



# THE DELHI DOMINICAN



ST DOMINIC'S CHURCH, VASANT VIHAR, NEW DELHI

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# THE DELHI DOMINICAN

(Parish Newsletter)

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## PARISH PRIEST

# Speaks...

**Fr. Prasad George, OP**  
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## THE DOMINICAN STORY

It's said that stories create cultures. "If you want to learn about a culture listen to the stories. If you want to change a culture, change the stories."

Biblical stories, for example, created the way the "People of the Book" (Jews/Christians) thought of who they were and how they should behave. The stories of Adam and Eve, Abraham and the rest taught basic principles of faith and right living. As time went by, in the face of new situations, new interpretations were given by those godly men and women whom we call Prophets in the Biblical language. The Prophets told new stories which, while maintaining the same story line of God's action among his people, changed the way they thought of God and his expectations of his people (for example compare Ex. 34:6-7 and Deut. 5:8-10 with Ez. 18:20). Similar re-interpretations and improvisations keep happening throughout history.

St. Dominic de Guzman was born at a time when Europe was reeling under a heresy known as Albigensian. The heretics believed in a dualistic principle: they taught that the world of matter was inherently corrupt and evil. All material world was the creation of Satan. God was responsible only for the spiritual universe. Man should always try to escape the burdens of the material world. Therefore, suicide was recommended. Marriage was bad, because you produce more matter which is evil.

In the midst of such self-destructive teachings St. Dominic's was a prophetic voice which proclaimed God's supremacy over the whole universe and his compassionate plan for the world. The stories connected with the Saint had one underlying theme: compassion. Be it the story of selling his costly books to feed the poor during a famine or offering himself to be sold to liberate a slave boy and to restore him to his mother or his long vigils praying for sinners, they always spoke of his compassion. However, his biggest act of compassion was the founding of a religious Order known as the Order of Preachers, for preaching and for the salvation of souls. This he did at a time when there was hardly anyone to teach the people the essential religious truths.

This is the big Dominican story: the ministry of compassion carried out through the preaching of the Word. Anyone who approaches St. Dominic should approach him to learn more of the Word of God. Yes, St Dominic would be genuinely interested in feeding the poor and liberating the enslaved. But he would be of greater help to us when we approach him for the spiritual nourishment that comes from the meditation on the Word of God. Thus, the prayer most pleasing to him would be: Father Dominic, teach us to love the Word of God.

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# St. Dominic: The Intercessor



Fr. Roshan, OP  
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We often remember the last words of the people at their deathbed. If they happen to be our near and dear ones the words will always linger in our heart. I still remember the last words of my dad at his deathbed. With his tear-filled eyes, he told me, "My dear son, you have to become a priest." We still remember the classical words of the great men and women in history at their deathbed, like: Leonardo Da Vinci, the great Italian artist, at his deathbed said, "I have offended God and mankind because my work did not reach the quality it should have." St. John Bosco, the founder of the Salesians, said at his deathbed, "Love each other as brothers. Do good to all and evil to none. Tell my boys that I wait for all in Paradise." St. John Paul II, remembered for his charismatic nature, before his death said, "Let me go to the house of the Father." Mother Teresa, the saint of the gutter, said, "Jesus I love you; Jesus I love you." Jesus, while hanging on the Cross before he breathed his last, said, "It is finished."

In "Life of the Brethren" the last moments of St. Dominic is beautifully described: All the brethren came around Dominic; they said the breviary prayer, sang the Salve Regina and all the brethren were in tears. Dominic consoling the brethren said, "My little children, do not weep. I will be more helpful in heaven than on earth." These were the last words of St. Dominic to the crying brethren at his deathbed. Now the question is: How can a person be more useful to others after death? It is only through intercessory prayer.

Intercession comes from the Latin word "*intercedo*" meaning 'to come between' or 'to mediate'. Intercession is a form of representative prayer where we represent other people or their situations before God. St. Dominic is a great intercessor of the Order and Church at large. So does the Novena to St. Dominic begin highlighting the intercessory aspect of St. Dominic. It begins: "O wonderful hope which you gave to those who wept for you at the hour of your death promising that after your departure you will be helpful to your brethren." It also highlights St. Dominic praying for our temporal needs and the daily progress in our spiritual needs.

It is not only after his death that St. Dominic has been interceding but during his lifetime too, he always interceded for others,

specially the sinners for the salvation of their souls. He used to spend the whole night in the chapel praying for the conversion of Albigensian heretics and doing penance on their behalf. He used to cry loud in prayer: "Lord have mercy! What will become of sinners?"

Now the question is: Why did St. Dominic intercede for others? The answers would be:

- 1). **Intercession actually works or benefits others:** St. Dominic was convinced of the fact that intercessory prayer has power and so he interceded for others. St. Paul too firmly believed in the power of the intercessory prayer and that's why he always asked for the prayers of the communities (cf. 2 Cor. 1:11; Col. 4:3-4). In the Gospels too we find people, placing their trust in the intercessory prayer, praying for others; be it the centurion praying for his servant (cf. Lk. 7:12) or the people who brought a paralytic laying on the bed to Jesus (cf. Mt. 8:6; Lk. 5:18).
- 2). **Jesus intercedes for us and teaches us to follow his example:** St. Dominic was well aware that "Christ Jesus who died, who was raised who is at the right hand of God always intercedes for us" (Rom. 8:34) and he expects us to follow his example (cf. Jn. 13:15). Jesus always prayed on behalf of other people. In the high priestly prayer (Jn. 17), he not only prays for his disciples but for all of us too and asks us to do what he has done and St. Dominic perfectly followed the example of his Master.
- 3). **When we pray for others it enhances our love for them:** St. Dominic knew that when we pray for others, it softens our hearts for them, we remember their needs and start loving them. This is precisely why Jesus links loving our enemies with praying for them, saying, "Love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you" (Mt. 5:44).

Thus, St. Dominic always interceded for others and he teaches us to do the same. So, let us get into the shoes of the other and intercede for them. If we do not have the habit of praying for others, let us earnestly pray like the disciples, "Lord, teach us pray" (Lk. 11:1).





# संत दोमिनिक और अध्ययन

Fr. Joachim Lakra, OP  
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हम जब बच्चों को भारी थैली उठाये स्कूल जाते देखते हैं, तो अक्सर सोचते हैं कि 'शिक्षा पाने के लिए बच्चे कितना कठिन परिश्रम कर रहे हैं या ज्ञानार्जन के लिए कितनी तपस्या कर रहे हैं।' उनका कल सफल और उज्ज्वल बनाने के लिए गहन अध्ययन आवश्यक है। नहीं तो इस रफ्तार से चल रही दुनिया के साथ दौड़ नहीं पायेंगे। आप, मैं और हम सब इस बात से भली-भांति परिचित हैं कि शिक्षा कितना महत्वपूर्ण है: न केवल दुनिया की गति के साथ आगे बढ़ने के लिए, बल्कि एक व्यक्ति के सर्वांगीण विकास के लिए भी।

संत दोमिनिक ने भी अपने जीवन में अध्ययन को विशेष महत्व दिया था। उन्होंने इस बात को अच्छी तरह समझ लिया था कि सही शिक्षा के बिना कुछ भी सुचारु रूप से नहीं हो सकता। उन्होंने शिक्षा को बहुत गंभीर रूप से लिया और उसे अपने जीवन का अभिन्न अंग बनाया। न केवल अपने जीवन के लिए, बल्कि उनके द्वारा संस्थापित धर्मसमाज के लिए अध्ययन को महत्वपूर्ण अंग बना दिया। इसलिए दोमिनिकन धर्मसमाज के चार प्रमुख स्तंभों में से अध्ययन भी एक है (अध्ययन के अलावा सामुदायिक जीवन, प्रार्थना और सुसमाचार प्रचार अन्य स्तम्भ हैं)। संत दोमिनिक अपने समय में एक प्रभावशाली उपदेशक थे और वह इसलिए संभव हुआ क्योंकि उन्होंने पवित्र बाइबिल का और कलीसिया के शिक्षा का गहन अध्ययन किया और उन पर मनन-चिंतन करके सत्य को पहचाना और उस सच्चाई को लोगों तक पहुँचाया। संत दोमिनिक ने इसी वजह से अपने भाईयों को उन शहरों में समुदाय स्थापित करने के लिए भेजा जहाँ-जहाँ विश्वविद्यालय थे ताकि वे अध्ययन करके सत्य के प्रचारक बनें।

संत दोमिनिक का उद्देश्य यही था कि वह और उसके अनुयायी आध्यात्मिक सिद्धांतों का अध्ययन कर लोगों को सत्य की ओर अग्रसर करें और उन्हें विश्वास में जीने के लिए प्रेरित करें। अतः दोमिनिकन अध्ययन धार्मिक सिद्धांतों का अध्ययन है। यह अध्ययन अलौकिक सत्य

को जानने के लिए है जो पवित्र ग्रन्थ, कलीसिया के परम्पराओं और शिक्षाओं के अध्ययन से प्राप्त होती है। इस प्रकार अध्ययन न केवल ज्ञान की भूख को मिटाता था, बल्कि आत्मा को भी संतुष्टि प्रदान करता था क्योंकि अध्ययन के माध्यम से एक भक्त अपने ईश्वर की भक्ति में लीन हो सकता था।

इंसान की प्रवृत्ति ऐसी है कि उसकी शिक्षा न केवल उसके लिए लाभकारी है, बल्कि पूरे समाज के लिए जहाँ वह जीता है। अतः एक व्यक्ति का अध्ययन न केवल उसके लिए उपयोगी है, बल्कि पूरे

समाज के हित के लिए बहुमूल्य है। संत दोमिनिक के जीवन से यह बात जरूर सिद्ध होती है। उनकी शिक्षा न केवल उनके लिए थी, बल्कि वह पूरे समाज के उत्थान के लिए थी।



आज हमारे लिए सोचने का विषय है कि हमारी शिक्षा किस तरह की शिक्षा है? क्या हमारे अध्ययन और हमारे शोधकार्य से पूरे समाज और पूरी मानव जाति के हित की आशा की जा सकती है? या वे जो अभी स्कूलों में हैं, वे सोच सकते हैं कि हमारे शिक्षा पाने का उद्देश्य क्या है? हम दुनियाई ज्ञानार्जन के लिए खून-पसीना एक कर देते हैं। संसार की प्रतियोगिता में भिड़ने की हिम्मत रखने के लिए यथासंभव प्रयास करते हैं। नई चीजों को जानने-समझने के लिए दिन-रात एक कर देते हैं।

यह उचित भी है कि हम इस तरह से दुनिया में जीने के लिए मेहनत करें। लेकिन क्या हम धार्मिक शिक्षा पर भी ध्यान देते हैं? क्या हम धर्म के मर्म को समझने के लिए पवित्र बाइबिल, कलीसिया के सिद्धांतों और परम्पराओं का अध्ययन करने का प्रयास करते हैं? या साधारण-सी बात है, क्या कम से कम हम पल्लियों में हो रही धर्म शिक्षा की कक्षाओं को महत्व देते हैं? हमारा अध्ययन और हमारी शिक्षा तभी लाभदायक हो सकती है, जब हम धार्मिक शिक्षाओं को भी बराबर महत्व देते हैं।





# Know Your Parishioner

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## *Mukta Barla - Braving the thorns of life*

St Dominic's Church abounds with lots of parishioners and lots of activities, with so much of buzz around. Sometimes we forget those people who come to Church, silently pray and quietly go back to continue with their life's chores. One such lady is Mukta Barla, with simple needs and wants, facing up to her life's struggle with a smile. Her whole focus is on her work and God that He will make all things right.

Mukta hails from Jharkhand. Her entire growing up years and education was done in her hometown Rengarih (Jharkhand). In 1988 she completed her Matric (10<sup>th</sup> Std) from Ursuline Girls High School, Rengarih and followed it up with a two years Teacher's Training Program Course from Ursuline Primary Teacher's Education (1988-90). The very next year, in January 1991 she got married to Sunil Barla, at St Anthony's Roman Catholic Church, Rengarih. A farmer by profession, Sunil is in Delhi and is only able to take care of his house and give people advice on farming, though in their own hometown they have their own house and farm.

Mukta is blessed with a family of two sons - Rohit and Rakesh who are residing with her in Delhi and are in jobs, and two daughters - Nidhi and Nomita. Nidhi is in the 10<sup>th</sup> Std in Ursuline Convent Balika High School in Rengarih and her older daughter Nomita has taken to a religious life. She will be completing her Theology Course by October 2019 and will be joining the Franciscan Clarist Congregation in Madhya Pradesh.

Life for Mukta was always tough but her faith in God kept things moving. For eight long years she battled with epilepsy, right through her crucial years from 1988 as a Matric Student till 1995 and by God's grace overcame it naturally. Indeed, a miracle. It was through this phase she really felt God's hand in her life. During her Teacher's Training period, she was time and again sent back home when she had her epileptic attacks. Hence though she had completed her training, she could not make a career of it. God saw her through it all - her academics, her marriage and her first child was born while she was still an epilepsy patient. It was while her second child was still in her womb, that Epilepsy gradually left her. She felt the touch of God's greatness in her life.

Mukta feels fortunate to have found a job with the family of Retd. Lawyer from the Supreme Court, Mr Rajeev Gupta in B Block, Vasant Vihar, where she also resides. Mukta has

been in Delhi for the last six years and ever since then has been attending Hindi Mass at St. Dominic's Church. She fondly remembers how she got her Rosary blessed by Fr Roshan in 2016. She began to get to know the Parish Priest Rev Fr Prasad George in 2018.

A very religious person, Mukta starts her day by singing hymns and is joined by her whole family. She has developed her own pattern of prayers and worship. Every day in the morning she reads from the Bible - Psalms 1, 5, 3, 22, 23 & 91. And in the evening, she recites the Rosary and reads Psalms 4. Every Sunday she attends Mass and listens to the Word of God very attentively - the First Reading, the Second Reading and the Gospel, and the whole week reflects and meditates on its message and how it is relevant to her in her own life.

Mukta's most favourite Parable is the Parable of the Sower (Mt. 13:1-23; Mk. 4:1-20 & Lk. 8:4-15). Mukta likens herself to the seeds that fall on the soil which contained thorns. The sower is Jesus or anyone who proclaims the Gospel and the seeds represent the Gospel. The thorns are her life's struggles but God is constantly redeeming her, saving her from the clutches of the demon who is looking for man's downfall. Mukta feels that with strong faith in God, we can quash the devil's evil design to cause man to sin. Redeemed from sin such peace you experience. And as Ronald Regan once said - "We are never defeated unless we give up on God."

A peep into the life of a simple lady - Mukta Barla and the words of Eleanor Roosevelt comes to mind: "A woman is like a Tea-Bag. You can't tell how strong she is until you put her in hot water." How true!







# The Power of Confession: Christ paid a debt, we couldn't pay

Ms. Jish Maria  
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Over the years of being a Catholic, it has taught us that sacrament of confession is an important part of our spiritual life. Sometimes, we face questions from our non-Catholic friends about the importance it holds in our life and what role does Jesus play here? For that, let's open the Bible and read the Scriptures! You will be fascinated to know that confession has been talked about in both Old and New Testament!

"Someone lets slip an oath to do something either evil or good, in any of those matters on which someone may let slip an oath; he does not notice it, then, realising it later, he becomes answerable for it; if he is answerable in any of those cases, **he will have to confess the sin committed**. As a sacrifice of reparation for the sin committed, he will bring Yahweh a female from the flock (sheep or goat) as a sacrifice for sin; and **the priest will perform the rite of expiation for him to free him from his sin**" (Lev. 5:4-6).

Scripture brings to our notice, that God wanted the people to go to **the priest and not to God directly**. You may wonder why would God want that and not for us to pray to Him directly? The answer is "This is how **the priest must perform the rite of expiation for the person for the sin he has committed, and he will be forgiven**" (Lev. 5:10). Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, "Speak to the Israelites: "If a man or woman commits any of the sins by which people break faith with Yahweh, that person incurs guilt. The person must confess the sin committed and restore in full the amount owed, with one-fifth added. Payment is to be made to the person wronged. If, however, the latter has no relation to whom restitution can be made, the restitution due to Yahweh reverts to the priest, apart from the ram of expiation with which the priest makes expiation for the guilty party"(Num. 5: 5-8).

God has chosen the priests and given them this beautiful power and to pray over us for our sins thus fulfilling the Scriptures! You may think this is the Old Testament, old traditions, what does Christ have to say about this. Let us look what one of the Gospels speak about confession: "And now some men appeared, bringing on a bed a paralysed man whom they were trying to bring in and lay down in front of him. But as they could find no way of getting the man through the crowd, they went up onto the top of the house and lowered him and his stretcher down through the tiles into the middle of the gathering, **in front of Jesus**. **Seeing their faith he said, 'My friend, your sins are forgiven you.'** The scribes and the Pharisees began to think this over. **'Who is this man, talking blasphemy? Who but God alone can forgive sins?'** But Jesus, aware of their thoughts, made them this reply, **'What are these thoughts you have in your hearts? Which of these is easier: to say, "Your sins are forgiven you," or to say, "Get up and walk?" But to prove to you that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins,' - He**

**said to the paralysed man - 'I order you: get up, and pick up your stretcher and go home.'** And immediately before their very eyes **he got up, picked up what he had been lying on and went home praising God. They were all astounded and praised God** and were filled with awe, saying, "We have seen strange things today"" (Lk. 5: 18-26).

If we look again and read the Scripture once more, we realize how much even we are paralysed with sin, and the sacrament of confession can only be fulfilled with faith in believing the moment we confess, our Lord will make us whole, healing us completely and giving us the power to walk in this world, to walk through suffering by giving us strength, to walk holding onto a pious life with prayers and forgiveness, through the priest who forgives us, sitting in the chair holding the position of Son of Man, Jesus Christ!

Jesus has the authority to heal the internal and external body; internal the bigger sign. And when question arises whether Jesus gave this right to the priests. Let's read John 20:21-23: "**He said to them again, 'Peace be with you. 'As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.'** After saying this he breathed on them and said: **Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven; if you retain anyone's sins, they are retained.**" The disciples got the authority to absolve sins, directly from Jesus. Similarly, our priests have been given the authority to forgive our sins.

Coming back to our topic, what is the supernatural power that confession holds and why should we do it? James 5: 14-16 tells us: "**Any one of you who is ill should send for the elders of the Church, and they must anoint the sick person with oil in the name of the Lord and pray over him. The prayer of faith will save the sick person and the Lord will raise him up again; and if he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven. So confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another to be cured; the heartfelt prayer of someone upright works very powerfully.**" Confession has the power to heal you and has the power to take away blockages that hold the blessings that are supposed to come your way.

God loves us abundantly, and he does not want us to suffer, we suffer because we sin. God is a compassionate God, a loving Father, who wants to see his child happy and blessed, but unfortunately sin takes away the grace from us. If we knew every time, we went for confession, a blessing is coming our way, our prayers will be answered and most importantly how much stronger it makes us spiritually, we would do it EVERYDAY! Many of our saints led a life of daily and frequent confessions, that is why they could lead a life full of devotion and the protection of the Lord was upon them, till the end of time! Let us value this beautiful sacrament, that Jesus has gifted us and realize how fortunate we are, to always be saved when we fall!





# “Taste and see the Lord is Good”

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In the year 2016, I was diagnosed with Tuberculosis. Doctor prescribed me to take the medicine every day without fail. I was troubled, I isolated myself and cried out. A tiny sweet word I heard deep within my heart that said “taste and see” my body and blood, I am the greatest medicine of this world. I started to receive the Holy Communion daily. My painful night turned in to so comforting night. No one ever came to know about my suffering and painful night because the power of His real presence was working on me and not letting become weak. It was not my physical immunity that fought against this deadly sickness rather His presence in Holy Communion. Indeed, heavenly food of His body and blood became a greatest medicine to get me healed. Jesus has assured us His real presence in the Holy Eucharist. When we receive Him, our whole being transforms into His likeness and we renew ourselves in his Holiness. Often, many of us do not experience that.

Are we really serious about this Sacrament? From the first Holy communion what is the transformation that takes place after receiving Him? Count how many times we have received Him since our first holy Communion. Has it become common ritual of our Catholic faith or is it truly transforming our spiritual lives? We are the citizens of Heaven (Phil. 3:20) and the King of Heaven has given each one of us the wonderful gift, the gift of freedom of choices. Holy Scripture reminds us, “Be Holy because I am Holy” (1 Pet. 1:16) and “I am the Lord your God, and you must keep yourselves holy because I am Holy” (Lev. 11:44). Most of us are not bothered about this Holy Sacrament and many of us are receiving it in very casual way which is very dangerous.

That is why Holy Spirit reminds us through the letter of St. Paul in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:28-30 “So that then, everyone should examine himself first, and then eat the bread and drink from the cup. For if he does not recognize the meaning of the Lord’s body when he eats and drinks from the cup, He brings judgment on himself as he eats and drinks, that is why many of us weak and ill, and several have died.”

St. Augustine says, “It is not the rewards of

saints rather it is the gift for sinners for transformation to a saint.” St. Matthew (11:28) says, “Come to me, all who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest.” If you are sick come to me and get healed, if you are in spiritual poverty come to me and prosper by receiving my body and blood. Every day in Eucharistic celebration He is inviting us. If we receive Him worthily, we see the transformation in our life.

Weakness, sickness, suffering, tragedy and all evils which may befall us make us receive the Holy Communion unworthily. It is dangerous for those who are habitual of being addicted to unholy things and simply go and receive Him like we eat a biscuit. Those who receive HIS body are safe because of his divine mercy. Though we are sinners He is waiting for our transformation, to be a beloved son and daughter.

Let us know the truth, and truth will set us free (Jn. 8:32) and the truth is His body and His blood is our true nourishment. The Holy Eucharist reveals his promises that He will be with us till end of our life (Mt. 28:20). Let us not desecrate this Holy Sacrament. Let us go for confession regularly. Make it a habit to examine our conscience before receiving His body and blood and be humble as He is humble. Let us pay Him our honour in every Holy Mass. Let us make a regular practice of visiting the Blessed Sacrament. Don Bosco says, “More visit more grace, less visit less grace and no visit no grace”.







# Q fäxr çkFkZık

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प्रार्थना बहुत अद्भुत है क्योंकि इसमें असंभव भी संभव है। प्रार्थना का अर्थ है – परमात्मा का मनन और अनुभव। प्रभु से प्रार्थना करने के लिए हाथ नहीं, बल्कि हृदय फैलाने की आवश्यकता है। प्रार्थना तभी पूरी होती है जब प्रार्थना में सांसारिक वासना का अभाव होता है वही सच्ची प्रार्थना होगी।

“मांगो तो तुम्हें दिया जायेगा, ढूँढो तो तुम पाओगे, खटखटाओ तो तुम्हारे लिये खोला जायेगा” (मत्ती-7:13)। हम प्रार्थना तो करते हैं पर हमारी यही शिकायत होती है कि परमेश्वर हमारी प्रार्थना नहीं सुनता, या हम जो मांग कर रहे हैं वो पूरा नहीं हो रहा। परमेश्वर हमारी प्रार्थनाओं को सुनता है, लेकिन उन्हीं प्रार्थनाओं को पूरा करता है जो हमारे लिए जरूरी है और उसकी इच्छा के अनुसार है।

परमेश्वर ये नहीं चाहते कि हम बड़े-बड़े शब्दों का इस्तेमाल करें या रटी रटायी प्रार्थना करें, न ही वह हमसे माँग करता है कि हम किसी खास तरीके से बैठ कर या खड़े होकर प्रार्थना करें; “जब तू प्रार्थना करे तो गैरयहूदियों की तरह अर्थहीन बातें न दोहराये, क्योंकि वे सोचते हैं कि उनके अधिक बोलने से उनकी सुनी जाएगी” (मत्ती-6:7)। वह चाहता है हम पूरे मन और हृदय से प्रार्थना करें। हमें चुंगी लेने वाले व्यक्ति (लूकस-18:10-13) के समान प्रार्थना करनी चाहिए। अपने को छोटा और अपने पापों को स्वीकार करते हुए पछतावे के साथ प्रार्थना करनी चाहिए। “क्योंकि जो अपने को बड़ा मानता है, वह छोटा बनाया जायेगा, परन्तु जो अपने को छोटा मानता है, वह बड़ा बनाया जायेगा” (लूकस:18 -14)।

येसु ने कहा है, “जहां दो या तीन मेरे नाम में इकट्ठे होते हैं, वहाँ मैं उनके बीच उपस्थित रहता हूँ” (मत्ती 18:20) “और जो कुछ तुम विश्वास के साथ प्रार्थना में माँगोगे, वह तुम्हें मिल जायेगा” (मत्ती 21:22)। इसलिए प्रार्थना करते समय हममें विश्वास होना चाहिए कि परमेश्वर पूर्णरूप से हमारे साथ उपस्थित है और हमारी प्रार्थनाओं को सुन रहा है। सकारात्मक सोच रखकर की गयी प्रार्थना सफल जरूर होती है और इसके द्वारा हमारे जीवन में चमत्कार भी होते हैं। लेकिन

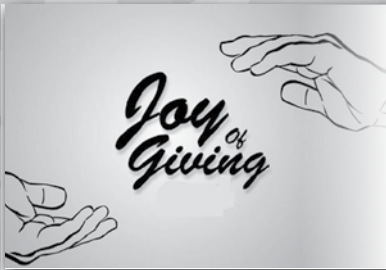
कई बार हम सांसारिक मोहमाया में ऐसे फंसे हुए होते हैं कि उसे पहचान नहीं पाते हैं।

मेरा व्यक्तिगत अनुभव है कि जब मैं ईश्वर से दूर हो जाती हूँ अर्थात् प्रार्थना करना कम कर देती हूँ, तब कुछ न कुछ दुर्घटना या कुछ सही नहीं होता है। ऐसे समय ईश्वर को याद करती हूँ और सबकुछ पहले जैसे ठीक हो जाता है। इसका अर्थ ये नहीं है कि ईश्वर हमें संकट में डालता है ताकि हम उसे याद करें। जब हम ईश्वर के मार्ग से भटक जाते हैं और सांसारिक मायाजाल में फंस कर बुराई का रास्ता अपनाने लगते हैं, तब प्रार्थना के माध्यम से परमेश्वर हमारा सही मार्गदर्शन करते हैं। जिस प्रकार हमारे शरीर को हृष्ट-पुष्ट रखने के लिए भोजन की आवश्यकता होती है, उसी प्रकार हमारी आत्मा को और एक अच्छा खीस्तीय जीवन जीने के लिए, प्रार्थना की अति आवश्यकता है। प्रार्थना ही ऐसा शस्त्र है जिससे हम शैतान को हरा सकते हैं।

प्रार्थना मात्र ईश्वर से मांग करना या शिकायत करना नहीं, बल्कि वह हमारे लिए कई चीजों का माध्यम है। हम सृष्टिकर्ता को बेझिझक वे सब बातें बता सकते हैं, जिसकी हमें चिंता है; उनके वरदानों के लिये, हम उसकी बड़ाई कर सकते हैं, उसको धन्यवाद दे सकते हैं और भजन द्वारा उसकी स्तुति कर सकते हैं। महत्मा गाँधी कहते थे “प्रार्थना धर्म का निचोड़ है। प्रार्थना याचना नहीं, यह तो आत्मा की पुकार है। यह आत्मशुद्धि का अह्वान है। प्रार्थना हमारे भीतर विनम्रता को निमंत्रण देती है।”







# GIVE UNTIL IT HURTS

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**“IT IS NOT HOW MUCH WE GIVE BUT HOW MUCH LOVE WE PUT INTO GIVING”  
(MOTHER TERESA)**

Giving is the best investment towards achieving genuine happiness. True giving comes from the heart, with no expectation of reciprocation. The more we give, the more we receive.

We often find joy in the act of giving to a friend, family member, charitable organization or even a stranger. While giving with the best intentions, we often expect things to go a certain way or to get something in return. We expect people to receive our gifts, favors or donations graciously and thank us in an appropriate manner and make an impact on an individual or an organization.

Our expectations often overshadow the act of giving if the outcome does not turn out the way we have envisioned. This often leads us to anger or disappointment in case the person we helped does not return the kindness or shows any appreciation or gratitude. This may lead us in giving less to a particular person or organization, not because their need is less but because of how their behavior did not live up to our expectations.

In Luke 10:25-37, Jesus tells the classic story of the good Samaritan – the one who gave his time, resources and skills to help the man who had been left to die at the side of the road. The Samaritan’s act of kindness was done without any expectation or return as he did not even know the man.

When we give with a pure intention of just giving, it can be one of the most overwhelming aspects of our lives, even if we get nothing in return. Truly giving from the heart fills our life with joy and nourishes our soul. As Mahatma Gandhi said, “To find yourself, lose yourself in the service of others.” Mother Teresa was a famous example who helped change the expression on dying people’s faces from distress and fear to calmness and serenity. She made their

pain easier to bear with her kindness. With a more open and generous heart, we can create a ripple of kindness and love in the universe, even for just one moment.

We often give gifts to our loved ones but the giving must come from the heart. We give gifts willingly without wanting something in return. It gives the receiver a feeling of being special and cared for. If we want joy, we must give joy, if we want love, we must give love, if we want attention and appreciation, we must give appreciation. These are some of life’s most precious gifts and they don’t cost us anything.

It’s the joy and love that we extend to others brings us true happiness or union with God. When we give, we reap the joy of seeing a bright smile, laughter, tears of joy and gratitude for life. We know that if people give just a little more—of their time, skills, knowledge, wisdom, compassion, wealth and love—the world would be a more peaceful and healthier place.

The rewards of giving are priceless. So, let us look for opportunities where we can give and help others. The gift



of joy will come to us when we give ourselves to others. That’s what life is all about. Let’s practice and commit our lives to giving joy. Try it! It really works!





# Youth and Education



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Knowledge is priceless which is neither countable nor deductible. It always increases by sharing. Education is the process of facilitating learning or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits. Nelson Mandela has rightly said that “Education is the most powerful weapon to change the world”.

According to “Right to Education Act”, it has been made compulsory for all children of age 6 to 14 years to receive basic education from any authorized school. Mid-day meal, scholarship, reservation, free books, free uniforms, etc. are some attractive programs launched by the government to provide education to more girls and poor children. “Saakshar Bharat Mission for Female Literacy” is one of the many latest programs launched by Government of India to reduce the illiteracy and to benefit us in numerous ways.

A study in USA identified that many students drop out their school because they find their classes boring. Absence from school for a long time, unable to manage their work, squandering time with those who are not interested in study, unnecessary freedom to do everything and failure in class were the other main reasons because of which students left their school during their education. Of an initial enrolment of 100 students, on an average, only 70 finish school in India. While the number of students in the elementary education level is high (94), many drop out during the secondary level with 75 left (report by The Hindu). The situation can be very worse in the rural areas.

Youth illiteracy increases present and future socio-economic vulnerability and is a significant reason in the reproduction of such vulnerability through children, passing from generation to generation. Its

effects are present throughout life. While the needs and requirements of education may vary over the course of a lifetime, they never disappear. The youth of our country drop out from schools with the mindset that it's better for them to earn at this age as they'll be able to have some cash in hand. But what they don't realize is that in this race of just earning money they have shunned themselves from the long-term benefits that they could have received from education. By completing their education, they could acquire more knowledge, more exposure, a sound and rational mind and better job opportunities which is directly linked with more salary and better living conditions. As Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore said, “The imposing tower of misery which today rests on the heart of India has its sole foundation in the absence of education.”

In present time, especially in our country where the opportunities are already so less, we can say that education is the best option by which one can improve their lives in a better way. Great people in this world have achieved their position through their hard work and their education. So, let us take our education seriously and go ahead in life with an ambition to reach greater heights.







# We are called to live out our mission

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“If you love me, you will keep my commandments” (Jn. 14:15). These words of our Savior are not limited to the Ten Commandments that God gave to Moses on Mt. Sinai but it’s beyond that. It simply means that if we love Jesus, we need to obey him, in all that we do. We can only obey him if we are ready to listen to what He says. Today, we are so engaged with other things in our lives that we neither have time for each other nor we have time for the Lord. Even if we manage to find time for the Lord, we just do things as an obligation. Have we ever asked the Lord, to speak to us, just as he spoke to our prophets, in the ancient times? We believe that the Lord has not changed and He is still waiting for us that we may stop by him, each day and give our ears to Him.

When Jesus appeared to the disciples after His resurrection, he asked, “Simon, Son of John, do you love me?” He asked Simon this question thrice so that he could affirm his love for the Lord in perfection. Simon was the disciple who assured Jesus that, he will never deny him. But, when Jesus was arrested, Peter was the one disciple who denied Jesus not once but thrice. The best part of Peter was that when he realized that he had failed, he repented with bitter tears. Jesus allowed Peter a threefold affirmation of love to replace his threefold denial. It is said that this was a moment for Peter’s restoration and re-commissioning.

We all have denied Jesus by not living our lives up to our Master’s expectations. We all have let our Lord down by evil speaking, foolish talking, by words that are untruthful or unkind, by being conformed to the standards of the world, by pursuit of sinful pleasures, justifying ourselves, holding onto various doubts, dwelling in darkness and many other ways but Jesus is asking us just one question: “Do you love me?”

In response to Jesus’ questioning, Simon declared his love for Jesus and each time our Lord asked him to feed His lambs, tend His sheep and feed His sheep. These words were mission statement for Peter. There was a time when Peter thought he was ready for anything but he wasn’t and Jesus knew that, yet he argued with the Lord. Peter was

humbled by his failure and realization, understood that the course of discipleship begins with humility. Humility is the mother of all virtues. “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble” (1 Pet. 5:5). Jesus knew that Peter was now ready to live out that mission for which He had chosen him. Peter’s original name was Simon, son of John, but our Lord renamed him. “You are Peter on this rock I will build my Church” (Mt. 16:18). Where people could only see an inconsistent fisherman Simon, Jesus saw Peter, the rock on which he was going to build the Church.

Ever wondered what God thinks about each one of us? Or what type of potential He sees in us? The answer is very simple. God sees greatness in us and it’s because He’s put in us. “The bee is the small among the flying creatures but what it produces is the sweetest among all” (Sir. 11:3). Bee does not know that what it is producing is the sweetest among all, but only God knows because he gave that ability. Many times, we underestimate ourselves: we are not good, we are imperfect, we are not capable, etc. But only God knows the potential in us.

Pope Francis said, “The gaze of Jesus can change a person’s life just like it did for St. Peter. He always looks at us with love. He asks us something, forgives us and He gives us a mission”. God has given everyone a business to be busy with and we cannot afford to live our lives as idlers. In fact, St. Paul warns us against idleness. Peter through his love for Jesus was to offer himself to God’s service for his people and so are we. Through our love we must offer our services for the Lord, for his people.

Maria Robinson writes, “Nobody can go back and start a new beginning but anyone can start today and make a new ending.” It’s never too late to start, the gaze of Jesus can transform us, so let’s turn to Jesus, listen to Him. He is asking us: Do you love me? We might have failed Him many times but remember Lord’s mercy is renewed every morning. He will forgive us if we repent the way St. Peter repented. The Lord is inviting each one of us to live out the mission according to the potential He sees in us. Let’s follow Jesus.





# Artistic Hands

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# {kek

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‘क्षमा’ एक छोटा-सा शब्द है, लेकिन यह हमारे जीवन में बहुत महत्व रखता है। इस संसार में हम सभी कई रिश्तों से जुड़े हुए हैं: जैसे कि परिवारिक रिश्ते, दोस्त, कार्यालय के सहयोगी इत्यादि। हम कभी न कभी जाने अनजाने में कोई न कोई गलती कर ही जाते हैं। यदि हम इन गलतियों के बारे में ही सोचे और किसी को माफ न करें या किसी से माफी न माँगे तो हमारे रिश्ते चंद लम्हों में ही बिखर जाएंगे। इस संसार में ऐसा कोई भी व्यक्ति नहीं है जिससे गलतियाँ न होती हों। इंसान गलतियों का पुतला है, मनुष्य गलती करता है और भूल जाता है और फिर वह वही गलती करता है। लेकिन हमें हमारे रिश्तों को बनाए रखने के लिए क्षमा मांगनी पड़ती है या क्षमा करना पड़ता है।

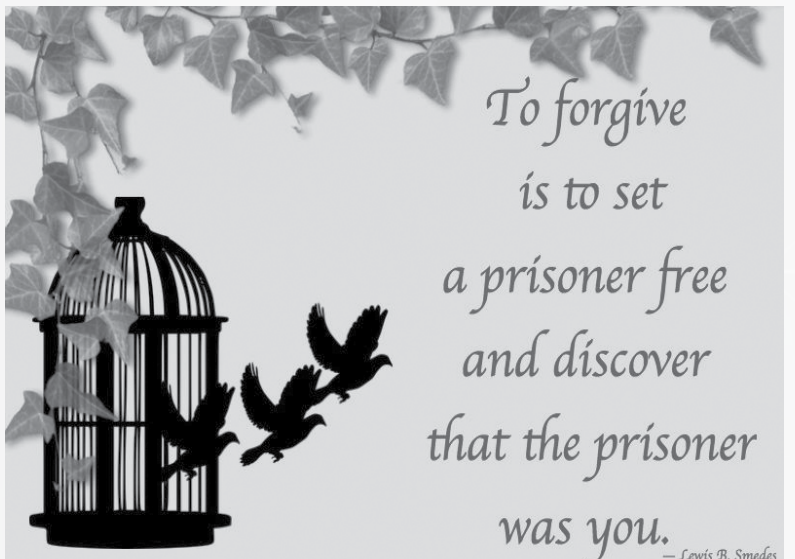
अगर हम किसी से माफी माँगते हैं तो हम छोटे नहीं हो जाते। कुछ लोग ऐसा सोचते हैं कि मैं माफी क्यों माँगू? अगर हम अपने मन में अहंकार की भावना रखते हैं और क्षमा करने की बजाय यह सोचते हैं कि मैं उसकी यह बात कभी नहीं भूलूँगी या उसे जीवन में कभी माफ नहीं करूँगी, यही उसके लिए सबसे बड़ी सजा होगी। लेकिन असलियत में हम खुद को सजा देते हैं। लोग यह सोचते हैं कि हम उसे क्षमा करेंगे या उससे माफी माँगेंगे तो वह सोचेगा कि हम झुक गए या कमजोर पड़ गए, लेकिन माफी मांगना या माफ करना किसी पर एहसान करना नहीं बल्कि अपने मन को शांत करना, अपने दिल से बोझ हल्का करना है। सबसे बुद्धिमान व्यक्ति वही है जो दूसरों को माफ करता है या दूसरों से माफी मांगता है।

बाइबल में जब पेद्रुस ने ईसा से पूछा, “प्रभु! यदि मेरा भाई मेरे विरुद्ध अपराध करता जाए तो मैं कितनी बार उसे क्षमा करूँ? सात बार तक?” ईसा ने उत्तर दिया, “मैं तुमसे नहीं कहता सात बार तक बल्कि सत्तर गुना सात बार तक।” “येसु हमें यही सिखाते हैं कि हमें सबको क्षमा करनी चाहिए। हमारे विरुद्ध कोई कितने बार भी अपराध क्यों न करे हमें हमेशा उसे क्षमा करना चाहिए। हम मत्ती 6:14-15 में पढ़ते हैं “यदि तुम दूसरों के अपराध क्षमा करोगे तो तुम्हारा स्वर्गीय पिता भी तुम्हें क्षमा करेगा: परंतु यदि तुम दूसरों को क्षमा नहीं करोगे तो तुम्हारा पिता भी तुम्हारे अपराध क्षमा नहीं करेगा।”

बाइबल में हम एक और दृष्टांत पढ़ते हैं येसु ने व्यभिचार में पकड़ी गई स्त्री को दंड नहीं दिया। संहिता में मूसा ने ऐसी स्त्री को पत्थर से मार डालने का आदेश दिया था लेकिन येसु ने उससे कहा, “जाओ और अब फिर से पाप नहीं करना।”

कई बार हम कुछ ऐसी गलतियाँ कर जाते हैं जो माफी के लायक नहीं होती। हमारे परिवार वाले हमारे सगे-संबंधी इत्यादि हमें हमारे गलती के लिए माफ नहीं करते, हमारे विरुद्ध हो जाते हैं या हमें त्याग देते हैं, लेकिन हमारा स्वर्गीय पिता हमें कभी नहीं त्यागता। हम चाहे कितना भी बड़ा पाप क्यों न करें, लेकिन हमारा येसु हमें हमेशा माफ करता है। वह हमें दोबारा मौका देता है। तो क्यों हम अपने स्वर्गीय पिता जैसे नहीं बन पाते? हम अपने आप को ईश्वर की संतान कहते हैं, तो हम क्यों किसी को क्षमा नहीं कर पाते? येसु ने प्राण त्यागते हुए भी उन लोगों के लिए प्रार्थना की जिन्होंने उन्हें सूली पर चढ़ाया — “हे ईश्वर इन्हें क्षमा करना क्योंकि यह नहीं जानते कि वह क्या कर रहे हैं।” येसु ने अपने अंतिम समय पर भी अपनी दया प्रकट की।

जब येसु हमारे हर अपराधों के लिए हमें क्षमा कर सकते हैं, तो हम दूसरों को क्यों क्षमा नहीं कर सकते? हम अगर दूसरों को माफ करेंगे या अपनी गलतियों के लिए दूसरों से माफी माँगेंगे तो हम शारीरिक और मानसिक रूप से स्वस्थ रहेंगे क्योंकि यदि हम दूसरों को माफ नहीं करते या उनसे माफी नहीं माँगते, तो हम दिन प्रतिदिन परेशान होते जाते हैं और इसके कारण हमारे बाकी के कर्तव्य-काम भी बिगड़ने लगते हैं और हम कभी-कभी मानसिक तनाव का शिकार भी हो जाते हैं। इसलिए हमें हर प्रकार की गलती के लिए दूसरों को क्षमा कर देना चाहिए और दूसरों से माफी माँग लेनी चाहिए। लुइस बी स्मेडस के कथन अनुसार “माफ करने का मतलब है किसी कैदी को आजाद करना और ये जानना कि आप ही वह कैदी थे”।







# Climate Change

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**“GOD SAW EVERYTHING THAT HE MADE AND BEHOLD IT WAS GOOD” (GEN. 1:31).**



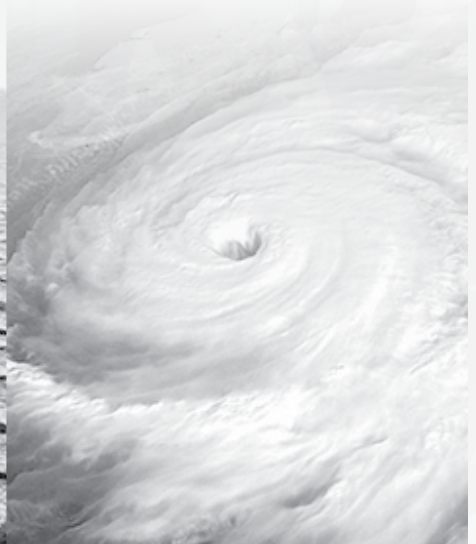
As I write this piece, my heart goes out to the innumerable people at global level who are suffering on account of global warming. Climate is a complex system linked to many of the essential conditions for human life. We are presently witnessing a disturbing warming of the climate system. Carbon dioxide pollution increases the acidification of the ocean and compromises the marine food chain, health hazards specially the poor, millions of premature deaths and so on.

This warming has been accompanied by a constant rise in the sea level an increase of extreme weathers. E-waste is a major challenge facing all of us specially its safe disposal. We need to take care of emissions which is continuously on

rise. We should no longer measure our wealth and success that shows economic growth but look at the damage that shows the emissions of greenhouse gases. Current economics and technologies are still totally dependent on burning fossil fuels, and thereby destroying ecosystems in order to create everlasting economic growth.

I would like to quote Greta Thunberg, a 15 years old Swedish young climate activist: “Sometime we just simply have to find a way. The moment we decide to fulfill something, we can do anything. And I’m sure that the moment we start behaving as if we were in an emergency, we can avoid climate and ecological catastrophe. Humans are very adaptable we can still fix this, but the opportunity to do so will not last for long. We must start today. We have no more excuses.”

Well it is about time we need to take stock of the situation and start doing whatever we can as individuals, social groups, policy makers and executors to make the change which is very essential today and in adapting to the impacts of climate change and reducing the emission of greenhouse gases, because we should not forget that we ourselves are dust of the earth (Gen.2:7). Our very bodies are made up of nature’s elements we breath air and we receive life and refreshment from water.







# Catechism and the Role of Teachers

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**“FORMATION IS MORE THAN A SUBJECT TO BE TAUGHT- IT IS AN INVITATION TO A WAY OF LIFE”**

## What is Catechism?

Catechism is basically one of the methods to teach orally a summary or description of doctrine that serves as a learning introduction to the Sacraments traditionally used in Christian religious teaching of children and adult. Doctrine is a codification of beliefs of a body of teachings or instructions, taught principles or positions, as the essence of teaching in a given branch of knowledge or in a belief system.

Catechism is not only a subject; it is a way by which we can easily understand God's words and also his unconditional love for us. We, as humans commit sins even without our knowledge; it is so because we are not spiritually healthy. Spirituality doesn't look for wealth, creed, caste, colour complexion; all it needs is faith and devotion. Catechism deals with all of these. It teaches us about why God created us. The answer is just as simple as the question; that is Love. "I have loved you with an everlasting love" (Jer. 31:3). It teaches us how to love and share the happiness with the world. To love is to share, and to share the happiness to the world by making known among the nations what God has done and proclaim the good news of his kingdom.

Jesus said, "Let little children come to me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 19:14). The family is the greatest gift, that God has given to the world. Parents are the first teachers of the child. They learn whatever they see or are taught in their family. These days we can see in our surroundings that most of the children are addicted to mobile phones and other gadgets. Even the tiny toddlers are fond of mobile phones. Why? The answer of this question is very simple. This habit was generated from their homes. When a child cries usually their parents give a particular gadget to him/her to please them as they wanted to be free to do other household works. Teens are addicted to drugs, smoking, drinking etc., because they do not have a guide, a mentor to support, encourage and help them in finding their way.

Catechism teaches us about Catholic belief which includes partaking of Eucharist, Sacraments and commandments. It not only helps children/students to find their way out of the darkness but at the same time they also learn many

things like manners, general knowledge, history etc. which enhances their academic performances.

"The harvest is rich but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to do his harvesting" (Lk. 10:2). There is a vocation for those who are involved in religious teachings. Catechism teachers are extended hands of the Priests and religious to teach children about enduring faith in God so that they grow in love and care.

Children are innocent, tender in heart and yes, sometimes naughty. It takes time for them to understand what is good and bad or what is right and wrong. They might be a perfect student but they are still in need of wisdom. In other words, in school they acquire knowledge and in catechism class they gain wisdom. Catechism teachers help the children by talking to their parents also. A good interaction with parents leads to understand the child more. In turn the child gets enough love, attention and care and because of which they come across many new things simultaneously.

Though parents are the first (primary) teachers of the growing child who help them to learn and opt for other curriculum activities, but when it comes to Church, children sometime bunk catechism classes and it is very common for a growing child to do this and doing it again and again might cause problems to them and set a bad example for others. In these circumstances, it is the responsibility of a catechism teacher who guides them and helps them grow more in faith so that they always stay in the light of God. "Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Mt. 28:20).







# Why do we need to study at all?

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There are a number of reasons why we need to study. We study to broaden our horizon towards life. It helps us grow mentally, intellectually, financially in the vast and complicated world of knowledge. Maturity comes through this as it makes us able to understand other's views in a better and understandable way.

The general feeling is that everyone studies just for securing the required marks and very few learn something from studies. Does anyone even truly know what they learned in 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> class and applied in their life?

Early man learnt to create fire though by an accident, that was an experience. He learnt from his experience. If you are an early man even today, you can learn **ONLY** by experiences. But today, as the world has become complex, learning solely through experiences will limit the quantity of things you learnt making you unfit to survive in this complex world. We need to survive in this cruel world too!

Whenever you study just understand one thing that you increase your knowledge and you become more powerful and strong. Nothing can be as powerful as your knowledge, because knowledge creates everything and increases mental level only when you study.

There are different styles we may need to understand about studying and they are what is commonly termed as **The Seven Learning Styles** and how the brain is connected to them:

1. **Visual (spatial):** You prefer using pictures, images, and spatial understanding. The occipital lobes at the back of your brain manage the visual sense. Both the occipital and parietal lobes manage spatial orientation.
2. **Aural (auditory-musical):** You prefer using sound and music. The temporal lobes of your brain handle the aural content. The right temporal lobe is

especially important for music.

3. **Verbal (linguistic):** You prefer using words, both in speech and writing. The brains temporal and frontal lobes are in use.
4. **Physical (kinesthetic):** You prefer using your body, hands and sense of touch. The cerebellum and the motor cortex (at the back of the frontal lobe) handle much of our physical movement.
5. **Logical (mathematical):** You prefer using logic, reasoning and systems. The parietal lobes, especially the left side, drive our logical thinking.
6. **Social (interpersonal):** You prefer to learn in groups or with other people. The frontal and temporal lobes handle much of our social activities. The limbic system (not shown apart from the hippocampus) also influences both the social and solitary styles. The limbic system has a lot to do with emotions, moods and aggression.
7. **Solitary (intrapersonal):** You prefer to work alone and use self-study. The frontal and parietal lobes, and the limbic system, are also active with this style.

It does not mean that if we may not be successful in one, we fail the others. But it is a combination of these that we need to adopt to be really successful and the situation will determine the necessity.





## प्लास्टिक क्यों खतरनाक है ?

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“यार राकेश! दुनिया में दो तरह के लोग हैं। एक तो वे लोग जो कम पढ़े लिखे होते हुए भी दूसरों के भले के लिए सोचते और कुछ करते हैं और दूसरे वे जो पढ़े-लिखे होते हुए भी सिर्फ अपने लिए सोचते और करते हैं।” विनोद ने बाजार से लौटते हुए लोगों के हाथों में पॉलिथीन बैग में सामान लेकर आते देख बोला — ‘ये जानते हुए भी कि प्लास्टिक का इस्तेमाल पर्यावरण के लिए व जीव जंतुओं के लिए बहुत खतरनाक है, हम लोग इसका इस्तेमाल करना नहीं छोड़ते और इस प्रकार प्रतिदिन हम इस दुनिया को और खुद अपने स्वास्थ्य को खतरे में डालते जा रहे हैं। लापरवाह होकर हम लोग इस धीमे जहर के इस्तेमाल से दूसरे जीवों की हत्या तो कर ही रहे हैं। हम खुद भी आत्महत्या करने जैसा काम कर रहे हैं।’ राकेश ने हाँ में हाँ मिलाते हुए कहा — ‘हाँ भाई विनोद! वाकई इस आधुनिक युग में हम पूरी तरह प्लास्टिक निर्मित सामानों के गुलाम बन चुके हैं।’

प्लास्टिक के आविष्कार ने बहुत सारी सुविधाएँ दी हैं, मगर प्लास्टिक से निर्मित इन खूबसूरत दिखने वाले, टिकाऊ, सस्ते दामों में उपलब्ध और हमारे दैनिक जीवन का अनिवार्य अंग बन चुके चीजों के हानिकारक प्रभावों को जानते हुए भी हम नजरअंदाज करते हैं। प्लास्टिक निर्मित वस्तुएँ अन्य वस्तुओं की तरह मिट्टी में मिलकर नष्ट नहीं हो पाती हैं और जीवों का शरीर भी इसे पचा नहीं पाता। अतः इनकी मात्रा पूरी धरती पर इतनी तेजी से बढ़ रही है कि इससे पर्यावरण व जीवों को नुकसान होने लगा है। फेंके गए प्लास्टिक को रिसाईकल करना भी आसान नहीं है। प्लास्टिक को सड़ने में कई साल लग जाते हैं और सड़ने के दौरान ये ऐसे विषैले रसायन को छोड़ते हैं, जो पर्यावरण में घुलकर जीव-जन्तुओं और पेड़ पौधों से होते हुए हमारे शरीर में आ जाते हैं और हमारे खून में मिलकर ये कैंसर एवं कई तरह की बिमारियों को जन्म देते हैं।

खास कर दक्षिण-पूर्वी एशियाई देशों में (जिनमें हमारा देश भारत भी है) इस्तेमाल के बाद फेंके जाने वाले प्लास्टिक की वस्तुओं का प्रयोग बहुत ज्यादा होता है। इस्तेमाल के बाद फेंके गए प्लास्टिक के पैकेजिंग मैटेरियल्स व पॉलिथीन थैली आदि को जब पशु-पक्षी खा लेते हैं तो उनके आहार नली व पेट में ये फँसा रह जाता है और बीमार पड़कर उनकी मृत्यु हो जाती है। घरों, अस्पतालों, कारखानों व अन्य व्यावसायिक स्थलों से फेंके गए प्लास्टिक की वस्तुओं, पैकेजिंग मैटेरियल्स और पॉलिथीन की थैली नालों, नदियों से होते बहते हुए समुद्र में चले जाते हैं जिसे खाकर समुद्री जीव व मछलियाँ भी ऐसे ही मर जाती हैं। प्लास्टिक से निकले हानिकारक रसायन जल में भी

घुल जाने से जल प्रदूषित हो जाता है और पूरी सृष्टि के लिए उस प्रदूषित जल के कारण नुकसान होता है। अंततः समुद्र व झीलों के ये प्रदूषित जल, जलवाष्प बनकर बादलों के द्वारा फिर से धरती पर वर्षा के रूप में बरसने के बाद फल- फूल, अनाजों और सब्जियों तथा अन्य रूप से हमारे शरीर में प्रवेश कर हमें ही हानि पहुँचाते हैं।’ विनोद ने बात आगे बढ़ाते हुए कहा — ‘एक सच्चाई सभी को जानना जरूरी है कि प्लास्टिक की चीजें कच्चे रिफाईंड पेट्रोलियम तेल द्वारा निर्मित होती हैं जिसमें “विस्फेनोल-ए” जैसे रसायन को मिलाया जाता है जिससे प्लास्टिक ज्यादा टिकाऊ और लचीला बन सके। जब खाने की चीजों को हम प्लास्टिक निर्मित डिब्बे, टिफिन बॉक्स या प्लास्टिक के बर्तन में रखते हैं तो प्लास्टिक में मौजूद रसायन खाने-पीने की चीजों में मिल जाता है।

खासकर जब गर्म अवस्था में खाने-पीने की चीजों को प्लास्टिक के संपर्क में लाया जाता है तो खतरा और भी ज्यादा बढ़ जाता है। पानी के बोतल या खाने की चीजों को पैक किया गये प्लास्टिक के डिब्बों को इस्तेमाल के बाद फेंकने को कहा जाता है। मगर ऐसे बोतलों और डिब्बों को घर पर बार-बार प्रयोग किया जाता है जो खतरनाक है। देखो यार विनोद, मेरे और तुम्हारे घर में, जानते हुए भी प्लास्टिक के डिब्बों, बोतलों और प्लास्टिक की थैलियों का इस्तेमाल होता है। आओ प्रण करें कि हम खुद ऐसा न करें और पड़ोसियों को, नई पीढ़ी को भी ऐसा करने को प्रेरित कर इस सुन्दर पर्यावरण और जीव-जन्तुओं के साथ पूरी मानव जाति की भलाई की सोचें।







# SCCs: A Concrete Expression of the Church

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What are Small Christian Communities (SCCs)? St. Pope John Paul II calls Small Christian Communities “A Concrete Expression of the Church” and “A Home and Family for Everyone” (FC. 85). SCCs are the most local incarnations of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. It is in the Small Christian Community that these four elements of the Church are tangible. The Lumko Missiological Institute of South Africa originally created the concept of a Parish as “A Communion of Communities”, meaning the Parish is divided into many SCCs. It was the Lumko Institute which gave ‘four essential marks’ to the SCC to distinguish it from other Parish groups. These four essential marks are shared by all SCCs, are as follows:

Members of the SCCs are neighbours **(ONE)**: All the baptized in an area (neighbourhood) rich and poor, from different culture and linguistic groups, young and old, single or married all are incorporated into the body of Christ there, they become responsible for God’s plan in that area. They meet in homes at regular intervals (weekly or monthly). Through Baptism, every Christian becomes a missionary sent to witness to the Gospel. When they fail to gather in the neighbourhood, they fail to be Church there. Without meeting they cannot grow in love because Church is a community of love. Being Church implies witnessing and serving together in the neighbourhood.

Members of the SCCs do Gospel Sharing **(HOLY)**: SCCs make Gospel Sharing the basis of their neighbourhood meetings. Through Gospel Sharing, the members experience the Christ present in their midst and HE truly becomes the foundation stone of the community. Gospel Sharing helps the members to become the Lord’s disciples. Jesus said: “If you make my WORD your home, you will be my disciples” (Jn. 8:31). Gospel Sharing makes the

members a new family. Jesus said: “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the Word of God and put it into practice”(Lk. 8: 21). Gospel Sharing helps the members to discern God’s will for them in their lives and situations.

Members of the SCCs are united with the Universal Church **(CATHOLIC)**: The Pastor is the living link between the SCCs, the local Parish, the Bishop of the Diocese and the Pope, the Chief Pastor of the Catholic Church. The local Parish is linked to the Catholic Church by the same faith and the same mission to bring God’s love to all. The Eucharist is another strongest link between SCCs and the Catholic Church. “The Eucharist brings about the intimate bonds of communion among all the faithful in the body of Christ which is the Church”, says Pope St. John Paul II.



Members of the SCCs act together out of Faith **(APOSTOLIC)**: Inspired by the Word of God (during the Gospel Sharing), SCCs serve the needy members in their neighbourhood, following the command of Jesus to serve the least in the community (Mt. 25:40). The members of the SCC feel co-responsible to continue the mission of the Church in their neighbourhood and each member has a specific role in the building up the community i.e.;

whole Body of Christ locally (Eph. 4:11-13).

When members come together in the neighbourhood, they become ONE. When they do Gospel Sharing and respond to the Word of God, they become HOLY. When they are united with the Universal Church, they become CATHOLIC and when they act out of faith, they continue the APOSTOLIC work. In other words, the SCCs are “A Concrete Expression of the Church”. The very incarnation of the Church founded by Christ, that is One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic.



# An idle mind is a devil's workshop

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We often find ourselves lost-in-thought, day-dreaming about all the possibilities of a better future or sometimes regretting a decision made in the past. Also, we never really miss to criticize our destiny in times of trouble which in turn surrounds us with deep anxiety or even takes us in a completely negative zone. Therefore, a person's mind cannot really be idle, it is always busy. However, an idle person, who has no work to do, thinks up of evil things which not only leads to frustration for himself but also creates complications for others.

If we read in Matthew (25: 14 – 30), we get to learn how hard-working and faithful servants received greater goods from their master in return as compared to that one lazy servant who did nothing with his talent and ultimately reaped no good. Social-evils that we see around us like robbery, murder, extortion and other such criminal activities are on a rise; because people today escape from toil, honest work and indulge in quick ways of making a living involving little to no effort. The kind of sedentary lifestyle that we live wherein we do no physical exercise and make fast food choices a part of our daily routine due to our indolent attitude impacts our health adversely. All in all, our mindset which is the source of all outcomes that we produce, eventually becomes destructive, sluggish and futile.

Therefore, it is essential to realize and set a goal for ourselves. Be it a short-term or a long-term goal, it could be as big as clearing any competitive examination or as small as learning how to swim. An aim that constantly motivates you to push your abilities a little extra each time, will help you in clearing your thoughts, keep you engaged and make you a more confident and level-headed person.

A person who knows the value of being busy also knows the value of time. He does not waste his time in gossip. One can utilise one's time wisely to achieve what one wants. Look around for something to do in spare time or help those around you in their daily chores. Set a

time for prayer. Give yourself unto the Lord and don't let distractions move you away from reading God's Word, as this is the time when the devil works his best in diverting your attention. Adopting a hobby or practicing meditation is one of the best ways of channelizing one's energy in a positive and fruitful direction. Learning about art and culture, sports and fitness, culinary and language courses and various other such activities will promote in building right attitude and skills needed for a betterment of the society, especially when it comes to the youth of today.

A famous quote, "Nature knows no pause and attaches a curse upon inaction", indeed tells us that it is a curse to remain idle. We all must make every effort to keep ourselves occupied. The more a person works, the more he progresses. As neither the past nor the future is in our hands. It is our today that we are gifted with, that is why it is called a present which we must not mis-spend but use it as an opportunity to accomplish our ambitions. What we are today is a gift of God and what we will be is our gift to God.

An idle brain is the devil's  
workshop  
One who has nothing to do will be  
tempted to do many  
mischievous acts







# Is your love genuine in this materialistic world?

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Aristotle once said that “Love is composed of a single soul inhabiting two bodies.” ‘Love’ is a strong feeling that one feels for the person they adore the most. For them their existence is no less than a gift and everything about them lightens up their lives. Even slightest of their efforts makes you smile and their presence makes you go head over heel every time.

Expressing ‘love’ to our partners is the purest form to make them realise their importance in our lives. There was a time when love letters were so meaningful. It was a means to speak our hearts out if we couldn’t express it verbally. People in love used to re-read those letters and feel the emotions and moreover, adore it life time. While, the innovation of technology has upgraded our way to express our feelings on various social media platforms; nowadays, love is expressed through ‘emoticons’ that is, smiley faces with various expressions or through pictures with love captions expressing our love for them. Thus, in a click you’re connected to your loved ones and millions of other people in one go!

All these fancy ways of expressing our emotions is truly mesmerising, but the big question is that your relationship with your partner is 100% real as you portray it on various social media platforms or is it unreal? Think about it!

When we are in love, we give ourselves completely and it is the most beautiful feeling in the world when you’re with the right person. For the Scripture says, 1 John 3:18 “My children, our love should not be just words and talk; it must be true love, which shows itself in action.” It is clear that we should feel the love and give love in return as well by expressing it through our actions, so that our partners do feel the same. The warmth, attention and care you receive from your partner is hundred times meaningful than fancy gifts you’ll receive. But sadly, our generation has been tied with the internet so much

that the potential of communicating with our partners has become enfeeble. In fact, we are missing out on our partner’s facial expressions or the gestures they make. As all these emotions are reproduced as ‘Likes or Dislikes’ and various smiley emoticons.

For a healthy relationship to last long it is necessary to continually nurture with care and communication. It is very important that both the partners should devote time and attention to each other. They should also be committed to indulge into differences and challenges that may emerge in future. It is true that no relationship is perfect, but one can work on their relationship by being faithful, understanding, caring, open-minded and loving.

All the fancy dine outs or expensive gifts can give you temporarily happiness but the feeling of holding hands and talking about life is much more meaningful, to say that you truly love your partner. It is high time that we understand and start working on our relationship in reality rather than living in the virtual world which is dangerously beautiful!





# ek efj; e

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‘माँ’—शब्द हम सब के लिए बहुत ही आकर्षक और महत्वपूर्ण है जिसकी व्याख्या नहीं की जा सकती है। माँ शब्द सुनते ही हमें अपनी माँ याद आ जाती है। माँ हम सभी के जीवन में महत्वपूर्ण स्थान रखती है। माँ मरियम हमारे लिए एक माध्यम है जिनके द्वारा हम अपनी प्रार्थनाओं को ईश्वर तक पहुँचा सकते हैं। माँ मरियम हमारी सहायिका है। अपनी तकलीफों और जरूरतों के समय जब हम अपनी प्रार्थनाओं को माँ मरियम को बताते हैं, तो वह हमारी प्रार्थनाओं और निवेदनों को अपने पुत्र येशु के सामने रखती हैं और प्रभु येशु अपनी माँ की दुहाई सुनकर हमारी प्रार्थनाओं का जवाब देते हैं।

हम संत योहन (२:१-१२) के सुसमाचार में काना नगर के विवाह में देखते हैं कि किस प्रकार माँ मरियम अपने आप को हम सबकी सहायिका सिद्ध करती हैं। काना के विवाह भोज में दाखरस की कमी हो गयी थी। जैसे ही माँ मरियम को पता चला वह सीधे प्रभु येशु के पास जाती हैं और उन्हें उनकी समस्या के बारे में बताती हैं। अपने बेटे को बताकर वह भोज के प्रबंधक से जाकर बोलती है कि “जैसे प्रभु येशु उन्हें आदेश दें, वैसा ही करें।” प्रभु येशु के कहने पर वहाँ रखी छः मटकों को पानी से ऊपर तक भर दिया जाता है और प्रभु येशु चमत्कार द्वारा उसे दाखरस में बदल देते हैं। माँ मरियम के आग्रह पर ही प्रभु येशु ने काना के विवाह में अपना यह पहला चमत्कार दिखाया था।

इस घटना द्वारा हम यही देखते हैं कि माँ मरियम हम सबकी सहायिका हैं और हमारी जरूरतों व तकलीफों को जानकर उसे प्रभु येशु तक पहुँचाती हैं और प्रभु येशु उन्हें पूरा करते हैं। हम सभी खीस्तीय भाई बहनों के लिए प्रभु ईश्वर से प्रार्थना करने व उनके पास हमारे सभी निवेदनों को पहुँचाने में माँ मरियम हमारी मदद करती हैं। यदि हमें कोई परेशानी या दुःख हो, और अगर हम उन्हें माँ मरियम को बतलाते हैं,

तो वह येशु से हमारी तकलीफों को दूर करने का आग्रह भी करती है।

हम खीस्तीयों के लिए माँ—मरियम की रोज़री—माला विनती बहुत ही महत्वपूर्ण है। रोज़री माला विनती द्वारा माँ मरियम हमारे सभी निवेदनों को सीधे प्रभु येशु तक पहुँचा देती हैं। इसलिए हमें माँ मरियम की रोज़री माला विनती को रोज़ करने की आदत डालनी चाहिए तथा रोज़री माला विनती को अपने जीवन में महत्वपूर्ण स्थान देना चाहिए।

हम जानते और देखते हैं कि एक छोटे बच्चे के लिए उसकी माँ बहुत महत्वपूर्ण है क्योंकि माँ बच्चे की सभी जरूरतों को जानती है और उसे पूरा करती है। उसी तरह माँ मरियम हम खीस्तीयों की सहायिका हैं; हम सब के दुःख, तकलीफों, जरूरतों को जानती और समझती है और उनके लिए अपने पुत्र और हमारे प्रभु येशु से निवेदन करती रहती है।







# WHY DO I GO CHURCH?

(A Parishioner of St. Dominic's)



In general, I consider myself to be a liberal who believes that religion is a private matter, each to his own. And so, do not engage in much discourse when it comes to religion during everyday conversations. During a recent social gathering, few friends were discussing religion and me, like the usual self was trying to disengage from the conversation and secretly disappear, when a new entrant to the group surprised everyone by asking me, if I went to Church on Sundays. Before I could respond, another jovial member made it worse by letting everyone know that it was not just Sundays but instead every day of the week.

By now, all heads had turned towards me and were expecting a response. It seemed that they were amazed that a visit to the Church every day was an achievement of sorts. I wanted to melt away at that very moment. I had no intentions of giving away my social tag of Mr. Cool by giving an explanation to anyone, so shook my head in concurrence with a few moments of eye contact and sipped away at my drink.

Once I reached home that night, I found myself still thinking about the question why do I go Church.

So, growing up in a Catholic family (note the Catholic and not Christian), I have been schooled & tutored for 16 years in convent institutions. As usual, catechism classes were order of the day and family prayer and Church were part of Sunday schedules. The change seems to emanate while studying for class XII. In a naïve state of things, I wanted to score well in my boards (for all the many reasons you may think off) in exchange for prayers to Jesus every day. And so, I started to attend morning masses every day before my pre-board examinations.

Every day I would attend mass like clock-work, exams came and went, I scored decently well. So, it seemed that the proposition was mutually agreeable. Taking it further we decided to continue this arrangement for the boards itself and thus it continued for the next 5 months. I wanted out, at the end of the contract and I returned to the Sunday schedules, wherein I found myself being anxious and devoid of contentment. It seemed like I missed meeting a

friend during those days. Something was not complete.

In Catholic families, a boy does not speak to parents about these things. On the premise that early morning walks were good for my health (only God knows, that I needed them, pun intended). I started attending morning masses again. I found for myself that the days I did not attend morning mass, my day was not complete (you may call me a creature of habit) but this was beyond a behavior, it was something more, a relationship with a friend with whom you could talk, be angry and he would listen and give advice (Scripture readings on particular days were aligned with my problems for the day, totally coincidental).

So, our mutually beneficially agreement has been revised and extended month-on-month because of that feeling. Just like, when we are sick, feel unwell, physically bruised & cut by the daily chores and the interactions we have with the world, we visit the doctor in the hospital (not talking about the ones who self-medicate, of course). Similarly, Church is a like a hospital for us, sinners. Jesus is the doctor himself. Priests and his Saints are the nurses that look after us when the doctor is making his rounds and taking care of others. They mend us and heal us with the sermons they preach. The confessions we undergo are treatment like surgeries and procedures, to make us well again.

Thus, for all the many reasons stated above, I go Church!





# This too shall pass...

(A Parishioner of St. Dominic's)

**“EVEN THOUGH I WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH, I WILL FEAR NO EVIL, FOR YOU ARE WITH ME; YOUR ROD AND YOUR STAFF, THEY COMFORT ME” (PS. 23: 4).**

‘Fear and Trembling’ is an interesting work by philosopher Søren Kierkegaard. In this work, Kierkegaard presents anxiety (a mode of suffering), that Abraham went through on his way to sacrifice Isaac. One can argue that Abraham could have avoided this suffering by refusing to obey God. Anyways, suffering need not be a consequence of one’s bad action; suffering could even result from one’s choice to obey God. Joseph in the Old Testament had to undergo lots of suffering. When he sees his brothers in Egypt, he tearfully states, “Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve numerous people, as he is doing today. So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones” (Gen. 50:19). I call this ‘the Joseph moment’. Many of us have to go through this ‘Joseph moment’ in some or the other form. Who knows, God might utilize my suffering for the benefit of many.

Dear readers, as you browse through, pause for a moment. Close your eye and then permit the Holy Spirit to take you back to that part of your life, which needs God’s healing touch...the hurts, public humiliation, unspeakable sorrow, and failure - these may be the cause

of your suffering. Let the Spirit of God unburden you from these. Then find yourself at the foot of the Cross. Like you, Mother Mary was also pierced with a sword. She too suffered. Let her speak to you, ‘my son and daughter, I care for you - this too shall pass’.

While composing the epic ‘Paradise Lost’, John Milton was blind and suffered from depression. Yet suffering did not deter him from composing that masterpiece. There is a touching incident that took place during the Olympic Games in Barcelona, Spain in 1992. A father named Jim had trained his son for many years. The son, named, Derek Anthony Redmond (a retired British athlete) is injured, therefore unable to complete the race but gets up and resumes the race. The referee asks him to vacate the ground, but the athlete continues. Later his father ran from the stands and brushed off security to join him; holding each other’s hand they complete the race. The entire audience gave a standing ovation. The same thing happens to us – when we struggle to cope with our suffering often, we appear to be defeated, discouraged and frustrated, but the loving Father himself comes and finishes the race with us. Whatever suffering we might be going through right now, remember that this too shall pass ...

## WHY SUFFERING?







# Laughter - the best medicine

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**“LAUGHTER IS WINE FOR THE SOUL - LAUGHTER SOFT, OR LOUD AND DEEP, TINGED THROUGH WITH SERIOUSNESS - THE HILARIOUS DECLARATION MADE BY MAN THAT LIFE IS WORTH LIVING.” (SEAN O’CASEY)**

We often hear the phrase ‘Laughter is the best medicine’ from our parents, relatives and teachers. That is because laughter is an expression that actually has several positive effects on our mood and health. In today’s world we are all progressing in terms of technology and standards of life. Yet we are under stress as we are continuously trying to extend our capabilities beyond our standards. There are always tensions among a group of people at home or at office, and this is contagious. Sometimes it is okay to be silly and laugh out loud as it is going to make you feel very happy and delighted. It is healthy for your physical, emotional and overall well-being. Laughter is the medicine for many ailments, feeling of depression, fear and anxiety. It is a powerful tool to combat several maladies and it is also helpful in developing strong bonds and relations.

There are several people suffering from depression, an illness that affects you physically and emotionally in a number of ways – lack of interest in family, friends and

fun; state of mind in which people just isolate themselves. We see a lot of people around us who are always sad and depressed. It is very difficult for them to laugh. Being depressed and sad all the time is the mindset which develops and becomes habitual over a period of time.

Laughter is the therapy that heals us mentally as well as physically. While we laugh it results in boosting immunity and relieving pain naturally. It helps in relaxing muscles and releasing stress. Laughter is powerful coping method and a natural antidote for anxiety, stress and depression. Laughing is associated with greater resistance and ability to deal with strain. It influences us to see a world from a positive perspective.

Laughter can instantly change the mood of a person in to a cheerful one and it is difficult to feel negative emotions while you laugh. It’s been said that if we practice smiling, laughing and laughing out loud every-day for some time then we will never feel depressed. So not only is it the medicine to fight depression and stress but also to prevent depression.

Laughter is usually a group activity and sharing joy increases happiness. It enhances our mood through social connection and decreases the feeling of loneliness. Socializing and sharing happiness will help repair the damage caused due to stress and depression. It is serious illness and needs to be cured at the earliest stage. Laughter can definitely help to combat serious illness like depression. There is no loss in laughing and we should never miss any chance to laugh or simply laugh without any reason.

**Laughter**  
is the  
**BEST**  
medicine.





# Artistic Hands

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# i kfj okfj d çkFkZik dk egRo

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अंग्रेजी में एक कहावत है —“Family that prays together, stays together”- लेकिन आज के दौर में इसके विपरीत हो रहा है। इस आधुनिक युग में मनुष्य जहाँ हर क्षेत्र में सफलता हासिल कर रहा है, वहीं दूसरी ओर उसके जीवन से प्रार्थना तथा परिवार के लिए समय कम होता जा रहा है। हम ऐसे युग में जी रहें हैं, जहाँ इंसान के पास अपने परिवार के साथ बैठकर भोजन करने के लिए भी वक़्त नहीं है। माँ-बाप के पास अपने बच्चों के लिए समय नहीं है, क्योंकि दोनों ही अपने बच्चों के अच्छे भविष्य के लिए मेहनत कर रहे हैं। कई अभिभावक तो अपने बच्चे को साल भर के अन्दर ही शिशु-गृह में सुबह से शाम तक छोड़ देते हैं या देख भाल के लिए एक आया रख लेते हैं। मनुष्य ये भूलता जा रहा है कि ‘रोटी कमाना कोई बड़ी बात नहीं लेकिन परिवार के साथ रोटी खाना बड़ी बात है।’ माँ-बाप के साथ बच्चों का भी कोई खास रिश्ता नहीं रह गया है। आज बच्चे अपना अधिकतर समय मोबाईल में बिता रहे हैं। कोई PUBG में व्यस्त है, तो कोई TIK&TOK में। छोटे बच्चों का भी क्या कहना? बाहर अपने दोस्तों के साथ खेलने के बजाय वे भी मोबाईल में ही खेलकर संतुष्ट हैं। आज आप किसी से भी पूछ लो, सबका कहना एक ही है—‘समय कहाँ है?’

दिन में 24 घंटे होते हैं। परंतु उन 24 घंटों में 24 परिवार भी मुश्किल से प्रार्थना के लिए बैठते होंगे। प्रार्थना क्या है? कई लोग कहते हैं कि हम रोज़ ईश्वर से प्रार्थना करते हैं, फिर भी प्रार्थना में जो माँगते हैं, वो मिलता नहीं। हम केवल अपने दुःख या तकलीफ़ के समय में ही ईश्वर के पास जाते हैं और दिन-रात प्रार्थना करते हैं ताकि हमारे जीवन से सब दुःख-दर्द समाप्त हो जाए। हम यह भूल जाते हैं कि सिर्फ माँगना ही प्रार्थना नहीं होती। प्रार्थना हमारे और ईश्वर के बीच वार्तालाप है या ईश्वर और हमारे बीच एक संबंध है।

प्रेरित चरित 6:4 में हम पढ़ते हैं, “हम लोग प्रार्थना और वचन की सेवा में लगे रहेंगे।” एक सर्वोत्तम उदाहरण जिसकी शुरुआत हम अपने ही घर से कर सकते हैं। पारिवारिक प्रार्थना तो सौभाग्य है जिसे बहुत से परिवार खो देते हैं। घर ही प्रथम स्कूल है, अतः हम अपने घर में ही आध्यात्मिक शिक्षा की भी शुरुआत कर सकते हैं। परिवार ईश्वर के द्वारा सृष्ट किया गया है ताकि हर एक परिवार नाज़रेत के पवित्र परिवार के समान बन सके; जहाँ ईश्वर का प्रेम हो और सभी जन एकता के सूत्र में बंधे हों। परिवार ही

है जो हमें सुख-सुविधाएँ तथा खुशी प्रदान करता है। मुश्किलों में भी परिवार ही हमें सँभालता है। आजकल माता-पिता की यही शिकायत रहती है कि बच्चे बड़े हो जाते हैं तो बात नहीं सुनते। वचन कहता है— “युवक को बचपन से ही सन्मार्ग की शिक्षा दो, वह बुढ़ापे में उससे भटकेगा नहीं” (सूक्ति ग्रन्थ २२:६)।

बचपन से ही हम उन्हें वचन के द्वारा माँ-बाप का आदर करना सिखा सकते हैं और खुद भी उन्हें खुश रख सकते हैं। कलोसियों के नाम पत्र (३: २०-२१) में हम सीख सकते हैं, “बच्चें सभी बातों में अपने माता-पिता की आज्ञा मानें, क्योंकि ईश्वर इससे प्रसन्न होता है। पिता अपने बच्चों को खिजाया नहीं करें। कहीं ऐसा न हो कि उनका दिल टूट जाए।” अन्य चीज़ें हम बदल सकते हैं लेकिन हम परिवार के साथ शुरुआत और अंत करते हैं। पारिवारिक प्रार्थना हमें अवसर प्रदान करता है जहाँ हम अपनी रोज़मर्रा की जिन्दगी से कुछ समय ईश्वर और अपने परिवार के लिए निकालें। जहाँ हम एक-दूसरे के सुख-दुःख को जान सकें, खुशी और ग़म बाँट सकें। ईश्वर को पूरा परिवार समर्पित कर उसकी दया और अनुकम्पा माँग सकें। किसी ने सत्य ही कहा है—

“परिवार से बड़ा कोई धन नहीं,  
पिता से बड़ा कोई सलाहकार नहीं,  
माँ की छाँव से बड़ी कोई दुनिया नहीं,  
भाई से अच्छा कोई भागीदार नहीं,  
बहन से अच्छा कोई शुभचिंतक नहीं,  
इसलिए परिवार से बड़ा कोई जीवन नहीं।”





# GOD'S LOVE

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Love is a strong feeling that a person experiences in one's life. It is a great desire to be loved and to love. Love is an essential need for survival without which it's like living inside a vacuum. As Victor Hugo, says, "The greatest happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved; loved for ourselves, or rather, loved in spite of ourselves." People wander the whole life seeking love; love from persons, love in material things. Eventually, disheartens and dispirits when fails to seek or give love. For, Hendry Miller says, "The one thing we can never get enough of is love. And the one thing we never give enough of is love."

In our life we are so involved in materialistic pleasures that we try to find love and peace in person or thing; but the true love is God's love. We fall for people, get cheated, get disappointed and depressed; but God promises true and eternal love that never fails. I have experienced God's love in abundance. There were phases in my life when I was



shattered, and distracted in seeking love. He lifted me up and gave me warmth of his love and peace in my mind. I was again shattered when I was willing to have further studies but was hopeless due to financial insufficiencies in my family. He again lifted me up and opened the avenues for me to get education and flourish. I have felt His love in true sense. Whatever I wanted in my life added with my efforts to achieve it, I've got it. Through my experiences,

I've understood that God has plans for each one of us and He loves us in good times as well as in bad times. But we only remember Him in our bad times. Though we forget Him, He never forgets us. Though we indulge into worldly distractions and distance from Him, He never leaves us. He always stands there with His open arms waiting for our return. And the love that is found in Him will never be found in anyone else. Therefore, it is truly said, "God's love is so wonderful. So high we can't get over it, so deep we can't get under it and so wide we can't get around." His love is immeasurable.

God is Love. He teaches us to love one another as He has loved us. He asks us to love our enemies and our neighbours as we love ourselves. Pope Francis explaining the true meaning of love in his preaching, said, "Whoever loves has been created by God because God is love. When there is something on our mind and we want to ask God to forgive us, it's He who is waiting for us - to forgive us, to embrace us." The greatest teaching of Christianity is to love one another. Forgiveness and love are the pillars of Christianity. God has created us in His own image and loved us. Therefore, we should also forgive and love each other. 1 John 4: 17-19 says, "And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So, we will not be afraid on the Day of Judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world. Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love. We love each other because He loved us first."

Many times in life we don't get what we want, and we get hopeless and feel that we are unloved. We should be persistent in believing and never lose hope at such times, for in God is our hope, and every cloud has a silver lining. For he will never leave us in despair; he will lift us up and kiss us with grace and mercy and fill us with joy and happiness. The Lord said to Israel in Jeremiah 31:3: "I have loved you, my people, with an everlasting love. With unfailing love, I have drawn you to myself."





# Pursuing a Healthy Food Habit for Good Health

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Healthy Food Habit is an important factor as it affects our health in multiple ways which otherwise can hamper our daily busy life. A healthy habit is any behavior that benefits our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. Healthy habits are hard to develop and often it requires strong determination. Here are some healthy changes in our eating habits - keep more fruits, low-fat products (low-fat milk and low-fat yogurt), vegetables, and whole grain food. Focus on adding healthy food to your diet. Following a proper food habit and achieving good health can help to protect our body against many communicable diseases and community acquired diseases.

The World Health Organization defines 'Health' as a state of complete physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Diet may be defined as the kinds of food on which a person or group lives. A balanced diet is defined as one which contains a variety of foods in such qualities and proportions that the need for energy, amino acids, vitamins, fats, carbohydrate and other nutrients are adequately met for maintaining health, vitality and general well-being.

Dietary habits established in children often carry into adulthood. So, teaching children how to eat healthy at a young age will help them to be healthy throughout their life. We should not think of diet as a specific weight-loss plan, but diet is simply the types and amounts of food we consume on a regular daily basis. There is a connection between good nutrition and healthy weight, which reduces chronic disease risk. By taking steps to eat healthy we'll be on our way to getting the nutrients our body needs to stay healthy, active, and strong. As with physical activity, making small changes in our diet can go a long way, and it's easier done than we think.

As there is a proverb saying early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy and wealthy and wise. HEALTH IS WEALTH; if we are healthy then our whole body and soul is wealthy. In today's more advanced life and technology, everybody is busy running after one goal or another forgetting their health; which in turn, is related to Mental Health as well. The mental health gives an ability for the individual to cope with the difficulties or problems successfully and adjust to life situations accordingly. Good health means "maintaining a nutritional status that enables us to grow well and enjoy good health status."

While planning for a healthy diet menu, it is important to know what foods are available according to their origin, approximate chemical composition, and predominant function and how to combine them to increase nutritive value. Since each food has a different profile, an intake of different types of foods is desired to achieve good health. So, healthy good habit is a behavior that is beneficial to one's physical and mental health, often attaining a high level of discipline and self-control. A good balance between exercise and food intake is important, as this helps to maintain muscle strength and a healthy body weight.





# QUENCH YOUR SOUL'S DESIRE

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**AS THE DEER PANTS FOR STREAMS OF WATER, SO MY SOUL PANTS FOR YOU, MY GOD.  
MY SOUL THIRSTS FOR GOD, FOR THE LIVING GOD. WHEN CAN I GO AND MEET WITH  
GOD? (PS. 42: 1-2)**

Who is a prisoner? A person who is confined. "When I was in prison, you visited me" (Mt. 25: 37). These words of Christ remind me that our Lord is found when we meet Him in the lives of others. The prisoners hunger for the contact of people to be around them and to get free. "For He came to call not the righteous, but sinners" (Lk. 5:32). I was once so struck by the thought that we make Jesus the prisoner in the tabernacle.

Our God is a powerful almighty God. Yet the humblest God. St. Paul says, "[Jesus] who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (Phil. 2:6-8). And this most humble God waits eagerly for his sheep to return to him. He gave his life for you, me and the whole world, so that 'whomsoever believes in him may have eternal life' (Jn. 3:15).

Is that all what God wants? The one who created us, does he lack anything? If he wished he could force us to return what he gives us, we would not have any choice or option. But he is different. He has blessed us with the freedom of Choice. He waits patiently for us to come to him voluntarily, to share with him all the joy and pain. He is in the Church at the Tabernacle waiting for us to visit him; he is inside the closed door wanting to come out and nourish us during the holy Communion. He breaks himself during the transfiguration of the body and blood. Not only does he wait for us but even when we go to receive him, he once again shows us how much he loves us. He says: "Though your father and mother forsake you, I the Lord will receive you" (Ps: 27:10).

It's not necessary that we visit him only on Sundays, most of us don't even come there on time to see him and to receive him, yet he waits for each sheep to come. Just imagine a child performing in front of the whole school, parents and teachers. How eagerly we wait for our parents to see us perform. We only want a glimpse of our parents to make us feel a spark within us. Same way God longs to see us. Come just to see him and make him feel that all that he has created rightly gives him praise. Just by saying I love you at times things don't work out. We go beyond all measures to make people feel loved. Same way we should go beyond our ways not only on Sundays but by taking 5 to 10 minutes to visit him and just say "I love you" and thank him. Make him to understand it's not only words and faith but true emotions are attached behind it.







# तबू i gyk vfèkdkj

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ईश्वर द्वारा प्रदत्त दस आज्ञाएँ हमारे सम्पूर्ण जीवन को सुरक्षित और पवित्र बनाने के लिए ईश्वर की दयालुता और प्रेम को दर्शाती हैं।

ईश्वर ने हमें सब तरह की बुराइयों से बचाने के लिये ही इन आज्ञाओं को दिया। लेकिन कई लोगों का मानना है कि इसमें अमुक मनाही नहीं है और न ही कोई दंड है। लेकिन वे यह क्यों नहीं समझते कि इन्हीं आज्ञाओं में सभी बुराइयों की मनाही है। दस आज्ञाओं की पांचवीं आज्ञा है "हत्या मत करो"। इसमें सभी तरह की हत्याओं की मनाही है। आज मैं जिस हत्या की बात करने जा रहा हूँ वह इस वर्तमान समय में एक भयावह और विकराल हो गया है; और जिसे अनेक देशों की सरकारों ने कानूनन मान्यता भी दी है। लेकिन ईश्वर की दृष्टि में यह पाप है।

हत्या चाहे वह किसी भी रूप में हो पाप है। हमारी कलीसिया किसी भी तरह की हत्या को मंजूरी नहीं देती। वैसे तो सभी धर्मों में हत्या को मंजूरी नहीं दी गयी है। लाठी-डंडे से, चाकू-तलवार से या गोली-बारूद से की गई हत्या ही हत्या नहीं कहलाती है। जिसे हम गर्भपात, भ्रूणहत्या, या एबॉर्शन कहते हैं, वह महा हत्या है। हमारी कलीसिया इसे आत्मामारु पाप कहती है। गर्भपात यानि एक ऐसे जीवन को समाप्त करना जो निर्मल और निर्दोष आत्मा है। जिसका अस्तित्व माँ के गर्भ तक ही सीमित है, हम उसे संसार में आने से पहले ही समाप्त कर देते हैं। ईश्वर ने ही उसे सृजा है, उसमें अपनी आत्मा को डाला है, और सिर्फ अपनी सुविधा, खुशी और इच्छाओं के लिए हम उस प्रभु की आत्मा को मार देते हैं।

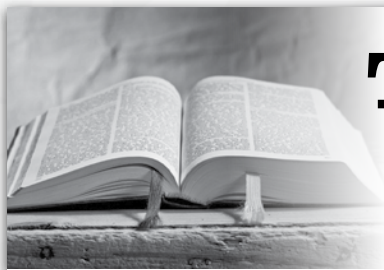
आज गर्भपात एक आम बात हो गयी है। इंसान इस घृणित कार्य के द्वारा पाप के दलदल में फँसता जा रहा है और संसार को दूषित करते हुए विनाश की ओर ले जा रहा है। गर्भपात का पाप अविवाहित युवक-युवतियों में ज्यादा है। इसका एक कारण हो सकता है कि इस पाप के बारे में उन्हें जानकारी नहीं दी जा रही है। ऐसा भी नहीं है कि यह सिर्फ युवक-युवतियों में ही है। विवाहित दम्पतियों में भी यह पाप होता है। इसके अनेक कारण गिनाए जा सकते हैं। जो भी हो, यह एक पाप है और ईश्वर के विधान का उल्लंघन है।

कुछ देशों ने गर्भपात को कानूनी मान्यता दी है, और कुछ ने विशेष परिस्थितियों में ही इसे अनुमति दी है। आज सम्पूर्ण विश्व में प्रत्येक वर्ष तकरीबन 56 लाख गर्भपात किये जाते हैं जिसमें 45 प्रतिशत असुरक्षित गर्भपात होते हैं जिसके कारण तकरीबन 47 हजार मौतें होती हैं और करीब प्रतिवर्ष पाँच लाख महिलाएँ अस्पताल में दाखिला लेती हैं। ऐसा नहीं है कि सभी लोग गर्भपात के पक्ष में हैं, विपक्ष में भी हैं लेकिन पक्ष में ज्यादा हैं।

ईसाई समुदाय में इसके प्रति कुछ असमंजस की स्थिति है क्योंकि धर्मग्रंथ बाइबिल के पुराने और न ही नये नियम में गर्भपात के विषय में कोई व्याख्या की गई है। फिर भी ईसाई समुदाय गर्भपात के विरुद्ध हैं। इनका मानना है कि गर्भपात किसी भी अवस्था या परिस्थिति में पाप है।

हमारी काथलिक कलीसिया शिक्षा देती है कि — मानव का सबसे पहला अधिकार उसका जीवन है। इसलिए माँ के गर्भ से ही मानव जीवन का सम्मान और उसकी रक्षा की जानी चाहिए। काथलिक कलीसिया कानून 1398 कहती है—जो व्यक्ति गर्भपात करता है, वह स्वतः ही कलीसिया से बहिष्कृत समझा जाएगा। जो तभी हट सकता है जब वह अपने पाप के लिए पछताता है और पापमोचन पाता है। ऐसे लोगों को पापमोचन देने का अधिकार 1869 में संत पापा पीयूष नवें ने बिशपों और अभिषिक्त पुरोहितों को दिया। अब इसका मतलब यह नहीं कि पाप क्षमा मिल जाती है तो गर्भपात के पाप करते रहें। इस विषय में हम ईसाईयों को जागरूक होना होगा और विशेषकर अपने युवक-युवतियों को शिक्षित करना होगा ताकि संसार में ईश्वर की आत्मा शांतिपूर्वक विचरण कर सके।





# THE WORD OF GOD

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Praise the LORD, all the children of God. If you are reading this article, it is not incidental but it is the Holy Spirit who is leading you and communicating to you.

Scripture says in Joshua 1:8 “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”

The LORD has given instructions or a manual for all the children of GOD to lead a righteous life and to become successful in all their endeavours. The lives of Moses, Joshua, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, David, Solomon and many others whom the LORD had been communicating directly to them and they are the best examples we can read in Scriptures.

We have to start our day by reading the WORD OF GOD. Just pray to the Holy Spirit of God to show you the way to guide you to the Scriptures that will help you to deal with any situations you might go through. King David writes in Psalm 119:130 “The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.”

Make the WORD OF GOD – as part of your everyday life and for every need.

Lord JESUS has said, as written in Matthew 4:4 “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” In Luke 8:21, Lord JESUS said, “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the Word of God and do it.”

Reading the WORD of GOD and following them diligently will help and guide the children of God to lead a righteous life and one that is acceptable to God. Scriptures say in James 1:22-25 “But prove yourselves

doers of the word, and not merely listeners, deluding yourselves by unsound reasoning contrary to the truth. For if anyone only listens to the word without obeying it, he is like a man who looks very carefully at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he immediately forgets what he looked like. But he who looks carefully into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and faithfully abides by it, not having become a [careless] listener who forgets but [c]an active doer [who obeys], he will be blessed and favoured by God in what he does [in his life of obedience]”.

We must have reverence for the WORD of GOD with joy and trust. All our actions, efforts, intentions should be according to the WORD of GOD and happiness, peace, grace and favour of God will surely manifest in our lives. And no form of any amiss will come near us. The Scripture says in 2 Samuel 22:31 “As for God, His way is perfect; The Word of the Lord is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him.”

God bless you, for sparing your time in reading this article. May the Holy Spirit of God guide you all in abiding by the WORD of GOD which is alive and active.







# HOPE

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**“NOW THE GOD OF HOPE FILL YOU WITH ALL JOY AND PEACE IN BELIEVING, THAT YOU MAY ABOUND IN HOPE, THROUGH THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT” (ROM. 15:13)**

You might say that as Christians, we are never without hope. And you are correct. Christ Jesus is our hope in our every circumstance, every hardship. But there are still times when we feel utterly hopeless. When our hopes and dreams are shattered, and we think they may never be fulfilled. When we can't see beyond our pain to grasp the hope that he offers. To believe there will never be a better day on the horizon. It feels like you're at your worst. The woman who longs for a child only to suffer health consequences making it impossible for her ever to conceive! The couple who prays over their sick child, begging God to save her, to heal her, only to see her life slip away! To feel the feeling of abandonment from a loved one! To feel like everything is coming crashing down towards you! Then there seems to be an emptiness from within. And then you are feeling hopeless about yourself and your life.

How do we find hope when hope is lost? “The Lord is close to the broken-hearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed” (Ps. 34:18). There is never a time in our life where God will abandon us. But what about our times of anguish? There too, you can be assured that God is closer to you than at any other time. Maybe it's through the kindness of others; the unexpected word of comfort; the moment of laughter that takes you completely by surprise; maybe it's just the grace to get you through the day or even the moment; or maybe it's the overwhelming peace when you should be falling apart. He is there. He is holding you close, wiping your tears. Being your supportive pillar.

Suffering is a season, often a long, difficult season. But it is only a season, one with a beginning and an end. And God promises that it will one day be over, one day when you will find your way back to hope when he has put together all the broken pieces and makes you stand

up on your feet for good. Maybe your pain was the way of consecrating you; of moulding you into his image so that you can witness the wonders, he has planned for you. He is good. He wants good for us. Even when bad things happen, we can trust that in His sovereignty, he can and will bring good out of every tragedy. Never be disheartened whenever something comes to an end. Remember that God has a new plan. A new dream, a new path, a new passion and a bright new journey waiting for you. Whatever your loss, God can take your pain and do something new in you and through you. Trust him. “We also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us” (Rom. 5: 5).





# St. Catherine of Siena – A Dominican Saint

(Courtesy: Catholic Online)

Catherine was born during the outbreak of the plague in Siena, Italy on March 25, 1347. She was the 25<sup>th</sup> child born to her mother, although half of her brothers and sisters did not survive childhood. Catherine herself was a twin, but her sister did not survive infancy. Her mother was 40 when she was born. Her father was a cloth dyer.

At the age of 16, Catherine's sister, Bonaventura, died, leaving her husband as a widower. Catherine's parents proposed that he marry Catherine as a replacement, but Catherine opposed this. She began fasting and cut her hair short to mar her appearance. Her parents attempted to resist this move, to avoid marriage, but they were unsuccessful. Her fasting and her devotion to her family, convinced them to relent and allow her to live as she pleased.

Despite Catherine's religious nature, she did not choose to enter a convent and instead she joined the Third Order of St. Dominic, which allowed her to associate with a religious society while living at home. Fellow Dominican sisters taught Catherine how to read. Meanwhile, she lived quietly, isolated within her family home. Catherine developed a habit of giving things away and she continually gave away her family's food and clothing to people in need. She never asked permission to give these things away, and she quietly put up with their criticisms.

At the tender age of 21 she underwent a change. She described an experience she referred to as her "mystical marriage to Christ." Such mystical experiences change people and Catherine was no exception. In her vision, she was told to re-enter public life and to help the poor and sick. She immediately re-joined her family and went into public to help people in need. She often visited hospitals and homes where the poor and sick were found. Her activities quickly attracted followers who helped her in her mission to serve the poor and sick.

Catherine was drawn further into the world as she worked, and eventually she began to travel, calling for reform of the Church and for people to confess and to love God totally. She became involved in politics, and was key in working to keep city states loyal to the Pope. She was also credited with helping to start a crusade to the Holy Land. On one occasion, she visited a condemned political prisoner and was credited

with saving his soul, which she saw being taken up to heaven at the moment of his death. Catherine allegedly was given the stigmata, but it was visible only to herself. She took Bl. Raymond of Capua as her confessor and spiritual director.

From 1375 onwards, Catherine began dictating letters to scribes. She petitioned for peace and was instrumental in persuading the Pope in Avignon to return to Rome. She became involved in the fractured politics of her time, but was instrumental in restoring the Papacy to Rome and in brokering peace deals during a time of factional conflict and war between the Italian city states. She also established a monastery for women in 1377 outside of Siena. She is credited with composing over 400 letters, her *Dialogue*, which is her definitive work, and her prayers. These works are so influential that St. Catherine would later be declared a "Doctor of the Church."

By 1380, the 33-year-old mystic had become ill, possibly because of her habit of extreme fasting. Her confessor, Raymond, ordered her to eat, but she replied that she found it difficult to do so, and that possibly she was ill. In January of 1380, her illness accelerated her inability to eat and drink. Within weeks, she was unable to use her legs. She died on April 29, following a stroke just a week prior.

St. Catherine's feast day is April 29, she is the patroness against fire, illness, the United States, Italy, miscarriages, people ridiculed for their faith, sexual temptation, and nurses.







# बचपन

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‘बचपन’ – यह एक शब्द सुनते ही हर एक व्यक्ति के चेहरे पर एक मुस्कराहट आ जाती है। बचपन के दिन किसी भी व्यक्ति के जीवन के बड़े महत्वपूर्ण दिन होते हैं। ये वो समय होता है जब हमारी एक अलग दुनिया होती है; न जिदंगी की भाग-दौड़ और न ही किसी चीज़ की चिंता; बस अपने में ही मस्त रहना; वो बारिश में झूमना, मिट्टी में खेलना, माँ की लोरियाँ और पिता की

न गँवाओ। बचपन के पल कभी लौट कर नहीं आयेंगे, इसलिए बचपन के हर पल को जी लो। बचपन ज़िन्दगी का सबसे खूबसूरत और यादगार पड़ाव है। इस समय ज़िन्दगी बिल्कुल चिंतामुक्त लगती है। बचपन में बने दोस्त और उनके साथ बिताये पल सबसे अनमोल और सच्चे होते हैं; न किसी तरह का दिखावा और न मन में कोई कपट। ज़िन्दगी बेहद आसान—सी लगती है।



डांट। जब से स्मार्टफोन इस दुनिया में आया है और उसके साथ में इंटरनेट, मानो बचपन फोन में कैद सा हो गया है, जैसे किसी ने बाहर से ताला लगा कर चाभी कहीं भूल आया हो।

बचपन में मेरे दोस्तों के पास घड़ी नहीं थी, लेकिन सबके पास समय था। आज फोन होने से घड़ी तो सबके पास है, पर समय नहीं है। हमारे माता-पिता के बचपन के बारे में जब हम सुनते हैं तो वह एक कहानी जैसी लगती है। आधुनिक युग में हमें हर सुविधाएँ तो मिली, पर हमारा बचपन कहीं खो गया। हमारे माता-पिता के समय वाला बचपन भी कितना हसीन था, न किसी के आने की खुशी, न किसी के जाने का गम था; हर पल को जी लिया करते थे। बचपन जीवन का सबसे सुन्दर हिस्सा है। हँसो, खेलो—कूदो, अपने बचपन को इस आधुनिकता के चकाचौंध में

आज मुझे मेरे बचपन के वो दिन याद आते हैं: मस्ती के पूरे दिन, रिम-झिम बारिश में दौड़ लगाने वाले वो दिन, बारिश के पानी में कागज़ के नाव बनाकर बहाने वाले वो दिन, माँ के लाख मना करने पर भी वर्षा की आखिरी बून्द तक दिल खोकर नहाने वाले वो दिन। काश! कुछ ऐसा होता कि जब चाहे हम अपने बचपन के समय में जाकर कुछ खुशी के पल बिताकर फिर वापस आ सकते। आज का बचपन इतना सुविधायुक्त और वैभवशाली है कि उन खेलों से कोसों दूर है। पहले खेलकर बच्चों के कपड़ों से गीली मिट्टी की खुशबु आती थी। आज का साफ-सुथरा बचपन विडिओ गेम, कम्प्यूटर, मोबाइल, और ऑनलाइन गेम के बीच व्यतीत हो रहा है। कभी-कभी लगता है, अगर अभिभावक इन सब चीज़ों को नहीं देंगे तो बच्चे बड़े ही नहीं होंगे। उन्हें लगता

है कि इनके बिना बच्चे का मानसिक विकास अधूरा रह जायेगा। जो भी हो, पुराने और पारंपरिक खेलों से हमने और हमारे बड़ों ने जो सीखा—समझा है, वह इन अत्याधुनिक खेलों के बस की बात नहीं है।

बचपन आज भी भोला-भाला ही है, लेकिन हम उन पर ऐसे—ऐसे तनाव और दबाव का बोझ डाल रहे हैं कि वे कुम्हला रहे हैं। बच्चे बचपन को खुल कर जीना भूल-सा गए हैं। आज भी हमें अपने बचपन के दिन याद आ जाते हैं — मस्ती के पल, गर्मी के दिनों में लूडो, कैरम, बिज़नस का खेल इत्यादि। हालांकि अब वो दिन लौट के नहीं आयेंगे, बस वो यादें चेहरे पे मुस्कान ले आती हैं। इसलिए बच्चों जी लो अपना बचपन, क्योंकि बचपन गुज़र जाने के बाद ज़िंदगी बहुत तेज़ भागती है।

# Brothers with entwined arms — Our African brethren: An integral part of St. Dominic's

Unity in diversity is a slogan which seeks to celebrate how can we be stronger, welcoming different cultural, social and ethnic elements. "Difference is of the essence of humanity. Difference is an accident of birth and it should therefore never be the source of hatred or conflict. The answer to difference is to respect it. Therein lies a most fundamental principle of peace: respect for diversity" (John Hume, Nobel Peace Prize Winner).

St. Dominic's Church is really blessed with diversity of faithful of all countries, YET, it celebrates as one Dominican family. It welcomes everyone without the distinction of culture, colour, race and background. Anyone who steps on to St. Dominic's experiences the divine presence and feels welcoming and homely. The hallmark of St. Dominic's - 'unity in diversity' - is lived and practised in every aspect of liturgical celebration.

One of the communities which is very robust, active and an integral part of St. Dominic's is the African brethren. For some of them, St. Dominic's has become a second home and a home away from home. A quite few of them visit St. Dominic's daily for prayer and Holy Mass. They not only actively participate in the Holy Eucharist but celebrate it with their entire being through lively singing.

A few of them have been regular in cleaning of the Church on Saturday mornings for so many years without fail. It was their own initiative and service to their Father's House. Whether there are many or just three of them, they clean the Church without any complaint. Even though, some of them have to come from faraway places, they make sure to reach the Church early in the morning, be it winter or summer or raining. They themselves voluntarily organise it so well that through their service they offer glory to God.

"He who sings, prays twice", says St. Augustine of Hippo. It speaks the power of singing. In five words this quote gives a

clear picture of the importance of singing. African community at the liturgical celebrations is a very lively community, it cannot remain passive. Whenever they sing, they praise God loudly clapping and dancing. They look after the choir of 10: 00 am Mass and 6: 30 pm Mass. They meticulously select the hymns, practise them well and make the Liturgy very solemn and lively. They not only sing English hymns but also Hindi, Latin, Swahili and Greek.

St. John Paul II says, "Prayer is in fact the recognition of our limits and our dependence; we come from God and we are of God and to God we return." Prayer is also an integral part of their life. Of late, there is an African Association at St. Dominic's which gathers on Wednesdays for prayer. All those who are free join the prayer meeting and read the Scripture for their reflection. Besides, a good number of them visit the Adoration chapel on a daily basis.

St. Dominic's indeed is very glad to have the African brethren as her parishioners. We pray that they continue to experience God in their life through St. Dominic's and be an integral part of our Church.





# My Experience at St. Dominic's

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It was May, 2015, when I received a letter posting me to New Delhi. My colleague had turned down similar instructions preferring to go to the USA, so I was next in the queue. I obliged. After 30 years in Diplomatic service, transfer is no surprise and choice of destination country is of no great relevance.

My daughter got to know and sent me a message from Australia: "Mummy, must it be India?" The international media had been awash with negative news about an unfortunate incident involving a woman in an Indian bus. I assured my daughter that since the incident made news, it meant it was a rare occurrence.

I looked up various Catholic churches in New Delhi and sent out an email to them, seeking to know Mass timings and choir availability and rehearsal details. I managed to receive an automatic response from the Cathedral Parish.

On July 2015, I arrived in New Delhi. I set out to identify a church I would belong to. I attended all the Masses at the Cathedral and also at St. Dominic's. For convenience I settled for St. Dominic's. The next task was: Which Mass.

I zeroed-in on the evening Mass mainly because there was a humble, organized lone lady leading the choir. Along the way, during Mass, she would be joined by 2 or 3 members. I thought she was in most need of support. Soon, Dinah (Uganda) joined in, so we were practically 3. Unfortunately, the Indian lady relocated to another State, so 2 of us were left. I sensed doom! Then Christel (Congo) joined us and again we were 3. There was hope.

Eventually, Akaa (Zambia) and Joseph (Nigeria) joined. James was our faithful organist. The arrival of Shruti and Priscilla and later Stanley and Merill completed the equation and re-introduced the indigenous touch/look. This, now, almost became a fully-fledged choir, in a sense, that all voices were represented: soprano, alto, tenor and bass. (Of late, Savio has brought in the reggae beat.)

Soon, we agreed on rehearsals an hour before Mass and later added 2 hours on Saturdays. The introduction of new hymns required papers to be printed and distributed. (Pope Francis cautions choirs against "stealing" the peoples'

voice.) But that meant announcements had to continue, during Mass, about the next hymn. I was not comfortable with the arrangement. I opted to print the whole program on sheets to enable smooth flow of Mass and to render solemnity to the liturgy.

Suffice to say that much as I wished to participate in singing, I had sworn never to be deeply involved in it, let alone be a leader. This was to avoid emotional stress (bordering on depression) similar to what I experienced in the past whenever I moved to another station. Obviously, I have not been successful in this.

Indians are deeply and admirably religious. The congregation is awesome. They are active and attentive participants. The Parish leadership/clergy provide full cooperation and allow reasonable liberty and flexibility. One cultural shock, however, was that Indians don't readily speak to strangers. It is the stranger to approach them. This is the reverse with Africa.

The Evening Mass choir has irregular membership and is sustained by members in transit. The challenge is how to manage this fluctuating situation without compromising quality. Often, I have been tempted to resign, feeling some semblance of the Cross, only to remind myself of the bigger Cross behind the altar. Four years down the road, God has consistently ensured He is glorified. Blessed be His name.



# Being a member of SDYM...

**Ms. Annie Nathan**

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SDYM (St. Dominic's Youth Movement) is the youth group of St. Dominic's Church. Its mission is to work effectively with peace, love and unity to promote Christ's name. When I was younger, I used to attend summer camps, I used to see the youth members working for the Church and I really admired them and their work. I was mesmerized how good they were. I always wanted to be part of them. At the age of 20, I finally joined the youth.

Youth is beyond my expectations. First, I thought that in youth you just have work for the Church that's it. But youth is much more and beyond that. I really feel very privileged to be a part of SDYM. The youth members have become like my extended family. From different people I have learnt different qualities; for example, how to be positive in life, how to tackle small to big problems, helping each other and working together towards a common goal, making each other smile, most importantly being positive in life and the list goes on.

The Youth Group has also helped me to develop personally. I have been very passionate about photography and members have helped me to enhance all my skills and get exposure, opportunity and chances to build upon it and get used to be comfortable in this field. Now I'm very confident about it. Earlier I had stage fright, crowds always frightened me. I used to stammer, stutter, forget words; but now I would thank members for filling so much of self-confidence in me that I can speak confidently in front of people. Members have also

taught me that any work that I do is not very little, every work that I do is a blessing from God. My contribution may be a drop in the ocean, but the ocean would be incomplete without this drop. Participating in inter-parish competitions has not only developed my personality but also has given me a platform to heighten my strengths. I owe this to SDYM.

It helped me to grow spiritually and be closer to God. I feel more connected to God not just spiritually but with my actions as well. Working in the Church is like working at home. I think youth is the gathering of people where diversity is celebrated through their unity in Christ. Meeting different people gives us many opportunities not just for the benefit of the Church but also personally gives us a chance to meet new friends and creating wonderful memories. Working in youth group helps me to give back to Christ. Every youth should join the Church youth as it makes them hear the word of God and helps them give back to the Lord.

At last I would like to say that sending your kids to become a part of the youth is giving them an opportunity to not only enhance their personality but also to bring Positivity in their lives as well as in others' lives. It is a platform to become who they are without the barriers surrounding them. It gives them a base in life and gives them life lessons to withstand the ruthless world outside that is prowling like a roaring lion looking for someone to eat.





# Artistic Hands

Mr. Pawan Lakra





# Youth and Truth

Mr. Neeraj Samad  
(neerajsamad14@gmail.com)



Our modern world is changing, so is the youth of today,  
The pace of keeping up with changes is quickening day by day.  
Embracing changes can be a very good habit to adopt,  
But drinking and smoking are trendy habits that they opt.

Peer pressure is weighing down current generations,  
As they begin to buckle under the strain and frustrations.  
The need for interaction has not changed, but the tools for it have,  
Talking to friends on phones for long hours is all what they crave.

Social Media has become the puppeteer of the world and youth today,  
Manipulating youth, creating illusions that say them to be perfect in every way.  
They are now living in a virtual world, with Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp,  
They no longer need to speak face to face as they have gotten mobile apps.

A world where fake is the new real, and they are supposed to wake up with their hair perfect,  
Where they show the happiness but hide the pain that peeks through the cracks with suspect.  
Living in the world where it's okay to bottle oneself up and put on a disguise,  
But this world is not what we are supposed to live what youth are yet to realize.

Today's youth has really lost the essence of life, they barely respect elders,  
Friends have become more important than their relatives and family members.  
They are embarrassed to speak their own local and indigenous language,  
They have discarded their tradition and culture which can be a real damage.

The all grown up youth joyfully swims in the pool of liquor.  
They drown their youthfulness in pits and become day dreamers.  
They are enslaved and captured by drugs and gambling,  
They feel home like jail and find outside very pleasing.

Street corners are full, as youth think that it's okay to walk into the darkness with a knife,  
When did parents stop teaching their kids that the greatest ever gift, is quite simply LIFE?  
Frustration and neglect flows through the streets of this concrete jungle and meadows,  
Bullies and racists still torture their victims, leaving them to cry in the shadows.

World is changing and everyone is busy blaming the youth of today,  
But their parents are equally involved making their world this way.  
Parents scold and beat their kids leaving them to cry in the shadows,  
Instead of teaching them how to fly, they tie them down with yet another ASBO.





## WHY DO CATHOLICS CALL PRIESTS 'FATHER'?



This question refers to Jesus' teaching found in the Gospel of St. Matthew, when He said, "Do not call anyone on earth your father. Only one is your father, the One in heaven" (23:9).

Taken literally, we would have to wonder why we do use the title "Father" when Jesus seems to forbid it. First, we must remember the context of the passage. Jesus is addressing the hypocrisy of the scribes and the Pharisees - the learned religious leaders of Judaism. Our Lord castigates them for not providing a good example; for creating onerous spiritual burdens for others with their various rules and regulations; for being haughty in exercising their office and for promoting themselves by looking for places of honour, seeking marks of respect and wearing ostentatious symbols. Basically, the scribes and Pharisees had forgotten that they were called to serve the Lord and those entrusted to their care with humility and generous spirit.

Given that context, Jesus says not to call anyone on earth by the title, "Rabbi," "Father" or "Teacher," in the sense of arrogating to oneself an authority which rests with God and of forgetting the responsibility of the title. Yes, as Jesus said, only the heavenly Father is the true Father, and the Messiah, the true teacher and rabbi.

Nevertheless, we do use these titles in common parlance: We call those who instruct us and others "teacher"; our male parent "father"; and Jewish religious leaders "rabbi." Especially in a religious sense, those who serve the Lord and represent His authority, as a teacher, parent and especially a priest, must be mindful of exercising it diligently, humbly and courageously. To use this authority for self-aggrandizement is pure hypocrisy. Jesus said at the end of this passage, "Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled, but whoever humbles himself shall be exalted."

Since the earliest times of our Church, we have used the title "Father" for religious leaders. Bishops, who are the shepherds of the local Church community and the authentic teachers of the faith, were given the title "Father." Actually, until about the year 400, a bishop was called "papa" for Father; this title was then restricted solely to addressing the Bishop of Rome, the successor of St. Peter, and in English was rendered "pope."

In an early form of his rule, St. Benedict (d. c. 547) designated the title to spiritual confessors, since they were the guardians

of souls. Moreover, the word "abbot," denoting the leader in faith of the monastic community, is derived from the word 'Abba', the Aramaic Hebrew word for father, but in the very familiar sense of "daddy."

Later, in the Middle Ages, the term "father" was used to address the mendicant friars - like the Franciscans and Dominicans since by their preaching, teaching and charitable works they cared for the spiritual and physical needs of all of God's children. In more modern times, the heads of male religious communities, or even those who participate in ecumenical councils such as Vatican II, are given the title "father." In the English-speaking world, addressing all priests as "Father" has become customary.

On a more personal note, the title for me is very humbling. As a priest, "Father" reminds me that I am entrusted with a grave responsibility by our Lord His faithful people. Just as a father must nourish, instruct, challenge, correct, forgive, listen and sustain, the priest must meet the spiritual needs of those entrusted to his care, providing them with the nourishment of our Lord through the sacraments. He must preach the Gospel with fervour and conviction in accord with the mind of the Church, challenging all to continue on that path of conversion which leads to holiness. He must correct those who have erred but with mercy and compassion. In the same spirit as the father with his prodigal son, the priest must reconcile sinners who have gone astray but seek a way back to God. As a father listens to his child, so must a priest listen to his spiritual children, providing counsel and consolation.

A priest must also be mindful of the "physical" needs of his flock such as food, housing, clothing and education. While priests may be celibate, the words of our Lord to His Apostles ring true: "I give you My word, there is not one who has given up home, brothers or sisters, mother or father, children or property for Me and for the Gospel who will not receive in this present age a hundred times as many homes, brothers and sisters, mothers, children and property - and persecution besides - and in the age to come, everlasting life" (Mk 10:29-30).

All of us must pray for our priests, especially those that serve in our own parishes, that by God's grace they may strive to fulfil the responsibility of being "Father."



# The Dominicans elect their first Asian leader

Source: "The Tablet"

The Dominicans, one of the most prominent religious orders in the Catholic Church, have elected the first Asian leader in their 800-year history. Fr Gerard Timoner, who comes from the Philippines, was chosen as the 88<sup>th</sup> Master of the Order of Preachers on July 13. The election took place during a gathering of the order in Bien Hoa, Vietnam.

The 51-year-old master is a former leader of the Philippine province of Dominicans and up until now has held a senior Rome-based position – a "socius" – advising on Asia Pacific matters. In 2014, he was chosen by Pope Francis to sit on the International Theological Commission, which advises the papacy and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

His election reflects the Church's growth in Asia, and a new generation of emerging leaders from the continent. Fr Timothy Radcliffe, a former Master of the Order, who took part in the General Chapter in Vietnam, told *The Tablet* he had been "bowled over by a sense of the growth" of the order in the continent explaining that in Vietnam alone there are 400 friars, 2,500 Dominican sisters, and 117,000 lay members.

"We elected Gerard because he is a joyful preacher, and a qualified theologian," he said. "It is also significant that he is Asian, though that is not why we elected him." The tilt to Church leadership in Asia was noted by the Pope in a recent book length interview, "The Strength of a Vocation", with Spanish Claretian priest Fr Ferando Prado, whose order is led by an Indian superior-general.

"In institutes today, it is not rare to see general superiors, men and women, who come from other continents," Francis explained. "It is clear that the origins of both men and women general superiors, who are from non-European and non-Western continents, is more and more becoming a reality. And this is good news that makes us happy. As time goes by, this change of the face of the Church is more and more visible, a fruit of its history and the marvel of evangelisation."

The pope pointed out the "clear phenomenon of a 'de-Europeanization' of the Church" adding that this is starting to "bear fruits in strong local churches, those particular churches that have a strong and specific identity. India is one

example of this, even with its own concrete theology. In Asia, we see the beginning of a strong theological thinking. The Philippines are also a clear example of how this is coming to be."

After his election, Fr Gerard said he had initially been reluctant to take up the position, confessing that were it not for the prayer and encouragement of his fellow Dominicans "the answer would have been 'no.'" In a message to the order, he emphasized the importance of evangelisation, mission, and the Order's focus on preaching. "Mission is not what we do. It is who we are. And if that is clear, everything will just follow," he said. "We are preachers even when we are not preaching. We are preachers even if in our old age, we can no longer speak. We are preachers even if we are not ordained. We are preachers even if we are sick. We are preachers even if we are doing serious research alone in our rooms. We are preachers when we are helping the less privileged. We are preachers. That is our identity."

He also emphasized the importance of communion among Dominicans and the need to overcome differences. "Once we have agreed, I think that is my job, to be the first among brothers to say 'We should do what we have set to do.'"

The Dominicans, founded by St Dominic in 1216, are comprised of friars, sisters and lay members and have a strong intellectual and devotional tradition. St. Dominic is widely considered to have established the Rosary devotion, while the Order runs several universities. Past Dominicans include two Doctors of the Church: St Thomas Aquinas, one of the most influential western philosophers and theologian and St Catherine of Siena, a mystic and Church reformer.







## A testimony: Strange are the Lord's ways of showing His faithfulness!

Ms. Preeti M Soreng  
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*"For my thoughts are not your thoughts neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Is. 55:9)."*

Yes, that is how I experienced the Lord's work in me.

The Lord was very pleased with me, when he found me - a lost sheep - at my first ever retreat in my College in Delhi (Jesus & Mary College) in September 2001. The retreat conducted by the Living Waters Prayer Group, left a deep impression on me and it turned out to be a life-changing experience. So deep was experience of the Lord's touch that I surrendered my life totally to Him.

I was under the wrong notion at that time that it will always be a bed of roses after having surrendered to the Lord and never knew that the chosen ones have to go through a time of testing and Jesus invites us to "carry the cross and follow" Him (Mt. 16: 24). Just two-and-a-half months after the retreat, I started vomiting blood and started experiencing breathlessness. I had stopped my Tuberculosis medication midway few months back and hence it relapsed. My condition grew worse, and I had to be rushed to the hospital at night. Doctors diagnosed that my left lung was not functioning properly. Oxygen pipes and masks did not give me relief and I kept gasping for breath. I was then put on ventilator. My three days on ventilator were very painful; even the slightest movement I made caused excruciating pain. The doctors ruled that even if I survived, I would have to be on medication, life-long. I still remember asking the Lord silently in my heart, "Lord, I just gave my life to you. Why are you allowing all this to happen to me?"

When my condition started getting worse, my uncle and aunt went to a retreat center to pray for me. An elderly man approached them there and started talking to them. When he learnt about my condition, he confidently said that no harm would come to me because he had vision of Jesus sitting by my side on my hospital bed. And this is precisely what happened. One morning, as I lay in the ICU, my sister and mother, who were sitting outside, suddenly perceived a strong fragrance of flowers. Later, my sister described this fragrance saying that it was as if "someone had brought in a truck full of flowers."

They told me that this fragrance lasted for a few seconds. They looked around for the flowers but there was not a single flower anywhere. The hospital was fully air-conditioned, so there was no way any fragrance could have drifted in from the outside. Soon after this experience, my condition started improving, and I was discharged. The following month, a friend gave me a copy of the monthly magazine of National Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services- Charisindia (Feb 2002), which carried the testimony of Mr. Arul Nathan from Delhi. In his testimony, he had described an experience of perceiving a strong fragrance of jasmine flowers whenever he approached the grotto of Mother Mary; he wrote that this was a sign of Mother Mary's presence. On reading this, I asked my sister whether what she and mummy had smelt was the fragrance of jasmine flowers. She said it was not just jasmine but it was a splendid fragrance of different kinds of flowers. I immediately sensed that the entire heaven had paid me a visit in the hospital. I realized then why my family started getting unexpected help and support very suddenly after that experience; even people unknown to us helped us throughout my hospital stay. Subsequently, I started responding well to treatment and just after a year I was completely off medication. Now, after seventeen years, I am absolutely healthy. Praise God!

In 2009, my Dad's health started deteriorating. Because of diabetes and high BP, his vital organs started getting affected. Subsequently, his kidneys failed, and he was put on dialysis. For a few months, it went well but soon the expensive





treatment started depleting our savings. We were worried as to how we would continue his dialysis. God in his mercy, yet again, showed his faithfulness to us in this sickness. My sister and mother were returning from the Shrine of Our Lady of Health in Vailankanni when we got news that Dad's office had brought out a circular wherein all medical expenses of retired employees would be fully covered by the office. God again surprised us with his faithfulness. Not only that, we also got reimbursement for what we had spent on his treatment till then.

God has been encouraging me to move to higher levels of faith. His unexpected and at times painful interventions in my life taught me to fully depend on him. Since the latter part of 2014, the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament was inspiring me to address God as "Daddy." There were times when I prayed nothing and just called him "Daddy" repeatedly looking at the Blessed Sacrament. I felt so overwhelmed by His fatherly

love that it often brought tears to my eyes. I never understood what the Lord was trying to teach me with all this. I remember leading the Adoration one Sunday in my prayer group and asking everyone to repeat "Abba" for a while. On the following Sunday, August 2, 2015 my father was found lying unconscious on his bed. We rushed him to the hospital and discovered that he had a brain hemorrhage. He succumbed to it the same day. My life seemed to have crumbled at this because I was very close to my father and I really struggled to accept God's will. But even amidst this storm, I experienced deep peace and tranquility. Though the pain of losing the one I loved the most was unbearable, yet the peace from the Lord superseded my pain. I now understood what St. Paul meant when he wrote of "the peace of God, surpassing all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:7). The Lord also strengthened me by reminding of his word, "A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling." (Ps. 68:5).

Looking back at these 17 years, I can only say that the Lord walked every step with me and my family. Our journey has not been easy but whenever we needed support, we found the Lord walking beside us. He showed us time and again that He does not leave or forsake us! So, let us keep trusting the Lord, even amidst terrifying storms. And just like Jesus manifested himself to the disciples amidst a raging storm, he will manifest his power and glory in our life.

.... *It's been two years* ....



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“Honest balances and scales are the LORD’s; all the weights in the bag are his work.” - Proverbs 16:11



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