

# KAIRO



## Rising Waves of a Global Catholic Revival

LUKE COPPEN

ALSO IN

Revival on the Road to Jubilee 2033

■ ABHY THOMAS

Faith Over Fear

■ SILVY SANTOSH WITH BLESSY FRANCIS





## MARY, MY MOTHER



O Holy Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows, teach us to understand the value of the Cross in our lives. By offering our sufferings to His, help us to complete in our own flesh what is missing in the sufferings of Christ in favour of His mystical body, which is the Church. And when our pilgrimage here on earth has ended, may we live forever with you in the Kingdom of heaven. Amen.



# EDITOR'S ROOM



DR CHACKOCHAN J NJAVALLIL

X @readkairos

TO OUR AMAZING WRITERS, WHO GENEROUSLY OFFER THEIR TIME AND TALENT WITH NO EXPECTATION OF PAYMENT – WE SEE YOU AND ARE GRATEFUL. TO EVERY READER, EVERY PERSON WHO PRAYS FOR US OR SENDS A SMALL CONTRIBUTION – THANK YOU FOR STANDING WITH US.

## Faith on the Rise

**W**e have a natural tendency to generalise – a few experiences, a couple of incidents, or a handful of impressions are often enough for us to form sweeping conclusions. Without realising it, we label entire groups, places, or institutions as good or bad, based on very little evidence.

This tendency also colours people's perception of faith and the Church. The mainstream media usually gives us only fragments of information, often highlighting scandals, failures, or weaknesses. Such stories may draw attention, but they rarely reflect the full picture. And when we hear them repeatedly, even faithful Catholics begin to assume that Christianity is collapsing and the Church is in decline.

But is this really the truth? A closer look tells a very different story. Statistics published by the Vatican in the *Annuario Pontificio* show clear signs of growth, vitality, and renewal. Across Africa, Asia, and Latin America, the Catholic Church is expanding. New parishes are being formed, vocations are flourishing, and young people are embracing faith with fresh energy. Even in places where numbers look stagnant, inspiring movements of evangelisation, prayer, and service are bringing about renewal.

This is the part of the story that rarely makes the headlines. At *Kairos Global*, we believe it is vital to highlight these signs of life and hope. In this issue, we bring you glimpses of the many ways God is at work in the Church today – from growing communities to missionary endeavours, from young believers stepping out in courage to new initiatives of faith across continents. The Church is not fading away. On the contrary, she is alive, moving forward, and bearing fruit.

Still, the persistence of negative perceptions even among Catholics shows us something important. If we allow ourselves to be shaped only by discouraging voices, we risk losing heart. We may become fearful, weary, or indifferent. But when we fill our minds with the truth of God's work and the beauty of authentic witness, we are strengthened, encouraged, and renewed. Christ never promised that His Church would be without struggles, but He did promise that He would be with her always.

The world today desperately needs hope. It needs men and women who are not afraid to stand up and share the Good News of Jesus. That is our calling. Let us remain firm and joyful in faith, never giving in to fatigue or fear. The Church is alive. The Gospel is powerful. And the Spirit continues to move – quietly, steadily, and irresistibly – across every corner of the world.

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## Also LOOK OUTFOR

- 14 Faith Over Fear
- 20 A Jubilee for My Heart
- 28 Holy Habits



Those who sow in tears will reap with shouts of joy.  
*Psalm 126:5*

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# LOOK INSIDE

ISSUE 91

**REGULARS**

- 6 Ask Fr Bitaju
- 7 Pope Talk
- 8 Jesus Youth
- 40 Chandeliers
- 42 Our Daily Bread
- 44 Newswatch
- 46 Timeout
- 47 Lukas and Ray

**ENGAGE**

- 10 Grace that Accommodates Freedom | BR ALVIN JOSEPH MATHEW



12

ENGAGE

THE OTHER SIDE OF  
THE WAR ON GAZA  
AND LEBANON

BR RAMZI HITTI

## CONTENTS

34

PATHFINDERS

LADY  
GEORGINA  
FULLERTON

NEHA ANTONY AKKARA

## EXPERIENCE

- 14 Faith Over Fear | SILVY SANTHOSH WITH BLESSY FRANCIS  
 18 My Five Loaves and Two Fish | SUNNY GUDINHO  
 20 A Jubilee for My Heart | ANJU MATHEW

## IN FOCUS

- 22 Rising Waves of a Global Catholic Revival | LUKE COPPEN  
 26 The United States Eucharistic Revival | TIFFANY GERKEN  
 28 Catalysts in the Spread of Catholicism in Africa | FR TIAGO MATHIAS MI  
 30 Revival on the Road to Jubilee 2033 | ABHYTHOMAS

## JUBILEE PAGES

- 36 A Quiet Month and a 100 Days! | FR JUSTIN PANACHICKAL MSFS

## SPECIAL

- 38 Holy Habits: Dressing up for Heaven | NOBIN JOSE

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# ASK



FR. BITAJU

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## ➤ Why is the Church against divorce?

The Church's teaching on divorce is rooted in its understanding of marriage as a sacrament and a lifelong commitment between a man and a woman. The Scripture and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* provide a comprehensive overview of this teaching, emphasising the indissolubility of marriage and the reasons behind the Church's stance against divorce.

**Indissolubility of Marriage:** According to the teachings of the Church, marriage is a covenant established by God, which is meant to be permanent. 'The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptised persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament' (CCC 1601). This understanding highlights that marriage is not merely a contract but a sacred bond that reflects God's love.

**Christ's Teaching on Divorce:** The Church bases its teaching on divorce in part on the words of Jesus. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus states, *What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate* (Matthew 19:6). The *Catechism* cites this passage to affirm that the divine intention for marriage is that it should be unbreakable (CCC 1614). The Church interprets this teaching as a clear directive against divorce.

**The Nature of Sin and the Call to Forgiveness:** The Church acknowledges that sin can affect marriages and may lead to separation or divorce. However, it emphasises

the importance of forgiveness, reconciliation, and the possibility of healing within the marriage. The *Catechism* teaches that 'divorce is a grave offense against the natural law' and that it 'introduces disorder into the family and society' (CCC 2384). The Church encourages couples to seek help and support to work through difficulties rather than resorting to divorce.

**Annulment:** While the Church does not recognise divorce in the same way secular society does, it does have a process for annulment, which is a declaration that a marriage was not valid from the beginning due to specific reasons (for example: lack of consent, psychological incapacity, etc.). The *Catechism* explains that 'the Church holds the exchange of consent between the spouses to be the indispensable element that makes the marriage' (CCC 1626). If this consent is found to be invalid, an annulment may be granted, allowing individuals to marry in the Church again.

**Pastoral Care:** The Church emphasises the importance of pastoral care for those who experience divorce. It seeks to provide support, understanding, and guidance to individuals who are navigating the complexities of their situation. The Church encourages divorced individuals to remain active in the faith community and to seek healing and reconciliation where possible.

In summary, the Catholic Church's teaching on divorce is grounded in the indissolubility of marriage, the teachings of Christ, and the call to forgiveness and reconciliation.



YOUCAT 287

## BUT DOESN'T 'FREEDOM' CONSIST OF BEING ABLE TO CHOOSE EVIL AS WELL?

Evil is only apparently worth striving for, and deciding in favour of evil only apparently makes us free. Evil does not make us happy but rather deprives us of what is truly good; it chains us to something futile and in the end destroys our freedom entirely. [CCC 1730-1733, 1743-1744]

We see this in addition: Here a person sells his freedom to something that appears good to him. In reality he becomes a slave. Man is freest when he is always able to say Yes to the good; when no addiction, no compulsion, no habit prevents him from choosing and doing what is right and good. A decision in favour of the good is always a decision leading toward God.





# Popetalk

DR. KOCHURANI JOSEPH



## Prayer Intentions October

### For collaboration between different religious traditions

Let us pray that believers in different religious traditions might work together to defend and promote peace, justice, and human fraternity.



*In our world bearing deep scars of conflict, inequality, environmental degradation, and a growing sense of spiritual disconnection, it is crucial for Christians to continue working and praying together. Christians should be architects of reconciliation and peace. Every occasion can be a courageous sign of unity amid difference, an early witness to the conviction that our shared confession can overcome division and foster communion.*

*It is not easy to preach the Gospel and bear witness to its truth, where believers are mocked, opposed, despised, or at best tolerated and pitied. Yet, precisely for this reason, they are the places where our missionary outreach is desperately needed. Evangelisation is not our attempt to conquer the world but the infinite grace that radiates from lives transformed by the kingdom of God.*

*To believe in Him and to be His disciples means allowing ourselves to be changed and to take on His same feelings. It means learning to have a heart that is moved, eyes that see, hands that help others and soothe their wounds, shoulders that bear the burden of those in need.*

*In the family, faith is handed on together with life, generation after generation. It is shared like food at the family table and like the love in our hearts. In this way, families become privileged places in which to encounter Jesus, who loves us and desires our good, always.*

*It is important that we live our faith in concrete actions and fidelity to our duties, according to each individual's state and vocation. For this purpose, moments of silence, moments of prayer, times in which, silencing noise and distractions, we place ourselves before Him and achieve unity within ourselves. Every gesture of willingness, every gratuitous act, every forgiveness given in advance, every effort patiently accepted, is a way to prepare a place where God can dwell.*

*Bear Christ's 'fire of love' to spread peace throughout the world. Even at a darkest moment, it is never too late to love and forgive and that there is always a way to continue to love, even when everything seems irredeemably compromised.*

# JESUS YOUTH



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

## Called to Be Master Builders

→ The beautiful depiction of the Sacred Heart as the resurrected Lord in my parish church has many admirers. Fr Augustine, our former parish priest, planned and built the new church and envisioned the image. Later, when he was transferred to another parish, he rebuilt the church there too. Wherever he goes, he builds. Over the years, you can trace his presence by the landmarks he has left behind – visible signs of faith planted in brick, mortar, and vision.

Thinking of other builders, I remember my friend who happened to renovate his house. After getting the knack, he built another and sold it. And has continued building houses. Long after he has moved on, those houses continue to shelter generations.

This is something profound: the gift of building. Some do it with cement and stone, others with people and communities. And in the Christian vision, *building* is more than construction; it is a calling to build persons and communities.

### BUILDING IN THE BIBLE

The Bible is filled with images of building. Saint Paul, writing to the Corinthians, captures this beautifully: *According to the commission of God given to me, like a skilled master*

*builder I laid a foundation, and another man is building upon it* (1 Corinthians 3:10). He goes on to talk more about the ministry of building, laying a foundation that is none other than Jesus Christ. On that foundation, others are called to build communities of faith.

Paul reminds his listeners that faithful builders will be rewarded abundantly, but careless ones will lose everything. And those who selfishly destroy God's work will face judgment. To build is both a privilege and a responsibility.

This biblical image speaks directly to the heart of the Jesus Youth movement. Over the past decades, Jesus Youth has embraced the identity of a builder – not of monuments, but of people, communities, cultures, and networks that carry the life of Christ.

### A STORY FROM THE BEGINNING

I still remember something from October 1978. Together with Sr Cleopatra, I went to meet Fr Fio in preparation for the first youth conference. After listening to our plans, he gave us a word of direction that has stayed with me ever since: *You have brought together so many young people and are now going to have this big gathering. Your next focus must be further steps of building them*

*into clusters locally, connecting, and networking them.*

That was over four decades ago. Yet that vision – clusters of young people, rooted locally, connected in friendship, and networking across regions – continues to guide us. It was never about big events alone. It was always about building steadily, person by person, community by community.

### BUILDING PEOPLE, STEP BY STEP

The Holy Spirit, in His gentle way, raises people through stages of growth. First, they come as Seekers. Then, touched by grace, they become Believers. As their love deepens, they grow into eager Disciples, walking closely with Jesus. At a certain point, they are sent out as Apostles, Missionaries bearing witness to the Gospel in the world.

But the journey does not end there. Many of these Apostles become *Builders* themselves. They mentor others, raise leaders, form communities, and shape cultures in their contexts. With time, some emerge as *Master Builders*, entrusted with wider responsibilities – guiding national initiatives, inspiring international networks, or designing creative platforms for mission.

This is the genius of the Jesus Youth





formation journey: it does not stop at individual growth but naturally flows into the building of others. Each person formed becomes a living stone in God's house, and often a builder of others as well.

### GLOBAL BUILDERS IN A GLOBALISED WORLD

We often say that we live in a time of global connectivity. For many, globalisation is a challenge; for Jesus Youth, it has also been an opportunity. The movement is both a beneficiary of this reality and a contributor to it.

Good Jesus Youth builders are skilled architects of community. They know how to leverage modern tools – technology, media, management skills, and the global environment – to bridge distances. What once required long trips and handwritten letters can now be achieved through instant messaging, video calls, or collaborative platforms.

But the tools are not ends in themselves. They serve the deeper purpose of building faith-filled relationships, strengthening communities, and weaving networks that embody the Gospel. A Jesus Youth builder today must be as comfortable organising a prayer meeting as designing an online campaign, as

skilled in personal mentoring as in managing cultural diversity.

### THE HARMONY OF GIFTS

One of the striking features of the Jesus Youth movement is the sheer variety of gifts and talents that come together. Musicians, dramatists, evangelisers, intercessors, teachers, organisers, writers, and countless others – all bring their unique offerings to the table.

This diversity echoes the Old Testament account of the building of the Temple in Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit equipped different people with a wide range of skills – craftsmen, artists, leaders – so that together they could create a structure of beauty, excellence, and harmony (Exodus 31).

In much the same way, Jesus Youth builders are diverse, and communities are not uniform. They are mosaics, where different colours and shapes come together to form a living picture of Christ's body. And when these gifts are harmonised, the result is both effective and beautiful.

In every age, the Church needs builders. Some are hidden, quietly mentoring young people or holding a small prayer group together. Others are visible, leading initiatives that span nations. All are essential. Together, they carry forward the mission of Christ: to form a living temple of faith, hope, and love.

### CONCLUSION: BUILDING ON THE ONE FOUNDATION

Looking back, it is striking how the simple vision spoken by Fr Fio in 1978 continues to inspire us. To gather young people, form them, connect them, and send them out – this remains at the heart of Jesus Youth's mission.

In a world that is often fragmented and transient, the call to be a builder is more urgent than ever. To build in Christ means to form lasting foundations of faith, to raise communities that can weather storms, and to weave networks that embody communion.

We may use modern tools, we may live in globalised times, but the essence remains the same. Our building must be on Christ, the one true foundation. And when we build with Him, we are not just constructing structures for today – we are raising temples that will stand forever.

The call to be a builder in Christ is both a joy and a responsibility. It is a task given to each of us, whether we are priests, engineers, musicians, housewives, or ordinary young people. And when we embrace this call, we step into the great adventure of being God's co-workers, master builders in His kingdom.

.....

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

ENGAGE

# Grace that Accommodates Freedom



Using the analogy of buying a phone, **Brother Alvin Joseph Mathew SDB** invites us to ponder about God's grace despite our freedom of choice.

**W**hich smartphone do you use? Apple? Samsung? Or some other? Let's assume you have an iPhone. If I asked whether Apple made you buy it or if it was bought of your own accord, what would your answer be?

If you answered: I bought the phone freely and it was my decision, you would be right in saying that. But if Apple did not exist or influence you, you wouldn't buy the product. So, Apple did play a certain role despite your free choice. However if your answer was Apple made you buy the phone and that you did not have a choice, I'd like to ask you, how come the other phone companies did not make you buy their product. Didn't you have the freedom to choose?

God's grace and human freedom work in a similar way. They are not meant to oppose each other. God's grace perfects human freedom by prompting you to do what is good for you. It nudges you to make decisions that are for your own good but at the same time, it respects your freedom and gives you space to reject it.

Someone once asked me what was the use of prayer – what God had planned would happen anyway. Consider John the Baptist. His birth

was foretold in the Old Testament even before his parents were born, yet in the New Testament, the angel responds to Zechariah telling him that God had answered his prayer and that his wife Elizabeth would bear a son, who was to be named John.

God heard his prayer! Does that mean if Zechariah did not pray, John the Baptist would not be born? In that case the prophecy foretold would be false? How would you reconcile God's will with


everything and made His plan. Wasn't the birth of the saviour planned considering the free response of Mother Mary? Wasn't the life of Jesus entirely scripted? Did He not know that He would be crucified? Think about it.

'The sun which warms the plant can under other conditions also wither it. The rain which nourishes the flower can under other conditions rot it. The same sun shines upon mud that shines upon wax. It hardens the mud but

God's grace perfects human freedom by prompting you to do what is good for you. It nudges you to make decisions that are for your own good but at the same time, it respects your freedom and gives you space to reject it.

human freedom here?

To answer this, I would like to use the same phone analogy used earlier. Apple may have influenced you to buy their product but sometimes we hesitate, questioning if it really is worth it. Then we meet our friends who share their good experience of the phone which convinces us to buy it. So, there are secondary causes that influence us along with the primary cause. In the same way, God who is outside time and living in an eternal present saw the prayers of Zechariah and made the plan of salvation accordingly. He included the secondary causes in making His plans, He Himself being the primary cause. He saw and knew

softens the wax. The difference is not in the sun, but in that upon which it shines. The Divine Life which shines upon a soul that loves Him, softens it into everlasting life; that same Divine Life which shines upon the slothful soul, neglectful of God, hardens it into everlasting death' – Fulton J Sheen. 

A chemical engineer who had worked in Kuwait, **Bro Alvin Joseph Mathew SDB** left his career for the priesthood in 2021. He is currently doing his regency in Don Bosco Salesian Society in Mysore, India.



# THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WAR ON GAZA AND LEBANON

**Brother Ramzi Hitti** writes about the war in Gaza and parts of Lebanon, bringing our attention to the heroic service rendered by priests and religious as well as by members of the Jesus Youth movement in Lebanon.

*Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy (Matthew 5:7).*

**O**n 7 October 2023, Israel launched a war on the Palestinians of the Gaza Strip, most of whom are Muslims, with a Christian minority. The war then extended to Lebanon, particularly the Shiite areas on the Israeli border. An area which has several Christian villages, these inhabitants were forced to flee to safer areas inside Lebanon from the end of September until the beginning of December 2024.

However, in this article, we will not discuss political or military matters. Rather, we will simply present the role of the Church and the monks in this war, what they did, and how the merciful face of Jesus was revealed through them...

## WHAT IS WAR AND WHY?

Donald Trump said, 'Sometimes by losing a battle, you find a new way to win the war.' In the same context, George Washington said, 'The harder the conflict, the greater the triumph.' Many military leaders, presidents and chiefs have sung praises of wars and their glories, and have written about it with positivity and pride.

We've heard the politicians' opinions on the war, its nature, and its objectives. But let's move on to the New Testament. *You have heard that it was said... But I tell you...* (Matthew 5: 38-39). What does God want to tell us about war?

## GOD'S VIEW ON WAR

God allows war because He is able to use evil for good. That is, God, the Creator and Almighty, is able to extract good from evil. God allows earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, volcanoes, and wars to occur. Firstly, because he

respects the freedom of nature and humanity. Secondly, because he is able to demonstrate goodness, positivity, love and compassion in all of these things...



## MONKS, SOLDIERS OF MERCY IN THE FACE OF WAR

God's mercy, compassion, and paternal face are revealed in wars, through good believers, holy religious men, monks, and nuns who have dedicated themselves to acts of righteousness, charity, and love. What happened in the war on Gaza and Lebanon is a prime example and witness to this.

The spirituality of St Francis of Assisi is characterised by poverty, austerity, work and selfless service. Numerous male and female monastic orders live out his spirituality, most notably the Franciscan Minor Friars, who are entrusted with the custody of the Holy Land.

In late July 2025, Father Francesco Lelpo, Franciscan and new Custodian of the Holy Land, arrived in Jerusalem. His custodial mandate comes at a time the land is experiencing its most difficult period, probably since 1948 – the tragedies of the people of Gaza and the horrors of poverty, hunger, and homelessness that have befallen Gaza's Palestinians, both Muslims and Christians, as well as a large number of Lebanese villages.

In an interview to Vatican News and speaking about the work the Franciscan friars have been doing during this time of war, he said, 'In Lebanon, too, I witnessed the great charitable work of our friars during the Israeli bombings. They provided shelter to many displaced families both in Beirut and in the south. I am deeply moved by the courage and missionary spirit of our friars, which is so little known in the West.' When asked about what he would ask of his friars, Fr Lelpo replied, 'Simply that they be good friars. As their predecessors were – those who have preserved and ensured the Christian presence in the Holy Land for 800 years. With care for their neighbour, but always with their gaze fixed on Christ.'

Lelpo came to the Holy Land, carrying the spirituality of St Francis, and in his heart and mind the lights of hope and love, conveying them to the afflicted people of Gaza. He came to complete the mission of his predecessors, to be a true witness to Jesus Christ amidst the devastation of Gaza, and to carry out his mission to the fullest, bringing the good news of peace to our tormented Middle



East, to Palestine and especially to Gaza.

Of course, the new Custodian of the Holy Land, like his Franciscan predecessors, will try to provide food, drink, clothing, and shelter for the residents of Gaza and the wounded people of Palestine. But, along with the much-needed aid, the suffering people of this war-torn land also need love, compassion, kindness and peace.

## JESUS YOUTH LEBANON INITIATIVES

The spark of war wasn't contained to only the Palestinian city of Gaza, but spread to many areas in Lebanon, the land of St Charbel. A large number of Christians and Muslims left their villages on the border with Israel, heading toward the Lebanese interior. What role did Jesus Youth Lebanon do in this regard?

JY Lebanon visited several schools housing refugees or displaced families who had lost their homes. They provided spiritual and psychological support and assistance, especially to the youth. Communication remains with the youth of these villages, even after their return, through prayer and meditation groups on social media.

The stench of war still wafts from Gaza and, to a lesser extent, from Lebanon. These skirmishes are not completely over. But God has His own views regarding this war, as revealed through the mission of the Franciscan Minor Friars, Jesus Youth Lebanon, and others.

## JY IN LEBANON

Jesus Youth has been present in Lebanon and actively operating since the summer of 2022, and includes more than hundred members across four social media groups.

The core group consists of about

sixty committed members who are either Lebanese Christians or Christian Arabs residing not only in Lebanon, but also in Egypt, the Middle East, Canada, Syria, and Denmark. We try to meet at least once a month for a prayer meeting or Mass. We hold daily meetings via Zoom and WhatsApp.

Another group was established at the American University of Technology (AUT), located in the city of Byblos (Jbeil). It comprises twenty university students living in and around Byblos, a region in central Lebanon on the Mediterranean coast, about 40 km north of the capital, Beirut.

A new group was formed in the spring of 2025, at the Apostles Secondary School in Jounieh (a small coastal city, about 20 km north of Beirut). It has fewer than ten members who share daily Bible readings, meditations, and spiritual readings via WhatsApp.

The fourth group, called 'Jesus Youth Lebanon Survivor,' was formed in September 2024, during the war in southern Lebanon. It includes youth from Christian villages on the southern border with Israel. They left their villages and then returned when the situation in southern Lebanon calmed down.

What distinguishes these groups, and makes them strong in a Lebanese society fragmented religiously, socially, economically, and politically, is the strength of their faith and their determination to bear witness to Jesus Christ until their last breath. This is achieved by living the six pillars of Jesus Youth, and applying it with faith, hope, and love in their daily lives. ■

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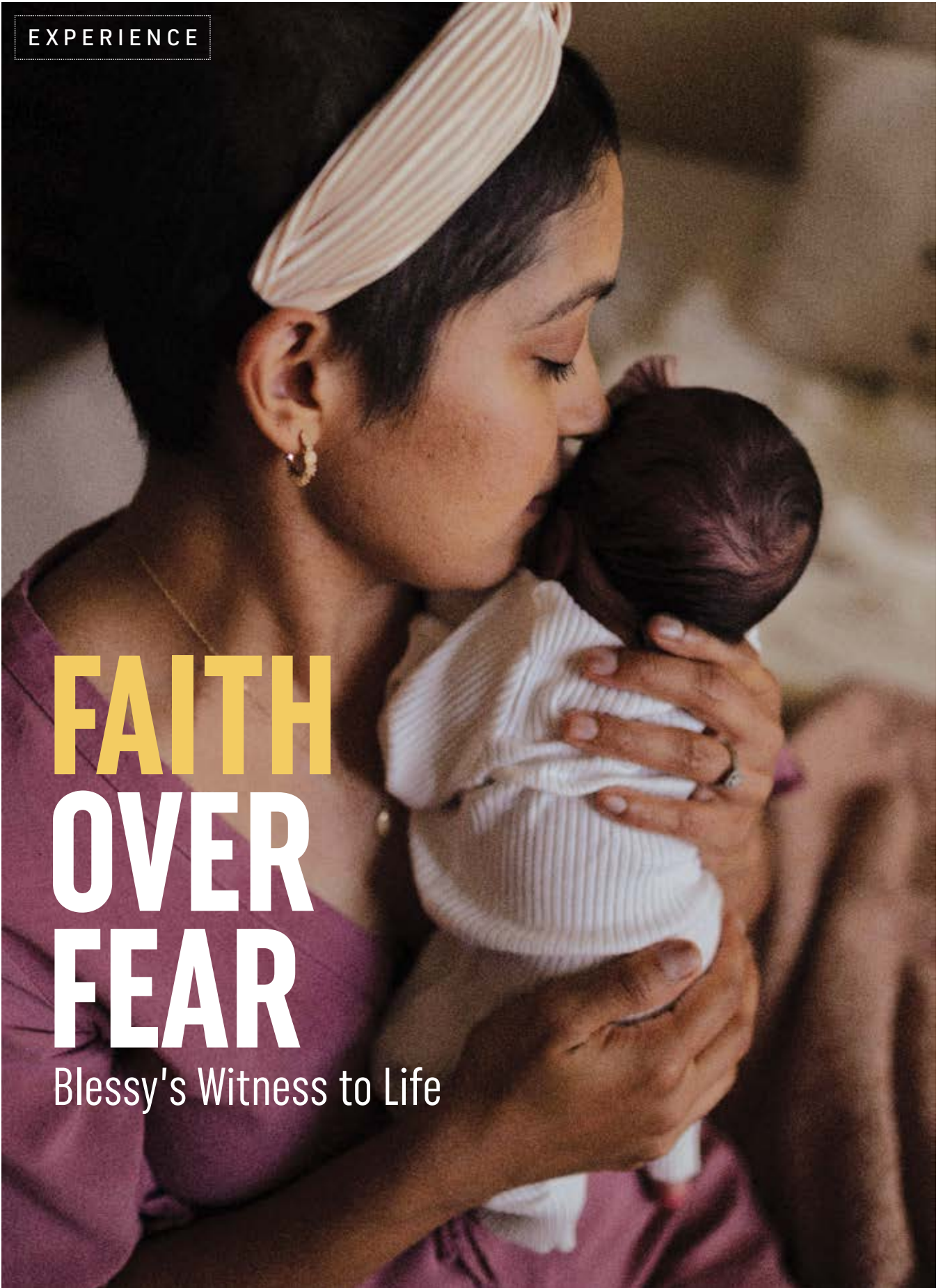
**Brother Ramzi Hitti** is a life-committed brother of the Lebanese Maronite Missionaries Association. He works in the field of religious media and lives in the Monastery of St John the Beloved in Jounieh, Lebanon.



EXPERIENCE

# FAITH OVER FEAR

Blessy's Witness to Life





## Silvy Santosh talks to Blessy Francis, a young mother of three, who is also a faith-fuelled and brave cancer survivor.

I had been sitting in the library with my children, quietly reading, when my spiritual sister, Maria George rang me. Her voice carried urgency as she asked for prayers for her friend's daughter, Blessy, a young mother who had just received two life-changing pieces of news: she had cancer, and she was expecting her third child.

From that moment, I carried her in prayer. Though I didn't know her personally, my heart ached for her family. I shared her intention with our parish intercession group, and together we begged God's mercy over this mother and her unborn child. Month after month, Maria kept me updated, until one day we received the news we had all hoped for: Blessy was cancer-free, and she had delivered a healthy, beautiful baby girl.

I knew her story was not just one of medical triumph but of divine providence. It was a living witness to what the Church proclaims: that every life is sacred from conception to natural death, and that God's grace is strongest in our weakness. When I finally spoke with Blessy and her husband George, I saw in them the beauty of Catholic family life – a couple who chose to trust God radically, even in the face of fear and uncertainty.

This is their testimony. A witness to Christ's victory over fear, to Mary's tender intercession, and to the truth that saying 'yes' to life is always saying 'yes' to God.

### Can you introduce your family and share your faith journey before and after marriage?

My name is Blessy. My husband is George and we have known each other since we were kids. We met around third grade, went to the same parish through middle and high school, and became great friends. By the time we were teenagers, we both knew – God had put us in each other's lives for a reason. We got married in 2015, and this November will be ten years. We have three girls, Emily (6),

Hannah (3), and Lucia (1).

We grew up amidst a very active parish life – Sunday school, youth group, retreats, and more. It was fun and gave us a sense of belonging, but looking back, our parish life was shaped much more by cultural identity, achievements, and education than by deep spiritual formation. We knew the traditions, celebrated the feast days, and worked hard in our parish community, but faith was something we learned about more than something we lived. In many ways, it was easy – we could enjoy all the benefits of a church community without ever being challenged to make sacrifices or go against the grain of the culture around us.

That started changing in our twenties. We began asking bigger questions – about God, our purpose, and what we were living for. God slowly put people in our lives who lived their Catholic faith in a way we'd never seen before – open to life, trusting Him with all the big and small decisions. It was beautiful, and honestly a little uncomfortable, because it showed us how much we'd been holding onto control. We didn't know it, but God was getting us ready for something that was going to shake everything.

### How did you find out about your cancer diagnosis and third pregnancy, and what were your initial reactions?

When my second daughter was about 18-months-old, I felt a hard lump above my left collarbone. At the time, I was working 1–2 days a week at a local hospital, so I mentioned it to a doctor I worked with. His face got serious immediately. He told me, 'You need to see an oncologist right away.'

After a whirlwind of scans and a biopsy, within about two weeks, I was told I had Diffuse Large B-Cell Lymphoma – an aggressive blood cancer. Hearing those words while looking at my two little girls felt like the floor had dropped out from under me. The doctor explained that

relapse is common with my subtype of DLBCL and it grows and spreads fast, but a cure is probable if treatment starts immediately.

Then came another blow: the chemo I needed might cause permanent infertility, especially since I already had fertility issues. The only fertility preservation options available to us didn't align with our beliefs, so we decided to place our hopes for future children entirely in God's hands.

The very next day – before a procedure to see if the cancer had spread to my bone marrow – they did a routine pregnancy test. It came back positive. I was only five weeks pregnant. We laughed at the timing – just the day before, we had been reading about ways to preserve fertility, and here was God, already sending new life.

The joy didn't erase reality: doctors said the best option was to start treatment immediately after terminating the baby, and no one was willing to consider first-trimester chemo in any circumstance. We both believed our baby's life had the same value as mine and were determined to find a way to get me treatment while giving our baby a chance at life.

Finding a doctor who understood that was hard. Many were kind but didn't share our view. Through the Catholic Medical Association, our friends found contacts that eventually led to us getting a call from a local Catholic oncologist who said, 'I see two patients – mother and baby – and I will do everything possible to give you both a chance.' That was all we needed to hear.

The plan was to start an immunotherapy thought to be safe early in pregnancy, with blood tests twice weekly until the second trimester, when chemo could be given with much less risk to the baby. If the cancer became unstable before then, we were prepared to start chemo immediately, entrusting our baby's survival to God, not to us.

By God's mercy, the cancer remained

stable. I made it to the second trimester before starting chemo. In June, we welcomed our healthy daughter, Lucia – ‘light’ – because she was exactly that: God’s light in our darkest time.

#### What happened when the cancer returned?

When Lucia was eight-months-old, I went in for a routine check-up. Some lab results looked off, so we did a PET scan. The cancer was back. More aggressive.

I had to stop breastfeeding overnight. The treatment that’s normally the best shot at a cure – CAR-T therapy – wasn’t an option because of a protein missing in my cancer cells. The relief of remission was quickly replaced with the sobering reality that I was not out of the woods.

But my team found a promising new treatment, and I started it immediately. Right now, my scans are clear, but the next one to two years are high-risk for relapse. If I make it through this period, my chances for a long-term cure are high.

Living in this in-between has changed how I see everything. I’m more focused on living each day as the true gift that it is and building a strong community around my girls now – people who will walk with them in faith if I’m not here to do it myself.

#### Can you share your love for the Eucharist and your experience of Jesus?

I’m still learning what it really means to love Jesus in the Eucharist. For me, it’s not about always feeling something dramatic or emotional – it’s about believing He is truly there, even when I feel little. At every Mass, I’m meeting the same Jesus who gave Himself for me on the Cross, because in the Eucharist that sacrifice is made present again.

So my ‘experience’ is less about a moment of emotion and more about slowly learning to live in the reality that I’m in communion with Him – in the joyful seasons, in the dry and ordinary days, in trials, and in moments of peace. Walking through suffering has made me realise how much I need Him there – how the Eucharist isn’t just part of my faith, it’s my lifeline.

#### How has this journey shaped your parenting and your family’s faith life?

We’ve always believed kids aren’t interruptions – they’re a gift. We bring



If I can leave them with anything, I hope it's this: Life is sacred. God is faithful. And no matter how dark the road gets, His light will always find you – and lead you home.

them with us to almost everything, even when it’s inconvenient, because they make life richer.

We try to live the faith in ways our kids can see: praying together, celebrating feast days, reading Bible stories, and talking about the saints. Our oldest has learned to ‘offer it up’ when she sees me in treatment. She’s beginning to understand that suffering can mean something when we give it to Jesus.

We also want them to know that our faith isn’t about comfort or convenience – it makes demands on us, and those demands require sacrifice. We can’t have everything, despite the lie our culture tells us that you can say yes to everything and never have to give anything up of value. Living the faith often means going against the current, and that will bring resistance. We want them to be ready for that, to know it’s worth it, and to see it lived out in our home.

For now, while they’re young, we home-school, which has been such a blessing. Our oldest is now transitioning to a home-school hybrid programme

where she’ll spend two days a week in a classroom, giving her a chance to build friendships and community. This approach still allows us to keep faith at the centre of our days while helping form their minds and hearts to live for truth in a world that often pulls in the opposite direction.

#### Who supported you most, and how have godly friendships made a difference?

We’ve been blessed with an overwhelming amount of support from so many people. My in-laws dropped everything to come stay with us, making it possible for me to get to appointments – often scheduled at the last minute – while they cared for the girls. My mother-in-law has truly been a saint, stepping in during times of sickness to care for the kids, help George and me, and keep the house running. My brother-in-law and sister-in-law have also been a huge blessing – this journey has brought us closer, and they’ve been there to help with the kids and to check in on us mentally, not just physically. My extended family has checked in frequently to make

sure I'm doing well.

Our friends have gone above and beyond. They've kept our girls entertained, set up playdates, taken our daughter to her dance classes and church activities, and made sure I was okay – checking in, praying for us, and encouraging us. They organised Rosary nights for my intentions, meal trains to keep us nourished, and even coordinated breastmilk donations for Lucia when I had to stop nursing her.

I also can't speak about support without mentioning my oncologist. He has been more than a physician, he has been a spiritual father figure to us. He prayed with us during appointments, offered Masses for our family, and guided us with a faith-filled confidence that reminded us we were walking the path God was asking of us. In the midst of medical complexity and fear, he was both thorough in his care and unwavering in his encouragement, giving us peace that we were never facing this battle alone.

And then, there's my husband, George. I can't begin to understand the level of stress and worry he carried through all of this. He was my rock, the steady, unshakable presence holding our family together when I felt like everything else was falling apart. From the moment we got the diagnosis, we were united in our convictions, and that was such a blessing. He was courageous when it mattered most, and he kept pointing our family's moral compass in the right direction, even when it felt like many people close to us were telling us to take an easier, more 'practical' path. I will always be grateful for the way he loved me, protected our children, and led our family with faith and integrity.

They didn't just lighten our load – they reminded us that we were never alone in carrying it. These acts of love weren't just practical help – they were living reminders of Christ's love, made visible through His people. Godly friendships, a steadfast marriage rooted in Christ, and the grace of having a doctor who walked with us in both medicine and faith have carried us through this journey, giving us strength, hope, and tangible proof that we are not walking this road alone. I can never fully thank everyone for the countless ways they've blessed our family.

### What do you hope your children remember from this season?

I hope they remember, deep in their hearts, that every life is worth fighting for – no matter how small or fragile – and that trusting God, especially when it feels costly, is never wasted. I want them to know that openness to life and love aren't restrictions meant to hold them back, but a roadmap to real joy, freedom, and eternal life.

And I hope they remember how surrounded they were by love during this time. I want them to recall the meals delivered, the prayers lifted, and the people who stepped in to care for them when I couldn't. I hope those memories give them courage to choose what is right, even when it might cost them everything. So that if the day comes when I'm not here, they will still feel held by that same love, and they'll know they are never walking alone.

### What message do you have for the Kairos readers?

If there's one thing this journey has taught me, it's that God's plans rarely look like ours – and yet, His are always better. I wouldn't have chosen cancer, and I certainly wouldn't have chosen to walk through it while pregnant. But I can look back now and see His fingerprints all over the story.

He sent me a daughter when the world said there was no room for her. He sent me a doctor who saw two patients instead of one. He surrounded me with a community who prayed with me when I couldn't find the words myself.

I still don't know how my story will end. I still have days where fear and uncertainty feel heavy. But every morning, I wake up and remember: my life and the lives of my children belong to Him. My job is to be faithful, to fight for what is good and true, and to keep pointing my girls toward Heaven.

If I can leave them with anything, I hope it's this: Life is sacred. God is faithful. And no matter how dark the road gets, His light will always find you – and lead you home.

### Blessy's Journey: A Witness to Life and Faith

In a world that often tells us that suffering and new life don't mix, Blessy and George showed us something

different – they chose faith over fear. With the help of a Catholic pro-life doctor who saw both mother and baby as precious in God's eyes, their family lived out the truth: every single life is sacred, from the very first moment of conception.

Blessy didn't walk this road alone. Her husband's strong faith, her in-laws' sacrifices, and the prayers and love of her Catholic community became the hands and feet of Christ. From shared meals to breast milk donations, the Body of Christ wrapped their family in God's providence.

Today, she is continuing treatment with encouraging scans. If everything remains clear, she will be considered to be in long term remission after a few years. Blessy celebrates daily life with her husband and their three beautiful children. Her story shouts to the world that choosing life is never a mistake – God always provides! As St Gianna Molla reminds us: 'The life of a mother begins with her child in the womb, and she must be willing to lay down her life for it.'

This isn't just a story about surviving cancer, it's about the victory of faith, love, and life itself. Jesus promised us: *I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly* (John 10:10). Blessy's journey reminds us: with Christ, even the heaviest crosses can be transformed into glorious crowns.

May her witness fire us up to be bold defenders of life, to cling to Jesus in every storm, and to believe that nothing is impossible with God!

Let us also keep Blessy in our prayers, for her continued health and for her sweet family. If you are reading this, please pause and offer: 1 Our Father, 3 Hail Marys and a Glory Be for her intentions. ■■

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**Silvy Santhosh** is married to Santhosh Kurian and a mom of three, Sophia, Sonia and Solomon. She is a parish member of St Alphonsa Syro-Malabar Catholic Church in Coppell, Texas, where she prepares children and adults for their First Holy Communion and Confirmation. She works as a Paediatric Nurse Practitioner, sharing the love of Christ with children and their families through healing ministry.

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**Blessy Francis** is a parishioner of St Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church in Keller. She enjoys spending time with her family and friends, especially camping, hiking and spending time in nature. She is currently home-schooling her kids and enjoying getting to spend quality time with them during their formative years. She lives in Fort Worth, Texas.



# MY FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISH

JY India Coordinator **Sunny Gudinho** shares how he encountered the Lord, who brought him to a deeper and radical surrender.



**M**y journey with God began in Sirsi Town, Uttara Kannada in India, where I was born and raised in a loving family. My father, a retired police officer, and my mother, a homemaker, instilled in me strong values. My two older siblings are married and settled.

As a youth, I was actively involved in parish activities, serving as president of the youth group. When my parish priest asked me to attend a leadership training programme in Mangalore in October 2006, I had no idea that God had bigger plans for me. The event turned out to be a three-day residential Jesus Youth programme with over 1,200 youth from across Karnataka.

It was during this programme that God spoke to me through a powerful testimony, challenging my faith with Acts 16:31: *Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household*. At that point in my life, I had been struggling with addictions, academic failures, and family issues, but God's voice pierced my heart. At confession and during the inner healing adoration, I surrendered myself completely and experienced the Lord in a deep and profound way.

This encounter transformed my life. My parish priest, family, and friends noticed a change in me. We soon started Sunday prayer meetings, arranged retreats, and formed a core team in Sirsi. As I pursued my higher studies, I witnessed to my classmates, living out my faith boldly. God lifted me academically, and I ranked third in my college and university for my chosen MSc Chemistry course.

My journey didn't stop there. I was elected coordinator for the Karnataka Jesus Youth team, serving for two years. During this time, God used me in various ministries, including formation, parish, and family. After moving to Harihar (Davangere), I started on a new path in life as a lecturer and met and married my wife, Patrishiya D'Souza, and we are blessed with two lovely daughters Mariya and Viola.

In Harihar, my spirituality was nurtured by Mamma Mary's presence in the Minor Basilica of Our Lady of Good

It was during this programme that God spoke to me through a powerful testimony, challenging my faith with Acts 16:31: *Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household*. At that point in my life, I had been struggling with addictions, academic failures, and family issues, but God's voice pierced my heart. At confession and during the inner healing adoration, I surrendered myself completely and experienced the Lord in a deep and profound way.

Health. Today, our family is actively involved in the family cell and teens' prayer meeting. For nine years, I've been teaching, spreading the Good News, and living out my faith.

#### **A LEAP OF FAITH: FROM LOCAL TRAVELS TO NATIONAL TRAVELS**

As I reflect on my journey, I am reminded of the story of a young boy who offered Jesus the five loaves and two fishes. Despite the boy's humble offering, Jesus multiplied it to feed a multitude. Similarly, when I surrendered my life to Jesus, I experienced a profound transformation.

I never imagined that I would one day leave my job as a chemistry lecturer to serve the Lord. But God had other plans.

During the National Leaders Learning Programmes (for leaders and animators), I felt an unshakeable conviction to serve. As I shared the story of the boy with the loaves and fishes with leaders, I realised that I was being called to give my all to Jesus. The moment I surrendered, tears of joy and gratitude flowed. It was as if Jesus was saying, 'Now it's time to put your faith into action.'

When I resigned from my job to commit to serving the Lord for a year, I thought it was a significant sacrifice. But God had bigger plans. As a Jesus Youth India Coordinator, I was called to serve

for three years. It was daunting, yet exhilarating. I knew that when I gave my life to Jesus, He would multiply my efforts and bless me abundantly.

Today, I testify that surrendering to God is the best decision I ever made. His plans are greater than mine, and His blessings are overflowing. I am humbled to serve Him and grateful for the opportunity to share my story.

When we give our lives to Jesus, He multiplies our efforts and blesses us abundantly.

And the first thing the Holy Spirit prompted me to do after saying YES is to consecrate India into the Immaculate Heart of Mother Mary. So let's pray to our Mother and stay united to build His kingdom in love.

Ave Maria!




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Prior to his current commitment as JY India Coordinator, **Sunny Gudinho** had been working as a college principal in Harihar, India. He is married to Patrishiya Dsouza and they are blessed with two daughters.



# A Jubilee for My Heart

**Anju Mathew** had recently participated in the Jubilee of Young People held in Rome. She shares how the experience brought her to a deeper appreciation for her faith.



**T**he Jubilee Holy Year is a celebration of the Catholic Church every 25 years, a gathering where millions of people from around the world come together in faith. For 2025, the Holy See designated 'Pilgrims of Hope' as the theme, and the Jubilee of Young People took place from 28th July to 3rd August.

I first heard about the Jubilee of Young People trip that Jesus Youth (JY) was organising when a member of the North Carolina JY community reached out to me about it. I was conflicted about going since I had only recently started attending JY meetings. Also, no one from North Carolina planned to go. Having moved to

NC two years ago, I had never heard about Jesus Youth before. It was after a family friend invited me that I started going to meetings.

I loved the sense of community and the passion that people my age had for Jesus Christ. I also started learning more about the Catholic faith and developing a deeper appreciation for it. Even though I was a baptised Catholic, growing up, I didn't have an attachment to my faith. When I was in middle and high school, I attended Sunday school at a church of a different denomination. While my love for Jesus flourished, I also had a lot of misconceptions about the Catholic

Church. Two factors pushed me to sign up for this trip: (1) My experience with the local JY community assuaged my fears about going on a trip with strangers because I knew that members of JY would be welcoming, (2) I wanted to further experience the Catholic Church, and where better to do it than in Rome?

The first night in Rome, we walked into a large pavilion with rows and rows of sleeping bags. Outside, there were porta-potties and shower stalls. When I signed up for this trip, I didn't realise that the living conditions would be... unique. Sleeping on concrete floors, waiting in line even at 1 am to take cold



showers, having to depend on someone to hold the shower curtain close, running around looking for toilet paper, or making do without, and so much more were all humbling experiences. Though I never got used to the cold showers, the excitement and tiredness from the days immediately knocked me out as soon as my head hit the sleeping bag.

On our first day in Rome, we visited St Peter's Basilica and walked through the Holy Doors. There are four Holy Doors in Rome, which are special entrances to the churches that are only opened during the Jubilee Year. The Holy Doors symbolise Jesus, and by going through the doors, we confess that Jesus is Lord and express our decision to follow and be guided by Him. Throughout the week, we were also able to go through the Holy Doors at the Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls, St John Lateran, and St Mary Major Basilica. The first day, we also attended the Welcome Mass, where Pope Leo made a surprise appearance, and he reminded us that we are the salt of the earth and light of the world; we are the hope that the world needs.

The next day, we attended the National US Pilgrim Gathering, where Bishop Robert Barron (Diocese of Winona-Rochester & Word on Fire Ministries) spoke. What stood out to me from that night was the comment he made about seeing Pope Leo during the Welcome Mass, which was held in St Peter's Square, mere yards from St Peter's tomb. Peter came to Rome, the centre of the world at that time, to spread the message about Jesus. The radical message Peter was trying to spread led to his crucifixion by Nero, the emperor of the great Roman Empire. Bishop Barron asked us, 'Where is Nero's successor?' Nero has no successor, but we saw Peter's successor, Pope Leo, in St Peter's Square last night. The great signs of the Roman Empire, like the Colosseum, Circus Maximus, the Forum, etc., are all ruins now, but the great empire announced by Peter is all over the world in every continent. And it is currently being carried on by the young generation.

Seeing young people from all over the world, waving their country's flags, passionate about their faith, was something that really impressed me



during the Jubilee for Young People. Despite the heat, large crowds, and long lines, there was always music in the air, dancing, and smiles on everyone's faces. It was an amazing feeling being part of that crowd, knowing everyone was there for the same reason. I think that is the beauty of the Catholic Church, her diversity and inclusion of different cultures, yet we are all united by our faith and hope in Jesus Christ. It was a beautiful sign of hope to come together as one family of faith, especially when young people were leading it.

One of the events from the week that stood out to me was a Taizé prayer service which we attended. This service involves chanted songs and prayers, readings, and meditative silence. It was a beautiful form of worship, and we also had the opportunity to talk to one of the brothers, Br Maciej, of the monastery. Br Maciej asked us a question about what it means to be pilgrims of hope. I realised at that moment I hadn't really taken the time to reflect on the theme of this Jubilee. And so I spent some time reflecting on Hebrews 11. The first verse says, *Faith is the realisation of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen*. When we put our hope in God into action, the result is faith; faith in God's promises for the future. The rest of the chapter delves into examples of faith in the Old Testament by recounting the actions of Abel, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and much more! The journey of these saints was not easy, yet through their hope in the promises of God, they were able to continue walking

with confidence and joy in God. In the same way, to be a pilgrim of hope is to journey through life with confidence that God's promises to us will be fulfilled. To be a pilgrim of hope is to realise that even when we face trials and tribulations, and there is trouble in the world, we have peace in Jesus Christ, for he has overcome the world (John 16:33).

The week concluded with a five-kilometre walk with one million other young people for a night vigil on a large field, Tor Vergata. Here we took part in adoration with the Pope. We woke up the next day to take part in Holy Mass where Pope Leo again touched on the message of hope. 'Dear young people, Jesus is our hope. It is He (Jesus), as Saint John Paul II said, "who stirs in you the desire to do something great with your lives [...] to commit... to improving yourselves and society, making the world more human and more fraternal." (XV World Youth Day, Prayer Vigil, 19 August 2000). Aspire to great things, to holiness, wherever you are. Do not settle for less.'

It was a beautiful closure to a beautiful week. Through this trip, I got to meet such wonderful people, deepen my appreciation for the Catholic Church, and leave Rome with a renewed spirit and a desire to do something more. ■

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Anju Mathew works as a process engineer for a pharmaceutical company. In her free time, she loves to play pickleball, go hiking, and read. She hails from Richmond, VA and recently moved to Durham, NC, USA.

IN FOCUS

# Rising Waves of a Global Catholic Revival





Recent trends and news report a steadily growing Catholic revival taking place across the world. The Pillar's Luke Coppen writes about why this is happening.

Something surprising is happening in Catholic parishes across the Western world. After decades of falling Mass attendance, a devastating abuse crisis, and the disruption of the Covid-19 era, new faces are appearing in the pews.

In congregations where women and the elderly have long predominated, young men are beginning to appear. In churches where young adults were once a rarity, teenagers are attending Mass of their own accord, not because their parents have told them to.

These impressions are not just anecdotal. This past Easter, parishes across the Western world have reported record numbers of new Catholics.

In the US Diocese of Lansing, Michigan, 633 people<sup>1</sup> became Catholic, the highest number in more than a decade.

In the Archdiocese of Westminster, England, more than 500 people<sup>2</sup> embraced the faith, the most since 2018.

In the Archdiocese of Lyon, France, there were 628 candidates for baptism, an increase of 40%.

In the Archdiocese of Sydney, Australia a record 384 people<sup>3</sup> entered the Church, a 30% increase on the year before.

In the UK, where I live, researchers have coined a phrase to describe this phenomenon. In April this year, the Bible Society published a report<sup>4</sup> called *The Quiet Revival*, which reported that church attendance is rising in England and Wales, driven by young people, especially men. The report made headlines because it challenged long-held assumptions about Christianity in highly industrialised countries such as the UK.

Academics, politicians, and social commentators have long subscribed to the secularisation thesis – that as countries modernise, religious practice wanes. This belief is so deeply ingrained in some countries that its adherents no

longer regard it as a theory, but as an infallible truth. Hence the shock at the claim that the UK is experiencing a ‘quiet revival’ of Christian faith.

We should note here, for honesty’s sake, that some scholars have questioned whether the UK’s religious landscape has changed as dramatically as the *The Quiet Revival* report claimed. British Catholic sociologist Stephen Bullivant recently speculated that ‘some methodological gremlin’ may have led the report to exaggerate the rise in UK church-going. Even so, he said, ‘it really does feel like *something* is afoot within British socio-religious culture.’

What is drawing newcomers across the West to the Catholic faith? The best way to understand why is to listen to their stories. Here are the stories of three recently baptised Catholics in Europe:

Maëlle, a 22-year-old student in Belgium who was baptised<sup>5</sup> this year, did not grow up in a church-going family. But she attended a Catholic school and was close to her grandfather, a Mass-goer who used to offer her precious words of encouragement. After her grandfather died in 2021, she entered a dark period, which only lifted when she spontaneously decided to attend Mass. At the church, she met a woman who helped her to begin the journey toward baptism.

Sébastien, a 51-year-old Frenchman who was also baptised<sup>6</sup> this Easter, grew up in an anti-clerical environment. One day, he was out walking when he went into a small church near his house. There, a conviction dawned on him that he should be baptised. Although his parents were unhappy at his decision, he plunged into his newfound faith, serving as a volunteer for a Catholic charity. One of his three children also sought to be baptised – something he described as ‘a coincidence, but in the end not so much...’

Guusje, a 26-year-old in the Netherlands who was baptised<sup>7</sup> this year,





also did not grow up in a religious family. But she believed there was a higher power and would often ponder spiritual questions. Not long ago, she experienced a 'dark time' that prompted her to surrender herself completely to God. 'It was a dark moment, but I will never forget how a ray of sunlight began to light up the room,' she recalled. 'A certain warmth and peace came over me, and I knew in that moment that I was being called. That longing only grew stronger as time went by.'

These stories suggest there are a variety of reasons why adults in secularised countries are being drawn to the Catholic faith. Each story is highly personal, which makes generalisation difficult. Yet there are some similarities in the three testimonies.

One thing that Maëlle, Sébastien, and Guusje have in common is that they received little to no Christian formation in their families. Maëlle and Guusje both suffered dark periods in which they searched for consolation. All three made decisions, seemingly quite random and unexpected, that led to an encounter with God and a realisation that they needed to be baptised.

The answer to the question of what is drawing people to the Catholic faith could therefore perhaps be answered with one word: God. Nothing else could really explain these mysterious events and inner illuminations, and the diverse paths Western adults are taking to the Church.

It's noteworthy that central to each story is a life-changing personal encounter with God. The divine meeting results from a little step each person takes: walking into a church, attending Mass, turning to prayer in a moment of desperation. God responds by consoling those who seek him, leading them gently into his Church, often through generous and attentive Catholics.

What can the Church do to accelerate the trend of adult conversions? Maybe to offer as many opportunities to encounter God as possible to the new generation of seekers: opening churches, organising perpetual adoration, planning pilgrimages, and engaging in charitable outreach. Perhaps if the Church can multiply 'contemplative spaces,' it will meet the greatest need of the harassed, anxious, digitally distracted people of the



21st century.

While adults' spiritual paths to the Catholic Church are highly individual, some social factors are also likely to be at work in the rising numbers of converts.

One element might be the deepening sense of crisis in the Western world, resulting from wars, pandemics, pollution, mass immigration, and technological transformation. The End Times atmosphere of the early 21st century could be prompting people to question whether secular modernity is truly meeting their deepest needs. Amid rapid, destabilising change, there might be a new hunger for eternal truths.

A significant proportion of new

Catholics say the internet helped them on their way to the Church. That's notable, because until quite recently there were high barriers to learning more about the Catholic faith. Converts in the past spoke of how they had to pluck the courage to attend a Mass, not knowing what they would find, or knock on a priest's door to ask for instruction.

Nowadays, seekers can see a Mass online, read the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*<sup>8</sup>, and ask questions of knowledgeable Catholics at sites like Catholic Answers<sup>9</sup>. They can watch skilful presentations of the faith from Catholic 'influencers' such as the American Bishop Robert Barron, the French



**In April this year, the Bible Society published a report called *The Quiet Revival*, which reported that church attendance is rising in England and Wales, driven by young people, especially men. The report made headlines because it challenged long-held assumptions about Christianity in highly industrialised countries such as the UK.**

Dominican priest Frère Paul-Adrien, and India's Fr Joseph Vettikuzhichalil. Prospective converts can arguably explore Catholicism more thoroughly than ever before, without even leaving their homes.

Another factor behind the increase in conversions might also be that, in many Western countries, the composition of the Catholic community itself has changed dramatically.

I hope readers will forgive me if I again take the UK – my home country – as an example. Twenty-five years ago, my parish consisted largely of elderly British and Irish Catholics. Today, perhaps around a third of the congregation are Indian Catholics with young families. There are also significant numbers of Africans, Filipinos, and Poles.

As Catholics from these different backgrounds mix, a kind of cross-pollination takes place. Catholicism is no longer bound by a single national expression, but appears truly universal. Seekers who are curious about the Catholic Church sense that if there is space for such a variety of nationalities in the parish, then there must be a place for them too. ■

#### Notes

- 1 <https://www.dioceseoflansing.org/news/read-god-good-highest-number-easter-converts-over-decade>
- 2 <https://rcdow.org.uk/news/cardinal-nichols-welcomes-over-500-for-the-rite-of-election/>
- 3 <https://catholicweekly.com.au/rite-of-election-2025-sees-catechumen-numbers-rise-in-sydney/>
- 4 <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/research/quiet-revival>
- 5 <https://www.cathobel.be/2025/04/maelle-22-ans-va-et-re-baptisee-ce-samedi-cest-plus-quun-moment-important-cest-une-renaissance-une-transformation-profonde/>
- 6 <https://aleteia.org/2025/03/31/sebastien-soon-to-be-baptized-i-said-yes-to-jesus/>
- 7 <https://www.kn.nl/nieuws/interview/guusje-ik-vergeet-nooit-meer-hoe-een-zonnestraal-de-kamer-begon-te-verlichten/>
- 8 [https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/\\_INDEX.HTM](https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM)
- 9 <https://www.catholic.com/>



# THE UNITED STATES EUCHARISTIC REVIVAL

A Three-Year Renewed Encounter with Jesus Christ

**Tiffany Gerken** writes about the impact the US National Eucharistic Revival has had on Catholic culture in the country.

In an era marked by fragmentation and social distance, the Catholic Church in the United States has embarked on a bold and unprecedented spiritual renewal: the National Eucharistic Revival. Launched with humble beginnings and faithful resolve, the three-year initiative from 2022-2025 sparked a nationwide rekindling of love for the Eucharist, drawing Catholics into deeper intimacy with Jesus Christ made present in the Blessed Sacrament.

## Origins and Vision

The National Eucharistic Revival was formally inaugurated on Corpus Christi Sunday, 2022, when the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) launched it to draw the Church into a deeper encounter with Jesus Christ truly present in the Eucharist, and to send disciples out on mission to share that love with the world.

In 2022, the Revival began with diocesan preparation and in 2023, the movement expanded through the parish bringing the mission home to the heart of every Catholic community. In 2024, the Revival reached a visible peak with the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage, four processions carrying the Blessed Sacrament from the four corners of the country to Indianapolis, Indiana the host city for the National Eucharistic Congress. Along the way, tens of thousands joined in prayer and adoration, witnessing publicly to their faith. Nearly 60,000 faithful gathered for the National Eucharistic Congress – the first in almost 40 years. On Corpus Christi Sunday, 2025 the Revival finished its final chapter forming missionaries. Formed and renewed in the Eucharist, Catholics were commissioned to carry Christ's presence into homes, workplaces, and communities.



Photo: Br. Anthony Kumumpurath





### Diocesan and Parish Preparation

The National Eucharistic Revival began with a year dedicated to diocesan and parish preparation. This foundational stage was designed to awaken love for Jesus in the Eucharist at the local level, ensuring that the wider movement grew from the grassroots up.

Dioceses across the country organised Eucharistic congresses, holy hours, processions, catechetical workshops, and opportunities for confession and adoration. Bishops encouraged clergy and lay leaders to strengthen Eucharistic catechesis, forming the faithful in the Church's teaching on the Real Presence.

Parishes responded with creativity and devotion by hosting Eucharistic nights of prayer, parish missions, family catechesis, and community events centred on the Blessed Sacrament.

This preparatory phase laid a spiritual foundation, inviting Catholics not only to learn about the Eucharist but to encounter Christ personally, so that the revival might flow outward with renewed missionary zeal.

### The National Eucharistic Pilgrimage

In one of the most visible expressions of faith, the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage carried Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament across the country in the summer of 2024. The pilgrimage featured four distinct routes, all converging in Indianapolis, Indiana for the National Eucharistic Congress.

The routes were named after beloved saints and began in the four corners of the nation. The Marian Route departed from the headwaters of the Mississippi

in Minnesota; the St Elizabeth Ann Seton Route set out from New Haven, Connecticut; the St Juan Diego Route began in Brownsville, Texas; and the St Junípero Serra Route launched from San Francisco, California. Along each path, the Blessed Sacrament was carried in solemn procession, pausing for Masses, adoration, and public witness in towns and cities.

A unique element of the pilgrimage was the presence of 'perpetual pilgrims' or adult Catholics who committed to walk the entire route from start to finish. These pilgrims, joined daily by thousands of local faithful, became living witnesses of devotion, sacrifice, and joy.

From bustling city streets to quiet rural roads, the pilgrimage drew crowds of the faithful eager to walk with Christ. In every procession, Catholics saw a reminder of the Church's deepest treasure: Jesus Himself, present in the Eucharist, leading His people on the way.

### National Eucharistic Congress

In July 2024, the Catholic Church in the United States witnessed a landmark event: the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis, the first of its kind in almost 40 years. Over 60,000 Catholics filled Lucas Oil Stadium and the Indiana Convention Center, joining in prayer, teaching, and worship that centred entirely on Jesus present in the Eucharist.

The Congress unfolded over five days, blending powerful keynote addresses, breakout sessions, and daily liturgies. Morning and evening sessions in the stadium featured national and international speakers, while workshops and panels offered formation for families,

clergy, young adults, and parish leaders. The structure allowed participants to move from intimate teaching to large-scale worship, always returning to the central theme of Eucharistic encounter.

Notable speakers included Fr Mike Schmitz, who proclaimed the Eucharist as 'the greatest love story,' Mother Olga of the Sacred Heart, who reflected on healing through the Eucharist, and Bishop Robert Barron, who taught on the Eucharist as both sacrifice and mission. Cardinals such as Timothy Dolan and Luis Antonio Tagle provided pastoral guidance and liturgical leadership.

Each day was anchored by solemn Masses celebrated with reverence and joy, accompanied by Eucharistic adoration that drew tens of thousands into silent prayer. The Congress also featured powerful Eucharistic processions, filling the stadium with visible witness to the Church's belief in the Real Presence. For many pilgrims, the Congress was not just an event but a life-changing encounter. As one participant shared, 'To kneel in prayer with 50,000 others before the Eucharist – it was as if we were living the Gospels, gathered around Jesus Himself.'

The National Eucharistic Congress became the beating heart of the wider National Eucharistic Revival, a moment of grace sending Catholics forth renewed in love for Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

### Missionaries Sent Out

The National Eucharistic Revival was not merely a series of spectacular events, but a movement aimed at renewal and transformation. Over three years, it rekindled belief in the Real Presence, ignited creative devotion in parishes, mobilised pilgrim hearts across miles, and culminated in the monumental National Eucharistic Congress. Yet the journey will continue because the renewal was successful and missionaries are on fire to carry Jesus Christ's love into the world. ■

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**Tiffany Gerken** is a devoted wife and mother of five who treasures the joys and challenges of family life. She serves as the editor of *The Minnesota Catholic*, where she shares stories that inspire and connect the Catholic community. When not writing or editing, Tiffany enjoys spending time outdoors, embracing Minnesota's natural beauty in every season. A lover of literature, she can often be found with a good book in hand.



Photo: John Mondah

# CATALYSTS IN THE SPREAD OF CATHOLICISM IN AFRICA

**Fr Tiigo Mathias MI** takes a look at how two devotional movements have helped the growth of the Catholic faith in Africa.

**T**he Catholic Church in Africa is experiencing a powerful revival, fuelled by two significant and popular devotions: the veneration of the **Uganda Martyrs** and the apparitions of **Our Lady of Kibeho**. These events have not only deepened the faith of existing Catholics but have also become catalysts for conversion and the growth of faith across the continent.

## **The Devotion to the Uganda Martyrs**

The devotion to the Uganda Martyrs has grown into a major spiritual movement centred at the Basilica of the Ugandan

Martyrs, Namugongo. This site, where St Charles Lwanga and his companions were burned for not renouncing their faith in the late 19th century, draws hundreds of thousands of pilgrims annually. The construction of the basilica was completed in 1975 and has since hosted visits from Pope John Paul II and Pope Francis.

Each year on the feast of the martyrs, on 3rd June, a pilgrimage takes place with a diocese within Uganda taking the lead. This tradition unites dioceses from across the country. Pilgrims from as far away as Congo, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Burundi endure incredible hardships – including long treks on foot, hunger, and fatigue – to reach Namugongo. They consider their journey a profound act of prayer, penance, and spiritual renewal. Parishes along the pilgrimage routes support these foot pilgrims with food, refreshments, and medical assistance, fostering a powerful sense of community and Christian charity.

The success of this pilgrimage has even inspired the Anglican Church of Uganda to develop their own memorial site nearby. The sheer number of



attendees is a testament to the movement's influence. In 2025, a local newspaper, the *Daily Monitor*, reported that over 690,000 pilgrims gathered at both Catholic and Anglican sites by 2nd June, with an additional 300,000 joining on the morning of 3rd June.

The veneration of the Uganda Martyrs extends far beyond Namugongo. Other pilgrimage sites have emerged at the martyrs' birthplaces, such as Katoosa in Fort Portal Diocese, the birthplace of Adolf Ludigo, and Kooki in Hoima Diocese, the birthplace of Andrea Kaahwa. These sites have become regional hubs for celebrations and liturgy.

The revival is also evident in the growing number of clergy participating in the pilgrimage, including priests and bishops who walk alongside the faithful. This accessibility provides pilgrims with more opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and spiritual guidance. The Uganda Martyrs Guild, a Christian organisation inspired by the martyrs' lives, has further strengthened this movement. It encourages Christians to reflect on the martyrs' faith, study the Word of God, and build community. This devotion has led to remarkable conversions, with former witch doctors, Muslims, and non-practicing Christians dedicating their lives to Christ.

### Devotion to Our Lady of Kibeho

Another visible sign of Catholic revival is the devotion to **Our Lady of Kibeho**, also known as 'Mother of the Word.' It all began on 28 November 1981, when the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to three Rwandan children at a school in Kibeho. In the apparition Mary, with dark complexion and blue and white attire, warned of an impending tribulation, which many believe was the Rwandan genocide that followed in 1994. Mary exhorted the visionaries and the faithful to pray the Rosary of the Seven Sorrows.

Since then, the site has become a major pilgrimage destination, attracting over



60,000 pilgrims a month from Rwanda and neighbouring countries like Tanzania, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The devotion has been popularised by organizations like *Nshuti za Nyina wa Jambo* (Friends of the Mother of the Word), which organises for the statue of Our Lady of Kibeho to visit different parishes.

Pilgrimage to Kibeho has produced countless testimonies of spiritual and physical renewal. One woman from Uganda testified that her business prospered after her pilgrimage, while another man decided to dedicate his life to Christ after reflecting on the mysteries of the Rosary. Pilgrims

**The Uganda Martyrs Guild, a Christian organisation inspired by the martyrs' lives, has further strengthened this movement. It encourages Christians to reflect on the martyrs' faith, study the Word of God, and build community. This devotion has led to remarkable conversions, with former witch doctors, Muslims, and non-practicing Christians dedicating their lives to Christ.**



are given the opportunity to receive the sacraments, and many couples have been encouraged to regularise their marriages in the Church after visiting the site.

The devotion to Our Lady of Kibeho has significantly promoted the reverence for Mary as the Mother of God. By placing Mary's life and virtues at the centre of their spiritual journey, pilgrims find new faith and a deeper connection to the Catholic Church.

These two powerful movements – the veneration of the Uganda Martyrs and the devotion to Our Lady of Kibeho – stand as clear signs of a vibrant and growing Catholic faith in Africa, demonstrating the enduring power of faith, devotion, and community.

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Fr Tiigo Mathias MI belongs to the Order of the Ministers of the Infirm (Camillians), whose charism is caring for the sick. He lives in Uganda.



# Revival on the Road to Jubilee 2033



Photo by Theo Farrell

## SIGNS OF AWAKENING IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ENGLAND & WALES

Across England & Wales, long known as the 'Dowry of Mary,' there is a fresh stirring of faith. CHARIS UK Coordinator **Abhy Thomas** shares signs of revival and the Spirit's awakening in the Catholic Church as we journey with hope toward the Great Jubilee of 2033.

**A**s we journey toward the Great Jubilee of 2033 – an extraordinary time of grace and renewal – the Holy Spirit is breathing new life into the Church in England & Wales. We are seeing a revival not merely of numbers, but of hearts awakened, young vocations blossoming, and a beautiful, tangible, God-given hunger for the supernatural.

### Grace in Our Time

Across England & Wales, people are coming alive in faith again. In parishes, schools, and universities, new prayer groups are forming. Hundreds have taken part in Life in the Spirit Seminars, discovering the love of Jesus in a personal way and beginning to live in the power of His Spirit. In Southwark, more than 3,000 gathered at Aylesford for Pentecost this year, and over 1,000 made the 'Pilgrimage to Pentecost' together. This Easter, dioceses in England & Wales reported a surge of initiations, with more than 2,500 adults received into the Church – the strongest figures in a decade and a clear sign of the Spirit drawing people into the Catholic faith.

In a culture often called 'post-Christian,' a different story is being written: people are being renewed, set on fire, and sent out.

### A New Generation is Searching

One of the clearest signs of revival is among the young. Surveys show that church attendance among 18 to 24-year-olds has quadrupled in the past five years (from 4% in 2018 to 16% in 2024), with Catholicism now the largest affiliation among worshippers under 35.

In Canning Town, more than 800 now gather for Sunday Mass, and thousands came during Holy Week – most of them under 35. In Richmond, a parish youth group that began with six teenagers now has over a hundred, with young adults being baptised and confirmed each year.

In recent months, I've also met young converts to the faith. One was raised in a devout atheist family and encountered God unexpectedly during a holiday in Spain. Another came from a Muslim

background, was baptised into the Church, and is now prayerfully discerning his vocation. These stories remind us that the Spirit is drawing people from every walk of life into the heart of the Church.

We see the same grace at formations and gatherings like the ASCENT, Joel's Bar, One Hope Project's Worship Academy, and Youth 2000. At these events, young disciples are formed, people worship freely, go to confession in their hundreds, and step forward to give their lives to Christ. Jesus Youth is raising up teenagers through the three-year Exodus formation programme and a lively university mission. The Shalom community in the UK also has a growing youth presence. Young people are hungry for something radical, real, and supernatural. As one young adult who attended the OHP Worship Academy put it, 'I learnt that a desire to lead worship is rooted in a life of prayer. The heart of worship is not about performance or ability, but about leading others to Jesus.'

I have also seen this hunger close up. Recently, while preparing and praying for the baptism of the Holy Spirit with a group of 25 young adults at the start of their 10-day discipleship training programme, I experienced an overwhelming presence of the Lord. It was uplifting to witness the strong manifestation of the Spirit in the lives of those participants, and also in the volunteers and speakers gathered that evening. These moments remind me that God is raising up a generation that is not content with half-measures, but is longing to live fully in the Spirit.

### Families and Communities Renewed

Revival is not just for the young. I think of a parish priest I met this year who had never personally experienced this kind of outpouring of the Spirit. During prayer, led by a speaker on the eve of Pentecost, he received the gift of praying in tongues for the first time. It was a deeply moving moment for this priest and everyone present – a reminder that the Spirit's gifts are not bound by age, tradition, or expectation. As Pope Leo XIV recently reaffirmed, echoing Saint John Paul II, 'hierarchical gifts and charismatic gifts are co-essential to the divine constitution of the Church founded by Jesus.'

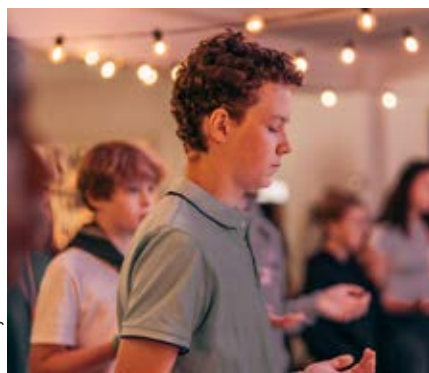


Photo by Theo Farrell





Photo by Theo Farrell



Photo by Theo Farrell



Alvaro Garcia/rcaos.org.uk



Alvaro Garcia/rcaos.org.uk



Photo by Theo Farrell

It is happening in families at Sion Community weekends, where parents and children encounter God together. It is in women's retreats like Beloved, and in men's retreats, where lives are healed and people go home renewed in their vocations. CELEBRATE, after years of blessing families nationwide, has relaunched its national festival with a clear Catholic vision for family, local community, and life in the Holy Spirit.

In Catholic communities and expressions like Cor et Lumen Christi, AFCM, ADoRE and Divine UK, worship and healing are touching thousands. New Dawn, in its renewed form through local mission weekends, has reignited with fresh energy, giving many a taste of worship, teaching, and Spirit-led ministry.

Festivals like We Believe are gathering Catholics of every expression – from charismatic praise to the Latin liturgy,

from Syro-Malabar Vespers to Ukrainian Divine Liturgy – more than 2,000 took part this year. In their diversity, these events show the beauty of a Church alive in the Spirit, united in Christ.

House of the Open Door carries a real heart for hospitality to the vulnerable, creative mission, and regular mission to Uganda. Expressions such as the Emmanuel Community and the Irenaeus Project are likewise helping people



Photo by Theo Farrell



**Festivals like We Believe are gathering Catholics of every expression – from charismatic praise to the Latin liturgy, from Syro-Malabar Vespers to Ukrainian Divine Liturgy – more than 2,000 took part this year. In their diversity, these events show the beauty of a Church alive in the Spirit, united in Christ.**

encounter Christ through compassion for the needy as part of their evangelisation.

Chemin Neuf is deeply ecumenical – forming young leaders at the St Anselm Community (Lambeth Palace) and resourcing prayer for Christian unity across the UK.

At parish level, initiatives like Divine Renovation are helping priests and lay leaders rediscover what it means to be missionary communities. Last year in Harrogate, nearly 1,000 leaders gathered with one desire: to see parishes come alive again.

### Signs of New Vocations

The Spirit is also breathing life into vocations. Seminaries continue to welcome new candidates, and dioceses are celebrating ordinations with joy. In recent years we have seen a steady increase in people discerning God's call across every state of life – whether to priesthood, consecrated life, marriage, or

the dedicated single life lived fully for the Lord. Some, like the young man from a Muslim background, are even beginning to discern a call to priesthood. Revival is never just about events – it is about lives offered in service.

### One Church, Many Charisms, One Mission

This renewal is not a separate stream. It is the river of the Spirit running through the whole Church. The vision we carry in England & Wales – bringing the love of God to the world and leading people to the fullness of baptism, to be a transformative force for renewal in the Church and society – is quietly coming alive. We see it whenever people are drawn into communion, formed as missionary disciples, and sent into the world in the power of the Holy Spirit, especially as we prepare for the Great Jubilee.

### A Church Awakening

This is not about looking back to a golden age. It is about recognising that here and now, God is moving. As one participant at the recent CELEBRATE festival put it, 'Wherever I go, whatever I do, Jesus is with me. If I have Him, I have everything.' Ordinary Catholics are being filled with extraordinary faith. Vocations are being discerned. Young people are seeking something radical and real. Families are being renewed. Prayer groups are multiplying.

As we prepare for the Jubilee, we do so not with fear for the future but with hope. The same Spirit who came at Pentecost is renewing the face of the Church in England & Wales today. Let us pray each evening at 20:33 (8:33pm) for every person in this world to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ by 2033.

So let us keep saying 'yes.' Let us keep opening doors for people to encounter the love of Jesus. And let us keep praying: Come, Holy Spirit, renew your Church, renew our land, renew our lives. ■

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Abby Thomas is the Coordinator of CHARIS England & Wales, the national body serving the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. He has been active in charismatic leadership for over 20 years through the Jesus Youth movement. Abby lives in Maulden with his wife, Saumya, and their four children, and serves on the executive leadership team of a multinational organisation.

## PATHFINDERS

A portrait of Lady Georgiana Fullerton, a woman with dark, ruffled hair, wearing a dark dress with a high collar and a dark ribbon. She is looking slightly to the left with a serious expression.

# Lady Georgiana Fullerton

**Neha Antony Akkara** introduces the famous nineteenth century English novelist and philanthropist, who embraced the Catholic Church.

*In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead (James 2:17).*

**W**e all know of Saul, notoriously known for persecuting Christians and whose journey down the road of Damascus changed the path Christianity forever. In this article, we explore how a spiritual conviction at Rome turned a writer into one of the best Catholic authors of her time.

Lady Georgiana Fullerton was the youngest daughter of Lord Granville Leveson-Gower. She was brought up in Paris, where her father served as the English ambassador. Her mother, Lady Harriet Elizabeth Cavendish, was a pious member of the Anglican Church.

Towards the end of her life, Lady Georgiana penned a short memoir (incomplete) from which facts about her early life can be gleaned. She was



born on 23rd September 1812 at Tixall Hall in Staffordshire, which her father had rented from the head of a very old Catholic family. Even her wet nurse was a Catholic. Though her childhood was marked by 'imperfect and scanty' religious teaching, she was inculcated with a reverence and sacredness for all things connected with religion. A passionate reader from a tender age, when she was ten, she was given the book *Génie du christianisme* (The Genius of Christianity by Chateaubriand, a passionate defence of Catholicism against attacks of the French Enlightenment), which had a deep impact on her. Sin and its absolution became matters of grave concern.

On 13 July 1833, Lady Georgiana got married to Alexander George Fullerton who was an officer in the guards. They lived at the English embassy which became their home for eight years. Following Lord Granville's retirement, the family moved to Cannes and later to Rome. It was during this visit that Mr Fullerton entered the Catholic Church following a long and thoughtful study.

Lady Georgiana started her literary career at the age of thirty-two when she published her first novel *Ellen Middleton*. Lord Brougham and Charles Greville, prominent figures at the time, were chosen as its literary critics. Both also played different roles with respect to the Oxford movement – which sought to bring back Catholic aspects of worship into and thus reform the Anglican Church. But it came to an end after one of its lead figures, John Henry Newman, converted to Catholicism. However, Lord Brougham was scathing in his review of *Ellen Middleton* – which dwelt on themes of absolution – calling it 'rank Popery.' Despite the critics, the book went on to be a success.

Lady Georgiana, meanwhile, had been following the movement with great zeal and wished she was like those who had the courage to follow Catholicism. In her biography, the Church is compared to a mother, who won back her children not by war or violence but by waiting patiently with outstretched arms.

To clear herself of any doubt, Lady Georgiana placed herself under the guidance of the Jesuit Fr James Brownbill for a course on religious instruction. He

The day before her submission, momentarily influenced by some uncertainty, she marched right into Fr Brownbill's room and stated that she had changed her mind and that it was not the Catholic Church that she wanted to enter.

led her with a calm and gentle authority and let her progress on her spiritual path at her own pace. Having himself received into the Church many who had been associated with the movement, Fr Brownbill patiently waited until Georgiana was filled with the love of Jesus and it started overflowing from her. The day before her submission, momentarily influenced by some uncertainty, she marched right into Fr Brownbill's room and stated that she had changed her mind and that it was not the Catholic Church that she wanted to enter. In response he quietly asked her which Church she wanted to join. Her biography says that this question took away her doubts forever.

She was baptised at London on Passion Sunday. Her baptism was not the end, but rather the beginning of her conversion story. In the Catholic Church, Georgiana received the one thing she had always yearned for: peace. She later on wrote many verses dedicated to mother Church.

It was at London that she met Radclyffe Livingstone and Cecil Chetwynd who were also recent aristocratic Catholic converts. The three of them were known to be a source of Catholic philanthropy. In 1852, Lady Georgiana published her second book, *Grantley Manor*, using it to publicly profess her belief and religion. The book won her praise from all over England. After a brief pause in her literary career she wrote other works like *Lady Bird*. Her most famous piece of work is *Too Strange not to be True*, which narrates the story of a French émigré who was extremely poor and lived in the wilds of Canada. Lady Georgiana occasionally wrote poetry, several biographies, and even translated French and Italian articles. She was undoubtedly one of the foremost Catholic writers of the nineteenth century.

The year 1854 brought her massive heartbreak when her only son died at the age of 21. Her biography describes this as a second stage of her conversion to Catholicism. So overwhelmed with grief that she decided to turn away from the world and sought solace in works of charity. Both Lady Georgiana and her husband never put off their mourning for their son. Two years later, she joined the third order of St Francis. She converted their home into an office which became the centre from which she coordinated all her charity works.

She worked relentlessly to bring the Sisters of St Vincent de Paul to England. She also founded a new religious community which she named 'The Poor Servants of the Mother of God Incarnate'. She later moved to Bournemouth and settled there, eventually passing away on 19 January 1885 surrounded by her husband and close friends. She was buried in the cemetery near the convent of the Sacred Heart at Roehampton.

Lady Georgiana Fullerton stands as an inspiration to all of us, showing how faith without acts is mere decoration. Born into rank and affluence, she was surrounded by all the comforts life had to offer. Yet, she was the humblest of souls, choosing a simple life, writing with clarity and spreading her conviction about Christ. Her life challenges us to stay grounded onto our faith amidst our losses and reflect what we truly believe.




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**Neha Antony Akkara** is a literature enthusiast currently pursuing her Bachelor of Education. With deep appreciation for Catholicism, she writes thoughtful reflections and stories exploring the beauty of faith and literature.

# A QUIET MONTH AND A 100 DAYS!



**A**fter all the hubbub of the Jubilee for Youth, it has been relatively a quiet month in Rome with regard to the Jubilee. It was heart warming to see all the unused lunchboxes and other items from the Jubilee being distributed to the poor through various charitable organisations. As an initiative of the Dicastery for Evangelisation, it was a concrete gesture against the throwaway culture.

In a video message to the participants of the third congress of the Pan-African Catholic Network for Theology and Pastoral Care, Pope Leo XIV recalled the fundamental role of the family, 'The first place where we receive the love and support we need to move forward and overcome the trials we face in life,' he pointed out.

There was a mood of celebration all

around on 16th August, as Pope Leo marked the 100th day of his papacy. These have been some of the hallmarks of Pope Leo XIV's first 100 days as pontiff. There were discussions across the media world regarding the Pope. Most obvious is the reference to him as 'the American Pope' but Pope Leo has taken great efforts not to allow that to affect his role and identity as pontiff, nor his decision making. There





has been a huge emphasis on his part towards Church unity and to make the Church more synodal as initiated by the late Pope Francis, very careful about not making any controversies, an apparent love for beauty and reverence for Mass. Above all, he is being seen as a bridge maker on an international level.

Though it was a quiet month in terms of the Jubilee, there was still a very large number of tourists in general, as a last gasp before the school/college opens in September. But the villain was the temperature. Rome was burning and the Pope kept his Wednesday Audience on 13th August, inside the Paul VI hall.

Meeting with altar servers from France, Pope Leo XIV lamented the lack of priests as a great misfortune and upheld the ministry of young people at the altar, saying that the dignity of their service helps lead people into the sacred greatness of the Mystery. 'Christians do not go to Mass out of obligation but because they absolutely need it; the need for the life of God that is given without return,' the Holy Father emphasised.

*Peace Be with You All: Towards an Unarmed and Disarming Peace* will be the theme for the 2026 World Day of Peace, the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development announced on 26th August. This theme, 'invites humanity to reject the logic of violence and war, to embrace an authentic peace, based on love and justice.'

On 27th August the Vatican published a compilation of Pope Leo's discourses from the first months of his pontificate in a book signed by the Pontiff titled *Let There Be Peace! Words to the Church and*



*the World.*

It collects the first discourses of Pope Leo XIV, through which we can better understand the pontiff through his own words.

In a good turn of events, *Time* magazine included Pope Leo XIV in its 2025 list of the 'World's Most Influential People in Artificial Intelligence' on 28th August, praising the pontiff's focus on the ethical concerns related to the emerging technology. [The magazine listed the top 100 influential people in artificial intelligence (AI) in four categories: leaders, innovators, shapers and thinkers.] Leo XIV is among the 25 most influential thinkers in the field, according to *Time*. *Time's* profile noted that 'Leo XIV's keynote speech underlined AI's potential

as a force for good, particularly in health care and scientific discovery.'

Our Pope was quite busy having a huge number of international and ecclesial meetings after being occupied purely with the Jubilee burst for the last two months. Now, the whole world and the Catholic Church is getting ready for the canonisation of Blesseds Carlos Acutis and Pier Giorgio Frassati. ■

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Fr Justin Panachickal MSFS is currently doing his licentiate in social communications at the Pontifical University of Santa Croce, and will share with us throughout the Jubilee year ground reports from Rome.

SPECIAL



# Holy Habits

DRESSING UP FOR HEAVEN!





Editor-in-chief of our children's magazine *Kairos Buds*, **Nobin Jose** writes about a 'beautiful movement of love, learning and holiness.'

### Keeping the Hallow in Halloween

It was in 2022 that *Kairos Buds* first introduced Holy Habits – a unique initiative encouraging children to dress up as their favourite saint in honour of All Saints' Day. What began small has now become a beautiful movement of love, learning, and holiness.

In 2024, we received over 500 entries from little saints across the globe. Children joyfully dressed up, posed, and even recited quotes from their favourite saints. Parents shared photos and reels, and all of these treasures were published on the Kairos Buds Instagram page. Through this initiative, our little ones didn't just wear costumes – they learned about the lives, virtues, and sacrifices of saints who now shine in heaven.

### A Family Project of Faith

Take the story of Linu and Deepak from Singapore, parents of five beautiful children. For them, October is both the busiest and the most blessed month. 'It's more like a family project,' Linu shared. 'From selecting a saint for each child, preparing costumes, and narrating the saint's story, to managing cranky toddlers during photoshoots – it's a challenge. But once completed, the joy and sense of achievement in the children makes it all worthwhile. It is indeed a glorious work of art for His Kingdom.'

### A Holy Alternative to Halloween

For Cynthia from Australia, Holy Habits offered an inspiring alternative to Halloween. Instead of spooky costumes, her children dressed as Mother Mary, Baby Jesus, and St Anthony. 'When my daughter Cianna explained to her brother why we choose saintly costumes instead of scary ones, my heart swelled with pride,' Cynthia said. Her family even shared the videos with teachers, sparking interest among classmates!

### Teachers, Schools & More

Divya from Assam, India, a teacher, introduced Holy Habits in her school.



With just two students dressing as St Maria Goretti and Marcelino (from the movie *Marcelino, Bread and Wine*), the impact was so powerful that the principal and sisters now plan to involve many more children in the coming years.

### Learning While Dressing Up

For Wilma in Qatar, the process wasn't only about costumes but also catechesis. 'It's not just about dressing like saints,' she shared. 'For weeks, my children Eloi and Ohel were learning about the saints they chose.'

### Transforming Curiosity into Holiness

From the UAE, Ann shared how she redirected her son Leo's excitement for Halloween into saintly joy. 'When he came home talking about ghosts, I introduced him to Carlo Acutis instead. His face lit up, and he was thrilled to dress as Carlo. Capturing his joy in a photo was a gift for me as a mother.'

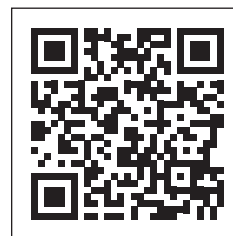
### From India with Love

Finally, Vincy from India summed it up beautifully: 'The children were more thrilled than us to dress as saints. It was inspiring to see little saints from across the world, each in different attires, yet united in one mission – holiness.'



### Join Holy Habits 2025!

*Kairos Buds* is once again organising Holy Habits this year. Let's keep the 'Hallow' in Halloween by encouraging our children to dress up as saints, light up the world with holiness, and inspire others by their joyful witness.



Scan QR code for details.

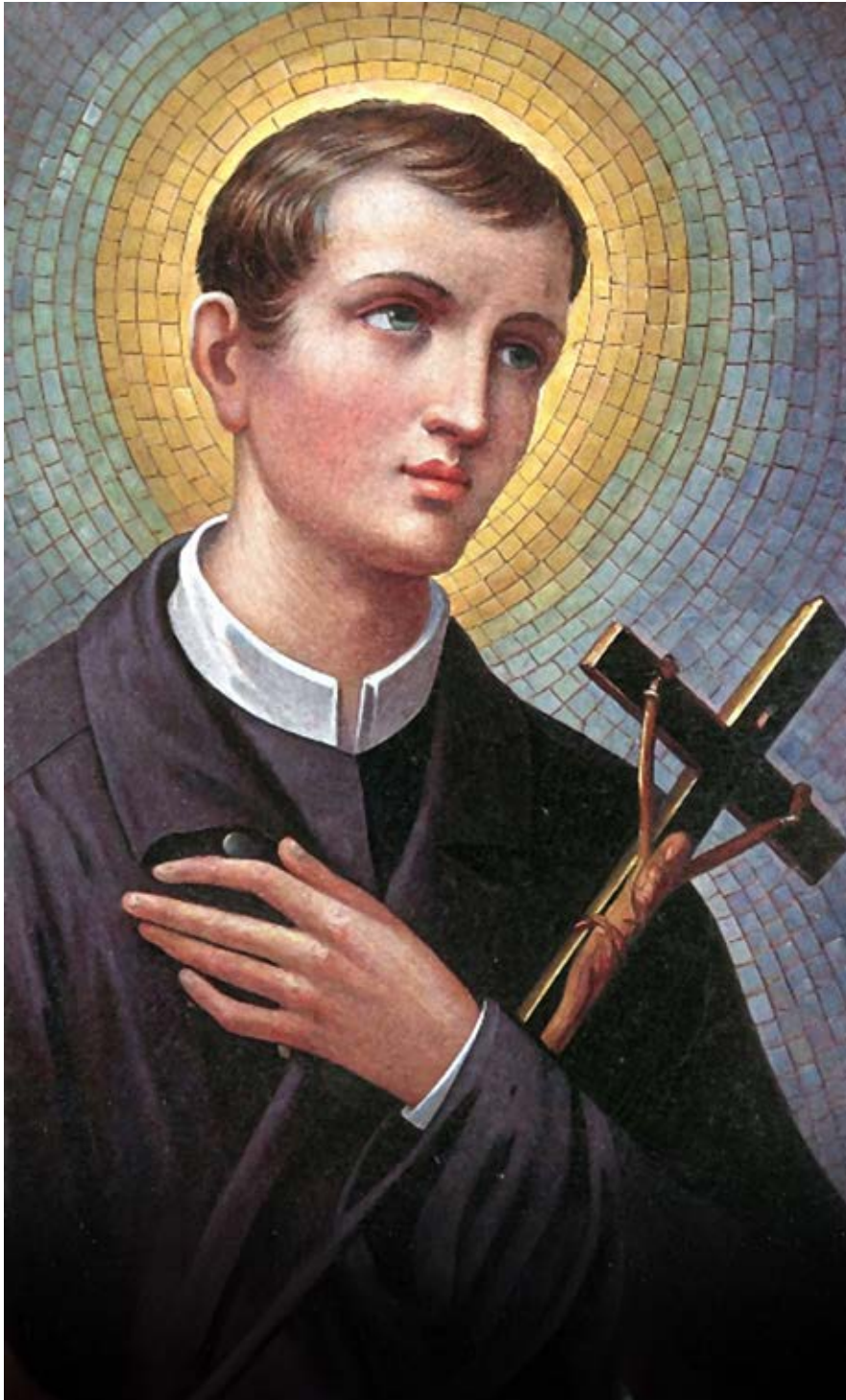
View photos & reels from Holy Habits 2024 on Instagram: Kairos Buds Instagram

As the saying goes: Rather than cursing the darkness, let us light a single candle.



# Chandeliers

## ✧ *Saint Gerard Majella*



**G**erard was born on 9 April 1726, in Muro Lucano, a small town in southern Italy. He was the youngest of four children of a tailor named

Domenico Majella and his wife, Benedetta Galella. His father died when he was only 12, leaving the family in poverty, so to sustain the family, his mother apprenticed him to a local tailor. Though the work was demanding, the conditions were difficult, and he was often mistreated, he never complained. Even then, he was a deeply pious child, spending hours in prayer; during this period, he also developed an intense devotion to the Eucharist and the Blessed Virgin Mary. His extraordinary patience and cheerful disposition that came to be one of the most attractive features of his sainthood, started becoming visible during this troublesome period.

### ROADBLOCKS THAT GAVE WAY

At the age of 23, Gerard's earnest application to the Capuchin friars was rejected because of his poor health. He then applied to the Redemptorists, who also initially refused but his persistence led to them taking him in as a lay brother. He performed tasks like gardening, cooking, and serving as a porter, always humble and willing to do the most menial tasks.

In 1754, the 28-year-old Gerard's life took a dramatic turn. A woman named Neria Caggiano, a former mistress of his benefactor, accused him of being the father of her child. Gerard, in his characteristic humility, did not defend himself. He remained silent and accepted the accusation. His superiors, who had no reason to disbelieve Neria, suspended him from his duties and confined him to his room. For three months, Gerard remained silent, suffering in humiliation. Years later, on her deathbed, Neria



confessed that she had lied. He was finally exonerated and allowed to return to his duties.

#### 'WONDER-WORKER'

Though riddled by many struggles like these, his life was also marked by extraordinary events, which earned him the nickname, 'the Wonder-Worker.' He was known for his bilocation, a phenomenon in which a person is said to be in two places at the same time. He was also known for his levitation, when he would rise off the ground while praying. His supernatural knowledge, whereby he would often speak about things he had no way of knowing, such as people's sins or their spiritual state was also a grace that the Lord benevolently gifted him with – not something that he sought out, but a part of his deep connection to God. His mystical gifts were not for show but were often seen as a sign of God's grace and a tool to help convert sinners or offer spiritual guidance. The accounts of these miracles were meticulously documented by his Redemptorist confreres and spiritual directors, who witnessed these events first-hand, cementing their authenticity.

His humility was legendary, choosing to suffer in silence rather than cause a scene. He was always the first to take on the most menial tasks, and never complained about his lot in life. He saw himself as a servant of God and a servant of all. He was known to say, 'The most I can hope for is to be a broom that sweeps God's house clean.' This is a powerful testament to his humility and his desire to serve God in the most humble way possible.

Gerard Majella died at the very young age of 29. Miracles that were never scarce during his life continued in more numbers after his death. Among these was a special miracle that earned him a place in the hearts of expectant mothers. During

his life, Gerard had no special ministry to mothers, but this story displayed his deep compassion and miraculous intercession for them, even from beyond. The popular story goes that one day, a young girl, while visiting Gerard, dropped her handkerchief. Gerard, in his characteristic kindness, picked it up and gave it back to her. He then told her to 'keep the handkerchief.' Some years later, the girl, who was married and pregnant, was in labour and in danger of losing her child. She remembered Gerard's words and asked for the handkerchief. She then placed it on her stomach. Immediately, her pain subsided, and she delivered a healthy baby. News of this miracle spread and, from that point on, people began to seek his intercession for safe and healthy births.

Even without the long list of miracles, Gerard's life was a testament to the power of simplicity, humility, and virtue. He was a simple man from a poor family who never sought fame or recognition. He was a man who, despite the poverty of

*His humility was legendary, choosing to suffer in silence rather than cause a scene. He was always the first to take on the most menial tasks, and never complained about his lot in life. He saw himself as a servant of God and a servant of all. He was known to say, 'The most I can hope for is to be a broom that sweeps God's house clean.'*

his upbringing and the hardships of his life, always remained joyful. Unperturbed by the accusations against him, never lost his faith in God. He was a man who, despite the miracles he performed, always remained humble.

Saint Gerard Majella inspires us, at the lowest moments of our lives, that despite humble beginnings, we can all achieve great things through faith... that even in the face of failing health and lack of high-achieving skills, God's grace etches your name in history with mind-blowing clarity. He is a saint for all people, but especially for those who are struggling, forgotten, and those 'in need of a miracle.'

Brother Gerard Majella was beatified by Pope Leo XIII on 29 January 1893, and canonised by Pope Pius X on 11 December 1904. His feast day is celebrated on 16 October.



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



# Magnifying God

If everything in nature gives glory to God, what about us humans, asks **Anil Israel**.

**A**ll things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small, all things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all.' This hymn written by Cecil Frances Alexander in 1848, expresses gratitude to God for the beauty and diversity of the natural order. *The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork* (Psalm 19:1). If one were to look at everything from a spiritual dimension, one would see that every created thing points to the Creator. The vast oceans and the mighty mountains declare His Majesty. Every breaking dawn, every flowing stream reminds of His unfailing love and mercy. *The Lord's unfailing love and mercy still continue, fresh as the morning, as sure as the sunrise* (Lamentations 3:22-23). The tall erect trees teach us to focus upwards towards heaven. They never tire of standing

straight. They never give up or stoop down in despair. *The mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands* (Isaiah 55:12). All created things glorify the Creator.

Every morning in Africa, a gazelle wakes up. It knows it must run faster than the fastest lion, or it will be killed. Every morning in Africa, a lion wakes up. It knows it must run faster than the slowest gazelle, or it will starve. It doesn't matter whether you're the lion or a gazelle – when the sun comes up, you'd better be running. *The ants are a people not strong, yet they provide their food in the summer* (Proverbs 30:25). *Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise* (Proverbs 6:6). The story of the ant and the grasshopper also teaches us not to be lazy. Isn't it a reminder, that at the break of dawn, we too ought not to be lazy and do our spiritual running? *We must get up before daybreak to give you thanks, and pray as the sun comes up* (Wisdom 16:28). There are more suggestions from scripture reminding us to begin the day with a time of prayer.

We Christians have a lot to learn from the created world. The life of a Christian is not a life on the comfort couch. 'The world offers you comfort. But you were not made for comfort. You were made for greatness' (Pope Benedict XVI). The Christian life is a life of the extra mile. To do more than presumably required, to be more than we inadequately perceive. We are not created for mediocrity. We are created for magnanimity. 'All the strength of Satan's reign is due to the easy-going weakness of Catholics' (Pope St Pius X). Am I responding to this heavenly invitation to step out with holy boldness and embrace the great commission?

We may grumble and complain of being small, weak and incapable. Someone wisely remarked: even in small

there is all. The bumble bee has very short wings. Aerodynamically it cannot fly. However, being ignorant of this it flutters its wings vigorously producing the buzzing sound and eventually it flies. Can't we learn from the bumble bee, not to remain crushed under our self-imposed limitations, but to strive to awake, *arise and shine* (Isaiah 60:1).

The butterfly too has a lot to teach us. A caterpillar weaves itself into a cocoon and then painstakingly struggles and wriggles out. In undergoing this labour of love, it eventually emerges as a beautiful butterfly. Every pretty butterfly gives glory to God, when it flaps its wings. If one deprived the caterpillar of the painful process and pulled it out of the cocoon, the butterfly would never fly. It is only in the struggling process that its wings are strengthened. Where am I? Am I enjoying the comfort zone inside the cocoon? Or am I willing to venture into the discomfort zone? The life of a Christian is a life outside the comfort zone.

What am I to do, to give glory to God? At the end of the Our Father, we pray: For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory. In attempting to create a kingdom of our own (my will be done), relying only on our own human strength and attempting to glorify ourselves, we unknowingly enter the enemy's camp. We may taste fleeting pleasures under the shade of darkness. It may be all toil and sweat under the scorching sun. But willing to toil and sweat for the Lord, fills us with surpassing peace and joy the world can't give. I therefore need to learn to acknowledge that all that I am and all that I have, is purely God-gifted. Since it all comes from Him, what have I to boast about? *Let him who boasts, boast of the Lord* (1 Corinthians 1:31).

If we are churned in the whirlpool of trials and tribulations, let us thank God for it. For sufferings are His ways



LET EVERYTHING THAT BREATHES PRAISE THE LORD! ▶ PSALM 150:6



**A caterpillar weaves itself into a cocoon and then painstakingly struggles and wriggles out. In undergoing this labour of love, it eventually emerges as a beautiful butterfly. Every pretty butterfly gives glory to God, when it flaps its wings. If one deprived the caterpillar of the painful process and pulled it out of the cocoon, the butterfly would never fly.**

of attracting us to Himself. *Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vines; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation!* (Habakkuk 3:17-18). The psalmist aptly summarises in the concluding verse of Psalms: *Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!* (Psalm 150:6). We give glory to God, when we embrace a life devoid of grumbling and complaining.

When we set apart time for prayer in the midst of our business, when we

share our time, talents and treasure with those most in need, when we put love into action especially when it hurts the most, when we bear wrongs patiently and forgive every time we are wounded, crushed or thrashed, it is then that we embrace the labour pains to emerge as true child of God. May we pray for the grace to live a life intentionally *magnifying God* (Luke 17:15; 18:43). ■■

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

# NewsWatch

## Passion of Christ Sequel to Hit Theatres in the Summer of 2027

Lionsgate Studios has revealed the release dates for Mel Gibson's long-awaited *The Resurrection of the Christ*, the sequel to his 2004 blockbuster *The Passion of the Christ*. In a 5th August announcement on X, the studio confirmed the film will be split into two parts, launching during Holy Week in 2027. Part 1 is set for Good Friday, 26 March, while Part 2 will follow on 6 May, aligning with the feast of the Ascension.

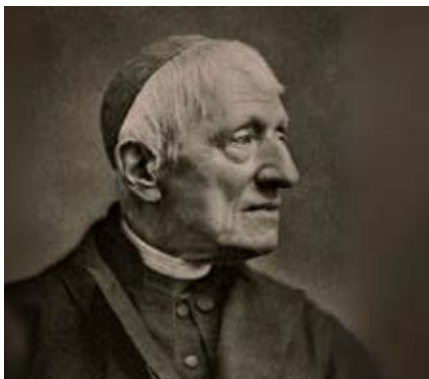
The project was first confirmed in May when Lionsgate announced it would partner with Gibson's Icon Productions. Lionsgate Motion Picture Group chair Adam Fogelson called the film, 'the most anticipated theatrical event in a generation' and praised its scale and emotional power. Gibson, in turn, commended Lionsgate's creativity and drive, expressing confidence in their handling of the release. Jim Caviezel will reprise his role as Jesus. While specific plot details remain under wraps,



Gibson described the production as 'very ambitious' during an appearance on Joe Rogan's podcast, revealing it will span events from the fall of the angels to the death of the last apostle. He also plans to employ CGI de-ageing on Caviezel to bridge the more than two decades since the first film. *The Passion of the Christ* depicted Jesus' final hours, from Gethsemane to the crucifixion, in unflinching detail. Its graphic violence stirred controversy – some critics saw

it as excessive, while others lauded its authenticity and emotional impact. In 2004, then Vatican spokesperson Joaquín Navarro-Valls reported that Pope John Paul II had watched the film and praised it as a faithful cinematic rendering of the Gospel accounts. Despite debates, the original film earned \$370 million domestically, becoming one of the most successful independent productions ever and influencing the rise of faith-based filmmaking in Hollywood.

## St John Henry Newman to become the 38th Doctor of the Church



St John Henry Newman, one of the most influential Christian thinkers of the modern era, is set to be declared a Doctor of the Church. The Holy See Press Office announced on 31 July that Pope Leo XIV has approved the recommendation of the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints to bestow this title, recognising Newman's profound impact on theology, ecumenism, and the spiritual life of the faithful.

Born in London in 1801, Newman was ordained an Anglican priest at 24 and soon became a celebrated preacher and writer. A pivotal 1832 journey to Italy deepened his spiritual search, inspiring his well-known hymn 'Lead, Kindly Light.' Immersed in the study of the Church Fathers and early Christian tradition, he increasingly felt drawn toward Catholicism. In 1845, he

published *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, which articulated his understanding of the Catholic Church as the authentic continuation of the Church founded by Christ. Later that year, he was formally received into the Catholic Church, describing the moment as 'coming into port after a rough sea.' In 1846, Newman entered seminary in Rome and was ordained a priest the following year. Inspired by St Philip Neri, he established the Oratory of Saint Philip Neri in England. Despite facing opposition in promoting Catholic education and institutions, Newman became a prolific defender of Catholic doctrine through his writings. His contributions were recognised in 1879 when Pope Leo XIII elevated him to the College of Cardinals, an honour Newman received with deep



By Sam Bijou

gratitude. He continued his pastoral and intellectual work until his death on 11 August 1890. His tomb bears the inscription *Ex umbris et imaginibus in Veritatem* – 'From shadows and images into the Truth.'

Beatified in 2010 by Pope Benedict XVI and canonised in 2019 by Pope Francis, Newman is remembered for his personal motto *Cor ad cor loquitur* – 'Heart speaks to heart.' Pope Francis has emphasised how this phrase reflected Newman's conviction that the deepest encounter

with God occurs not merely through study but in prayerful, heart-to-heart communion with Christ, particularly in the Eucharist.

Newman's forthcoming recognition as a Doctor of the Church affirms his enduring legacy: a witness of intellect and holiness whose life united rigorous scholarship with deep pastoral care, and whose writings continue to inspire Christians to seek the truth in faith and love.

## Conservative German Bishop defends Bishop Barron being awarded the Josef Pieper Prize



Bishop Stefan Oster of Passau, Bavaria, delivered a strong defence of US Bishop Robert Barron while criticising what he described as 'beige Catholicism' within Germany. His remarks came during his laudatio for Barron, who received the Josef Pieper Prize in Münster on 27 July amid vocal opposition from various Catholic and political groups.

Protesters, including members of the local Green Party, a diocesan lay council, and the Catholic youth organisation BDKJ, staged a public vigil against Barron's award. They accused the American prelate of promoting 'exclusionary identity politics,' collaborating with networks linked to 'autocratic political forces,' supporting US President Donald Trump, and holding anti-LGBTQ+ positions. The Catholic-Theological Faculty of the University of Münster also expressed 'bewilderment' over the decision to honour him.

Oster directly addressed the controversy, warning against quick political labelling. He argued that accusations portraying Barron as right-wing or pro-Trump revealed

more about the critics and the German Church's media culture than about Barron himself. The Bavarian bishop broadened his comments into a critique of the German Catholic landscape, suggesting that many Church leaders have set aside binding doctrinal teachings on anthropology and sacramental theology in favour of aligning with prevailing cultural trends. He invoked Barron's term 'beige Catholicism' to describe a faith that conforms to cultural norms rather than challenging and transforming them. Oster said this results in a 'well-financed Catholicism of appeasement' in Germany that has 'largely lost its spiritual power and attraction.' He linked much of the criticism of Barron to resistance against authentic evangelisation. In Germany, Oster observed, 'new evangelisation' often faces suspicion or dismissal, yet it lies at the heart of Barron's ministry. As a result, some automatically categorise him as belonging to a right-wing faction. Looking ahead, Oster predicted that more people in Germany will

eventually question why Barron – deeply loyal to the magisterium – resonates so strongly with young Catholics and inspires hope for renewal.

The Josef Pieper Foundation praised Barron for his clear connection to the late philosopher's thought, particularly his efforts to reintroduce an intellectually grounded, comprehensive Catholic faith into modern missionary work. Barron, founder of the Word on Fire ministry, is one of the most prominent Catholic evangelists in the world, with a social media following of more than six million, and nine honorary doctorates. His mission emphasises presenting the fullness of the Catholic faith without 'dumbing it down.'

The Josef Pieper Prize honours the German Catholic philosopher Josef Pieper (1904-1997), celebrated for making Thomistic philosophy accessible and for his reflections on leisure, contemplation, and the integration of faith and reason.



## CATHOLIC MASS FINDING APP SURPASSES 2 MILLION DOWNLOADS

Over a decade ago, Argentine computer science graduate Pablo Licheri created Catholic Mass Times, an app that helps travellers find nearby Catholic churches and schedules for Mass, confession, and adoration. Available in nine languages, the app has grown into the world's largest Catholic database, covering 125,000 churches and surpassing 2 million downloads.

Licheri built the app alone on weekends, without sponsorship or advertising, funding it with his wife, for nearly ten years. Gathering data proved challenging, as 70% of dioceses lack websites and many did not respond to inquiries – especially in poorer countries. To overcome this, he allowed users to submit church information directly through the app. He personally entered more than 200 churches in Buenos Aires, and the database expanded as travellers contributed worldwide.

A small internal team now updates details using user reports, diocesan sites, and Google Maps, with visible verification dates. The app even lists rare locations, such as the sole permitted Mass in the Maldives. Available for Android and iOS, its simple interface serves both practical and pastoral purposes. For three years, it has also sent a weekly faith newsletter to over 52,000 subscribers, which Licheri calls 'a concrete tool for getting closer to God.'



Take a picture of the solved image and send it to [quiztime@jykairosmedia.org](mailto:quiztime@jykairosmedia.org) before 25th October 2025.  
The winner will be rewarded with 1 year subscription of Kairos Global

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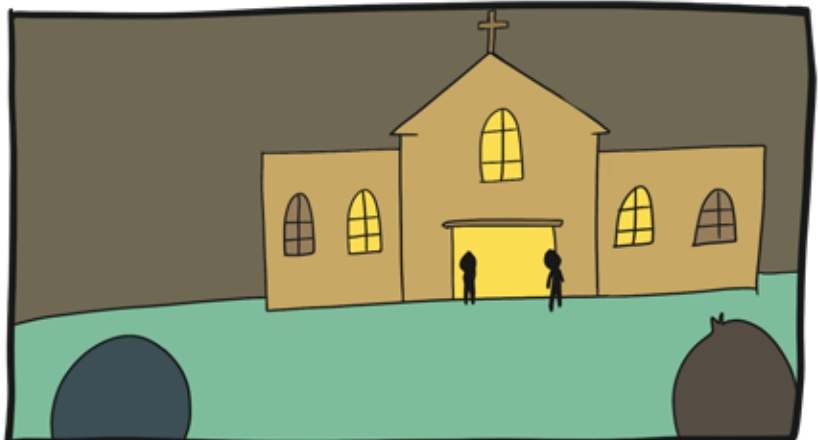
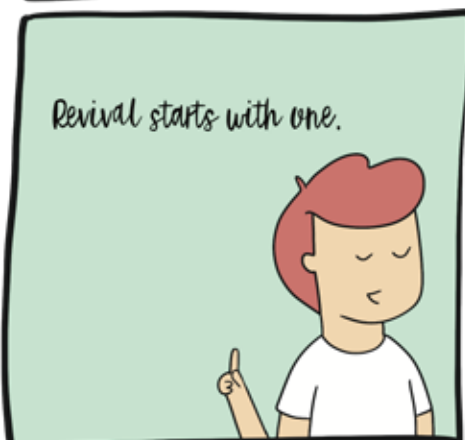
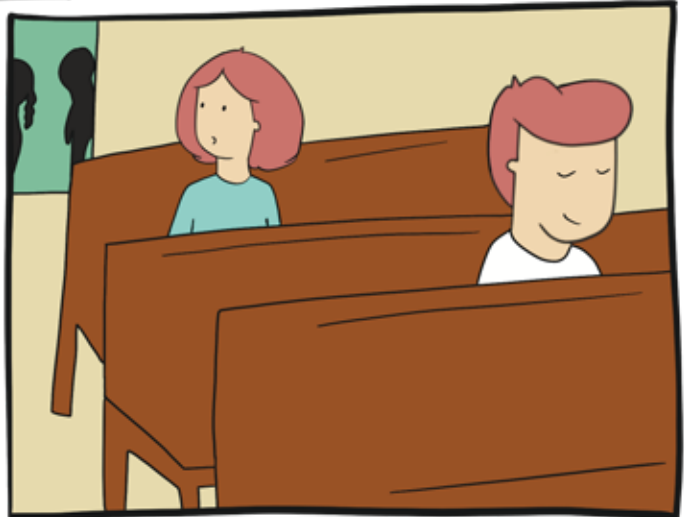
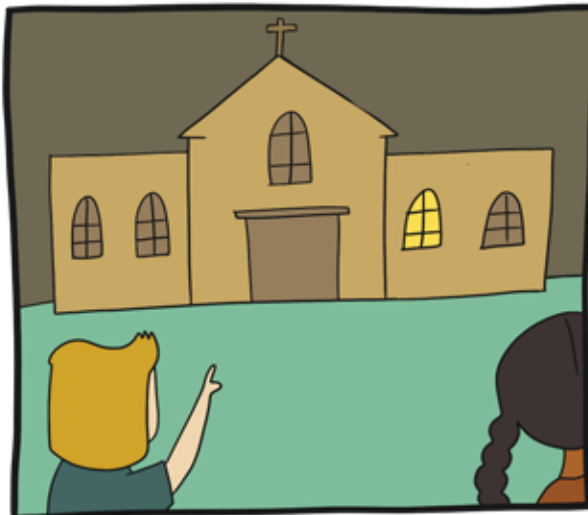
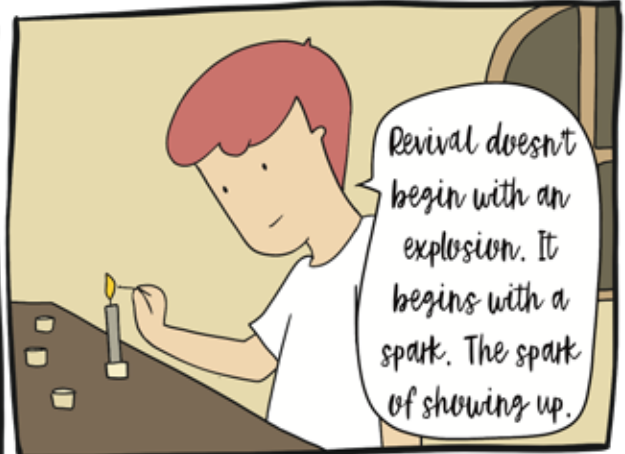
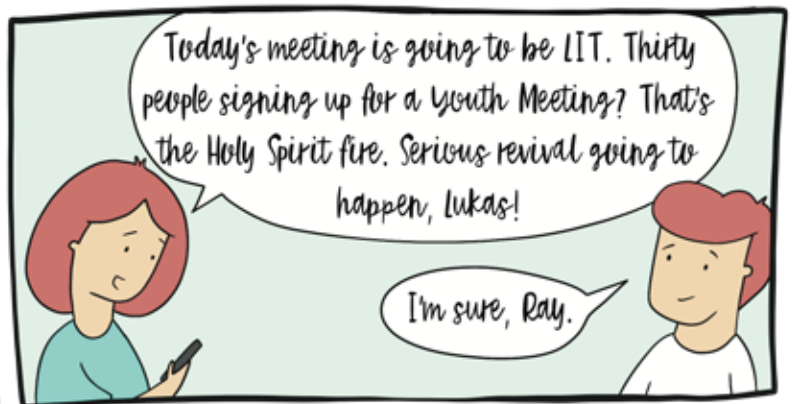
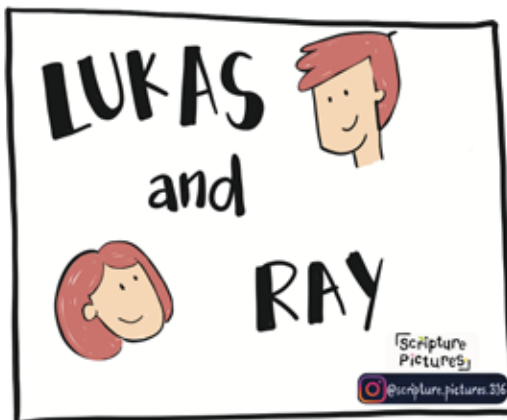


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**SPOT  
DIFFERENCES**

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**KAIROS**  
**Buds**  
Presents



SCAN ME



# Holy Habits

An All Saints' Day Challenge to dress up as your favourite **Saint**



## 1 Dress Up

Dress up as your favourite saint.

1



## 2 Shoot

Click a photo or record a short video.

2



## 3 Upload

Submit at:  
[tinyurl.com/Holy-habits](https://tinyurl.com/Holy-habits)

3



## 4 Share

Share the Buds IG post with friends and family.

4

**Submissions:** Oct 28 – Nov 3

**Prizes:** 5 Little Saints with most likes (photo & reel)

Open for kids 14 & below



Jesus Youth



@kairosbuds