



"They are trees planted by streams of water; they bear fruit; their leaves do not wither; in all that they do they prosper." Ps 1:3

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The Theme for 2012: "FRUIT-BEARING DISCIPLE." Jn 15:8

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What does JESUS mean to you

Historians, philosophers, wise men, religious and a host of others regard Jesus as the centerpiece of history. In today's world many deny this, many don't believe; and in fact many don't acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God. The world today is spiraling to disaster; with all the new inventions in various fields, the human race has not stopped searching for an ultimate goal.

The question I pose to you and myself is **WHAT DOES JESUS MEAN TO YOU?**

This will define our very existence and what we are in this world. It will portray the way in which we behave and look at the world. Jesus Himself made a statement that was dramatic and daring, when He said to the apostle Thomas, **"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).**

Every word of this statement challenges the fundamental beliefs of our culture, and in reality actually stands against the entire world today.

Let's look at the implicit claims in that statement. First and foremost, Jesus asserted that there is only one way to God. This shocks post-modern moods and mindsets. Jesus also unequivocally stated that God is the author of life and that meaning in life lies in coming to Him. He revealed Himself as the Son of God, who led the way to the Father. He claimed that we can personally know God and the absolute nature of His truth. Many religious people reject and deny these claims, but one can go down the line of history, and see that every claim Jesus made of Himself, challenged human culture's most basic assumptions about life and meaning.

WHAT DOES JESUS MEAN TO YOU? The answer lies within one's own heart. To be a fruit bearing disciple in its truest form depends solely on this, it is only then that one can say – **Yes! Jesus is my way, my truth and my life.**

The whole world is on a mad quest for security, love, peace and happiness – the answer to the world today is – JESUS, and what He means to it.

- **Philip Balfour**

THE VISITATION OF MARY

At the Annunciation of our Lord, Mary was given two exciting and wonderful news, one of her being chosen to be the mother of the long awaited Messiah, and the other, the incredulous news that her dear cousin Elizabeth, in her old age was six months pregnant! Her excitement knew no bounds and she immediately forgetting her own pregnancy, hastens to visit her cousin whom she knows would need help. How thoughtful and self-giving must Mary have been at that tender age, to think of another's need at a crucial time in her own life. She stayed with Elizabeth to render her services for three months until her delivery.

Which of us does not like visitors, especially, from relatives who visit after a long time? Well, Elizabeth too, was happy and excited to receive a visit from her cousin Mary and especially at a time when she needed help most, in her sixth month of pregnancy when perhaps the baby's weight and she age, was weighing her down. For as soon as she heard Mary's greeting, the child in her womb leapt with joy and she exclaimed the second part of the **HAIL MARY**, exalting and praising Mary, "of all women you are the most blessed and blessed is the fruit of your womb" (Lk 1:42). We see here, that the destinies of John the Baptist and Jesus were entwined from then on. For the baby John, not only leapt for joy at the voice of the future Queen of Heaven, but he felt and recognized the presence of God the Savior, come to visit him first! Not only was it humility on Mary's part but of Jesus as well. And that prompts Elizabeth who is also filled with the Holy Spirit, to exclaim as to why she should be honored with a visit by the mother of her Lord. Mary then proclaims the soul-stirring and magnificent **MAGNIFICAT**, glorifying the greatness of God who fulfills the promise made to the Israelites generations earlier, of sending a Savior from the house of David, whose reign would have no end and also of God's wisdom and greatness in dealing with humans, by exalting the humble and humbling the exalted!

Elizabeth and John represent the Old Testament, of Israel rejoicing at the coming of Christ the Savior, and Mary and Jesus are the fulfillment and the beginning of the New Testament. While John prepares for the coming of Jesus, Mary belongs to the realm of faith and God's work in and through her of saving humanity and as a result all generations shall call her blessed. The Church commemorates that great moment in history when humility is rewarded with greatness and turns into service, by celebrating the feast on May 31st. We should endeavour to emulate and learn that **humility is the virtue of great people!**

- *Charmaine D'Souza*



YOUTH TALK

1. PRAISING HIM IN THE SUNSHINE

“This is the day that the Lord has made, I will rejoice and be glad in Him”-Psalm 118:24

All of us have been rewarded abundantly by the Lord in these trying years; in one wonderful way or the other. Be it academic success, a fruitful relationship, a blossoming friendship, great family times or even the ownership of a mere gadget we’ve always desired - it has simply come our way because the Lord has worked in our favor.

I remember as kids, how we would so joyfully sing praise and worship songs at Mass and during catechism, with all our earnest innocence and child-like fervor. However, it isn’t the same with us anymore. Sometimes, we even grow a pint selfish; for when good things happen to us, we forget to thank the Lord, and often go as far as to think that it is either our pure luck, or entirely of our own doing.

So why praise, even when things seem to be going okay? Well, primarily because He is the sole reason! He is the lone cause for all the good things; even the bad, let alone our so-called pure ‘luck’. Praise goes hand-in-hand with thanks and since we have a lot to thank God for, we might as well praise Him!

Now we may think, what’s in it for me? Surely enough, most of us have experienced a greater degree of closeness towards God, during a time of praise and worship, which makes the former so important! Just as every relationship requires regular cementing; praising Him is the very act that can paint our lackluster spiritual wall. For people of our age and standing, the edgy beats of gospel artiste, Paul Baloche, or the likes of the band New Song, are sure to mentally uplift us and place us in a more comfortable position with God. Hence, we need not adopt the same method of praise that adults around us do.

Praise to our Yahweh, however, shouldn’t be confused with a shower of flattery. I remember the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector (**Luke 18:9-14**) who differ in their forms of praise. The former, though more religious, is less humble and praises God for making him better off than the latter - which is what God does not want. He wants us to thank Him for what He has blessed us with, not the despicable circumstances He has saved us from. Our ordinary life itself, thus, is a powerful tool of praise. Hence, author Stormie Omartian instructs us to **adopt praise as the first response to everything that happens in our lives.**

Praise isn’t just a duty - it’s more of an obligation! This fact is reiterated throughout our Scriptures - the psalmist cries out to us, “Praise the Lord my soul and do not forget how kind He is” (**Psalm 103:2**). **1Chron 16:8-36** also holds a beautiful Song of Praise which underlines to us exactly why our God is so praiseworthy. But the best of all is what Paul writes to the Thessalonians in **1Thess 5:18**, “Rejoice always, be thankful in all circumstances, this is what God wants from you in your life in union with Christ Jesus”. Moreover, Jesus, in his teachings, warns against praising Him ostentatiously in **Matt 6:5**.

What happens when we fail to praise Him? We may feel like lesser persons, unworthy of Him, and in need of His Light. Praise helps to dispel exactly this. At this point in our lives, our journey of praise should start with a realization that **His name has always been blessed and worthy of praise**, and then; we should continue to praise Him, with all the sincerity that we’ve ever known.

You can be sure that He’ll always be on the other end of the phone, so you can definitely make your call of praise anytime. And if a new kind of praise has to evolve from you, then so be it!

2. SURRENDERING WHEN IT SEEMS THE HARDEST

“Hold nothing back, but hold onto Him”

Odd as it may sound to us, **self-liberation comes with surrender to God** - and it is no easy task, as you can imagine.

However, from **Luke 22:42**, we obtain a quintessential expression of this belief - Christ was well aware of the terrifying fate that awaited Him; in His moment of weakness, He pleaded with His Father to be free from it! As little children, we learnt through catechism that Jesus died to save us. Surely, we can rely on only the Messiah to teach us this wonderful approach to survival through suffering - in other words, liberation by **surrendering to His will**.

Truly, it is hard for us to understand God’s will when we are going through something painful – we in fact feel more rebellious rather than submissive. But as always is the case, He works in ways we cannot understand and He will make a way for us. His love is a surreal love, which is beyond human comprehension, as evident in **Ephesians 3:19** - “Yes, may you come to know His love, although it can never be fully known and so be completely filled with the nature of God.”

Just as Christ is an example for us to follow, so are His actions of surrender. Our suffering in totality can never amount to His. Yet in our moments of weakness, we very easily forget that these very moments were all planned by Him to teach us His own lessons; in ways we cannot fathom. We are sometimes motivated to think that He no longer cares, but that’s exactly what He does. He cares for us all the time but believing in this fact is something all youth struggle with, at one point in our lives or the other.

And so it calls for **Waiting on the Lord**. After all, surrender comes with patience - a virtue, that again, the youth of our fast-paced world struggle with. Needless to say, God slowed down for us, hence, so can we! He slows down every time - to individually inspect us, effectively evaluate us and spiritually nourish us.

Our Savior’s story of surrender is the greatest of all time. But equally inspiring is the one that circles the Book of Job. A true pillar of unwavering faith, Job doesn’t question God’s ways, and doesn’t blame God despite losing everything. In fact he says in **Job 2:10**- “When God sends us something good, we welcome it. How can we complain when He sends us trouble?” Job thus elucidates to us that - **every relationship comes with a price**, likewise, our relationship with God.

It never hurts to be close to the Lord, and yet, this is not an assurance that our troubles will be over. Troubles in life are inevitable, just as the drops of water in the sea. It is truly God’s impalpable way of making His presence known. He wants us to rush to Him broken, so that unto Him only can we truly be made whole.

In effect, when we find it tough to surrender, given the situations of our young lives, we must not look further for a better example than Christ - who enables us to surrender well. For Christ Himself asserts His priority in submission in **John 6:3** - “For I have come down from Heaven, not to do My own will, but of the One who sent Me.

- *Melanie D’Souza*



PRAY THE 6.30A.M CALL DAILY

MIPC'S CONTRIBUTION FOR MY WALK IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

(This speech was delivered at the MIPC's Elocution Competition)

Jesus is Lord now and forever, now and forever Jesus is Lord!

Respected judges, friends and MIPC-ites a very good evening to you all. Yes, I am going to talk on MIPC's contribution for my walk in the spirit. For the information of the judges what I said at the beginning is MIPC's victory call which is usually given at the end of the prayer meeting. couple of years ago I used to wait for this call to run out of this hall if there was no children's meeting.

MIPC or the Mary Immaculate Praise Community is not new to me, from the infancy till now I grew up with this community. Mother Mary's role has a great impact on my life. My mother says if I was born alive it's because of mother Mary's intercession and I should be indebted to her. And this community bearing her name has a special place in my life.

This community has contributed immensely for my growth as a child of God. It's not that I wasn't taught to pray at home, I learned to pray on my parents lap but I learnt to Praise God in a deeper way and joyfully in this community. In fact, Praise became more meaningful to me when I praised the living God with my brothers and sisters in the community.

The many retreats, seminars and days with the Lord over the years have helped me immensely. I not only learned new things but also new values which I could apply in my daily life.

Jesus would not have been in the first place of my life and The Holy Spirit would have been not as close as now if the MIPC would not have been there in my life. I can proudly say that over the years the Holy Spirit has become my best and truest friend. In times of need I know I can count on Him.

The contribution of MIPC for my daily prayer life is enormous. I learned to surrender my entire day to the Lordship of Jesus by praying in the morning. Of course at first my parents used to force me to pray and to read the Word of God, The first question in the morning from my Mom was Noel did you Pray? Did you read the Word of God? But now I have realized the importance of personal prayer and reading the Word of God which gives a lot of strength. It is a book full of promises, and it was taught here in MIPC how to claim these promises. You know when I was playing the clusters representing my school last month, it so happened that though I was confident I lost first two games, and the third game was the decider, I prayed Lord I need your help and the Scripture verse Is. 41:10 came to my mind "Fear not, I am with You, I am your God, I will help you and strengthen you and uphold you in my victorious right hand" and not to say, the remaining three games I won, so that's how I could represent my school in the Nationals.

Another greatest blessings of MIPC is the youth meeting. Every month we have this meeting and here we are taught, in this world of temptations how to cling to Jesus and how we can be on a right path.

I also learnt the power of intercession here. I saw my parents praying for the needs of others so I believe all others also doing the same which is the greatest gift we can give to each other. So I know whenever I am in need of prayer I can come running to anyone in this community.

I thank God for this wonderful loving Community which taught me that Lord Jesus is the vine and if I don't belong to Him I will be like a dry branch which is of no use and will be cut off.

Thank you MIPC for your contribution for my walk with the Holy Spirit and I pray, Lord keep Mary Immaculate Praise Community ever faithful to you and bless all those who worked for it in the past, present and in the future. Long live MIPC.

- *Noel Rasquinha*



A WINDOW THROUGH THE PAST WEEKS!

Sharing on **11/4/2012** by Bro. Felix Menezes :

Going a step ahead – Quality of a disciple of Jesus.

As we read in the Gospel of Mathew 26:36-46, our Lord Jesus even when he was in agony set an example of a leader and a shepherd. He really went ahead of the disciples, that is Peter and two sons of Zebedee. During his time of Agony, he spent time with His Father seeking His Will and not working out any strategy to save himself from coming trials. We as disciples of Jesus, have lot of strategies at work, home, family, future etc and we work towards achieving what we

desire or expected by our family and employers by utilizing all available resources. How about our Spiritual life and walk with the Lord? What is our strategy, aim, vision, mission and how and when do we measure our performance? What is our yardstick? Do we compare ourselves to others and consider that we are better or do we compare ourselves to our Lord and Master and try to grow in His image and likeness and follow Him closely and not the world? Discipleship is a process and we need to get ourselves evolved with the Word of God and discern the promptings of the Holy Spirit we wait on the Lord like Jesus himself did at Gethsemane? As a disciple we need to learn continuously. As we have moved out of the crowd and moved towards Jesus, saved by Jesus, we ought to make Jesus our Lord and Master in order to be His disciples. Since we are weak and constantly attacked from all sides, we need to renew ourselves daily and remain under God's grace and mercy. As human we are, let us never give up in trying to be our Lord Jesus' disciples in our daily small little ways at home, office and in the community.

18th April 2012, was a heartwarming day, when the MIPC members got together for a fellowship meal. There was plenty of sharing and caring. Members brought in dishes prepared with love. The evening began with Sr. Carmen Fernandes leading the Community to praise, thanks and worship to our loving God through melodious hymns and music. Bro. Joaquim lifted a prayer for the community and the Grace before Meals was recited. The food was delicious and sumptuous. The evening was wonderful with everyone fellowshiping with one another. Thank you Lord for the blessings you shower upon our Community.

On 26th April 2012, the Night Vigil was conducted by Bro. Keith Netto along with members from the Greeter's Ministry. It was a spirit filled evening with Sis. Ivy leading us in Praise, Sr. Regina lead us in Thanksgiving and Sis. Flavia lead us to Worship our living God, all this was done through prayers and songs. The night continued with Bro. Keith sharing the Word which was on topics that we all encounter sometimes in our life i.e. FEAR and ANGER. He went on communicating to us that if we are resurrected people, then why don't we look it and act it. He then explained the topic and the simple reason, being FEAR. Just as darkness is absence of light, similarly fear is the absence of love. He quoted scripture as below for deeper understanding and encouragement.

“There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment and the one who fears is not perfected in love.” 1 JOHN4,18

How do we get rid of our fear?

“Not that I complain of want; for I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and want. I can do all things in him who strengthens me Philippians 4,11-13

He then teamed up with 2 other members and they did a short narration skit on Anger. After the narration a few questions that were put forth gave us time to reflect on similar areas in our personal life.

Was it he or she who made you angry or what they said or did? Was it the person, words or action of the person that made you angry, or was it really the manner in which you responded? Was it your wife or husband who made you angry or her nagging or his drinking or infidelity? Or was it really the way you responded?

His closing note was, we need to change our reaction and we will see that no one in this whole world, no action or non-action, no event or things will ever be able to have a hold on us. We will be all free from anger & filled with love for one another. You will always be on top of the world!



NEW HYMN FOR THE MONTH

MIGHTY TO SAVE

Everyone needs compassion
Love that's never failing
Let mercy fall on me
Everyone needs forgiveness
The kindness of a Saviour
The hope of nations

(Chorus)

Saviour, He can move the mountains
My God is mighty to save
He is mighty to save
Forever author of salvation
He rose and conquered the grave
Jesus conquered the grave

So take me as You find me
All my fears and failures
Fill my life again
I give my life to follow
Everything I believe in
Now I surrender

(repeat Chorus)

Shine Your light and
Let the whole world see
We're singing
For the glory of the risen King
Jesus
Shine Your light and
Let the whole world see
We're singing
For the glory of the risen King

(repeat Chorus x 2)

Shine Your light and
Let the whole world see
We're singing
For the glory of the risen King
Jesus
Shine Your light and
Let the whole world see
We're singing
For the glory of the risen King



MIPC Prayer Meeting: Every Wednesday at 8:00 pm in the Parish Hall.

General Intercessory Meeting: Last Monday of every month at 8:00 pm.

Community Mass: Every Friday at 9.00 a.m. except the last Friday of the month.

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