



*“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 2013: “LIVE BY FAITH” *Romans 1:17***

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### THEME FOR THE YEAR 2013 LIVE BY FAITH – ROM 1:17

The term ‘**FAITH**’ is so important and crucial to Christian living that the Catholic Church deemed it fitting and essential to give her children real solid teaching to learn more and to grow in this area without which the entire Christian life is meaningless. Thanks

to God for this inspiration due to which we will be studying different aspects of Faith.

For us here at the Mary Immaculate Praise Community the Lord has given the theme – **LIVE BY FAITH – *Rom 1:17***. For those of us who are already living our life of faith **it is a challenge** to see if faith is alive in every area of our life. If we have not started at all, it **is a calling** for us to do it immediately without any further delay. Christian Faith is not composed of feelings, rather it is the decision of the heart to put God first and live according to his Word. *Faith is the assurance of the things hoped for, the evidence of the things not seen – Heb 11:1*. Therefore, faith is such an essential part of a Christian’s life, that it should be alive in us all the time irrespective of feelings, moods, seasons or circumstances.

### Faith for salvation:

By his **Revelation**, “the invisible God, from the fullness of his love, addresses men as his friends, and moves among them, in order to invite and

receive them into his own company.” **The adequate response to this invitation is faith.** (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, CCC # 142*).

By **faith**, man completely submits his intellect and his will to God. With his whole being, man gives his assent to God the Revealer. Sacred Scripture calls this **human response to God**, the author of revelation, “the obedience of faith.” (*CCC # 143*)

God is making the **revelation** (offering the eternal life and friendship) and man in faith submits freely to the **Word** that has been heard. Abraham is the best example in the Old Testament whose response to God is noteworthy. In the New Testament we have the example of Mary who is the perfect example of the best human response to God. You and I too are the examples of those who responded to God in faith. But can our faith be likened to those heroes of faith in the scriptures who pleased God with their lives of faith as mentioned in *Heb 11:1*.

Faith is a **personal adherence** of the whole man to God who reveals himself. It involves an **assent of the intellect and will** to the self-revelation God has made through his deeds and words (*CCC # 176*). Though it is a personal response, it is possible not by our flesh and blood but only by the power and grace of the Holy Spirit because primarily “faith is a gift from God, a supernatural virtue infused by him” (*CCC # 153*) and God alone can make it easy for us to accept and believe the truth.

The necessity of faith is best explained in these lines: “Believing in Jesus Christ and in the One who sent him for our salvation is necessary for obtaining that salvation. Since without faith it is impossible to please God and to attain to the fellowship of his sons, **therefore without faith no one has ever attained justification, nor will anyone obtain eternal life but he who endures to the end**” (*CCC # 161*).

### **Lesson from Mk 9:24**

With this light we can understand better what the father of the boy with a dumb spirit said – *“I do have faith. Help the little faith I have”* – *Mk 9:24*. Here the issue is not whether Jesus can cure the boy, but whether the father of the boy is willing to believe it. God’s omnipotent power is more than sufficient for the healing, but it must be sought with faith and prayer.

Therefore, the father, who struggles with “unbelief”, pleads Jesus to strengthen his weak faith. Whenever we find it difficult to believe in the omnipotent power of God to deliver from any situation in life, the best prayer we can make is: “I do have faith. Help the little faith I have”

### **Are you a strong link in the great chain**

Though faith is a personal act – the free human response to God’s initiative, it is not an isolated act. No one can believe alone, just as no one can live alone. We receive faith from God as a gift and should hand it on to others. This is church’s mission. Therefore, we teach our children what is Christian faith. We are called to share our faith even with others. That is why **“each believer is thus a link in the great chain of believers. I cannot believe without being carried by the faith of others, and by my faith I help support others in the faith”** (CCC # 166). What a great responsibility we have, to grow in faith not only for our own sake but also for the sake of our family, friends and brothers and sisters in the Lord. I was greatly delighted and edified when I realized that as a believer, I am a link in the great chain of believers. Just as it is a privilege to be a link in this great chain, it is also a great challenge for you and me to see how strong is this link in the great chain. If it is a weak link, it is time we strengthen it so that the great chain of believers may growing ever strong. May the Lord make each of us a strong link in this great chain of believers.

*- Harry Rasquinha*

### **TESTIMONY**

During our recent visit to India, I was advised to do the Cataract operation on both of my eyes. On visiting the Doctor, I was told that my eyesight was very bad (only 30%) and if neglected further I would lose it completely. While going to the doctor I was already nervous and after hearing what the doctor said I was totally shattered. However, in my heart I trusted in God and I knew He would not forsake me. My husband and I started praying. We requested my family and the Intercessory Ministry of our MIPC to pray for the success of my eye operation. The operation took place on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> December 2012 as planned. Many were praying

for me and I could feel the prayer support of so many brothers and sisters in the Lord. Now, I would like to thank God for taking care of me and restoring my eye sight completely. **For me it is a great miracle the Lord worked in my life. Praise the Lord!**

- *Milly Concessao*

## **MIPC - 31<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL DAY CELEBRATION**

The 8<sup>th</sup> of February, 2013, saw the celebration of the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Day of our close-knit blessed Mary Immaculate Praise Community, MIPC. After a grace filled 5:30 pm thanksgiving mass at Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Ruwi, the MIPC members geared themselves up for the exciting festivities that were to be held in the Church Parish Hall.

Taking charge of the evening, the Master of Ceremonies, Brother Paul Sujeet called on all to take their seats and be ready for a session of prayer. Brother Vernon led the gathering into the Praise and Worship session with spiritually uplifting hymns, while our Servant Leader, Brother Harry, beautifully inaugurated the event with his meaningful welcome speech with the underlying message to grow in our spiritual life with every passing year. Delicious snacks, tea and coffee were then served, after the enlightened talk by Rev. Fr. Wilson Rumao, on how to grow deep in one's faith.

The performances of the evening were then kick started by the Junior (I) Children's Ministry, with their peppy action song, "Shake it up", which urged us to open our hearts, to allow Jesus to scorch us with the burning desire of faith and to let Him work the individual recipes that He has for each one of us. The underlying message was that this can only be achieved by shaking ourselves up, and stirring up a hunger in our hearts for Him. The extremely talented children continued to display their faculties by enacting a short skit on Obedience. With their acting talents, they were able to successfully reiterate the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment, "**Honour your father and mother**" and *Eph. 6:1*, "**Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right**" in the minds of every MIPC child present. They also sang two songs on obedience, rightly in tune with the theme.

Meanwhile, Brother Godfrey got the audience to put their thinking caps on as he quizzed them with a few Bible trivia questions. Brother Paul Sujeet entertained the audience with his witty jokes and compeering flair, adding charm to the evening.

The Youth Ministry then contributed their talents to the event, by performing three thought provoking songs, Don Moen's "Great Things", Paul Baloche's "The Same Love" and "Break Open the Sky". The first song reminded us about the wonderful, amazing and magnificent things that the Lord has done for us, for which we must never cease to proclaim His greatness and that we should continue to rejoice in our Saviour, shouting aloud His holy name. The second song struck a chord about God's love for us, sending His only begotten son to redeem us from sins, setting us free from captivity and that He is calling all of us by name to the cross. The Senior Children Ministry kids danced to the third song, and through their moves, advocated us to call out to Jesus and defy gravity, break open the sky to reach out to Him, looking eagerly for His return. This message was emphasized through an informative skit enacted by them, inspiring all teenagers to join the Youth Prayer Group, in order to have a fruitful and spiritual relationship with God.

The Junior (II) Children Ministry then beautifully finished off the series of performances for the evening, by gracefully dancing to a Marathi Song that reminded the audience that Jesus is our Good Shepherd, always leading His flock on the right track.

The celebrations continued with Brother Freddie conducting a session of spot questions, which really made every one think awhile for the correct answers. After giving out a few spot prizes, Brothers Mario and Ryan conducted the housie- tombola that involved the active participation of everyone. This event was followed by the prize distribution ceremony for the winners. As all the performances had come to an end, Brother Philip delivered the 'Vote of Thanks' and Brother Ken said the 'Grace before Meal' Then all the gathering advanced towards the delicious buffet dinner, served in generous quantities by smiling and enthusiastic volunteers.

Thus the day's celebrations concluded with great pomp, leaving smiles on the faces of everyone. We were all left positively dazzled with the exhilarating performances put up by the children and youth of MIPC. We truly appreciate the commendable efforts by all the organizers, the various ministries and everyone else who were actively involved in the co-ordination of this celebration. We faithfully look forward to participate in our next year's celebration.

*-Elaine D'souza*

## **WINDOW THROUGH THE PAST WEEKS!**

### **02 Jan. 2013 – Bro. Ryan Pinto – Feed Your Faith**

How does one Feed one's Faith?... by starving one's Doubts to Death. An acronym to assist would be KBRG that stands for '**K**now' your God, '**B**elieve' His Word, '**R**eceive' His grace & mercy and '**G**ive' in service and love.

In the parable of the Unforgiving Servant - **Matt 18:23**, in spite of the master cancelling the huge debt in full, the servant could not do likewise with his fellow servant. Why? Because he didn't **know** his hard task master and so could not **believe** when he actually cancelled the debt, consequently he did not **receive** the forgiveness and so could not **give** freedom from debt to his fellow servant. His pride and the need to look good before his master kept his focus on himself rather than on his master.

Let's ask ourselves: Why do we find it such a challenge to **give** in God's Kingdom? To forgive someone for a hurt they caused us, to minister to another, to witness for God, to bear fruit...? Because we don't as yet **know** our God, **believe** His Word, **receive** His Grace & Mercy – in order to **give**. We let the blocks of our doubt, guilt, shame, pride etc. ruin our chances of doing so.

Jesus **knew** His Father intimately and **believed** in Him totally and so He received the strength and wisdom to **give** during His ministry on earth.

So did Mother Mary; surrendering totally to the will of God, she received the honor of the most favoured and so could give herself totally to bring to fulfilment the plan of salvation. It is in the final act of Giving that Knowing, Believing and Receiving finds its true meaning.

### **09 Jan. 2013 – Bro. Harry Rasquinha**

The Theme for the Year 2013 – **LIVE BY FAITH** – *Rom 1:17* was introduced to the community on 9<sup>th</sup> Jan, 2013. This is the shortened version of the verse - the righteous live by faith. Three main points were explained.

**1. How can we obtain/possess faith-** Faith comes from hearing the word of God – *Rom 10:17*. The word of God that we read and meditate goes into our heart and produces faith. All other books can give us information but for transformation and faith we need to go to the Holy Bible.

**2. How do we become righteous -** The word of God we receive enables us to receive the person of Jesus into our heart. The outward expression of the profession of faith that we make is the sign of the inward commitment of our heart and life to the Lordship of Jesus – *Rom 10:9-10*. No other person or thing other than Jesus can make us righteous (saving us by cleansing from sins).

**3. How do the righteous live by faith -** by being rooted in him (Christ), by building our lives on him and by being established by the faith that we received. We are called to live our whole life in this way filled with thanksgiving - *Col 2:6-7*. This is the road map for fruitful Christian life.

### **16 Jan. 2013 – Bro. Louis Ryan**

Why was Abraham called the father of faith?

1. Abraham surrendered the good of the present for the better of the future - *Gen 11*
2. He went on believing in God's purpose for him even when doors were shut in his face – *Gen 12*.

3. Allowed room for questioning God for seeking clarity in **Gen 15:8** with regards to the promise of the Lord and in **Gen 17:17** with regards to the promise of a son.
4. Abraham lived in faith this can be seen in his five good works: Giving Lot a choice to choose his land, Abraham's treatment of the king of Sodom, Abraham's hospitality to the three strangers, Abraham's concern for Sodom & Gomorrah and Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac reflected his unconditional faith in God.

There are four kinds of faith- the 4 "S"

1. Simple faith – moving in car /plane
2. Saving faith – believing in Jesus
3. Strong faith – Claim God's promises
4. Supernatural faith- Small as mustard seed e.g. Faith of Centurion **Mt 8:10**

In **Lk 17:5** the disciples made a request to Jesus to 'increase their faith' How does faith increase?

1. Through prayer - **Lk 22:3** – Jesus prayed for Peter
2. Word of God - **Rom 10:17** – If you are weak in faith it is because you are weak in the Word. Faith grows in proportion to the amount of "word time" one puts.
3. Through trials **1 Pet 1:7** ex – sickness, unanswered prayer, suffering
4. Love increases faith **Gal 5:6** - Faith is like flash light, love is the battery. More love more faith.

### **23 Jan. 2013 – Bro. Godfrey D'Souza**

Giving us further insight into the "**Live by Faith**" theme, Godfrey quoted **Heb 6:12** stating that we are saved, justified and have access to God by faith, and thereby inherit the promises. Since faith is a gift from the Holy Spirit, we have to receive and use it.

Faith is not an idea, or concept but rather a foundation, reality and a



quality. It is the key that unlocks doors, the outstretched hand of a beggar taking hold of what is offered. It is when we acknowledge the Lordship of

Jesus and follow Him in faith that things begin to happen. Examples of the Centurion (*Lk 7:7-10*) and the Canaanite Woman (*Mt 15: 21-28*), show us how to take God at His word and persevere.

Jesus himself is an example of faith which he had in the Father and exercised in working of miracles. We are also called to have the same trusting relationship as children of the heavenly Father. The Bible presents Faith as a mustard seed growing into a big tree. The Word of God strengthens our faith for as we read, we should also respond through obedience and works. **Faith without works is dead** (*Jas 2:14-26*).

Faith also gives us a deep peace and brings about a commitment and co-operation with God. Faith is a two-way relationship with God and man and is not limited to acceptance of the creed, but also manifested in fruit bearing. Trials test our faith like fire purifies gold. Our faith being far more precious than gold (*1 Pet 1: 7*), is tested, and brings manifold blessings to us and our household.

### **30 Jan. 2013 – Bro. Henry Sanjivi**

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of January, Henry continued on the theme “Faith” – emphasizing, that “**if we will**” and make an attempt, our faith will surely grow from strength to strength.

Taking a cue from *Rom 1:16-17*, he went on to explain, under what circumstances this proclamation was made. St. Paul was imprisoned in Philippi, chased out of Thessalonica, smuggled out of Beroea, laughed at in Athens and in Corinth his message was foolish to the Greek and a stumbling block to the Jews – with this background he declares that he was proud and not ashamed of the gospel. ***Such faith comes only from knowing the person and with the relationship we have. The Gospel had the power to reveal the righteousness of God.***

Examples from the Old Testament were shared – the bronze serpent had no

healing power in itself, it is with faith the Israelites saw the bronze serpent, and were healed. Couple of examples of the community members were

shared, whose rock like faith, coupled with **intimate** relationship with Jesus, resulted in mighty miracles.

We were encouraged to live like Paul, who boldly confessed (*2 Tim 4:7*) “**I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.**” The key to build rock like faith, is available for us in *Mk 9:29* - wherein our Lord Jesus says "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer." Prayer and fasting will un-lock the power to speak with authority and with conviction. The sharing was concluded with *Dan 3:17* where Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed'nego with FAITH and confidence were able to say to the King that their God is able to deliver them, even if not – they were ready to accept the sovereign will of God.

### **06 Feb. 2013 – Bro. Roman Almeida**

It was Mary's faith that opened heaven to men when she agreed to cooperate in the incarnation of the eternal word. As a tribute to her faith, Elizabeth called our lady 'blessed'. “Blessed are you that has believed, because those things shall be accomplished in you that were spoken by The Lord” (*Lk 1:45*).

Mary was blessed more by receiving the faith of Christ than by conceiving the flesh of Christ. By her magnificent faith, therefore, Mary merited to become "a light to all the faithful, and the "Queen of the true faith". We are hence called to imitate Mary's faith.

### **20 Feb. 2013 – Bro. Philip Balfour**

What is Faith?? The dictionary defines Faith as, “Unquestioned belief that does not require proof or evidence.” The Holy Bible defines Faith as, “**To have Faith is to be sure of the things we hope for, to be certain of the things we cannot see.**” (*Heb.11:1*). When we see the two meanings of Faith, God is asking us to place all our trust in Him alone. Unless we give our lives and will to Jesus it is not possible to have complete faith in Him.

## **FAITH = Forsaking All I Take Him.**

### **27 Feb. 2013 – Bro. Freddy D'Souza**

We all know what the theme for the year is. **Rom 1:17 - LIVE BY FAITH.** We are fortunate that the church too has declared this year as the year of faith. Faith means different things to different people.

1. Faith can refer to our trust in another person because of their abilities. ie: I have complete faith in my doctor.
2. Faith can refer to extreme self reliance. i.e. I have complete faith in my own abilities.
3. Faith can be an absolute end in itself. i.e. I have faith in faith.
4. Faith can refer to our trust in the divine i.e. I have complete faith in God.
5. Faith can refer to our religious beliefs i.e. I profess the catholic faith.

The first 3 examples are worldly; we are placing our trust in mere human beings. Satan works cunningly and makes us look inwards and not upwards. It's great if we study **Heb. 11** this year. The Bible teaches that our lives will remain unproductive unless we begin to practice what we believe. We may combine large amounts of reading, prayer, and church going but if we lack the essential of faith, we will not experience any significant spiritual growth.

No matter how small and insufficient our faith is, let us keep on praying. Remember it is the object of our faith that is important. In life's uncertainty faith must focus on GOD and not on self.

### **BIBLE BOOK QUIZ**

*There are thirty books of the Bible hidden in the following paragraphs. See if you can spot them. Put your answers with your names in the all purpose box by 15<sup>th</sup> May 2013.*

This is a most remarkable puzzle. It was found by a gentleman in an airplane seat pocket, on a flight from Los Angeles to Honolulu, keeping him occupied for hours. He enjoyed it so much that he passed it on to

some friends. One friend from Illinois worked on this while fishing from his john-boat. Another friend studied it while playing his banjo. Elaine Taylor, a columnist friend, was so intrigued by it, she mentioned it in her weekly newspaper column.

Another friend, judges the job of solving this puzzle so involving that she brews a cup of tea to help her nerves. There will be some names that are really easy to spot. That's a fact. Some people, however will soon find themselves in a jam, especially since the books are not necessarily capitalized. Truthfully, from answers we get, we are forced to admit it usually takes a minister or scholar to see some of them at the worst. Research has shown something in our genes is responsible for the difficulty we have in seeing the books in this paragraph. During a recent fund-raising event which featured this puzzle, the Alpha Delta Phi-Lemonade booth set a new sales record.

The local paper, the Chronicle, surveyed over 200 patrons who reported that this puzzle was one of the most difficult they had ever seen. As Daniel Humana humbly puts it, "the books are all right here in plain view hidden from sight." Those able to find all of them will hear great lamentations from those who have to be shown. One revelation that may help is that books Timothy and Samuel may occur without their numbers. Also, keep in mind that punctuation and spaces in the middle are normal. A chipper attitude will help you to compete really well against those who claim to know the answers. Remember there is no need for a mad exodus, there really are 30 books of the Bible lurking somewhere in this paragraph waiting to be found.

### PRAY THE 6.30 AM CALL



***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.***