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ALSO ↓



Power Behind the Bat

■ JEMIMAH JESSICA RODRIGUES

The Human-Tree Who Stood Tall

■ SANTHOSH CHUNGATH

A Catholic Vision for Fitness and True Wellness

LINDSAY FULLERMAN



Jesus Youth

A Missionary Movement At The Service Of The Church



PRAYER TO THE TWO HEARTS



O Jesus, only Son of God, only Son of Mary, I offer You the most loving Heart of Your divine Mother which is more precious and pleasing to You than all hearts. O Mary, Mother of Jesus, I offer you the most adorable Heart of your well-beloved Son who is the life and love and joy of your Heart. Blessed be the Most Loving Heart and Sweet Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and the most glorious Virgin Mary, His Mother in eternity and forever. Amen.

EDITOR'S ROOM

SIJO THOMAS

X @readkairos



WHEN WE LEARN TO CONTROL OUR HABITS – OUR EATING, OUR ROUTINES, OUR REACTIONS – WE BEGIN TO DEVELOP VIRTUE. AND VIRTUE IS THE FOUNDATION OF A MEANINGFUL SPIRITUAL LIFE.

Discipline That Shapes the Soul

A simple transformation video went viral last year. A young man documented his 90-day journey – waking up early, exercising, eating mindfully, and most importantly, staying off negative speech and social media arguments. His physical change was visible, but what caught attention was his caption: *The real transformation was not my body – it was my discipline.*

In a world that celebrates comfort, speed, and instant gratification, discipline feels outdated. Yet, Christian life has always been rooted in discipline – not as restriction, but as freedom.

St Paul reminds us: *Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit?* (1 Corinthians 6:19). How we treat our body, what we consume, how we rest, and how we train ourselves all shape our relationship with God. Physical fitness, therefore, is not about appearance, it is about stewardship. When we care for the body God has given us, we honour the Creator Himself.

But discipline goes deeper than food and fitness. It extends to something far more powerful – and often more dangerous – the tongue. In today's world, words travel faster than ever. Through messages, comments, and posts, a careless sentence can wound, divide, or destroy. We may control what we eat, yet fail to control what we speak.

Jesus Himself reminds us: *For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of* (Luke 6:45). When we learn to control our habits – our eating, our routines, our reactions – we begin to develop virtue. And virtue is the foundation of a meaningful spiritual life.

The world often promotes indulgence, which leads to restlessness, confusion, and lack of direction. Christian discipline, on the other hand, leads to freedom. The saints understood this deeply. They trained both body and soul – not to suppress life, but to live it fully in Christ.

In our daily lives, this may look simple: waking up on time, choosing healthier habits, being mindful of our words, resisting unnecessary distractions, and creating space for prayer. These small acts form the foundation of a disciplined life.

As youth and families, we are invited to rediscover discipline not as a burden, but as a gift. In a world that celebrates ease, may we choose intentional living. In a culture of noise, may we choose words that give life. For when the body is disciplined, the mind becomes clear. And when the heart is formed, the soul draws closer to God.

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For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of
Luke 6:45

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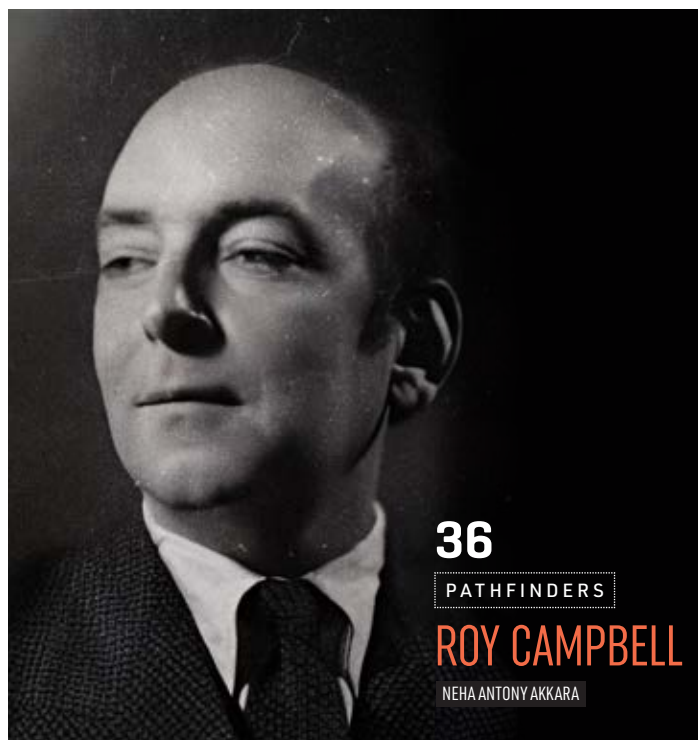
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ASK



FR. BITAJU

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→ What are mortal sins in Catholic teaching?

In Catholic teaching, mortal sins are serious offences against God that result in the loss of sanctifying grace and the separation from God's love. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* outlines the nature and conditions of mortal sin, emphasising its gravity and the necessity of repentance for reconciliation with God.

Definition: Mortal sin is defined as a grave violation of God's law that results in the complete turning away from God. It is a sin that destroys charity in the heart of man by a grave violation of God's law (CCC 1855).

Three Conditions for Mortal Sin: For a sin to be considered mortal, three conditions must be met. **a) Grave matter:** The act itself must be intrinsically evil and immoral. For example, murder, adultery, theft, and other serious offences against God's commandments (CCC 1857). **b) Full Knowledge:** The person committing the sin must have full knowledge that the act is a serious sin. This means that they are aware of the moral gravity of the act and its consequences. (CCC 1857). **c) Deliberate Consent:** The individual must give their full consent to the act, meaning that they freely choose to commit the sin without coercion (CCC 1857).

Consequences of Mortal Sin: Mortal sin results in the loss of sanctifying grace, which is the divine life of God within the soul. This separation from God can lead to eternal

damnation if not repented. The *Catechism* states, 'Mortal sin is a radical possibility of human freedom, as is love itself' (1861).

The Need for Repentance: The Church teaches that to be reconciled with God after committing a mortal sin, one must sincerely repent and seek forgiveness through the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession). The *Catechism* emphasises the importance of this sacrament for restoring grace: 'The Sacrament of Penance is the only ordinary way for the faithful to be reconciled with God' (CCC 1468).

Distinction from Venial Sin: Mortal sin is contrasted with venial sin, which is less serious and does not sever one's relationship with God. Venial sins weaken charity and can be forgiven through acts of contrition, prayer, and participation in the Eucharist (CCC 1862).

Pastoral Considerations: The Church recognises that circumstances and psychological factors can affect an individual's culpability. Thus, while the objective nature of the mortal sin is grave, the subjective guilt may vary based on the individual's awareness and consent (CCC 1860).

In conclusion, according to Catholic teaching, mortal sins are serious offenses against God's law that require grave matter, full knowledge, and deliberate consent. They lead to a loss of sanctifying grace and necessitate repentance and reconciliation through the sacrament of confession.



YOU CAT 295

WHAT IS CONSCIENCE?

Conscience is the inner voice in a man that moves him to do good under any circumstances and to avoid evil by all means. At the same time it is the ability to distinguish one from the other. In the conscience God speaks to man. [CCC 1776-1779]

Conscience is compared with an inner voice in which God manifests himself in a man. God is the one who becomes apparent in the conscience. When we say, 'I cannot reconcile that with my conscience,' this means for a Christian, 'I cannot do that in the sight of my Creator!' Many people have gone to jail or been executed because they were true to their conscience.



Popetalk

DR. KOCHURANI JOSEPH



Prayer Intentions June

For the values of sports

Let us pray that sports be an instrument of peace, encounter, and dialogue among cultures and nations, and that they promote values such as respect, solidarity, and personal growth.



We must not allow ourselves to be overwhelmed by the pace of a world that does not know what it is chasing. Rather, we must return to serving the rhythm of life, the harmony of creation and healing its wounds.

In a world marked by tension, which seems to make conflict the only way of addressing needs and demands, our efforts to commit ourselves to dialogue, listening and reconciliation may appear insufficient, at times even futile.

I have often mentioned that the peace of the risen Lord is 'unarmed'. This is because He always responded to violence and aggression in an unarmed way, inviting us to do likewise.

I carry with me a photo of a Muslim child who, during the visit to Lebanon, was waiting there with a sign saying 'Welcome Pope Leo.' He has been killed in this final phase of the war. There are many human situations, and I think we must be able to think in these terms.

Wisdom enables us to discern and pursue the true and the good, rather than apparent goods and vainglory, amid the circumstances of daily life.

Temperance proves essential for the legitimate use of authority, for a true understanding of temperance restrains inordinate self-exaltation and acts as a guardrail against the abuse of power.

There is no opposition, nor competition, between heaven and earth; in Jesus they are united forever. This living and dynamic mystery binds the heart to an indissoluble love: it binds and fills it. Certainly, like the love of spouses.

The Lord does not come to take anything from us. Rather, He is the Good Shepherd who increases life and offers it to us in abundance. Jesus knows and seeks us like a shepherd seeks His sheep. Jesus is bound to us by a relationship of friendship. He knows us, calls us by name, guides us, and seeks us out when we are lost, caring for us with tenderness.

JESUS YOUTH



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

Are you a keystone, holding everything together?

→ We were discussing the strengthening of a Jesus Youth region. A few months ago, all the leaders gathered, formed clusters to work more effectively, and began meeting enthusiastically. But after a couple of meetings, most people lost interest. Anu concluded her sharing, 'Now we are almost back to square one. Where do we go from here?'

I thought to myself, But is this a new problem? Isn't this what every group, every ministry faces? I also thought of a question that often comes up in interactive sessions with youth: You have been in active work for so many decades. What is the secret of this continuity?

WHAT PREVENTS GROUPS FROM CRUMBLING?

I recall the endings of many earlier student leaders' gatherings. From June 1986 onward, Jesus Youth began a focused effort to build college groups and activities. To that end, we held all sorts of student meetups. Youngsters came in distracted, but after the weekend, they would leave highly motivated to work and build.

The closing challenge was always interesting. I would ask those attending to raise hands if they were one of ten from a single college. Many proud hands would go up. Then I would ask

for five to ten, then two to five. Finally, I would ask those who were the only representative from their college to raise their hands. Many discouraged hands would go up. Then I would say I had the greatest hope for these solitary ones, for they would put in 100% effort – there was no one else in that vast institution to rely on. When you are ten, there is a real possibility you might assume others will carry the load, and each puts in only 10%. Everyone would laugh, and then I would ask each person to work as though they were the sole hope for all their friends and their entire institution.

In a sense, the miracle of Jesus Youth is simply the fruit of an ever-growing number of ordinary people with a relentless sense of responsibility. Each of them believes that to build God's kingdom, they cannot look to anyone else – only to the Lord – and must wholeheartedly do their part, now and always. Surprisingly, this sense of call and anointing may be absent in many talented people, yet present in some very ordinary ones.

CALLED TO BE A KEYSTONE

One very striking image in the Bible is the keystone – the topmost stone in a large Roman arch. A foundation stone or cornerstone is similar, but a

keystone is especially fascinating. The dictionary describes it as the central stone at the summit of an arch, locking the whole together. In those days, a great arch would stand erect without cement or mortar, with all stones stacked one upon another and finally secured by a single keystone. Remove that stone, and the entire edifice crumbles. So remarkable!

Jesus is the keystone of humanity and the universe, holding everything together. Each of us is called to be such a keystone in our own right. If there are no foundational people with deep ownership within a group, that community will soon disappear.

WITHOUT THE KEYSTONE, GROUPS AND MINISTRIES PERISH

'Let us have a team and a leader.' But that does not automatically ensure ownership.

'We need a good system and a set of guidelines.' The Jews boasted of their innumerable laws, yet that very boast became their greatest stumbling block.

'Let us have more training and retreats.' Study and formation can become ends in themselves, but the real need is to do God's work.

'Pray a lot! The Lord must act.' Better still, pray, and then do the Lord's will.

Each of the above is a vital



We know well that Moses lacked confidence, David was overlooked within his own family, and Francis did not come from a spiritually rich home. Most outstanding builders of God's kingdom came from ordinary circumstances — yet at some point, they heard the Lord's call. As they responded wholeheartedly, they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

ingredient in building God's work within a ministry or group. Yet, in a very real sense, a deeply responsible person who takes ownership becomes the main switch that draws all these elements together and ensures their effective operation.

WE HAVE MODELS EVERYWHERE

The Jesus Youth movement has produced and sent forth numerous keystones. After high school, Arun went to college, where his first resolve was to gather others and build a vibrant group. He did that, and much more. Within a few months, together with his friends, he began building fellowships across many nearby institutions. Smitha went to a new country and became foundational to the vibrant network that grew there. Many would

lose heart along the way, but she had the grit to keep everyone alive and moving forward.

Look into the Bible and the history of the Church, and you encounter outstanding keystones at every turn. What is their secret? Intelligence, education, skill, cultural background? We know well that Moses lacked confidence, David was overlooked within his own family, and Francis did not come from a spiritually rich home. Most outstanding builders of God's kingdom came from ordinary circumstances — yet at some point, they heard the Lord's call. As they responded wholeheartedly, they were filled with the Holy Spirit. This led to their transformation, and they performed miracles. Most of them also had a nurturing community and a way of life suited to their new calling.

WHAT DO THEY HOLD TOGETHER?

A keystone in an edifice holds the other stones in place by virtue of its position, gravity, and the builder's craft. The result is both surprising and beautiful. But in Christian work, what do human keystones hold together? This reveals something of their role and working style.

1. Relational wizards: They bring people together, foster reconciliation, and encourage everyone around them. For any meeting, Arun arrives first and

leaves only after the last person has gone.

- 2. Live wires:** They are the heartbeat of the ministry, infusing it with energy and fresh ideas.
- 3. Keepers of memory and aspiration:** They have a deep sense of time — reminding everyone of the past and helping them look towards the future with hope.
- 4. Cultural custodians:** Every family or group carries a distinct culture, and that makes all the difference. It is tied to the group's core vision. A good leader discerns it and builds upon it.

In other words, a keystone person carries deep ownership, is full of life, and endures. They are always present, see the need, step in, love all and pray for them, spot people and follow up, and carry a sense of both history and future. They are promise-keepers, enthusiastic initiators, long-term builders, humble contributors, friendly collaborators, kingdom enthusiasts, and 'wind-feelers'. They hold a group in their hands and carry it forward.

FINALLY,

I began by discussing how groups disintegrate and the rallying call at those student gatherings. When I told those young people that they were appointed to transform an entire institution — almost single-handedly — they believed it and responded with generosity. And they made a real difference.

But do individuals alone serve as keystones? Surely not. Just as one person can play a central role in a ministry, a well-motivated and united group of Jesus Youth can accomplish far greater marvels. Small or large communities and teams can be pivotal in the journey of the people of God. In Jesus Youth, a vibrant small group or prayer group often carries a significance far beyond its size. May the great Keystone shape each of us after His own image and set each of us in place as a keystone, wherever we are. ■■

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

ENGAGE

HOLY WATER



Fr Melvin Watts FSSP writes about the significance of holy water for Catholics.

Water from the side of Jesus

According to tradition, it was Longinus, a Roman soldier, who pierced the side of the crucified Saviour with a lance after His death and opened His heart: and *immediately there came out blood and water* (John 19:34). The stream from Jesus' heart is said to have struck the soldier in the face and healed him in body and soul. According to tradition, he was freed from his eye ailment and received the grace of faith, so that he later even suffered martyrdom for Christ. This is a beautiful example of holy water, which flows forth from the heart of Jesus, so to speak – namely, through the power of His merits – and can heal us in body and soul.

Holy water is one of the sacramentals of the Catholic Church. These are sacred signs that have the power to bring about a supernatural effect. Unlike the sacraments, they do not originate directly from Christ, but from their institution by the Church. The early Church already used holy water. Holy water consists of water and salt, which are exorcised, blessed, and mixed by a priest. It reminds us of baptism. The pious use of holy water is in conjunction with the sign of the cross and the name of Jesus.

We owe the effect of holy water first and foremost to the merits of Jesus Christ, who earned us all graces through His suffering and death. However, its power comes specifically from the actions and prayers of the Holy Church. Its effectiveness also depends on the devout and faithful use and spiritual disposition of those who use it.

Effects for the good of body and soul

Holy water is a true remedy for bodily illnesses. It also protects against illness and harm to body and life, as well as to property and possessions. It protects against harmful elements, which is why it can also be used during storms and hailstorms, for example. Just as the soul is superior to the body, so too are the spiritual effects of holy water far superior

to the physical ones. 'Sprinkling with holy water causes venial sins to be forgiven to the extent that it inclines the soul to repentance' (Thomas Aquinas). It also expiates temporal punishment for sins and protects us from temptation. Holy water sanctifies us; through its use, we are granted graces such as: enlightenment of the mind, inspiration from the Holy Spirit, disposition to prayer and to receive the sacraments, and strengthening of the will to fulfil our duties.

The blessing formula from the Roman ritual

In contrast to the new blessing formula, this traditional formula contains exorcisms and important prayers for protection against harm, illness, and devilish persecution. The proper use and benefits of holy water are evident from the blessing formula. Excerpts from the blessing in the Roman Ritual:

'I conjure you, creature of salt, by the living God ... You shall become salt, cleansed of evil, for the salvation of believers; you shall serve all who enjoy you for the health of body and soul; from the place where you are scattered, every thought and every wickedness or deceit of devilish deception and every unclean spirit shall flee and depart ...'

'I conjure you, creature of water, in the name of God ... that you may become water, purified from evil, to keep away all the power of the enemy, and be able to banish the enemy himself completely, together with his renegade angels. O God ... pour into this element ... the power of Your blessing, so that Your creature ... may receive divine grace to drive away evil spirits and keep away diseases. Whatever is sprinkled with this water in the houses and apartments of the faithful shall remain free from impurity and be protected from harm. The breath of contagious disease shall have no place there, nor shall corrupt air. All persecutions of the insidious enemy shall remain far away...'

After mixing salt and water: '... Wherever it is sprinkled, may every attack of the unclean spirit be repelled by the invocation of Your holy name, and may the terror of the poisonous serpent be driven far away; but may the Holy Spirit be near us everywhere ...'

Use of Holy Water

Holy water can be *sprinkled anywhere*, not just on oneself: on people, objects, fields, animals, against storms, and even for the poor souls in purgatory, to whom holy water brings relief. Holy





water also works from a distance. No Catholic household should be without a holy water font, and it is advisable to bless yourself and your loved ones with holy water at least in the morning and evening, as well as when leaving the house. In the morning, we implore protection from all dangers to body and soul for our daily work. In the evening, we implore purification from all venial sins and protection for the night through holy water, so that 'every illusion and all malice and snares of the evil enemy may depart.'

Many dangers to body and soul threaten **children** because of their inexperience. What better can parents do for them than pray for them, bless them regularly with holy water, and teach them to make diligent use of it themselves? The blessing of parents, as the authority given by God, has a special power for children. For example they can pray: *May the almighty and merciful God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and protect you. Amen.*

By using holy water **in temptations and afflictions** of all kinds, we become aware that we are in a spiritual battle and that the devil often attacks us. It is precisely for this reason that holy water has a special power through the prayers of the Church: 'Wherever it is sprinkled, may every attack of the unclean spirit be repelled by the invocation of Your holy name, and may the terror of the poisonous serpent be driven far away.' Saint Teresa of Avila wrote: 'From long experience I have learned that there is nothing better than holy water to put the devils to flight and prevent them

from returning.' It can therefore be very valuable to always carry a small bottle of holy water with you, also to have one in your vehicle.

Holy water is a proven remedy **for the sick**, and there are many reports of healings through its use. It can be sprinkled on the sick, giving them the opportunity to bless themselves with holy water or even drink it. Medicines can also be sprinkled with it in the shape of a cross. It is particularly advisable to sprinkle holy water frequently on the dying, especially during their death throes.

Just as the Church gives holy water to the deceased at funerals, it is her wish that the faithful do the same. Sprinkling the corpse or the grave, combined with a prayer for the deceased, is like a heavenly dew that refreshes **the poor souls** in purgatory and alleviates their suffering. Let us also make use of this remedy more often in this sense, whether at the cemetery or from afar.

Everything related to human beings should be protected by holy water against the destructive power of the evil enemy and against harmful influences. It is therefore the wish of the Church that the faithful also sprinkle holy water in their homes, on their fields, and on their **goods of all kinds**.

Final remarks

Saint Teresa of Avila required her fellow sisters to always carry holy water with them when travelling. She reports: 'Once I was in an oratory when the devil appeared to me on my left in his hideous form ... In a terrible voice, he made me

understand that although I had wrested myself from his hands, he would get me back into his power. I was very afraid and crossed myself... then he disappeared, but soon returned, and this happened twice. I didn't know what to do until I finally sprinkled holy water on the place where he had been... after that, he didn't come back.'

Another story from the 21st century: A mayor from Austria reported once that officials had found the water quality in his well to be terrible. After testing other wells in the village, they returned to the mayor, who insisted that they test the quality of his well again. Reluctantly, the men agreed, saying that the measuring devices were very accurate. To their complete astonishment, they saw that the water was now impeccable, indeed the best drinking water. The mayor told them: During their absence, he poured holy water into the well and prayed: 'Lord, through the power of holy water, you can help us obtain better water quality.' The men were amazed and acknowledged the miracle.

When using holy water, our faith is of paramount importance. Jesus Christ linked most of his miracles to the faith of those who asked for them. It is also crucial to combine its use with the Sign of the Cross and the reverent invocation of the holy name of Jesus. The water consecration prayer says: 'Wherever it is thrown, may every attack of the unclean spirit be repelled by the invocation of Your holy name, and may the terrors of the poisonous serpent be driven far away...'

Put you on the armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood; but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places (Ephesians 6: 11-12).

Fr Melvin Watts FSSP belongs to the Priestly Fraternity of St Peter, an order devoted to the Traditional Latin Mass. He discerned his vocation after completing his education and pursuing a career in banking. He was ordained priest in 2023. At present, he works as chaplain in Stuttgart, Germany.

EXPERIENCE

The human-tree who stood tall

Santhosh Chungath remembers his beloved departed father through a legacy of lessons.

I was probably the only person in the seminary who had a visitor every Sunday. Whenever someone came and announced, 'Brother Francis Chungath has a visitor,' I knew it was *Appan* (father). There was no one else to come seeking me from home. He would be sitting quietly in the parlour, on a metal chair beside the small aquarium, its blue bulb casting a light upon *Appan's* face. *Appan* was always like that. He spoke very little. Fathers of the seventies and eighties indeed were so. They were taught to live with love on the inside. For them, love was like a miser's gold coin. This behaviour changed in *Appan's* old age, or was it after he had grandchildren!

Anyway, my father wasn't much of a talker back then. He would just sit there listening to the little things I said. Maybe it was the excitement of my first year at the petit seminary, but I wasn't worried or anxious about home at all.

However, my parish priest, relatives, friends, and neighbours did not support my decision to join the seminary. In reality they, knowing what our life circumstances were, were not inclined to encourage me. 'Don't forget that you're leaving

takes away your father's hope,' my grandfather told me. Though my decision came as a shock to him, and that he was being left alone with no one to help share





Still, snakes always scared me. The paths were always dark, and every slight movement among the dry leaf strewn ground always made me uneasy. Appan knew that I would get startled by such sounds when we had to walk those paths. He once made me stop, held the torch over the ground for me and said, 'Don't run away when you see or hear something. Look at this, it is not a snake, just a small frog. If you flee in fear without looking, you will be afraid for the rest of your life.'

the responsibilities, *Appan's* sadness was of a father who had been unable to have enough to adequately feed his son...

After bringing me to the seminary, and as he was leaving, *Appan* stood on the porch of the St Pius dormitory, waiting for the other parents to leave. Finally, and in a furtive manner, *Appan* gave me a kiss on the cheek. It was a new experience for both of us. There on that seminary veranda, was the first kiss I remember from my father.

Every Sunday when he'd come to see me at the seminary, I never thought to ask about things at home, always telling him about my news. I never even asked, 'What do you do now, *Appa*?' After vacations when I had to return to the seminary, I'd see *Appan* struggling to raise money for my fees – around three hundred rupees, which had to be paid every three months.

Even then never once did I ask him, 'How are you doing? How are you managing the family?' When I finally did ask him that, much later, he replied with only a smile. Appan never said anything. Only later did I learn in a letter from a cousin that my father was selling lottery tickets to feed the family. By then we had lost all of my father's businesses, agricultural fields, and other properties. Ours was a large family, consisting of my mother, four sisters, and a younger brother. My father was proud, but not wilfully so. To look after his family, he went out into the streets.

For my father, 'hope' was not just a part of life; it was life itself. The courage and rejuvenation we derived from Appan's, 'It'll be alright,' simply cannot be put into words. That kind of life has taught us to work hard without waiting for miracles to happen. One of Appan's oft-said lines was, 'When there's water over the house, there'll be a boat over the water.'

I learned to 'scrutinise' fear from my father. Our house was on five cents surrounded by long-overgrown land. It was a house without electricity, with unpainted walls and floors covered in caked dung (traditional flooring in rural India). A forest of dense trees and uncared-for land bordered ours, and the country roads were footpaths that emerged after water had initially paved them. Even during the day, you could see vipers and other reptiles slithering through the thorn fences that bordered our land. When I was little, Ammama (grandmother) used to scare me with stories about snakes hanging low from tree branches and biting one on the head. She said that they hung like that to ensure that the bitten person would die. And I listened to it, trembling with fear and eyes wide enough to pop. Yet, it was Ammama herself who taught me to pray to St George to allay my fear. Still, snakes always scared me. The paths were always dark, and every slight movement among the dry-leaf-strewn ground always made me uneasy. Appan knew that I would get startled by such sounds when we had to walk those paths. He once made me stop, held the torch over the ground for me and said, 'Don't run away when you see or hear something. Look at this, it is not a snake, just a small frog. If you flee in fear without looking, you will be afraid for the rest of

your life.'

Scrutinising and knowing fear is the first step in conquering it. Appan was my textbook.

Many years later, when I realised that priesthood was not my calling, I came away from the seminary.

In those days, a person returning from seminary was a laughing stock in the community and among relatives. My father was the one who gave me courage. Whenever I had a problem, I would always seek Appan first. Even if I hadn't mentioned the problem, when I hung up the phone, I would feel a great sense of relief and courage.

The night before I first went to Kuwait, we – Appan and I – didn't sleep at all. *'It all seems like a dream, son...we were destroyed, but God didn't forsake us, He held us together... All we prayed was that the sufferings would be endurable. And, He brought us this far. Even though I received two confiscation notices, I did not fear. Some of the people we knew even thought that we would take our lives in despair. We will not be defeated. No one can defeat us until we decide upon defeat, son... Don't be afraid, either. These obstacles and problems will disappear, and you will go forward. Don't lose courage. Appan will pray for you.'*

During one of my vacations from abroad, when the entire family had gathered together after evening prayer, Appan said to my wife, 'Do you know what, Merin, I haven't been able to give Santhosh many of the things that boys his age had. Not even enough freedom. Even though there was a river right in front of us, I wouldn't allow him to swim. I wouldn't let

him ride a bicycle either. (Later, it was my brother Anto who taught me how to ride a bicycle, and that too when I was in my second year of degree.) *I was afraid that he would get hurt. And no one else has been caned like he was either – my only thoughts were that he not go astray. That was all I knew... Please don't raise Manu (our son) like that.'* As Appan said that, I could see the tears in his eyes...

It was Appan who taught us that even when all roads close, 'The Lord's way is never closed.' And Appan would pray on his knees till a candle burned down. It is easy for a praying father to introduce his children to God, the Father, who is love. How can one share love that has not been experienced?

Our greatest blessing was Appan's prayers and his great heart.

It has now been six months since God took back that huge tree. Six months without Appan! And yet, I am not without him. Here in the desert, if I close my eyes, if I place my hands over my heart, I can see Appan, I can hear Appan... so closely do I feel his presence. And that is what Appan told us as he was bidding us goodbye. *'I have lived with you all so happily all these years. It is now time for me to pass on. Do not fear anything. God is with you. Face everything courageously. Always be together. Take care of your mother. She has been with me since her youth. I will never forget you. Please don't forget me either. All my children will do well.'* Appan didn't forget to entrust us siblings to each other either.

Appan taught us that prayer was the key to overcoming difficulties; he remains another scripture that we have yet to finish reading!

Even though our eyes no longer fall upon him, that Appan is there with his hands folded in prayer is our courage. ■



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Translated from Malayalam by Tania Rose Josun.



FAITH IN MOTION

From his recent experience, **Tony Malayil** shares parallels between training and running for a marathon, and growing in one's spiritual life.

When you think of St Paul, you may think of many things: persecutor of Christians turned to 'greatest' apostle, prolific writer, martyr, and one of the most revered saints in the Church. However, I would suggest another descriptor, a possible long-distance runner! Given how often St Paul refers to running in his letters and his deep understanding of the spiritual connections to running, I would not be surprised if he ran a race or two.

Running is a beautiful example of how God uses the world to bring us closer to Him. When we venture into nature, we witness the goodness of God and the beauty of His creation. Similarly, in running, we not only learn the importance of physical endurance but also fortitude in our life, leading us to *press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus* (Philippians 3:14). Spiritual parallelism opens our eyes to God's all-encompassing presence, moulding us into His likeness as we live

in this broken world. Physical activity is an integral part of becoming holy and practicing virtue. Just as prayer and the sacraments align our souls and hearts to God's will, exercise trains our bodies and minds to execute His will. While the spiritual benefits of running are easy to list, the path to receiving them is arduous. I learned this the hard way while training for and running a marathon last spring in Cleveland, Ohio, with Jesus Youth from around the US.

Up to that point, running had never been an interest of mine. It was a punishment reserved for when I lost in soccer practice, and my coach thought I wasn't trying hard enough. I have always sought out opportunities to challenge myself, so when a new initiative called STRIVE was announced in late 2025, in which Jesus Youth from around the country would race together, I jumped at the chance. I saw it as an opportunity to prevail over this hated activity, and decided to sign up for the longest option, a marathon (26.2 miles or 42.2 km). It seemed like the perfect time to challenge this impossible hurdle, to take a leap of faith and effort. I went in expecting to just grow in physical endurance and discipline, but ended up also receiving a lesson on growing in spiritual strength.

Early in the process, the parallels between marathon training and spiritual formation became evident. The consistent habit of showing up for personal prayer and weekday slow runs, no matter how short or what we deem 'fruitful', both slowly work to conform our mind and body to reach our goal. It requires reordering our desires to choose the difficult over immediate pleasure for our greater good. In this reorientation, I had to struggle with my priorities, between training, sleeping, or spending time with others. In our busy lives, we often feel there isn't enough time or space to focus on God. However, faced with the impending doom of the marathon, I was able to make time for hours of running a week. This realisation became a call, in daily life and even during this intense period of training, to prioritise God and time with Him. Just like St Paul wrote to the Corinthians, *Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a*

perishable wreath, but we an imperishable one (1 Corinthians 9:25).

Throughout the training, God made His presence known at every turn. Several months later, the first big checkpoint for the marathon appeared: a half-marathon. All my preparation – waking up early, carrying enough water, bringing energy gels – wasn't enough to keep me from hitting a mental wall from exhaustion. Not knowing what to do, I turned to God for support. I prayed that the pain would leave, and when it didn't, that it would be offered up to Him. This became an important lesson for me to always keep in conversation with God and relate to Him, whether it be the daily grind or intense suffering. Jesus, in His conversation with the rich young man, shows His desire for us to 'follow me'; to enter a deep and constant relationship with Him. Just as physical training strengthens our bodies, steadfast spiritual exercise permeates into our being, reshaping how we live and see the world around us.

Throughout the months of preparation, our JY community had been constantly updating and motivating each other. It was also a place where I witnessed the faith alive. From giving advice to sharing recent struggles, the group became a source of strength during our training. The group was made up of a wide range of people – children, older parents, first-time runners, seasoned athletes, committed JY, those new to the movement – but even with all these differences, the focus on Christ was not lost. The night before the race was spent asking for protection and praying over injuries. Our final preparation was not carb-loading, but attending Mass the morning of the race and receiving the Body of Christ. As we began the race carrying Jesus in our bodies, it was a fulfilment of our call as the laity to remember that Christ is with us in everything we do in the world.

After all this talk about building endurance through training and relying on Christ in the difficulties, one could assume that my marathon went well. Instead, it was as if all the pain and struggle from the training were brought together in one big amalgamation. From getting overconfident and running too

fast to cramping up in the last 10 miles, everything I'd learned was being tested, and, by my standards, I was failing. I felt slow, abandoned, and that my body had failed me when I needed it the most. And in this suffering, when I turned to Christ, I realised that I would have to be in this pain, but that I was not alone. This feeling was reinforced when a random runner slowed down and accompanied me for the final portion of my race. After getting over the fact that he was faster than me while speed walking, I was able to accept my poverty and my need for help. I started to see the image of Jesus in him, leading me forward by example and safeguarding me. Soon, I was joined by several JY runners, running alongside me to the end. I was not afraid to struggle since I could lean on Christ and those around me. As I crossed the finish line, instead of feeling accomplished or angry, I felt an overwhelming sense of gratitude.

On reflecting on my experience, I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to suffer and grow with Christ. From what began as a place where I could feel accomplished for what I did, it became a place for me to glorify God and keep my eyes on Him. Physical discipline enables us to take control of our bodies and unify them with our will. It prompts us to consider our priorities. Importantly, it reminds us that our journey is not completed alone; Christ and our brothers and sisters share in our joy and suffering. After receiving the fruits of this experience, I want to encourage others to come together and take up similar challenges, seeking to grow in virtue and physical strength, and to bring Christ with us in all things.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us (Hebrews 12:1-2).



Tony Malayil is an undergraduate at Florida Atlantic University and a student at the School of Nazareth in Delray Beach, Florida, USA. Tony became a committed member of Jesus Youth last year and loves to encounter Christ in the outdoors and through others.

UP CLOSE

A portrait of Jemimah Jessica Rodrigues, an Indian cricketer, wearing a black sari with a gold and white floral pattern. She is standing in a dimly lit room with warm, out-of-focus lights in the background. Her hands are clasped in front of her, and she is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile.

POWER BEHIND THE BAT

Indian cricketer **Jemimah Jessica Rodrigues** answers a few questions on faith and fitness to *Kairos Global's* editorial team member, Jyothsna DSouza.

Please can you share your faith journey with us.

My faith started really young since my father is a pastor. Prayer was an integral part of our family, growing up. The only rule was that you had to pray before you play. It was in a way forced on us, and because we wanted to play we started praying.

I didn't realise when but it became part of my life that whatever I did, I'd always end up talking to Jesus or having conversations with God. And that's what you call prayer, right? That's how prayer started. And for me, my journey in faith is not a religion. It's more of a relationship with Jesus, with God the Father; I think

that's how it started for me. Cricket has also been a way that God has used to help me get closer to Him and to get to know Him more.

You wowed Christians in India and abroad when you boldly and passionately gave glory to Jesus after the historic World Cup win. Please can you tell us about that day?

That entire month, I was not doing well mentally, had been going through a lot of anxiety, and it was even hard before the games. A lot of times I would cry before the match, but what happened in the semi-final, that knock... Just before that game, I was dropped and to come back into the semi-finals on the world stage with everyone watching, to defeat Australia, who are eight-times world champions...that had to be the hand of God in my life. I was just grateful that He chose me to be a part of that.

What came out of the post-match presentation was very real. It was from the heart. It was not planned nor was I forced to say that. Whatever happened came out of a real experience of how God was there when I was anxious, how God became real to me, how Jesus became real to me. How He carried me through, and the experience will always stay with me. I know He's real because I've experienced Jesus showing up in my life and lifting me up, and that was what happened.

Who has played influencing roles in your faith?

My mom and my dad have played the most influencing roles in my faith, just by the way they led by example. They didn't just tell us to follow God or even love one another. They showed it. They lived out their faith and I think they are my biggest examples. I would also like to thank Brother Manuel and Sister Lynette who are an important part of my faith journey. They are my pastors, they are the ones who showed me the way to Jesus and helped me go on that path.

Our theme for the June issue of Kairos Global is, 'physical fitness leads to spiritual fitness'. How important has both these been to you?

Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. It's the only place you're going to live in,

and if we take care of it, we're taking care of everything else. So, it's important to have a healthy body and to do whatever it takes for a healthy life, because in the end, all of us are called to serve, all of us are called to help one another. All of us are called to go and spread the kingdom far and wide. But if I'm not healthy, I'm not taking care of my body. It's going to be hard for me to go out there and put in all the effort and hard work. So, it's important for me not just to stay physically fit, but also stay spiritually fit because that's when I can go and spread the love of Jesus everywhere.

Please can you share how you keep yourself physically and spiritually fit.

Regarding my physical fitness, I have a routine where my entire week is planned. For example, one day I will do a strength session, the next day I'll do a conditioning session, so both of them are taken care of.

When it comes to being spiritually fit, at first I used to have a dedicated time for prayer every day, but now prayer has just become a part of my life where every time I'm on the ground and something good happens, I just imagine Jesus standing right next to me and I say, "Thank you Jesus for making this happen." If there are times that I am anxious and stressed and feel like I don't know how to go about the situation, at that moment I'll make a silent prayer and say, "Jesus can you help me? Can you give me wisdom on what to do?" And He always shows up. He always leads.

So, one is by involving God in everything you do, throughout your journey, as if He's your best friend, talking to Him like that, because He is. And the second thing would be to take time out of your day. I do it usually just before going to bed, just sitting still, thinking about God and thinking about what His Word says from the Bible. Maybe thinking about a Scripture verse or just speaking to Him and letting Him love you in that moment, letting Him be there in that moment, just sitting there and listening to what He wants to say. I think that's the most important thing for me...just letting your mind wander on Scriptures, wonder about God's thoughts, and just talking to Him, but even more just letting Him love you there, and letting Him still you.

What is your advice to Christians about spiritual fitness and being bold witnesses of Jesus? What is your message to youth and youngsters?

My advice to Christians about spiritual fitness and being bold witnesses to Jesus would be that before talking to everyone about Jesus, first talk to Jesus about everything. I think that is the most important thing and let everything flow from there.

Tell him, 'Jesus, I really want my friend to get to know you.' Talk to Him about it and He will guide you how to go about it. And the other thing is to let everything flow from your relationship with Him.

A lot of people reading this might even doubt whether God is real, and that's a very valid question. I mean, that's a very real thought and why don't you talk to God about it. If you feel that God is not real to you, you need to talk to God more than anything else. Tell God, 'God, I don't feel that You are real. If you exist, prove it to me. Show me.' I don't think God gets offended at that. I feel He gets pumped up. He's like, 'Yes, my son, my daughter wants to know more about Me. I'm going to reveal Myself.'

So this is something I always pray, 'Jesus be more real to me.' Far from someone providing me knowledge about Jesus, I want it to be more intimate and more personal and more real. I don't want to follow Jesus because someone tells me to follow Jesus. I want to follow because I know Him. I know His heart and He leads me. So all I would say is, talk to God about everything and tell Him to be more real, and He will show up. ■

Jemimah Jessica Rodrigues is an Indian international cricketer who plays for the India women's national team as a middle-order batter. She was part of the squad that won the 2025 Women's Cricket World Cup.

A Chartered Accountant and mother of three, Jyothsna DSouza is passionate about writing, social causes, and designing creatives to evangelise.

IN FOCUS



THE BODY AS AN INSTRUMENT OF GOD

Sonia Kurian takes a look at physical fitness, the excesses of it in our present time, and what truly matters with strength.

Of all the people to write about physical fitness, I count myself the last of them all. I was always more a bookworm than a sports enthusiast, mostly because my hand-eye coordination is rather atrocious. I'm not saying this to be modest – the first time I ever played volleyball, I served the ball and it came right back down and smacked me in the face. Other sports were not better. I was also blessed to be rather skinny for the first 30-odd years of my life, and so I could eat whatever I wanted and never gain much weight. Some blessings are only granted for a period of time though, and it's good to appreciate them before they're gone.

In the last few years, my weight has

been catching up to my terrible eating habits and I'm always discovering the need to keep tabs on my physical fitness. While I struggle to stay consistent with it, I know that when I keep up a workout regimen through the week, I tend to feel a greater mental clarity. And it always feels so good when you can be physically nimble without groaning like death may come for you tomorrow. Don't worry, I'm not going to ask you to start lifting weights immediately either. I simply want to take time to reflect on what it means that our body is a temple, made in the image and likeness of God.

I tend to live by the maxim that 'virtue is found in the middle,' and hence I stay away from the extreme ends of

any practice in life. I firmly believe God purposely made food delicious – it is to be a delight and joy for us to enjoy. I rather love GK Chesterton's stance 'that the proper form of thanks... is some form of humility and restraint: we should thank God for beer and Burgundy by not drinking too much of them.' Similarly, I think we should show our gratitude for the gift of our bodies, to God, with humility and restraint as well. We don't need to be puritanical in punishing our bodies by only eating the blandest food that bears uncanny similarities to wood pulp, for fear of a single fold appearing on our bellies. Neither do we need to indulge our bodies to the point of lavish gluttony, completely lacking any restraint to curb

our desires. Like I said, virtue lies in the middle.

Now of course, our soul is more important than our physical bodies. There is no point in being the perfect specimen of physical health, while making everyone in your life miserable as you strive to attain this perfection. It may be worth examining to see if your love for your body has taken over your love for your neighbour, if you suspect yourself to be guilty of this little vanity. The opposite is possible too, of course. I remember roughly eight or so years ago, when I found myself driving from noon Mass to my lunch spot, growing increasingly impatient with the drivers on the road who seemed to have nowhere to be, or at least in no hurry to get to their next stops. As I grew increasingly antsy, I was suddenly struck by how impatient I was being. In a moment of forced self-reflection, I asked myself why I was getting so frustrated, and I realised that I was getting 'hangry', as they say. Now I was someone who could go an entire day without eating, and for most of my life up to that point, I was never one to get hangry. I also had family members who used to get hangry, be rather unaware of their affliction, and continue to inflict cutting snark on everyone else around, until food was obtained for them. I was rather stunned that a little bit of hunger could make me so unkind to my neighbour on the road, so I decided to return to the practice of fasting regularly, to conquer this new little vice that was rearing its head. After a few months of fasting my lunch twice a week, and being very intentional to take deep breaths and smile, lest I fall back to my little vice, I found I had conquered it quite well. What good is free will, if we can't use it to stamp out a little vice after all?

Similarly, one Lent I took up the practice of daily exercising for at least 40 min, as a little mortification for myself. I don't mind foregoing meat during Lent, but I knew forcing myself to exercise would truly hit me where it hurts. It's still the most memorable Lent to date, because I hated having to exercise, and I hated it even more that I felt so good afterwards (as you can see, I still have a long way to go being less stubborn in life in general).

In recent years culture as a whole has

taken a turn for the looksmaxxing and body-hacking extreme of physical fitness. Growing up, I barely knew any college kids who worked out regularly, let alone high schoolers. Now though, it seems unusual to meet someone who can't monologue their entire workout regimen and weekly schedule to keep all their muscle groups in check. I find this interesting, because when I was in school, even though none of the guys worked out, it was quite normal to have guys jump in to break up a fight, or help you lift something into your overhead compartment on a flight. These days, I find it rather ironic that everyone works out, and yet no one wants to use all this potential energy and strength to help someone weaker, who may need it in the real world.

Of course, I know we live in an increasingly polarised society, where people are afraid to impede others' personal bubbles for fear of offending them. It just seems that if strength was a gift from God, in order to help those who are weak, then even our physical strengths are meant to be cultivated to be at the service of the weak, and not for our own vain glory. Often in today's world, it seems the cultivation of physical strength is no longer to honour the body or to help the weak, but at the service of likes and followers on social media. If this is the case, then physical fitness is no longer an act of honouring the body God has gifted you, and you have walked yourself to the other extreme. You may have conquered the vice of gluttony or laziness, but you have now gone off the deep end into vanity. Both extremes stop you from loving your neighbour, and thus require virtue to step in to mediate.

This is why, in all actions and endeavours, we must always stay close to Christ – so we might discern and allow Christ to reveal the hidden intentions of our hearts. We humans are excellent idol-making machines. When I was younger, I laughed at the Israelites in the Old Testament, for their inability to be disciplined enough to stay away from running after idols for five whole chapters in a row. As I have gotten older, I have seen how much like Israel I am. As soon as I think I have given up the idol of gluttony, I find I have instead built a shrine to the idol of scrupulosity. When

I successfully shake off scrupulosity, I find I have now waded knee deep into pride. When I climb out of pride, I find I have walked too far from humility and am now in despair. And on and on it goes, with only the Lord to constantly steer my boat straight as it bobs about wildly in the waves and temptations of life. As St Augustine prayed in his *Confessions*, 'My soul is like a house, small for you to enter, but I pray you to enlarge it. It is in ruins, but I ask you to remake it. It contains much that you will not be pleased to see: this I know and do not hide. But who is to rid it of these things? There is no one but you.'

Let us cling to the Lord as readily as we cling to our idols, asking Him to guide our idol-making hearts away from anything that draws us away from Himself. May He teach us what it looks like, to honour the gift of our bodies – to embrace our bodies with the deep awe and tenderness with which He shaped every tendril of hair on our heads. To rebuke the accuser's shame that we have attached to the folds and crevices we pull in in the mirror. How would we feel if we saw our own children or nieces and nephews accuse their bodies the way we do our own? Let us ask the resurrected Lord who appeared with His scars intact to His disciples, and thus honoured even the wounds on His own body as the medals that proved His love for us – to show us how to love our bodies as He perfectly accepted and loved His own. May His heart guide our own, in every thought, decision and action we take. ■

Sonia Kurian lives in Houston, USA and is a clinical systems analyst in the healthcare sector. Her interests include writing, reading, iconography and animated karaoke sessions.

A Catholic Vision of Fitness and True Wellness



Lindsay Fullerman, Catholic speaker and founder of a health and wellness organisation, writes that physical fitness and wellness are indeed deeply interconnected, especially when viewed through a Catholic lens.

Physical fitness and wellness are often discussed in purely physiological or psychological terms, but from a Catholic perspective, they take on a deeper, more integrated meaning. The human person is not just a body, nor just a soul, but a melding of both. Because of this, caring for one aspect of our being inevitably influences the other. To understand how physical fitness connects to wellness, we must first explore what it means to be truly 'well', and then consider how our physical habits and spiritual lives work together in that pursuit.

In modern culture, wellness is often reduced to the absence of disease or the presence of physical vitality. While these measurements of wellness are important, they are incomplete, one-dimensional. Through a Catholic lens, wellness is rooted in the concept of integrated human development, the flourishing

of the whole person: body, mind and soul. True wellness means living in right relationship with God, with others and with oneself. It not only includes physical health but also emotional stability, moral integrity and spiritual vitality. A person may be physically strong but spiritually empty, or spiritually devout but physically neglectful. Neither reflects the fullness of what it means to be well.

Scripture reminds us that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. This is not merely symbolic language; it reflects a profound truth about human dignity. Our bodies are not disposable shells but sacred gifts entrusted to us. To neglect our bodies is to disregard the very essence of what is considered to be the pinnacle of God's creation, and to care for them is an act of stewardship. Wellness is not just about feeling good or looking fit. It is about honouring God through the way we live in our bodies, making choices that support life, clarity, holiness and our sanctification.

Physical fitness plays a foundational role in this broader understanding of wellness. Regular movement, strength, endurance and flexibility all contribute to the proper functioning of the body. But beyond the biological benefits, fitness also cultivates discipline, resilience and self-awareness. Exercise teaches us consistency. It requires showing up even when we don't feel motivated. This habit of perseverance translates into other areas of life, including prayer and moral decision-making. Just as we train our muscles through repeated effort, we also strengthen our character through repeated acts of virtue. Physical fitness also supports mental and emotional health. Movement can reduce anxiety, improve mood and sharpen focus. When the body is cared for, wellness of mind often follows. This clarity can make it easier to engage in prayer, to reflect, and to discern God's will. Moreover, fitness can be an act of gratitude. Choosing to move, to nourish the body and to rest appropriately can become a form of thanksgiving for the gift of life. It shifts exercise from being purely aesthetic or performance-driven to something more meaningful, such as an offering.

It is important to note that physical fitness must be approached with balance.

When it becomes an idol, that is, when appearance, control or performance takes precedence over God, it can distort rather than enhance wellness. The goal is not perfection, but integration.

The connection between physical fitness and spiritual life is both practical and symbolic. On a practical level, a healthy body can better support the demands of a spiritual life. Energy, focus and stamina all play a role in sustaining prayer, service, and community involvement.

On a symbolic level, the discipline required for fitness mirrors that required for spiritual growth. Both involve sacrifice, patience and trust in a process that unfolds over time. You do not become physically strong overnight, just as you do not become spiritually mature overnight.

There is also a profound connection to the concept of suffering. Physical training often involves discomfort and pushing past limits, enduring fatigue and embracing temporary pain for long-term gain. In the Christian life, suffering is not meaningless; it can be united with Christ's own suffering and becomes a path to transformation.

In this way, fitness can become a form of prayer. A run can become a time of reflection. Strength training can become an opportunity to meditate on perseverance. Even the simple act of breathing deeply during exercise can draw attention to the gift of life that God continually sustains.

Furthermore, caring for the body can foster humility. It reminds us of our limitations, our need for rest, nourishment and recovery. These limitations are not weaknesses to be overcome but realities to be accepted. They point us back to our dependence on God.

The guiding principles of the Full of Grace Wellness programme support how faith and wellness can be integrated in a concrete way. While each person is unique and approaches may vary, Full of Grace Wellness is rooted in the desire to bring healing – spiritual, emotional and physical – to individuals through a Christ-centred approach. Full of Grace Wellness provides a 13-week online programme, retreats, group and individual





coaching and community support. The programming addresses issues like body image, identity, wounds, and spiritual brokenness, helping individuals encounter God's grace in a personal and transformative way.

In the context of fitness and wellness, Full of Grace Wellness can serve as a bridge. It acknowledges that healing is not just about physical change or spiritual insight, but about integrating both. It creates a space where individuals can begin to understand their bodies, not as burdens or enemies, but as part of God's plan for their restoration.

Emphasising grace reminds us that wellness is not something we earn through effort alone. It is ultimately a gift. Our role is to cooperate with that gift, to take steps toward health while remaining open to God's work within us.

My own experience of healing through fitness began with a desire for physical transformation, propelled by a sense of restlessness and imbalance. There was a disconnect between what I believed spiritually and how I was living physically. I often gravitated toward unhealthy, sugary foods and the 'fastest' food I could find. I felt tired, distracted and unmotivated, which began to affect my

prayer life and my relationships.

At first, incorporating fitness into my routine was difficult. It required breaking habits, confronting excuses, and pushing through discomfort. I started to look at my behaviours with food and the relationship that I had with myself. It was full of negativity and a lack of self-love. I was not the best at setting boundaries and honouring them to become healthier. I didn't like myself and often lived in a shame cycle. Over time, something began to shift. The structure of regular exercise created a rhythm in my day. That rhythm brought clarity and a sense of purpose.

As my body grew stronger, I noticed changes beyond the physical. My mind felt clearer, my mood more stable and my ability to focus in prayer improved. I also started to enjoy who God created me to be. What once felt like separate areas of life, fitness and faith slowly began to converge. There were moments during workouts where I found myself reflecting more deeply, praying more honestly and even encountering a sense of peace that had been absent before. The act of caring for my body became intertwined with caring for my soul.

Perhaps most importantly, fitness taught me patience with myself. Progress

was slow and often inconsistent. There were setbacks and days of discouragement. But those experiences mirrored my spiritual journey. Growth, in both areas, required trust that small, faithful steps would lead somewhere meaningful.

Through this process, I came to see fitness not as a separate goal, but as a tool for healing. It did not replace prayer, but it created space physically, mentally and spiritually for God to work more freely.

Physical fitness and wellness are indeed deeply interconnected, especially when viewed through a Catholic lens. Wellness is not merely the absence of illness but the flourishing of the whole person. Physical fitness contributes to this by supporting the body, shaping discipline and enhancing mental clarity. More importantly, it can serve as a pathway to deeper spiritual growth. The habits formed in physical training reflect and reinforce the habits needed for a vibrant spiritual life. When approached with the right intention, fitness becomes more than exercise – it becomes a form of stewardship, a practice of gratitude and even a kind of prayer.

Full of Grace Wellness is a reminder that true healing is holistic. It involves the integration of body and soul, healing through God's grace and mercy. Transformation is possible, not through perfection, but through persistence, consistent effort and openness to God. In the end, pursuing physical fitness is not just about strengthening the body, but about participating more fully in the life we have been given. It is one way among many to respond to God's invitation to live well and grow in holiness. ■

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Stewarding the Temple of the Holy Spirit

If our bodies are tabernacles, a well-cared-for tabernacle allows us to serve the Lord until our very last breath, writes **Florance Chakkalakal**.

In modern Christian life, we often focus on the cultivation of the soul, the study of the Word, and the service of our neighbours. Yet, there is a fundamental element of our existence that is sometimes overlooked or exiled to the realm of 'vanity': the physical body. We tend to view our flesh as a mere vessel, a temporary suit to be worn until we reach eternity. However, a deeper look at Scripture reveals that our bodies are far more than biological shells. They are a profound gift, a divine entrustment, and the physical landscape of our spiritual obedience.

The cornerstone of a biblical view of health is found in Apostle Paul's 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. In a world that often swings between the extremes of body-worship and body-neglect, this verse provides a steady, convincing anchor:

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies.

This is not merely a suggestion for healthy living; it is a declaration of ownership. To understand the gravity of this, we must look back at the Old Testament tabernacle. It was an intricately designed space, built with the finest materials and maintained with meticulous reverence. The priests did not treat the tabernacle with indifference; they guarded its cleanliness and order because of Whose presence resided within. As believers, we are the new tabernacle. When we shift our perspective from the mirror to the Maker, we realise we aren't just 'getting fit' – we are preserving the Lord's house, ensuring it remains a ready vessel for His work.

Physical training serves as a laboratory for the cultivation of virtue, most notably the virtue of discipline. Discipline is not just a personality trait; it is



a fruit of the Spirit. Scripture warns us of the danger of a life without boundaries. Proverbs 25:28 offers a sobering visual:

Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control.

In the ancient world, a city without walls was defenceless against passing predators. When we lack the discipline to govern our appetites or our physical activity, our 'spiritual walls' often begin to crumble as well. The same lack of self-control that leads us to consistent physical lethargy often bleeds into our spiritual lives, making us more susceptible to sin and distraction. Conversely, when we practice the discipline of waking early to move our bodies or choosing nutrient-dense foods over momentary cravings, we are strengthening our capacity for self-governance. We are training our spirits to say 'no' to the flesh and 'yes' to the higher calling.

Living It Out: Stewardship in the Trenches

Understanding this truth is one thing. Living it out – especially in a full and demanding season – is another. For me, this season looks like raising three young children under the age of five. It is constant, physically demanding, and often unpredictable. For a long time, I treated the 'trenches' of motherhood as a valid reason to set aside my own physical health. It felt justified; there simply didn't seem to be enough time or energy left after pouring into everyone else.

Over time, I noticed that the exhaustion I felt wasn't just coming from my responsibilities. It was also coming from how I was neglecting the very habits that would sustain me. Caring for young children requires immense physical capacity – lifting, carrying, bending, and staying engaged all day long. When I wasn't taking care of my body, everything felt harder. My patience was thinner, my energy was inconsistent, and simple tasks felt overwhelming. To move from theory to stewardship, I've had to implement specific, practical changes:

- **Prioritising Early Movement:** If I wait for the 'right time,' it rarely comes. Starting the day with even a short workout provides the energy and patience needed for the day.

- **Nutrition as Fuel:** In a house with young kids, it is easy to graze on leftovers

Recognising our limitations isn't a failure; it is an invitation for God to step in. This year, I've had to stop relying on my faltering willpower and instead ask the Lord to help me navigate these hurdles. He has been faithful to provide the grace I need – the energy to get moving before the kids wake up and the wisdom to make healthy choices for our table.

or convenience snacks. By prioritising protein and simple, nourishing foods, my energy stays stable rather than crashing by mid-afternoon.

- **Embracing the Possible:** I've had to let go of the need for 'perfect' routines. Short workouts and small, consistent efforts are faithful stewardship, even if they aren't the long workout sessions I once enjoyed.

However, we must also recognise that we live in a world of seasons. There are phases of life that uniquely challenge our ability to remain active and disciplined. Finding the mental space to meal plan for a busy family can be just as daunting. When the house is loud and the night is short, it is incredibly easy to remain stagnant and reach for the readily available poor choices in the pantry. It is in these specific moments of exhaustion that we must lean into a different kind of strength. 2 Corinthians 12:9 reminds us:

But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

Recognising our limitations isn't a failure; it is an invitation for God to step in. This year, I've had to stop relying on my faltering willpower and instead ask the Lord to help me navigate these hurdles. He has been faithful to provide the grace I need – the energy to get moving before the kids wake up and the wisdom to make healthy choices for our table.

The call to stewardship does not expire as we age. In fact, maintaining physical vitality in our later years is one of the most powerful ways to remain active in the Kingdom. We often see the elderly struggle with declining mobility and frequent hospital visits, but this is a partially avoidable complication. I am encouraged when I think of the 80-year-old woman in my child's school nursery.

Despite her age, she is remarkably fit and active, having spent years running marathons and prioritising her health. Because she has remained a good steward of her body, she is still able to pour into the infants and small children, and to serve her community with a strength that defies her years. Her fitness is her 'yes' to God's continued use of her life. She is living proof that a well-stewarded tabernacle allows us to serve the Lord until our very last breath.

Ultimately, our physical stewardship is the silent liturgy of a life reclaimed by Christ. We are not just building muscles or managing calories; we are fortifying a household that honours the King, one prayerful choice at a time. This journey requires deep humility – recognising where we have fallen short and relying on the Lord for the strength to persevere – but it is a pursuit that pays dividends for eternity. We must return to the foundational truth that we are not our own. We were bought at a price – the very life of the Saviour – and in light of that infinite sacrifice, our only reasonable response is to offer our bodies back to Him as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing. So, we begin again today. We choose movement over lethargy. We choose nourishment over convenience. We choose the discipline that leads to peace, not to achieve a worldly standard, but to reflect the One to whom we belong. Choose to honour the Temple. Choose to steward the gift of your physical self, so that with every breath and every ounce of strength, you may serve the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, and might. ■

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Fasting:

A Hidden Strength

Sunnichan V George shows us how fasting can empower us physically and spiritually.

In a world that constantly tells us to 'enjoy more,' 'eat more,' and 'never miss out,' fasting can feel strange. We are surrounded by choices such as food, entertainment, social media, and endless distractions. Comfort is easily available, and the idea of willingly giving something up can seem unnecessary, even outdated.

And yet, Catholic tradition quietly offers a deeper wisdom. Fasting is not

about losing joy, it is about discovering a deeper, lasting joy. It is not about punishment; it is about freedom. It is not about weakness; it is about inner strength. Navigating a complex and fast-paced world, fasting can become a powerful practice that shapes both the body and the soul.

At the centre of this understanding is Jesus Christ, who fasted for forty days in the desert before His public mission. This was not an escape, but a preparation. In that silence and hunger, He became spiritually focused and strong. When tempted, He responded with a truth that continues to guide us:

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God (Matthew 4:4).

For today's youth, this message is deeply relevant. It reminds us that life is not just about satisfying physical needs or chasing success. There is a deeper hunger within us, a longing for meaning, purpose, and God. Fasting helps us become aware of that hunger and directs us toward what truly satisfies.



People today are concerned about health, fitness, and energy levels. Interestingly, fasting, when practiced wisely, supports all of these. When we fast, the body shifts from using immediate food for energy to using stored energy, especially fat. This process improves metabolism and helps regulate blood sugar levels, reducing the risk of conditions like Type 2 Diabetes. Instead of depending on constant eating, the body becomes more efficient and balanced.

Another important benefit of fasting is the activation of autophagy. During this process, the body begins to remove damaged or unhealthy cells and replace them with new ones. It is like a natural cleaning system that helps maintain overall health. Scientists are studying how this process may even contribute to lowering the risk of diseases such as cancer, although fasting itself is not a cure. Fasting also gives rest to the digestive system. When we fast, the system gets time to recover. Many people experience less bloating, improved digestion, and a sense of lightness.

Another surprising benefit is mental clarity. Many who fast notice that their minds become sharper and more focused. Without the constant cycle of eating and digesting, the body uses energy more efficiently, which can improve concentration and reduce fatigue. These physical benefits show that fasting is not harmful when done properly, it is actually a way of allowing the body to reset, repair, and function more effectively. While these physical benefits are important, fasting becomes truly meaningful when it enters our daily life in simple, personal ways.

Little Acts of Love Where Fasting Becomes Real

For me, fasting did not begin with something dramatic. It began with something very ordinary, a cup of coffee. Like many people, I enjoy coffee. It is part of my routine, a small comfort in the middle of a busy day. But I began to make a small change. I started having my coffee without sugar. At first, it felt like something was missing. The taste was not as pleasant. There was a small discomfort. But slowly, I began to offer that small sacrifice to God. It became a quiet prayer: *'Lord, this is for You.'*



These are very small acts. No one notices them. There is no recognition. But in those hidden moments, something beautiful happens. The heart slowly learns patience, discipline, and love.

Then I took another step. There are moments when I feel like having coffee immediately, almost without thinking. Instead of acting on that impulse, I began to wait a little. Just ten minutes. Sometimes a little longer. That small delay changed something within me. The moment became intentional. It was no longer just a habit, it became a choice. And in that choice, I found a space for God.

These are very small acts. No one notices them. There is no recognition. But in those hidden moments, something beautiful happens. The heart slowly learns patience, discipline, and love. This is exactly what St Thérèse of Lisieux taught through her 'Little Way.' She believed that holiness is not about doing extraordinary things, but about doing small things with great love. You do not need to do extreme fasting. You can begin with small, sincere acts, and God sees them.

Training the Soul in a World of Distractions

Fasting is not only about the body, it is about the formation of the soul. Today's youth live in a world of constant stimulation. Notifications, entertainment, social media, and instant gratification make it difficult to pause and reflect.

Many often act without thinking, following impulses rather than making conscious choices. Fasting gently interrupts this pattern. It teaches us to pause, to wait, and to choose.

As St Paul writes: *I discipline my body and keep it under control.* (1 Corinthians 9:27). This discipline is not about harsh control; it is about freedom. Real freedom is not doing whatever we feel like doing. Real freedom is having the strength to say 'no.' When a young person learns to say no to something small like a snack, a craving, or even the urge to check the phone, they become stronger in facing bigger challenges. Fasting builds this inner strength.

A Heart That Learns to Love

Fasting does something very beautiful, it slowly changes the way we see other people. At first, fasting may feel like a personal effort, something between 'me and my sacrifice.' But if it is lived in the right spirit, it never remains self-centred. It begins to open our eyes and soften our hearts. When we experience hunger, even for a short time, we begin to understand, at least in a small way, what many people live with every day. For some, hunger is not a choice or a spiritual practice; it is a daily reality. This realisation can be very



powerful. It moves fasting from being just a physical act to becoming an experience of solidarity. We begin to feel with others, not just think about them. This is why God speaks so clearly through Isaiah:

Is not this the fast that I choose... to share your bread with the hungry? (Isaiah 58:6-7)

Here, fasting is not just about what we avoid, it is about what we become. It is about becoming more attentive, more compassionate, and more generous. It is easy to fall into a lifestyle that revolves around personal comfort, what I want, what I need, what makes me happy. Fasting gently breaks this pattern. It invites us to look beyond ourselves.

True fasting always leads to giving. It leads to small acts of kindness, sharing food, helping a friend, listening to someone who is struggling, or supporting those in need. It transforms sacrifice into love. The saints lived this beautifully. St Francis of Assisi did not fast just to discipline himself; he fasted so that he could give more to the poor. His life became a reflection of generosity. He saw Christ in the hungry, the sick, and the forgotten.

In the same way, fasting can teach people to live with a generous heart. It reminds us that life is not just about

receiving, it is about giving. It shifts our focus from 'What do I get?' to 'How can I help?' Over time, these small changes shape who we are. We become more patient, more understanding, and more loving. We begin to notice people we would normally overlook. We become sensitive to the needs around us. In the end, the goal of fasting is not just self-discipline, it is transformation. It is to become more like Christ, who gave Himself completely for others. And when fasting leads us to love more deeply, then it has truly become real.

Saints Who Inspire the Youth

St Francis of Assisi enjoyed the good things of life and was well-liked by others. But after a deep encounter with Christ, he realised that the happiness he was seeking in the world was temporary. Gradually, he embraced simplicity and practiced fasting, not as a burden, but as a way of freeing his heart. In giving up small comforts, he discovered a deeper joy and peace that came from God alone.

St Carlo Acutis offers a more modern example for today's youth. Living in a digital age, he loved computers and technology. Yet, he practiced discipline in his daily life. He was careful about his habits, including food and entertainment, and did not allow them to control him. His small acts of self-control helped him remain focused on what truly mattered, his love for God and the Eucharist. Both these saints lived in very different times, but their message is the same. They did not begin with great sacrifices. They started with small, faithful choices, choosing simplicity, practicing restraint, and offering little acts of love.

Living Fasting Every Day

Fasting does not have to be extreme to be meaningful. It can quietly become part of our daily life through small, conscious choices. They help us move from acting out of habit to acting with awareness. Over time, such small practices build discipline and create space for God in the middle of our routine. While seasons like Lent invite us to be more intentional, this spirit of fasting can continue throughout the year in quiet, consistent ways.

At the same time, fasting must always be guided by balance and wisdom. It

should never become a burden or harm our health. The purpose of fasting is not to prove strength or to do something extreme, but to grow in love and self-control. God does not look at how big the sacrifice is, He looks at the sincerity behind it. Even the smallest offering, when done with a willing heart, becomes meaningful.

Fasting may feel challenging because it goes against our natural desire for comfort and immediacy. Yet, this is precisely where its strength lies. It slowly forms a deeper inner life. It helps us become more attentive, more peaceful, and more rooted. In a world that constantly pushes us to consume more and move faster, fasting invites us to slow down and rediscover what truly matters. It leads us toward silence, reflection, and a deeper connection with Jesus Christ. What begins as a small effort gradually becomes a quiet transformation, shaping a heart that is freer, stronger, and more open to God.

In this journey, we find a perfect model in the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Her life was not marked by outward extremes, but by deep interior surrender. She lived with simplicity, silence, and complete trust in God. She did not seek comfort or recognition; instead, she said a wholehearted 'yes' to God in every moment. Her hidden life reflects the true spirit of fasting, not just giving up food, but letting go of self and making space for God.

For us, Mary becomes a gentle guide. She shows that holiness is not found in big, visible sacrifices, but in quiet faithfulness. Like her, when we offer our small acts of discipline and love, whether in fasting, waiting, or choosing simplicity, we begin to grow in the same spirit of surrender. And slowly, our lives too become a place where God can dwell, just as He did in her.

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LIFE ? QUESTIONS



Life Question: I have discerned marriage as my vocation. How will I recognise the 'right person' for me?

➤ First of all, it's beautiful that you have taken the time to *discern* your vocation. Many people step into marriage without really asking this question in freedom. The fact that you are pausing and seeking God's will already places you on a good path.

Now, about the 'right person.' It would be comforting if there were a clear sign or a direct answer. But in reality, discernment is less like finding a marked

destination and more like learning to recognise God's voice over time.

In the Catholic understanding, God usually guides us gently rather than dramatically. He invites us into a relationship of trust, where clarity grows step by step.

So where does this begin? Not with the other person but with **your relationship with God**. When you are rooted in Him, your clarity about others becomes clearer.

This takes simple, consistent forms:

- **Stay close to the Word of God**
Let it shape your mind and heart. *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to*

my path (Psalm 119:105).

- **Be faithful to the Eucharist**
In the Holy Mass, we learn what love looks like: self-giving, faithful, and centred on Christ.
- **Make space for silence and personal prayer**
In a noisy world, discernment needs quiet. *Be still, and know that I am God* (Psalm 46:10).
- **Walk with wise and prayerful people**
A mentor, priest, an elder or mature friend can help you see clearly and stay grounded.

• **Stay open to the wisdom of your family**

When there is love and trust, their guidance can be a quiet support in your journey.

Often, discernment becomes a rhythm: bringing your questions to God in prayer, listening in silence, speaking with someone you trust, and then returning again to prayer.

At times, you may even ask God for signs. That can help, but more often than not, what guides you most is a growing sense of **peace**. Not the absence of all questions, but a quiet steadiness within that helps you take the next step.

As you meet someone, be honest and attentive:

- Do you experience a sense of peace in their presence?
- Is there respect and openness?
- Do your values, especially your faith and vision for life, move in the same direction?

Compatibility is not just about personality; it is also about shared purpose.

And this is important: there may not be a moment of complete certainty. Instead, what grows is a deeper confidence to move forward with trust. So alongside asking, *Is this the right person?* it may help to also ask, *Am I becoming someone who can love faithfully, freely, and well?*

Because in the end, the 'right person' is not just found but recognised and chosen, as two people grow in love with God at the centre.

A gentle note to close:

These are not steps to follow mechanically. They matter only when there is a sincere desire to seek God's will. Discernment takes time, honesty, and trust and unfolds step by step.

Life Question: As a socially awkward person, I find interacting with people difficult, and wherever possible avoid those I don't know. How can fellowship help my spiritual life, when I prefer to be alone with God?

At times, you may even ask God for signs. That can help, but more often than not, what guides you most is a growing sense of peace. Not the absence of all questions, but a quiet steadiness within that helps you take the next step.

✚ Thank you for sharing this honestly.

When you say 'socially awkward,' it often points to feeling uncomfortable or unsure in social situations, or simply being more reserved by nature. That is not something to be judged, it is part of who you are.

For some people, connecting with others comes easily. For others, it takes more time and energy. Both are valid. We are all wired differently.

At the same time, it may help to gently recognise that we are made not only for a relationship with God, but also for some form of connection with others. In the Book of Genesis, after creating everything, God saw that it was good. But after creating man, He saw that it was very good, Genesis 1:31. Relationships are part of that goodness.

Your desire to be alone with God is something beautiful. Personal prayer, silence, and that quiet space with Him are deeply important. But over time, that relationship often begins to shape how we relate to people as well, in small and natural ways.

Fellowship does not mean forcing yourself into uncomfortable situations or becoming someone you are not. It simply means allowing a little space for others in your life, at your own pace.

Not every interaction has to be deep.

- With some people, it may be just a smile or a greeting.
- With others, a simple conversation.
- With a few, a deeper friendship.

And that is enough and okay. You are

not expected to connect with everyone in the same way. What matters is openness, even if it is very small. Perhaps you can begin with one gentle step, speaking to one person, being part of a small group, or simply staying present without pressure.

Over time, many people notice that fellowship quietly supports their spiritual life. Sometimes, God reaches us not only in silence, but also through others, through shared moments, and through relationships that grow slowly.

So, it is not really a choice between being alone with God and being with people. Both can belong together, in a way that is true to who you are.

As you stay close to Him, allow Him to guide you, gently and patiently, into the relationships that are right for you. ■■

Dear Reader, if you would like answers to something you are grappling with, please send your questions to lifequestions@jykaivosmedia.org. Discretion is assured.

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PARABLES2LIFE

FROM SEED TO TREE: YOU ARE CALLED FOR MORE

What life lessons can the Parable of the Mustard Seed teach us? **Joseph Sebastian PhD** shares insights.



I am a bit uncomfortable with what I am presently doing. There is an uneasiness in staying put. Am I called to do more...?' Do these thoughts come to you?

At times, even when life seems outwardly fine, a quiet restlessness rises within. You may be doing what is expected, staying faithful to your responsibilities, and yet wondering whether the Lord is asking for more or specifically, 'Am I doing what the Lord wants of me?'

Perhaps questions like these surface within you:

- Am I where God wants me to be right now, or have I become too comfortable?
- Have I settled for routine when God might be inviting me into a deeper purpose?
- Am I simply being busy, or am I truly bearing fruit?
- Have I stopped growing without even realising it?
- Is this a time of staying faithful where I am, or stepping into something new?
- Am I holding back because of fear, uncertainty, or because I have become used to the familiar?
 - Could this uneasiness be God gently stirring me?
 - What is the next faithful step God may be asking of me?

These questions do not always come from dissatisfaction. Sometimes they are the quiet ways in which God awakens us, stretches our hearts, and invites us towards deeper faithfulness.

Not necessarily more noise, more achievement, or more pressure, but **more purpose, more depth, more life.** Somewhere within you, there is a quiet restlessness that refuses to settle for simply drifting through days. You sense that your life is meant to matter, to grow, to make a difference.

And yet, most days do not feel that way. You may feel like you are not doing enough, or not strong enough, or simply not ready. You may be waiting for the right moment, the right feeling, the right version of yourself.

- But what if the journey does not begin

with becoming 'more'?

- What if it begins with something very minuscule – what we may consider as simple, insignificant and that no one notices?

When Jesus Christ spoke about the mustard seed, He said: *The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed... the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs* (Matthew 13:31–32).

This is not just a teaching about growth. It is a roadmap for your life.

1. The First Step: Small Beginnings

Every meaningful journey often starts insignificant, so minimal that it feels almost pointless. As the Chinese proverb says, 'The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.'

We tend to generally dismiss these small things of life:

- a short prayer
 - a kind word
 - a quiet decision to do what is right
- They seem unlikely to change anything. But this is exactly where God often begins.

Think of a young migrant university student in Manchester, juggling studies, friendships, financial pressures, and the social pressures of fitting in. He once decided, almost casually, to spend a short time in silence before starting his day. No big plan. No perfect routine. Just two minutes.

Nothing dramatic happened at first. But over time, those two minutes became a space of honesty, then a habit, then a source of strength. What began quietly, slowly shaped his choices, his responses, and even his sense of direction.

Small does not mean insignificant. As Scripture reminds us: *He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much* (Luke 16:10).

The journey may already have begun. **Try something simple and quiet today!**

2. The Honest Start: Imperfect Faith

Many of us delay our journey because we feel unready. We think we need stronger faith, better discipline, or clearer direction before we begin. We compare ourselves

with others who seem more 'sorted' spiritually.

But that is not how faith works.

Faith does not begin when everything is in place. It begins when you show up as you are.

In the Gospel, a man once came to Jesus with a simple, almost conflicted prayer: *I believe; help my unbelief!* (Mark 9:24). **That is not perfect faith, just honest faith. And it was enough.**

In many of our contexts, whether in a busy city or a quieter small town, life is full of distractions and inconsistencies. Some days you feel close to God. Other days you do not feel anything at all. That does not disqualify you.

God does not wait for your perfection. He works with your willingness.

Speak honestly to God, even if your prayer feels distracted or uncertain. Try beginning one simple spiritual habit, even if you do not feel like it.

3. The Long Road: Slow Growth

Once we begin with honest faith, we soon discover something else: growth usually takes longer than we expect.

We live in a world that moves fast. Results are expected quickly. Progress is measured instantly. So, when nothing seems to change, we assume nothing is happening.

But growth, especially inner growth, does not work that way. A seed takes time. It does not become a tree in a day.

The Bible reminds us: *Let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not lose heart* (Galatians 6:9).

Often, the call is simply to remain steady: to continue praying, continue choosing what is right, continue taking the next faithful step. Slow does not mean stuck. It often means something is taking root.

A well is not dug by digging one foot in a hundred places. It is dug by staying in one place long enough to go deep.

That steadiness matters.

4. The Unseen Stretch: Tough Times and Hidden Formation

There will also be seasons when

everything feels silent.

You pray, but feel nothing. You try, but see no change. These are often the most difficult moments in the journey. It is easy to feel like giving up.

But Scripture gives us a deeper understanding: *This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how* (Mark 4:26–27).

Much of what God does happens beyond what we can see or understand.

In many Asian families, responsibilities come early, expectations are high, and personal struggles are often kept inside. In such settings, growth can feel invisible. You carry questions, doubts, disappointments, or even dryness in prayer, without seeing immediate answers.

Yet even in such seasons:

- roots are deepening
- character is being formed
- resilience is being built

Hidden seasons are not wasted. They are often the places where strength is quietly formed.

5. The Turning Point: One Small 'Yes'

Every journey has defining moments. But they rarely look dramatic. They often look like a quiet decision. A simple 'yes'.

Mary's entire life, and in many ways the history of salvation, turned on one response: *Let it be to me according to your word* (Luke 1:38).

That one 'yes' opened the door to something far greater than she could have imagined.

Your life also moves forward through such moments: a yes to prayer, a yes to forgiving someone, a yes to trying again after failure.

These may seem unimportant, and sometimes they may come with hesitation or doubt. Yet they shape your direction. Never underestimate the power of a simple, and what we consider as a casual, yes given to God.

So how about saying yes to one thing you have been avoiding: a conversation to connect back to an old friend or family member, a step of faith, or a new beginning? Perhaps one act of kindness or forgiveness today.



Often, the call is simply to remain steady: to continue praying, continue choosing what is right, continue taking the next faithful step. Slow does not mean stuck. It often means something is taking root. A well is not dug by digging one foot in a hundred places. It is dug by staying in one place long enough to go deep.

Step In

You are called to do more, not by becoming someone else overnight, but by beginning where you are.

God is not asking you to be a tree today. He is inviting you to be a seed:

- to begin
- to trust
- to stay
- to believe

To believe that even now, something is growing.

Take a few quiet moments, wherever you are. Place yourself before the Lord, even in the simplicity of your room or your daily routine. Ask, slowly and honestly:

Lord, what is my small yes today?

That is where your journey begins.

Shall we?

You are called for more. The choice is yours. 

Joseph Sebastian, PhD is a social development professional with a Doctorate in Social Work, having over three decades of experience spanning multiple regions and time zones. He has been actively involved with the Jesus Youth movement since his undergraduate days. Passionate about mentoring young leaders, he also walks closely with individuals and families in their vocational journeys. Joseph is married and lives in Kerala, India

A CATHOLIC MAGAZINE FOR CHILDREN

VOLUME 6 ISSUE 66

KAIROS

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**SMALL
ACTIONS
MATTER**

WITHIN
**Faith &
Reason: The
Empty Tomb**
BY FR. JAMES K. HANCOCK
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A Missionary Movement at the Service of the Church

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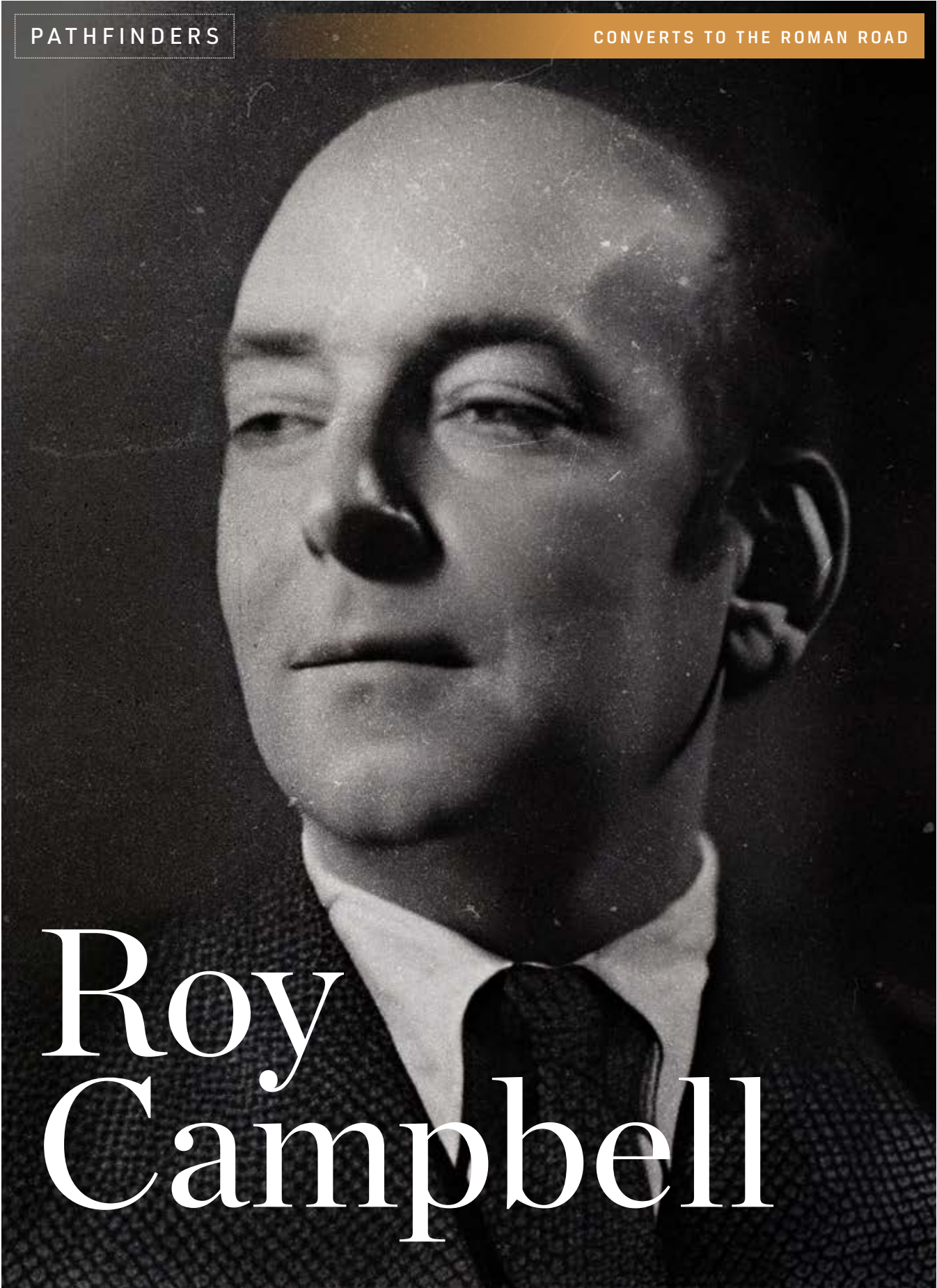


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Faith in Joyful Pages

PATHFINDERS

CONVERTS TO THE ROMAN ROAD

A black and white portrait of Roy Campbell, a man with a shaved head, looking slightly upwards and to the left. He is wearing a dark suit jacket, a white shirt, and a dark tie. The background is dark and textured.

Roy Campbell

Neha Antony Akkara brings to focus a poet, literary critic and satirist, who was instrumental in saving the works of St John of the Cross.

Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work (2 Timothy 2:21).

In this article, we delve into the life of the renowned South African poet, Roy Campbell, and explore how his conversion to Catholicism ignited a fire that would eventually impact the literary and spiritual world.

Born in South Africa, Campbell eventually migrated to England, where he established himself as a bold new voice in literature. However, his early years were defined by England's 'decadent underbelly'. Immersed in a world of artists and models, Campbell's life was a whirlwind of hedonistic partying and excessive drinking.

While Campbell is often associated as having CS Lewis cross swords with him, it was actually JRR Tolkien, a devout Catholic himself, who used Campbell as a partial inspiration for the character Strider (Aragorn) in *The Lord of the Rings*, marvelling at Campbell's rugged, travel-worn appearance.

Despite his outward bravado, an internal shift was beginning. Campbell started to feel a profound discomfort with

his lifestyle. He began to lash out against the atheist writers of his day, sensing a 'solitary silence' amidst the worldly noise – a silence that would eventually allow the voice of Christ to reach him.

Campbell's search for peace eventually led him to Provence, and later to Spain, where he and his wife Mary fell in love with Christ and were received into the Catholic Church. Their timing, however, was harrowing.

Spain was on the brink of a brutal Civil War. By March 1936, bloodshed and riots were commonplace; priests and nuns were being massacred in the streets. Living in Toledo, the Campbells turned their home into a sanctuary, sheltering as many clergy members as they could.

As the violence escalated, the Carmelite Monastery in Toledo faced imminent destruction. The monks, fearing for their lives, entrusted Campbell with a heavy trunk containing the original archives of St John of the Cross. In the dead of night, Campbell smuggled these precious spiritual treasures into his home.

Days later, the monastery was butchered and its library set ablaze. From his window, Campbell watched the flames consume the history of the Church. When the horror subsided, he went out to personally bury the bodies of the

martyred priests and nuns, an experience he later immortalised in his work, *The Carmelites of Toledo*.

The danger did not end with the fires. Revolutionary police searched Campbell's home, looking for hidden priests. As they ransacked the house, Campbell's daughter sat innocently upon the very trunk containing St John's archives. In that moment of terror, Campbell made a vow: if his family were spared, he would translate the poetry of St John of the Cross into English.

The police found nothing. Campbell kept his word, and his translations of St John's work are still considered some of the finest in the English language, earning him the prestigious Foyle Prize.

Throughout the rest of his life, Campbell spoke of a mystical connection to the Saint. Whenever, during the translation of the works, he felt his spirit flag or his pen grow stuck, he felt St John of the Cross smiling down at him, calling out, *Arre burrico* (Go, little donkey)! Upon hearing those words, Campbell felt he could keep trotting forward.

St John of the Cross' message to Campbell is a beautiful reminder for every Christian. In Luke 19:31, Jesus instructs His disciples to untie a colt, saying simply, 'The Lord needs it.' Just as a humble donkey was chosen to carry the Saviour into Jerusalem, God had a plan to use a former hedonist to save the sacred writings of one of the Church's greatest doctors.

This month, let us pray for the grace to be 'The Master's Donkey.' Whether we feel stuck or unqualified, may we remember the phrase *Arre Burrico!* ■

Throughout the rest of his life, Campbell spoke of a mystical connection to the Saint. Whenever he felt his spirit flag or his pen grow stuck, he felt St John of the Cross smiling down at him, calling out: *Arre burrico!* (Go, little donkey!). Upon hearing those words, Campbell felt he could keep trotting forward.

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.



Deep Down Inside

If our perishable body demands so much attention, how much more our imperishable soul, writes **Anil Israel**.

When we have visitors at home, we take the utmost care to clean and tidy our home, to make it highly presentable before they arrive. We may even invest a lot of time, energy, and effort in arranging a delicious meal for them. This is true, not only in our informal social settings but also in the formal corporate world. When a celebrity or dignitary of high rank is invited for a special occasion, those who are responsible for arrangements, extensively ensure that nothing is lacking in their welcome and all measures are taken to ensure that the guests receive the best service. But when the *King of kings and Lord of lords* (Revelation 19:16) knocks at the door of our hearts, seeking permission to enter, how do we respond?

We tend to get carried away by the notion that external expressions determine results. When the Lord sent

Prophet Samuel to anoint the son of Jesse, Samuel presumed it could be the eldest son Eliab. *But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.'* (1 Samuel 16:7).

When the Lord knocks at the door of our heart, we may at times be reluctant to let the Lord in, for we are aware of the mess that would get exposed. Sometimes we let the Lord in only to certain areas of our heart, unprepared to let Him into certain secret chambers. Have we been unintentionally delaying divine romance?

Recently, I was prompted by my free email service provider to reduce storage space. It seems I had been using more than double the limit foreseen for free use of the service rendered. In a desperate attempt not to lose the service,

I diligently resorted to a mammoth clean up that consumed several hours over multiple days. In the process, I realised I had allowed careless accumulation of unnecessary digital content. I eventually parted with decades of old stuff. Though I am now slightly under the prescribed limit, I have come to learn that this clean up needs to become an ongoing regular routine, to be able to enjoy the free service.

Those of us with an attic or a basement providing free storage space, can easily co-relate to everything that has been casually dumped over the years. If something is stored assuming a later utility but has neither been needed nor likely to be used, must I retain it still? Shouldn't I consider giving it away to someone else who might need it now? The earlier I decide, the more I declutter my life.

Our crazy comfort-seeking lifestyle and unhealthy food culture demands that we pay attention to our physical wellness. With an aim to maintain our bodily appearances, we succumb to reluctant reliance on the fitness studio. A plethora of workout videos grab our attention to try out every piece of advice out there, in the hope to attain our dream dimensions in weight and shape.

It seems our earthly life primarily revolves around satisfying our bodily cravings. If the perishable body demands so much attention, isn't it fair to give due attention to our imperishable soul?

What is the shape of my disfigured soul? How much dead weight of negativity have I been accumulating? Is my heart full of toxicity or compassion for souls? Do I realise that I need to focus on spiritual wellness? What spiritual exercises do I need to embrace? How often do I take a break to let my soul breathe in the heavenly serenity of His divine presence? Is going for an annual retreat part of

HE MUST INCREASE; I MUST DECREASE > JOHN 3:30



How often do I take a break to let my soul breath in the heavenly serenity of His divine presence? Is going for an annual retreat part of my priority list? Do I surround myself with holy art and Christian music? Am I feeding my starving soul with scriptural nourishment and sacramental nutrients? Is prayer, a life ring I seek when I am drowning in the troubled sea or is it my exclusive time with my beloved Lord?

my priority list? Do I surround myself with holy art and Christian music? Am I feeding my starving soul with scriptural nourishment and sacramental nutrients? Is prayer, a life ring I seek when I am drowning in the troubled sea or is it my exclusive time with my beloved Lord?

Physical exercise has some value, but spiritual exercise is valuable in every way, because it promises life both for the present and for the future (1 Timothy 4:8). We are indeed amidst constant spiritual warfare. For our struggle is not against human opponents, but against rulers, authorities, cosmic powers in the darkness around us, and evil spiritual forces in the heavenly realm (Ephesians 6:12).

We simply can't afford to lay down our weapons and be crushed by the enemy. We need to be an active spiritual warrior. We need some sort of spiritual discipline in life. By virtue of our baptism, we are a member of the mystical body of Christ. Am I a dead cell or am I alive? Like St Paul can I too say, *it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me* (Galatians 2:20). To be a living cell, I need to let Christ live in me. I need to let Christ into every chamber of my heart, into every fibre of my being.

He must increase; I must decrease (John 3:30). More of Him and less of me, till there is all of Him and none of me. May we let Christ lead us *out of darkness into*

His marvellous light (1 Peter 2:9). May we let the divine potter craft us into His image and likeness. May we pray for the grace to uproot every selfishness and to grow more in other-centredness. In the final analysis, our exterior lives hardly matter. What matters most is how we live our interior lives – deep down inside. ■■

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

PsalmMeet:

THE VIRTUE OF WISDOM



Through Psalms 19, 49 and 111, **Fr Jijo Jose Manjackal MSFS** invites us to be enlightened by the Lord's Word in this reflection upon wisdom.

'Lord, shed upon our darkened souls the brilliant light of your wisdom so that we may be enlightened and serve you with renewed purity.' This beautiful prayer of St Ephrem, the deacon, teaches us about the importance of the virtue of wisdom.

Wisdom is not merely knowledge or intelligence, but the grace to see life as God sees it, to judge rightly and to walk in the path of truth. It is the light that guides our decisions, the clarity that orders our thoughts and the insight that directs our lives according to God's Will.

The Psalms are filled with divine wisdom; they instruct, enlighten and form the human heart. They teach us that true wisdom is received from God through reverence, reflection and obedience.

Psalm 19 – Wisdom that enlightens the mind
The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the decrees of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple! (Psalm 19:7).

Psalm 19 reveals that God's Word is the source of true wisdom. It enlightens the mind, strengthens the soul and leads us into truth. Wisdom here is illustrated as an 'illumination' reflected in the entire creation. God's Wisdom is stamped upon the entire cosmos!

This Psalm reminds us that we receive wisdom by allowing God's Word to shape our minds.

- Turn to God's Word daily, allowing it to enlighten your mind
- Let Divine truth correct your thoughts and guide your choices

Wisdom is not merely knowledge or intelligence, but the grace to see life as God sees it, to judge rightly and to walk in the path of truth. It is the light that guides our decisions, the clarity that orders our thoughts and the insight that directs our lives according to God's Will.

- Seek wisdom not in passing opinions, but in God's revealed truth

Psalm 49 - Wisdom that understands life rightly

My mouth shall speak wisdom; the meditation of my heart shall be understanding (Psalm 49:3).

Psalm 49 reflects deeply on the meaning of life, wealth and human limitations. It teaches that earthly success cannot save and that true understanding comes from seeing life in the light of eternity.

Wisdom here is presented as 'perspective' – discerning what is lasting and what passes away.

- Do not measure life by wealth, success or status
- Reflect on life's deeper meaning and its eternal destiny
- Live with the awareness that only God gives lasting value

Psalm 111 - Wisdom that flows from reverence for God

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a

good understanding. His praise endures forever (Psalm 111:10).

Psalm 111 brings us to the heart of wisdom: reverence for God. The Psalmist praises the works of the Lord and shows that wisdom grows when we live in awe and obedience before Him.

Wisdom here is presented as a 'relationship' – flowing from knowing God, loving Him and walking in His ways.

- Cultivate a deep reverence and love for God in daily life
- Praise God for His works and learn from His ways
- Let your life reflect obedience rooted in love

This month, let us specially practise the virtue of wisdom – that sees with God's eyes and chooses according to His Will. It is allowing God to guide every thought and decision. St Augustine reminds us, 'If you believe what you like in the Gospel, and reject what you do not like, it is not the Gospel you believe, but yourself.'

Through Psalms 19, 49 and 111, we are invited to be enlightened by the Lord's Word, to understand life rightly and to grow in reverence before Him. Wisdom, like all virtues, is not self-made; it is God-given and God-sustained. St Bernard the abbot, further teaches us: There are three ways for wisdom or prudence to abound in you: if you confess your sins, if you give thanks and praise, and if your speech is edifying.'

May our life boldly proclaim: *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom!*
God Bless! Live Jesus!



Fr Jijo Jose Manjackal is a Missionary of St Francis de Sales (MSFS). Ordained in 2012, he is currently pursuing his Licentiate in Sacred Scriptures from Biblicum, Rome. He was appointed as a Missionary of Mercy by Pope Francis in 2016.

Newswatch

Reflections on Pope Leo XIV's Visit to Africa



The conclusion of Pope Leo XIV's eleven-day apostolic journey to Africa marked not only the end of a significant pastoral mission but also the beginning of lasting spiritual reflection among those who experienced it.

The final Mass, held at Malabo Stadium in Equatorial Guinea on 23 April 2026, served as a powerful culmination of a trip that spanned Algeria, Cameroon, Angola, and Equatorial Guinea. Describing his journey as 'grace-filled,' the Pope expressed gratitude for what he called an enduring treasure of faith, hope, and charity gathered from the continent. His words resonated deeply with attendees, many of whom described the visit as transformative and spiritually enriching.

Father Jose Fernando Liso highlighted that the visit's impact will depend on the personal responsibility of individuals in fostering growth within both the Church and society. Similarly, Maria Lourdes Ndong Esono shared a deeply personal perspective, recalling her childhood experience of seeing Pope John Paul II in 1982 and expressing gratitude for witnessing another historic papal moment decades later. For Sister Gertrude Ehizokhale, the Pope's message carried particular weight amid local grief following the recent loss of a Church leader. She noted that his words offered encouragement, urging generosity, compassion, and care for the most vulnerable.

Together, these voices reflect a shared sentiment: that Pope Leo XIV's visit was not only a historic event but also a profound moment of unity, renewal, and faith.

Finland's first Catholic school to open in August

A long-held vision of establishing the first Catholic school in Finland may soon become reality, according to Bishop Raimo Goyarrola. In a country where Catholicism largely vanished after the 16th-century Protestant Reformation led to the adoption of Lutheranism, the initiative represents a significant step for the small but growing Catholic community.

The bishop plans to open the school in August on the premises of a Lutheran church on Lauttasaari, an island near Helsinki. Initially, it will operate as a home-schooling model recognised by the state, offering early primary grades and emphasising a holistic education grounded in Christian values and liturgical traditions. Although open

to all, the main challenge lies in attracting enough Catholic families. Bishop Goyarrola hopes to begin with 12 students, symbolically reflecting the apostles.

Appointed by Pope Francis in 2023, the bishop has identified the school as a priority among the needs of the local Church. Despite bureaucratic hurdles, he remains optimistic, expressing strong faith that the project will succeed. With teachers, facilities, and materials already prepared, only student enrollment remains uncertain.

Though Catholics number only about 20,000 in Finland, their presence is gradually increasing through immigration, baptisms, and conversions, making the project both timely and promising.

Pope Leo expresses support to abolish death penalty

Pope Leo XIV has expressed strong support for efforts to abolish the death penalty both in the United States and globally, emphasising the need to uphold human dignity in all circumstances.

In a video message addressed to participants at an event hosted by DePaul University marking 15 years since Illinois ended capital punishment, he affirmed that a person's dignity remains intact, even after committing serious crimes.

The Pope welcomed the anniversary of Illinois' 2011 decision and aligned himself with advocates working to end the death penalty worldwide. He voiced hope that such efforts would deepen recognition of every individual's inherent worth and encourage broader support for abolition. He also highlighted that modern justice systems are capable of protecting society without eliminating the chance for offenders to reform.

Echoing the teachings of Pope Francis and earlier Church leaders, he noted that justice and the common good can be upheld without resorting to capital punishment. Referring to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, he reiterated that the death penalty is unacceptable because it violates human dignity. He further stressed that protecting life – from conception to natural death – is fundamental, as the right to life underpins all other human rights and is essential for a just and flourishing society.

By Sam Biju

Eucharist remains intact amid destruction in Lebanon



Amid the devastation of war in southern Lebanon, a striking event in the village of Tibnin has brought hope to a suffering community. Inside St George Church, what many describe as a 'miracle' has become a powerful symbol of faith and resilience.

When Father Marios Khairallah returned to the damaged church on April 17 following a ceasefire, he found the consecrated Eucharistic bread exactly as it had been left 47 days earlier, despite the absence of people and the destruction surrounding it. For him and his parishioners, this was not merely unusual but a profound affirmation of Christ's enduring presence. He explained that while there may be no scientific explanation, such an occurrence aligns with belief in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

The priest described the discovery as a message of hope for the local community, that even amid ruin, faith remains alive. He also noted that a statue of the Virgin Mary remained standing, symbolising steadfast maternal care in the midst of suffering.

The wider situation in Tibnin, however, remains dire. Around 55 Melkite Catholic families were displaced by the conflict; many now relying on temporary shelter with limited aid. Basic necessities such as water, electricity, and communication services are largely unavailable, compounding the hardships faced by residents.

Despite these challenges, the event at St George Church has offered spiritual encouragement, reminding the faithful that even in times of war and loss, hope and belief endure.

Singapore sees the highest number of baptisms in a decade this Easter



The Catholic Church in Singapore welcomed its largest group of new members in a decade this Easter, marking a significant moment of growth for the local faith community. According to the Office for Catechesis, more than 1,200 individuals – including catechumens and candidates – have taken part in the Rite of Election and related ceremonies in recent months.

This rite, typically held at the beginning of Lent, represents the final stage of preparation for those entering the Church. Catechumens, who have not yet been baptised, and candidates, who come from other Christian traditions, formally express their commitment to the faith. A key moment in the liturgy is the signing of the 'Book of the Elect,' symbolising their readiness to receive the sacraments at the Easter Vigil.

Church leaders emphasised that this journey is ultimately a response to God's call. Participants were encouraged to use the Lenten season as a time for deeper personal conversion rather than simply outward sacrifice.

Many of those who joined the Church shared personal stories of conversion, often shaped by relationships, life challenges, and spiritual searching. Church officials attribute the rising numbers partly to active evangelisation and the influence of Pope Francis' 2024 visit.



REACHING JESUS FIRST

Choose your team and test your simple knowledge as you race to the centre.

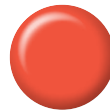
INSTRUCTIONS

Roll the dice: you need a 1 or 3 to bring a piece onto the board. **Answer the question correctly** to move your piece forward by the number rolled. **Wrong answer stays put.** Rolling a 3 gives you a **bonus turn**. The first person to reach Jesus at the centre with **minimum two pieces** claims victory.



ANGELS

- Name an angel from the Bible?
- Which angel told Mary about Baby Jesus?
- Each person has an angel assigned by God.
What is this angel called?
- Which angel helped Tobit and Tobias?



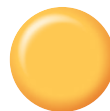
SAINTS

- Name a saint who loved animals?
- Name a saint known for helping the poor?
- Do you know a saint who cared for children?
- Can you name a saint who preached to crowds?



MISSIONARIES

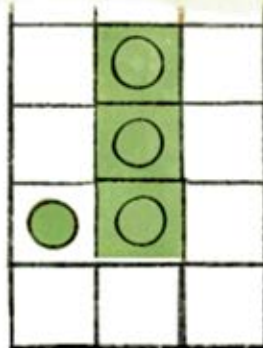
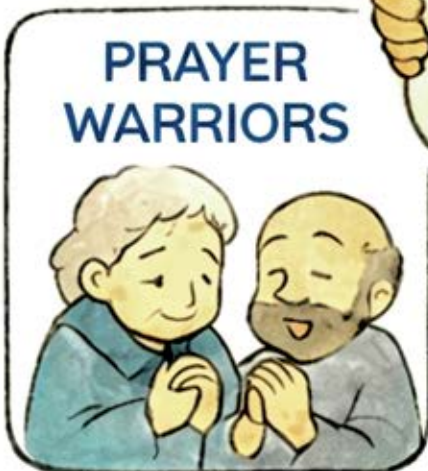
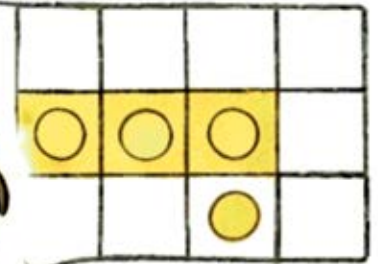
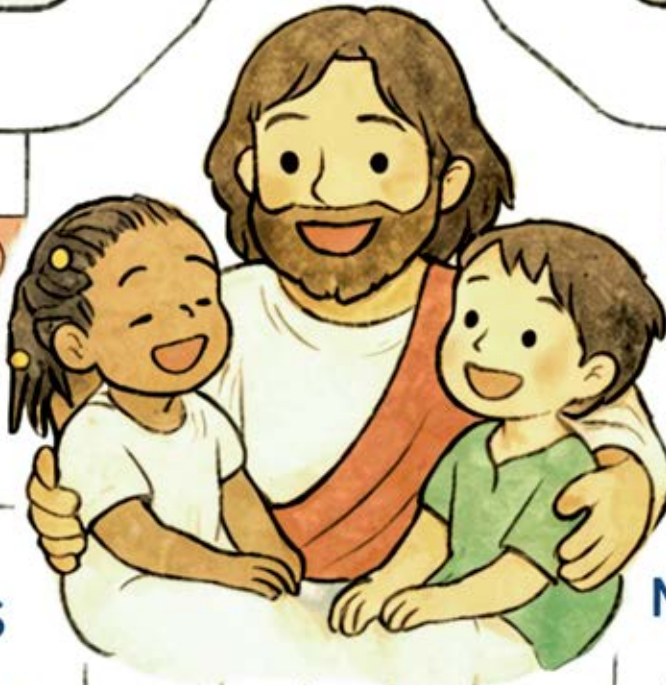
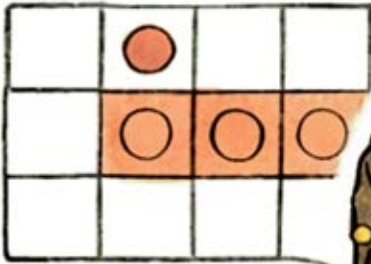
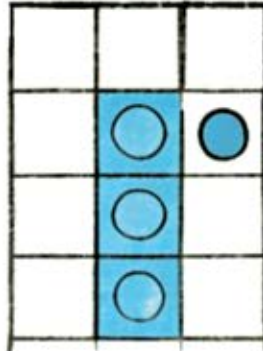
- Who founded the Missionaries of Charity?
- What is the definition of a mission?
- What was the mission of St Thomas the Apostle?
- What was the mission of the Camillian missionaries?



PRAYER WARRIORS

- What is prayer?
- What are the different types of prayers?
- Why is prayer important in our lives?
- Which is the prayer of all prayers?

Prepared by Edwin Joseph



ON MY MIND

God usually deprives His servants, for a time, of all consolation, that they may learn to serve Him through pure love, and become truly faithful servants. He deprives them of spiritual delights, even on the most solemn occasions, to test their faith and fidelity.

- St. Paul of the Cross

ANITA TREESA BENNY, KERALA, INDIA

God has created me to do Him some definitive service; He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission - I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next!

- St John Henry Newman



Tania Rose Josun, Kottayam, India



I find that sometimes we get so caught up in the 'doing' that we lose sight of the resting. Serving others is what we're called to do, but we cannot pour into others when we leave ourselves drained and empty. When was the last time you sat with your Father in silence? Let yourself rest in His arms, feeling the weight of life lifted. Hear His gentle voice saying, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. Take my yoke for it is easy, and my burden which is light.'

In that moment, feel your soul lift to heaven, praising Him for His goodness, His love, and His mercy. Let your face fall to the floor in adoration, your heart joining the worship of the saints who came before you; those who bore the weight of their crosses and followed Him to eternal glory.

Stand still and be amazed at His splendour and might, comparing His infinite power to your own. We are merely the work of His creative hands. His breath giving life to dust; not meant to take the driver's seat, but to sit as passengers.

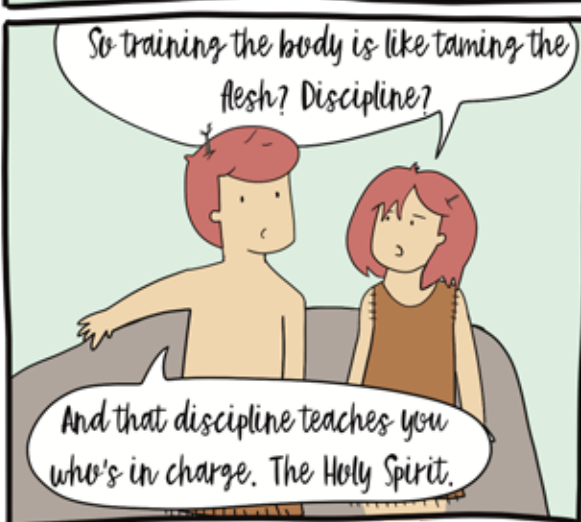
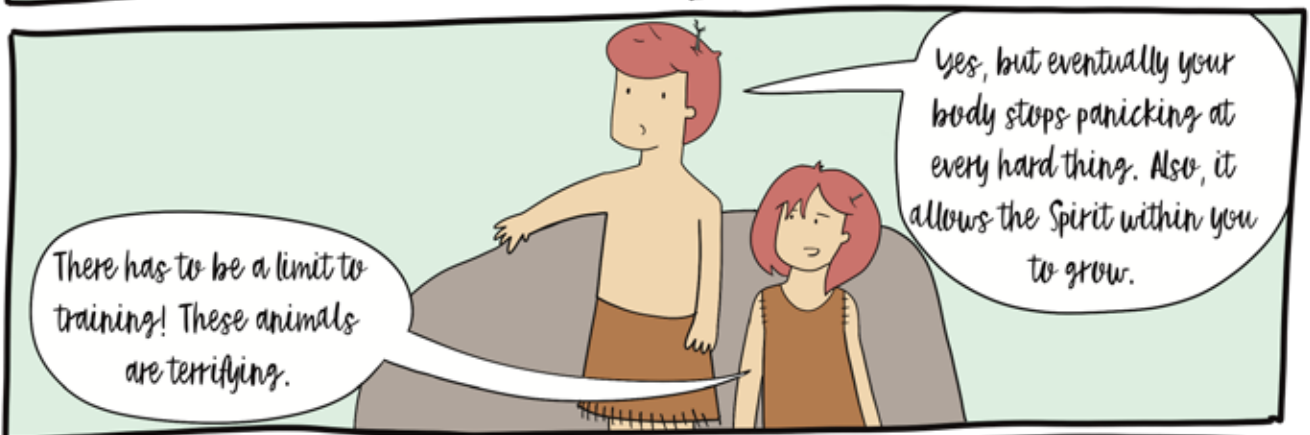
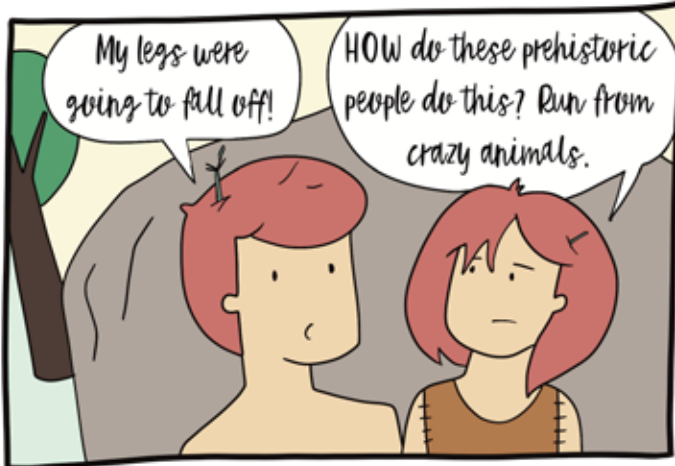
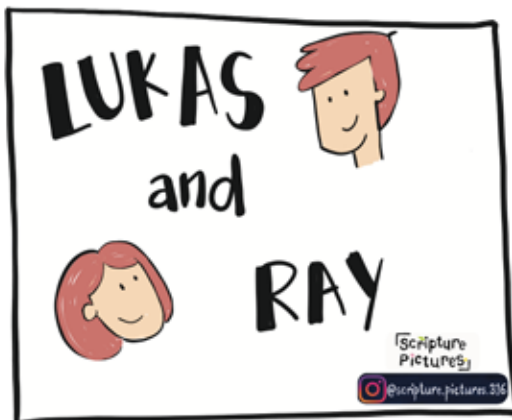
We are called to serve others, but the distinction lies in serving with His strength, His love, His will & not our own.

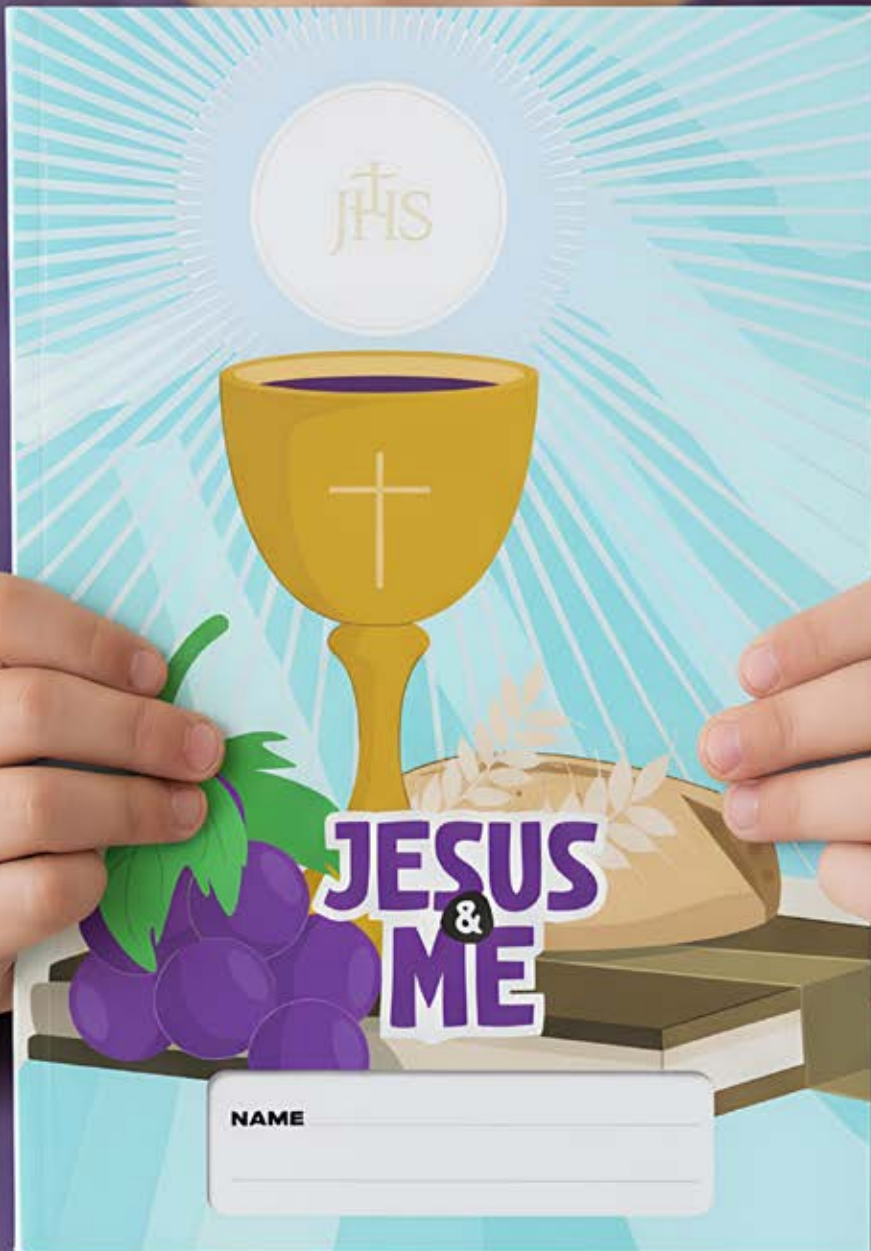
 jenny's catholic diary

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