

*“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 2011: Walk by the Spirit (Rom 8:4)**

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## **GOD-Centered Praying!**

The only prayer that Jesus taught his disciples was ‘**The Our Father**’ Jesus said that whenever we pray we were to pray in this way (*Mathew 6:9-13*)

**Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed by Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

While this is commonly known as “The Lord’s prayer”, actually, it was not a prayer He Himself prayed. There are some aspects of this prayer that Jesus could not use as the sinless Son of God.

It was a model prayer He taught His own to use. Being made up of invocation, petition and doxology, He taught the necessity of this method even in our prayers.

In this most complete and convincing expression of Christ’s conception of prayer, we can discern seven voices

- 1) The Voice of the Son - “Our Father, who art is in Heaven”
- 2) The Voice of the Saints - “Hallowed by Thy Name”
- 3) The Voice of the Subject - “Thy Kingdom come”

- 4) The Voice of the Servant - “Thy Will be done”
- 5) The Voice of the Suppliant - “Give us our daily bread”
- 6) The Voice of the Sinner - “Forgive us our debt”
- 7) The Voice of the Sojourner-“Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

We address God as our Father **WHO IS IN HEAVEN**. He is not only our Father, He is also Almighty God. We need to keep both these facts in mind whenever we come to Him in prayer. We approach Him with reverence because He is God who is a **Consuming Fire (Heb12:29)**...But He is also God. He is one before whom the seraphs cover their faces to cry Holy, Holy and Holy (*Isa.6:5*). Those seraphs never sinned, yet when they approach God, they cover their faces, for they cannot bear to look upon the holiness of God. This tells us something about the infinite purity of God that our finite minds can never comprehend. The greatest truth that the church needs to recognize in this day is the truth of the Sovereignty of God and the total authority of Jesus Christ over all the nations and powers.

**HALLOWED BE THY NAME:** The Glory of God’s name.

What does “Hallowed Be Thy Name” mean? The word hallowed comes from the same root from which we get many other words, in the New Testament such as “sanctify”, “holy”, “saint”, etc. It means “set apart”, that is set apart from all that is evil and unclean. It is the prayer of the Saints who give reverence to His Name. We don’t give God the rightful place that He should have in our lives, in our longings, in our desires and in our ambitions, and if God and His glory were the consuming passion of our lives, that would express itself clearly every time we went to God in prayers. The reason why many things in our lives don’t fall in place, why there is so much confusion and chaos is because God is not First...

So our humble request should be “Father” let your name be feared and revered and honoured and glorified.

**THY KINGDOM COME:** True salvation should give us a longing to be delivered from self-centeredness, so that God now becomes the centre of our lives and the centre of our petitions in prayer. Our prayer should be “Father, I long for your kingdom to come, I am not asking this for my personal comfort. I long that your reign of righteousness will come soon, so that Your Name will be glorified on this earth which was created for your glory”. It is meaningless to pray, “*Thy Kingdom come*” if we don’t want Jesus to live with us and be the Lord of our homes every day. The kingdom of God means the government of God, the absolute ruler-ship of God. If we want the kingdom of God to come, it must first come in our hearts, in our homes and in our churches. The Holy Spirit came to bring “*the kingdom of God with power*” to earth (*Mark 9:1*)

**THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN:** This is the Will of God...We can call Jesus Lord only when we are willing to do His will in our daily

life. True conversion takes place, not when a man is stirred in his intellect and his emotions, but when he yields his will saying – “Lord, not my will, but Thing be done in my life.” If we maintain this attitude before the Lord consistently, then we shall be sanctified increasingly.

Jesus himself prayed saying “*Not My Will but Thine*” to His Father all through his earthly life (*Jn 6:38*).

Jesus said, *‘If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me’* (*Luke 9:23*). To take up our cross is to say, *“Father, not my will, but Thine be done.”*

Jesus said *in Jn.4:34, my food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to accomplish His work*. To follow Jesus is to have a similar longing to do the will of the Father in every area of our life.

**GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD:** Our Physical Needs - God is interested in meeting all our bodily needs whether spiritual or material but God wants us to put Him first, before blessing us physically and materially. He is our Divine Provider and He knows exactly what we need. All our physical needs are summed up in this petition *“Give us our daily bread.”* The Holy Spirit tries to convince us that God is interested in every part of us- spirit, soul and body! That is why the Bible says *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything in prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made know to God”* (*Phil.4:6*). Jesus told us not be too anxious about tomorrow... God doesn’t want us to worry about the future. We are dependent upon Him day by day.

**FORGIVENESS OF SINS:** *“Forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven our debtors.”*

Sin is a debt to God – whether that sin is one of omission or commission. Our conscience warns us when something is wrong in our relationship with God, just like pain warns us that something is wrong in our body. There are many people, who say *“Father forgives us our sins,”* who don’t realize that we can’t ask God to forgive us unless we have confessed our sins to Him first. God’s word says, *“He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper”* (*Prov.28:13*). The verse goes on to say *“.....but he who confesses and forsakes them will find mercy.”* The Bible also says...*“If we confess our sins, God is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*(*1Jn.1:9*).

Forgiving others - This petition for forgiveness is one of the most important petitions in this prayer, because it is the only petition that Jesus repeated at the end of his prayer. Jesus emphasized and said *“If you forgive men their trespasses your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their*

*trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also not forgive you.” (Matt. 6:14-15)* Many of us do not enjoy full and free fellowship with God because they have not taken this petition seriously. And so we need to forgive one another as long as we live on this earth. **“TO ERR IS HUMAN, TO FORGIVE IS DIVINE”**

**FREEDOM FROM EVIL** *“Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”* There are two sides to this petition - one, asking God to protect us and the other, asking God to deliver us. Having prayed for deliverance from the guilt of sin, we should pray for deliverance from the power of sin. If we desire only forgiveness and not freedom from sin, it would indicate that our repentance is not proper. Forgiveness of sins is meant to be a gateway to a holy life and not taking advantage of the grace of God.

Jesus too was tempted in all things as we are (Heb.4:15) , but He always said ‘Yes’ to God. In order to be a perfect man, the type of man that God wants all men to be like. He faced temptation and overcame, and thereby was *“made perfect”* (Heb.5:8-9)

Jesus prayed for His disciples saying *“Father, I do not ask Thee to take them out of the world, but to keep them from evil.”* (Jn.17:15). Jesus knew that His disciples could never become holy if they were taken away from pressures and trials and temptations that they would face in this world. Let us long for deliverance from our fleshy lusts first and then it will be very easy for us to fight and overcome the Satan. Then we will find that no demons can touch us.

**TO GOD BE GLORY:** *“For Thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever, AMEN”* The Lord’s Prayer begins with *“Hallowed by Thy Name and it ends with, “For Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory.”*

God said, *“I am the Alpha and the Omega”* (Rev.1:8). God must be the very first thought and the very last thought in our lives. God must be the centre as well as the circumference of our lives. All Power belongs to God (Psa.62:11). He gives us power, but it belongs to Him...not to be used for our own selfish ends.

**For all Eternity:** *“Forever”* – not for a few years, but for all eternity – The final word is **“AMEN.”** meaning *“It shall be so.” because God has thus declared it.”*

*Ethel Fernandes*

## **“His Faithfulness Endures Forever” – The Power of Prayer**

Peace of Christ Dear Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ.

It started like any other day. It was mid-July 2011. Albert, my brother in law, who was

working in Dubai, tried to get up from bed, to go to work. Due to a severe headache, he was not able to get up on his own and his friends somehow managed to get him to the hospital. It was diagnosed that he had suffered a severe Brain Hemorrhage. Albert was a chronic hypertension case, and his Blood Pressure had shot up to 200+, which resulted in the Brain Hemorrhage. When he was taken to the hospital, he was almost dead and the doctors had no time even to do a MRI. The team of doctors had to perform an emergency operation.

The news about Albert's operation was conveyed to the family members, who were all petrified and could do nothing in this terrible situation – but to pray.

After almost 2 – 3 weeks after the operation Albert, 44, who is the only bread winner of his family, was still in the ICU, unconscious. The doctors were not hopeful of his recovery. He was completely on life support and being fed through a tube.

We, the brothers and sisters, did our best to contact all possible religious centers seeking intercessory prayers. I requested our MIPC Intercessory Ministry, in addition to my own fervent prayers. The power of prayer started to manifest in Albert's life. I spent one of the weekends with Albert in Dubai and I feel that was the most fruitful time I spent in Prayers - when I was with him in the ICU. It was only by the Grace of God I was allowed to stay in the ICU the entire Thursday and I spent that day praying for him, reciting the rosary, claiming his healing through our Intercessor par excellence, Mother Mary, and invoking the power of the most precious Blood of Jesus to heal Albert.

Our God is a good God and no prayers go un-answered with HIM! This was the first day after his collapse that Albert responded and when I called him, by his name, he opened his eyes!! The next day when I visited him on my way to the airport to come back to Muscat, to my surprise Albert's eyes were wide open and he was responding very well. I spoke to him about his wife and he responded by nodding his head. This was unbelievable!! Praise God for his Mercies.

Albert was then moved to India, this again was a miracle. In our hometown, he was taken to the hospital, where he spent about 15 days. The Power of prayer was so strong, that last week he was discharged from hospital and taken home. He now talks and walks, with support, and his diet is almost normal. This phenomenal improvement is nothing short of a Miracle, which I attribute to the prayers of our MIPC brothers and sisters and other faithful friends. Through all this, I have learnt that we are called to hold on to Him, no matter what and depend on His benevolent love. I thank and praise GOD for His Mercies and Faithfulness.

*“There is no other Power like the Power of Prayer “*

**Flavia Pereira**

## Whose Report Will You Believe?

Our lives are a mixture of experiences, some positive and happy, others sad, disappointing and negative. I am, however, very convinced of one truth; that GOD uses every experience we go through just for one Purpose; **so that we may come to KNOW HIM for who HE really is; a deeply compassionate Father who loves us, HIS Beloved Children.**

In preparation for a new job which I will be starting in September, it was mandatory for me to do an international English skills exam called **IELTS ACADEMIC**. “The Ministry of Education requires a minimum score of 6.5 of a total of 9. Only then will your papers be handed over for visa processing,” I was told by the principal of the school!

I signed up for the exam which cost me OMR 75. It was to be a 6 hour exam composed of 4 sections, listening, reading, writing, & speaking. I was given some practice material to work on. I set about preparing for the exam scheduled just three weeks away.

It was not as simple as I thought it would be. The IELTS ACADEMIC was much more challenging than the IELTS GENERAL and every answer had a time limit; eg. 120 questions had to be answered in 120 minutes. So I needed a noise free environment with absolute no disturbance while preparing so that I could assess my efficiency and accuracy.

I would get up very early in the morning just to get the quiet time I needed before my kids woke up. Beginning everyday with Prayer and clinging on to the promises in HIS WORD that GOD was with me, I took one day at a time. To add to the situation, my house help fell ill and couldn't come to work just two weeks before the exam. I really had to TRUST my heavenly father and it was only my morning prayer time with the LORD and his WORD that kept me from panicking and sustained me. Often I would speak aloud Bible verses to battle the FEAR which raged in my mind. The devil would try to discourage me, saying, “You're never going to make it at the rate you're going, see how little you've managed to do,”

It says in **Isaiah 41 : 10 Fear not for I am with you, do not be dismayed, for I am your GOD. I will strengthen, I will help you, yes I will hold you up with my right hand of righteousness and justice** and then in **Exodus 14 : 13 Fear not, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD which HE will work for you today.** These are some of the verses which I confessed regularly and which I used as a weapon to fight the enemy's lies. Besides fear, the Lord was also dealing with my pride and my independent spirit which often prevented me from having a child-like attitude towards my Heavenly Father. Very often, too strong a dependence on ourselves makes us unable to truly surrender because we depend so much on our own ability and strength which actually is a form of pride.

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**Quit telling God how big your storm is, and tell your storm how big your God is.**

A few days before my exam, I came across this verse in **1 Peter 5: 6-7 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of god, that he may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon Him, for he cares for you.** I read it over and over and I realized that the Lord was asking me to trust him irrespective of the fact that time was running out and that things were just not going the way I would have wanted them to go.

The morning of the exam finally arrived. I cried out to the Lord in prayer that morning and opened my Bible. God's Word for me was **Isaiah 40 :5 The glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together** . I had done my best with all my constraints and the Lord knew that. With confidence that the lord was with me and he was going to give me the **victory**, I went for the exam.

As I mentioned earlier, there were 4 sections. The Listening section went very well. But in the Reading and Writing section I lost a lot of time and made a number of mistakes. The Speaking section was not that great either as I had to speak on photography both the technical and artistic sides. This was not one of my favorite subjects, but the Lord gave me the ideas and insights and I spoke with confidence.

After the exam was over I should have been relieved but for the next two weeks I was plagued with thoughts of failure and fear that I may not get the required score and I might have to do the exam again. Very often my prayer time was just sobbing and pouring out my heart to God and then clinging onto HIS promises. My doubting mind and deep seated fears were a result of not really knowing my **Father**. He asked me one day, "Whose report will you believe? My word or the lies of satan?" And so, as the battle in my mind raged on, I **chose** to believe what GOD promised about my performance rather than the devil's lies. My faith told me that (**Eph 3:20**) **"my God is able to do exceedingly, abundantly above all that we ask or think according to this power at work in us"**.

On the day of the results as I entered the IELTS Centre, all I could think of was that my God is going to come through for me. The lady in charge handed me a sealed envelope which of course contained my results. I opened it and looked at the overall score. **I had scored 7 out of a maximum of 9!** The Lord had given me more than what I had required. We serve an **AWESOME GOD!**

I returned home with tears of joy, marveling at the faithfulness of our loving Abba. I had so very little time to prepare and had made so many mistakes but My God worked above all that.

**Whose Report Will You Believe?** When you are waiting for answers to your prayers and the waiting seems forever. Do we truly know our father well enough to **trust him** fully or is our inner man restless, anxious, worried and doubting?

I encourage you all to seek to know God, His word and His love through your trials, for that is the reason he created us, to know him, to love him and to serve him.

*Ann Pinto.*

## Mary And The Catholic Church

One of the chief failures of non-Catholics is to assume that Marian devotion is not focused on Jesus. In fact, the entire focus IS Christological! Catholics are often insulted by this question and frequently refuse to answer it on that account. A non-response, however, is not helpful for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is that it is an extremely important question; the answer to which determines whether or not one is a Christian.

The teaching of the Church is clear: Jesus Christ is the sole mediator between God and man. No other person in heaven or on earth can take His place. The role of Mary or any other saint is to lead the believer to Christ. This subordinate form of mediation derives its meaning and effectiveness from the Lord Himself and is not something the saints possess on their own. Where, then, does Mary fit into the picture? Throughout the New Testament one finds references to Mary. In fact, at every significant juncture in our Lord's life, one finds Mary on the horizon.

When God began His plan for our redemption, He sent to Nazareth an angel, who hailed a woman as "highly favoured" or "full of grace" to be the human partner in this divine enterprise (Lk 1:28). When the Babe was born in Bethlehem, He came forth into our world not from heaven but from the womb of the Virgin Mary (Mt 1:25; Lk 2:7). As the Child was presented to the Lord in the Temple of Jerusalem on the fortieth day, the old prophet Simeon singled out His Mother Mary for special mention as a woman destined to be the Mother of Sorrows (Lk 2:35). Twelve years later, after another temple visit, the Boy Jesus returned with His Mother and foster father to Nazareth and was subject to them (Lk 2:51). It was Mary who prodded her Son into action at Cana to work His first miracle, launching Him on His public ministry (Jn 2:3).

And it was Mary who stood by His side at the foot of the Cross and was given to John as the Mother of the Church (Jn 19:26f). Finally, as the Church was waiting to be born in the Upper Room, while the disciples prayed for the Pentecost gift of the Spirit, Luke tells us that Mary was in their midst (Acts 1:14). Prayer to Mary, like all Marian devotion, is not an end in itself, but is intended to be a means by which one is led to a deeper union with her Son. Classical spirituality even had a Latin maxim to illustrate the point: *Ad Jesum per Mariam* (To Jesus through Mary). True devotion to Mary never obscures the uniqueness of Christ because the only command of Mary recorded in the Scriptures is one that must be scrupulously obeyed: "Do whatever he (Jesus) tells you" (Jn 2:5).

*Fr. Tom Mangattuthazhe (contributed by, Richard Mascarenhas)*



## I Saw Jesus

I saw Jesus last week.  
He was wearing blue jeans and an old shirt.  
He was up at the church building, working hard.  
For just a minute he looked a little like one of our members.  
But it was Jesus,  
I could tell by his smile.

I saw Jesus last Sunday.  
He was teaching a Bible class.  
He didn't talk real loud or use long words,  
But you could tell he believed what he said.  
For just a minute he looked like my Sunday School teacher.  
But it was Jesus,  
I could tell by his loving voice.

I saw Jesus yesterday.  
He was at the hospital visiting a man who was sick.  
They prayed together quietly.  
For just a minute he looked like Brother Jones.  
But it was Jesus,  
I could tell by the tears in his eyes.

I see Jesus everywhere,  
Taking food to the sick,  
Welcoming others to his home,  
Being friendly to a newcomer,  
For just a minute I think he's someone I know.  
But it's always Jesus,  
I can tell by the way he serves.

May someone see Jesus in you today.

*~Author Unknown~*

## Christian Vocabulary

English is a language, as we all know, that is and was spoken by the British, some of whom were Christians. The idiom 'the road to Damascus', in the Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary, means (as defined by the dictionary) an experience that results in a great change in a person's attitudes or beliefs. For example: Spending a night in jail was his road to Damascus. The very fact that this idiom is defined by this

**God didn't save us from a life without pain. He saved us from a life without meaning.**

dictionary proves that it is being used widely by people - Christian and non-Christian! It is surprising that we, as Christians do not use such vocabulary thereby creating a much more conscious awareness that we are Christians.

Of course, it is true that we all know and are aware that we are Christians but using a 'Christian vocabulary' will strongly affirm this fact further.

*Amy Ann Jacob*

### **Endless Blessings – A Testimony**

To those who know me well, I haven't been and still am not the most "religious" person around.

Don't get me wrong, I've always believed in God, but earlier in my life, He was a God who dwelled in the Church and whom I met every Sunday or Friday at Holy Mass. As a child, I learnt about God from my parents and teachers and attended Church regularly, but aside from learning the popular Bible stories and basic Christian prayers, I didn't learn much about how to truly live as a follower of Christ. The services seemed routine to me, and although I prayed with all the others, it was more a recitation of oft repeated words. Even my personal prayer was just a one-way traffic of me always "ASKING" favors of God, for myself (and maybe at times for others too), but "THANKING" Him was never a priority. Any scholastic achievement at school or college or later success at work that I managed was attributed to my own intelligence and skills and personality and not to any divine power or blessing or God's intervention in my life.

But then God has a plan for us and it manifests itself in ways that we cannot even comprehend at times. Today, when I look back at my life, and how I came to be in the Gulf and Muscat in particular, I realize that what seemed like troubles and worries at that time, are now revealed as pre-determined steps in God's master plan for me. We all have heard of "**Ask and it shall be given you; seek; and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you...**" (Matthew 7: 7-8) but in my case, I have often received the Lord's countless blessings, without my even asking Him. He knows my every need, He knows what is good and bad for me, and in His wisdom, He answers my every prayer, in His time and in His way. There have been so many instances where He has rescued and blessed me and my loved ones, but I will just list the major blessings here, or this testimony will never end.

I came to the Gulf in 1997, actually running away from my responsibilities to my wife and family, amidst a tale of lies, bad debts and financial mistakes made back home. Even coming to Muscat was by default, as I had gone to the agent's office in Mumbai to attend an interview for a job in Saudi, but finally ended up coming to Muscat. This I now know as step 1 in His Plan for saving me.

5 years passed by in Muscat, my wife had joined me, and we were now a family and blessed with the birth of my first daughter, Sneha, but then disaster struck in 2002, when the Omani sponsors of my company had a fall-out and they went into forced bankruptcy. While we were worried what was going to happen to us next, and preparing for the worst, out of nowhere, I was approached by a company from Dubai with a better offer in my exact field of work. We jumped at the opportunity and moved to Dubai. Looking back, this was step 2 in His Plan.

We settled down in Dubai, but then just when my second daughter, Samika, was born in Dec 2004, the company informed me that I was being immediately transferred to a new office they were starting in Muscat. I was quite upset, as we had just adjusted to life in Dubai, we had a month old baby, and moving house and job was the last thing we needed in our lives, but having no choice in the matter, we made the move back to Muscat – my wife gave up her job, my elder daughter lost her new school friends, I was not happy at all, but what we did not realize then was that bringing us back to Muscat was step 3 in His Plan.

Coming to Muscat, we were “lucky” enough to get the last apartment in the Darsait complex where we now stay. In hindsight, I know luck had nothing to do with it, for this was His Will as here it was where we met so many wonderful brothers and sisters from the MIPC. But the skeptic that I was, it took me a couple of years, before I even stepped into the Parish Hall one Wednesday evening for the fellowship, and boy, was it was a revelation! Instead of singing only traditional hymns, the congregation was singing rousing praise songs and clapping their hands. Instead of just reciting words like I did, people seemed to be earnestly praying, holding their hands up in the air as they sang - people who seemed to be excited about being Christians. I hadn't seen anything like that before, and to be honest, I was embarrassed and kept looking down at my feet all the time, but I continued to go with my family and also started really listening to and absorbing the sharing of The Word. This experience also helped me be more attentive at Holy Mass and for maybe the first time in my life, I was actually saying my prayers with a deep understanding and appreciation of what the words really meant.

And the blessings continued – Step 4 in His Plan was when in Dec 2007, when we were unsure about a career move to Australia, we prayed on it and the Lord made a way. Overnight, my current employers entrusted me with a new and enhanced responsibility which also came with higher rewards. Again in April 2009, when my elder daughter was diagnosed with an internal lesion like growth on her brain, that required surgery as per the best doctors, Our Lord completely healed her by making it just disappear and even the doctors could not explain this, when they saw the before and after CT scans – but to us it's simple, just one more great blessing in our lives that was Step 5 of His Plan to bring us closer to Him.

So what we have come to realize is that there is nothing like coincidence, good luck, karma, etc in this world. God created this world we live in and all that has happened, is now happening and will happen, in our lives is as per the will of The Father. You might be thinking that this is easy for me to say as I have seen the power of His miracles in my life, but no, we are all His children and He cares for each and every one of us, so all we need to do is just believe in Him, and always have faith. As long as we, His children, cling to His promises, we will prevail over all the chaos and strife that is around us today.

All praise, honor, glory and thanks to our Mighty Lord Jesus, our Good Shepherd, who never leaves us, even when we let go of Him!

- *Daniel Sequeira.*

## **The Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

(Rev 11:19; 12: 6-10; Ps 44; 1 Cor 15:20-26; Lk 1:39-56)

The celebration of the Assumption is a day of joy, it is the feast of God's greatness and of the greatness of man in Him. Today the Magnificat resonates joyfully; this extraordinary poem emerges from Mary's heart and flourished on her lips. The Gospel canticle is a portrait of the Madonna, through which we can see her just as she is. It starts with the acclamation: 'My soul magnifies the Lord' that really means 'proclaims the greatness' of the Lord. Mary wants God to be great in the world and in her personal life. Mary knows that since God is great our lives are elevated, enlarged and enriched by God's greatness and glory.

In the fact that our first parents thought the opposite, we precisely grasp the core of the original sin. They feared if God was too great, he would take something from their lives. They wished to put Him aside, to have more space for themselves. This is also the great temptation of every man! This is also the great temptation of every ideology. However, where God disappears, man doesn't become greater, rather, he loses divine dignity, the glow of heaven on his face.

Mary's joyous humility invites us to understand that we must beware of distancing ourselves from God. Like Mary, we must make space every day for the Lord in our lives, starting with ones prayer and giving time to God. We don't lose our time if we offer it to Him. If the Lord enters 'our' time, all our time becomes fuller and richer.

The Solemnity of the Assumption reveals that whoever is loved by God and welcomes His love doesn't ever die. In Him, in His thoughts and in His love we are always preserved and therefore become immortal in all our personal being. This love is the bearer of the immortality that we call 'heaven'. This is the meaning of the dogmatic expression of the 'bodily Assumption into heaven' of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Our faith doesn't promise only the salvation of the soul but announces the eternal value of what occurred on this earth. Nothing that is precious and dear to us is lost: 'But even the hairs on your head are numbered.' (Mt 10:30)

This truth that gives us a profound joy today: the Most Holy Virgin Mary, with her Assumption into heaven, testifies to the authentic meaning of our existence.

God has assumed into heavenly glory her who was given to us by the Son at the foot of the cross. The Virgin Mary is close to each of us and she knows our heart, she listens to our prayers and she is close to us in our necessities and sustains us with her maternal goodness.

We can always trust our entire lives to this sweet Mother. We thank the Lord for the gift of His masterpiece, the heavenly Mother assumed into glory and we pray that the Church, through Mary, may help mankind to recognise his own unprecedented dignity that is reflected in God's majesty.

*Contributed by Charmaine D'Souza*

## **Sainthood**

"Me, a saint? No way! I certainly can't become one." This is what people, young and old, say when asked whether they are or would like to become saints.

The fact that one cannot become a saint is false because God has called all of us to become saints. It is a fact that there are many saints who have not been acknowledged as saints by the Catholic Church. We can all be saints if only we respond to his call!

Saints have admitted in their autobiographies that they were not perfect and had human weaknesses like us. It is their belief that God is always ready to forgive their sins, both venial and mortal, and knows that they are, after all, human beings that made them saints.

In this world, where immorality is widely accepted and in vogue, let us all try to become saints even if we will not be acknowledged as saints by the Catholic Church. Let us all try to become Jesus' secret, private, special and precious saints by answering his call.

*Amy Ann Jacob*

## **Answers to Bible Quiz #50**

- |          |                                |                                   |          |         |
|----------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|---------|
| 1) Moses | 2) Nun                         | 3) Jericho                        | 4) Rahab | 5) Adam |
| 6) 12    | 7) God stopped providing manna | 8) Take off his sandals           |          |         |
| 9) 7     | 10) Achan                      | 11) Held out his spear towards Ai |          |         |

12) Woodcutters and water-carriers      13) Hailstones      14) Levi      15) 85  
He was forty when Moses sent him out to spy on the land and forty-five years had passed since that time. 16) Simeon Josh 19:9 - Judah had more land than they needed and so Simeon is entirely contained within Judah.      17) Dan      18) Timnath-Serah  
19) Accidental murder      20) Built an altar.

## **Winners of the Bible Quiz**

*Henrita Rowan, Jovita Rowan and Joseph Louis*

### **Bible Quiz #51**

You will find the answers in the book of Ezekiel.

1. What did Ezekiel receive from the lord?
2. The Lord God compared Jerusalem with which sinful city?
3. What happened to the dry bones when Ezekiel prophesied?
4. The Lord commanded Ezekiel to lie bound on his left side for how long?
5. Where was Ezekiel when he was carried off by the hair of his head?

*Answers must be submitted by 1st October 2011.*

### **A Very Good And Important Question**

**Question:** I've come across many religious articles, especially about Mother Mary, having a statement at the bottom which says that if the articles are forwarded to a certain number of people (for eg. 10 persons) the person forwarding the articles will receive special blessings and graces. Is this religious or superstitious?

*Amy Ann Jacob*

#### **Catholic Answer: From OASIS**

These ridiculous 'pseudo-religious' messages promising that special blessings and good fortune will come a person's way, just by passing on the message to several other persons, must be deleted immediately. Someone you know has stupidly fallen prey to their own superstitious nature and are now trying to victimise and inconvenience you. If, however, any message really appeals to you and you feel a strong but holy desire to share it, because it will truly edify the reader, then you **MUST** first completely delete any and all references which ask people to pass on the message to 10 or more persons or all persons on their address books.

No blessings will ever come anybody's way if they cave in to superstition and forward such messages. In point of fact they are to be pitied because they are acting contrary to our Faith.

*(Several similar articles have appeared in past issues of Oasis)*

## Reflections

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.

When GOD solves your problems, you have faith in HIS abilities; when GOD doesn't solve your problems HE has faith in your abilities.

A blind person asked St. Anthony: "Can there be anything worse than losing eye sight?" He replied: "Yes, losing your vision!"

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.

Worrying doesn't take away tomorrow's trouble it just takes away today's peace.

*Contributed by, Richard Mascarenhas*

### Smile Awhile

I used to be indecisive. Now I'm not sure.

I always take life with a grain of salt, plus a slice of lemon, and a shot of tequila.

You're never too old to learn something stupid.

To be sure of hitting the target, shoot first and call whatever you hit the target.

Nostalgia isn't what it used to be.

A bus is a vehicle that runs twice as fast when you are after it as when you are in it.

Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.

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A little boy was overheard praying:  
'Lord, if you can't make me a better boy, don't worry about it.  
I'm having a real good time like I am.'

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A Sunday school teacher asked her children as they  
were on the way to church service,  
'And why is it necessary to be quiet in church?'  
One bright little girl replied,  
'Because people are sleeping.'

~~~~~

A mother was preparing pancakes for her sons, Kevin 5, and Ryan 3  
The boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake.  
Their mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson..  
'If Jesus were sitting here, He would say,  
'Let my brother have the first pancake, I can wait.'  
Kevin turned to his younger brother and said,  
' Ryan, you be Jesus!'

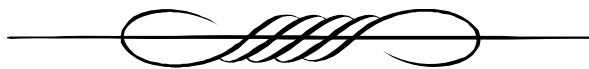
### **Indian Secret for a long Marriage**

At The Swami Narayan Temple in Neasden London, they have weekly husbands' marriage seminars. At one session, recently, the priest asked Popatbhai, who said he was approaching his 50th wedding anniversary, to take a few minutes and share some insights into how he had managed to stay married to the same woman all these years.

Popatbhai replied to the assembled husbands, 'Well, I've tried to treat her nice, spend money on her, but best of all is, I took her to Bombay for our 25th anniversary!'

The priest responded, 'Popatbhai', you are an amazing inspiration to all the husbands here! Please tell us what you are planning for your wife for your 50th anniversary?'

Popatbhai proudly replied, "I'm going back to Bombay to pick her up."



***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.***