

KAIROS

GLOBAL

PRIVATE
CIRCULATION
ONLY

HOPE IN THE NEW YEAR

ALSO ↓

HOPE -
'HOLD ON,
PAIN ENDS'

■ **SUNOL PIQUS**

**Riding
storms
on His
shoulders**

■ **SUJA SIJU**

JOEL ALEX



MARY MY BELOVED MOTHER



O most glorious Ever-Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ our God, accept our prayers and present them to thy son and our God, that He may, for thy sake, enlighten and save our souls. Amen.

EDITOR'S ROOM

DR. CHACKOCHAN J NJAVALLIL



A DREAM IS NOT WHAT YOU SEE WHEN SLEEPING, IT IS WHAT ROBS YOU OF SLEEP AND HOUNDS YOU UNTIL IT BECOMES REALITY.

DREAM DREAMS

May I ask you at the beginning of the New Year about your plans, expectations and dreams for the new chapter in your life? If you have not spent time dreaming, I would like to encourage all of you to dream big dreams for the future and the New Year.

A very interesting and relevant explanation about dreams was given by Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, former president of India. A dream is not what you see when sleeping, it is what robs you of sleep and hounds you until it becomes reality.

That said, have you dreamt of being more faithful to God in the New Year – experiencing him through deeper encounters and witnessing his love to many more people? What are your dreams about living the Gospel in a more fruitful manner, about becoming the presence of God to the people around? How significant in your life is the kingdom of God? Are you really passionate about it?

I have always been fascinated by the lyrics of songs like *When I look into Your Holiness* by Kent Henry from the album *Glorify Thy Name*. What I liked most was the line, 'when all things that surround become shadows in the light of you'. At the start of this New Year, let us reflect about the kingdom of God in our life – is it so significant as to make shadows of achievements, positions, power and money, in the light of Him?

Another song, one attributed to Sadhu Sundar Singh, based on Luke 9:57, *I have decided to follow Jesus* and Darrel Evans' *I'm trading my sorrow*, too encourage us to live the Gospel.

I hope that we are able to dream big dreams about the kingdom of God; that these dreams will hound our waking hours to look to His holiness, to follow Him and to trade it all for the joy of the Lord.

Here's wishing you a very fruitful 2021.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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But those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.
Isaiah 40:31

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ON PAIN
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EXPERIENCE

ENGINEERED
BY HIS GRACE

REJI FRANCIS

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ASK



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

FR. BITAJU

➔ **The Church grades students for their knowledge in catechism. So, is a student with more knowledge in catechism blessed than one who is faithful without catechism?**

JERIN VAKAYIL / BANGALORE, INDIA

I suppose your question seeks clarity on the real purpose of teaching catechism. In other words, whether grades in exams are more important than good character in the learner?

The Latin roots of the word 'education' means 'to bring up' or 'to lead out' or 'to draw out'. The purpose of education, therefore, is to draw out the wealth of qualities and intelligence inherent in a child. The word 'catechism' derived from Greek *katecheo* literally means 'sounding down towards'. Therefore, the sole purpose of education in catechism is to sound the truth of our Lord to echo in the hearts of our children and thus draw out the inborn qualities and intelligence within them. At the heart of this process is the development of a good character, which turns them into little Christs. Actually, catechism is a continuation of the process of our transformation in Christ initiated in our baptism. According to British educator Sir Anthony Seldon, 'what is not "led out" of young people, what is not nurtured by the age of 16 or 18, may remain dormant in those individuals for the rest of their lives.'

Catechism, in fact, unfolds the biblical truths, the gospel values. Therefore, learning them is meant to bring about a gradual transformation in the life of the learner. The Catechism of the Catholic Church makes it very clear when it says, 'The whole concern of doctrine and its teaching must be directed to the love that never ends. Whether something is proposed for belief, for hope, or for action, the love of our Lord must always be made accessible, so that anyone can see that all

the works of perfect Christian virtue spring from love and have no other objective than to arrive at love' (CCC 25). St. Paul beautifully summarises it when he says, '*I am in travail until Christ is formed in you*' (Gal. 4: 19).

Often catechism is misunderstood and is treated as a mere necessity to receive the sacraments. Whereas, it is meant for a deeper understanding of the Catholic faith and a prop to grow in a deeper relationship with God. Moreover, catechism teachers also concentrate on other areas of formation, like, human values, good manners, self-discipline, wellbeing, moral science, etc.

Exams and grading in the education of catechism is important only to the extent that they are a means to motivate and encourage young children to be thorough with what they have learned. Effective and fruitful education in catechism is not an effort to maximise the exam performance of our children but rather a process to maximise the chances of our children leading joyful, faithful, successful and healthy lives. Sir Anthony Seldon underlines that 'over emphasis on exams and grading can easily lead to closed minds and leave the heart cold, whereas a focus on character seeks to open up hearts and minds. The development of good character is a priority than exam success because good character strengths are a greater predictor of success in the school of life than mere exam passes.' Therefore, a student well versed with mere knowledge in catechism without a corresponding witnessing life can only be an anomaly.



YOU CAT 291

HOW CAN A PERSON TELL WHETHER HIS ACTION IS GOOD OR BAD?

A person is capable of distinguishing good actions from bad ones because he possesses reason and a conscience, which enable him to make clear judgments. [CCC 1749-1754, 1757-1758]

The following guidelines make it easier to distinguish good actions from bad ones: [1] What I do must be good; a good intention alone is not enough. Bank robbery is always bad, even if I commit that crime with the good intention of giving the money to poor people. [2] Even when what I do is truly good, if I perform the good action with a bad intention, it makes the whole action bad. If I walk an elderly woman home and help her around the house, that is good. But if I do it while planning a later break-in, that makes the whole action something bad. [3] The circumstances in which someone acts can diminish his responsibility, but they cannot change at all the good or bad character of an action. Hitting one's mother is always bad, even if the mother has previously shown little love to the child.



POPE talk...

Dr. Kochurani Joseph
Cochin, India



PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR JANUARY

PROMOTION OF WORLD PEACE

We pray that
Christians,
followers of other
religions, and all
people of goodwill
may promote
peace and justice
in the world.

Holy Spirit whom Jesus sent to gather us together. The four coordinates can be used to judge whether a situation is truly ecclesial. If any of the coordinates is lacking, then the Holy Spirit will also be absent. If the Holy Spirit is lacking, we are a beautiful organisation, humanitarian, doing good things... even an ecclesial party, let's put it that way. But not the Church.

Humans are not alone in praying

There resounds in us the multiform cry of creatures – of trees, of rocks, of animals – as St. Paul says 'everything yearns for fulfilment'. But we are the only ones to pray consciously, knowing that we are addressing the Father, and entering into dialogue with the Father. At times we can feel self-sufficient and believe we do not need anything from God. But sooner or later, this illusion vanishes. The Lord always provides for us – always, and everything is grace of God. However, we must not suffocate the supplication that rises up in us spontaneously. In the Our Father we pray first for the coming of God's Kingdom and then for what we require. We also pray for the simplest gifts, for everyday gifts, such as 'daily bread' which also means health, home, work and our everyday needs.

God entrusted St. Joseph with the most precious treasures, Jesus and Mary

St. Joseph responded fully with faith, courage and tenderness to God's call with a father's heart. Let us invoke his protection on the Church and learn from him to always do God's will with humility. My desire to do so increased during these months of pandemic noting that many people had made hidden sacrifices during the crisis in

order to protect others. Each of us can discover in Joseph – the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence – an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble. St. Joseph reminds us that those who appear hidden or in the shadows can play an incomparable role in the history of salvation. I recall what I said earlier that I have great love for St. Joseph, because he is a man of silence and strength. On my table I have a statue of the sleeping St. Joseph. Even when he is asleep, he is taking care of the Church. So when I have a problem, a difficulty, I write a little note and I put it underneath this statue of St. Joseph, so that he can dream about it – that he can pray for this problem.

The Church is the work of the Holy Spirit

Catholics risk going astray if they neglect the four essential characteristics of Church life. The four fundamental qualities were present in the early Church as described in the Book of Acts – listening to the apostles' teaching, safeguarding of mutual communion, breaking of the bread, and prayer. Any situation needs to be evaluated in the light of these four coordinates. Whatever is not part of these coordinates lacks being ecclesial. It is God who creates the Church, not the clamour of works. The Church is the work of the

Prepare to meet the Lord with good deeds inspired by his love

It is important not to forget that at the end of one's life there will be a definitive appointment with God. If we want to be ready for the final encounter with the Lord, we must cooperate with him now and perform good deeds inspired by his love. Being wise and prudent means not waiting until the last moment to correspond to God's grace, but to do so actively and immediately, starting right now. Not only the final coming, but also for the everyday encounters, great and small, with a view to that encounter, for which the lamp of faith is not enough; we also need the oil of charity and good works.

Pope Francis says ...

- What opens the gates of paradise to us is God's grace, received by us with faithfulness.
- The contemporary world requires examples of true fatherhood.
- God is patient and never stops waiting for a sinner's conversion.
- Consistent prayer produces progressive transformation.
- Disabled people must also have access to the sacraments.
- The Immaculate Conception is one of the wonders of the 'story of salvation'.

JESUS YOUTH



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

Discussion groups are so special for Jesus Youth



'The Pope's new encyclical has come. If a few of us get together online daily, can you help us study it in detail?' The request came from a country leader. But I said, 'Mine will only be an animating presence. Every day one person can briefly introduce the portion to be read that day, all would study that part, then come back next day and discuss it.' That was the beginning of a four-week long study – one that became an enriching formative journey for all of us.

Such discussion groups can be simple and interesting, yet a highly beneficial approach to study and formation. What are some of its advantages? Persons of different sociocultural and intellectual levels gather; everyone listens and each one talks. In effect, it becomes a highly conducive ambience for building up confidence and self-esteem in everyone. When youth receive formation from such simple discussion groups, new ideas and initiatives spontaneously sprout and eventually rich leadership blossoms there.

I have heard people ask how the informal and simple approaches of JY produce such abundant fruits compared to the well-planned, content-rich and faith-equipping plans of many other movements and

the larger Church. Emphasis on Christ encounter is surely the first. And the very next would be its creative approach of discussion groups. In the simple dynamics of a discussion group a deep transformation takes place in each person and, moreover, little by little an intimate Christian community gets built up there.

A NEW STYLE GETS FORMED

In June-July 1978 groups of young people met together in centres across Kerala. The purpose was to get a feedback on a proposed youth convention later that year. These were youth with some retreat exposure and had attended only Bible talks and prayer sessions. But during those feedback meetings in five different cities, something novel took place. After a brief introduction they were put into smaller groups for friendly discussions on the upcoming convention. For them this was something new, a first experience of a discussion group. They had always attended classes, but this time they discussed and took decisions. And where did we get this new approach? Our exposure to youth trainings in the Catholic college movement called AICUF (All India Catholic University Federation) had done the trick. And it worked – everyone talked, listened and

experienced dynamics of participation and community.

Later in 1982 for the first leaders training by Fr. Gino, the theme was 'self-awareness' and there too the dynamics were the same. Father would give short reflections based on the Bible and psychology after which we would go into groups to share. A few months later we started coming together in a regular fellowship called 'First Line group'. We would gather to report, share and grow together, and slowly these simple interactive styles became characteristic of the Jesus Youth movement.

WHAT HAPPENS IN A DISCUSSION GROUP?

One challenge in the early days of the movement was when good-hearted preachers would volunteer, 'I can come and give you a talk, next time', or youth asking, 'Who will be taking class this month?' For us it was a bold decision to try out another 'model' starting with the First Line group.

Pope Francis in his exhortation after the youth synod highlights this approach, 'Friendship and discussion, often within more or less structured groups, offer the opportunity to strengthen social and relational skills in a context in which one is neither analysed nor judged. Group experience



'Friendship and discussion, often within more or less structured groups, offer the opportunity to strengthen social and relational skills in a context in which one is neither analysed nor judged.

(Christus Vivit, 219)

is also a great resource for sharing the faith and for mutual help in bearing witness. The young are able to guide other young people and to exercise a genuine apostolate among their friends.' (*Christus Vivit*, 219)

What happens in a discussion group? There could be free banter on a topic, sharing of random thoughts or experiences, group study or analysis, planning for something and so on. And in Jesus Youth they are apt for regular meetings like cells, small groups, ministry or team gatherings, and for small or medium prayer groups. For the occasional consultations, planning or outreaches too, such an informal style is quite suitable.

What are some of the tips for effective discussion groups?

- A reflective and prayerful tone can be good, yet an ambience of informality, joy and fun will help shed masks and to have greater openness.
- Someone who thinks, 'I am a leader; I know much' – can be a misfit. Even if one is advanced in age and experience, it will help the group if they join in with humility.
- To hold a fellowship together a facilitator rather than a leader is needed, who more than being talkative, would encourage everyone to talk.
- In such a group, an idea gets built up brick-by-brick, moved by the great architect, the Holy Spirit. In that journey one should learn to be all ears and not to hurry too much.
- Won't there be clashes of ideas? Surely. These are forums where apparently conflicting ideas come out and people slowly learn to accept unexpected turns and witness how 'the new creation' appears.
- On such platforms you have to expect disturbing silences, lone voices, sudden bursting out and other surprising developments. When such

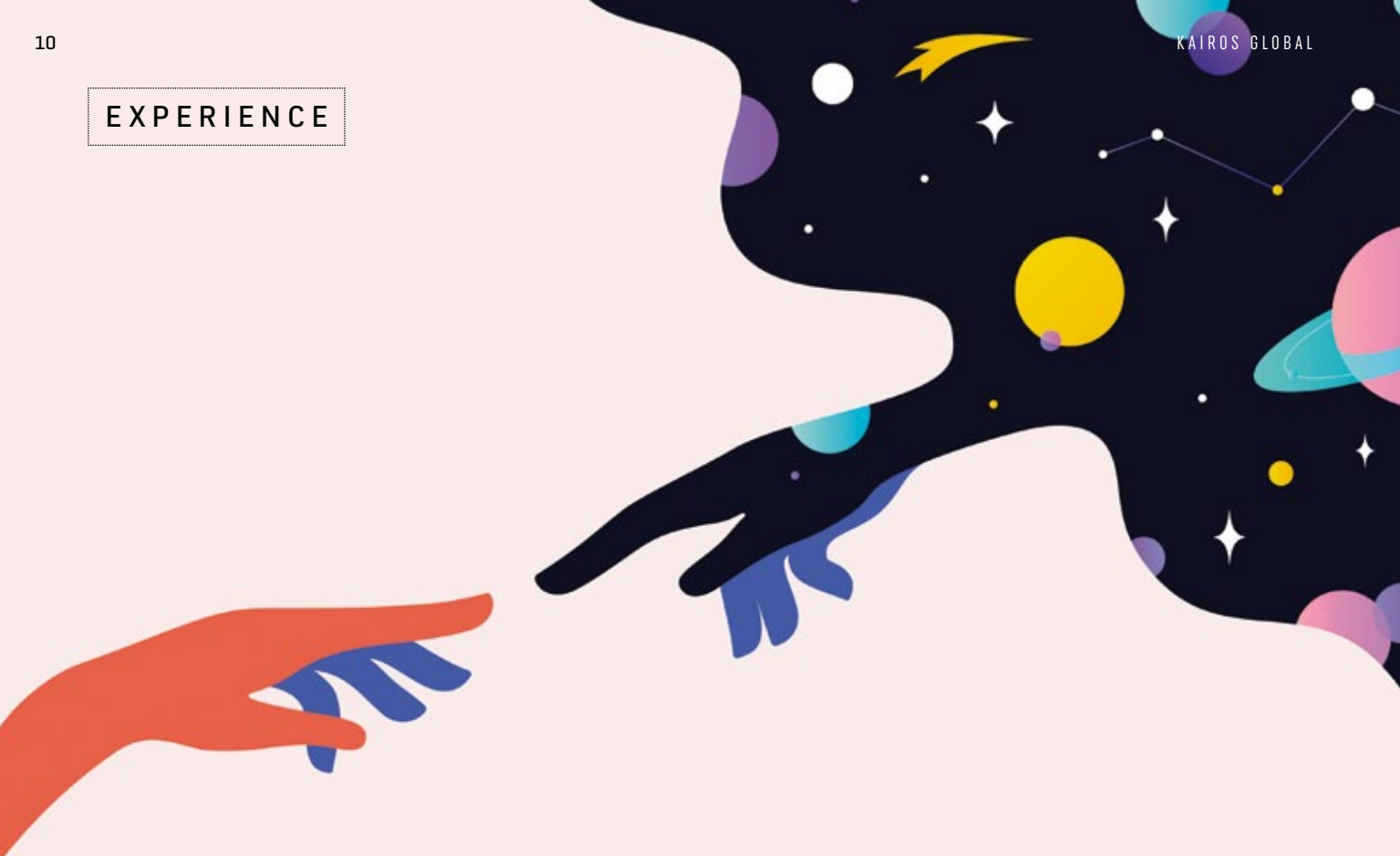
things are handled well, it is then that real Christian formation takes place and gradually the Kingdom of God takes shape.

For long years we had this Tuesday sharing group in the city. It was there we learnt the basics of personal sharing, Christian commitment and ministry building. Youth from diverse backgrounds shared their prayer experiences, insights from the Bible and their missionary dreams. All of us were active members of a larger group that met on Wednesdays, but this sharing group lent us real formation. Gradually small and big initiatives like prison visits, slum area work, and reach out to the sick began to come out from that group. But more than all that I learnt this big lesson that a regular discussion group can be deeply formative for each participant and it will in turn bring out enduring fruits of mission. And that has also become a core style of Jesus Youth movement. ■■

.....

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

EXPERIENCE

An illustration of two hands, one orange and one dark blue, reaching towards each other. The background is a dark blue space filled with various celestial bodies: a yellow sun, a pink planet with a blue ring, a purple planet, a yellow comet, and several white stars. A constellation of white stars is visible in the upper right. The hands are positioned as if they are about to touch, with the orange hand on the left and the dark blue hand on the right.

ENGINEERED BY HIS GRACE

An engineer, **Reji Francis** traces two decades of journeying with the Lord that began with three prayers.

LIFE BEFORE

I was born to a traditional Catholic family. From a very young age, I was regular for Sunday Holy Mass, Catechism, Little way, KCSL and Altar boy groups. At the age of fifteen, I joined KCYM as well. To an outsider, I was an active Christian. But in reality my inner self was wounded, filled with inferiority complex and anger pock-marked with swearing. Now when I look back, it's easy to see that I lacked a deep encounter with the Lord. My father would always say that during Mass, an altar boy received more blessings after the priest. Those words were embedded in my heart and I never missed an opportunity to serve at the altar.

ENCOUNTER

It was my dream to become an engineer. While studying in college, I was regular for daily Holy Mass. There I learned to serve the altar for Syro-Malabar Mass. One day in 2002, after Mass, a couple of medical students invited me for a Jesus Youth prayer meeting. I joined them and continued to go there as I was deeply challenged by their daily God experience. But I would try and avoid getting called for any activity. Then in 2003, they invited me to attend the Professional Conference at Vimala College Thrissur¹. Later, when one of my friends also invited me for it, I decided to give it a try. During the programme, I made a thorough confession – the best in my life till then. After that, I was in another world. Yet, I asked God for an extraordinary experience during Adoration that day. But nothing happened and feeling discouraged, I went back to the accommodation. There I encountered the Bible verse, *You did not choose me. But I chose you* (John 15:16). I read it many times and a deep conviction filled my heart that HE had chosen me – I was also the only one from my campus for this programme. From that moment, my prayers took a U-turn. I asked God, 'Why have you chosen me?' Along with that, three prayers came out from my heart.

- 1) Lord, give me back the years I have lost.
- 2) Give me the grace to do something for the campus.
- 3) Give me the grace to start something from scratch.

I returned to college with the realisation that I was given the grace to pray for my campus and for everyone there. I started praying the Rosary around the campus, praying while travelling and praying for all I would encounter. God also took away my habit of swearing.

INITIAL DAYS AND CHALLENGES

I put my childhood dream of becoming an engineer on the back-burner when I decided to stop pursuing further studies after the diploma and took up a job. But God gave me admission into the Muslim Association College of Engineering, Trivandrum², which had hardly

any Christians. In the hostel we started a small prayer group with people of different denominations. Later when our hostel shifted to a new building inside the campus, our prayer meeting stopped. But I needed to attend daily Holy Mass. My search led me to a Syro-Malankara church at Karett, a village nearby. There was no Mass on weekdays there, but Fr. John was merciful enough to celebrate Holy Mass for me. Though it was very difficult to follow the liturgy, the Lord's grace followed me. Soon, few of my non-Christian friends started coming for the Holy Mass and I helped them understand about the miracle happening in the Holy Eucharist.

Even though I had a desire for fellowship gathering, I couldn't be part of one initially. Gradually, my college commitments grew as I became the college general secretary, placement in-charge, etc. One day I heard about an upcoming JY retreat at Kunnamthanam, Kottayam³ and decided to attend it. That was in 2007, my second birth in JY. During that retreat, I decided to take the six pillars seriously and started DRC in my way. After that during the same year, I attended another retreat, where I experienced a renewed zeal for mission.

I already had a few non-Christian friends who had experienced God's love in one way or the other. Few of us would skip lunch and pray for their intentions, especially on Fridays. Friends would give their intentions to pray and I have seen God doing miracles for them. One such example was the successful marriage of my Hindu friend, Avinash's sister, who, as per their belief had a bad horoscope. Through it they were able to experience God's care and his fatherly love. With a few of these friends, we started a prayer meeting at Vamanapuram⁴ Latin Church. I still remember those beautiful days with my non-Christian friends singing and dancing, *Yes Lord* together.

CONNECTING TO ZONE AND BEGINNING OF LEADERSHIP

One day, I received a call from the Neyyattinkara⁵ Zonal Coordinator. They wanted help for an exam preparation retreat for class 10 and 12 students. That was the first step in leadership outside my college. Soon, the Lord chose me as the campus coordinator for the zone and I became part of the zonal service team.

When I moved to Coimbatore⁶ for my Masters, I was already in touch with the JY community there, so getting to work for the upcoming zonal family gathering was easy. During the family gathering, I got to meet all the JYs in Coimbatore. In the days that followed, focus was on 'Rhythm of Love', a reach out programme for north-west districts of Tamil Nadu⁷, for which I was responsible for Coimbatore mobilisation.

During that programme, the first Tamil Nadu campus team was formed and the Lord chose me as the

team coordinator. We started praying for Tamil Nadu with colleges listed on a map. The first programme conducted was at Tindivanam TTI (a place close to Chennai⁸) for Tamil youth. Without much knowledge of the geography, culture or language, we moved forward with the Lord. The song, *God will make a way* was sung umpteen times as prayer. The programme turned out to be an anointed one with many God experiences. As a result, they started a daily prayer group with over twenty students.

After that, we visited many places and conducted many programmes. The days were fully packed. Starting with morning Holy Mass, followed by family or youth visits. After college, we would continue with visiting prayer meetings, families or youth, going for Tamil Holy Mass, etc. Weekends were for long travels to meet people or for meetings across Tamil Nadu.

One day, the National Campus Coordinator, Jordy Michael invited me for the first campus leaders training – a training I had longed for. I confirmed my availability and grabbed the chance the Lord brought me. As the days drew near, I learnt that my campus was to host companies for placement the same week. Still I stuck to my decision to attend the training. On the last day of the programme, I became a part of a new National Campus team. We travelled the length and breadth of India to initiate campus ministries and to connect with the existing ones. After my Masters, I responded to God's call to commit a year for the campus ministry. During that time, I got the opportunity to coordinate the National Campus Meet 2009, for which we visited twenty states and interacted with students of different cultures and languages. Not even for a single moment did I feel language and culture, a barrier for the mission. It was the Holy Spirit who planned, guided and took us to these places and people.

I would like to share a small experience during one of our team meetings at Hyderabad. We had decided to travel to North Indian states for two weeks. When we checked with the leaders there, the possibility of meeting students seemed vague. Still, we kept the faith and went all the way to Nagpur⁹. The day we set foot there, it was a regional holiday – the students were free and we met them all. From there, we continued to Pune¹⁰. The sweltering heat in these parts was unbearable in the train and we desperately began praying small prayers for rain. Unbelievably, few minutes later, it began to rain! When reached Pune, it was a holiday there too and so we could meet most of the JY leaders. All of them were amazed by the rain since they too had been long praying for it. We continued our journey through Mumbai, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi¹¹. Everywhere, HIS hands were visible and the Holy Spirit guided us.



Soon, few of my non-Christian friends started coming for the Holy Mass and I helped them understand about the miracle happening in the Holy Eucharist.

JUBILEE GRACE

2010 was a year of great blessing for my family. My sister got married in February; I said yes to the new responsibility of National Campus Coordinator on Easter Sunday in April; I completed my MBA exams in May, the very next day joined the Kerala State Electricity Board as Assistant Engineer and in August I got married to Treesa. Along with the Jubilee Conference held that year.

STRUGGLES IN LIFE

The initial days of our marriage were not smooth sailing. It took time to get to know and understand each other. It was hard for me to accept initially but through the movement, my faith deepened and that led to surrendering our lives before Him – the third person in marriage – during Holy Mass and praying through the intercession of Mother Mary. Day by day, I grew under the guidance of Our Lady. Along with that we had great support from JY elders. Patiently, both of us got to accept each other.

Another crisis we went through was the miscarriage of our first child. With great longing, we had been praying for a child. But HE took back. Even though it was painful, the understanding that 'every child is a gift of God' and 'God knows everything and He has a plan for you,' penetrated deeply into our lives and consoled us to accept.

The third crisis was during the delivery of our second child on Dec 8, 2015. After the delivery, Treesa had severe bleeding. The doctor briefed me on the situation and asked for my consent to remove the

uterus to save her life. We had dreamt of having at least five children. It was painful but our Lord gave me an inner peace. That was the day of the opening of the Door of Mercy in the Vatican. It truly was the Mercy of Lord extended to me and my family to bring Treesa back to life.

All those struggles helped both of us to come close to Jesus and to surrender our lives to him as a thanksgiving and we started enjoying the little sacrifices we made for his glory.

MISSION AS FAMILY

I got married to Treesa four months after becoming National Campus Coordinator. Though not part of the movement, she had a strong Catholic background and was active in Church. I was working at Idukki¹² Powerhouse at the time and would get four days off after twelve continuous days of work. Whenever possible, I would club two pairs of offs together and go for a week's ministry visits; we mostly travelled together. Those travels were filled with graceful experiences. Once we were travelling from Angamaly¹³ to Mumbai with our four-month-old daughter, Rachel. Our tickets were on the waiting list when booked, and we hoped it would get confirmed. But when we reached the station, our tickets were the first two on the waiting list. Since it was bought directly from the station, we could travel but without reservation. We had our baby and two bags. A family waiting for the same train were heading to Udupi¹⁴. We befriended them and shared our plight and they were kind enough to offer their upper berth to us. The train was crowded and Treesa, Rachel and me, along with our luggage settled in the upper berth for our long journey to Mumbai. The family got off at Udupi but in spite of the rush, no one came to occupy the upper berth. We experienced the providence of God in our need.

When Rachel was a year old, we went to Khandwa, Madhya Pradesh along with campus students for a mission exposure. The simple lives yet deep faith of people there challenged us. The sacrifices of the priests to build twelve mission centers was yet another motivation for us to deepen our commitments. Even though we worked outdoors without any warm clothes that winter, we didn't endure any hardship.

During the past ten years, I have worked in six offices in various parts of Kerala. After my commitment as National Campus Coordinator, I got elected to the National Council for two terms. Currently I am serving as the National Mission Coordinator. Being a dentist by profession, Treesa started a dental clinic in 2014 and got involved in the Neyyattinkara zone, serving as Household Core Team member and Zonal Teens Animator. In all of our life, we have experienced the loving hands of our Lord. Be it small or big, the Lord provided for our needs. Whenever we were needed at

the family, we were available there and when needed for the Lord, we were also available for him too – only by his grace.

In this 'tin jubilee' of our marriage, the support I get is amazing. When I am tired or have to make some calls, Treesa takes over. Constantly interceding for everything in the ministry, serving the food at my workstation when I am loaded with work, serving tea at regular intervals when I skip sleep, sitting with me and helping me in all possible way, her support is beyond words. She knows almost all of my contacts and responds to calls when I am busy. And in my absence, she takes care of our family.

There is an incident which I can never forget. In 2015, there was a national-level coordinators' gathering at Hyderabad from December 5th to 6th. Her delivery due date was on December 10th. I was very confused as to what to do as the meeting was important. But she assured me that she would be fine till I came back and encouraged me to attend the meeting. Assured, I peacefully went to Hyderabad and returned on December 7th, the baby was born on December 8th.

When I look back at the two-decade journey with the Lord, I can see the numerous blessings that HE has showered in my life. He granted the prayers of my soul back in 2003 by giving me many years back through different dimensions – education, job, ministry, marriage, children and so on. Regarding my second prayer, the Lord gave me the chance to serve him at all levels in the Campus Ministry. He also formed in me a heart that could always accommodate campus youth. As an answer to my third prayer to start something from scratch, he gave me many opportunities to build ministries in colleges, zones, and at national level, including my present responsibility as Mission Coordinator. In a nutshell, through all these years my purpose in life is 'to be a channel of grace from the Holy Eucharist to many and to build young missionaries for Christ.'

AMEN.



^{1-5, 12-13} Thrissur, Trivandrum, Kottayam, Vamanapuram, Neyyattinkara, Idukki and Angamaly are places in India's southern state, Kerala

⁶⁻⁸ Coimbatore and Chennai are cities in India's southern state, Tamil Nadu

¹⁰⁻¹¹ Pune and Mumbai are cities, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi are states in North India

¹⁴ Udupi is a city in India's southern state, Karnataka



Reji Francis works as an Assistant Engineer with Kerala State Electricity Board and is the National Mission Coordinator. He is married to Dr. Treesa Reji and they have two daughters.

THE SUPER HUMANS I MET

Housesurgeons usually find
Oncology postings depressing.
But **Dr. Irine** managed to find super
humans on her posting there.



have no complaints. I am led by my God.' Her faith was real and resolute. Like the house built on rock.

Next day in the OPD I saw another elderly cute couple. For them, I felt that love was eternal. She had colon cancer and even though her husband had trouble walking himself, he was struggling hard to help her walk. There I saw the real meaning of love.

The next super couple I saw were again in our ward. She had been beautiful, before being diagnosed with breast cancer but as the chemotherapy progressed, she lost her hair, the fingers that were

pain. They surely faced a crisis at the beginning of the diagnosis, but they overcame; many were still trying to overcome and I pray that they do. I have the highest regard for all the patients and families who fight this war.

Now, it's time for us to think about what faith really means to us. Is faith that 'something' which provides us everything we need? Or through it, do we have the courage to be tested like gold – burned in a furnace. Yes, my JY elder had the faith to be burned in a furnace and she emerged like gold – precious in God's eyes. And to couples, I ask, what is love to you? Are

Medical oncology posting is one of the most hectic postings during housesurgery. For me it was like a bad dream – initially. Being a person who prefers to be happy, medical oncology ward, OPD and ICU were depressing for me. But as days passed I began to notice my patients, super humans as I came to see them. I realised that they had a new definition for love, happiness and faith.

It was while doing my evening rounds one day that I noticed the first super human. Each time I entered his room, both he and his wife would welcome me with a smile. I could see the chemotherapy drugs flowing into his vein through the IV set. Yet, he would say with a big smile on his face, 'Doctor, I'm perfectly alright.' I was curious about this patient and ran to the nursing station to check his diagnosis. He had metastatic carcinoma colon (stage IV colon cancer). But I strongly believe he had metastasis of joy.

The next super human I met was one of my JY elders. She was diagnosed with breast cancer but whenever I saw her, her face glowed with joy. She told me, 'I

previously adorned with beautiful rings were now black, her skin tone and colour changed and she had lost a lot of weight. But the only thing that remained unchanged was their love for each other. Beauty, for them, had another definition. Her husband discovered the beauty of her soul. And that I think was true love.

There were many more examples of super humans I met, who were filled with joy and hope irrespective of the pain they were going through. So, I write this for the people who get easily discouraged or depressed! My dearest brothers and sisters in Christ, we need to accept the fact that we are abundantly blessed. Imagine being diagnosed with a disease that literally 'eats' you. The super humans I met were all diagnosed with cancers that 'ate' their bodies and caused excruciating

you in love with appearances or with the soul? The couples I met were just like each of us but they brought something extraordinary to their relationship – the love that mirrored Christ.

After my medical oncology posting I realised that most of us are truly blessed; accept it. God loves us so much. If God brings a Goliath in front of you, accept the fact that you are now a David!

God bless us all and may we be filled with his joy. ■

I could see the chemotherapy drugs flowing into his vein through the IV set. He had metastatic carcinoma colon (stage IV colon cancer). But I strongly believe he had metastasis of joy.



Dr. Irine Mary Joy is a Housesurgeon at Amala Institute of Medical Sciences, Trichur, India.

Christ Encounters on Life's Crossroads

Nimmy Alex shares how the various Christ encounters of her life, starting from home, were guideposts that led her to discover her charism – bringing youth to Christ.



MY DOMESTIC CHURCH

I was blessed to be born into a Catholic family as the youngest child. My parents moved to Bangalore from Kerala for better prospects. They were blessed with an elder son, Sabu Varkey who went on to become an international hockey player. Their second child, a girl, Beena Varkey was an angel sent from heaven for me. She introduced *Jesus* to me, always took me to Jesus Youth gatherings and imprinted the image of Christ on me.

MY SECOND HOME

Mary Immaculate, a convent school under the Apostolic Carmelites was my second home to experience Christ. The annual retreats, the daily morning walks for Mass, helped to lay strong foundations for my Catholic faith. As I continued my education at St. Joseph's College, Bangalore (a Jesuit institution) and later began working as a lecturer in St. Aloysius College, Mangalore, the conviction to be a Catholic missionary wherever I am planted, has only grown stronger.

LESSONS LEARNED ALONG ROADS TRAVELLED

From my first Christeen retreat in grade 7 up to my full-timership training in 2003, the Lord gave me plenty of opportunities to taste his goodness. Since grade 12 onwards, I was actively involved in the audio-visual ministry, was member of the first Bangalore Campus Team in 2000, along with active participation in weekly campus prayer meets at St. Joseph's College, Bangalore.

In 2003, the forty-five days of intense full-timer training, the commitment day, the additional three months of resource training, the remaining year which abounded with beautiful experiences of prayer, Bible reading, session preparation, long travels and acquaintance with almost all Jesus Youth families at Kochi opened up a new horizon of *Christ into my life*.

The Holy Spirit inspired me to spend quality time making conversations with Jesus, to read three different parts (Psalms in the morning, New Testament in the afternoon and the Old Testament at night) of the Bible. *Reading the entire Bible was and will be the 'biggest achievement of life'.*

It has made me more confident, vibrant and dynamic and has played a pivotal role in making me a determined mother and a versatile lecturer.

Was blessed to meet many living saintly couples, whose inspiration convinced that every Catholic family is a domestic church, a factory of saints and today I have my own family with Alex Nicholas and three children Nick (10 years), Theresa (9 years) and Hannah (4 years). We still travel to JY gatherings, reach outs to gather youth, always keeping our home open for all youth to grow in Christ.

The formation I received in Jesus Youth helped me to lead Praise and Worship, instilled a deep thirst to pray in tongues, to go for regular confession and to always live in union with Christ. It has made me more confident, vibrant and dynamic and has played a pivotal role in making me a determined mother and a versatile lecturer.

THE ROAD AHEAD

After my full-timership, I continued my higher studies in Trichy, Tamil Nadu where I continued my JY involvement. During this time, two of my JY elders introduced me to the Teens Team. Being part of the National Teens Team since its inception helped me understand teenagers to accompany them in their faith journey. Along with Rhea Eugene and Bijo Cyriac, we scripted a book called *Companion*, which had daily acts of charity based on ten themes for ten

months designed on the same lines of our basic Kerygma.

This exposure helped when we moved to Australia after marriage to gather twelve selected teenagers, with whom we faith-journeyed for two years. They were called the '12D' for whom we did monthly gatherings like screening movies, outdoor Rosary walks, outdoor games, saint-costume days, advent calendar, etc.

And in 2015, when I walked into the campus of St. Aloysius PU college, Mangalore to teach, to guide, to love, to hold my students close to my heart, I was reminded as to how my Lord had already created a special place for teenagers in my heart.

TOUGH TERRAINS

The struggles in comparison to the learnings were few. There were moments of rejection, but it reminded me of Christ on the cross who suffered and endured it all alone, in union with God the Father, through whom he rose again and lives forever. And when I started sharing my life experiences with students, I realised that in going through those hard times and enduring it, I could help those who struggled with those same issues. Struggles, rejection and loneliness helped me to depend more on Christ as the Word of God in Nehemiah 8:10 says, *The joy of the Lord is my strength*.

COUNTLESS BLESSINGS

The fruit of knowing Christ from all avenues of life beginning from my home, school, JY platforms, Jesuit education, struggles, joys, travels, reach outs, formation programmes and the six pillars have helped me to be rooted in Christ. Today as a family when we reside in Mangalore and look out into a world yearning for God's loving touch, we try our best to continue to inspire all whom we encounter on the *crossroads of life*.

All the Glory to God!



Nimmy Alex a lecturer at St. Aloysius PU College, resides in Mangalore, India with her husband Alex Nicholas and their three children.

UP CLOSE



Talking with THARAYILACHEN

Anu Pinheiro speaks to Fr. Thomas Tharayil on his new responsibilities in the Latin Catholic Church of Kerala and the role of the movement in the Church.

Fr. Thomas Tharayil, a priest from the Diocese of Vijayapuram in Kerala, juggles dual heavy-duty responsibilities in the Latin Church of Kerala and yet his enthusiasm and energy to work with youth in the Jesus Youth movement remains undiminished. TharayilAchan, as he is fondly called in JY circles, speaks to Kairos about how he continues his efforts within the Church and the movement.

Q. TharayilAcha, please tell us about your new responsibilities and what they entail.

The responsibilities entrusted to me recently are actually a dual responsibility. I was appointed as the Deputy Secretary General of the Kerala Region Latin Catholic Bishops' Council (KRLCBC) and the General Secretary of the Kerala Region Latin Catholic Council (KRLCC). These are two apex entities of the Kerala

Latin Church. The Bishops' Council (KRLCBC) is the top most body that guides and leads the Latin Church of Kerala. All the Latin bishops come together and deliberate on the working of the Latin Church of Kerala and I have to assist the bishops in their deliberations in their meetings.

My second responsibility is as the General Secretary of the Kerala Region Latin Catholic Council (KRLCC), a key unifying and policy making council of the Latin Catholic Church of Kerala. It comprises nearly two-hundred diocesan representatives including all the bishops, representatives of priests, religious, lay people and leaders of various lay associations. This council convenes a general assembly twice a year where we discuss matters relating to the Latin community and the Latin Church. In Kerala the Latin people are at the same time a church and a community. So, we have to

work in this dual reality and my work involves much travel to all the dioceses across the length & breadth of Kerala to see people, to organise programmes, to animate meetings, etc. It is hectic and demanding, but not new to me as for the past eight years I have been working as the Associate General Secretary of the KRLCC and the Associate Deputy Secretary of the KRLCBC. So, I'm familiar with the functioning of these bodies but now I'm directly responsible for these realities.

Q. You have been an integral part of Jesus Youth for a very long time now – Chaplain of the JY US National Council and of the JY International Council. Please share with us your journey with the movement.

It began while I was in the seminary. The charismatic movement drew me to it and I was involved in prayer meetings. Eventually I came to know about Jesus Youth and was attracted to its activities. However, being in the seminary I was unable to participate in all JY programmes. After my ordination in December 1986 I began to actively associate with the movement. As a priest, I was appointed to the high ranges in Peermade and Idukki region and so was associated with the zones of Kattappana and Idukki. Later I came down to Kothamangalam followed by a time in Kottayam¹. In all these places I was associated with JY at the grassroots. Then in the late 90s when I moved to the US for my studies, I was able to initiate JY activities there too with the help of some JYs who were already there. We brought together the youth from the Indian-American families under the banner of Jesus Youth.

When Jesus Youth went global, and the first international team (ad hoc) was formed during the WYD 2000 in Toronto, I was called to serve as the chaplain of the international team, which I continued to do for two more consecutive terms. Now I am in-charge of the priests and seminarians in the movement. In all my years of association with Jesus Youth, I would rather say that I've been enriched by it. Notwithstanding my other responsibilities in the diocese, I have always tried to help and serve the movement. It has been an honour and a blessing.

Q. From your perspective, what role can Jesus Youth play in the Church?

Having been able to minister to the Church in various responsibilities, I have had the opportunity to work with different movements and associations, all of whom do meritorious service to the Church. However, associating with the Jesus Youth movement, I am convinced that it has a very specific role in the Church at large, and also especially in the Church in Kerala

We have to train our younger generation about this basic call of a Jesus Youth to be at the service of the Church, to become involved in the integral life of the parish and diocese.

and India. As Jesus Youth always works according to the need of the times, it can respond relevantly to any situation – in mission places, in rural, urban and semi-urban situations, in campuses and parishes, with families, teens, youth and elderly – JY is able to work with all these groups and realities. The contribution that Jesus Youth is making right now in the Church is marvellous and praiseworthy. At the same time, we can go a very long way ahead. We can do more as a missionary movement at the service of the Church.

One thing to be done more seriously is to get into the heart of the Church – the Church local. As a Christian is primarily raised in a parish, our involvement's presence, visibility, relationship, fraternity and fellowship with the local parish is equally important. This does not limit focus to the parish priest, parish community, Catechetical, youth or family ministries but being agents of transformation in everything that happens in the parish. Over the past years I have seen that many a time after attending a JY programme or retreat, youth would return burning with zeal to do something for their parish. Though in the rare instances when they encountered negative responses within the parish, they would manage to organise a few young people around them, to form a small prayer group, slowly entering into the life of the parish and transforming it. But nowadays I think our members are more focused towards a programme-oriented way of ministry.

Our primary focus is the youth, maybe even those youth outside the Church, as we are able to reach many



who are inaccessible to the officially organised Church associations or ministries. This is our charism and we should hold fast to it. At the same time our association with the official structures of the Church has to be strengthened. Though our leaders are trying, we have to train our younger generation about this basic call of a Jesus Youth to be at the service of the Church, to become involved in the integral life of the parish and diocese. It may be time for some soul searching about how we can relate more or improve our relationship with the local Church.

Q. Being responsible for JY priests and seminarians, how do you perceive the movement's role in nurturing vocations?

That is a very significant question. I would like to answer that question in two parts. Firstly, as we know, when JY began, we had a few priests who would support us by hearing confessions or helping us for Mass, Adoration, retreats, spiritual direction, etc. Some priests, who despite their responsibilities, out of their generosity, associated with the movement and helped us. This continues even today and will continue forever in JY. I too belong to that category. This association helps not just the movement but the priests as well. Many priests have testified that the zeal of the youth, their prayer life and their genuine interest in mission have encouraged and strengthened their priestly ministry. JY has been promoting vocations over the years. But unlike a diocesan or religious vocation promoter organising vocation camps, it was more

through the activities and JY lifestyle that many young people discerned their call to religious life. Hundreds can testify that life in the movement helped them to discern their vocation and embrace it.

Secondly once the movement was recognised by the Vatican as a private association in the Church, the Holy Spirit slowly began prompting us to discern the possibility of having priests specifically for our movement. It took a long time to discern and to reach a final decision. Several eminent people like our beloved Archbishop Abraham Viruthakulangara, along with other bishops, canonists and other leaders of the Church, helped us in discerning this possibility. Finally, when we were fully aware of this reality and fully convinced of the fact that we could promote vocations for the movement, we dared to do it.

As you know now we have three priests ordained for the movement. For the time being we have to make a working arrangement with some dioceses for the technicality of incardination of all priests – to abide by the canonical requirements. But eventually, God willing, we hope that we will be able to incardinate them in the movement itself. But here too, what we have to keep in mind is that we are not aggressively promoting vocations for JY priesthood. We encourage all our members to discern their way of life, be it marriage, religious or priestly vocation or single life. Some might be called to be priests in the movement or in any diocese or any congregation. Either way the movement supports and helps them whole-heartedly.

If, after prayer and discernment, someone approaches the movement to become a priest, the movement sits with him and comes to a certain level of conviction that this person is called by the Lord to serve as a priest in the movement. Only then we begin the process of priestly formation. This is why we have only a few candidates. Currently we have seven candidates on the journey of priestly formation. A few more are waiting and discerning. So we are not worried about numbers, but are very serious about the discernment of priestly vocations in the movement and we support them. These priests will serve the movement in a particular way. Priests like me will definitely continue to help JY in various parts of the world as chaplains or in other capacities, but the ministries and responsibilities of the priests ordained for the movement will be different. ■

¹ Peermade, Idukki, Kattappana, Kothamangalam and Kottayam are places in the southern Indian state of Kerala



Anu Pinheiro lives in Cochin with her husband, Shelton and their two daughters, Andrea and Isabel.

IN FOCUS

Hope

*'Hold On,
Pain Ends'*

Sumol Pious gives us a deeper understanding of hope, as we enter a new year.



Hope is the essence of our life, the vital component to move forward. People usually hope for a better future, work hard for a better lifestyle and do what they can for a better tomorrow. Do I follow the crowd in this or do I take a U turn to live my life in a simpler, fuller and beautiful way as He has planned? I hope the acronym Hope – ‘Hold On, Pain Ends’ has a new dimension and will help us to understand it in a better way.

H for Holiness. Joshua 3:5. *Joshua said to the people, ‘Make yourselves holy! Tomorrow the LORD will do wonderful things among you.’* When we live with integrity, our life becomes holy before God and we become his witnesses to others. That’s the simple yet scrupulous task to enjoy our life in its fullness. Life is always beautiful with all its ups and downs as He has something good to offer us in it all. So, living a holy life without wearing a mask – just being humble to see others as part of a bigger plan can always fill a person with hope.

O for Openness. Revelation 3:8. *I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.* If we are open to ourselves and others, we can live a fuller life. Many times, we close ourselves to the several doors that the Lord opens in our life. We are so naïve to understand his love and care for us. We make our own plans and decisions but they trip us down and leave us with cuts and bruises – mentally, emotionally and physically. Opening up to our Lord and acknowledging our sins give us hope for a second chance.

So this is not the dusk but a dawn full of hope which make us new beings in His image.

P for Perseverance. Luke 1:37. *For nothing will be impossible with God.* The one who trusts in God will find solutions to all the problems of life. We will be able to bear our pain with ease or with the conviction that this will turn out to joy one day, or that the sufferings will sanctify us and humble ourselves to see everyone as our brethren. Hope is this – God can make everything possible in our lives. We all might have experienced God’s miraculous intervention in life. This very hope gives us strength to persevere and move forward with gratitude.

E for Eternity. 1 Corinthians 15:19. *If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied.* All our thoughts, words, and deeds should lead us to a life here and a life after our death. According to the scripture we need to put our hope in Christ not only for the graces we need in this very life but also to partake with him the beautiful life he has offered us. *If you confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised him from death, you will be saved.* (Romans 10:9) So eternity is a part of our life as we hope for the best, and the best is yet to come. It is a conscientious task to believe that there’s a life after our death, yet for us this is the good news as we enter into a new year and new era.

As we enter into another new year with all the graces it can offer, let us all live our life to the fullest with our Lord. Let us consider others as more worthy than us, let us love and serve God with our heart and in our deeds and actions. Let us strive for holiness in every small and big thing we do. Let us open our hearts for God. Let us persevere in all things, hoping to perceive the greater glory of God. Let us live this life as a deposit for eternal life. So this is not the dusk but a dawn full of hope which makes us new beings in His image. ■



Sumol Pious works as a higher secondary teacher in Muscat, Oman.

HOPE

IN THE NEW YEAR

Hope in God strengthens us, says **Joel Alex**, who learnt total surrender to God's Will during his full-timership in Uganda.



As scheduled the New Year has arrived. Like a lot of people, we tend to set new goals or resolutions to improve ourselves. I too have done so. Though in my life, for the most part, the resolutions fell through after the first few weeks. This, I later realised, was because of an unrealistic commitment I had made or that I was doing something I was not really passionate about. Or simply because I was not ready to make that commitment.

In the past year, the impact of Covid-19 was felt by one and all. It left the whole world wondering whether there was any light at the end of the tunnel. At some point, you probably would have felt hopeless, depressed, lost or angry – as though you were clinging to the last straw. And like many, you would have asked God, ‘Why are you letting this happen to me?’

Experiencing total surrender to God is what rejuvenated my faith. When everything was going well, I overlooked God's mercy and failed to see the genuine love of God.

I was an international full-timer and was placed in Uganda. Being raised in a western society, all possible luxury was at one's fingertips. It also meant my faith was based on the securities I was around – my earnings, friends, education, family, and other worldly achievements. It was not until I was exposed to a life where all these things were scarce that I realised, my faith was based on worldly achievements. Experiencing total surrender to God is what rejuvenated my faith. When everything was going well, I overlooked God's mercy and failed to see the genuine love of God.

It was only when I was put in a spot of helplessness that I realised my lukewarm faith rested on my own comforts. Because I had no choice but to put my trust in God, I was able to experience his grace. I was able to understand true love. It was only because of the hardship I experienced in Uganda that I was able to surrender to God's will.

As the New Year is here, I encourage everyone to put their hope in God, especially when going through turmoil, because he has already suffered and died for us. There is nothing greater than that. Regardless of what you are going through today, just know that you have overcome all your struggles till now. With my personal witness, I can guarantee that the problem that we are facing today is only temporary and all Jesus is asking us to do is surrender that to him and walk with him. Hope in God strengthens us.

Let this New Year be a year where we truly welcome Jesus into our hearts. So that his love overpowers the struggles we face. Also, when we pray, let us pray with conviction. *Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.* Mark 11:24



Joel Alex was a former international full-timer to Uganda. He currently works as a peace officer in Calgary, Canada and is part of the Calgary zonal council.

KAIROS STORY

KAIROS IS NOT A MAGAZINE ALONE

Sunny Kokkapillil shares his experiences as one of the early Managing Editors of Kairos. Memories of his days in the magazine's Calicut office shine with the passion for evangelisation and God's abundant grace.



It was in 2000 that I took charge of the *Kairos* Magazine as managing editor and I continued in that post till 2017. When I took over, there were only a few files and furniture consisting of a table and a couple of chairs in the office, while the circulation was merely a few hundreds. Then in October 2000, the magazine came out with a new look – in content, size and layout. Although it was published in full debt, all those who were working for *Kairos* were filled with hope for its bright future. *Kairos* was an outreach of Jesus Youth to the common youth, a manifestation of their unquenchable thirst to proclaim Jesus.

Publicity at the time was without today's social media reachability or network. Yet, the youth welcomed the magazine. For many years, the office space of *Kairos* underwent constant shifting of locations. Finally in 2006, the magazine settled into a rental space in Chevayur, Calicut¹.

The growth of *Shalom* magazine – the forerunner among Christian spiritual magazines was mainly powered by Kulathuvayal Retreat Centre, the charismatic movement, and the strong prayer groups of seniors along with strong intercession. Moreover, they had a permanent office space. For *Kairos*, with the limitations of the youth leaders busy with so many ministries and with their modest financial backgrounds, it was often a struggle to continue. The person in charge of finance often struggled to meet the press bills and office expenses.



The magazine witnessed many young people rebuilding their lives with Jesus as the cornerstone, after reading *Kairos*.

He had to borrow money from many people and on one occasion, even had to pledge his own property for a bank loan to clear the debts. Funds came largely through the occasional Jesus Youth conventions and programmes. When the then chief editor, Mr. Renny Njarakulam, visited the Gulf countries, many Jesus Youth leaders came forward to help us. Slowly, subscriptions began to pick up and when the financial condition was stable, we were able to equip the office with the necessary computers and furniture. As the facilities and circulations increased, seven to eight employees were appointed. A strong prayer support was behind all this growth. The *Kairos* team would gather frequently and pray fervently for a permanent office of their own, for Hindi and English editions of *Kairos* and even for a *Kairos* channel.

CONTENT

Over time, we learnt that the spiritual experiences of various Jesus Youth

published in *Kairos* attracted the common youth. We were able to publish articles on the realities of human life, relatable to the readers. As a result, the magazine witnessed many young people rebuilding their lives with Jesus as the cornerstone. It is divine providence that the spiritual life foundation of many were laid after reading the God experiences of many Jesus Youth. My column of twenty years, *Vartha Vicharam*, a critical review of contemporary social issues has been well appreciated. Like all magazines, *Kairos* also went through many experiments in content evolving to its present stage. According to the changing era, the magazine also went through a reformation in style and printing. Now, *Kairos* has won a prominent place among the many Christian publications in Kerala.

OTHER SERVICES

It was in 2011 that the office of *Kairos* shifted to Ernakulam. Until then, any Jesus Youth coming to Calicut from

anywhere in India would first visit the Kairos' office. It was their meeting place for long discussions and prayer. Several national level charismatic leaders have visited the office many times. Continuous intercessory prayer was always present. Once a week, senior prayer group leaders came to the office for a day of prayer. Thus both the youth and seniors sat together in union praising the Almighty. Even people residing quite far away were enthusiastic to come to the office for intercession. Every first Friday of the month, we held a 'Kairos Night Vigil' in the MCBS chapel near the Kozhikode Medical College. We would receive a lot of prayer requests in the office to be prayed for during the night vigil and many renowned preachers were invited to deliver a message during the night-long prayer sessions.

RETREATS AND COUNSELING

In the early years, the main office bearers of *Kairos* were people who were very much active in evangelisation. Leaders like Chackochan Njavallil, Elvis Kottooran, Tomy Thottumkal, Adv. K. J. Johnson, Renny Joseph and Babu Thundathil had been serving the Jesus Youth movement through various ministries. Therefore *Kairos* was able to conduct various retreats even outside Kerala. The members of *Kairos* were multi-talented people and their gifts helped *Kairos* to grow in various ministries. People of all ages came to the office for prayer and counseling.

OTHER THINGS

The support of a lot of people was necessary for the packaging of the magazine every month. Initially, there was neither the plastic wrap used now nor the software to sort the post. When the newly printed magazines arrived at the office, it had to be folded, covered in a wrapper, stamped, pasted with the address slip, bundled postal region-wise and district-wise and sealed – all in a routine sequence. Packaging day was like a festival. The entire Kairos team, the people who helped with intercession, and the campus youth would come together as one family.



It was always 'kairos' (a time of grace) during Kairos' stages of growth. It grew step-by-step only through prayer.

Kairos was able to publish many books such as *Koumarathinte Kanappurangal* (The Hidden Side of Teenage Years), *Ente Rajakumari Parannu Poyi* (My Princess Flew Away), *Amma Anne Angane Paranjirunnu* (Things Mummy Told Me Then), which were all sold-out in thousands.

For me, my own family and the Kairos family gave me the same feeling of homeliness, both could not be separated. When I start to write about my experiences of managing the *Kairos* office, it seems endless. It is all through the grace of God that I have been able to associate with the growth of *Kairos* – from a few files to a fully equipped office – for seventeen long years.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Kairos strived through all these years because of the tithe given by generous people, a decent share of which was shared with the needy, in giving medical-aid and paying the school fees of students. If any urgent need arose for a charitable act, many would immediately come forward and help us.

My services in the *Kairos* office has helped me to grow both spirituality and personally. I treasure the strong friendships made with the great spiritual personalities of the Church. The fact that I was a common visitor to POC and Emmaus was a blessing given by *Kairos*. Above all, I have been able to wipe away the tears of many youth through the abundant graces of Jesus.

One of my greatest personal grievances came when the *Kairos* office was destroyed in the great floods of 2018. Many valuable books that *Kairos* owned and all its issues from the pilot issue, published in 1997, were all lost in the torrential rain.

To sum up, it was always 'kairos' (a time of grace) during *Kairos*' stages of growth. It grew step-by-step only through prayer. If money kept coming into its empty account, it was all because of the 'Hail Marys' that echoed within the walls of *Kairos* office. Without any first-hand knowledge about printing and publication, *Kairos* grew and blossomed over the years by the intense fire burning in a group of youth, kindled by the Holy Spirit. When they encountered Jesus, they had to think of new ways of propagating His Word. *Kairos* has unveiled another beautiful face of the Church. I feel that the seminary aspirants may be the most enthusiastic readers of *Kairos* because in the recent years, the magazine most revealed the pulse of the modern youth. ■

¹ Calicut is a city in the southern Indian state of Kerala



Sunny Kokkapillil was the Associate Editor of Kairos Malayalam and is the author of several books.

FEEDBACK



Well written, wide spectrum of content for all categories of readers, slick production values. I'd also suggest indicating the age and country of children in Blooming Kids section. It will give more credibility and makes it more relatable to young readers. Also, in the movie review, Sound Reply, could some factual info about the movie be added at the end, such as, production house, duration, etc?

Fr. Jude SDB, Sikkim, India

I received the some copies of Kairos. I read through and I liked it. I felt that KAIROS magazine is to be given to high schools and Colleges, where the students could get knowledge, wisdom, guidance, and motivation. I have given a copy each to about thirty colleges and high schools. I congratulate all of you for cooperating with the Kairos of God. Assuring you of my cooperation and prayers.

Fr. George Kandanthinkara, Guwahati, India

I had been having physical ailments for some time and had to undergo an operation as well. By the time I returned to the old age home, I was filled with sadness and depression because of many other things. In my absence, the Kairos magazines had been lying unread so I started reading them. It was the sharings of the three women in Issue 31 – Agnes Santhosh Thomas, Shanice Castellino and Annie Sebastian that filled me with hope and turned my attention to God. The depression left me and now I am full of joy. Thank You!

A Reader, Kerala, India

+ Friends
of
Kairos

KAIROS MEDIA, the mass media initiative of Jesus Youth, reaches out to young people around the world using modern means of communication.

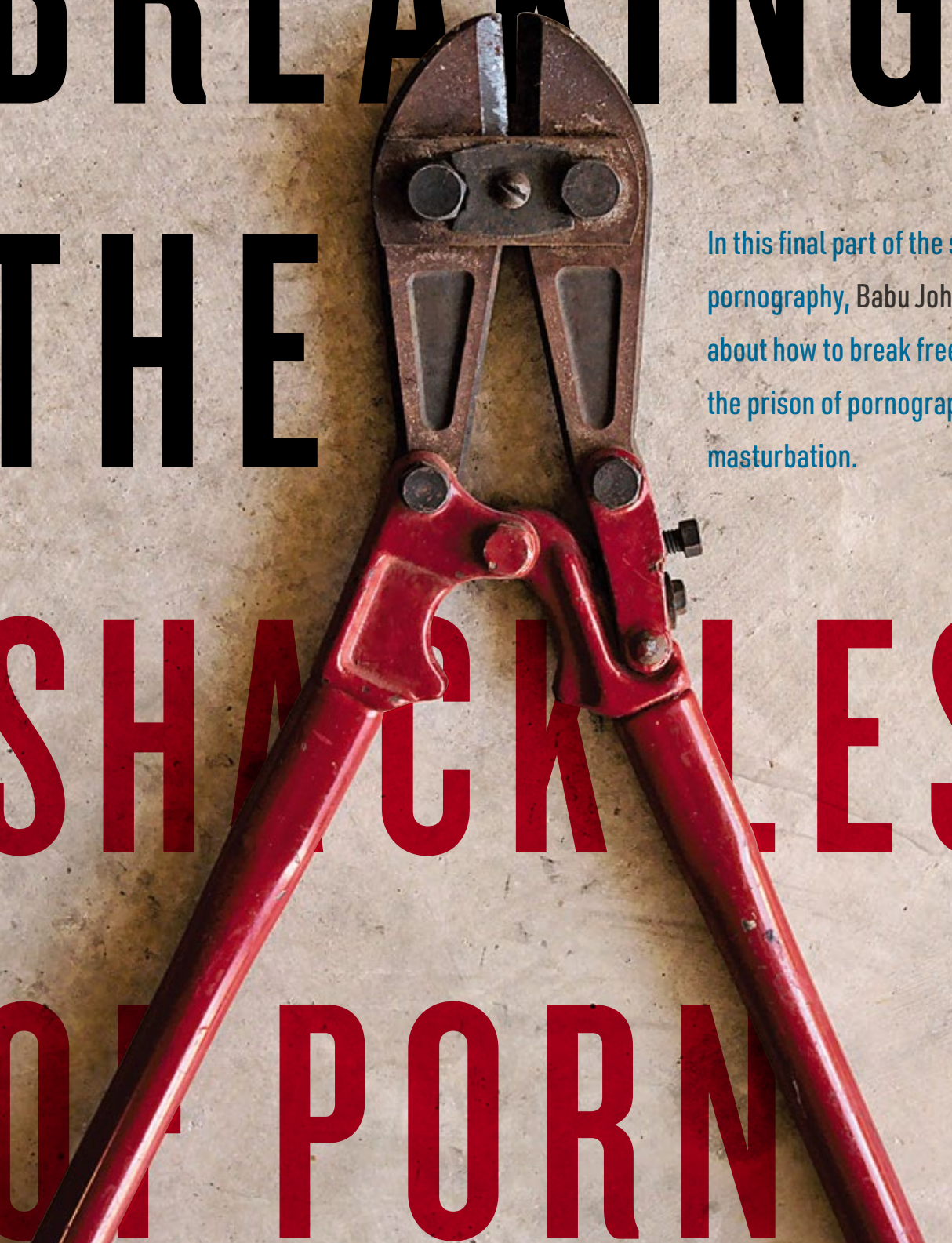
It is the love and support of so many "Friends of Kairos" that financially sustain the mission of Kairos Media. With a grateful heart, we lovingly remember and offer continuous prayers for our many friends who support Kairos every month through regular monetary contributions. If the Holy Spirit inspires you, dear Kairos reader, we invite you to join and support this evangelisation initiative by becoming a Friend of Kairos with your prayers and support. May God bless you!

You can make your contributions online through www.kairos.global
For more details contact **Rani George** - +91 9446563335 finance@kairos.global



CULTURE OF LIFE

BREAKING THE SHACKLES OF PORN



In this final part of the series on pornography, Babu John talks about how to break free from the prison of pornography and masturbation.

The struggle with porn is real and can become a life-controlling problem. While many other addictions are introduced from outside the body, porn addiction takes place inside, in the mind and limbic system. The consequent harmful effects are across the human condition – biological, psychological, and spiritual. It produces neurobiological changes in the nervous system on par with those produced by addictive drugs. Overcoming any addiction is not easy; it involves healing and integrating various dimensions of the person. Breaking free from the prison of pornography and masturbation requires the ability to make radical, concrete lifestyle changes. Is it possible? Yes, it can be done; you can break the cycle. Here are a few pointers in two phases of contemplations and actions towards freedom from porn.

FIRST PHASE: (SELF-REFLECTION)

Be honest, and take a moral inventory of your life. You will not overcome anything until you first admit that it is a problem, and realise that you do want to be over it. You have to come to see that in your strength. It is not until you can admit this that you will be willing to get help from God and others.

1. Hate the Silent Killer, the Liar, the Devastator

If you want to break the chain of porn and masturbation, don't accept it as normal. Don't say, '*I can't help it, and after all, it's not that bad.*' Or don't justify it and say, '*It is my life and I'm not hurting anyone... Everyone does it, no big deal... Just one more time... I can stop whenever I want...*' Come to your senses and **be smart to understand the science behind any addiction which we have explained in the previous two editions.**

2. Porn is a grave offense against the whole of humanity

'Pornography offends chastity because it perverts the conjugal act, the intimate giving of spouses to each other. It does grave injury to the dignity of its participants (actors, vendors, the public) since each one becomes an object of base pleasure and illicit profit for others. It immerses all who are involved in the illusion of a fantasy world. It is a grave offense' (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2354).

3. Masturbation is an intrinsically and gravely disordered action

Have you ever considered the wonder of each part of your body? God, the divine architect designed each part of our body with a clear purpose and dignity, including our genitals. Just like any other part of the body, our genitals are designed for a purpose, not to be

misused on the pretext of freedom or pleasure; for then, we would have to face the consequences.

Instead of the intimate and mutual self-giving that is the hallmark of the marital act, masturbation, whether within or outside marriage, is an act where one turns selfishly inward. Indeed, masturbation is a dualistic, self-indulgent activity that uses the body as a means of personal gratification, instead of integrating one's gift of sexuality—one's powers of love and life—into a sincere self-gift to another.

Consequently, 'both the Magisterium of the Church, in the course of a constant tradition, and the moral sense of the faithful have been in no doubt and have firmly maintained that masturbation is an intrinsically and gravely disordered action' (CCC 2352). 'And when committed with full knowledge and complete consent' (CCC 1859), *it is a mortal sin* (cf. CCC 1854-64).

4. Why do we have a male body or a female body?

God created us male and female so that we could image the love within the Trinity, becoming a sincere gift to each other. Human sexuality is a gift from God. It should be viewed as a gift possessing inherent goodness and properly placed within a free, faithful, fruitful, and total marriage. Then sexual love becomes an image of the giving and receiving love in the heart or inner life of the Trinity (CCC 369, 372, 373).

According to St. John Paul II, God created us male and female, and the call to become 'one flesh' to be a sign in this earth of the eternal bliss and ecstasy waiting for us in the heavenly marriage. The 'essence of the human' is our call to communion – with God and with one another; it is the giving and receiving of love. And the whole truth of the body and sex, St. John Paul II affirms, '*is the simple and pure truth of communion between persons*' (TOB 14:4).

Femininity and masculinity are complementary gifts, through which human sexuality is an integrating part of the concrete capacity for love which God has inscribed in man and woman. (The truth and meaning of human sexuality #10) Sexuality, then, is not merely a matter of biology, nor is it simply a source of personal pleasure. Rather, it concerns, as Pope St. John Paul II reminds us in the apostolic exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*, 'the innermost being of the human person as such. It is realised in a truly human way only if it is an integral part of the love by which a man and woman commit themselves totally to one another until death.' (FC 11) The truth is that 'human sexuality can never find its full expression apart from the intimate partnership of life and love established by the Creator in marriage, where the husband and wife become one heart and one soul, and together obtain their human perfection' (CCC 2364 & *Humanae Vitae*, 9).

5. 'Your Body is not Yours'

'My body, my choice' is a slogan of secular culture that is meant to represent the idea of personal bodily autonomy, bodily integrity, and freedom of choice. But the truth is that we are merely the *custodians* of our bodies. Our body is expected to reveal God. 'The body, and it alone, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and the divine.' (St. John Paul II, TOB 19:4) Every action in our life should be challenged by these questions: *Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?* (1Cor 3:16).

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you,

which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body (1Cor 6:19-20).

6. Why Pornography is morally wrong?

In moral theology, an 'act' is the knowing choice of a human person. Each knowing choice is an act and each act is subject to the eternal moral law. 'Freedom makes a man a moral subject. When he acts deliberately, man is, so to speak, the *father of his acts*' (CCC 1749). Some acts are moral, and other acts are immoral. An immoral act is a sinful act, in other words, sin is a knowingly chosen immoral act.

To be moral, every act must have three good fonts (sources) of morality:

'The object, the intention, and the circumstances make up the "sources," or constitutive elements, of the morality of human acts' (CCC 1750).

(1) The intention or purpose for which the act is done, (2) the inherent moral meaning of the act as determined by its moral object, (3) the circumstances of the act, especially the consequences. 'A *morally good* act requires the goodness of the object, of the end, and the circumstances together. An evil end corrupts the action, even if the object is good in itself' (CCC 1755). If any of the fonts is bad, the act is immoral.

Sexual acts are not exempt from the moral law. To have a good moral object, every sexual act must be marital and unitive and open to procreation. The deprivation of any one or more of these meanings from the moral object causes the sexual act to be intrinsically evil and always gravely immoral.

'Sexual pleasure is morally disordered when sought for itself, isolated from its procreative and unitive purposes' (CCC 2351).

SECOND PHASE: [FAITH & ACTION]

7. Make a firm decision to break the chain

This is ongoing, and healing is possible with outside support and the Mercy of Christ. You cannot do it alone. It requires much effort, personal work and help from others. Don't hide, confide! Don't let shame and frustration overwhelm you. The darkness of shame and frustration gives sexual sin its power. Share your struggle with a trusted person – someone who is non-judgmental, sympathetic and compassionate – who can help and guide you on this journey.

8. Healing of the Mind, Body, and Soul

Perhaps you started watching pornography out of curiosity, or because those around you were. And you got glued because there were gaps within you that porn started to fill. Your actual problem may not be pornography or masturbation. It may have been a lack of love or merely to de-stress, but which has enslaved



According to St. John Paul II, God created us male and female, and the call to become 'one flesh' to be a sign in this earth of the eternal bliss and ecstasy waiting for us in the heavenly marriage.

you now. Whatever be your situation, as St. John Paul II says, 'We are not the sum of our weaknesses and failures, we are the sum of the Father's love for us and our real capacity to become the image of His Son Jesus.'

9. 'You are not alone'

'Remember that you are never alone, Christ is with you on your journey every day of your lives! He has called you and chosen you to live in the freedom of the children of God. Turn to him in prayer and in love. Ask him to grant you the courage and strength to live in this freedom always. Walk with him who is "the Way, the Truth and the Life"' (St John Paul II).

You could be a Christian or a non-Christian, *[Christ] indeed died for all* (2Corinthians 5:15). *He is the expiation for our sins, and not for our sins only but those of the whole world* (1John 2:1-2).

Jesus doesn't want you to be enslaved. He will liberate you. *[God] desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself a ransom for all* (1Timothy 2:4-6).

10. 'Do you believe that I can do this?'

When a few blind men approached him for healing, Jesus said to them, 'Do you believe that I can do this?' 'Yes, Lord,' they said to him (Mathew 9:28).

Believe that Jesus can heal and liberate you from this bondage. *If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved* (Romans 10:9). *For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, 'Do not fear, I will help you'* (Isaiah 41: 13).



11. Sacrament of Reconciliation (Healing)

If you are a Christian, confession is a powerful practice for healing. *Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!* (Psalm 51:2). The Sacrament of Reconciliation communicates God's healing grace. It forgives sin through God's abundant mercy, breaks the cycle of shame, and offers graces for protection against future sin. Regular confession is a source of strength for those seeking to live pure, chaste lives, who embrace God's plan for love and sexuality. Forgiveness, too, is important for spiritual healing. When a person admits to the reality of their pornography use, the harm caused by it becomes clear and they need to make amends for it. In turn, when the person seeking freedom offers forgiveness to others, this brings God's healing grace in all their lives.

If you are a non-Christian, ask God's pardon sincerely and seek him to forgive and heal you so that he can shower his grace upon you.

12. Frequenting the Holy Eucharist

Every Holy Mass is as precious as the sacrifice of our Lord's life, sufferings, and death – the most pleasing sacrifice to God the Father. Mass is the most powerful atonement for our sins. It gives us strength and healing to remain holy.

13. Daily Bible reading and Prayer

By reading scripture daily you are taking a stand for God and his plans for you. You are letting Jesus renew your mind and direct your steps, which directly impacts everything you do and you will feel more confident. Prayers against temptation give strength to break free from sinful snares! Remember, a person without prayer is one whom Satan has greater influence upon.

14. Holy Rosary

In the Rosary, Mary guides us to her Son; she intercedes for us; she loves us. It will help us in our battle against the temptations and the lies of the evil. The Rosary is our best defense against Satan. It will help cleanse your mind off porn images that exist within your subconscious, which can re emerge at the strangest, most inappropriate times. Surrender every woman and man whom you have ever seen and objectified in pornography to Mother Mary in the Rosary so that she can lead them to Jesus.

15. 'Get rid of it all!'

Destroy all the acquired materials in addition to placing secure internet connections and accountability software on all your devices. As you do this, identify thoughts and behaviors that have led you to seek out pornography. Root out these thoughts and habits and eliminate them from your collection. Avoid these near occasions of sin and remove them from your easy access.

16. Always remain 'alert'

Avoid all situations that lead to the temptation to watch porn again and keep a healthy distrust of yourself in terms of your vices and weaknesses. Don't be naive in believing you are immune to pornography once you overcome it temporarily. If you relapse, get up. Be ready to get up and go through the process over again. The Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Eucharist are fundamental to this process.

In this 'culture of death,' we are weak, we are broken but there is a current of grace flowing beneath, to heal our brokenness and renew us. Our brokenness and addictions are not our identities. We have a theological pre-history – which explains our true identity. St. John Paul II says, 'There is imprinted in the experience of fallen man *a certain echo of the original innocence of man*' (TOB 55:4).

We hear the echo of God's original plan that God had in his mind when he created us. He created us to participate in the eternal exchange of love. God wants us to be filled with his Love and unending Ecstasy and that makes meaning for our lives. ■



Babu John is the Director of TOB for Life, and a speaker on Theology of the Body.

FAMILIA

Riding storms

on His Shoulders

Reflecting on the poem, *Footprints in the Sand*, Suja Siju recollects the trials that tormented her family and the unwavering presence of God, especially during them.

The poem, *Footprints in the Sand* and its visuals – two sets of footprints imprinted in the sand, behind a man journeying through life – are familiar to all. The man notices that after a while, only one set of footprints remain. These, he realises are during the most difficult moments of his life. Puzzled, he asks God, ‘Lord, you said once that if I decided to follow you, you would walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that during the most distressing times in life, there has been only one set of footprints. I don’t understand why when I needed you the most, you would leave me.’

The Lord replied, ‘My precious, precious child, I love you and would never leave you. During your times of trial and tribulation, when you see only one set of footprints, that was when I carried you.’

When I bridge this story with our life, when I look back at the last twenty years, what I see on the path is just one pair of footprints and how we surpassed adversities. But when you realise that you were on the shoulders of Jesus that makes you feel you have achieved the best in life.

My journey with Jesus began with Jesus Youth. From the Campus Meet of 1991 to when I began my family life in 2001, that was my training period during which I learned to walk with Jesus – the training to walk arm in arm, side by side, and to carry him amply in the heart.

We got married in April 2001, building castles of dreams in our minds. The days followed proved that our dreams were not in vain. May, June, July, and August bid their farewell. One day in September, as usual my husband Siju returned home after work. He had been complaining of a gastric problem for the past few days, despite taking medicines. So we decided to go and consult a doctor.

The doctor enquired after his habits, regarding smoking or alcoholism, to which he replied negative.

There was nothing suspicious at the initial checkups, so they decided to take Siju’s ECG. We handed him the ECG report expecting nothing but were taken aback by what the doctor said. As per the scan report, Siju had undergone a cardiac arrest. The news shook us. We spent ten days in the hospital but the doctors were unable to find the reason for his cardiac arrest.

Later, we shifted to Thrissur¹ for ease in commuting to work and for hospital visits. Soon life got back to normal except for the medicines and checkups. The days that I spent there in the chapel along with Jesus is what sustained us. Years passed and we were blessed with two kids. When our youngest was only a year old, Siju got a transfer to Ernakulam². By then, the kids, ailments, and the tedious routines of life took me away from Jesus Youth. But I still held on tight to God. We maintained our friendship.

Having moved into a new house on rent, we wanted to get it blessed and invited Fr. Abraham Pallivathukal from Kaloor Lumen Jyothis Jesuit Centre. The children had already made friendships in the neighbourhood. Taniya *mol* our neighbour’s child spent a lot of time playing with our kids at home. When the father arrived to bless our home, Taniya *mol* and her mother were also present. He suggested that if children could play together, their parents could pray together. That made us think about a prayer group and we formed a community of six families called the Friday group, where we prayed, shared, played and cared for each other. Even though our family moved away a few years later, the group still exists and is going strong.

Life at Ernakulam was not easy. Ailments seized our kids, Alen and Abel one after the other. Seeing all this, Dani, one of our Friday group members said, ‘Even though Suja aunty and Siju uncle pray so hard, yet they are always in the hospital. That itself makes us suspicious of praying, but how can you still be happy? Is it because you are in Jesus Youth?’ That revived us and gave us a new light.

Not long after, Siju had to go to Kozhikode for a week’s training. Abel had joined kindergarten. One day late noon, it was time to pick Abel from school. Being very hot that day, I sent Alen to the nearby anganvadi³ not wanting to expose him to the scorching heat. When I returned, I was shocked to find Alen crying. The school midday meal was usually prepared on a traditional stove outdoors. Unfortunately, some of the embers that fell out were still burning when Alen accidentally walked by. The people around helped me to take him to the hospital. But when we returned home, something else was awaiting me. There was a crowd gathered around our house, just about to take Abel to the hospital. Someone told me that Abel was bitten by something on his feet. I stood there helpless, wondering how I would deal with these onslaughts. When we reached the hospital with Abel, they suspected snakebite and so he was sent to the ICU. Friends from our Friday group came forward to help stay at the hospital with Abel; Santhosh and Jossy being heaven-sent angels. When a priest blesses a marriage there is a blessing that he bestows on the new couple. That blessing has been with us throughout life.

Siju now began falling ill due to buildup of calcium deposit and was admitted to the hospital. During my stay there in the hospital, I too fell ill when my pulse rate started to decline fast. The results of my checkup revealed that there was a difference in the length of my valves – a result of continuous stress. They also found that there was an infection

When a priest blesses a marriage there is a blessing that he bestows on the new couple. That blessing has been with us throughout life.



in my uterus and so I was admitted in the same room with Siju. One day Fr. Pallivathukal visited us, prayed and blessed us. He later called us up that night and shared a vision he had, where he saw a child in our hands by this time, next year.

We continued the treatment for four months. The next checkup was a miracle. Doctors told us that everything was fine for us to have a child if we wanted. The very next month, I conceived and just as father had said, the next year, our youngest was born. There were many complications in the pregnancy but God carried us on his shoulders. Fr. Pallivathukal had suggested that we named the baby Joshua as he was a child saved by God. And so we did.

We continued our journey with the Saviour. In 2013 Siju underwent a kidney stone surgery. During this time we were active members of the church and its congregation. In 2016 a stomach pain he had led to the removal of a small part of his intestine. We continued to have different checkups to find out the reason for this sickness. At last, doctors found out that his body tended to form blood clots suddenly. In 2019, a stroke due to a clot in his brain became serious. Doctors predicted that there was a high chance of his going into a coma or total memory loss. They suggested

an immediate shift to hospitals either in Coimbatore⁴ or Thrissur. We hurried with all the preparations but suddenly, Siju got paralysed on one side. I felt like sinking into the depths of the oceans. All that came to my mind was the song, *All to Jesus I surrender*. I looked at his lifeless hands, tied my rosary around them and prayed hand-in-hand; it gave me a strength that I had never felt before. Soon he was taken for a CT scan. I waited outside the room praying to God to perform some miracle. When he was brought out of the room I ran to him. He stretched his hands and touched mine, the same lifeless hands on which I tied the rosary. He was back to normal.

After all the checkups the doctors found that it was cerebral thrombosis. Siju could not recall what happened the day before – the memories of just one day in his life from all of the 45 years. One day a junior doctor came on his rounds and asked to see Siju's medical records. On going through them, he said that Siju's case was a miracle in medical history. For us, it was the experience of the pure love and care of God.

In 2019 we were admitted again to the hospital just when Siju happened to be in charge of the JY programme, 'Bliss'. We got discharged from the hospital and reached the programme two days before it began. When we had left for the hospital, his condition was critical but he made it through Bliss and it truly was a wonder to everyone. Somehow we managed to leap into 2020. Headaches started to seize him again. Finally, we decided to get treated in Ernakulam. The check-ups revealed a polyp in his small intestine. He underwent a sigmoidoscopy to remove the polyp.

Finally, when we reached back home, Alan's 10th board exams were getting over. When every parent spends time with their children during exams, Jesus was the guardian of my child. He passed with 88%, by the grace of God.

Illnesses, hospital admissions, checkups added to the burdens of life. But we made it through. The struggles, pain, sufferings we endured were trivial before the eternal love of God.

When we feel that the paths ahead are closed, when we pass through the darkest moments of life, he will send angels to guard and protect us. These angels appeared to us in the form of our friends and doctors who pulled us up from the verge of pain and suffering. We suffered the loss of health and wealth on our journey through life but we clung on to the Lord. We will forever hold on to him, as long as we live. No, it's not us, it's him; he is carrying us and enfolds us in his tender love. Yes, we will overcome; leaving everything to him, we will move forward. We will keep building our castle of dreams, holding his hands, standing together. *But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.* (Isaiah 40:31)

I know everybody who reads this will picture Siju as a man, sick and weak. No, he is not. He does everything on his own. He drives ten kilometers every day to work. He is strong, strong in his belief. He knows from dusk to dawn that Jesus is carrying him on his shoulder. What is there to fret about then? Glory to God in the highest! ■

^{1-2, 4} Trichur, Ernakulam and Coimbatore are cities in South India

³ An anganwadi is a rural child care system in India



A columnist and motivational speaker, **Suja Siju** is also the author of several books for children. She lives in Ernakulam, India with husband, Siju Abraham and their three children.



KAIROS BUDS Diary

**A Spiritual
Companion for
children through
2021.**

- ★ Monthly Calendar with feasts of the Saints
- ★ Learn a Bible verse every day
- ★ Daily inspiration from the Saints
- ★ Devotions for each month
- ★ Twelve special Saints for the year
- ★ Traditional prayers
- ★ Learn the Hail Mary in different languages
- ★ A special journal for kids

Spiritual Cramps

Every Christian has experienced spiritual cramps in one form or the other. Through the Word of God, **Anil Israel** explains how we can overcome it.



Many of us who have had a conversion experience or who have encountered Christ somewhere along life's journey, might be happy to have turned our back to our 'old way' of living and glad to have found joy in a 'new way' of life in Christ. With the help of divine grace from above and the inner working of the Holy Spirit deep within, we might have given up certain sinful habits and embraced a lifestyle of soul-nourishing habits. We pursue spending time with God either in personal prayer or listening to his Holy Living Word or frequenting the Sacraments more often than before or taking delight in plunging ourselves in a world of spiritual books or holy media.

The desire to *put on the new self* (Ephesians 4:24) is there in our hearts. However, the circumstances surrounding us remains unchanged. The set of temptations waiting to attack us are also the same. The people with whom we stay at home or those whom we meet every day continue to behave and respond in the same 'old way'. *The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak* (Mathew 26:41) and we might tend to slip and fall back to the old sludge we bravely announced to abandon forever.

The Holy Gospel cautions us: *Anyone who starts to plough and then keeps looking back is of no use for the Kingdom of God* (Luke 9:62). The farmer who is ploughing must keep his focus on what lies ahead and cannot afford to be distracted by

TIMID, BUT GIVES US POWER, LOVE AND SELF-DISCIPLINE. > 2TIMOTHY 1:7



We might find ourselves weakened by the spirit of infirmity and exhausted by the storms of discouragement. Let us not be fatigued with such spiritual cramps that lead us to despair. *For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.*

(2Timothy 1:7)

what lies behind. Any attempt to 'look back' can result in going astray from the desired path, resulting in consequences uncalled for. Reverting to old sinful ways is referred to as, *A dog goes back to what it has vomited* or *A pig that has been washed goes back to roll in the mud* (2Peter 2:22). Now this is something none of us would like to be compared to! Also, in the Old Testament we are reminded, *Lot's wife looked back and she became a pillar of salt* (Genesis 19:26). Inclination to revert back to the ungodly ways can have its disastrous consequences in that we end up missing the promised *unfading crown of glory* (1 Peter 5:4).

It is said we cannot stay passive on our spiritual journey. We either actively swim upstream against the tide of sin and move forward towards our eternal goal, or we get swept away downstream by the evil attractions of this worldly living, distracted by the *cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches* (Mark 4:19) and find ourselves trapped in the mire of unholy living. We either progress or backslide. There is no standing still. We, therefore, ought to choose consciously to row rather than to go with the flow. Spiritual stagnation yields to spiritual decay!

The Christian life is a *training in godliness* (cf. 1 Timothy 4:7). We might be blinded by the cloud of confusion, led astray by the deception of the devil, lured by the *desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes and the pride of life* (1 John 2:16) and disillusioned by *itching ears* (2 Timothy 4:3). We might find ourselves struggling to keep alive the flame of Christ, our Hope – *the Light of the World* (John 8:12). We might find ourselves weakened by the spirit of infirmity and exhausted by the storms of discouragement. Let us not be fatigued with such spiritual cramps that lead us to despair. *For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline* (2 Timothy 1:7).

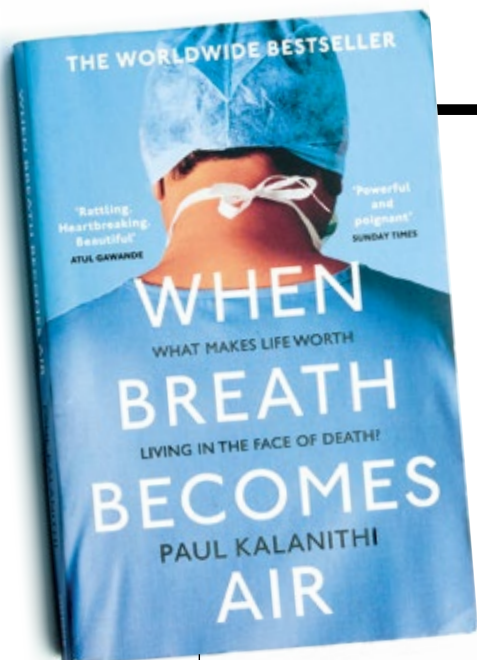
Let us not grow weary in doing good (Galatians 6:9), *let us run with endurance the race that is set before us* (Hebrews 12:1). Scripture consistently empowers us, *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me* (Philippians 4:13). *God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it* (1 Corinthians 10:13).

We are further encouraged: *he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world* (1 John 4:4), *those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength* (Isaiah 40:31). *Those who look to him are radiant* (Psalm 34:5). Like our Blessed Mother, may we too learn to respond: *I am the servant of the Lord, let it be done to me according to your word* (Luke 1:38). Let the lives of the saints and the blessed continue to inspire and motivate us. *'To always be close to Jesus, that's my life plan. I'm happy to die because I've lived my life without wasting even a minute of it doing things that wouldn't have pleased God'* (Bl. Carlo Acutis).

God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 1:3). *So do not let yourselves become discouraged and give up* (Hebrews 12:3). *I consider it all as mere garbage, so that I may gain Christ* (Philippians 3:8). Let us avert spiritual derailment by letting this song echo in our hearts: *'I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back, no turning back. The world behind me, the cross before me, no turning back, no turning back. Though none go with me, still I will follow, no turning back, no turning back.'* ■



Anil Israel lives in Mannheim, Germany, with his wife Sunitha and their 5 children. He is the current National Formation Coordinator of JY Germany.



BOOK

WHEN BREATH BECOMES AIR

What makes life worth living in the face of death? What do you do when the future, no longer a ladder toward your goals in life, flattens out into a perpetual present? What does it mean to have a child, to nurture a new life as another fades away? These are the questions which Dr. Paul Kalanithi had to wrestle with alongside battling stage IV metastatic lung cancer. His memoir *When Breath becomes Air*, a seminal autobiography about living while dying, was translated into 39 languages and spent 68 weeks on the New York Times bestseller list. Dr. Kalanithi was 36 years old and in his final year as a neurosurgical resident when he was diagnosed with terminal cancer.

This book is undoubtedly the most moving of accounts I have read in the recent past, and has influenced my worldview like no other. Through his lifelong quest to find out what gives meaning to life, he takes the reader through a journey of discovery on what matters in life. One day he was a doctor treating the dying, and

the next day a patient struggling to survive a disease that not only caused him excruciating pain but also at the same time threw light on his quest to decode the intricacies of human existence. I personally had a tough time completing the book towards the final pages, where I found myself crying profusely reading the account of Lucy, his wife. The book is in a sense, unfinished – derailed by Paul’s rapid decline, which in Lucy’s words was the essential component of Paul’s reality, of what he faced. Paul spent much of his life wrestling with the question of how to live a meaningful life, and his book explores the very same territory. Though it will not give you an answer to this question, it is bound to give you a perspective on how to live a life of integrity in the face of death. ‘Always the seer is the sayer,’ wrote Emerson. This book was Paul the seer’s courageous attempt at being the sayer.

Not only is Paul poetic throughout the whole book, but grapples with some fundamental questions about what makes life worth living, about faith and scientific enquiry, and the meaning of life which he believed had something to do with the depths of human relationships one forms. His fascination with how ‘human relationality’ undergirded life’s meaning is not only profound, but is beautifully articulated through his conversations with friends, family and his physician Cady. I’m absolutely positive that his efforts to translate his own experience with death, into literature was not an easy task – given he was typing away this

When Breath Becomes Air is in many ways an unforgettable, life-affirming reflection on the challenge of facing death and on the relationship between doctor and patient, from a brilliant writer who became both.

book even while in the waiting room of his oncologist, with a certainty that the writer in him would live on forever through his words. The result – a piece of literature that talks straight to the heart of anyone in pursuit of truth and meaning. ‘Everyone succumbs to finitude’ is my favourite of takeaways from his book which not only shares a perspective but also talks about the most fundamental of truths.

‘When you come to one of the many moments in life when you must give an account of yourself, provide a ledger of what you have been, and done, and meant to the world, do not, I pray, discount that you filled a dying man’s days with a sated joy, a joy unknown to me in all my prior years, a joy that does not hunger for more and more, but rests, satisfied. In this time, right now, that is an enormous thing.’ This was Paul’s message to his daughter, Lucy who was eight months old at the time of his death.

Paul died in March 2015, while writing this book, yet his words live by with an ever increasing profoundness. *When Breath Becomes Air* is in many ways an unforgettable, life-affirming reflection on the challenge of facing death and on the relationship between doctor and patient, from a brilliant writer who became both. If you haven’t already, I’d urge you to grab a copy at the earliest and dive in.



REVIEW BY Noel Benno

A former William J. Clinton Fellow and TEDx speaker, Noel Benno is a Technology Strategy Consultant and enjoys cooking fish and meat while not busy with charts and excel sheets.

Chandeliers

FAMILY SAINTS

By Joseph Santhosh & Bijie Santhosh

✿ *Saints Basil the Elder and Emmelia*



Feast: May 30

Family of six saints is a unique state of grace. Basil, a lawyer and great orator got married to Emmelia, had ten children and lived a holy life in modern day Turkey. Living in the most happening city of the world during the fourth century, the couple led a heroic, saintly life through their marriage.

Basil, the son of notably devout parents, married Emmelia, whose father had died a martyr. Fleeing the persecution of Christians by the emperor Maximus, they hid for seven years in the wild mountains of Pontus. They returned to Caesarea, Cappadocia (modern Turkey) settled into a large home and were blessed with ten children. The most known among them are St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Macrina the Younger and St. Peter of Sebaste.

Saint Emmelia, a woman of excellent and virtuous character and of outstanding beauty, had lost her parents at an early age and married Basil to avoid

the many dangers of the world. They were known for their works of mercy and zeal to help the poor and pilgrims. She was extraordinary in the upbringing of her children; taught them very early on to know and to treasure the Word of God. The children were thoroughly acquainted with the fundamentals of Catholic life.

On the death of their famous son, Basil the Great, Saint Gregory Nazianzen, described the home life that Basil the Elder and Emmelia created, 'The union of his parents, cemented as it was by a community of virtue, no less than by cohabitation, as notable ... especially for generosity to the poor, for hospitality, for purity of soul because of self-discipline, for the dedication to God of a portion of their property.. However, their greatest

claim to distinction is the excellence of their children.'

Basil the Elder died around the time his youngest, Peter was born. Emmelia after taking care of all her children, withdrew to a cloistered religious community she and her daughter Macrina had founded. All their children lived saintly lives and even today the Greek Church observes the 'Feast of the Relatives of St. Basil the Great.'

Let us fortify our families through the intercession of St. Basil and St. Emmelia, asking that our children might go forth and transform the world. All the Saints – Basil the Elder, Emmelia, Macrina, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa and Peter of Sebaste, pray for us and our families. ■

Newswatch

GOD'S CRAZY PEOPLE

'It is awesome to follow the Lord.'

'It is a thanksgiving to the Lord.'

Love the Lord

entirely and be ready to give everything to him.'

'A call to go deeper.'

'The only constant in life is Jesus.'

'Fear has no place in a Christian's life.'

'Praise God in all circumstances.'

By **Serena DSouza** with inputs
from **Manoj Sunny**

CRAZY! Better stay away from it. I'm sure this thought has crossed your mind or hasn't it? Some of us strive for normalcy and stability in our lives, why would we want to go crazy? Moreover, God's crazy people? Aren't we God's beloved children? The apple of his eye? The rest of us out there may feel we are all crazy in our own way! Confused? Let me introduce you to a world where CRAZY is what you would aspire to be.

Shalom world USA and Jesus Youth International have collaboratively started a weekly twenty-five-minute chat show called *God's Crazy People*. Aired since September 2020, the show highlights the lives of these crazy people over fourteen episodes, with more to come. These are people who have taken a year off of their life and surrendered it to God by being a part of a unique programme of Jesus Youth called Full-timership. Jesus

Youth full-timership was started twenty-eight years ago and has witnessed the participation of around two-thousand youth. It involves an intensive one-month training followed by a one-year time span of missionary work across the globe.

God's Crazy People aims to share the life-transforming Christ-encounters of the full-timers, the reasons behind their leap of faith, their experiences and lessons with the youth today. These full-timers come from different walks of life – college students, working professionals and occasionally seminarians too! The full-timership has also been a process of discernment and finding purpose in life. To share a few, Br. Anthony Xavier speaks about how the full-timership helped in his discernment to become a priest even after working in the corporate world for quite a few years. Shelina Guedes (currently working in the corporate world)

from UK shares her joy at being able to overcome her lack of satisfaction despite having a good job by learning to rely on God alone during her full-timership in Canada. Currently working in Dubai with a family of three kids and a beautiful wife, Rony Dominic a chartered accountant by profession brings to light the enriching experience his JY full-timership in Cambodia had on his career. Daimy David continues to be a full-time missionary with his family and kids in various part of the world.

Watching *God's Crazy People* leaves one feeling warm and comforted with God's unconditional love for each one of us. You can watch the programme on shalomworld.org, SHALOM WORLD APP and the Jesus Youth YouTube Channel. In case you wish to know more about the full-timership project, you can email your queries to fulltimers@jesusyouth.org. ■



Release of Kairos Buds

A new magazine for children is being released in January 2021 by Kairos. The magazine will be for children up to the age of thirteen. A pilot copy had been brought out in December 2019, which received a positive response.

With vibrant and child-focused design, *Kairos Buds* aims to inculcate in children a love for the Catholic Church through interesting articles, cartoons, activities stories and events. It brings together a range of segments to showcase how awesome their faith is. With articles on parenting, health, book-movie-and-online-review, and Q&A, parents too have reason to enjoy this brand new magazine.

Kairos Buds is brought out at an extremely affordable rate of 30 INR per copy in India and 4 USD per copy outside India. For details on subscription, please visit www.kairos.global.

Living life

HOPE

And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us (Romans 5:5).

Hope is not a feeling or an emotion rather it is a conviction that I am loved by my Heavenly Father.

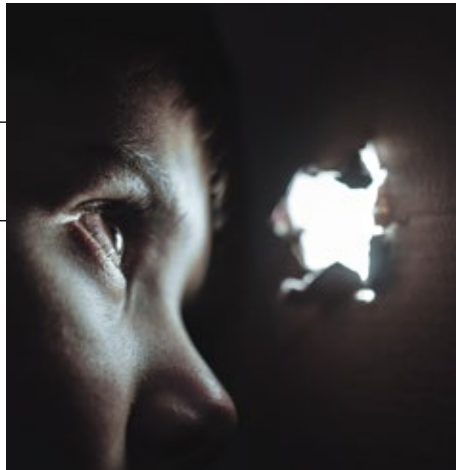
2020 was a shocking year for the entire world. A total shutdown, globally was beyond our wildest imagination. Dreams and plans of millions shattered before a micro virus.

After my graduation from law college in 2019, I was totally uncertain about my future. With this dilemma eating my mind, I entered 2020 expecting an answer ...

When the whole world came to a standstill, with hope a distant dream, only two questions remained – Oh Good Lord what is this? Where are you taking me?

With plenty of time and no commitments, I decided to pray more, read the Scriptures more and pray more Rosaries – even in the midst of many personal struggles. I just completely put my trust in Him – I had no other choice.

ARUN SEBASTIAN / THODUPUZZHA, INDIA



As time passed, I began to see the Lord guiding, preparing me and revealing the answer I was in search of. He showed me rays of hope through uncertainty, gave me spiritual realisations that I was loved by my Heavenly Father despite my flaws. That there was nothing I could do to make him love me more and love me less, for he is love and his nature is love. All the while, he was asking me to be still, be patient and calm and to know that he loved me and had great plans for me. The terrible year 2020 turned me from hopeless to hopeful.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways are my ways, declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9).

AMDG.

Let us say once again: we need the greater and lesser hopes that keep us going day by day. But these are not enough without the great hope, which must surpass everything else. This great hope can only be God' (*Spe Salvi* p31, 2007). During a mission trip, while going through a struggling phase, this quote transformed my life forever. We need smaller hopes like a good dinner, a good job, finding a suitable life partner. But all those hopes cease to exist the moment you get them. So, we all need a hope that drives us till the last breath, the hope in Christ who will come back with Mercy and Justice.

CYRIAC PANACKAL / GERMANY



For me hope in simple words means complete trust in and waiting for God's time. Having hope in the lord also helps us to be humble to accept that God is in control.

Long after completing my Masters in Engineering from University of Ottawa, I still couldn't find a job. While all my friends started working in reputed companies, I was still doing small, part-time jobs. I prayed a lot and many of my JY friends prayed for me too. Even though I was struggling, it didn't stop me from continuing my ministry, the

burning desire for him kept me going. Whenever I asked God in prayer about a job, he kept giving me messages that he had something good for me; I wasn't sure what it was but I trusted him.

After 27 months of searching, God miraculously gave me a job where I enjoy what I do and I can glorify him all the time. I couldn't even believe that a job like this existed and I hadn't even applied for it in a formal way – youth ministry coordinator for an Archdiocese in Northern Canada. It is a missionary diocese that works mostly among the

First Nation communities in the North.

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are mine (Isaiah 43: 1). What else do we need, we are his, and he will keep his promises. I waited and hoped in God, knowing that my Abba father had it under control. I know how frustrating it is to wait without knowing the outcome, but there is a lot of grace and blessing which comes with it. God never abandons because he is Love and he is our Father. Let us joyfully hope and wait for him and his time.

JIMS ALACKEL / CANADA

Quiz Time



Mail your answers to quiztime@kairos.global before 31st January 2021.
The winner will be rewarded with 1 year subscription of Kairos Global



PART A

Who Said It?

1. Who said, 'Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?'

Judas / Simon / Jesus / Mary

2. Who washed his hands before the multitude and said, 'I am innocent of the blood of this just person.'

Caiaphas / Herod / Pontius Pilate / Judas

3. Who asked Jesus this question, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going, and how can we know the way?'

Simon / Thomas / Mathew / John

4. 'The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer.' Who made the statement?

David / Samuel / Daniel / Jacob

5. Who said, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.'

Jacob / Samson / Martha / Mary Magdalene

PART B

Fill in

1. The Lord is my , I shall not want.

God / strength / shepherd / provider

2. Yea, though I walk through the valley of , I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

treachery and torment / the shadow of death / sin and suffering / evil

3. is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

The Holy Spirit / The Lord, our God / Thy word / Thy law

4. To everything there is a , and a time to every purpose under the heaven.

place under the sun / season / reason / day

5. Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name .

Jesus. / Son of God. / Messiah. / Immanuel



ANSWERS TO QUIZTIME ISSUE 33

Match the Bible words to their definitions

1. Father; 2. All-powerful

Match the following

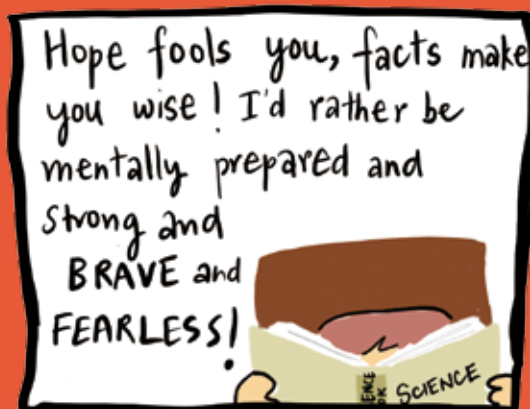
27; Simeon; 12; Peter; Matthew

Who am I?

Zechariah; John the Baptist; Zacchaeus; Nicodemus; Peter; Martha; Mary Magdalene; Herod; Hannah



The winner of Quiztime Issue 33: Jackulin Sheela, Maharashtra, India





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for children
aged 3 to 12
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