





"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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The Theme for 2012

Those of us who sincerely sought the Lord for a `Theme' for the new year truly have to thank Him when He led to choose the Theme for the year – 2012 - "FRUIT-BEARING DISCIPLE" Jn 15:8.

Last year the Lord taught us that we all need to `walk by the spirit' and not 'by the flesh'. The person who has taken his lessons seriously on how to walk by God's Spirit can understand easily what it means to be a Fruit-Bearing Disciple.

Who is a disciple?

First, a disciple is a person who submits himself to a life of discipline. Without discipline one cannot achieve anything in life.

Is there that degree of discipline in my life that is required of a disciple? Having a mere wish to be a disciple is of no use unless it is backed by a strong desire to submit oneself to a life of discipline.

Secondly a disciple is a person who has the desire to be like his master in talk, walk and actions. Being a "true copy" of the master should be a passion for the disciple. This calls for knowing the master fully and completely. This takes place through the prayerful study of God's word and through the application of God's word in our life. Spending time with the Lord makes us more and more like him. It is very helpful to pray to the Holy Spirit and say "dear Holy Spirit, make me more and more like Jesus ". It is nice to ask oneself the question:

"Do I really have the desire to be like my master?" It is good to ask oneself often the question — how much have I become like my Lord? Or even better to say: "Lord, show me the areas in my life where I am still my old self'.

Thirdly, This person will stand for the master and his values at all times and in any circumstance. A person who loves the master dearly will definitely stand for him anywhere, come what may. The question I need to ask is —"do I love the master dearly?" "Love" is the most important character of a disciple. If a person loves the master enough, being his disciple is not very difficult.

Fruit-bearing disciple:

Every Christian is called to be a disciple of Christ our Lord. How good a disciple, is determined by the fruit he or she bears. I don't think there is any other yard stick to measure the type or the quality of a disciple. A person does not become a disciple of Christ by just having a Christian name. When a person studies God's word and allows himself/herself to be led by God's Spirit he or she is on the path to become a disciple.

The Lord wants us to be disciples who bear fruit. Bearing fruit takes place when a plant/tree/person reaches maturity. The Lord wants us to be mature Christians, (mature disciples) so that we can bear fruit. Though every Christian is called to be a disciple, scripture exhorts us be 'fruit-bearing disciples' — **Jn. 15:8** because this brings glory to God. If we visualize a paddy field or any green crop, it is very pleasant to the eyes. It brings a great deal of joy to the owner of the field.

God our father is glorified when we bear fruit. Just as the parent rejoices at the achievements of his/her child in studies or sports, our father in heaven feels so happy when his child (disciple) brings glory to him by bearing fruit.

What type of fruit: A Christian is expected to bear such fruit that brings glory to God our Father. In a simple way we can understand this as being people whose words, deeds and life can make an impact in another person's life. Our Lord Jesus has shown us a very easy way. He said "Be the salt of the earth" — Mt 5:13. We are called to bring taste to our neighbor's life. Being the light of the world is another practical thing Jesus talks about — Mt 5:14-15. Jesus attaches great value to bringing light into someone's life. When our life is full of Jesus, His light and love in us can't be hidden from others. It will be noticed and experienced by others.

Naturally, they will be attracted towards Jesus who is alive in us. That is why our master says "let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."- Mt 5:16.

In our families, homes, schools and work places we can be the salt and light to those around us. If we start in a small way the Lord will lead us to greater heights. He will show us new meaning of bearing fruit. If we show that we are faithful in small things he will lead us to something greater.

Dear brother, dear sister, if we are, already his faithful disciples who are bearing much fruit, the Lord is calling us to remain steadfast and continue bearing even more good and lasting fruit. He wants us to bear more fruit just as it is explained in Lk 5:4. If not, the Lord is giving us his grace to start doing that. If we are his disciples just by name, then it is time we become his "true disciples" indeed- Jn 8:31. May the Lord enable each of us to be truly his 'FRUIT-BEARING DISCIPLES' not just for this year but for all our life.

Harry Rasquinha



Our Vision - Our Mission

Our Vision

Every religion, nation, organization, community and individual has a vision/goal in life, some have very ambitious, robust and unattainable ones, and some, complacent cold souls, have a placid and compromising goal. It is but natural; the approach to reach the desired goal successfully, one has to put the best effort forward, so that the vision/goal is achieved comprehensively.

The Mary Immaculate Praise Community, lovingly known as (MIPC), visualizes a great multitude of different nations coming to the giver of the Living Waters, the only Saviour - Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, just as the thirsty travellers come in search of the oasis in the desert, to refresh themselves.

Jeremiah 32:27 says – Behold, I am the LORD the God of all flesh; is anything too hard for me? God in His sovereign will chooses to share His visions and accomplish them, through divine human partnership. This is where the search for faithful men and women, who like Isaiah 6:8 I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me."

God can use any individual, group, community, nation to accomplish His Holy will, He has done it in the past and He can do it even today. Like the famous saying goes – God is not looking out for men and women who are able but who are available. He equips the called. –

- AM I THE ONE, GOD IS CALLING in this divine human partnership?
- AM I going to be an integral part, in the above vision coming to pass?
- Is my Yes to God, a genuine response to His call from the inner most resources of my Soul?
- Is it a privilege to be part of the vision or is it a heavy (Involuntary) boring task
- Do I have the burden/Zeal for His kingdom, and the burning desire to be used by God?

Our Mission Our mission at The Mary Immaculate Praise Community is to strive for the "Spread of His fragrance" to everyone, we come in contact with. The living water which our lord Jesus provides will become a well from within.

A prayerful planning is made to accomplish this vision, a detailed strategy is drawn, and the community is motivated, encouraged and educated, time and again to fulfill God's vision for His people. Although sadly, most of us tend to take Gods dictates and commands lightly.

"As a Christ-centered community, aided by the intercession of our Patroness Mother Mary, MIPC aims to develop faith and character to interiorize oneself first, and then to be a light within the family, the local Parish, at workplace and ultimately to influence the world through love and service." (Math 28:19)

We believe there is a need for transformational change in our communities. We are called to be the salt of the earth and light in this dark world. Within the framework of its mission, MIPC constantly strives to fulfill the given objectives:

- a) To cultivate in each member, an awareness of God and His will and a complete dedication to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
- b) To remain committed to our calling, build oneself, by joining a cell/ministry, so that we fellowship more often, with likeminded people.
- c) To be the light in the Parish and to be the leaven in the society.

Our mission is to help His faithful to become more:

- Spiritually passionate;
- Uncompromisingly Catholic Christian
- And to lead a 24 x 7 Christian life without hypocrisy

We believe that every member (Iyour name) can be instrumental in achieving the vision/goal; all I have to do is to put on the mind of our Lord Jesus Christ. There are certain things; I must firmly resolve (MY WILL COMES TO PLAY)

- Pray extra everyday (Consistently no matter what)
- Read the Bible everyday at least 3 verses DAILY
- Appreciate your spouse/children/parent, at least once a day
- Thank God at least 3 times a day
- Intercede for a stranger as often as you can

MIPC being a Christ-centered community is called to develop fully our bodies, minds, souls, and spirits so that we reflect His character (which includes holiness, love, purity, justice, and mercy). One of the ways is to value people; accept differences; and to emphasize common purposes. All of us are very well aware of the powerful tool available to us Catholics. ALL of us have sufficient quality time, if we choose to re-arrange our priorities. We are more than conquerors and we can do all things in Christ who strengthens us.

I CAN DO IT – Rejoice always

Henry Sanjivi



17th February, 2012 was a golden day in the history of our MIPC or rather a "pearl" of a day, as we celebrated the 30th (pearl) anniversary of our prayer group, the Mary Immaculate Praise Community. The day started with the Holy Mass at 9 am, in the church, celebrated by our Parish Priest, Fr. Raul. The entire service was a blessed experience as he drew parallels between the Gospel of the day on the healing of the paralytic (Mark 2: 1-12) and the role of the MIPC in the parish. It was only the faith of the 4 friends who lowered the paralytic down to Jesus through the roof of the house, and their intercession with our Lord on his behalf, that cured him of his affliction. The power of Intercession and Intercessory Prayer (praying for others and not one-self), can never be under-estimated and Fr. Raul said that the MIPC, with its Intercessory Ministry plays a stellar role in the Parish on this very matter. The MIPC choir led the congregation in praising our loving God through song and music throughout; and the Offertory procession was also gracefully conducted by the MIPC members, as were the readings.

After the Mass, we all moved to the Parish Hall, where a hearty breakfast was served, and then the young and dashing MCs for the day, Andrew Menezes and Noel Rasquinha took over the show. They

began by welcoming all as gathered to this momentous occasion and then invited Bro. Vernon Fernandes on the stage to lead us in a Praise and Worship session. Then our Servant Leader, Bro. Harry Rasquinha gave the welcome address, followed by the lighting of the inaugural lamp, by Fr. Raul along with Bros. Harry, Philip, Henry and Godfrey.

The MCs then called on our dearest and ever smiling raconteur, Bro. Henry Sanjivi, to narrate to the gathered audience, on the very founding and history of the MIPC. He shared how it actually came about some 30 years ago due to the dedication and persevering faith of those 5-6 pioneering brothers, who just wanted to come together and praise God and pray for our parish, and how it evolved into the dynamic and vibrant prayer group that we have today. One could see so many of the older members in the audience, lose themselves in their memories of yesteryear and transport themselves back into the past, as they fondly recalled the early days of the MIPC. It was also no surprise to learn that almost the all the current denominational prayer groups in our parish today were born out of the MIPC itself. No wonder then that everybody refers to the MIPC as the "mother" prayer group of the parish of Sts. Peter and Paul!

Fr. Raul gave us the key note address, and he said something so very profound. On the occasion of our 30" anniversary, he reminded us of the life of our Lord Jesus, who after 30 years on this earth, started His public ministry and carried on for the next 3 years, before He made the supreme sacrifice for us all. Similarly, Fr. Raul said that the MIPC has completed 30 years since its birth, and so should now start its "real" mission in the parish and in Oman, that of taking God's Word out to all. We may surely face many hardships and pains on this journey but we should always remember our Lord and the sufferings He bore for our sake. So, as Fr. Raul put it, we must be prepared for this call, and stride forward boldly now, and he forecast much greater things happening in the life of MIPC thereafter. Then there was the cutting of the 30th anniversary cake (an exquisite creation by Val and Mel Cakes) by Fr. Raul and Bro. Harry, and the distribution of the same. This was accompanied by the reading of congratulatory messages from MIPC's well wishers and loved ones, from near and far, by Bros. Lawrence, Mario, Eugene, Louis and Xavier.

With the formal part of the morning now complete, the 2 debonair MCs announced the start of the fun and festivities and the first item was a rendering of the unique 30th anniversary MIPC theme song, composed by Bro. Harry especially for this occasion, and sung with full fervor by the MIPC teenagers. Then it was the turn of the little ones with an action song, "Remember the Lord", put together by the musical duo of Ryan and Ann Pinto, with choreography by Sister Natalie. The next time the curtains rose, we were in for a very special surprise item by the talented couple, Maria and Henry Sanjivi, that had the audience guessing all along, as Sister Maria's hands were dancing to one tune, but her body seemed almost dwarf-like, and the accompanying legs that went with the body seemed to have a life of their own! The next number was a "Bible Action Song" by the elder children, arranged by Ryan and Ann, followed by a mime act by Teena Joseph and her troupe. This was followed by a dance and action song, "Your Eyes", by Belinda and Lanston.

To bring up the end of the group items for the afternoon, we had the "University in Diversity" tableau, put together by Sister Yamitha, that was set on the theme song, "One Body and One Spirit", composed by Bro. Apolinaris D'souza, and sung live by the choir, led by Bro. Renato. We got to see some very lively acting by the MIPC couples, representing various regions of India and abroad, who were dressed for the occasion in their native costume, and accompanied by impromptu dialogues in their native tongues, they had the audience in splits, but also very effectively conveyed the message that though we may be from different parts of the world and speak many different languages, ultimately we are all united as one in the Body of Christ. A musical, "Love in any Language" was then performed by the Youth group, which was enjoyed by everyone.

Bro. Godfrey took the stage soon after with an "MIPC Quiz", following which the dance floor was thrown open for all. As it was getting near lunchtime, we were privileged to have the Grace said by a visiting religious sister, Mother Benedicta (of the order of St. Charles Borromeo), and then the dancing continued with some line dancing too, while a delicious lunch was served. Mementoes for this special day were also distributed to one and all.

Post-lunch, Bros. Freddy and Xavier conducted an exciting game of Housie with great prizes, including air tickets Mct-Mum-Mct and Mct-Salalah. To close out the evening, Bro. Felix Menezes led us all in a thanksgiving prayer and proposed the vote of thanks to the sponsors, organizers, well-wishers and all who had contributed in some way or another to make this day such a grand success.



Living the Word and Bearing Much Fruit

By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, so you will be My Disciples. (Jn15:8). Bearing fruit includes all a Christian does to the Glory of God.

He who has the wisdom of God is full of good fruit `But the wisdom that is from above is first pure and then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruit without partiality and without hypocrisy. Fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who cultivate peace. (James.3:17, 18.) John the Baptist emphasized the necessity of fruitfulness. He warned unrighteous Jews who trusted in their lineage for salvation: "And even now the axe is laid to the root of trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. (Lk.3:9) When people asked: "What shall we do then," he told them to share their abundance with the needy. He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none, who has food, let him do likewise. (Lk.3:10, 11)

Jesus tells His followers: He who abides in Me and I in him, bears much fruit, for without Me you can do nothing. (Jn15:4,5).

Paul prayed that the Colossians might, "have a walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God." (Co1.1:10) Through every good work a disciple bears fruit to the Glory of God. Paul told Titus: "And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs that they may not be unfruitful." (Titus.3:14). A disciple bears fruit by doing good deeds and helping those in need.

Our youth of today are the evangelists of tomorrow.

We must transform our teens from spiritual consumers to world transformers. We need to find ways to evangelize young people by proclaiming the gospel so that the teens will respond and come to conversion to Christ and the Church. We need to help teens to bear spiritual fruit by taking on the mission of the Church and becoming leaders in evangelization and service.

"Be doers of the Word and not merely leaders who deceive themselves". (James 1:22)

Today let us make a firm decision to be doers and decide ways to serve God among teens and our neighbours and thus bear abundant fruit for the lord by living the word.



30 ROSARIES

To mark the 30 grace-filled years of the MIPC, the core team encouraged the community to offer a bouquet of 30 Rosaries by 17th Feb 2012. I was skeptical about it. However, once I started, it became a blessed reality.

VOW! It's wonderful that many brothers and sisters said 30 Rosaries in a week. For me it was a wonderful experience too. Brother Harry and Brother Henry encouraged us to pray these Rosaries. I thought to myself how would it be possible for me, since it was with great difficulty I would finish 2 Rosaries on any given day. But I started with confidence and prayed to Mother Mary for her intercession. Everyday reciting this happily, it became a practice and gave me so much peace and finally I managed to accomplish it.

Blessed Virgin Mother said to St. Dominic, "One Day through the Rosary & Scapular I will save the world". Yes, I got the hope that Mother Mary is, was and shall be always with us in all our difficult moments; helping and protecting us. Now I do not find it difficult any more to say my Rosary. That is a blessing from my Mother.

I thank you Lord for all our brothers & sisters in this Community (M.I.P.C.) for their support and prayers. Nothing is impossible if we pray and practice. "PRAISE THE LORD"!

Flavy Lewis



Musings

- 1. Prayer is not a "spare wheel" that you pull out when in trouble, but it is a "steering wheel" that directs the right path throughout.
- 2. When GOD solves your problems, you have faith in HIS abilities; when GOD doesn't solve your problems HE has faith in your abilities.
- 3. A blind person asked St. Anthony: "Can there be anything worse than losing eye sight?" He replied: "Yes, losing your vision!"
- 4. When you pray for others, God listens to you and blesses them, and sometimes, when you are safe and happy, remember that someone has prayed for you.
- 5. Worrying does not take away tomorrow's Troubles; it takes away today's PEACE.
- 6. "The Church doesn't have a mission, as if "mission" were one among a dozen things the Catholic Church does. No, the Church is a mission, such that everything and everyone in the Church ought to be measured by what the management types would call mission-effectiveness. Pope John Paul II

7. God does not call the qualified, He qualifies the called. Jacob was a cheat, Peter was impetuous, David was an adulterer and a murderer, Jonah ran away from God, Paul persecuted the Church, Gideon was insecure, Miriam was gossip, Martha was restless, Thomas was a doubter, Sarah was impatient, Elijah was depressed, Moses stuttered, Zaccheus was short, Abraham was old and Lazarus was dead. Doesn't this mean that everyone can be a FRUIT BEARING DISCIPLE despite our individual short-comings, if only we surrender all to HIM and allow HIM to fulfill HIS plans for us.

Contributed by Richard Mascarenhas



The Carpenter

Once upon a time, two brothers who lived on adjoining farms fell into conflict. It was the first serious rift in 40 years of farming side-by-side, sharing machinery and trading labor and goods as needed without a hitch.

Then the long collaboration fell apart. It began with a small misunderstanding and it grew into a major difference and finally, it exploded into an exchange of bitter words followed by weeks of silence.

One morning there was a knock on John's door. He opened it to find a man with a carpenter's toolbox. "I 'm looking for a few days' work," he said. "Perhaps you would have a few small jobs here and there I could help with? Could I help you?"

"Yes," said the older brother. "I do have a job for you. Look across the creek at that farm. That's my neighbor. In fact, it's my younger brother! Last week there was a meadow between us. He recently took his bulldozer to the river levee and now there is a creek between us. Well, he may have done this to spite me, but I'll do him one better. See that pile of lumber by the barn? I want you to build me a fence an 8-foot fence -- so I won't need to see his place or his face anymore."

The carpenter said, "I think I understand the situation. Show me the nails and the post-hole digger and I'll be able to do a job that pleases you."

The older brother had to go to town, so he helped the carpenter get the materials ready and then he was off for the day. The carpenter worked hard all that day -measuring, sawing and nailing. About sunset when the farmer returned, the carpenter had just finished his job.

The farmer's eyes opened wide, his jaw dropped. There was no fence there at all.

It was a bridge! A bridge that stretched from one side of the creek to the other! A fine piece of work, handrails and all! And the neighbor, his younger brother, was coming toward them, his hand outstretched.

"You are quite a fellow to build this bridge after all I've said and done."

The two brothers stood at each end of the bridge, and then they met in middle, taking each other's hand. They turned to see the carpenter hoist his toolbox onto his shoulder.

"No, wait! Stay a few days. I've a lot of other projects for you," said the older brother.

"I'd love to stay on," the carpenter said, "but I have many more bridges to build."

Contributed by Richard Mascarenhas



Why Do We Shout?

A theology professor was teaching about proverbs 15:1. He asked his students, "Why do we shout in anger? Why do people shout at each other when they are upset?

The students thought for a while. One of them said, because we lose our calm, we shout. "But why shout when the other person is just next to you?" asked the professor. "Isn't it possible to speak to him or her with a soft voice? Why do you shout at a person when you are angry?"

The students gave some other answers but none satisfied the professor. Finally he explained, "When two people are angry at each other, their hearts psychologically distance themselves. To cover the distance, they must shout to be able to hear each other. The angrier they are, the stronger they will shout to hear each other through that great distance. Then the professor asked, "What happens when two people fall in love? They don't shout at each other but talk softly, why? Because their hearts are psychologically very close.

The distance between them is very small. The professor continued, "When they love each other even more, what happens? They do not speak, only whisper and they even get even closer to each other in their love. Finally they even need not whisper, they only look at each other and that's all....So next time you shout to a loved one, know that you are creating distance between your heart and that person's heart.

A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger - Proverbs – 15:1

Anonymous-Contributed by Libby Gomes



Humour

A Fatal Bet

"If any man here," shouted the temperance speaker, standing in the middle of the Bar, "can name an honest business that has been helped by this Bar, I will spend the rest of my life working for the liquor people." A man in the audience arose," I consider mine honest," he said, and it has been helped by this Bar."

What is your business?" asked the Speaker.

I, sir, replied the man, I am an undertaker.

Nuts of Glass

The employment interviewer asked him,' and where have you recently worked?" "I was a psychiatrist in a porcelain factory."

I never heard of such a job," said the interviewer. "What did you do?"

The peculiar gleam in the man's eye was in tune with his answer. "I took care of the cracked pots."

Fresh Breath

A 'nouveau riche' woman watched in great alarm as her husband was dragged spluttering from a hotel swimming pool.

"Give him some artificial respiration," someone shouted. The woman became most indignant.

"What do you mean artificial?" she cried. "We can afford the real thing."



Answers to Bible Quiz #53

1. Aaron 2. Pharaoh's Daughter 3. Jewellery 4. Ten 5. Frogs 6. Red Sea 7. Marah

There are No Winners of Bible Quiz # 53
There was only one respondent.



The Holy Alphabet

Although things are not perfect Because of trial or pain Continue in thanksgiving Do not begin to blame Even when the times are hard Fierce winds are bound to blow God is forever able Hold on to what you know Imagine life without His love Joy would cease to be Keep thanking Him for all the things Love imparts to thee Move out of 'Camp Complaining' No weapon that is known On earth can yield the power Praise can do alone Quit looking at the future Redeem the time at hand

Start every day with worship

To 'thank' is a command

Until we see Him coming

Victorious in the sky

We'll run the race with gratitude

Xalting God most high

Yes, there'll be good times and yes some will be bad, but ...

Zion waits in glory ... where none are ever sad!

Contributed by Flavia Pereira



Delicious Meat-free recipe for Lent

Marinated Mushrooms is a wonderful make-ahead recipe that's perfect on its own, part of an antipasto platter, or as an addition to a simple green salad.

Prep Time: 25 minutes / Cook Time: 15 minutes / Total Time: 40 minutes.

Ingredients:

3 cups water. 3 tablespoons lemon juice, 1 teaspoon salt, 2 (8-ounce) packages firm button mushrooms, trimmed, 1/2 cup white wine vinegar, 1 tablespoon sugar, 2 bay leaves, 2 teaspoons coriander seeds, 1/2 teaspoon peppercorns, 1/4 teaspoon celery seeds, 1/2 teaspoon seasoned salt, 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes, 2 teaspoons dried thyme leaves, 4 cloves garlic, minced, 1/2 cup minced red onion, 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil

Preparation:

In large saucepan, combine water, lemon juice, and salt and bring to a boil. Add mushrooms; bring back to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 4-5 minutes until tender. Drain mushrooms, reserving 3/4 cup of the liquid.

In same saucepan, combine reserved mushroom liquid, sugar, and vinegar. Tie the bay leaves, coriander, peppercorns, and celery seeds in a small square of cheesecloth and add to the saucepan. Add seasoned salt, pepper, thyme, and garlic and bring to a simmer. Simmer for 5-6 minutes.

Add red onion and mushrooms to saucepan and remove from heat. Let stand, uncovered, for 30 minutes. Then remove and discard cheesecloth bundle. Place mushrooms and liquid in a 4-6 cup heatproof container. Add olive oil and stir gently. Cover and refrigerate for 3 days before using, shaking the container occasionally.

Store in refrigerator up to 5 days longer. Let mushrooms stand at room temperature for 30 minutes before serving.

(Source: About corn — Contributed by Richard Mascarenhas)



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.

*For Private Circulation Only MARY IMMACULATE PRAISE COMMUNITY, P.O. BOX 1319, MUTTRAH, P.C. 114, SULTANATE OF OMAN. E-MAIL ADDRESS: oasis@mipcmuscat.org.