadly, my naïve mind would go to Jesus with a mask so thick and prayers so perfect anyone would melt. But he knew, he knew how I was brewing in my own guilt and was coming to him to pray out of obligation.

Prayer is so important. Pray to him regardless of what you're feeling. Jesus shows you so much, he makes you realise so much when you pray. Spending time with him would give me clarity and insight. So, if you're a teenager reading this, I have just one piece of advice for you. Pray your broken prayers, don't brew in your own guilt, and let Jesus handle it for you. Go back to him every time you sin, go back to him over and over again. Trust his way and be proud to be his child. ■■

Tresa Alex is a twenty-two-year old recent graduate of BBA. She works for an advertising and marketing firm in Bangalore, India.

Newswatch



THE CATHOLIC CHAI

By **Serena DSouza**

CHAI! I am sure it strikes a chord with all of you along with a mental picture of accompanying grease-filled, not so healthy but gobsmacking tasty roadside treats. But wait a minute! What's CATHOLIC about chai? Wondering if you missed out on some major announcement during online Sunday mass? Before you start bombarding Google or WhatsApp, allow me to calm your palpitations by informing you that this is not the case. However, there is an exciting new-relevant-happening-much needed CHAI show called THE CATHOLIC CHAI. Yes, you read it right.

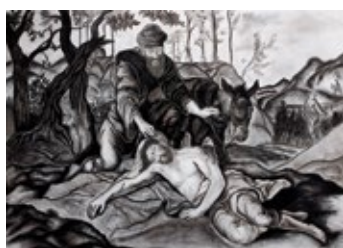
Jesus Youth India Media Ministry supported the personal mission of a

bunch of 20-28-year-olds to start this incredible journey which began in mid-2019. Cristin Joseph, an editor-cum-director by profession and the mind behind this idea, envisaged using social media platforms to spread the good news. Discussions over CHAI meetings on topics related to the Catholic Church led to the ideation and a deeper understanding of the need for readily available, validated content on the Church's teachings in a format that was youth friendly. With a lot of prayer and inspiration by the Holy Spirit, Cristin and his fellow group members translated the vision into the bi-weekly YouTube chat show which premiered on May 16, 2020 despite the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

The team, a beautiful blend of working professionals and college students, is streamlined into three sub-groups: Hosts (Johnny Baby and Neil George), the research team (Maria Joseph, Ann Mary and Anna Ros) and the creative team (Cristin Joseph and Diya Mary Shaju). The team is also guided by mentors, CC Joseph, Jacob Jose and Fr. Bitaju. They do recognise the necessity and power of prayer. Despite their hectic professional commitments, all the members come together for daily prayer for the chat show, participate as a group in Holy Mass before every episode and have paired team members to encourage each other to pray!

Wondering how this is different from the plethora of content available on the internet? The Catholic Chai doesn't shy away from addressing the matters that concern today's youth. Additionally, their chat show has live audience whose questions are catered to by the resource of the show. They have discussed the stand of the Catholic Church on topics such as dating and relationships, contraception, same-sex attraction, mental health, political chai, being a Catholic woman and so on. The chat show also ensures the recruitment of an apt resource person (national and international) after discussions with the mentors, priests and JY India Council. Although it may seem that The Catholic CHAI is contrary to the light-hearted-yet-hurried meetings during work that 'chai' is associated with, the team has managed to discuss these relevant aspects with a non-preachy, fun yet sober demeanour.

I am sure there have been a gazillion unanswered topics which have crossed our minds causing us to ponder over its relation to the Catholic Church. If so, do watch the Catholic CHAI on YouTube (past episodes are available as well!). The team is also open to feedback regarding topics that the audience would like to hear. You can DM them on Instagram. com/thecatholicchai. What are you waiting for? Get your hot cup of CHAI and snacks with your friends and tune in to the world of THE CATHOLIC CHAI! **■**



GRAFFITI CONTEST WINNERS

Winning posters of the Graffiti Contest conducted by Jesus Youth Kerala Art Ministry, along with the artists.

Counter-clockwise from top: First Prize, Anson Jose, Irinjalakkuda; Second Prize, Jinto Jose, Kattappana; Third Prize winners: Dixon George, Prince Martin, Pranav Pradeep, Robinson Antony, Nivedya Ouseppachan and Praveen Pradeep



PAPAL EMBRACE FOR JY

His Excellency, Bishop Mar Raphael Thattil recently had an audience with Pope Francis. He speaks about that meeting.

Then I said to the Pope, 'Holy Father, I would like to add one more thing.' Pope Francis replied, 'What is it?' I looked at him and said, 'I am the newly appointed Ecclesiastical Advisor for the Jesus Youth movement.'

At that very moment, I saw the Pope's face brighten with joy. He embraced me towards his heart and said, 'You are the Ecclesiastical Advisor for Jesus Youth movement, appointed by the Holy See. Tell the Jesus Youth that they are very close to my heart.'

I thought that in his affection for me, the Pope had hugged me. But actually he wanted to show that Jesus Youth was very close to his heart.

'They are very dear to the Church. They are most needed in the Church. I pray for them. I bless them.'

My beloved Jesus Youth family, I would like to tell each of you that the Catholic Church, the Holy See and the Holy Father, Pope Francis considers Jesus Youth as a horizon of glory, beyond your expectations. The Church and our Pope perceives us as a great missionary movement and a missionary presence. The Holy Father reminds us of who we are, 'A missionary movement at the service of the church – a mission movement that works for the Church.'

Quiz Time



Mail your answers to quiztime@kairos.global before 31st December '20.
The winner will be rewarded with 1 year subscription of Kairos Global

PART A

Can You Match These Bible Words to Their Definitions?

1. On the cross, Jesus said, 'Abba, into your hands I commend my spirit.' What did he mean by "Abba"?

Angels on high / Father / Fall silent

2. We say that God is "omnipotent." What does this mean he is?

All-powerful / Everywhere at once / Extremely loving



PART B

Match the following

1. How many books are in the New Testament?

Matthew

2. Who recognized Jesus as the Messiah when he was presented in the temple as a baby?

12

3. After Jesus fed the five thousand, how many baskets were left over?

Simeon

4. After Jesus was arrested, which apostle disowned him three times?

27

5. Who worked as a tax collector prior to preaching the Word of God?

Peter



PART C

Who Am I?

1 My voice was taken away until my son John was born. Who am I? (Luke 1:18-20)

2 I baptized Jesus in the River Jordan. Who am I? (Matthew 3:13)

3 I was the chief tax collector in Jericho, who climbed a Sycamore tree to see Jesus. Who am I? (Luke 19:1-5)

4 I was a Pharisee and member of the ruling council who asked Jesus how one was to be born again. Who am I? (John 3:1-4)

5 I was the disciple who denied knowing Jesus. Who am I? (Matthew 26:69-75)

6 My sister was Mary and my brother was Lazarus. Who am I? (John 11:1-2)

7 I was the first person to meet Jesus after his resurrection. Who am I? (John 20:11-18)

8 I was the king whom the wise men met. Who am I? (Matthew 2:1-8)

9 I came to worship in Shiloh with my husband every year. I was barren but when I prayed to God he blessed me with a child. Who am I? (1 Samuel 1:1-26)

ANSWERS TO QUIZTIME ISSUE 32

Who said it?

1. Jesus; **2.** John the Baptist; **3.** Moses; **4.** Paul; **5.** Cain; **6.** David
7. Judas; **8.** Jesus; **9.** Satan; **10.** Paul

Identify the books

1. Hebrews; **2.** Mark; **3.** Malachi; **4.** Haggai; **5.** Jonah; **6.** Luke;
7. Romans



The winner of Quiztime Issue 32: Joseph Samuel, aged 10 from Chennai, India.

Lukas and Ray

By Steffi Andrat Faria

TODAY'S SERMON WAS GREAT. THE PRIEST EVEN QUOTED EINSTEIN!



THAT'S BECAUSE FOR ONCE, YOU LISTENED. THIS IS SO UNREAL, LUKAS. I CAN'T WAIT TO GET BACK TO CHURCH!



OH, COME ON, RAY. WE BOTH HAVE LEARNT SOMETHING.

LOOK WHO'S TALKING, THE LATE COMER AND BACK BENCHER AT CHURCH.



I HAVE LEARNT TO LOVE THE MASS, I'M SUPER EXCITED TO JOIN BACK! I NEVER PAID ATTENTION, BUT NOW...

THAT'S ACTUALLY NICE.



AND WHAT DO YOU THINK I LEARNT?

TO NOT SPY ON WHAT EVERY GIRL IS WEARING AND FOCUS





WRITE A LETTER TO GOD



Dear God,
God you are my dad. So how about this. You are my superhero and father. We all love you and you do good things to us. So Jesus, I want to say, 'Thank You'.

David Jayk



Dear Jesus,
Thank you for my family, friends, and this beautiful world you have made for me. I thank you for the continuous blessing that you shower on me every day. As you know, the Covid-19 pandemic is on the loose, and it is destroying many families. They are losing their family members and their friends. Lord, please help us to conquer this pandemic. Protect all healthcare workers with your Precious Blood as they help the victims of the pandemic to survive. Send your Holy Spirit upon all scientists and researchers to develop a vaccine for the coronavirus. Please give us the courage to confront the virus and conquer it.

With love,
Anton Joshy



Dear Lord,
I would like to thank you for my life, the blessing you have given me. God, you have always answered my prayers but sometimes it is not the way we expected, but I am happy with what you have given me. I ask for wisdom for those who bear the load of making decisions with the spread of Covid-19. I am praying for those who are affected with Covid-19 and those who are taking care of them. God I ask for the protection of the elderly. O God I pray that you will give us courage and wisdom as we face the Covid-19. Hold us in your arms as a loving parent would, as we journey into the future.

With lots of love,
Gloria Jiju



Dear God,
Thank you for always being there for me and listening to my prayers. Thank you for blessing me with your love and protecting me. You are the only one who has fulfilled my wish. God you are the only one who has given me courage. We pray for this Covid-19 pandemic to end so we can see our friends, relatives, and teachers. I also pray for those who are affected with Covid-19 and those who have died. We ask for your blessing and pray for all the students who are having exams so they may get good grades. Amen

With love,
Gladys Jiju



My Dear God,
I believe that you are happy in heaven with the angels and saints. I may not know everything about you but, you know everything about me. You knew about me before I was conceived. You chose me when you planned the creation. I believe that I was not a mistake for you. God, Thank you for giving me the best parents, relatives, etc. In earth we are suffering a disease called Covid-19. To overcome this situation we are using social media and we are not able to go to school, church, visit relatives and friends. We are praying to you for ways to solve Covid-19. Thanking you.

From your loving child,
Mathew Joshua



Dear God,
I know you will be surprised seeing my address with these letters. Usually you find me in a different set up where I have a bell and incense sticks in my hand and you sit in the beautiful altar of my house. This set up is more real and gives me a chance to write my heart out. You must be wondering why I am writing a letter to you. As if my daily prayers and wishes weren't enough that I have another wish ready for you. In my daily prayers, I chant, sing for you and express my hopes, which I know only you can fulfill. But today I am writing this letter to express my gratitude. Apart from my existence, there are several things in my life that I am grateful for. I have never been that expressive when it came to saying thank you, so today I am taking this opportunity to do the same.

Thank you Lord for all your Blessings!
Thomas Augustin



Dear Heavenly Father,
I love you for everything.
I don't know what to say
when I see you. How can
you be so humble Father?
Though Creator, you
came down to save your
creation. I don't know how
to be humble but I thank
you for your kindness
in every single step of
my life. I would like to be
a pencil in your hands.
Sharpen me with your
own hands, Lord. My
Lord, my God I love you.

Jiss Antony Pius



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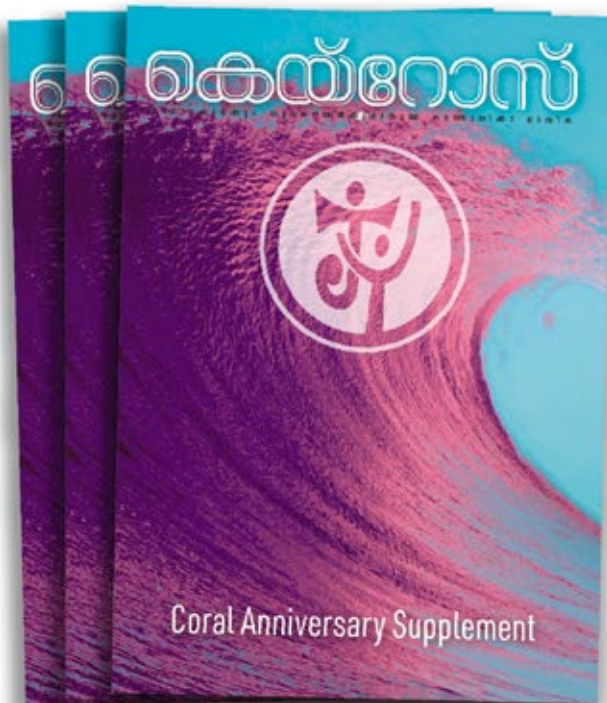
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Coral Anniversary Supplement



Kairos is bringing out a special supplement to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the Jesus Youth 85 conference.

Primarily, the Coral Anniversary Supplement is a collection of features on 35 milestones in the journey of Jesus Youth.

It will include major programmes, projects and significant turning points along with special write-ups on unique aspects of the movement. With crisp articles, personal sharings of Jesus Youth 85 participants and throwback pictures, this supplement is sure to be a keepsake of that ground breaking event.

The Coral Anniversary Supplement will contain 96 pages and cost Rs. 100.

Objective

A handbook picturing the whole movement

To document the history of the movement

To illustrate how different ministries were formed and evolved over the years

To demonstrate how the community was built up in different geographical locations

To mark the milestones that the movement has achieved on its missionary journey

Goals

Introducing the JY lifestyle and spirituality to newcomers or anyone unfamiliar with JY

Highlighting the relevance of Jesus Youth in the Church

Showcasing the beauty and strengths of the movement

Inculcating a sense of appreciation for the movement among the youngsters

KAIROS BUDS

A CATHOLIC MAGAZINE FOR CHILDREN

Following the publication and positive reception of the pilot issue, **Kairos Buds** will be published every month, beginning January 2021. This brand new magazine from Kairos is just for children, between the ages 5 and 15 (with focus on 6-15 year olds).

Kairos Buds will be a 'bouquet of beautiful and fragrant flowers' that show the multifaceted beauty of the Catholic Church. A gem for the faith building of little souls.

How will parents & children benefit from Kairos Buds?

We at Kairos know that Kairos Buds will be super! How do we convince you? Fun. Faith-building. Activity-engaging. All Roads to Jesus!

Every issue of Kairos Buds will have:

Creative & Brain Workouts: Colouring pages, Word puzzles, Brain games, along with small activities across the pages



New Hobbies: Each issue will feature a new hobby with accompanying DIY project

Cartoons: Bible stories, Lives of Saints, and two more theme-based cartoons

Firm Foundations: Kids learn the basics of Church History

Basilicas, Cathedrals & Churches: Get to know famous churches around the world

Christian Science: Children learn young that faith and science are best friends

Getting Familia: Deeper knowledge and love for God, Mother Mary and the Saints

Good Books & Movies: Get introduced to good books & movies

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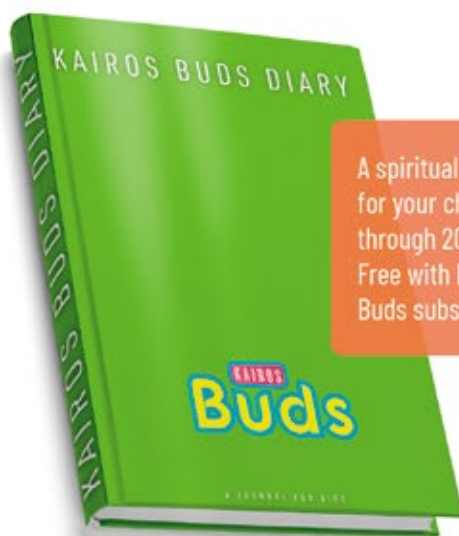
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