



“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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WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?!!

“Didn’t I tell you if you believe, you would see the Glory of God?”

Jesus said to Martha and to the people gathered around him in Bethany at the site of the tomb of Lazarus in ***Jn 11:40***. And in ***Ezek 43:5***, the Word of God says, *“The Lord’s spirit lifted me up and took me into the inner courtyard*

where I saw that the Temple was filled with the Glory of the Lord.” Often we take the song ‘Know ye not you’re the Temple of the Holy Ghost?’ Therefore doesn’t it stand to reason that to see the Glory of God here and now, all we have got to do is to believe?

Well, here I would like to share a little about myself. I had struggled for years with dryness in my prayer time. As much as I wanted to experience the presence and touch of the Lord, I couldn’t. I would sing songs of praise, thanks, worship etc. which would help especially when I sang the Word of God in a song but still I wound up pretty much not getting very far. I even tried reading a daily reflection in my personal prayer and it did help but I still experienced spiritual dryness. “Why Lord?” I would ask him... then came my rebellious attitude of ‘so what? If I can’t experience God’s presence in prayer, let it be.’ Not that it helped one bit. I only felt worse – let alone the greater guilt of being a counter witness, of not being a

blessing, of not being able to live in victory and the enemy's all time favourite: being a sitting duck for his fiery darts and temptations.

I did eventually get a revelation that disobedience causes God's presence to leave one. As for my attitude, it was only when I much later reached one of my lows in spirit that I was given the grace to think: I'm not getting anywhere or anything out of this. Why, this attitude is sending me on a downward spiral. No matter how much I try, I am not going to experience the Lord's presence with any rebellious attitude. The Lord said "Your attitude displeases me as much as I detest witchcraft". *'Rebellion against him is as bad as witchcraft'* (**1 Sam 15:23**). I repented and asked the merciful Lord Jesus to forgive me for this sin.

Now, even though this fallen part of my past occasionally tries to regain its former active role in my life, I consciously rebuke it; and call upon the name of the Lord to be saved. The book of James says "*Submit to God, resist the devil and he will flee*" (**Jas 4:7**) but all this, NOT WITHOUT BELIEVING THAT HE IS WITH ME. The Lord gave me the grace to believe that NO MATTER WHAT, HE HEARS ME. HIS ARM IS NOT TOO SHORT TO SAVE. Secondly even though I still hear the negative voices in my head, I refuse to listen to them. You see, hearing is one thing and to listen in to them is altogether something else. I press on to listen to my Good Shepherd's voice... and this because I refuse to give in as formerly, I easily would do. I BELIEVE IN HIS LOVE, MERCY AND GRACE.

Today, I experience His Saving grace (**Acts 16:31**); His Answer to Prayer (**Mt 21:22**); His Deliverance from Fear (**Mk 5:36**); His receiving my Petition (**Mk 11:24**); Happiness (**Lk 1:45**); His Quenching my Spiritual Thirst (**Jn 6:35**); and an ability to Walk in the Light (**Jn 12:46**)... again, this miracle and much more because I BELIEVE.

Brothers and sisters, Jesus asked the question "Didn't I tell you if you believe you would see the Glory of God?" Just before he raised Lazarus from the dead, saying that, he worked that miracle so that we would believe.

Can we commit to becoming more Believing Catholics and see the Glory of God starting with simple faith and belief!

-Ryan Pinto

FAITH

Faith is a firm belief or trust in a person, thing or doctrine. To have faith in someone means to trust that he will accomplish the task given to him, and to know I can count on his / her help when I need it. (**Rom 10:17**) *“Faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the word of God.”* When I hear the word of God, I come to know Jesus who is the Word, the more I know Him the more I am able to trust Him in difficult situations. This enables me to undertake challenging tasks and helps me to overcome areas of weakness in my life.

Rom 12:3 says *“God has given each of us a measure of faith.”* Sometimes we think that we do not have enough of faith but God’s word says that each of us has been given a measure of faith. How do we realize this truth? When we can very naturally trust the pilot of an aircraft to bring us safely to our final destination, we have unconsciously exercised the measure of faith God has put in us.

In **Mt 17:20**, the Lord says if you have faith as small as a mustard seed you could move mountains. When we read this verse we often get caught up with the word “small” and think I can’t move any mountains in my life that means I do not have even that much faith but instead of concentrating on the word “small”, let us focus on the word mustard seed. Why didn’t Jesus say faith as small as a grain of sand instead of as mustard seed - that too is small? A mustard seed can grow into a tree which is 8 feet tall; likewise our faith also has the potential to grow as we apply it to various situations in our life.

Jas 2:17 says *“faith by itself if not accompanied by action is dead”*. Abraham is called the father of faith because every time God called him to do something challenging, he stepped out in faith and said “yes” to God and never let negative thoughts defeat him. To have faith is to be a **doer**

of the word . This means I must act upon my faith even if I fear or doubt or think negatively about my situation. I will take a **step of faith** trusting in God. I must choose to make God big by keeping my eyes on Him and the mountain of problems will become small.

In the Bible, the lady with the issue of blood (*Mk 5:25*) was bleeding for 12 years. The more she heard about Jesus the more her faith grew till it reached a point where she was convinced that even touching Jesus' garment would heal her. Her faith brought her healing.

The opposite of faith is doubt, unbelief, fear etc. The moment I allow fear to rule me it means I am not trusting God. I doubt His ability to help me, to take care of me or to overcome my weakness. The very first step to exercise faith is by saying **“Yes”** to God like Mother Mary. God has given us a free will, He cannot make us say Yes, we have to choose Him and say “Yes” and bow to His will.

- *Carmen Fernandes*

WINDOW THROUGH THE PAST WEEKS!

6 March 2013 – Sis. Carmen Fernandes – Lent & Personal Reflections

Lent is the time when we enter into and share in the sufferings of Christ. Many of us make sacrifices, prayers etc. every year. Everything that we do must draw us closer to Jesus and make us more like Him, we need an inner transformation. Thankfully, for the Lord, it did not end with death, but He won for us victory over death, with **His Resurrection**. However, the way to that victory is thru' death and sacrifice. The Lord suffered pain, rejection, shame, injustice, mockery at degrees which are much higher than anything you and I will ever experience. Can I say, Lord, my small sufferings of everyday life help me to bear them like you did yours? Can I learn to patiently endure small irritations? Can I release the burdens and pains to you and learn to love inspite of the hurts? Can I deal with situations and trials in a godly manner?

So what is this godly manner? It is the narrow path, dying to self, offering our body, its fleshy desires as a living sacrifice to God and renewing our mind daily with the Word of God. God puts a number one priority on **relationships**. Jesus' 2 greatest commandments were 1) Love of God; 2) Love of neighbour.

1) **Love of God:**

Jesus says if you love me you will obey my commands. His commands are a call to walking in holiness. We need to stop being passive towards sin and actively resist the devil and sin everyday. Sin which is not checked or dealt with will slowly enslave us. **Rom 6:16** says: *“You can be the slave of either sin, which leads to death or obedience which leads to saving justice.”* If I am a person who gets angry quickly and I don't try with God's grace and His Word to bring it subject to the Spirit of God then that fleshy nature will take more and more control of me. This could be the case with any addiction \ sin I have, like lust, fear, negative thinking, perverse or loose tongue, grumbling spirit, giving in to emotional outburst, a controlling spirit...it will alienate us from God and people and will rob us of the abundant life we can enjoy in Christ. We must resist the devil in our thoughts, emotions, words and habits.

2) **Love of Neighbour:**

On the Judgement day, we will be judged not based on the gifts of the Spirit we have operated, but based on the fruit of the spirit we have exhibited. Today, we give more importance to things than to people. Somebody makes a dent in my car and I get all worked up but I say sharp words to make a hole in someone's heart which will take a life time to recover from and that does not move me in the least. Yes, we must correct our brothers and sisters, family members, as correction is a part of loving but are we doing it in love? Correction not done in love is like **a surgery without anaesthesia**. **Rom 15:7** says: *“Accept one another, then, for the sake of God's glory, as Christ accepted you”*.

We may win some battles and we may lose some, but let us never stop fanning the flame of love in our hearts for God and for our neighbor.

27 March 2013 – Bro. Manuel Fernandes – Humility

Humility is what Jesus showed each of us by His stooping down and washing the feet of his disciples as narrated in (*Jn 13:1*). He has set this example so that, we, in turn, are able to wash each other's feet. St. Paul in his letter to *Philippians 2:6-8* tells us that, Jesus humbled himself and became obedient by accepting death on the Cross.

In Mt 23:12 we are told that, “*the one who exalts himself shall be humbled, and the one who humble himself shall be exalted.*” *Isaiah 14:12* tells us how Lucifer who was created by God as an angel, had fallen down because of his pride and thrown into hell. Satan uses our weaknesses especially in the area of pride, anger, ego, self-centeredness, negativity as the main tools for the downfall of mankind. But, when we yield to the working of the Holy Spirit, we will be able to walk the path that Jesus wants us to walk to live in humility. Some of the ways we can achieve this are:

1. **Prayer** (*1 Th 5:15*) – “*Pray without ceasing.*” Prayer is the most important tool to live in humility, by having that close relationship with our heavenly Father.
2. **Reconciliation** (*Jas 5:16*) – “*Humility before God is not complete unless there is humility before man.*” We have to *confess our sins daily to God and also acknowledge our sins to one another.* *Ps 51:17* says “*a humble and contrite heart God will not despise*”.
3. **Take wrong patiently** (*1 Pet 3:8-17*) - Patiently responding to the unjust accusation and actions of others, demonstrates our strength of godly character and provides an opportunity to put on humility.
4. **Submit to Authority** (*1 Pet 2:18*) - Whether they like you or not, you submit and respect those whom God has placed as authorities in your life.
5. **Receive correction & feed back from others graciously** (*Pr 10:-17 & 10:1*) - Healthy suggestion which people give, look for the kernel (core) of truth, people offer you.
6. **Choose to serve others** - When we serve others, we are serving God's purpose in our lives.

7. **Be quick to forgive** (*Mt 18:21-25*) - Forgiveness is possibly one of the greatest acts of humility we can possess.
8. **Cultivate a grateful heart** (*1 Th 5:18*) - The more we develop an attitude of gratitude, it helps us to be humble of heart.
9. **Purpose to speak well of others** (*Eph 4:31*) - Speaking well of others edifies them and builds them up.

The more recent example on humility I could share is on Pope Francis, when he was elected by the College of Cardinals, he came to the balcony and greeted the people, before he could give his blessings, he asked the people a favour - to pray for him. On his inaugural mass, as he was being driven in the Pope mobile at St. Peter's square to greet all people, he saw a disabled man, he got down from Pope-mobile and went down and kissed him.

10 April 2013 – Bro. Harry Rasquinha– Pathway of Faith

One of the main reasons why we fail to draw strength from the promises of God is our inability to manage “Fear”. Various kinds of Fear affect our life in many ways, because it:

- Stifles our thinking, hinders our growth, seriously damages our self-image and self-confidence
- Weakens our ability to make right, timely and proper decisions
- Affects our emotional well-being and may cause physical problems too
- Affects our capacity to achieve what God want us to achieve

Since fear is not of the Lord, learning to manage our fears is of great importance. If we want to grow in our Christian life we need to reject the pathway of fear/worry/anxiety and walk the pathway of Faith. These 5 points (5 “P”s) may help to manage our fears, worries and anxieties.

1. **POWER OF GOD** – God is the sovereign ruler of the entire universe. Everything and everyone is subject to him. He is in absolute control of everything, as in scripture *Ps 103:9, Jer 32:17 & 26, Luke 1:37-38*.

2. PROMISES OF GOD - Hearing God's Word ignites faith in us (*Rom 10:17*). God can bring out good from every situation (*Rom 8:28*).
3. PRESENCE OF GOD - *Ps 46:1-2, Mt 28:20, Ps 23:4*.
4. POSITIVE THOUGHT - Do not go to bed with negative thoughts in the mind, instead with a positive thought/promise so that God can work in our sub-conscience through that positive thought even in our sleep (*Js 3:5, Phil 4:8*) fill your mind with all that is true and not untrue or half-true things which are from the enemy.
5. PRACTICAL ASPECT - Our God is a practical God, he has never promised a life without problems, but he has promised his grace and strength to carry us through. (*Jn 16:33, 2 Cor 12:9*).

If we neglect God's Word we are heading for trouble. We need to strengthen ourselves with his Word constantly, so that we walk in his ways.

17 April 2013 – Bro. Mario Alvares – Growing in Faith

What is Faith? Faith is to hope for things which are not seen.

3 ways to grow in Faith: a) Praying to God, b) Reading the Word of God & c) listening to the Word of God and most important is obeying the Word of God. "Blessed are those who hear the Word of God and obey it." (**Instructions + Involvement = Spiritual Growth**) *Jas 1:22* "But *be doers of the Word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves.*" In this Chapter of James we learn about 2 types of hearers:

1. Careless hearers – Characteristics:

- a) Deceived hearers – are like the hearers who because they hear the Word of God and they understand the Word, or are regular church goers or they attend every prayer meeting or they are the members of the prayer groups think that they know everything. But when called to work for the Lord then they are unwilling or hesitant to be involved. (e.g. my own unwillingness to join the Word ministry).
- b) Distracted hearers – are those who have a good look at themselves in the mirror but once out they immediately forget what they were like.

c) They are like those who come to church or for prayer meetings regularly, they listen to the Word of God, but once they are out of the Church or Prayer Meetings they lead their own life. They are like those seeds which fall on the ROCKY SOIL. Once out, they get distracted by the outside surroundings and forget the Word of God. (e.g. the fig tree outside the prayer meeting)

d) Do nothing hearers – are those hearers who listen to the word of God and do nothing about it. They come to Church and for prayer meetings just for fulfilling an obligation or because they feel good being present (e.g.: about the boy who lost his faith).

2. **Careful hearers** – are those who look intently, listen intently and apply it in life, i.e. abiding in it.

“Blessed are those who hear the Word and obey it”. Once you hear God’s Word, think about it, pray and ask for God’s discernment and act upon it, you start obeying the Word and this in turn brings blessings.

And what does God want us to do? A simple law would be:

- a) To love our God
- b) To love others
- c) To witness to others (visiting hospitals/jails)
- d) Serving others (praying with others and reaching out to those in need)

CHILDRENS BIBLE QUIZ – 20 QUESTIONS

This is a quiz prepared for the children in our community, so let them try this out preferably on their own, without an adult’s assistance. Most of the questions are not too tough, but the children are encouraged to refer to the Holy Bible as required.

- 1. How many brothers did Joseph have?
- 2. Noah sent out 2 different kinds of birds from the Ark. What were they?

3. After the flood, what sign did God give that He would not destroy the earth with a flood again?
4. Who found baby Moses in the river?
5. What was the name of the mountain where Moses was given the 10 Commandments?
6. What were Gideon's weapons when he fought the Midianites?
7. What was the first miracle of Jesus recorded in the Bible?
8. What kind of work did Zacchaeus do?
9. When Jesus was on the Mount of Transfiguration, who were the Old Testament men who appeared with Him?
10. Who was in prison with Paul in Philippi when they were singing and there was an earthquake?
11. What four books tell about Jesus life on Earth?
12. What is the longest book in the Bible?
13. What is the shortest book in the Bible?
14. Which book in the Bible did Jesus directly write?
15. What was another name for the Apostle Paul?
16. What was another name for Jacob?
17. How many tribes did ancient Israel have?
18. In what language was most of the Old Testament given?
19. In what language was most of the New Testament given?
20. Who was Jesus' most famous cousin?

Please send in your answers numbered 1-20 to oasis@mipcmuscat.org by 30th June 2013.

The answers to our last edition Quiz on the 30 Books of the Bible are as follows: 1) Mark 2) Amos 3) Luke 4) Joel 5) John 6) Judges 7) Job 8) Hebrews 9) Esther 10) Acts 11) James 12) Ruth 13) Romans 14) Titus 15) Mathew 16) Genesis 17) Philemon 18) Chronicle 19) Daniel 20) Nahum 21) Hosea 22) Lamentations 23) Revelations 24) Timothy 25) Samuel 26) Numbers 27) Peter 28) Malachi 29) Exodus 30) Kings

We take pride in announcing the names of our 4 participants, who are ***Joash & Janice Saldanha, Juliet D'Souza and Yohan Yesudas***. We hope to see more numbers for our current quiz in this edition of the Oasis.

ALPHABETS THROUGH LIFE'S PHASES

*A*lthough things are not perfect
*B*ecause of trial or pain
*C*ontinue in thanksgiving
*D*o not begin to blame
*E*ven when the times are hard
*F*ierce winds are bound to blow
*G*od is forever able
*H*old on to what you know
*I*mage life without His love
*J*oy would cease to be
*K*eep thanking Him for all the things
*L*ove imparts to thee
*M*ove out of 'Camp Complaining'
*N*o weapon that is known
*O*n earth can yield the power
*P*raise can do alone
*Q*uit looking at the future
*R*edeem the time at hand
*S*tart every day with worship
*T*o 'thank' is a command
*U*ntil we see Him coming
*V*ictorious in the sky
*W*e'll run the race with gratitude
*X*alting God most high
*Y*es, there'll be good times and yes some will be bad, but...
*Z*ion waits in glory...where none are ever sad!



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.*

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