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DR. JOBY CYRIAC

Abounding
Grace

CHRIS CAMMARATA



Jesus Youth

A Missionary Movement At The Service Of The Church



MARY MY BELOVED MOTHER



O queen of the families, help our families to be like the holy family of Nazareth. Help us to accept the joys and sorrows of family life with the same docility as you accepted God's will in your life. Holy Family, pray for us.

EDITOR'S ROOM

DR. CHACKOCHAN J NJAVALLIL

 @readkairos



MANY YOUNG PEOPLE, ALTHOUGH THEY MAY BE WELL-EDUCATED PROFESSIONALS, ARE ILL EQUIPPED TO HANDLE THE CHALLENGES OF MARRIED LIFE AND ITS PRESSURES.

SUPPORT MECHANISMS ARE NEEDED FOR YOUNG FAMILIES

This happened two decades ago when our first child was less than a year old. It was an ordinary weekday but crisis soon unfolded when news came that our usual domestic helper would not be coming that day. Both of us had work and there was no one else to take care of our child. Finally, we had to resort to leaving our child with a family friend at their place.

There are many families where both spouses are working and managing things at home with the help of grandparents or other extended family and domestic workers. A family I know has a system where things are arranged so, that on Sundays, while the domestic worker has their day off, the family also gets a day to spend together with no cooking involved as this is done in the days beforehand. All the family members are now very much accustomed to the arrangement.

Young families today, especially nuclear families, are facing serious challenges. Often, both the spouses are working outside of the home with serious work responsibilities, nobody to support them at home and little help from extended family. Due to the increasing financial requirements, 'not working' is not an option to consider, and in many situations, the pressure and stress at work is unbearable. Friends and neighbours are also going through similar situations and are not able to extend any support.

Even the couples who are yet to have children are also facing various kinds of issues. Very often, it happens that when an independent person gets married, they expect the same lifestyle to continue after marriage and reach a stage of disillusionment within the marriage. Their care-free lifestyle is no longer possible as they become answerable to many people and are forced to live up to several people's expectations. Many young people, although they may be well-educated professionals, are ill equipped to handle the challenges of married life and its pressures. Sometimes, the unnecessary and imprudent intervention of the parents, though well-intentioned also creates many problems.

It is high time that we develop a support mechanism, which may include emotional, spiritual, physical and if possible financial support too (temporary loans etc.), for young couples and families. The Church and youth ministry leadership should apply its mind to this serious concern and evolve some innovative approaches.



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OUTFOR

14 Financial pointers for the young

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34 Pwojè Bon Vwazen

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table.
Psalms 128:3

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CULTURE OF LIFE

THE SECRET PANDEMIC OF THIS ERA

SONEY ABRAHAM

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ASK

FR. BITAJU



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



YOUCAT 271

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SAY THAT THE FAMILY IS A “CHURCH IN MINIATURE”?

What the Church is on a large scale, the family is on a small scale: an image of God's love in human fellowship. Indeed, every marriage is perfected in openness to others, to the children that God sends, in mutual acceptance, in hospitality and being for others. [1655-1657]

Nothing in the early Church fascinated people more about the “New Way” of the Christians than their “domestic churches”. Often someone “believed in the Lord, together with all his household; and many . . . believed and were baptized” (Acts 18:8). In an unbelieving world, islands of living faith were formed, places of prayer, mutual sharing, and cordial hospitality. Rome, Corinth, Antioch, the great cities of antiquity, were soon permeated with domestic churches that were like points of light. Even today families in which Christ is at home are the leaven that renews our society.

Q. If Mary took a vow of chastity before she was married, then why would she get married?

BINCE GEORGE / BANGALORE, INDIA

We are not sure if Mary made a vow of virginity before she married Joseph. Yet, the Word of God and also the teaching of the Church gives us some clear indication. When the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she was chosen to be the Mother of the Messiah, Mary asked, “How shall this be, since I do not know man?” (Lk 1:34). This question of Mary has no sense unless she had a vow of virginity. Because, consistent with Lk 1: 27, Mary and Joseph were already betrothed, which is the first phase of Jewish marriage. She is betrothed to Joseph but has not yet begun living with him, which is the second phase of the wedding referred to as the “coming together,” where the marriage would be consummated. This background of Jewish marriage is vital for us to understand the question of Mary “How shall this be?” Because a newly married woman would not ask such a question, for she would know what is expected of marriage, unless she has made a vow of virginity. Mary did believe the message of the angel, but wanted to understand how it was going to be fulfilled. This would indicate that Mary was not planning for a normal course of events for her married life with Joseph. Such a view of Mary’s vow of virginity before the annunciation and marriage was held by Church Fathers like Saints Augustine, Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure.

The second part of the question is ‘then why would Mary marry?’ St. John Paul II, in

one of his catechesis on Blessed Virgin Mary (1996), gave a relevant explanation on this question: “We can wonder why she would accept betrothal, since she had the intention of remaining a virgin forever ... It may be presumed that at the time of their betrothal there was an understanding between Joseph and Mary about the plan to live as a virgin. Moreover, the Holy Spirit, who had inspired Mary to choose virginity in view of the mystery of the Incarnation and who wanted the latter to come about in a family setting suited to the child’s growth, was quite able to instill in Joseph the ideal of virginity as well.”

Moreover, the Book of Numbers 30: 6-8 gives us a historical basis for how a Jewish married woman could keep her vow provided her husband did not object. This was very much familiar to the Jews of the first century. Likewise, Mary’s life would have been in danger in a culture that could not accept an espoused woman getting pregnant by someone other than her spouse. Thus, in divine providence Joseph became Mary’s earthly spouse and protector through their marriage. To summarize, we could say that the word of God and also the Fathers of the Church clearly indicate that Mary made her vow of virginity prior to marriage with Joseph, and their decision to remain as celibates was mutual as per God’s plan, respecting the culture and practice of the days they lived.



POPE talk...

Dr. Kochurani Joseph
Cochin, India

What would happen if we pray more and complain less?

Prayer is able to ensure the relationship with God, who is the true companion of man's journey, in the midst of many hardships of life: good or bad. In life's ups and downs. So it is essential to make prayer your constant companion. The same thing that happened to Peter and Paul in prison: now as then, so many closed doors would be opened, so many chains that bind would be broken. Only prayer unlocks certain chains. The closeness that joined Peter and Paul, in spite of their differences, did not come from natural inclinations, but from the Lord through prayer.

Bring everything into dialogue with God

King David is an example of being consistent in prayer no matter what life throws at you or what good or bad you do. Though David knew solitude and loneliness in his life, through the power of prayer he was never alone. The two characteristics of David's life and vocation: that he was a shepherd and that he was a poet. David is a sensitive person who loves music and singing. Prayer arises from there: from the belief that life is not something that slides into us, but an amazing mystery, which evokes in us poetry, music, gratitude, praise, or lamentation, supplication etc.

Individualism is 'illusory'

In the period to follow the coronavirus pandemic, people should remember they are made for communion with others and with God. Now more than ever the claim to focus everything on ourselves is illusory. In this way, we will be able to get out of this crisis spiritually and morally stronger; and this depends on the conscience and responsibility of each of us. We are not alone, however, but together and united with the grace of God.

Three additional invocations in the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Pope Francis adds three titles to Catholic litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary as "Mater misericordiae," "Mater spei," and "Solacium migrantium." "Mater misericordiae," means, "Mother of mercy," "Mater spei," means "Mother of hope," "Solarium migrantium," means "Comfort of migrants," The Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary has been an approved prayer for the intercession of Mary by the Church since the late 16th century. It consists of the recitation of formal and informal titles of Mary, followed by the request to Mary to "pray for us."

God awaits us in our darkest moments

Continuing his cycle of catechesis on prayer, pope reflected on Jacob's struggle



PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR AUGUST

THE MARITIME WORLD

We pray for all those who work and live from the sea, among them sailors, fishermen and their families.

with an angel described in the Book of Genesis (Genesis 32:23-33) The episode offered an insight into prayer. We all have an appointment in the night with God, in the night of our lives, in the many nights of our lives: dark moments, moments of sin, moments of disorientation. In this moment of trial we will become aware of our poverty before God. But we will have nothing to fear because in that very moment God will give us a new name, which contains the meaning

of our whole life. From this account, the spiritual tradition of the Church has retained the symbol of prayer as a battle of faith and as the triumph of perseverance. 'Wrestling with God' is a metaphor for prayer. He changed his name, changed his way of life and changed his personality: he came out changed. In our darkest moments God awaits us and is ready to transform us.

Catholic media should help young to distinguish good from evil

We need media capable of building bridges that can help young people to distinguish between good and evil, presenting the facts in a clear and unbiased way. We need men and women of conviction who protect communication from all that would distort it or bend it to other purposes. A true communicator dedicates himself or herself completely to the welfare of the others, at every level, from the life of each individual to the life of the entire human family.

Pope Francis says...

- Prayer is the soul of hope.
- Discover the riches hidden in Jesus' Sacred Heart'
- The Eucharist gives us Christ's healing love
- There is no true love without the cross
- Lord's command is not to like but love one another
- Christians should fear sin, not the hostility, violence, or persecution

JESUS YOUTH



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

Minimalism - Why Jesus Youth love it?

→ "Four sons I have, and the second one is a JY. About him I was worried, thinking, he was careless in money matters. Unlike his brothers, he is not eager to buy many things and his home is quite simple and bare. But now I see his point. His life is not cluttered, but he is focused, quite loving and very happy. Perhaps that looks much better."

Many active Jesus Youth are 'minimalists with a mission'. What is minimalism? It is an attempt to live with the essential things you need and giving up what distracts you. Very often such a life has a clear focus. This results in a greater freedom and enjoyment of the little things in life.

LESS IS MORE

Is it being miserly, not spending money for your real needs? No – the lifestyle of minimalism is all about the simplicity of living, as well as the joy in giving. Joy and generosity are at the heart of it.

"Nowadays, many who take life seriously are adopting this slogan, 'Less is more'. For them this is a reaction against a decadent culture of blindly following a 'use and throw' lifestyle." One active Jesus Youth shared his thoughts with me. "But in my case, I became a minimalist not as a reaction. My Christ Encounter turned my values upside down. Earlier it was a 'successful life', but now a 'life of joy in

Christ'. And now I have started seeing others' needs. So, for me, not only 'less is more', but 'it is more blessed to give' and experience that joy."

One thing special about Jesus Youth movement is that in all generations of its growth there have been outstanding models of minimalism. Fr Abraham, one of its pioneers, often challenged youth. He would ask, 'What does the Bible teach about giving? How much?' They often reply by talking about 'tithing'. No! He would say. That is the Old Testament teaching. Even John the Baptist talks about giving 50 percent, "if you have two coats, give away one". But Jesus challenges us to give fully, "if you want to follow me, sell everything, give to the poor and follow me". He would conclude, "we are only custodians of the Lord's gifts; those who are in need are the real owners."

Another challenging person in the movement has been Alicekutty, who has been animating the movement from the beginning. While working as a professor she would say, 'my income is for those in need' and would support others generously after meeting her meagre needs. She always lived in a simple home, but that too was always shared by a few others. Those are early examples, but over the years the movement has produced many, committed to a life of simplicity and who have found joy in giving.

According to Pope Francis: "We need to take up an ancient lesson, . . . the conviction that "less is more". A constant flood of new consumer goods can baffle the heart and prevent us from cherishing each thing and each moment. . . Christian spirituality proposes a growth marked by moderation and the capacity to be happy with little." (Laudato Si', 222)

A TRUE CHRISTIAN CULTURE

A life of minimalism in the sense of not being enchanted by material goods and slowly turning away from luxuries of life is a true sign of Christian commitment. As Apostle Paul remarks, those who desire to be rich fall into ruin and destruction, because 'the love of money is the root of all evils' (1Tim 6:9,10). He speaks of a life of extreme simplicity in which "if we have food and clothing, with these we shall be content" (v. 8). One reason for this being that Jesus his master was a very poor man with "no place to lay his head" (Mt 8:20) and challenged his disciples to be poor, exhorting them towards simple living.

For a Jesus Youth the example of St Francis has been another challenge not just for the love of beauty and the joy of life, but more so for simple living. Young Francis from the year 1208 devoted himself to a life of utter poverty and proclamation of



We are only custodians of the Lord's gifts; those who are in need are the real owners

the Gospel. His example shocked, yet inspired people of all walks of life in his generation and continues to challenge young and old of contemporary times to embrace a life of moderation.

MINIMALISM IS INTEGRAL TO JY LIFESTYLE

Jesus had some special instructions for his disciples sent on mission: "Take

no gold, nor silver, nor copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, no two tunics, nor sandals, nor a staff" (Mt 10: 9,10). In brief, a missionary must travel light.

We live in a consumeristic world in which needs are fast increasing and new products are constantly appearing. It is natural that people want to gather more and more. But here is a 'sign of contradiction' in which people opt to buy only the essentials and even give away what they already have. This in turn builds up a caring and sharing community and help one to turn attention a little more to the poor and needy.

Three years ago, a couple of Jesus Youth from Kuwait had a brief discussion in which they said, 'Most of our families have a lot of dresses in very good condition that we surely can

spare. We can ask others also. If only we had a way to collect and reach them to people who really need that.' That was the beginning of a new initiative, JY Dress Collection Mission. This helped families to ask themselves what they can give away and also creating a mechanism to collect and send dresses to the needy. As of now more than ten thousand kilograms of dress have already been collected and put to good use. A spirit and style of minimalism has evoked so many such small and big steps in the movement. Surely much more is on the way. ■

.....

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

UP CLOSE



ABOUNDING *Grace*

Fr Thomas Pulickal

Chris Cammarata in conversation with Fr Thomas Pulickal, who was recently ordained as the third priest for the Jesus Youth movement.

ON JUNE 6TH 2020, Fr. Thomas Pulickal was ordained a priest for the Jesus Youth movement by the Syro-Malabar Catholic Eparchy of Chicago. He is the third Jesus Youth priest in the world and the very first in the United States.

Fr. Thomas was born and raised in the United States, and over the years has lived in places like New Jersey, Texas, Illinois, and Florida. Fr. Thomas is truly a fruit of many years of growth and formation in the movement and has been an active Jesus Youth since his teens. Over the years he has served in various capacities, including as National Youth Coordinator, National Coordinator of the United States, member of the International Council and the International Formation Team, among others. When he was 26, he was called by the Lord to discover the priestly vocation – but in a truly new and unique manner! In his own words:

“All these times, my heart was sure that the charism of the movement, while having already produced great fruit, had still much to offer the world. I desired to be part of that, as a priest. I also thought about how thankful I was for those priests who were spiritual fathers to us as young people and families growing in the movement, building us up as disciples of Christ. These generous priests did so by extending themselves above and beyond their ordinary duties. But I also learned that there would have

to be some priests who are specially dedicated to this purpose and to the ever-unfolding discovery of all that Jesus Youth is meant to be in the living Body of the Church. In the end by God's grace, working through my bishop's blessing and the movement's support, I was grateful that I could one day serve both the movement and the diocese as a priest, as my own particular way of living out my fervent love for the whole Church. As these details were worked out, I also completed my Masters of Arts in Philosophy from Holy Apostles College and Seminary, which has helped me a great deal in my ministry and personal life. The Lord has been generous, gentle, and merciful with me at every turn, and I am now overjoyed as I enter into the vocation for which I am sure that I was made.”

Fr. Thomas has been assigned to the faculty of St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary in Boynton Beach, Florida, from which he will also serve on the weekends at the local Syro-Malabar parish.

The Jesus Youth movement is so proud and grateful to God for Fr. Thomas' life and the new ministry to which he has been called! We were blessed with the opportunity to have an interview with Fr. Thomas as he begins this momentous new chapter for himself and for all of Jesus Youth...

THE JOURNEY SO FAR

Please share a little about your faith life growing up. Did you have a specific conversion experience?

I had a specific time of conversion when I was a 14-year-old freshman in high school. In the two or so years leading up to that moment, I began to experience God's presence at different Jesus Youth programs, especially in Eucharistic Adoration and times of praise and worship. However, it was during a short silent retreat that the Lord led me to repent of all my sins and to follow him in true discipleship.

When did you first start thinking of a vocation to priesthood? Was there an “aha” moment?

I was always open to the priesthood as a young man because I believed, as a matter of principle, that every Christian young man ought to discern this possibility. There were a few days or weeks here and there when I thought I might be called to the priesthood, but by and large I was convinced that my call was to the lay and married vocation. When I was 26, I felt the Lord calling me to the priesthood while at Mass one day. From that moment onwards, my vocational journey took a sudden turn.

You have an extensive academic and professional background. Where do they fit into your path to priesthood?

I do not actually have an extensive academic or professional background. I am blessed to have some experience in the academic and professional world. I loved the professional world; I thoroughly enjoyed working. I try to bring that same enthusiasm, focus, dedication, and skill to the work I do as a priest. (It's too early to say whether I am doing that well!) I am not particularly interested in the academic world, but I am



in love with learning. I hope to be a life-long learner because learning is a way of diving in. When you are in awe, you jump in, you get involved, you drink up what you can!

Were there particular challenges or “adventurous” moments you had along the way?

There were certainly many challenges along the way, especially since the path that I was pursuing was not well-trodden. But these contributed to the sense of adventure in the Lord. Indeed, they allowed me to be open to greater movements of grace and healing from the Lord, as he built me up day by day and strengthened me for the mission he has entrusted to me. And this adventure has only just begun!

Who are some of your inspirations (living or dead) in this journey?

St. John Paul II, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Philip Neri

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

What do you look forward to in your priestly ministry? What will your particular ministry be like?

I look forward to the ministry of accompaniment. Sometimes I feel as though that is at the very center of my calling as a priest.

Formation is something especially important to you. Could you speak a little about that?

Formation is important to me because I am

Though I have my own struggles, battles or imperfections, I know the love of the Father fills me with His grace and when His love overflows, all my imperfections are washed away



FUN FACTS ABOUT FR. THOMAS PULICKAL

How do you usually start your day?

In the last two months, I've developed the regrettable habit of starting my day with Twitter news.

Word is that you love math. What's your favorite number?

I do love math, but I do not pick favorites!

What music do you like?

Many kinds. The bands that I always come back to are probably: U2, Switchfoot, Yes, Kansas, Coldplay, and many more.

What are three books you can't go without? (other than the Bible)

The Confessions of St. Augustine
The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

The Handbook of Epictetus

Do you have any special hobbies?

Programming

What was your first job?

I worked in a computer shop, selling and fixing computers.

Are there saints you go to for help?

Mary – first and foremost!

Numerous others!

How do you prefer your coffee?

BLACK

Favorite pizza topping?

I don't pick favorites. :)

"My day is not complete until..."

Night.

Left: Fr Thomas Pulickal during the ordination
Bottom: Fr Thomas Pulickal with his parents

so touched by the hearts of those who desire to give everything to Jesus. They are the true diamonds of this earth. At the same time, each of us need some help, some guidance, some encouragement, some added perspective.

We all need others to help us see ourselves more clearly and in the way that the Father sees us, as we work through the challenges and celebrate the victories of life. To me, every Christian who desires to give himself or herself totally to Jesus has a right to receive formation and guidance from the Church. And the Church has that great responsibility.

What makes Jesus Youth priesthood special?

Jesus Youth priesthood is a way in which the charisms of the movement contribute all the more, and in a distinct manner, to the mission of the Church in the world. That is the “outward” dimension. Then, there is the “inward” dimension: the movement itself requires the pastoral care, service, and assistance of priests specially dedicated to the movement.

You are the first American-born Jesus Youth priest, something for the movement in the United States to celebrate! What are some particular needs and challenges that you see for the movement in the USA? What part do you see yourself playing in that?

The movement in the USA is blessed with a kind of depth and maturity that is hard to find elsewhere, not merely in its teachings but also in its relationships and inner working-style. The movement, I think, would benefit from integrating more fully into the wider Church and the mission in America. So many leaders of the Church in America who have met us have confirmed our unique value and charisms and have sincerely asked for our help. However, there's some more learning to do in terms of how to respond to this blanket invitation. There's certainly no lack of desire, just a process of learning. I've had the privilege of being plugged into the American Church in different ways over these years, and I hope to be able to assist in this regard.

What is your “core message” that you want young people to know?

“Do not be afraid!”

Thank you for this opportunity to get to know you better, Fr. Thomas! Our prayers and best wishes go with you as you begin this incredible new ministry.



Chris Cammarata works as a clinical systems analyst in Houston and has degrees in Catholic theology and philosophy. He also writes for Catholic Café.



EVOLUTION

FINANCIAL POINTERS

FOR THE
YOUNG



Joel Alex gives shares some practical financial steps on how to manage money and save for future

Being a young adult can be exciting as it is the start of an independent future. However, each of the decisions made during this time can have an impact – short term or even in the longer term, especially when it comes to finance. I started working at the age of 15, and been working ever since doing a variety of different jobs. I am now 24 years old, working as a peace officer. About nine years of ‘self-money management’ has taught me several great skills.

I recently started on my dream-job career after my Fulltimership placement in Uganda with Jesus Youth. Before my Fulltimership, I was able to pay off my \$40,000 student loan within a year of working. That itself was a miracle as I was doing my internship with a \$24,000 salary. However I told God, “If you want me to do the Fulltimership, I need you to pay off my student loan.” I had faith that His Will would be done, and that is exactly what happened. God paid off a \$40,000 student loan by allowing different possibilities to work in my favour.

Starting my current dream job, with no debt to pay off, allowed me to start thinking about the next phase of my life. This includes buying a house, furthering my education, preparing for matrimonial life, saving for retirement, everyday expenses and the list goes on. All this requires financial planning. The one financial advice I go by is – evaluating my spending and building a budget. Having had the experience of spending money lavishly, as well as of experiencing poverty in the past, has allowed me to understand the value of money at both ends of the spectrum.

I budget my money currently with a saving mindset and I try to plan in advance for things I need to spend money on. I focus more on my needs than my wants. This is because I am single and have no other major financial burdens currently. When I receive my income, I split my finance like: savings: 65-70%, fixed expenses (phone bill, entertainment, utility, insurance, food and etc) - 15-20%, emergency/travel fund - 5%, and tithe - 10%. These numbers are just an approximation as unexpected spending can occur, so it is important to prepare for those as well. I also re-evaluate my finances every few months to see if there needs to be a change.

One of my favorite things to do is travel the world. Many people believe that if you have to save money, you cannot have “fun”. I completely disagree with that as I am able to travel more as I have financial security. Therefore, find out what you would like to save money for, whether it is buying a car, social life, new clothes, house, and then instead of spending the money

I BUDGET
MY MONEY
CURRENTLY
WITH A SAVING
MINDSET AND I
TRY TO PLAN IN
ADVANCE FOR
THINGS I NEED
TO SPEND
MONEY ON

recklessly, plan where your money goes according to your priorities.

I am not in favour of having any outstanding debts. I only spend what I have as this prevents one from going down a slippery slope. If you have any outstanding loans, I encourage you to pay them off soon instead of making the minimum payments, or even adding to it. If this means you have to sacrifice a little on your wants, it will develop financial discipline. When I paid off my student loan, I had to make a lot of sacrifices, such as limiting social life, reducing purchases, etc. However, when I finished paying off the loan, I understood the stress of having a student loan and what it takes to pay it off.

God gave us money to meet our needs, but more importantly, to help others that are less fortunate. Everything is a gift from God and if we do not use it wisely, we are the ones to answer for our own actions. I encourage you, to help others whether it is by donating money or even dropping off items such as non-perishable foods, clothes, hygienic products, and such at the homeless shelter or to someone in need. We have to help and love one another.

Money can be very appealing but it can do good or bad. What we choose to do with the money will have its own consequences. To conclude, try not to spend money that you do not have and pay off your debts as soon as possible. Spend some time to plan and write spendings and targets, and put more discipline into your financial life. But the most important advice is to ask God before you make any financial decision or even before spending big or small amounts, ask for God’s input. God will show you clarity as He is the best manager and is always ready to help those who ask. He’s got your back.



Joel Alex lives in Canada and is currently serving as the assistant coordinator of Jesus Youth Calgary Zonal Council. He is a former International Fulltimer, who is now working in Law Enforcement as a Peace Officer.

IN FOCUS

LOVE AND RESPECT IN

Aby Jose reminds us of the importance of family units and how we can cultivate an atmosphere of positivity in our homes.



Family is a place close to everyone's heart. All of us toil day and night to be with our families, to give a better life for our loved ones. Family is where we begin our life, the place we go to, to share our happiness and celebrate our successes, for consolation during difficult times and for protection and support. When can we call ourselves a family? It is only when there is love and respect among the members. Below is an attempt to share a few thoughts on this from my journey so far.

In the Catholic context, a couple begins a family once they are united by the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony. From then on, it is the love and respect

FAMILY LIFE

between a husband and wife which forms the foundation for the growth of the family, and it is the key for a strong and resilient family in today's secular and materialistic world. As Mother Teresa said "Love begins at home, and it is not how much we do, but how much love we put in the action that we do". It is when we pour love into all that we do, that we transform our house into a home and our family becomes a place where we love to spend time.

I felt the following is an appropriate scripture verse in this context. Romans 12:9-10 says "Let love be sincere. Hate what is evil and hold to whatever is good. Love one another and be considerate. Outdo one another in mutual respect". Let our families be places where we live out these words of God; where we love each other sincerely, help each other to identify what is evil, stay away from it and have regard for one another. Respect is one of the greatest expressions of love. We can truly love someone only if we respect that individual for who he or she is, regardless of their strengths, weaknesses, abilities or disabilities, employment or unemployment, economic status etc. We need to learn to genuinely love and respect our family members and not allow our feelings, i.e. having a bad day, to dictate how we treat them. At the end of the day, our family is the one place where we can go to for support during downtimes in our life.

When we take things for granted, we forget to respect each other, whether it is our parents, spouse or children. The way I see it, listening is an expression of respect. It will be worthwhile reflecting on whether we spend enough time to listen to each other. Do we

make time for small chats with our spouse? Do we take time out to play with the kids and give them our full attention? Do we make a genuine attempt to stop on time from our work every day or answering a last work email taking priority over our child who is calling us to join for a little fun game? It is a fine and delicate balance. As a family, we struggle a lot on this and I am sure we are not alone. This is where our community can help us, to share our struggles and help us not to get discouraged. With the proper support, sharing of best practices and praying for one another, there will be changes gradually.

We are our children's greatest role models and we can teach them the importance of love and respect in life by practicing what we preach. As St. Paul says in his letter to Ephesians 6:1-3 "Children, obey your parents for this is right: Honour your father and your mother. And this is the first commandment that has promise: that you may be happy and enjoy long life in land".

I came across a beautiful Bible verse sometime back and found it to be so truthful, applying to all of us every

day. Proverbs 11:27 says "He who diligently seeks good seeks favor and grace, But he who seeks evil, evil will come to him." All of us spend a major share of our time with our family and it is quite natural and human to look for what is lacking rather than the positives. If we look for dirt in one another, we will find it. Rather we should make the effort to identify the real gold in those around us and we need to mine for this gold every day. 'Gold' can be a good quality, a helpful gesture, a simple thank you, appreciation or even a valuable virtue in another person's life. Once we start practicing and embracing this habit in our families, it will certainly give a new perspective to everything we do and bring a lot of positivity to our

families. This in turn will help to boost our self-esteem, which helps us to love and respect each other.

To end, I would like to quote St. Francis de Sales, "The measure of love is to love without measure." As the love of God our father is unconditional, personal and unceasing, let us love and respect our loved ones without measure. Let our families be circles of strength, founded on faith, joined in love and respect and rooted in God.



Aby Jose currently lives in Singapore with wife Sharoon, kids Jonathan and Jaden, and works in the pharmaceutical industry.

MARRIED

*Remember you are in
the battle field!*



Joby Mundackal asserts that the core of Christian marriage is to follow the footsteps of Christ. He provides some profound pointers to young couples embarking on their journey of married life

Battle! Often people misunderstand this battle and think that the battle is between the husband and wife. In a war, if the enemy is smart his best strategy would be to confuse the opposing soldiers and make them fight among themselves. Our struggle is not against enemies of flesh and blood, but against the spiritual forces of evil (Eph 6:12). Let us explore married life through this lens and equip ourselves.

On May 6th, we celebrated our 16th wedding anniversary – a good time to reflect on our lives and also to evaluate the battle.

Three weeks after our marriage, Vinitha and I moved to the UK. We began our life far away from our immediate families. A small family can encounter difficult obstacles when it is isolated from relatives and friends. The ecclesial community therefore has the responsibility of offering support, encouragement and spiritual nourishment which can strengthen the cohesiveness of the family, especially in times of trial or difficulty. (Benedict XVI). Most of our families are in a way slightly isolated. There are advantages and disadvantages to this. None of our intermediate relatives witness the mood swings in our family life, and thus miss the opportunity to provide support and guidance. However, the role of ecclesial communities like Jesus Youth can play a vital role in these situations. Our fellowship gatherings give ample opportunities to

interact with other families and youth. One common agenda in all JY gatherings is time for personal sharing. This provides opportunity to share at least a fraction of our vulnerability and raise our need for prayer support.

We also find time to visit other families. In fact when we became parents, we visited and stayed with many other JY families. This gave us an opportunity to build relationship with them and also to see the dynamics of other families. One important blessing that happened for us was in having another couple as our cell mate. This gave an opportunity to be accountable about our life.

COMBINED FAITH JOURNEY

Till marriage the spiritual journey is personal. But with marriage my partner becomes my way of getting closer to Christ. In fact one of the mysteries of marriage is that our choice of our life partner becomes a gift of God. When we reflect on the lives of St Monica or St Rita, we can be certain that our ways of gift is completely different from God's gift, and only in time can we fully understand it. We spend time together in praying, talking, traveling and many other activities. But the most nourishing time is when one person shares their spiritual insights, which often become the food for the other person's soul. This should be a two way process, so both will grow spiritually.

The soldiers in the battle field talk about the strength of their King, which in turn empowers them. So don't miss any opportunity to talk about the spiritual experiences in your daily lives.

Now they are no more two but one. It's important to go to bed as a couple. Sometimes we tend to stay with the phone or engrossed in some other business as late night is often a quiet time. So prioritize those activities. It is important for couples to reconcile to one another and thank God before sleep. Don't let anything that affect your marital relationship to go with you to your sleep.

When it comes to any major decisions, it should be decided with mutual consent. Sometimes this can be costly, but through this process your decisions won't be influenced by any external factors.

One major mistake we do in our marital relationship is underestimating our spouses. During the honeymoon years we try to discover one another and often make the mistake of judging our spouses. The success of an individual lies in discovering



himself/herself under the eyes of his/her creator. As time progresses, I am discovering many more new things in me. If I could do this to myself, how can I stop discovering the diamond in my spouse. When God created everything, He concluded with a statement that "It is good". Also, His love is new every day. The beauty of marriage is helping one another to discover this diamond. The best way for evil to win the battle is to make you believe that there is nothing new in your spouse. Are you losing your battle or winning?

Another mistake couples make is mocking a character trait of their spouse in front of others. If your husband is someone who doesn't help with the daily chores, or spends too much time with social media, you should find the right time to talk to him, rather than talking about this frustration in a funny way in public, as this will usually be counterproductive. In the same way, talking bad about your wife's nature in the presence of friends' would only damage the relationship more. If you are finding it difficult to talk about such sensitive issues, bring them in prayer – your help comes from the mountain (Ps 121). Lives of St Rita and St Monica gives us hope. Having a close cell group often helps in opening up.

If someone were to ask me what the core of Christian marriage is – it is to follow the footsteps of Christ. He emptied himself and navigated life in its entire spectrum of difficulties and sufferings, in complete obedience. So to bear fruit in our family life, we should be willing to die. Dying to self is vital. Thus the other person's interest becomes my interest. If we observe carefully, the Old Testament rule of a tooth for

Till marriage the spiritual journey is personal. But with marriage my partner becomes my way of getting closer to Christ

a tooth is still visible in many of our families – actions and reactions abound, thereby giving room for evil. But when we begin walking in the footsteps of Christ, his divinity starts blossoming in our life.

SO THE GOLDEN RULES..

We are in battle with the forces of darkness. If we are getting irritated with our partner, it is most likely the power of evil. So that's the time to sharpen; put on the armour of God (Eph 6: 13-17). Our weapons should have power to defuse all evil powers (2 Cori 10:3-5).

Your faithfulness is towards Christ. He is the standard. All comparison is with Him, not with our spouses. In every effort try to imitate Him (Phil 2:3-8) and the Lord will raise you up, as he promised. ■



Joby Mundackal Lives in Manchester, UK with wife Vinitha Joby and their four children. They home educate their children and have a special interest in ministering to kids and teens.

Living life

In the Family



well they treated their parents, and they have been role models for us. My husband taught me selflessness and true leadership. I never had the feeling of being transplanted into a different family after marriage, as they had the same values as me. Our silent prayer for family was answered in the best way possible.

SUSMITHA MELVIN / SINGAPORE

When I think of family, the two things that come to mind instantly are 'freedom' and 'love'. My parents built in their daughters a deep-seated feeling of trust – that no matter what goes wrong, they will always stand by us and fight for us till their last breath. I admired their punctuality and inherited the habit of reading from my dad. My mom was one of my favourite teachers. They have always been warriors; they taught us to be brave and courageous, and not be ashamed to admit a mistake. We have witnessed how

Through the six years of being married, I feel I have grown tremendously. I have felt love and healing take place in areas of my insecurity and brokenness through my spouse and children, and importantly, learned how to depend on the Lord above all else for His love. Various daily situations have revealed to me many weaknesses that I thought I never had, as well as made me develop strengths that I thought I was incapable of acquiring! Procrastination and poor time management has always been a struggle for me, but I have been forced to prioritise and manage time effectively so that I can do justice to all the roles I want to live out. And so I am stretched without being broken! I have discovered my contentment now comes firstly from having lived out each day at home in love, and that is the legacy I want to leave behind.

HAZEL CRASTO / UK



Ithink family is one of the biggest blessings from God that we take for granted, simply because they are always there. Very often we fail to realise how wonderfully God has provided for us through our families. Growing up I was very fortunate to have a very peaceful and stable family life. Even though my dad had passed away when I was really young, I never felt that void – my Mom made sure of that. When me and my brother were small, my mom used to read to us stories of saints and made us pray the way of the cross. We would force her to read to us the story of St. George and the dragon, he was our favourite superhero growing up. The biggest gift I've received through my family is to have an abiding faith in Christ regardless of the situation I am going through. Mom taught me to always seek the will of God and pray to God before doing anything in life. I always have confidence in my troubles because I know I have a family who is always praying for me. I praise and thank God for this beautiful gift of family.

JULIUS ARJUN FERNANDEZ / SINGAPORE



TRUE MEANING OF LEARNING

Sini Joshy highlights that during this time of home-based learning, along with schoolwork, it is a good time to begin involving the children in household chores so that it becomes a habit

Home-based learning is something that our young children in Singapore had to get accustomed to since the Covid-19 pandemic broke out. The country was placed under 'circuit breaker phase' which meant you could not leave the house for any reason other than exercise or essential work. Hence children had to continue being home-schooled with online support from teachers. The kids loved that they could sleep longer in the mornings without the typical school rush. However, the day began by going straight from the bed to the laptop. After a few hours of staring at the screen, they would look for ways to unwind. It was indeed a struggle for parents to manage them at home since they were missing their favourite outdoor activities. This led to the kids spending the rest of their day either watching TV or playing on their phones.

That got us parents thinking – is home-based learning only about completing school lessons at home? Is it not true that our homes are the children's

first school and that parents are the primary teachers? In the mad rush of daily life, this is one truth we often forget or sometimes ignore.

In a bid to ensure that their children excel, most parents invest a lot of time and finances in finding the appropriate extracurricular activity. While parents are burdened with getting their kids to these different extracurricular activities on time, and though children find themselves engaged through it, most of the time they are also overwhelmed with organised recreation.

Today's generation can handle the most advanced technologies with ease. However, because of parents not allowing their children to carry out even the smallest household chores, i.e. folding laundry, they struggle to get things done by themselves. Consequently, they must rely on others in the family for help and fail to adopt the habit of helping with things at home. As the Bible says in Sirach 40:18 "Life is sweet for the self-reliant and the worker, but he who finds treasure is better off than both." Are we, the parents, denying them the opportunity to learn to be self-sufficient in their daily activities by being overprotective? Something for us to think hard about!

During this time of home-based learning, along with schoolwork, it is a good time to begin involving the children in household chores so that it becomes a habit. Just like the school timetable, it would be great to have a timetable to help with the work at home, along with a list of chores that the children can do. Without differentiating between boys and girls, all jobs in the house should be distributed equally among the children.

Without too much hand holding from parents, children are more likely to become self-reliant, and it is a great way to boost their self-confidence. When kids work together in cooperation with their siblings, they will also pick up some essential skills like teamwork which will be useful in the future. While teaching them different jobs around the house, it is particularly important to emphasise to children that every job has its own dignity and value and that it must be done with due diligence and earnestness. "Whatever work you find to do, do it with all your might" (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

Cleanliness of our dwelling place is the responsibility of every single person who lives there. Children should be instructed to keep their rooms and surroundings clean from a young age, so that it becomes a norm and a habit. In this way, they will learn to keep whatever area they use clean and tidy at all times. Try and involve kids whenever you are cleaning the house, even just to watch and learn. One area of the house that kids mess up the most but are most reluctant to help with is the toilet. Including them while cleaning the toilet will help them to use toilets in schools and public places with care.

Other small tasks they can help with are setting

WITHOUT DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN BOYS AND GIRLS, ALL JOBS IN THE HOUSE SHOULD BE DISTRIBUTED EQUALLY AMONG THE CHILDREN

the table for meals, clearing the table after a meal and washing dishes. Once they realise the difficulties in cleaning the house, kids will become less likely to cause a mess. Keeping the house clean and tidy is a challenge when you have young kids. Teaching good habits like putting away the toys neatly after playtime or returning the books to the shelf where they belong after reading will go a long way. Encourage children to do the jobs by themselves no matter how long it takes and resist the temptation of helping them just to speed up the process.

Putting clothes for wash, spreading them out to dry and folding them once done are all simple tasks that kids can be involved in. If they have folded their own clothes and kept them neatly in the cupboard, it will remain so for a longer time as they will come to appreciate the time and effort needed to do the job. Thus, the problem of a messy wardrobe could be solved!

Most kids are reluctant or picky eaters. One way to tackle this is to involve them in the preparation of meals. They can do simple things like rinsing rice, cutting or peeling vegetables, grinding ingredients or even tasting the food while cooking. It is surprising to see how children's attitude to eating changes when they have a hand in the process, with less complaints and grumbling. Trying a new recipe is also an exciting way to engage the kids and the parents in the kitchen and a great way to encourage an interest in cooking. If the dish is the child's choice, then the enthusiasm is doubled! Such engagements also give you the opportunity to highlight the advantages of healthy and balanced meals, instead of binging on junk food and sticking to specific types of food. If you have room to grow some vegetables in your garden or kitchen area, it would be a great opportunity to nurture some good habits like caring for delicate things, the value of pesticide-free vegetables and a chance to highlight the difficulties that farmers go through to bring good produce to the market.

Older children in the house can be given tasks that need more responsibility and skill, i.e. grocery shopping for essential things. Being entrusted with money gives them a sense of responsibility and could also help them appreciate the cost of living while teaching them to spend money wisely. It is also sensible to teach them basic sewing skills like stitching buttons, to avoid them having to rely on others.

If there are older members of the family staying with you, such as grandparents, then encourage kids to be involved in their care by making sure to check upon them once in a while and help them with what they need. This will teach kids respect, responsible behaviour and good moral values.

Every child holds promise for the future. They should not only excel in academics or art or sport, but also have good moral and social values. It is the duty of every parent to ensure that their children are formed in a wholesome manner. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

May every household have such home-based learning.



Sini Joshy, is a mother of two energetic young kids. She is a stay-at-home-mom and lives in Singapore.

FAMILY IN FOCUS

A WITNESS TO THE



Sijumon and
Sindhu with their
five children

STRANGERS



Seema Thomas shares with us glimpses of the lifestyle of Sijumon Abraham and family, who have made it their mission to give Jesus to strangers

Pope Paul VI once said, 'modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses'. One such witness who has stood out distinctly for young people in Singapore has been Sijumon Abraham and his family.

Be it journeying with young people personally or even opening his house for youth gatherings, he has been the driving force for the mission in Singapore. Sijumon serves as the animator for Jesus Youth Singapore and lives with his wife and five lovely and energetic young kids. Following is an excerpt of a candid conversation with Sijumon and Sindhu about their family, ministry and mission life:

Tell us about your first encounter and initial experience with Jesus Youth

Sijumon: I was a Sunday Catholic and never missed a Sunday mass. But attending Holy Mass for me was like watching a drama. I never had an encounter with Jesus. But I always prayed for getting things done mainly through the intercession of Mother Mary by attending Saturday novenas.

While I was doing my Masters' final year project, I had a chance to attend a Jesus Youth night vigil prayer at CST Chapel, Bangalore. During the homily, the priest asked "Do you love Jesus?" That question struck me and I repeatedly asked myself the same question. This question encouraged me to attend the next night vigil with eagerness. During the praise and worship session (which I always hated

and mocked when people prayed loudly) I saw young people raising their hands and praising God without any hesitation, while I stood there with folded hands watching what the others were doing. Moments later, I had a deep urge to praise God in a loud voice and by raising my hands. That same night during a praying over session, a brother told me to "Surrender your financial worries to God". This surprised me as I did have some financial struggles at that time; but what surprised me more was how people could hear God's message. The very next day there was an answer to the financial problem that I had! Praise God! Since then, I continued my spiritual journey, seeking the Lord and growing close to Him.

What dreams did you both have about your family when you got married?

We didn't have big dreams but only one wish, to live together with all the kids that God would bless us with wherever we may be! We do not plan anything in our life. Rather, we trust fully in the Lord as He has a better plan for us and we are ready to do His will wherever we go.

Tell us more about your family?

Sijumon: My wife Sindhu and I both come from big families. Both of us know well the benefits of a big family, and we have found our joy multiplying when we come together as a family. Also, our kids are learning how to share everything and how to adjust their lives to live peacefully. This is a life lesson for them to trust fully in God.



Having a big family in Singapore is a super luxury in the words of most Singaporeans. When people hear that I have five kids, they are really surprised and ask us "How do you manage that?" We only have one answer which is similar to Psalms 20:7 "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God". We thank God for all the things we have today. God will make a way for our tomorrow!

How does a normal day look like in your household?

Sijumon: Our day starts with personal prayer. The time and prayer varies from age to age as the elder ones have their own personal prayer format and the younger ones will pray the Holy Rosary. Kids go to school early in the morning and I go to work while my wife does shift work. Our routines change based on my wife's shift; if she has a night shift we change our family prayer time to evening around 6pm before she leaves for work.

Sindhu: During my personal prayer time, I offer my family, especially kids,

for them to have a Christ experience in their lives. Family prayer is another place where we all spend time together and appreciate each other's good deeds. I also ensure that my kids do their personal prayer every morning and make a short prayer before leaving for school. Sijumon brings all our kids to church everyday as some days I have shift work and am unable to attend the Holy Mass. Also, I read the bible for 30 mins daily without failure and I encourage my family members to do the same. This way I ensure the word of God touches my family members' heart and changes their way of life including myself.

How do you manage to balance work, family and ministry in your life?

Sijumon: We are not career oriented but we are family oriented. As a result, we focus more on family time instead of spending overtime at work. Because of this we have less promotions and increments but we are blessed with what we need for our daily life.

What are your personal interests or hobbies?

Sijumon: I like to do acrylic paintings, photography and videography. But more than that my real passion is to seek the kingdom of God and help young people experience the real love of Jesus.

How do you spend time together as a couple in the midst of a busy day?

We try to spend some alone time before we go to sleep. It is very important for couples. Some days we have more time to talk and laugh with each other but some days are really tiring and so we may get less time.

How do you ensure each child gets enough individual attention and also time to spend together?

We usually check each child's daily activities and help them. We try to spend more time when we see one of them sad or silent. Family prayer time is the time we spend together. Our family prayer time is usually 30 minutes, but before we start we have a casual talk about our day and



Above: With the sisters and Jesus Youth elders at the Chapel during the Mission trip

any concerns and may take longer time to complete the whole session. We also try to eat our breakfast, lunch and dinner together and during weekends, we get more time to spend with each other.

How do you integrate family and mission? How do you emphasize that mission is important?

Sijumon: I strongly believe that mission is something that should come from the heart and not because of compulsion. Our intention is to give them basic catechism and a love for Jesus. One way we prepare them is by learning the Word of God. Each member of the family will take a separate Bible verse for the day and memorize it. The members will then share the word of God they have learnt during the evening family prayer time.

Sindhu: There was a point of time where we had to select the second language for my kids; we chose Mandarin Chinese instead of our known languages like Hindi or Tamil. We received a lot of

WHEN I GET CALLS FROM INSURANCE AGENTS, I DON'T DISCONNECT THE CALL; RATHER I MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH THEM TO HEAR THEM PERSONALLY. DURING THE MEETING, I SHARE MY TESTIMONY AND TRY TO INSPIRE THEM TO TAKE A FEW STEPS TO EXPERIENCE THE SAME LOVE OF GOD

discouragement from many but we pressed on. The reason why we chose this language was for them to be able to mingle more with Chinese nationals so they will be able to share the good news with them. We got this conviction from the Lord which helps us to persevere. The kids speak Mandarin quite well now.

Do you have any personal mission?

Sijumon: My personal mission is to meet

strangers and share the love of Jesus. I have tried different ways to accomplish this.

- When I get calls from insurance agents, I don't disconnect the call; rather I make an appointment with them to hear them personally. During the meeting, I share my testimony and try to inspire them to take a few steps to experience the same love of God.

- I attend Holy Mass daily in the evening after my work. After the Mass I spend some time in adoration and then go to a nearby crowded place to meet and talk to strangers.

- I share my car with strangers on my way to the office and back. I find this a great way of sharing about Jesus to strangers. I've been doing this since 2017. I've managed to talk to thousands of people using this platform and I thank God for helping me with the grace to reach out in this manner.

How can we encourage kids to share the love of Jesus? What changes did you see in them after such experiences?

We personally look for opportunities to join any mission activities and try to involve our kids in them too. We encouraged our 12-year-old son to go for a two-day mission experience trip to Indonesia to help poor people. We were surprised that during the trip, he shared a testimony to some school children about how the Holy Spirit helped him find the directions to our home when he lost his way. This experience reminded him to depend on God always and listen to the Holy Spirit every moment of his life. His sharing to the kids was not because we forced him to share, he did it on his own. He realized how the Holy Spirit had helped him and was inspired to share it. Sharing reinforced his experience and made him more confident of himself with the Holy Spirit. Praise God! ■



Seema Thomas is a mother of two young kids and a medical engineer by profession. She is part of Jesus Youth Singapore

SPECIAL

A VISIONARY MENTOR

Palliachan is a household name for many families across the globe. **Dr. Joby Cyriac** talks to this ever young priest, who has the intrinsic courage to face challenges and the vision to break new paths.



Availability is the sign of a Christian" - when Rev. Fr. Abraham Pallivathukkal makes that statement, you know that it comes from a person who has lived it all through. Fondly called Palliachan, he is a priest who walks with the youth to enable them to grow in holiness in their unique way. A mentor who readily listens to the young people and interprets their life in the light of the scriptures and enables them to mature and grow. When the person gets inducted to his unique mission, the mentor silently retreats to watch in joy another vine branch blooming and bearing fruit as a Jesus Youth.

In his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation 'Christus Vivit' Pope Francis speaks about the priests and the leaders who are called upon to help the youth discern their path in life. For such people, what is uppermost is the ability to listen, which calls for three distinct and complementary kinds of sensitivity: to the individual, to discernment, and finally to perceive the other person. Fr. Pallivathukkal radiates this level of sensitivity which makes him a warm guiding presence for hundreds of youngsters. He has relentlessly striven to imitate Christ by always being ready like Jesus, even for the ultimate of sacrifices for the sake of his wards.

Palliachan recalls the days of his formation in the Jesuit order as a process of becoming an influencer of people, particularly of youngsters. The Jesuit formation was a gradual mentoring and guidance in spiritual growth, learning to forget self and to live for the Lord and His people. It is the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius that showed him the way to the transformation of self and others. "The Lord has called us not to live for ourselves, but to live for others," Palliachan clarifies. For him, option for the poor is a conviction articulated in deeds, a commitment which runs through his whole life. "We are called to wipe the tears of others and to reduce their burden. This conviction I got during my formation and it is this option for the poor that I have tried to bring into the Jesus Youth formation."

Palliachan is enthusiastic when he voices his convictions; Jesus did not come and give an ideology. Instead, he lived what he taught. He shed even the last drop of His blood for us and every Holy Mass we celebrate is a call for the ongoing renewal of the person. Here, a revolution happens through the death and resurrection of the individual Self. This internal transformation is what is expected from every Christian. The Priests, religious and Jesus youth need to become role models. That is the purpose of all formation- to live with fortitude, without falling into self-indulgence, to live with a mission "looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who

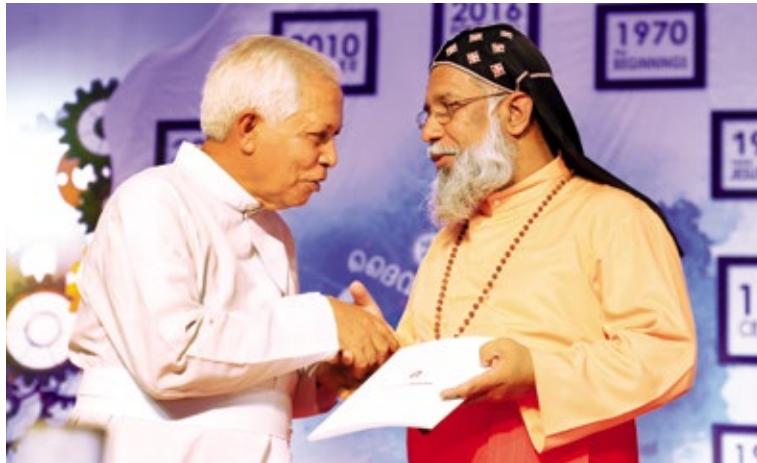
for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2-3). We are called to lead by example.

Father jubilantly walks down the memory lane to relate his edifying experiences of interaction with Sr. Petra Moennigmann (Servant of God Mother Petra Dinadasi) the foundress of the religious Congregation 'The Servants of the Poor,' and with St. Mother Teresa during the years of his formation for priesthood. Such experiences helped confirm in him the importance of 'reaching out to people'. On one occasion, a group of students from Calcutta University came to Mother's old age home at Kalighat seeking an opportunity to do social service. Mother gave brooms and buckets and asked them to sweep and clean the lavatories. Soon they returned unable to bear the filth and the stench. With her disarming smile, Mother took over, tucked in her blue-bordered saree, and washed the first toilet clean. And the youth followed suit! Palliachan pauses for a moment and remarks, "It is high time we responded to Pope Francis' call to 'Walk the Talk'."

It is more than what meets the eye, when you are with Palliachan. You start contemplating the meaning of life and spirituality as you listen to him: "God gave His only Son who died for us. Perpetuating the life of Christ in the world is the task of the Christian. The risen Christ is not a 'there and then experience' far removed from our lives. But he is with us 24 hours a day. As a Christian and as a priest, I have received his commissioning - go and live for the other. Once we try to understand the paschal mystery deeply, we will be transformed. We will move away from self-centeredness to the other-centred living." Father sums up quoting St. Paul: "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another" (Gal 5:13).

Palliachan has with him the remedy to the modern day maladies of callous self-seeking. "It is not the survival of the self that needs to be focused – psychological models many a time speak only about the survival of the self. They stop there and do not go beyond. But what is needed is a wider perspective of life. Every Christian leader, every Jesus Youth, should be able to clarify the meaning of life for others. They should be able to interpret the life, death and resurrection of Christ in the context of human lives. This is the life-line the Lord has shown us. But many drift away from this life-line and get trapped in the self and fall into bondages of different types."

"We are called to freedom. This freedom of the spirit leads us to imitate Christ, to follow Jesus who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, by living for the other.



The risen Christ is not a 'there and then experience' far removed from our lives. But he is with us 24 hours a day. As a Christian and as a priest, I have received his commissioning - go and live for the other

This does not mean that everyone becomes perfect,” Palliachan cautions, “but it is the direction of our growth, the lifeline of our true and spiritual existence. But the ‘good life’ I teach and the ‘not so good life’ I lead - the difference between these two is painful. ‘Walking the Talk’ is easily said than done!”

Father also shares his vision of youth formation which he tried to put in to practice from the early days of his priestly mission. “The church needs to read the signs of the times and challenges which today’s youth face, and plan interventions in anticipation. We need contemporary answers for contemporary questions, not yesterday’s answers.” The young people of today should get a chance to experience Christian faith in the way St. Oscar Romero describes: “Christianity is not a collection of truths to be believed, rules to be followed, or some prohibitions. Seen that way, it puts us off. Christianity is a person who loved me immensely, who demands and claims my love. Christianity is Christ.” In Jesus Youth formation, this personal touch and accompanying experience were incorporated from the very beginning. The formation of a Jesus Youth has this contemporary touch and an understanding of the

realities of today’s world.

Palliachan also observes that the lay people seem to have lost the awareness that they are an integral part of the Church. Creating a sense of belongingness to the Church is the need of the hour. The clergy and the leaders of the Church need to take up this challenge with a full understanding of their vulnerabilities. They should move forward without losing credibility and trustworthiness. The laity who form almost 98 percent of the faithful should be taken into confidence and proportionately

resources; finances and personnel - should be channelized according to the needs of the laity. The realisation that priesthood is for service and not for authority is what will make the key difference. The Church needs to go beyond just formation of the laity and embrace collaboration with the laity at all levels.

The visionary zeal in Palliachan reveals itself when he looks into the future of the Church and the involvement of the laity. He asserts: Instilling the sense of belongingness in the laity can happen only if they come to understand the meaning of life by comprehending the paschal mission of Christ. In the history of the Church, we meet several lay theologians from the very beginning (e.g. Tertullian, Pascal, Justin etc.) - enlightened and discerning lay leaders, who could guide and enrich the laity and the clergy alike. In the true spirit of collaboration, the laity should be involved in seminary formation also. There are several ‘accomplished and informed’ lay people in our midst. There are instances in the Church when some insightful Bishops have asked retired lay people who are experts in their fields to take charge of the finance, agriculture etc. of their diocese. Why can’t we do this in other contexts too? If such creative steps are taken the distancing of the clergy from the laity can be checked. This requires an all-round radical change in the Church. The perspectives have to change and a new way of thinking and collaborative leadership needs to emerge.

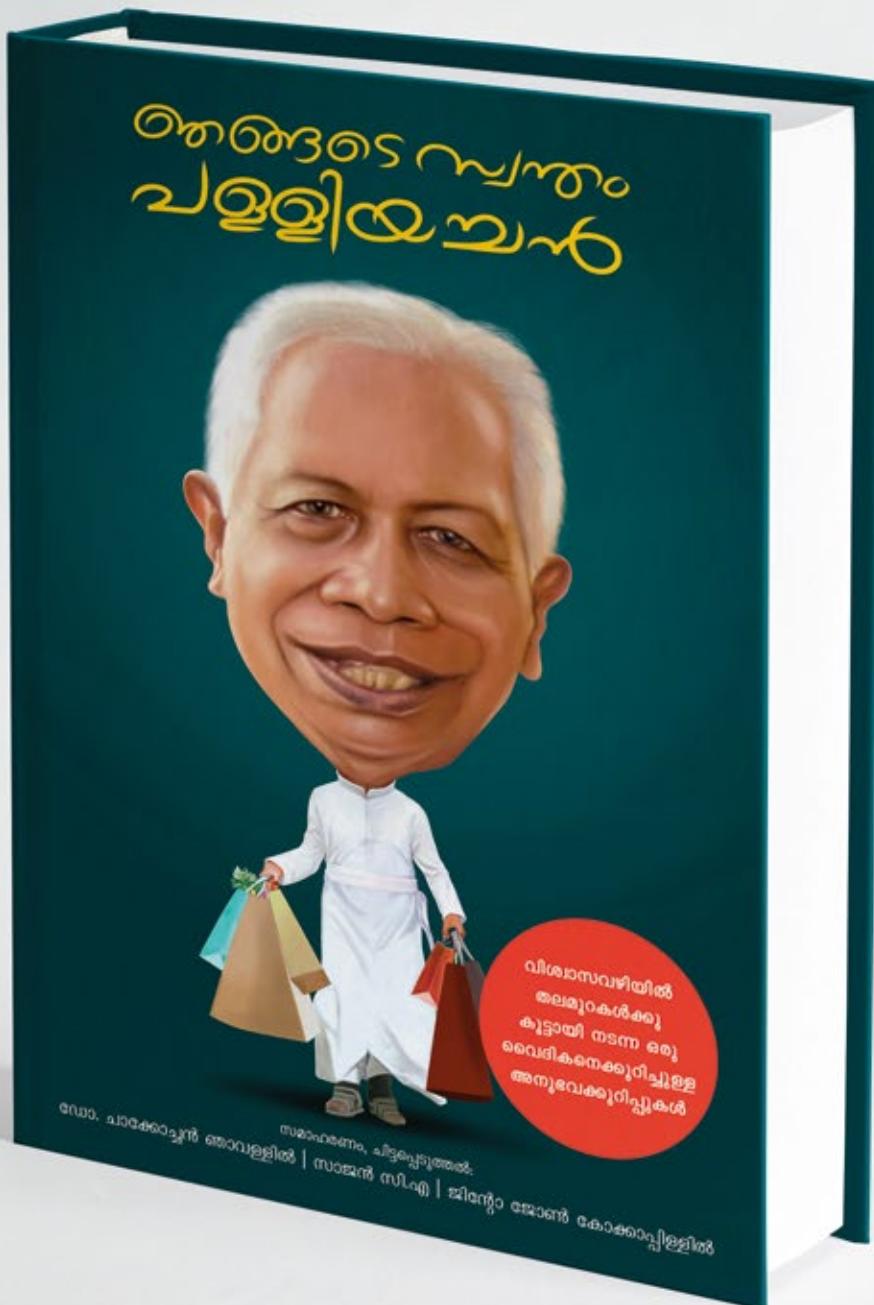
For many people in Kuttanadu, Kerala, where most of the cultivation is done below sea level in the land created by draining delta swamps in saline waters, the means of livelihood still is a gambling in the monsoon and floods. Palliachan, who hails from among those who brave the vagaries of nature in Kuttanadu, no doubt, has the intrinsic courage to face challenges and the vision to break new paths.



Dr. Joby Cyriac is the Associate professor at Marian College Kuttikkanam, Kerala, India and the co author of two books about full time volunteers - 'Motivated by Love' and 'Focused only on Lord'

Tales of love

60 PEOPLE SHARE THEIR BEAUTIFUL EXPERIENCES
WITH FR ABRAHAM PALLIVATHUKKAL.



Many of us have experienced the fraternal love of Fr Abraham Pallivathukkal, whom we fondly call, "Palliachan." If you have met him, you will definitely have an unforgettable experience of his love and concern. Here's a compilation of sharings from across the globe by few of those who were touched by his warmth.

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OUTREACH

Lumen Vitae

Brian Mundackal shares about this unique initiative

Lumen Vitae is a humanitarian organization, which accompanies young people, especially those who find themselves hindered by poverty in marginalized situations around the world, on a path to abundant life. Born from the heart of the Jesus Youth mission in Haiti; it uses education, practical support and mentorship to empower young people to realize their dreams and shape the future of their communities.

It was only a little over three years ago when I would walk in the sunny afternoons from house to house of Camp Corail with Jemps Jean, our school support agent, to check in to see how our students and their families were doing. At that time, our entire operation consisted of our feet, our ears and whatever papers we could fit into our backpacks. When I think about our energetic staff in Haiti and the countless generosity of our volunteers and sponsors in America, I am marveled by the Lord's providence and humbled by His confidence in us to start





All pics: Beneficiaries of Lumen Vitae

Lumen Vitae to serve some of the most marginalized students in Haiti.

Today, we have nearly 600 students enrolled in schools across zones like Croix-des-Bouquets, Mirebalais, Carrefour, and Anse-à-Veau in Haiti. The program has also yielded over 20 high school graduates, who have, in turn, volunteered to become mentors to accompany the younger students in the program. This reinforces a key theme which we like to communicate to our young people: "without cost you have received; without cost you are to give" (Mt 10:8). In addition, this past December was extra special for our students because of the efforts of hundreds of children across the United States who "Shared the Light" and sent Christmas gifts to their brothers and sisters in need.

As we evaluated necessary areas of growth to further our mission, we recognized the need for what has now become our newly opened Learning Center. We saw that partially due to the availability of university seats, our previously sponsored students were encountering difficulties in entering an

We hope that through education and accompaniment, we can put our students on a path to abundant life!

accredited bachelor's degree program. Meanwhile, we also noticed that there was a great need for language and computer skills to provide a competitive advantage for young people who desired to work to support their families immediately after their studies. As a means to help equip students to excel in these areas, through the help of two corporate partners, we were able to launch our "Learning Center" where we host English and computer classes every morning for students who have graduated from High School but have not yet started university or work. In the afternoon, the center transforms

into a tutoring space where our younger children come to receive additional instruction from the older students. In the future, we hope more learning centers can spring up in our newer zones, giving an opportunity to create spaces for further learning and mentorship.

This past year has not been an easy one for Haiti; marked by political differences, gang violence and rapid inflation of goods. For the vulnerable populations which we serve, the opportunity to receive an education, a daily meal and have mentors closely accompany their journey can be the only source of light in the midst of much darkness. We hope that through education and accompaniment, we can put our students on a path to abundant life! ■



LUMEN VITAE MISSION

Accompany: Towards A More Dignified Life

Educate: To Inspire Hope & Virtue

Transform: To Build A Brighter Future

To find out more information about our project or how to sponsor a child, please visit us at www.lumenvitae.us.

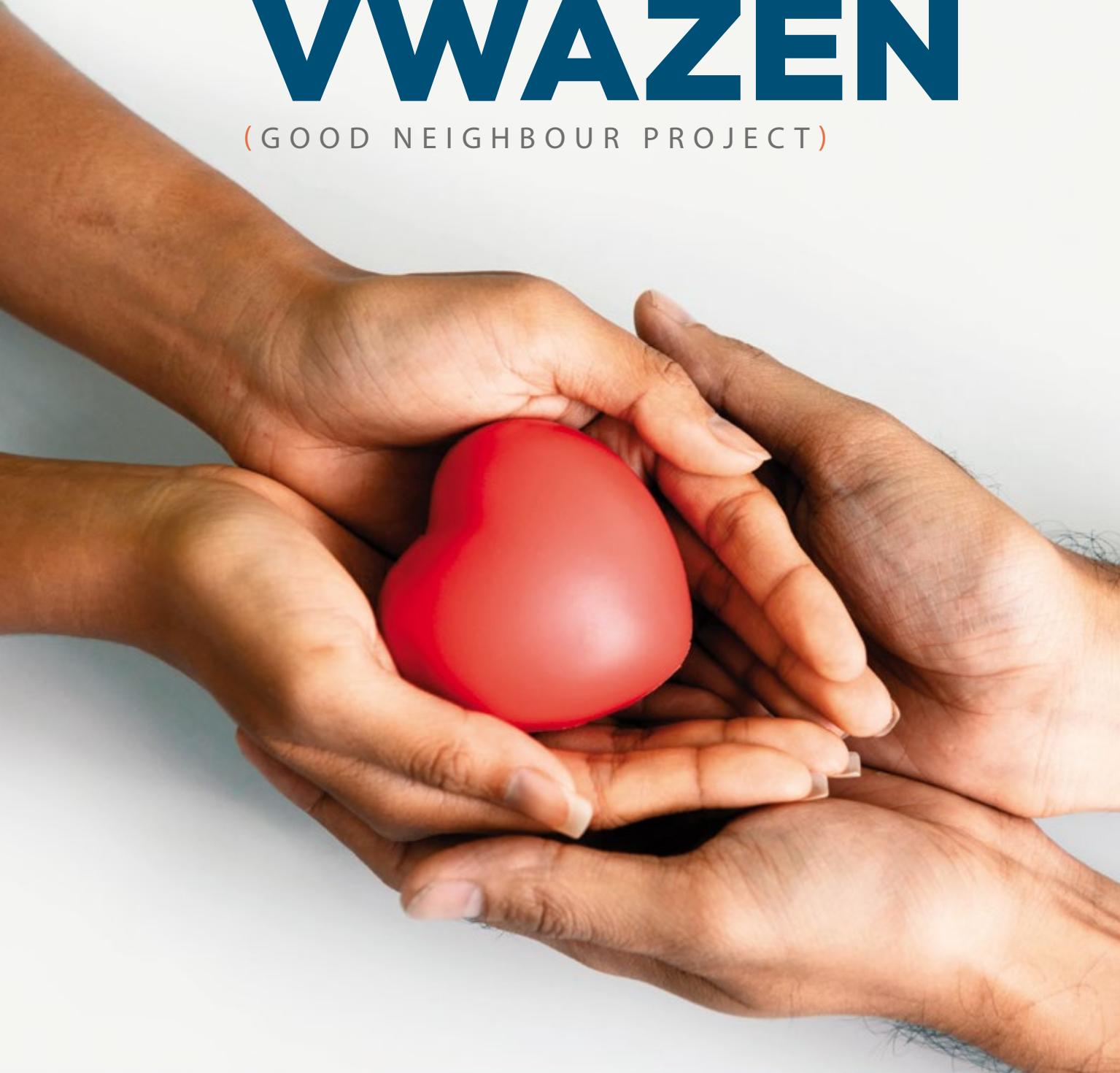


Brian Mundackal lives in Delray Beach,

Florida, USA with his wife Swapna and son

Ephrem, He is currently working as the Executive Director of Lumen Vitae.

Pwojè
**BON
VWAZEN**
(GOOD NEIGHBOUR PROJECT)



Armelie Pierre and Jonathan Cayo, shares with Roshan Philip and Anthony Kunnumpurath about the Good Neighbour Project, which is trying to help Haitians combat COVID-19

While the world at large is still grappling to contain a deadly virus, WHO has identified Haiti as one of the nations that could face potential collapse of their already weakened health systems if the spread of COVID-19 is not mitigated. It is at this point our friends at Lumen Vitae, a non-profit funding education to K-12 grade and college students, formed a mission project called, "Pwojè Bon Vwazen" or "The Good Neighbor Project." To get a clear picture of it, Roshan Philip and Anthony Kunnumpurath spoke with Armelie Pierre and Jonathan Cayo, coordinators of the project in Haiti. Excerpts from the interview:

How is the situation with COVID-19 in Haiti?

► **Jonathan:** Currently, the numbers are increasing, almost by 150-200 daily. The Haitian government has implemented social distancing and is not allowing gatherings of more than 10 people. But there continues to be gatherings of more than 10 people. For example, the public market is still open where more than 100 people gather. But these places cannot be closed all of a sudden without a contingency plan because people need the markets to sustain their food for livelihood. Economically, we need a solution to allow people to stay at home, social distance and bring food to the table. At the moment, there is no substantial solution and without any real solution, people will continue to do what is needed to do to earn their livelihood.

What were your initial thoughts about Pwojè Bon Vwazen ?

► **Armelie:** I thought it was a really good idea and felt that it was something needed for our community and Haiti. A vast majority of the people don't have the accurate information about the disease; how it spreads and how to prevent it from spreading. So, if we have individuals trained with the correct information, we could easily deliver this message and help others in our community.

► **Jonathan:** Even before Pwojè Bon Vwazen, Lumen Vitae Haiti team, (Jemps Jean, Evens Ducasse, Litzia Joseph and Obed Giles) have been thinking about how we can help others during this time of COVID-19, especially the families of Lumen Vitae. As Armelie said, people don't have the right information and are not able to understand the severity of the pandemic. So when we first heard about Pwojè Bon Vwazen and creating Community Health Workers (CHW), it was for us the best way to help the people to get the information about COVID-19.

What is Pwojè Bon Vwazen or The good neighbor project?

► **Armelie:** Pwojè Bon Vwazen, is a project by Jesus Youth Haiti and Lumen Vitae. In the project, we train six CHW on the basics of COVID-19 - the disease, how it spreads, and how we can stop the spread. After receiving the training, these community health workers will go to their own neighborhood and distribute items like masks, sanitizers, along with educating them on the spread and prevention of COVID-19. Overall, we want to have more people educated about the virus and we hope to keep people safe from the disease with the accurate information. We will also have three people trained to make masks locally in Haiti which our CHW will be distributing.

Who are CHW -community health workers? Why do we need them?

► **Jonathan:** Community health workers are individuals who receive training to help their own community about certain health issues. For our project, we have chosen to tackle COVID-19. The CHW after receiving appropriate training on a particular health issue, in our case COVID-19, goes out to their community to educate them about the issue. They will also provide necessary materials to prevent the spread of the virus, to the families and individuals they visit, including soap, masks and disinfectants. We also want our CHW to be part of our current health system and help people who need medical attention get the care they need. In Haiti, the physician to patient ratio is 0.25 per 1000 population. The WHO recommends a 1:1000 physician patient ratio for developing countries. Our CHW are not a replacement for a physician, but will help teach people about a particular condition which otherwise would not be possible and help them get the care they need.

► **Armelie:** The CHW will also be able to identify those with COVID-19 symptoms and help them get the care they need. In Haiti, a lot of people still don't know the basic symptoms of the illness. Our CHW will help them understand this along with teaching them how to wash hands, how to put on masks, what to do if they have these symptoms etc.

Why is it important for community health workers to go to their own communities?

► **Jonathan:** The main reason they go to their own community is because the trust these communities have in them. One of the biggest problems in Haiti is that people don't really trust the government or the health system that is in place because they think they are doing all of this just to make money. Some don't even believe that COVID-19 is real. We understand that if it is someone that you trust, someone who has been with you for years and respected in the community tells you about the pandemic, people will accept it more and be more receptive. People are actively looking for information about the pandemic, but they don't know who to listen to. If it's someone from their own community who they know, they are willing to accept them more.

The work that you are doing is service oriented. Many people in this situation are looking to help themselves more than others. Was there things in your upbringing that helped form you with this mentality? What helped inspire this mentality?

► **Jonathan:** One thing that helped me for sure was my middle school and high school education at Louverture Cleary School at Port au Prince, Haiti. One



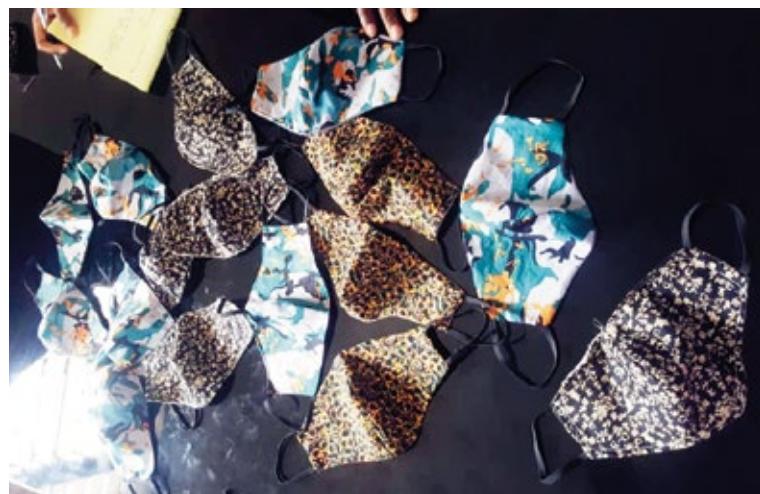
One of the biggest problems in Haiti is that people don't really trust the government or the health system that is in place because they think they are doing all of this just to make money. Some don't even believe that COVID-19 is real.

Above: Pwojè Bon Vwazen Team
From top right: Pwojè Bon Vwazen team stitching masks; Stitched masks ready to be distributed; Community health workers receiving training

Pwojè
BON VWAZEN
 TRAIN EQUIP PROTECT

of the main philosophies of the school is, "Whatever you receive for free, you give it for free." I received my education for free from this school. I understand what is going on right now with COVID-19, and I have a responsibility to help others in my community to receive this information and help prevent this illness from affecting my fellow countrymen.

► **Armelie:** In my family, my mother has always taught us to share and help those in need. And also the education I received at Louverture Cleary School helped me to understand what it means to live and be



part of a community. Social services and helping others was a big part of our formation at school. We not only understood this, but were actually able to live this out in our school as we were assigned different tasks to mentor younger children, be part of cleaning our own school, washing the dishes etc. With COVID-19, we understand that this pandemic can affect our entire community and so now it's our turn as young people who know about this disease, to help others and our community from being affected by this virus.

What are your dreams for Pwojè Bon Vwazen and what do you hope to achieve for your country with this project ?

► **Armelie:** At the end of this project, I hope that we have more people educated about COVID-19 and less people affected by it. I hope that we are able to provide the communities and families we are targeting with adequate supplies to keep them and their family safe. I know our CHW will do a great job and help Pwojè Bon Vwazen achieve its goals. I also hope that as our CHW educates families, these families will now be examples to their communities on how they prevented COVID-19 from affecting them.

► **Jonathan:** I want to help people know what to do if they get COVID-19. In Haiti, because of close living proximities, it may be hard to avoid getting infected. Once they are infected, people don't know what to do. If they have the necessary information and if we are able to provide the right supplies needed like masks, soaps and disinfectants, they may prevent others from getting infected.

COVID-19 is spreading mainly because people don't have the right information. We have six Community Health Workers. We hope that when one CHW educates an entire family, that family can educate other families and so on and thus, we can share the information faster. Maybe our CHW can also stay beyond COVID-19, because there are numerous health issues which we feel our Community Health Workers can address if they receive the right training in the future.

Armelie Pierre initially encountered the movement by working as a translator with the Haiti Healing mission and now is an active member of Jesus Youth in Haiti participating in youth groups and faith formation. Jonathan Cayo works for Lumen Vitae and coordinates their education projects in Haiti.



Roshan Philip is from Philadelphia, USA and is currently working as a teacher assistant for kids with disabilities. **Anthony Kunnumpurath** is from Batesville, Arkansas, USA and currently works as an internal medicine physician.





THEN YOU WILL KNOW THE



TRUTH AND THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE > JOHN 8:32

Your constant companion

Raifiel Cyril encourages us to take up His Word, which heals, encourages, strengthens and guides us.

If I were to ask you, 'When do you most experience Christ in a tangible manner', many of you may say, 'the Eucharist'. This is true. We are not only able to see and touch Christ in this manner, but we also receive Him into our body becoming one with Him.

My father would often point to a Bible when I was younger and say this is 'Jesus'. We all would look at him perplexed, struggling to make sense of this. A few decades later I started reading the Bible to taste and see if it was good. Through the working of the Spirit I was encouraged to stop reading fiction, at the rate of one book a day and switch to the Bible for some time. This time stretched out to two years. Since I absolutely had to read and I'd decided to not read anything else I could be found reading the Bible during a lot of my free time. At the beginning it was just like any other book with stories, characters and drama. Slowly, but surely however, this book started coming alive. They weren't just words on paper, but it was as though I was being spoken to. The words started becoming dynamic and began speaking to me on topics that I needed most guidance and assurance

around. From being skeptical about Christ, I went to being filled with faith. It is no surprise that the Word says, 'Faith comes by hearing the Word of God'. Soon I was led into a life changing encounter, the foundation of which was clearly laid in those two years leading up to it.

With the help of the Holy Spirit, my relationship with God became as tangible as a relationship with another human would be. There was no doubt and an unshakeable trust. Study and meditation of the Word became a vital part of my quiet time everyday and I strongly believe this constant renewing of my mind through the Word has established me in Christ.

Yes the Word of God is Christ. My Dad did not make that one up.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

From the above passage, taken from John chapter 1 we learn quite a few truths.

- God created everything through Christ. After all He spoke and brought things into being. The Word of God.
- The spoken Word of God from creation went on to become flesh and live with us.
- This Word of God is Christ.

Is it any surprise then that St. Jerome said 'Ignorance of scripture is ignorance of Christ'?

As we study the scripture we get to know the heart of God. We understand his personality, his faithfulness, his love. He reveals Himself to us unabashed. We see His plan and purpose for His children, us. Through the Word of God He heals, encourages, strengthens and guides us.

Eternal life is knowing God, and

As we study the scripture we get to know the heart of God. We understand his personality, his faithfulness, his love.

truly, getting to know God has been the most beautiful experience of my life and without a doubt, a great passage for intimacy was afforded by the Word of God. A genuine study of the scriptures (aimed at knowing Christ) coupled with sacraments will make it hard for anyone to become lukewarm in their faith.

The Bible is a constant companion. Why would I go anywhere without Him? He has got me out of many a soup and led me into many a green pasture through His wonderful words of life.

If the Bible does not play an integral part in your spiritual life, you are missing more than you know. Start making time to know Christ.

You remember how Christ spoke about fresh wineskins for fresh wine. Often Christians are filled with the new wine of the Spirit, but carry old wineskins of patterns, behaviours and beliefs of the old. A very good way to renew our old selves is poring on scriptures. The truth will invariably replace the lies of old and consequently will change beliefs and behaviours. We cannot leave behind the lies if we do not yet know the Truth.

Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. (John 8:32). ■

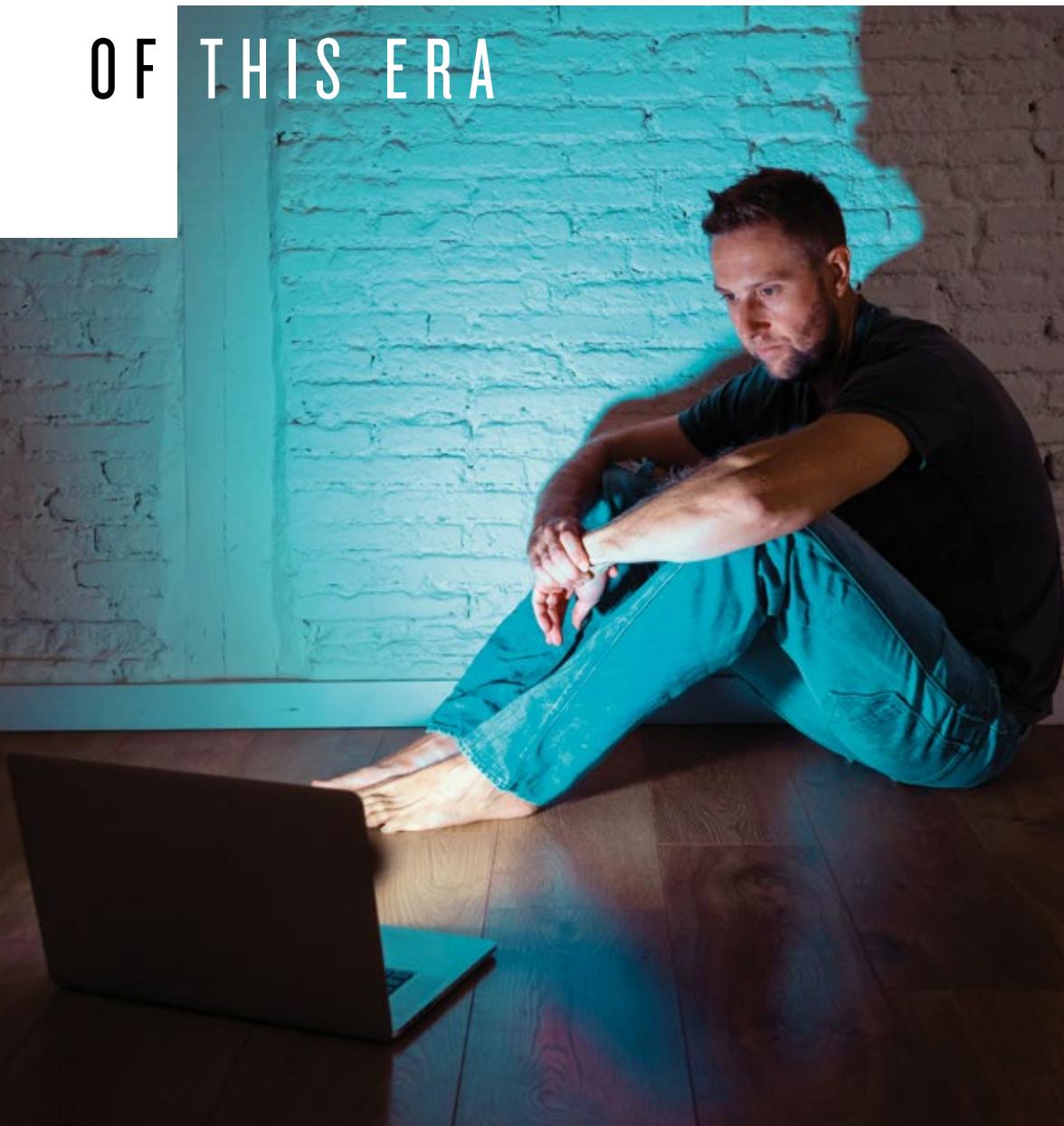


Raifiel Cyril is a writer, counsellor, member of national council Jesus Youth Australia and part of the Kairos Global Editorial Council. She lives with her husband, Cyril Abraham in Canberra, Australia.

CULTURE OF LIFE

THE SECRET PANDEMIC

OF THIS ERA



Soney Abraham lucidly explains the root causes and damages caused by pornography, masturbation and its vices, and how we should steer clear by taking responsibility



Create in me a clean heart God' (Ps 51:10), as David prayed, let us also pray to be free from the grip of the greatest secret pandemics—pornography and masturbation. All other sins are outside the body, which is forgivable, but sexual sin happens within our body destroying our body, soul and mind, the holy tabernacle of the Lord. In John 6:56 Jesus promises us that whoever eats His flesh and drinks His blood remains in Him and the Holy Trinity resides in that person. As Christians, we are responsible to keep our body holy so that God can reside in us. God created man and woman in his image of LOVE and placed the fundamental need for intimacy in each person to be fulfilled by healthy relationships with parents, siblings, friends, and spouses. The visible expression of one's soul is through the image of the body; hence our bodies should be treated with the greatest respect; they are not meant to be used but to be loved.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines pornography as the removal of sexual intimacy from the context of marital love and the display of real or stimulated sexual acts deliberately to others. It is a mortal sin as it perverts

the conjugal act, the intimate giving of spouses to each other, and it injures the dignity of its participants (actors, vendors, the public), making them objects of pleasure and means of illicit profit for others. Pornography includes visual images, written or audio forms (e.g. certain romance novels, erotic literature, phone conversations, social media, sexting, online video chats, etc.). Pornography leads to masturbation, which is deliberate erotic stimulation of self to achieve orgasm, against the chastity and dignity of one's body as it seeks sexual pleasure outside of the mutual self-giving and fruitful intimacy of spouses in marriage. Masturbation has powerful neurological effects leading to addiction.

Addiction to pornography and masturbation are the new pandemics, which grips people in all walks of life. The current statistics of pornography shows that 25% of search engine requests are related to sex, 35% of downloads from the internet are pornographic and the porn industry makes \$57-\$100 billion/yr. Mainstream entertainments, music lyrics, magazines, social media content, shopping online or at the mall, watching movies and television have all become hypersexualized. In this environment modesty in dressing is replaced by body revealing cloths portraying oneself as sex objects. It is a challenge to maintain purity and appropriate boundaries that are necessary for living chastely and having healthy relationships. There are deliberate and organized attempts to adulterate the traditional Christian teaching on masturbation and pornography. Catholic Church teaches that masturbation is objectively disordered or intrinsically

AS CHRISTIANS, WE ARE RESPONSIBLE TO KEEP OUR BODY HOLY SO THAT GOD CAN RESIDE IN US

evil, no circumstances or intentions of masturbation is morally good. But Liberalists claim that self-sexual satisfaction is a channel to open one's own spirit. Some psychologists wrongly advise pornography and masturbation to improve the quality of sexual intimacy among spouses.

What the Bible Teaches about Sexual Sins -Jesus taught us that if anyone that looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Mt 5:27-28). Hence looking at another person with lust, as only a sexual object to enjoy, control and use is a sin. Proverbs 6:25-27 commands us 'Do not lust in your heart after her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes, for the adulteress preys upon your very life'. In 1 Corinthians 6:13, St Paul teaches us that the body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. St Paul in Hebrews 13:4 urges us to honor marriage and keep it pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all who are sexually immoral. St Paul in Galatians 5, warns us that the results of self-indulgence are sexual vice, impurity, and sensuality and people who behave with self-indulgence do not inherit the Kingdom of heaven.

Causes of pornography and masturbation- People indulge in pornography and masturbation when their fundamental need for intimacy is not met through healthy relationships with one's parents, siblings, friends, and spouse—when people feel empty inside. People attempt to fill this emotional vacuum with a false intimacy – selfish

sexual gratification. The sexual fantasies achieved from various pornographic materials lead to masturbation, causing emptiness, worthlessness, and later they get trapped in a vicious cycle of addiction.

Effects of pornography and masturbation- The adverse effect of pornography and masturbations are physiological (sexual dysfunction), financial (money spent on porn movies and prostitutes), emotional (detachment from family and friends), mental (anxiety, depression, eating disorders) and spiritual damage (detachment from God). Pornography damages the ability of men and women to be self-giving and self-sacrificing; it destroys their ability to build mutually cherishing, respectful relationships with each other. It creates a deep sense of shame and poor self-esteem, distorts one's view of sexuality, marriage, and the opposite sex, and causes confusion about one's own sexual identity and inclinations. It damages people's relationship with God, leading them to falsely believe that God could never love them and making them feel that they are deprived of God's mercy and healing. Children and youth who are exposed to pornography lose their innocence, develop distorted images of sexuality and build abusive relationships. Exposure to pornography and masturbation may lead children and young adults to situations of sexual abuse creating mixture of pleasure, pain, disgust, guilt, and curiosity. It may also make them prone to premarital sex and other degrading sexual practices.

Healing from pornography and

masturbation- God want us to realize that we are His Tabernacles and hence we should be living in the power of Holy Spirit. Pornography and masturbation are sins against Holy Spirit that needs healing through the sacrament of penance and reconciliation. A collaborative effort of parents, clergy, diocesan and parish leaders, educators, mental health professionals and all those who are in positions to help is required to protect people from pornography and heal the men, women, and young people who have been harmed by its use. Different steps that need to be adopted by the individuals affected by pornography are to 1) turn to God—repent and ask for healing and strength to abstain from sin, 2) spend time with God daily—spend time reading, studying and meditating on the Scriptures, 3) be in a support group, 4) identify the triggers, 5) seek help to heal the broken relationship with God, self, parents, siblings etc. through qualified counsellors.

Parents and all adults who care for children should protect them from physical, psychological, moral, and spiritual dangers. They should offer emotional and spiritual support for kids who are abused and exposed to pornography. Children should be gradually educated about the virtue of chastity and the perils of sins against chastity. They should seek to edify children with examples of chaste life. Christian homes should use an appropriate system for monitoring electronic devices, and teach young kids to use them moderately and creatively. Children and young adults need special support groups and environment that will empower them to live chastely, and to reject the cultural pressure to treat sexual activity as recreational.

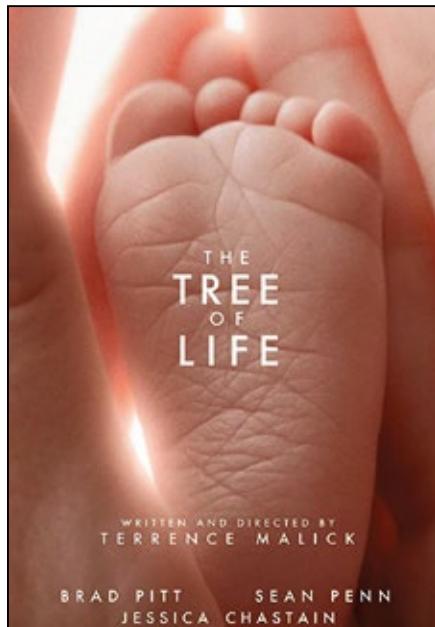
Conclusion- Use of pornography and masturbation are mortal sins and are the greatest pandemic addictions that grip the world. In order to obtain freedom from pornography cultivation of chastity is essential which like any virtue is a lifelong process that can be achieved through self-determination and divine intervention.



Soney Abraham, works as a Nurse practitioner and lives in Dallas, USA with her husband and three children.



SOUNDREPLY



MOVIE

THE TREE OF LIFE (2011)

The relationship between 'grace' and 'nature' has long been a fundamental point of debate in Christianity, so much as even to cause a schism. In a world where success is mostly enjoyed by those who are ruthless in their pursuit of power, and where we often witness evil prevailing unfettered over good, the question of the meaning of life is one that even an atheist or an agnostic is frequently confronted with. If there is a God, does he know – does he care?

"The Tree of Life" is a magnum opus from Terrence Malick – arguably one of the best directors of our generation, which ponders this question of the relationship between nature and grace, with the book of Job in the Bible as its basis. Combined with breath-taking photography and brilliant visual effects, the film is a superlative theological articulation of the question of suffering from the book of Job.

The film opens though, from the question by God in the book of Job, "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the



REVIEW BY
Joseph
Anthraper

Joseph Anthraper lives in Southampton with his wife Mahima and kids – Anna-Claire, John-Paul & Samuel. He loves reading, movies and apologetics and is part of the Kairos Global Editorial Council.

Earth? When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" and Mrs. O'Brian recalling what the nuns had taught her, "that every person must choose – either to follow the path of nature or the path of grace". Somewhere in the 1960's, she receives a call telling her that her 19 year old son has died. Unable to control the grief, she demands the same answers of God that Job once asked and most of us ask when going through intense pain and loss – do you know and do you care? In the present day, one of the O'Brian boys, Jack, who has grown up to be a successful architect, wakes up in his home and remembers the day as the anniversary of his brother's death. The human story of the movie is him reminiscing about his growing up in the 1950's in a rural Texan suburb and his own struggles in letting grace lead his life, as exemplified and contrasted by the lives of the people around him.

The O'Brian's are a middle-class Catholic family, with a loving father and mother (masterfully played by Brad Pitt and Jessica Chastain) and their three boys. The mother is the embodiment of grace – loving, caring, forgiving, joyful and deeply religious. Their father is more practical and embodies nature – an ambitious, driven, disciplinarian who wants his sons to become the masters of their own destiny, not to be left behind in a world which has no place for 'good' men. As young Jack grows up, he encounters pain, death and sin – and questions God as to why – why should the good

The "Tree of Life" is truly a monumental work of art – just like Michelangelo's sculptures or Shakespeare's plays – to be cherished slowly, pointing firmly to a transcendence possible through art

God allow these things, and why should he be good if God himself allows evil. Yet, as he grows up, he finds himself becoming more and more like his father (which he himself hates), becoming aware of nature subduing grace in his own life. Yet, grace is all around him – even in the forgiveness and trust of his brother, whom he hates initially.

The movie is set on a very large canvas – a visual treat showing the creation of the universe, the forces that shape the forming of the earth as we know it now, the emerging of first life forms, the fish of the water, the dinosaurs, the meteor that wiped out the dinosaurs and created conditions for humanity to begin – all in response to the questions posed by Mrs O'Brian and Jack to the seemingly pointless death in the family, the same puzzling response of God to Job.

Grace, nature, good, evil – some answers are beyond us, yet Malick as in the book of Job is suggesting that in the grand scheme of God's plan, everything makes sense – in some way, hitherto unknowest to man. The "Tree of Life" is truly a monumental work of art – just like Michelangelo's sculptures or Shakespeare's plays – to be cherished slowly, pointing firmly to a transcendence, possible through art.





WITH MY FAMILY

**Children share few of the
favourite traditions they enjoy
with their families**

★ Everyone has a favorite thing to do with their family and mine is traveling. We plan way ahead which keeps me very excited about those amazing days with my family. It's a break from my normal routine so I am very happy to go on such trips. On the previous day of the trip, we pack our bags ourselves and my mom adds to it. I wake up very early – we kids prepare breakfast like pancakes or waffles. We take the leftover so that we can eat it during the journey. We start the trip saying the rosary or the DMC. We sing songs, tell stories, and listen to music, so the journey never is boring. If we see any interesting places we go there and spend some time together. We take pictures so that later my mom can make albums from it. For lunch, we stop at a restaurant – mostly Chipotle because we all like it. When we go we always try to visit our family or friends, mostly

my dad or mom's classmates so I get more friends which makes me happy. At the end of the day, we stay in an inn where we sometimes watch movies before going to sleep. Our visit to Florida, San Antonio, McAllen, Austin, and Georgia are all unforgettable experiences in my life. In conclusion, traveling is an awesome activity you can do with your family!

Christon Joshy

★ One of my favorite things to do is to go outside. Why? Because, especially during this quarantine season I have been feeling pretty bored sitting at home watching TV all day, so I decided that I should go outside and get some fresh air every day. While I'm outside I usually help my dad with the vegetable garden. My job is to water the plants and also to spray my sister with water. My second favorite thing to do is to go biking with my siblings. I love the idea of feeling the fresh breeze against my face!

Therese Roy

★ My favorite thing to do with my family is to dine together. I like to have nice conversations over delicious food with my family. We



make varieties of food together. Everyone has different items that we like to make. It helps us to learn new skills and bond with each other better. When I help with the household chores, it relieves the stress on my mom. My parents have taught me to invite the Holy Family in preparing the food and at the table when we eat. Quarantine has been a blessing in disguise for me and I get to eat my favorite food items prepared by my own family!

Nathan Regy

★ I love to play games with my family. Here we created a game that the entire family can play, at the same time helps us to learn bible too. So I thought of a fun game anyone can do, that helps you with your faith also. It's a relay race that helps you learn Bible verses. So you need four or more people to play. You will need some sticks or any object. If there are four of you then

it is 2 vs 2. This is how you play. You and a player from the other team start off the race with one of the objects in your hand. The other 2 players are half way through the race. When the race starts, you run and run until you reach your other teammate. Then you say a Bible verse correctly with no mistakes. If you do, pass the stick or the object to you teammate, and then they will run and reach the finish line. By playing this game it helps you with your Christian faith by learning the Bible verse. I love playing this game with my siblings and parents.

Helping me and the entire family to learn Bible verses and is a fun game too!

Paul Benson

FAMILY PRAYER IS MY FAVORITE TRADITION BECAUSE YOU ARE WITH YOUR WHOLE FAMILY AND YOU CAN GET CLOSER TO GOD

it is a different saints' novena. Like on Sundays, my family prays to St. Joseph for a happy death because he died peacefully in the hands of Jesus Christ and St. Mary. On Monday we pray to St. Alphonsa novena for the protection from illness because she had an appalling illness. On Tuesday we pray to St. Anthony of Padua because he is the patron saint of

lost things. On Wednesday we pray St. Jude's novena because he is the patron saint of desperate cases. On Thursday we pray to St. Sebastian because he is the patron saint of athletes and archers. On Friday we pray to Infant Jesus. On Saturdays we pray our dear Mother Mary's novena. During this pandemic, we pray St Sebastian's Novena every day for protection from COVID-19. Since saints are so close to God in heaven, they can intercede for us!

Sanya Sabu

★ I love to do everything with my family. My most favorite family fun is watching movies together with my parents and brothers. When we watch movies as a family, I microwave some popcorn and me and my family eat it as we watch the movie. Sometimes we get sleepy and fall asleep! When it's funny, we all laugh loudly. Sometimes, me and my brothers fight for the blankets. Also, when something scary or yucky happens, we close our eyes. We like to watch some of the movies my parents pick, and sometimes, we watch movies that we pick. Sometimes we watch marvel movies or Disney movies. Also, sometimes we talk during the movie. We love to watch movies together!

Diya Jacob

★ Family prayer is my favorite tradition because you are with your whole family and you can get closer to God. God listens to your prayers so when I feel like no one's listening to me I always remember that God is listening. Family prayer is important because it keeps the devil away, and last but not least it keeps everyone happy!

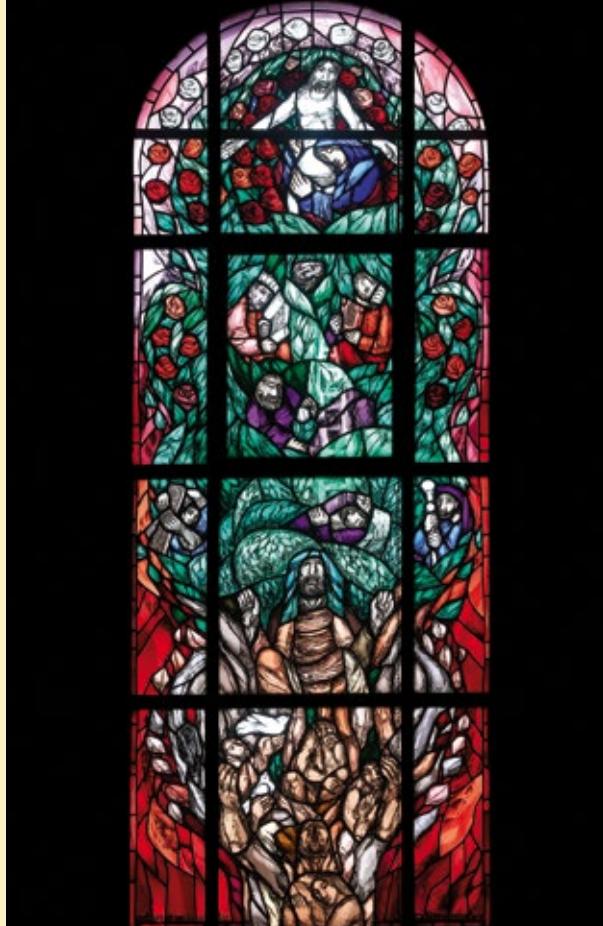
Daniella Paul



Quiz Time



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



PART A

The genealogy of Jesus

[Gospels of Matthew and Luke]

1. With whom does the genealogy according to Gospel of Matthew begin?
2. Number of generations from David until the captivity in Babylon according to Matthew
3. Number of women mentioned in Matthew's list
4. According to Matthew's genealogy, Boaz was the father of ____.
5. Which chapter in the gospel of Luke has the genealogy?
6. According to Luke, Nathan is the son of ____.
7. Number of women mentioned in Luke's list
8. Who is the son of Adam mentioned in Luke's genealogy?



PART B

Match these feasts with the days/dates

1. All Saints	August 6
2. Annunciation	August 15
3. Guardian Angels	November 1
4. Christ the King	First Sunday after Pentecost
5. Holy Trinity	September 14
6. Corpus Christi	March 25
7. Sacred Heart of Jesus	Last Sunday of liturgical year
8. Transfiguration	December 8
9. Assumption	Thursday after Trinity Sunday
10. Triumph of the Cross	September 29
11. Immaculate Conception	19 days after Pentecost
12. Archangels	October 2

ANSWERS TO QUIZTIME ISSUE 28

Part A

1. Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal: Sr. Catherine; 2. Our Lady of the Golden Heart: Belgium; 3. Our Lady of Lezajsk: Thomas Michalek; 4. Our Lady of Fátima: Portugal; 5. Our Lady of Happy Meetings: Benoîte Rencurel; 6. Mother of the Word: Rwanda; 7. Our Lady of Guadalupe: Juan Diego

Part B

1. Rachel; 2. David; 3. Methuselah; 4. Goliath; 5. John; 6. Naomi; 7. Joseph
8. Esther; 9. Esau; 10. Delilah



The winner of Quiztime Issue 28: Alice Josephine G, Tamilnadu, India

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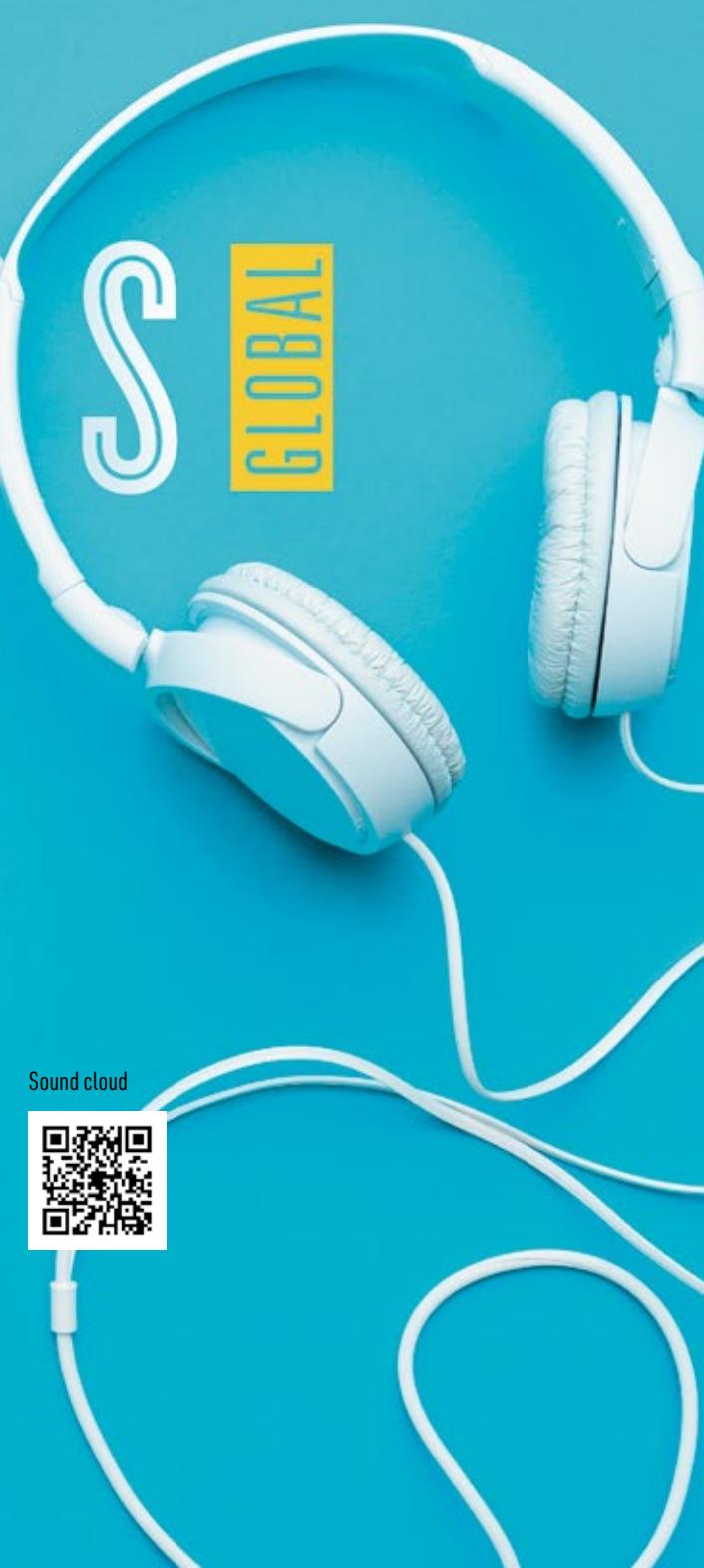
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