



“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 2010: Live By the Spirit (Gal 5:16)

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The Theme for the Year 2010

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, may the peace and the love of Christ be with each and every one of you.

First of all let us all thank our Almighty God for His countless blessings and faithfulness to our Community during the year 2009.

Year after year our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, guides and leads our prayer group MIPC with a theme enabling us to have a closer walk with Him and be a light to others around us.

Last year our Loving God blessed us with a wonderful theme “Persevere in Prayer and seek the

will of God.” Persevering in prayer is nothing but staying in communion with Jesus always, so that we leave no room for satan to tempt us. Once we are in union with Christ through our persistent prayer life, we become more and more humble and we surrender our own wills and seek His will for us. I am sure dear brothers and sisters, that we all have tried our best and have lived the theme, seeking the will of God, for each one of us in the Community.

When the time came around for us to pray for the theme for the year 2010, the

Pray the 6.30am Call Daily.

whole MIPC prayed and fasted for God's direction, for the Community, during the year 2010. The Core Team and the ex-Core Team brothers thank God and appreciate all the brothers and sisters who prayed and put in their suggestions. God will bless them for their commitment. The brothers in the Core Team and ex Core Team met and went through all the suggestions received from the Community. They prayed to God for His guidance.

Our loving God knows what we need, better than we know ourselves, and He revealed to us His will for the MIPC, our Community. "Live by the spirit of God", Gal 5:16. This is the theme for the year 2010 and His will for the Community. Our Divine Master and Saviour Jesus, asks all of us to live by His Spirit and not to gratify the desires of the flesh. He wants us, if we live in the Spirit, also to walk in the Spirit.

Romans 8:8 says that 'those who are in the flesh cannot please God'. Also 8: 6 says, 'to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace'. We read in Gal 5: 19-23 all about 'the works of the flesh and the fruits of the Spirit'. Jesus invites us to live by His Spirit and to receive the gift of His Spirit and bear the fruit of His Spirit.

This is Jesus' invitation and His command, which we cannot afford to ignore. I only pray that all of us make a firm resolution to live the theme with full commitment, during the year 2010.

My brothers in the Core Team and ex-Core Team will discern and seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit so as to help the Community to understand the theme better and to live it.

May the Spirit of God always guide us and lead us to live by His Spirit and to walk in His Spirit so that we may all live a Holy life enjoying His presence every moments of our lives.

*God Bless us all,
With love and prayers*

Eugene Das

Personal Reflections in Lent

1. On the 12th of January, 2010, an earthquake with a magnitude of 7.0 hit the country of Haiti. An estimated three million people were affected by the quake, hundreds of thousands of them dead or injured and millions left homeless. When

I heard of this tragedy, I said a silent prayer for all those affected, especially the many helpless children, who were now orphans, in the aftermath of this earthquake, and that would have normally been the end of it, as I moved on with the routine of daily life.

However, a week or so later, I was copied on a prayer request mail for Haiti. This came into my inbox at the office on a particularly busy day, and I normally would either have deleted it as spam, or just ignored it, but for some reason, I opened it and read the prayer as below:

“Heavenly Father, I just want to say THANK YOU, because this morning I woke up and knew where my children were. Because this morning my home was still standing, because this morning I am not crying because my husband, my wife, my child, my brother or sister is buried underneath a pile of concrete; Because this morning I was able to drink a glass of water, because this morning I was able to turn on the light, because this morning I was able to take a shower, because this morning I was not planning a funeral, but most of all I thank you this morning because I still have life and a voice to cry out for the people of Haiti” and it went on similarly for a few lines more.

I guess this mail may have reached several others too, but it really made me sit up and reflect, right there in the office, on how I have taken for granted the many blessings that God has given me. It could have been me or my wife or my children out there, but it wasn't; so God surely has a PLAN for me, but I need to listen to Him carefully and live my life, according to the plan.

Yes, I do praise and thank Him, when He works great miracles in my life and answers my prayers, but can I ever thank Him enough for the simple fact that I am alive today, have a roof over my head, have my family with me, and still have a good job, in these times of recession? Or can I thank him enough for the many blessings he gives me, in his all knowing power and wisdom, even without my asking for them? Do I have to wait for that big miracle to happen, before I acknowledge Him as my Savior?

I guess we all know the answer to these questions, but need to be reminded of it

every now and then, by events like Haiti, that jolt us out of our stupor.

2. IMPOSSIBLE – How many times have I used this adjective when faced with trials and tribulations that are part of my life? To be honest, I really have lost count, but let’s just say it has been too many times. However, a recent reading on this word’s structure opened up an entirely new belief for me.

We can define the word IMPOSSIBLE, not as the Oxford dictionary does, but rather as I-M-POSSIBLE, or “I Am Possible”; and then it’s so simple really; when the “I” in our lives is not ourselves or our petty egos, but when the “I” = Christ Jesus, in our lives. Then everything is possible in and with Him. So the next time, you feel something is impossible for you, just remember this fact.

3. Lastly, another nugget that came in over the internet was on “fasting”, and how we could apply its meaning in Lent and open up creative ways to welcome Jesus’ healing touch.

a) FAST from ANGER and HATRED – give your family an extra dose of LOVE each day!

b) FAST from judging others – before making any judgment, recall how God overlooks our many faults and failings.

c) FAST from DISCOURAGEMENT – hold on to God’s promise that He has a perfect PLAN for your life

d) FAST from RESENTMENT or BITTERNESS – work on forgiving those who may have hurt you.

e) FAST from spending too much money – try to reduce your spending and give the savings to the poor.

Keep smiling – and know that **GOD LOVES YOU.**

Daniel Sequeira

MIPC 28TH Anniversary Celebrations

The 5th of February 2010 was certainly a day to remember, it marked yet another milestone in the history of the Mary Immaculate Praise Community as the members celebrated their 28th Anniversary with great pomp and vigor.

The Evening began with a solemn Eucharistic Celebration, after which the Community Members moved to the hall to commence the festivities. An elaborate program had been organized to commemorate this special occasion. The Festivities began with the MIPC choir leading the gathering into a session of edifying and enthralling praise and worship.

This was followed by a welcome address by the Servant Leader Br. Eugene. Rev.Fr. Raul also addressed the gathering. Br. Eugene really stressed that it is love among the MIPC members which really cements our beloved Community and keeps them together.

An ensemble of stage programs were presented by members of all ages, beginning with the tiny tots who put up a lovely dance and song performance which captured the hearts of all present.

The Juniors and the Youth also put up individual performances which were enjoyed by all. Lots of spot prizes were given, which kept the gathering entertained and all participated. The Master of Ceremonies for the evening was Christopher Colaso who kept the crowd entertained. Cultural stage performances ended with a spell-binding Skit performed by members of the various family cells. This was then followed by a scrumptious buffet spread.

The evening was brought to an end by a vote of thanks delivered by Br. Philip Balfour thanking everybody for their contributions in making the evening a truly memorable one.

Neville Colaco

BIBLE QUIZ #43

Answer the following Questions based on the Gospel of Matthew:

Please hand in your answers before 10th April, 2010

- 1) Jesus said that the Scribes and Pharisees tithed mint, anise and cummin, but had omitted the weightier matters of the law. According to Jesus, what were the "weightier matters of the law"?
- 2) According to Jesus, what did people do in Noah's time?

- 3) How much money was paid to Judas Iscariot for betraying the Christ?
- 4) Finish the quote: "The spirit indeed is willing, but..."
- 5) Finish the quote: "All they that take the sword..."
- 6) Who said the following words: "Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him."
- 7) Who said the following words: "I do not know the man."
- 8) Who said the following words: "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast."
- 9) Who was forced to carry the cross of Christ?
- 10) What is the meaning of the word Golgotha?

ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUIZ #42

1. Elizabeth and Zechariah. Lk 1:5
2. Angel Gabriel. Lk 1:26
3. From Nazareth (Galilee) to Bethlehem (Judea). Lk 2:4-5
4. Jesus. Named by God thru' the Angel Gabriel. Lk 1:30-31
5. 12 years old. Lk 2:42
6. Annas and Caiaphas. Lk 3:2
7. Command these stones to become bread. Lk 4:3
8. The Exorcism of the man with the unclean spirit in the synagogue. Lk 4:33.
Or the healing of Peter's mother in law. Lk 4:38-39.

WINNERS OF BIBLE QUIZ #42

Above 10: Joel Prem Lobo, Amanda Lobo, Sneha Noella Sequeira, Alfred Menezes, Ruwena Gomes, Elvita Lobo, Jovita Niveda Royan, Chester Fernandes, Savio Vaz

JOKES

A man got 2 wishes from GOD. So he asked for the Best Wine and the Best Woman.

In a flash he was given a bottle of Dom Perignon Champagne and Mother Teresa!!!

3 Easy Ways to Die!!!

1. Have a Cigar daily - You'll die 10 years earlier.
2. Drink Rum daily - You'll die 30 years earlier.
3. Love Someone Truly - You'll die daily.

Jack and John were walking along the road when they saw 2 bombs lying by the wayside.

Jack: Let's go and hand these in to the nearest police station – who knows? There may be a big reward waiting for us!

John: But what if one of them explodes on the way??

Jack: We'll lie to the cops and say we found just one!!

Jack: The word "IMPOSSIBLE" is not in my dictionary.

John: What's the use of complaining now – why didn't you check before you bought it???

(In the Biology practical exam)

Examiner: Tell me the name of this bird by only looking at its legs?

Student: Don't know, sir

Examiner: Then you've failed, stupid! What's your name?

Student: Look at my legs!!

A Testimony-‘Thy Faith Has Made Thee Whole’

I have been in the MIPC for more than 5 years, and ever since I have joined this Community, every day has been a miraculous day for me and I have experienced God in many ways. I have seen my own life changing tremendously for the better. Every day I can see God working wonders in my life and giving me another new day. I can testify to so many things that God has blessed me with, and here is one of the miracles that happened recently in my life.

Six months back I developed mild spondylosis; I visited the doctor for treatment, and the doctor taught me some neck exercises. Unfortunately I neglected to do these regularly and after couple of months the pain again came back. I lacked the courage to go back to the doctor since I had not faithfully followed his advice. I recalled the exercises he taught me and started doing them and my pain was under control, however, I had to do these exercises regularly.

On January 28 we had our first half night vigil for the year 2010 and our Brother Mario lead us into inner healing. On the same day I was chosen by God to lead praise and thanksgiving. During the healing session, when brother was asking us to surrender every organ to God, I surrendered to the Lord my neck pain which had been troubling me for months.

From that day onwards my pain has vanished. The Lord healed me completely of my neck pain.

I want to thank God for He is truly a wonder-worker.

Flavia Pereira

A Testimony – “All Things are possible with God”

If someone had told me a year ago that I would be writing a personal testimony like this today, I would probably have laughed it off in some embarrassment, but then, God has his ways and man is powerless in the face of God’s infinite love & wisdom.

2009 was a year of so many changes for us as a family, and we have had more than our share of ups and downs, but for our daughter, Sneha, it was a year for miracles – last month, was her birthday and she received the best present that she will ever get in her entire life from our Lord Jesus.

In April, 2009, just a few months before Sneha's 1st Holy Communion, she was diagnosed with a lesion on her skull that had expanded and broken through her skull bone, causing a hole in it. The neurosurgeons consulted were of the opinion that there was no treatment for this, but surgery, to remove the lesion and close the hole. We were told that although we could delay this a few months, the operation was unavoidable. The MRI & CT scans taken confirmed the finding.

We were totally shaken up, because no matter how many times you hear of such things happening to others, it really hits home when someone close to you is involved, and this was our 9 year old daughter, here before us. We shared this news with our immediate family & some close friends within MIPC(our prayer group in church) & with prayers and support from them, we decided to go ahead with her 1st Holy Communion as planned, and then take on the operation.

As she received the body and blood of Christ, she prayed, “Only say the word and I will be healed!!” I remember one line that kept coming back to me at that time as shared in one of the weekly MIPC meetings - **The battle is the Lord's and the victory is ours!** This was a great source of consolation for both me and my husband and we held on to it during those initial days of shock and doubt; and confused anger too, that this should befall us.

Just 2 days after her Communion, she was admitted to Khoula Hospital and scheduled for surgery. We were still hoping for a miracle, but while we hoped for a last minute reprieve, we were also prepared mentally to go through the procedure and our Sneha really bore it all very bravely. All the while, we knew that besides us, so many people were praying for her and that gave us courage. Well, they say God works in mysterious ways - on Sunday, a day before her

surgery, when the anesthetist came to check her, we were told she had a cold and so they would have to postpone the operation and we were asked to come back for the operation, when she had recovered from the flu.

While we waited for the flu to take its course, we noticed that the lump on the head was slowly going down and another CT scan, **just one month after the first**, confirmed that the lump had reduced in size, but the damage to the bone was still the same, and the senior doctor, although still strongly recommending the surgery, reluctantly agreed to our request that we wait and take another scan in some months time. If that still showed the presence of the growth, we would have to operate and would not delay it any longer.

6 months passed by and we were dreading the 3rd CT scan appointment, but all along we had our comfort and support in our daily prayers, mass and the weekly MIPC meetings and Sneha continued all her school and church activities as usual, without any problems. Last month, we prayed and went for the scan and it really was a wonderful miracle from God – the skull gap had completely filled up on its own, there was no trace of any growth or lesion, just one smooth continuous line of skull bone just like any normal person!

All we can do is thank and praise our mighty and powerful GOD for the numerous blessings he keeps giving us, and constantly reaffirming that He is a God of Love and is always looking out for us, his children - all we have to do is ask and he gives to us in abundance!

I'd like to end by reflecting on what kept us going, through those many months last year – it was faith in God, the hope of redemption and prayers, both our own prayers as well as that of all our extended family in Oman and elsewhere – and all that was so beautifully captured in our theme for 2009 **“Persevere in prayer and seek the will of God!”**

So whatever our situation may be, we just need to lay down all our worries before the Lord and He will answer us in His time and in His way.

Yamitha Sequeira

Growing in Holiness

The first thing I do after everybody has left home in the morning is tidy up the house, keeping all things in their proper places, picking up bits of paper and toys left behind by children. Once the house is tidy it gives the appearance of being neat and clean. All this doesn't take much time, 15 minutes at the most. When a visitor comes home, the house appears clean to his casual glance, but I know that the house is not really clean. It just appears to be so.

Since I'm the one who does the cleaning, I know that the sofas haven't been vacuumed, the furniture hasn't been dusted and there are nooks and corners that need a good scrubbing. Real cleaning takes a lot more than 15 minutes. It can take hours and even a whole day. It is physically strenuous and at the end may leave you drained. Yet when it is all over there is a deep sense of satisfaction that the house is really clean.

As I went about this cleaning, week after week, the Lord began to show me a spiritual parallel. The tidying up which has to do only with appearances is like the outward piety that we exhibit. Most of us judge people according to the way they conduct themselves in Church or during worship. While it's not wrong to keep an outward appearance of piety it should not stop there. If I am satisfied with just tidying up and make no effort to really clean the house you can imagine what a mess the house will actually be in. Just as cleaning is more difficult and requires more effort, to move from an external exhibition of piety to real holiness needs tremendous effort.

We have to struggle to grow in holiness. God (and to some extent we ourselves), knows exactly where we stand when it comes to holiness. To be able to maintain purity in thought, word and deed is humanly impossible; but praise God! His grace is always supplied in sufficient measure. Just as the house can never be completely clean, I can never claim to be completely holy. I need a fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit every day. It is an ongoing process that will be perfected on the day we are in the presence of the Lord.

I have noticed that once the house is clean it appears very bright and full of light. Trying to find an answer to why this happened, I realized that since all the surfaces were cleared of dust, they were reflecting the light streaming through the windows. The dust that dulled the surfaces was gone, enabling the smooth surfaces to reflect light. Here again I could see a parallel. As I struggle to grow in holiness, cleansing myself of all that is unholy, the light of God enters my heart and His brilliance radiates through me to others. My heart is now able to reflect God's light and love.

I can draw others to myself by the power of my holiness. I once read that the greatest power on earth is the power of holiness because so few are able to achieve it. The example of our Pope and Saints are enough to show us how great is the power of holiness. Holiness brings God into our hearts and people to us.

Today all of us strive for a perfect physical appearance to be able to attract others. Holiness is the perfect magnet to draw others to us. Just as we fret over the wrinkles on our skin, let us have a greater anxiety over the wrinkles on our soul. As we strive to grow in holiness we will become more like our Master. How great will be the joy of our Father to see us grow in holiness. Let's all resolve during this Holy Season of Lent, to bring delight to our Father's heart.

Josena Verghese



Editorial Note:-

This Edition of Oasis has been compiled by and is brought to you with the prayers and blessings of "***Team A***"

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.