



“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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THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT

In the gospel of *Matt. 22:36-40*, the Pharisees asked Jesus this question to test Him. “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with your entire mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, you shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments, depend all the laws and the prophets.”

The question to ask oneself is, do I love God and my neighbour as Jesus said? If we look at the world today people love only themselves, love for

God and neighbour comes second; love for God takes first place when one is down with troubles and illness and love for neighbour when one wants something from another.

But Jesus specifically says; love God and your neighbour, so if we are not doing this then everything is lost. Look at all the Saints, this is what they did and God exalted them. This does not mean that everyone who does this will become a saint but God will reward those who keep His commandments.

To keep God's commandment calls for total surrender to Him. Surrender is a dirty word in the world today. It has mostly negative connotations. Some are to give in, give up, admit defeat, lay down arms, submit, yield and capitulate; surrender implies failure, a decision made only when irrevocably backed into a corner, a tattered white flag waving weakly. No wonder we avoid talking about surrender. We carry these illusions over into our spiritual lives as well, and doing so keeps many from following Christ. "Surrender to God? No thanks". Even those of us who have acknowledged our need for Jesus Christ have a difficult time surrendering to Him on a daily basis, we are just too full of ourselves, too much in control, too proud. Surrendering means that we have come to the end of our independence from Him, our reliance on self-sufficiency, and our insistence that we don't need him. Surrender to God changes everything! Surrender to God allows you to know him increasingly deeper and to participate fully in his will. By this we come to know our God in a deeper way because the Spirit of God, the HOLY SPIRIT rules our lives, our love for God grows deeper each day because we come to understand how much Jesus Christ has sacrificed for our sake, he paid the price for us to live. Our love for God deepens and we are also able to love our neighbour the way God has commanded.

The late Bishop Fulton Sheen says, "Once I surrender the tinsel to have the jewel, then I enter into the mystery of love. I see that I do not love anyone unless he has some goodness in him or is lovable in some way. But, I see also that God did not love me because I am lovable. I became lovable because God poured some of His Goodness and Love into me. I then begin

to apply this charity to my neighbour. If I do not find him lovable, I have to put love into him as God puts love into me, and thereby I provoke the response of love. Now, my personality is restored and I make the great discovery that no one is happy until he loves both God and neighbour.”

- *Philip Balfour*

TESTIMONY – 3 YEARS AT MIPC

Peace of Christ my dear brothers & sisters.

I joined MIPC 3 years back in the month of July as my husband was in a very critical condition; he had a diabetic stroke and was in a coma. My friend, who is also my school mate, advised me to join the MIPC as I would get strength and prayer support.

My husband was in a coma from 20th June till 19th July. The doctors gave only 48 hours for his survival and said only God can do a miracle in his life. His friends sent the prayer request to the Intercessory ministry. My husband was out of the coma on 20th July i.e God gave him a new life on his birthday. He was on a ventilator and doctor informed till he starts breathing by himself, he is still critical.

I attended the MIPC night vigil for the first time as I joined in July. Next day, my husband was out of ventilator and started breathing by himself. He was shifted from ICU to the general ward within 2 days. When the physiotherapist saw my husband, he said it will take more than 6 months for him to walk as he was totally paralysed. But my Lord lifted him up and he started standing, and with support started walking within one month. When the physiotherapist saw him he was surprised and said there are no words to explain how this happened. We took him to Goa for further treatment

I met Bro. Victor when he first came to Oman and he told me to join the cell as I will get more prayer support and will grow in the Lord. I joined the cell in Jan 2011. My husband was back to work within 5 months but

due to depression he had to go back, and thus lost his job. He came back after recovery within 7 months but on a visit visa. And this continued for one year, as women are not allowed to get family joining status for their husband. Recently the rule changed that if a person comes on visit visa and goes back, he can come again only after 3 months. This obstacle was also cleared as my sponsor who is very supportive and always there for me gave him the sponsorship to get him a permanent visa. Whenever I ask her anything she will always be with me.

During these 3 years I gained a lot of knowledge and wisdom from the MIPC and my faith increased in the Lord.

I learnt the following:

1. To read the word of God. In it when Jesus performed any miracles he said, "Your faith has healed you". I believe my Lord is a living God of yesterday, today and forever and whatever miracles He has performed yesterday, He will also perform today and tomorrow. Yes, He did the same miracle of Lazarus giving new life to my husband.
2. Faith comes by hearing and hearing the word of God. I hear a lot of preaching CDs and this increases my faith.
3. If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can speak to the mountain and tell him uproot and fall in the sea. This I did for my husband when he was in depression and sickness; and with faith we were able to overcome it.
4. God has given us the weapon "The Armour of God". Take the shield of faith and quench every fiery dart that the wicked ones brings against you and this I did by meditating on the word of God day and night confessing it always no matter where I am and with this I was able to overcome all the difficulties.
5. My cell group is where I grew and learnt and came closer and closer to God. They taught me how to repent, praise, give thanks to the Lord, to

worship, to be in the presence of the Lord and intercede for others. We in the cell are so close to each other like one family and every week there is a testimony to share within us.

All this helped me increase my faith day by day and to live by faith. This is my journey with the Lord in MIPC for the last 3 years. Thank you, dear brothers and sisters, and may God Bless you all.

- *Cynthia Fernandes*

TESTIMONY – POWER IN PERSONAL PRAYER

For the past 20 years, I have been attending the prayer meetings and receiving the grace week after week.

When Bro. Victor Pereira spoke on personal prayer I took the challenge I began to spend 30 or 40 minutes in personal prayer. Starting with repentance and went to praise, thanksgiving, worship, allowed the Lord to speak to me and concluded with intercession. I also read the scriptures and started to mediate on it. This practice of spending time in personal prayer for the past 3 years has actually changed me and drawn me closer to Jesus. This has helped me grow strong in faith and trust in Jesus.

Ever since I learned to surrender everything to the Lord, I have started experiencing freedom from fear and anxiety. Now I experience a personal and intimate relationship with the Trinity. I experience the comfort of the Holy Spirit every day. He strengthens me in moments of weakness and gives me patience. His wisdom helps me at my work place to finish my work on time. The Holy Spirit reminds me to pray each day without fail and feed myself with Word of God. Each day I take the precious blood of Jesus for cleansing from my sins and healing.

The improvement in my prayer life has motivated my husband also in this area.

- *Perpetual Fernandes*

WINDOW THROUGH THE PAST WEEKS

4th July 2013 – Bro. Philip Balfour – Power of the tongue

The tongue is the smallest organ of the human body, but it is so very important (*Jas 3:5*); with our tongue we can speak while without it we cannot. With our tongue we bless and / or curse, receive the Holy Communion, and pray and praise our God. With the same tongue, we abuse and curse our fellow human beings.

Can we tame our tongue - that is the question we have to ask ourselves but the word of God says (*Jas 3:8*) "No human being can tame the tongue - a restless evil, full of deadly poison." We have to look deep into ourselves because if our hearts are not clean and pure according to the will of God then what comes out of our mouths will be what the heart has within.

Therefore our relationship with God is very vital for our life. Let us always say *Ps.39:1* "I will guard my ways that I may not sin with my tongue."

11th July 2013 – Bro. Philip Balfour - For we walk by Faith, not by sight (2 Cor 5:7)

Very often we blindly stumble through life by our own strength.

God has provided a supernatural Guide to lead us - **THE HOLY SPIRIT** – (*Jn 16:13*). Do we solely depend on the Holy Spirit in our daily life? If we do then our lives will be different, but most of the time we do not, and that is why our lives are topsy-turvy. Let us therefore surrender our lives daily to the Holy Spirit. These words should help us:

**I'd rather walk in the dark with God
Then go alone in the light;
I'd rather walk by faith with Him
Then go alone by sight.**

18th July 2013 – Bro. Roman Almeida - Activate Faith and not Fear

The disciples were terrified when there was that violent storm and the boat was filling with water and Jesus was in the stern, asleep. Because of their fear they lacked faith. Jesus asked his disciples “Why are you afraid, do you still have no faith?” What Jesus was telling them was “Fear and Faith cannot co-exist.”

Fear is something all of us struggle with. I personally had my own battles with fear right from my childhood and the more my journey of life continued, the more “different” kinds of fear I had to battle.

The Bible says, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing the Word of God" (*Rom 10:17*). The careful study of God's Word is of primary importance in developing a strong faith. God wants us to know Him and completely rely on His direction in our lives. It's through the hearing, reading and meditation in the Scriptures, that we begin to experience a strong, confident faith that excludes worry and fear. Spending time in prayer and quiet worship develops a relationship with our heavenly Father that sees us through even the darkest of nights.

Do not come into agreement with fear. Stay disciplined in your thought life. Learn to activate faith and not fear.

25th July 2013 – Bro. Louis Ryan - Suffering a key to Salvation

In the Bible, Gideon (*Jg 6:13*)/(*Hb 1:2-4*) questioned God on why suffering, why the innocent suffer and the wicked flourish? God answered that He is raising up Chaldeans (*Hb 1: 6*).

Second question of Habakkuk was - is it right that God use wicked people to punish lesser wicked people (*Hb 1:13*). Habakkuk waited on the lord (*Hb 2:1*) God answered they will also be punished, Habakkuk rejoiced in the lord (*Hb 3:17-18*)

God allows suffering because God's love values freedom (Adam & Eve's

sin brought about suffering)

Causes of suffering

- Wrong decisions made by us.
- Wrong decisions of others
- Because of our grumbling / blaming God
- The past impacts the present generation (global warming / asbestos sheet)
- Natural laws (Uttarakhand / earthquake)

How is suffering key to salvation?

- Jesus suffering brought us Salvation (*Heb 5:7-10*)
- Unless a grain of wheat (*Jn 12 :24*)
- Deny oneself (*Matt 16:24*)
- To know him, the power of his resurrection and share in his suffering (*Phil 3:10*)
- Fruit bearing (*Jn 15:1-17*)
- Suffering equips us, stabilises us, strengthen us & establishes us (*1 Pet 5:10*)

Benefits of suffering

- Character is built (*1 Pet 5:10*) e.g. St. Francis of Assisi (The metal of a person's character is forged in the face of trials and sufferings)
- Draws us closer to God (*Job 42: 5*) e.g. of Jacob's broken hip bone (*Gen 32:25*)
- Help us to comfort others (*2 Co 1:3-5*)
- Suffering joyfully hastens the second coming of Christ (*2 Pet 3:11- 12*)
- Suffering keeps us from becoming proud (*2 Co 12:1*)
- Suffering produces perseverance (*Jas 1:2-4*)

1st August 2013 – Bro. Henry Sanjivi - Thanksgiving

After a vibrant Praise and Worship led by Sr. Ann Pinto, Henry shared his thoughts on “Thanksgiving”. Taking the text from (*Lk 17:11-19*), the state of the leper during Jesus’ times was explained, and how an outcast was treated by our Lord Jesus. Our compassionate Saviour meets them, when they cry out to Him and heals them. The key to their healing was their faith in the words of “Go and show yourself to the priest”.

The 10 lepers not only believed in our Lord’s words but **OBEYED**. When the Samaritan returned to give thanks **LOUDLY**, our Lord perhaps, looking at his disciples would have said – were there not 10 that were cleansed? – which is to say, *Should not all the 10 come to thank me?* The Lord was expecting thanksgiving. Give thanks in **ALL** circumstances (*1 Th 5:18*)

Thanking God will freely flow from our hearts, if we are convinced, that this world and all that is therein, belongs to the Lord (*Ps 24:1*). If we believe that all our “so called” possessions are loaned to us by God, we will be able to thank Him at all times. If we are reminded of this fact at all times, many of us will stop complaining and will start rejoicing at all times. No matter how much we thank our parents it is not enough, we should also thank our spouse, our children. (*Phil 4:6*) reminds us that even while praying, we should place our supplications with thanksgiving in our hearts (*Ps 100:4*).

Giving thanks to God, also implies that we submit to His perfect will.

EVERY PRAYER OF OURS SHOULD INCLUDE THANKSGIVING FOR THE VERY GIFT OF PRAYER ITSELF.

7th August 2013 – Sr. Carmen Fernandes - A Recap on Faith

Faith in *Heb 11:1* is defined as “Faith is to be sure of things we hope for certain of things we cannot see.”

We can only be certain of things we hope for and those things we cannot see when our faith is in God and not on people or things or ourselves. It is only God who can bring things to pass and make them concrete realities in our lives, provided we are praying according to His Will as **Rom 4:17** tells us God gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they are”. (**Rom 4:17; 17-21**).

Abraham was 75 years old when he left Haran. God had given him a vision of the stars in the sky to cling to, telling him that he will have descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky. He saw his faith becoming a reality in Isaac at the age of 100, nearly 20 years after receiving the promise. For 20 years Abraham had to believe and hold on and stand on that promise till it was fulfilled in his life. Those days the vision of the stars helped him to remember what God had promised him.

Today, we also desire a promise from God about His plan for our future, our children, our careers, etc. The Word of God is filled with the promises of God for us, but how much do we believe in the promises given and how much do we persist in that belief? How much are we holding on to those promises until we see them becoming a reality in our lives and in our family?

Very often, we are initially delighted at having a word of knowledge spoken over us or a promise from the Word given to us but as time goes by, that Word tends to fade from our memory and our heart and after some more time when circumstances look defeating or troublesome we even wonder if we had ever received the Word, if it was true or did we just imagine it all.

15th August 2013 – Bro. Keith Netto - Night Vigil

The vigil began with praising and thanking the Lord by Bro. Louis Ryan with action songs. All members took part enthusiastically.

This was then followed with a clipping and sharing by Bro. Keith, on the gospel of **Jn 3:16**. The greatest love story ever told, “For God so loved the

world that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting Life” - The gospel in a nutshell, a love letter from God written in His blood and addressed to all mankind. This means ALL are sinners and all need a Saviour. Salvation is attained only by faith.

Bro. Felix ended with interceding based on *Jn 3:16* and worshipping our Lord.

22nd August – Bro. Harry Rasquinha - Mary’s Faith

Mary is admired because she was a vessel found fit for use by God. Her life full of faith, love and virtue is an outstanding testimony to all. She is the First and the Most Perfect Disciple of Jesus. In this year of Faith, it is worthwhile focussing on the quality of Mary’s faith and learn from her.

Mary had:

1. Faith to Accept and Believe God’s Word: When the human mind normally asks for proof, reasons and signs to believe, Mary believed the Angel’s message almost instantly soon after receiving the clarification, whereas the devoted priest Zechariah had difficulty accepting the message without a sign. What was told to Mary was never heard of before (a virgin bearing a child without the help of a man) where as there were instances in the scriptures of people getting children in the old age which Zechariah was supposed to know.

Question: Whenever God speaks to us through people, books or various circumstances in life, are we ready to accept his message or wait for a sign, proof or sensible explanation to satisfy our reason?

2. Faith to endure hardships: Emotional pain, hardships, distress and anguish was part of Mary’s everyday life. By God’s strength Mary endured every trial of her life. She was constantly focusing on her goal, she kept the Lord before her (*Ps 16:8*) and was rejoicing in him (*Lk 1:46*). This is what enabled her to endure everything in life.

Question: What is our reaction to the hardships of our life like sickness,

pain, tragedy, emotional distress, trauma etc?

3. Faith never to complain/grumble/murmur: Mary never grumbled or complained while not having place in the inn or while moving to Egypt or while facing the torture and crucifixion of her son. This is a beautiful lesson for us who get so many reasons to grumble about in a day.

Question: *Phil 2:14* calls us to do everything that is to be done without grumbling or murmuring. How successful we are living this scripture?

29th August, 2013 – Bro. Felix Menezes - Walk in Faith

After the praise and worship, we were taken to the Walk to Emmaus by Bro Felix through scriptures **Lk 24:13 – 34**. We were reminded of our own faith walk and being the Year of Faith, it was more so to evaluate where we stand in our Christian faith scale.

As those two did, do we also bring in Jesus and His presence in our day to day discussion of various issues and topics and thus truly experience the power of scripture, i.e. “Where two or three are gathered in my name there am I?” This is possible and evident if we invite Jesus in our midst in every conversation and action.

Do we remember scriptures and remind God while we pray? It is very beneficial for us in the Community to read, meditate and memorize important scriptures which helps us in times of need. We have a beautiful example in **2 Chr 20: 5** onwards - how King Jehoshaphat reminds God of His Word and promises when he was in trouble to move God to act on his favour. We too are required to remind God, ourselves, our children and each other of God’s promise and His Word, especially in times of temptation as only through the Word we can resist temptation like Jesus did when He was tempted.

Further in the scripture we were reminded how some women and even men ran to the tomb to see the body of Jesus. In times of distress and difficulties we are reminded to run to our living and all powerful God and not to empty tomb and other lifeless source. As we continue our walk to Emmaus, do we

invite Jesus every moment to stay with us, so that we live in His presence? Does scripture burn and stir our heart and mind when we read, meditate and put it into practice as it happened to those two on the way to Emmaus? Here we are drawn to experience the living presence of God's greatest sacrifice and wine and bread turning into His body and blood. It is very thought provoking for each one of us to totally and completely get involved in the Eucharistic celebration and offer our brokenness and sinfulness to be transformed in His image and likeness when we go in the Peace of Christ.

Finally we are led to truly go in the peace of Christ and be strengthened in our faith when we go back to our families and community of faith. Let's not forget we are ultimately required to testify as to what the Lord has done in our lives, which in turn will strengthen our brethren in faith and that all of us would grow in Christ.

YOUTH TALK - HUMILITY

Humble or Tumble

"..You who are younger...clothe yourselves with humility toward one another because God opposes the proud and shows favour to the humble" (1 Pet 5: 5).

I do not need to repeat the well-known adage, "*Pride comes before a fall*", although I just did. And here's the Bible version: "*Before a downfall, the heart is haughty, but humility comes before honour*" (**Pro 18:12**)! Whether you're watching Lion King or reading an account of an overbearing politician, or of an eminent personality who had humble beginnings, you will only know this to be true.

Obviously, humility has an undeniable connection with our relationship with Christ. All of us wish to go to heaven but at the same time, most of us believe in shortcuts. And in the present state of affairs, with technology accelerating our lives for us, we rather text or 'Whatsapp' a 'sry' or 'sorry' to someone than do it the 'old-fashioned' way or probably the more

appropriate manner- presenting an apology in person and accompanying it with a contrite gesture.

So when did this trend of growing youth pride arise? Oh well! Unfortunately enough, youth has always been associated with pride, from even the days of the Prodigal Son. But it doesn't always have to be like that, does it? Humility is attractive, and always has been. And more importantly, it is attractive to God, who in the end, we have to please!

When I think about my unfortunate encounters with pride, be it with other people or myself, I realize that it stems from our approach towards to other people, rather than our own self-esteem. We must accept that the fact that everyone is fairly entitled to an opinion and that no one's views are superior to another's. And when we fail to do so, we simply aren't seeing the forest through the trees. Let's just take our daily interactions with our peers into perspective. Climbing the corporate ladder, achieving goals through teamwork, smoothly organizing events- all of these take less tension when everyone is as humble as they are supposed to be. Though it may be hard for us to ascertain, worry is actually a form of pride! And in my experience, it can definitely show lack of faith. If we constantly worry about things, we're basically expressing that we don't trust God enough for it all to go away or that He will get us through it - in other words, we're too proud to leave it up to Him! As youth of comparatively lower patience levels, we probably know by now- that God plays our life by testing our patience and humility. When we humble ourselves, he lifts us up in due time, says the Bible (*1 Pet 5:6*).

Also, complacency is a form of pride. When we feel situations can't get any worse (when we lack faith that God can't change a situation) or when we are gifted with talents and certain abilities that we owe to God, but don't thank Him for it, and credit ourselves instead, we're not exactly being humble! Of course, we can turn this around by thanking Him at the end of our day - let's not forget that He was actually responsible for the way things went that day! Interestingly enough, pride was not just human. At the time of the fall, Lucifer, the renegade archangel gave in to pride as he felt he needed to be worshipped. He thought he was worthy of the praise

given to God - but this very pride of his, brought his ruin - he was stripped of his position, his glory and his beauty. At the same time, humility can now be human - as was clearly exemplified by Moses.

Very early on, in *Ex 34:8-9*, Moses realized that we are a ‘*stiff-necked people*’, unworthy of God’s presence and hence, we need to be humble in order for Him to walk amongst us.

So while we have a lot to flaunt at this particular age, there are a couple things we could do to do our humble bit for the Lord - like breaking social cliques and conveying more genuine and expressive apologies. Learn to hate pride, avoid ego and communicate this by saying ‘sorry’ faster than you usually do, irrespective of the circumstances. After all you’ve got nothing to lose, except pride. Start giving credit of your achievements to God and other people you respect – they will appreciate you. Try not to point out faults, by doing so, you are merely assuming you know better - and that’s ego, isn’t it?

Also, your tithes may be small because you probably don’t earn yet. But that’s not how you measure up to God anyway. There are various other small ways in which you can assist your parish, which still have great value - after all service equals leadership.

Yes, yes, I know, it’s hard to do all of that all at once. But that’s what the Lord requires of us - he states it so clearly in *Mic 6:8*, “*Do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God*”. And when we have taken up this challenge, he promises to have our back in *Ps 25:9*, “*He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them His way*”.

- *Melanie D’Souza*

MARIAN CHILDRENS BIBLE QUIZ

1. What is the Immaculate Conception?
2. Where did the angel Gabriel appear to Mary when he asked her to be the mother of the Redeemer?

3. What is the Annunciation?
4. How old was Jesus when Mary and Joseph presented Him at the Temple in Jerusalem?
5. How many Marian dogmas has the Catholic Church proclaimed?
6. When does the Catholic Church celebrate the birthday of Mary?
7. Which Marian prayer is recorded in the Gospel of Luke?
8. Which Catholic saint sought the help of the Virgin Mary to defeat the Albigensian heresy?
9. What is the oldest Marian feast the Catholic Church celebrates?
10. Which famous Marian pilgrimage site is the home of the apparitions where the Blessed Virgin appeared to Bernadette Soubirous?

*WISHING ALL THE MIPC MEMBERS A
VERY HAPPY FEAST OF THE NATIVITY
OF OUR BLESSED MOTHER – MAY THE
QUEEN OF PEACE CONTINUE TO GUIDE
US ALL & INTERCEDE FOR US WITH HER
SON, IN OUR JOURNEY THROUGH LIFE.*

"The world needs to see gestures of peace and hear words of hope and of peace" – Pope Francis.



MIPC Prayer Meeting: Every Thursday at 8:00 pm in the Parish Hall, except on the second week of the month.

General Intercessory Meeting: Last Monday of every month at 8:00 pm.

Community Mass: Every Saturday at 9.00 a.m.