



“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

VOL VII - ISSUE 6

NOV-DEC 2010

The Theme for 2010: Live By the Spirit (Gal 5:16)

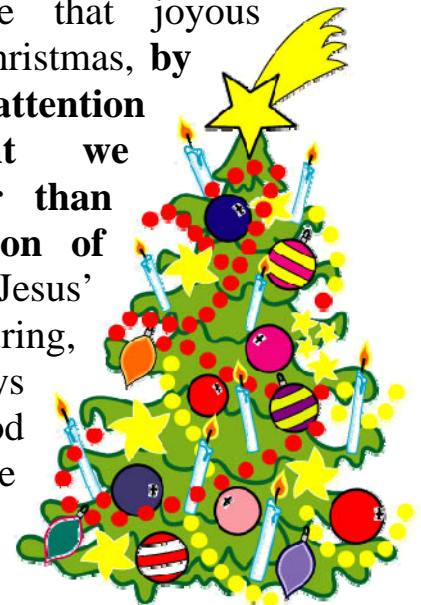
CONTENTS

- *Preparing for Christmas.*
- *The Teflon Pontiff.*
- *Reflection on Our Theme.*
- *The Life of Saint Nicholas.*
- *The Highly Favoured One.*
- *Christmas Goodies! (Recipes)*
- *Jesus, the Ultimate Christmas Gift!*
- *My Shoes.*
- *Children’s Bible Quiz #47.*
- *Answers to Bible Quiz #46a&b.*
- *Smile Awhile.*
- *Intercession.*
- *Testimonies*
- *St. Nicholas – A Poem.*

PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS

Occasions are times of celebration, happiness and enjoyment, a time of anticipated joy. However, for every occasion to be a success and to truly enjoy it, it requires thoughtful planning and detailed preparation, and the amount of effort, time and involvement put into it, determines the measure of happiness and fulfilment we receive. Like all occasions, Christmas too, needs prior preparation to truly enjoy and experience its essence and the joy that it brings.

Let us recapture that joyous excitement this Christmas, by **refocusing our attention on the event we celebrate, rather than on the celebration of the event.** It is Jesus’ birth we are honouring, and that always makes for a good Christmas. Before



we prepare ourselves for the party-going, gift-shopping, and family gatherings, we need to prepare ourselves spiritually, and how do we start?

We need to give our Spirits not just a quick shower of verbal repentance, but a long,

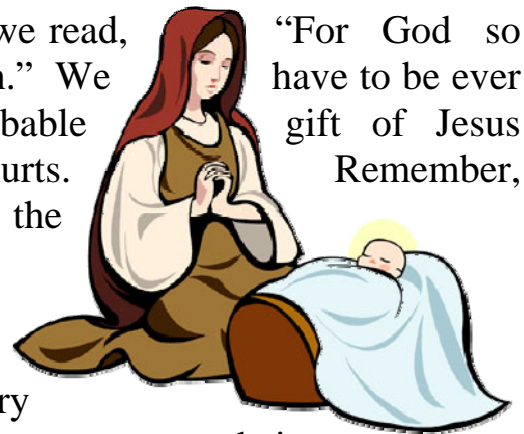
Pray the 6:30 Call Daily!

deep, cleansing bath, a return to the depths of our souls to review our lives and delve into the areas that cause us to sin. We need to wash away the dirt and grime collected over time that weaken us and cause us to fall repeatedly, through a good confession, which will thereafter make us feel good and crispy clean.

We are in the season of Advent; a time of awaiting Christ's coming into our hearts, our homes and our lives. Christ the Prince of Peace will only abide in peace, so to have him abide in us, we should first be at peace with ourselves and with others. But most importantly, we should be at peace with God. We should strive to have that peace which passes understanding, which only God can give. For only then, can we enjoy true peace, which is, the presence of God in our lives.

During these days, we should make a special effort to be extra loving and caring not only towards those in our family, but to all those whom we encounter in our daily lives. If we begin with love and give ourselves this Christmas, it will make a difference in others' lives. For if we are grounded and rooted in Christ's love, we will reach out to all those in need willingly, even if it requires sacrifice and pray for lost souls in love, offering it as a living sacrificial gift of love to the Lord. We should also live in Hope, for a better life on earth in and through Christ, and eternal life in heaven. Devoting special time to Prayer, reading scripture related to Christ and his second coming, and spiritual books which will ignite a new fire of love for Christ and spreading the good news.

Christmas is a time of giving. When we give gifts, let us give generously and with careful thought. Let us give gifts that will make a difference in someone's life. Quite often our gifts are inadequate, because we have not learned the art of giving from our heavenly Father. In John 3:16 we read, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." We have to be ever grateful and thankful to our Father for his indescribable gift of Jesus and learn to give with love and be generous till it hurts. Remember, the best gifts are tied with heartstrings. Hence, let the Spirit of Christmas giving; be seen in all our living!



I am reminded of a story of two women who were dressed in their finest and having lunch in a very exclusive restaurant, when a friend saw them and came over to their table to greet them and asked, what was the special occasion they were celebrating. One of the women said she was celebrating her baby's second birthday, to which the friend inquired where the baby was. The mother happily replied that her mother was looking after him. For if they had brought him along, they wouldn't have been able to have any fun. How ridiculous! A birthday celebration for a child who wasn't

welcome at his own party? Yet, when you stop to think about it, that's no more foolish than going through the Christmas season, with all of its festivities, without remembering the One whose birth we are supposed to be honouring. And that's the way many people celebrate Christmas. In all the busyness of the party-going, gift-shopping, and family gathering, the One whose birthday they are commemorating is completely forgotten. Make sure you don't leave out the Lord Jesus, give him the honour he deserves. There is always the danger of celebrating Christmas and losing Christ!!!

Finally, don't forget to say a prayer when preparing those mouth-watering sweets and cooking those delicious meals for Christmas. While mixing your ingredients, add a pound of sweetness with your sugar, perhaps two pounds of good cheer with your flour, a dollop of gratitude with your butter, new life in Christ with your eggs, to brighten the lives of family and friends who partake of the delicacies.

Let this Christmas, be a time to think of what God gave to us and what we can give to Him and **REJOICE!**

Charmaine D'Souza

The Teflon Pontiff

Ever since he was elected in April 2005, the media have been expecting Pope Benedict XVI to be tripped up and rejected by the masses that flocked to John Paul II, his outgoing, charismatic predecessor. But it hasn't happened.

Indeed, possibly as a legacy of John Paul's outreach to the entire world, in the first few years of his papacy Benedict drew even larger crowds than Karol Wojtyla did. The crowds have subsided a bit, but again and again, Pope Benedict has advanced, gliding unharmed through hoops of fire, around traps and past ambushes.

From the Convention of the Church in Italy, held at Verona in 2005, which the media had ominously suggested might burst the bubble of existing divisions within the Church, to the controversy over the speech at Regensburg, which ended up in meetings and inter-religious dialogue of the highest level, Josef Ratzinger has consistently turned troubles into triumphs.

His trips to North America, Australia, France and most recently the United Kingdom, were all preceded by months of serious challenges and even provocation. Atheist campaigners even called for his arrest upon his arrival in Britain. But every dispute, every trip, has ended with the acclaim of the people, of the authorities and -

most miraculously - of the media.

Even the priestly sex scandal turned into a boomerang, when it was revealed that it had been none other than Cardinal Ratzinger who had insisted on rigorously cleaning house once the abuses had come to light, under his watch at the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Ironically, the fact that it had been he who had prevailed over more lenient policies, might never have come to light had not part of the press insisted on pinning the blame on him.

The attacks won't stop, of course. But in the five and a half years of Benedict's Papacy, they have all led to an increase in the prestige of the Catholic Church.

In a final irony, the man derided as "God's rottweiler", a stern and distant intellectual, connects with the people, drawing crowds from every age, background, and walk of life. Take the traditional summer appearances in Castel Gandolfo. Quite often Pope Benedict returns to Rome for the Wednesday audiences, because the square could not hold all of the people who sought to be there.

Far from marking its demise, under Josef Ratzinger's watch the Catholic Church has been recovering its reputation and, along with it, the ability to spread its message. Whoever would have thought that this quintessential intellectual, 83 going on 84, would rewrite the public relations textbooks?

By: Alessandra Nucci Contributed by Charmaine D'Souza

Reflecting on Our Theme –“Live by the Spirit” (Gal 5:16)

God the Father sent the Holy Spirit to earth so that His Son Jesus Christ is glorified and can lead believers into all truth. If we remember, on the eve of His crucifixion, Lord Jesus said to the disciples, “It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do



not go away, the Helper shall not come to you, but if I go, I will send Him to you, but when He, the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth and he will disclose to you what is to come. He shall glorify Me, for He shall take of Mine and shall disclose it to you.”

The Holy Spirit came to enable us to know Christ, through our new birth, and to give us the power to live and share the abundant life which Jesus promised to all who trust Him”.

If we are to live by the Spirit, then we should be filled with the Holy Spirit. We need to ask, “Why we are not filled with the Holy Spirit?” Perhaps it's due to our lack of Knowledge and unbelief. These two reasons will lead us to

You've not begun to live until you've prepared to die.

disobedience, rejecting God's love and forgiveness. Trust is another word for faith and without faith it is impossible to please God.

How can one be filled with the Holy Spirit?

We are filled with the Holy Spirit by faith. We become Christians by faith, as the scripture says, "for by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of ourselves it is the gift of God, not as a result of works that no one should boast".(Ep.2:8)

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him. We received Christ by faith. We walk by faith. Everything we receive from God from the moment of our spiritual birth until we die is by faith. So if you want to be filled with the Holy Spirit, you can right now, as you read this article, wherever you are, you can be filled with the Holy Spirit by faith.

One may not barter with God to fill you with His Holy Spirit. No barter system works with God, by fasting or weeping or begging or pleading- as the scripture says "the just shall live by faith" we do not earn God's fullness, we receive it by faith. But we must also desire to live a life that will please our Lord. Be willing to surrender your life to Christ in accordance with the command of God, as in Rom12:1-2

Confess every sin which the Holy Spirit calls to your remembrance and experience the cleaning and forgiveness which God promises 1Jn1:9.

From the day we became Christians, the Holy Spirit already dwells within us, and He has imparted in us spiritual life causing us to be born anew as a child of God as the scripture says, 1 Cor.12:13,"For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body"

St. Paul in his letter to the Eph.5:18, commands all believers to be filled, directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit continually every day of our lives, and the promise given to us in 1 Jn 5:14, is that when we pray according to God's will He hears and answers us. If we pray to be filled with God's Spirit, He will hear and answer us. He will fill you and me, but let our faith be child-like! Then we can walk by His Spirit daily which will help us to live a holy life pleasing to God. This will enable us to inherit His Kingdom, which is the primary reason why God led our community to this theme "Live by His Spirit.

By Renato Gomes

Saint Nicholas (Santa Claus)

As a little child, I still vividly remember spending anxious days before Christmas. Like most kids, Christmas filled me with expectations of a new dress, painting the house, delicious sweets (especially the process of preparing them) and Christmas gifts. We had a family Christmas tree, that was prettily decorated and all the gifts were secretly placed under the tree, when we were away for the mid-night service.

How did this all start? There are different versions and here is one popular account of the origin of "Santa Claus".

It is well known that the name "Santa Claus" comes to us by way of the Dutch "Sinter Klaas," which in turn, was a form of Saint Nicholas. Our modern Santa Claus took his name from the Christian Saint Nicholas so we need to begin with a look at this Christian bishop of the fourth century.

Throughout history, Nicholas of Myra (d. 350) has been one of the most beloved saints even apart from the Santa Claus context. In fact, George McKnight claims that both in the eastern and western Church, Nicholas is "the object of extreme veneration, to a degree un-equalled in the case of any other saint." The first historical record of his veneration is the fact that the emperor Justinian built a church in his honour in Constantinople around the year 540.

Nicholas is the patron saint of entire nations, including Greece, Russia, Sicily, and Lorraine, and many cities throughout Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Holland, and Italy. He is also patron saint of children, bakers, merchants, and mariners.

Ironically, very little factual information is actually known about this most popular saint. In the words of Weiser, there is scarcely any definite historical fact known about him except that he was bishop of Myra in Asia Minor; that he was cast into exile and prison during the persecution of Emperor Diocletian and released by Constantine the Great; that he died in Myra about 350, and in the year 1087 his body was brought by Italian merchants from Myra to the city of Bari in Italy, where his relics are still preserved and venerated in the church of San Nicola. The legends surrounding this truly remarkable Saint abound.



Saint Nicholas was born in Patara of Lycia about the middle of the third century, of

devout and wealthy parents who provided him with a Christian upbringing and education. He was orphaned at an early age of 14. Later he was ordained a priest, and when the bishop of his district died, he was made Bishop of Myra of Lycia. (Now Turkey)

The name of Saint Nicholas has traditionally been linked with acts of loving generosity and kind-hearted giving, especially to the poor. There was a poor man who had three daughters. In those days a large dowry had to be arranged to secure a suitable groom. Without the dowry, it was unlikely that a girl would be able to marry. This poor man's daughters were therefore destined to be sold into slavery. But surprisingly, on three different occasions, a bag of gold appeared in their home providing the much needed dowries. The bags of gold tossed through an open window, are said to have landed in stockings or shoes left before the fire to dry. This led to the custom of children hanging stockings or putting out shoes eagerly awaiting gifts from Santa Claus. Thus St. Nicholas, (Santa Claus) has become a legendary gift-giver!

Because of the gift-giving legends associated with Nicholas, it was held (especially in Belgium and Holland) that on the Eve the Feast of Nicholas, the bishop himself would come from heaven and visit children in their homes, giving gifts to those who had been good. Nicholas, decked out in full ecclesiastical garb (bishop's vestments, with mitre and crozier), would arrive on a flying grey horse (or white donkey, depending on the custom). In some variations of the legend, he was accompanied by Black Peter, an elf whose job was to punish children who had been bad!

There are other legends as well. It is said that his faith was so great, that with his prayer alone he calmed a stormy sea while on a trip to the Holy Lands. For this reason, sailors pay homage to him as their protector.

He fought for the cause of Orthodoxy and took part in the First Ecumenical Synod of Nice. Especially well known are his charity and his love for children. He used his great wealth to relieve all who were in need: poor families, widows, and especially orphans and poor children. For this same purpose he founded, as Bishop, a poorhouse, hostelryes, and a hospital.

He was the personification of Christian love and affection. As such he is honored by the entire Christian world, both the Eastern and the Western. For all of us Saint Nicholas is a "Canon of faith and an image of goodness and kindness." Here are a few more of the many legends and miracles are attributed to him:

- When he was an infant, his mother only nursed him on Wednesdays and Fridays;

he fasted the remaining days.

- He halted a storm at sea in order to save three drowning sailors.
- During his lifetime, he adored children and often threw gifts anonymously into the windows of their homes.
- His father left him a fortune which he used to help poor children.
- He grabbed the sword of an executioner to save the life of a political prisoner.
- He brought back to life several children who had been killed.

We are on the threshold of Christmas, the embodiment of God's immense love for each and every one of us. "For God so loved the world...Jn 3:16." The true message of Christmas is God's incarnation for our salvation. G.K. Chesterton once asked a very pertinent question. "When we were children, we were grateful to those who filled our stockings with gifts at Christmas. Why are we not grateful to God, for filling our stockings with legs?"

In the midst of the celebration let us not forget to thank God for the many blessings bestowed on us. Christmas is a time for forgiveness, a time for charity, and a time for LOVE.

Flavia Pereira

The Highly Favoured One

"And the angel came unto her, and said, Hail, thou that are highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women" (Lk 1:28)

Jesus was growing in Mary; and when she manifested Jesus what a blessing she became! "From henceforth all generations shall call me blessed" (LK 1:48) from the day you manifest Christ to the world, generations are going to bless you.

When Jesus was manifested, while Herod and the people were greatly troubled, the heavenly hosts were rejoicing. When Christ is manifested through us, there will be great rejoicing among the saints, but the devil and his emissaries will tremble.

Shepherds came to see the baby Jesus. When we manifest Jesus through our life, many "shepherds" will come. Many servants of God will arise; many will be inspired to step out to serve God – to save souls and nurture them into Christ likeness.



When Christ was manifested many wise men came from afar. Precious souls will come to us from faraway places. How richly we will be blessed when we show Jesus to the world.

People are not interested in seeing us, or in knowing about our greatness. People want to see Jesus “Sir, we want to see Jesus” (Jn 12:21) this is the cry of people everywhere. But are we able to help them? How often we show our selfish, quarrelling and complaining nature to those around us? As we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Lord let us reflect and try to find out how best we can manifest Jesus in our life so that we become a blessing to others.

From Morning Manna submitted by Josena Varghese

CHRISTMAS GOODIES!

Holly Wreaths, Stars of Bethlehem & Christmas Trees

Ingredients

Plain white flour	100 gms
Plain wholemeal flour	700 gms
Baking powder	4 (level tspns)
Caster Sugar	100 gms
Crushed/rolled Oats	100 gms
Butter/Margarine	300 gms
Milk	300 ml
Ready-to-roll icing (white)	4 lbs.
Flour and icing sugar for rolling	
Food colouring	
Biscuit cutters - Star, Christmas tree, Holly Wreaths	



Method:

1. Put the flours, oats, sugar and baking powder in a mixing bowl. Cut the butter/margarine into small pieces and add to the flour. Using the tips of your fingers and your thumbs, pick up a few pieces of butter or margarine and some flour mixture and rub them together so that the pieces of butter/margarine get even smaller and mixed. Keep rubbing until all the big crumbs have gone and the mixture looks a bit like breadcrumbs.

Gradually add a little milk, mixing in just enough with your fingers to form a ball. Add a little more milk if the dough seems dry.

2. Sprinkle a little flour on the work surface and rolling pin and roll out the dough until it is very thin. Cut out Stars, Wreaths and Christmas tree shapes and put the biscuits on baking sheets and bake in a pre-heated oven set at 200 degrees C (400 degrees F) for 10-15 minutes or until pale brown. Take the baking sheets

out and carefully put the biscuits on the wire racks to cool.

3. Divide the ready-to-roll icing and put a few drops of required food colours – red, green, pink and yellow, and knead into the icing dough. Sprinkle the work surface and rolling pin with icing sugar and roll out the icing. Use biscuit cutter to cut out the shapes the same as the biscuits. Brush the underside of the icing with a little water and stick the shapes on to the biscuits.

4. Colour the stars pink and yellow and decorate with silver balls, big in the centre and smaller around. The wreath green and decorate with bits of glace cherries at intervals in the wreaths. The tree green and decorate with big and small silver balls and bits of cherries. You can double the quantity as required.

Merry Christmas!

Contributed by: Charmaine D'Souza

Jesus, the Ultimate Christmas Gift

God so loved the world that He gave... John 3:16

Jesus is the gift that perfectly fits every heart
and it is with His love that all celebration starts.

We rejoice in Him as we remember His birth
and thank God for sending His only Son to earth.



His life led from a manger to a cross on a hill
where He faithfully followed His Father's perfect will.
He freely laid down everything so that we could live
and there is no greater treasure anyone could give.

Like a scarlet ribbon His love wrapped around the cross
and He offered it to us all at the greatest cost.
So each time that we give we remember what He's done
and honor the perfect Gift - God's one and only Son.

Adapted from Dayspring Blessings

My Shoes

I Thank God for my shoes because they fit--perfectly!

I woke up one day and I realized that there were many things about my life I was not satisfied with; there were some challenges that were threatening my soul.

And I said to myself. “Why should anyone envy me and want to be in my shoes.” They don’t know how far I’ve come. They don’t know what lies ahead of me, and neither do they know how dissatisfied I get with myself from time to time.

People don’t know the troubles that you’ve had or the price you had to pay to get to where you are. They only wish that they could be like you!

Why should you wish you were in somebody else’s shoes when you hardly know how they fit?

When you’ve worn your shoes for a while, they take the shape of your feet and align to the way you walk. If you were to wear my shoes, you would not be comfortable in them.

So I stopped wishing that I was in someone else shoes, because it might not fit, rather I thank God for my own shoes, because they perfectly fit!

I have learnt to be the best in what I do, and I know no-one can replace me anywhere and in any sphere.

I am an original, my God is not in the cloning business. He makes originals!

Make the best of what you do: besides you have this beautiful life to live ONLY ONCE.

Live it to the fullest.

Valerie

Children’s Bible Quiz # 47

1. Which four books reveal the good news of Jesus birth?
2. What are the first five books of the Old Testament?
3. Which is the last book in the bible?
4. Who were the people who followed a star to bring precious gifts to a very special child?
5. Name three sons of Adam & Eve
6. Who was sent to tell Mary she would have a son & where did he meet her?
7. How old was Jesus when He started His ministry/work? (Lk)
8. Which place is called City of David? (Lk 2)

Please submit your answers by 1st Feb 2011

Answers to Bible Quiz # 46a

1. How to recognize wisdom and good advice and understand sayings with deep meaning.
2. How to live intelligently, be honest, just and fair.
3. Make a person clever.
4. How to be resourceful
5. Adds to the knowledge of the wise
6. How to understand the hidden meaning of proverbs and the problems that wise man raise.
7. To have reverence for God.
8. Pay attention to what your father and mother tell you.
9. Don't give in to temptation.
10. We will have security. We will be safe and have no reason to be afraid.

Answers to Bible Quiz # 46b

1)A 2)A 3)A 4)B 5)B 6)B

Winners of Bible Quiz #46a & b

**Jovita Niveda Rayen (12), Dexter Fernandes (12) Kyra Stevens
Ruvena Gomes (12), Alfred Menzis (13),
Jason Rosario Rayen (8) & Aveni Bosco Correia (8)**

SMILE AWHILE

“How Do I Get into Heaven?” a teacher asked the children in her Sunday school class,

“If I sold my house and my car, had a big garage sale and gave all my money to the church, would I get into heaven?”

“NO!” the children all answered.

“If I cleaned the church every day, mowed the yard, and kept everything neat and tidy, would I get into heaven?”

Again, the answer was “NO!”

“Well,” she continued, “then how can I get to heaven?”

In the back of the room, a five-year-old boy shouted out,

“You gotta be dead!”



Let's Intercede for Haiti

It would be an understatement to say that Haiti is having a bad year - in an earlier issue of the OASIS newsletter, I had penned a few words on the devastating earthquake in Haiti and what it had made me reflect on. Little did I imagine at the time that come Dec 2010, the people of Haiti would be in the midst of another disaster like the current cholera outbreak, even while the country is still trying desperately to recover from the earlier tragedy!

In fact, all of this is also happening in the midst of a political crisis. The presidential elections last month led to street protests as 12 of the 18 candidates said the balloting was fraudulent. Just to have an idea of the human lives lost to date, the earthquake is said to have caused between 250,000 to 500,000 deaths while the death toll of the on-going cholera outbreak has risen to 1,817 as of the beginning of December and is still rising.

One might wonder why Haiti of all places, and why such a double whammy? Only our good Lord knows the reason behind this tragedy, but what we, as His children, do know for sure, is that whatever be the severity of the situation, there is nothing that cannot be resolved when we place the problem at the feet of Our Father in prayer. As we read in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, **“Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.”**

So I would urge that we, who are so blessed to be in our privileged situation, cry out the below intercessory prayer from our hearts, to our merciful and loving God, so that He will take complete control of the healing of the minds, bodies and spirits of the Haitian people.

“Father God, we pray today that your people all over the world unite to help these precious people. Move mightily in all of this chaos, Lord - bless the survivors of the earthquake and this cholera epidemic with medical care, food and shelter. Let the medical aid reach those who are most in need, wherever they may be in this poor country.

Lord, we pray for peace and calm in this land; let there not be frustrations and anger any more. Bless them with good governance and honourable leaders, who will use the aid coming in to the benefit of their people and country, and not misuse it for themselves.

Lord, bless all those who have lost family members, like the many children who have lost their parents; keep them safe from predators and child molesters, and

give them loving homes again in your infinite mercy.

Lord, we cry out to you to save the people of Haiti, and we stand together in unity, praying that the covering of your precious blood be upon them! We make this prayer in the most powerful name of Jesus, our Lord, Amen.”

Daniel Sequeira

Our Intercessory Prayers Are Desperately Needed

On October 31st the most horrifying slaughter took place in Baghdad. Two priests were killed as they celebrated Holy Mass (ages 27 and 32 yrs old). One other priest was severely injured and is critical. The priests begged for their lives to be taken if their flock would be spared. Instead all were murdered, even the children. This is an atrocity as well as a huge tragedy.

On Oct. 14 alleged Hard-line Hindus in Paikamara, Puri, Orissa, confined three recent converts to Christianity in a house and assaulted them. Aswini Sahu, Sanatana Jena and Amulya Swain became Christians six months ago after listening to Christian radio broadcasts. When the Hindu extremists learned of it, they threatened them and expelled them from the village after they continued to worship Christ.

The Egyptian government discriminates against Christians and hampers their freedom of worship. The government enforces restrictions on building or repairing churches and restricts Christians from senior government, diplomatic, military, and educational positions. There has also been increasing discrimination in the private sector. The government subsidizes media which attack Christianity and also restricts Christian's access to the state-controlled media.



The persecution of Christians continues in in many Countries and our prayers are desperately needed.

Let us all recite this special Intercessory prayer for the persecuted as often as possible!

God our Father, we pray for all Christians in Iraq, India, Egypt, Pakistan, Sudan and in many places, all over the world who are suffering persecution because of their faith . Be with them Lord, and fill them with your power and strength that they may remain strong in their faith and bear all the trials with courage and

perseverance, trusting in your most Holy Name. We make this prayer through Jesus our Lord. Mother Mary, intercede for all your persecuted children. Amen

Richard Mascarenhas

A Testimony-Faith and Prayers Make Everything Possible.

I will praise you Lord, with all my heart: I will tell of all the wonderful things you have done. I will sing with joy because of you. I will sing praise to you almighty God. Ps 9:1,2.

My 13 year old daughter Veylonie, was hit by a speeding vehicle on the 23rd September and suffered very serious head injuries.

She was rushed to the hospital and immediately admitted into the ICU. My husband and I rushed to the hospital and we were stunned and devastated to see our precious daughter lying there with tubes in her mouth and connected to numerous other monitoring machines. We could see no sign of injury or blood, yet she was unconscious.

The doctor finally revealed how serious her accident was, explaining that her head has been damaged on both sides and there was evidence of blood clotting in her brain. In short, our daughter was in a very critical condition, and an emergency operation was immediately needed. The doctor explained that our daughter might not survive the operation because the injury was in a very sensitive part of her brain.

I was shattered and begged Jesus to save our daughter's life. I asked that the MIPC members should be asked to pray for her. I had full faith in my prayers to Jesus and also that the prayers of my brothers and sisters in the MIPC would be heard, because only Jesus can make the impossible, possible!

It was a four-hour operation. During this dreadful time I kept vigil, storming heaven and imploring Jesus to save my baby's life and give her back to me in perfect health like she was before. I felt the loving and comforting closeness of our Lord, who listens and cares for those who love Him.

I begged, "Lord Listen to this poor Mother, the way you heeded your own Mother's request at that wedding in Cana. Jesus, please listen to this desperate mama whose daughter is struggling between life and death." Throughout, my ordeal I had full

faith that my Lord, who can do anything, anytime, anywhere and for anyone, had heard me. **I promised the Lord that my daughter would worship him all her life.**

After four agonizing hours the doctor came out of the theatre and said he believed the operation was successful, however, he couldn't confirm for 48 hrs.

We kept praying and interceding. The day after the operation, while attending mass, I received a message that I should hold her right leg and pray. Whenever I visited her that's what I did. The following day we were told that her right side was paralyzed. I now understood the Lord's message at Mass; however, I never lost faith and kept praying.

My friend had over-heard the surgeon telling another person that he had felt someone guiding him through the entire difficult surgery. **That was surely the Hand of my God, responding to our prayers.**

Another C.T. scan was done and the doctor seemed surprised that her brain now seemed fine with no signs of damage!! On the first day he had told us that her brain had been compressed. **The damage had suddenly disappeared.**

The next day she showed some signs of movement! She was out of danger and we were delighted. Her memory seemed fine and she could see us and recognize us gradually. She started uttering words and recognizing people but she had still not fully recovered.

She started saying phrases of the Lord's Prayer. She was so weak that she hadn't enough strength to speak. I praised God for everything.

On Friday she got down from the bed and took a few steps but her right hand and leg were not showing much improvement. We kept thanking and praising God for each step she was able to take. She was improving minute by minute and day by day. We gave her Holy Communion. Immediately after receiving communion she talked so much with everyone that we couldn't believe our ears!

Days were passing but her operation wound wouldn't heal. Our daughter had to undergo another surgical procedure because they noticed signs of infection. Several procedures were done including a reoperation on the wound. Her fever finally left her and her wound started healing properly. Her paralyzed side recovered strength and she could walk and raise her hand. Praise God!

For one full month she had to remain in the hospital. Throughout this long ordeal

we kept praying incessantly and reading Psalms of Praise. We never lost faith. Our daughter is now 95% recovered. She can walk by herself and can perform all her normal activities without my support. The doctors had given us just a 2% chance for her survival. They said if she did survive, she would suffer lost memory and impaired motor functions. **With our Lord's blessings, today she's 100% perfect.**

Our delight is boundless and so is our gratitude to our beloved Father, Our Lord Jesus, His Holy Spirit and Mother Mary because our darling Veylonie is now fine, just as she was before the accident and all her organs and senses are functioning well.

We wish to thank all our brothers and sisters who prayed for our daughter and for us for strength and faith in our desperate hours.

Praise the Lord!

Bina Souza

A TESTIMONY

In Nov'09 I was diagnosed with a kidney stone (size approx. 1cm), and I suffered from frequent pains on my left & a temperature at night. In March 2010 the stone moved down to the ureter and started giving me severe pain. Doctors advised Lithotripsy at the Royal Hospital.

On the 5th blasting the stone broke into 2 pieces giving us hope they would be flushed out. Due to the blockage my kidney started getting infected.

Due to my continuing painful condition, we decided to continue further treatment in Mumbai.

The first urologist we met (25+ years' experience) explained the procedure concerning the insertion of a stent. He said the procedure would take only 5 to 10 minutes and patients are usually discharged the same day. But it took more than ½ hour with much difficulty and they kept me for 2 days under observation. After 15 days the 2nd procedure of Ureteroscopy was done with removal of one stone. During this process the other piece moved little upwards.

We then sought the opinions of 3 other urologist's before I underwent another Ureteroscopy. All of them assured us that the procedure would be 100% successful. But even the 2nd attempt by another very senior Dr. of Mumbai was without success. In fact, the stone moved back into the kidney and the x-rays showed 2 pieces. It was really very strange, even the Doctors were surprised at the situation. Again, at the Doctors' insistence I underwent lithotripsy. The Doctor also suggested

to keep the stent, which was causing severe discomfort during my daily chores, in place for 3 more months.

After the summer holidays we returned to Oman with the same situation. The stent was removed after 3 months on 17/10/2010.

All this time I was sustained by God's message, given to me during a prayer session at our home in Mumbai. A Sister from the prayer group had a vision of some black object grinding inside and with great pain flushing out like the flush in the toilet (this message was given on 04/06.10). This came true on 28th and 29th Oct. I was experiencing very severe pain, however, I was bearing it bravely because I didn't want to go again to the hospital.

YES, after the two days of pain, on the 3rd day I passed out 2 pieces of stone (size app. 5mm) without any difficulty. Thereafter, the pain started reducing gradually.

Through this mighty miraculous deliverance, I experienced the power of prayer through the intercession of Mother Mary, along with all angels and saints in Heaven, the beautiful & wonderful Army of Angels on earth in the form of my family (parents, in-laws, brs & srs of the MIPC, Legionaries of Ruwi & Ghala Parish, prayer groups & legionaries of my parish in Bombay). This Army of Angels were praying for me throughout the year unceasingly.

My earnest prayer to my Redeemer and Saviour is to give me a sincere heart to pray for each one them in my personal prayers. AVE MARIA.

Juliet Chettiar

St. Nicholas - A Poem

Holy Bishop St. Nicholas lived faraway
Near the Aegean Sea, where Turkey did lay.
Travel back with us now to a time long ago.
We will visit his country, his life we will know.

We remember this saint, such a holy, good man.
Be like him in charity, do all that you can.
Many miracles Nicholas hastened to do,
Helping people in need with gifts that were new.

Bishop Nicholas travelled to Nicea town,
Where the Creed would be written, to us handed down.
During church every Sunday, we stand for the Creed.
Thank you Bishop St. Nicholas, for doing this deed.

Sailors tossed in the wind and the storms of the sea,
Saw a vision of Nicholas who guided them free.
Now patron of sailing, they remember him yet.
Many icons and pictures with fisherman's net.

Giving money to poor girls, so marry could they,
Made our Nicholas famous, remembered today.
With dowry in hand, soon they were wed.
"God bless you and keep you," St. Nicholas said.

Kid's patron in Germany, Netherlands, too.
Asks that presents be given to children like you.
Their customs are different: they put out their shoes -
Filling them with toys, his coming's good news!

Here stockings are hung by the chimney with care,
In hope that St. Nicholas soon will come there.
Dressed as bishop or Santa, he's one and the same-
Jolly, friendly, good man, we're glad that he came.

Call him "Santa" or "saint," they both mean the same,
For his nickname is Claus, short for Nicholas' name.
Giving gifts was his custom-we still do today.
Deeds done in Jesus' name forever will stay.

Bishop Nicholas still is a hero to all.
Christmas Day, and all others we follow his call,
Bringing gifts and some joy to children in need.
Follow Nicholas today- do a good deed.



Author Unknown



Wishing every member of
The Mary Immaculate Praise Community (MIPC)
and Your Families

*A Very Happy and Holy Christmas
&
A New Year Filled with Peace, Love, Joy & Prosperity*

May the Choicest Blessings of our Lord Jesus
Be with you and your family throughout this
Special Season of Grace and Happiness
With love, Prayers and Best Wishes,

THE CORE TEAM
&
THE OASIS MINISTRY



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.