



“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 2017: “Watch and Pray” Mathew:26:41

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WE ARE AN EASTER PEOPLE

The Risen Lord asked Mary Magdalene in John Chapter 20:15

“Woman why are you weeping? and whom do you seek?”

Jesus asked this woman why are you weeping? She was weeping in her ignorance of the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus had already risen from the dead. There was no reason for her to weep instead she should have been rejoicing. But in her ignorance she was weeping. Sometimes we forget the promises of God and the power of God and we drown ourselves in sorrow. Jesus is asking us like the woman why are you weeping when I am alive to help you and deliver you?

Pray the 6.30a.m call daily

There must have been times where we were overtaken by grief and sorrow and for a brief moment we were able to let go, then again like a returning wave we let ourselves to be immersed in the pit of sorrow and grief. Like Mary Magdalene we keep returning to the empty tomb, and the emptiness of our lives. Jesus died and rose again so that we may have life and life in all its fullness.

Col 1:21 says “Once you were alienated from God and were enemies because of your evil behavior, but now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death.” We are set free from the clutches of the evil one and no longer have to go back to our empty lives, the Risen presence of the Lord in our lives gives us the hope that whatever the situation we are in we will rise up and declare the victory of the Risen Lord over our hopeless situations.

WHOM ARE YOU SEEKING?

Jesus asked Mary Magdalene **WOMAN WHOM DO YOU SEEK.** She was seeking a dead Jesus in the tomb when He had already risen from the dead. The God we seek is not a dead, powerless and helpless God. We serve a living almighty God who will never leave us nor forsake us.

Too often we allow our pain, struggle and trials that we face in our day to day life to cloud our thoughts and emotions. We focus so much on our problems and prevailing situations that we are unable to look up to the Risen Lord the source and summit of our life to rescue us from our troubling situations.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

Jesus asked the disciples on the way to Emmaus what are you talking about which makes you so sad? These disciples were confused about the whole situation after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. They were ignorant of His resurrection and were still in deep sorrow and pain and disappointment. Their whole conversation was depressing and confusing. But Jesus wanted to help them out of this depressing conversation. Sometimes we talk endlessly about our trials and those

things which we do not understand. Words have creative power and the more we speak depressing, unproductive words they will start to take control of our lives. This only makes us sad. Let Jesus reveal the truth to us which will make us glad. He asked them, ‘What are you discussing together as you walk’. They stood still, their faces downcast. He said behold, I come to make all things new. The strength and the happiness of a man consists in finding out the way in which God is going, and going in that way too.

DO YOU LOVE ME ?

In Mark 16:7 the angel of the Lord, told the women who have come to the tomb to go and tell the disciples and Peter that the Lord had risen and was going before them to Galilee. We see love of the Lord for Peter, though he had denied, the Lord understood the frailty of Peter and made a special mention of his name to assure Peter that he truly loved him very much.

In John 21:15 the closing verses Jesus asked Simon Peter do you love Me? Three times this question was asked Peter who had denied Jesus three times. When Peter replied that he loved Jesus, he was given a responsibility to serve the Lord. The Lord wants us to love Him first and as a result of that love He wants us to serve Him. So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me more than these? He said to him, Yes, Lord; you know that I love you. He said to him, Feed my lambs.

In the same way the Lord is every day asking each one of us DO YOU LOVE ME, it is only when are able to love the Lord with all our heart, mind and soul, that we will be able to love our fellowmen without any conditions. The word of God in 1 Pet 4:8 says “Above all, love each other deeply, because *love covers over a multitude of sins*, and the Lord wants us to be compassionate in our dealing with our families, colleagues, near and dear ones so that they will seek the Risen Lord in us.

Core team

FASTING –THE SOUL OF PRAYER

Continued from the last issue...

God sees our heart and it is a humble and contrite heart that He desires. It is very important to spend more time in **prayer** and **Bible reading** during the period of fast which helps to avoid temptations. And it will be most fruitful to do an act of **charity** and **mercy** as well. The food that we saved on the day of our fast could feed a hungry soul.

Fasting before a spiritual activity, like preaching at retreats, praise and worship or conducting Eucharistic Adoration, can bring about powerful **anointing, healings and deliverances**.

Eucharistic fast—whoever is to receive the Eucharist should not take any food or drink for **an hour** before receiving the Holy Eucharist, with the exception of water and medicines. (**Canon 919 § 1**)

Can we make this **Lenten Season** more meaningful than ever before? Can we fast, not to fulfil obligations but for something different this time? Yes, let us fast in order to **grow spiritually**; let us fast in order to lead an **extraordinary life**, filled with the Holy Spirit, let us fast because the **Saints and Holy People** did it; let us fast simply because **Jesus** did it. And we will certainly see the glory of God revealed in our lives, when we see ourselves gaining victory over our anger, pride, jealousy, impatience, addictions and much more. Let us not drown ourselves in worldly indulgences, but keep our eyes focused on heavenly treasures as **St Paul** says, “ **The Kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit**”. (**Romans 15:9**)

Prayer: Father God in Heaven, we love you, we praise you and we thank you for the gift of your Son Jesus who died for us. We surrender our lives, all that we have and all that we do, especially in this season of Lent. Be our strength, our guide and our refuge in times of trials and temptations. Help us remain faithful to your commandments and avoid every occasion of sin.

May every fast and sacrifice we make and every prayer from our heart, be acceptable and pleasing in your sight. Fill us with your Holy Spirit every moment of our lives and may every step we take, be guided by you alone. Help us to empty ourselves of all that does not come from you and as we walk along this journey of Lent, may we be able to meaningfully commemorate the passion, death and Resurrection of your Son Jesus. AMEN.

- Dr. Nelly De Sa

Make me a Channel of your Peace!

I came to Oman from Germany in the last week of February. It was a delightful re-union with the family. Back at my University, January and February had been quite hectic for me which led to prayer taking a rather back seat in my life. I resolved that Lent would be the time for me to get right with God. Once Lent started, I realized to my dismay that I was not faring very well: I was still distracted in prayer and my getting round to a proper time schedule was only proving more difficult even though I was on vacation. I realised that a battle was going on within me but I did not bother much about it. Apart from this, things at home seemed to be going well. One evening, I found myself entertaining the thought that I have improved in my weak area of temper and now my parents or sister cannot irritate me so easily. Subtly, a sense of pride at my having established self-control over my 'former weak area' crept in. But God in His mercy allowed something to happen in the following days, which was very edifying for me.

The next day being a Thursday we attended the prayer meeting. On returning home, my mum said something to me which unleashed in me the unexpected: I found myself screaming at the top of my voice. My mum was taken aback and went out of the room with a mixture of shock and anger. Screaming at the top of my lungs had not taken away my fury, and I was simmering within. Completely bewildered at having reacted so badly, I began to cry. I felt I could not even talk to the Lord as the initial feeling was that He would not want to listen to such an imprudent Christian as myself. Thinking deeper, I also realized that even my screaming and shouting did not take away any bitterness I had towards my mum and this

upset me all the more. Now, rationally thinking, I did not want to waste any more of the short time I had with her by holding on to resentment. And so, the next day I apologized to her in Church and we made up. She was quick to forgive me and things were back to normal, or that is what I supposed. But God still had something to show me about myself.

The following week, the conversations between my mum and me were very cold. I felt she was trying to admonish me about my behaviour. But I was getting frustrated at every word she was speaking. That whole week I gave her cold vibes. It certainly made my mum sad. **And to my surprise, I caught cold. I guessed, the coldness in my heart was transferring to my body...**

On the following Thursday after prayer meeting (note the timing), after getting back home, my mum came to the room to give me some medicine for my cold. **Staying away from the Lord for having been so bitter was also taking its toll on me.** That night ended in me not being able to sleep because of the pain. Unable to distract myself from the after-effects of the fight with mum, I decided to watch a movie. **The movie's message was about being aware of the actual enemy we fight with and to tackle that enemy with prayer.** I got up the next day feeling absolutely down. The Lord gave me his grace to grant and seek forgiveness.

My sister came home from Church a while after I had finished praying and the first thing she did was reach out her arms to me and apologize for something she had said to me that morning. Jesus had already started taking control. I gladly hugged her back. She was surprised as well, that it was that easy to make up! With the Lord Jesus in the driver's seat, everything went very smoothly. Later on I had the strength to reach out my hand to my mum, asking to be friends again. That evening I felt light hearted. Oh and to top it all, my cold which was quite intense just went away the next day.

This incident at home taught me two very important lessons. First,– I was actually trusting in my abilities and not on the Lord's supply of grace. Second, the Lord showed me that **when He expects me to forgive, all He wants from me is the genuine desire to forgive. He really takes care of the rest.**

Josma Rodrigues - Youth Cell

Are you a fan or disciple of Jesus?

We read in the gospel of Mathew 17:1-9 Jesus takes with him Peter, James, John and leads them up to a high mountain by themselves. It makes me wonder, why did Jesus take only Peter, James and John.

The first question is *Are you one of the three?*, and the second is *Are you a disciple or fan of Jesus?*

The dictionary meaning of a **fan** is a person who is enthusiastically devoted to something or somebody such as a sportsman or performer. A **disciple** is a pupil or follower of a teacher or leader. Many of us are *fans* of Jesus. *Fans*, because we are not following in the Master's footsteps. How many of us are perfect disciples of Jesus. It is the need of the hour to follow our Lord and Master. It is so easy to back slide to our old way of life. Look at the world today it is crumbling to pieces, no peace, no family life, families are breaking up. If we are true disciples of Jesus then we must listen to his voice (John 10:27).

The greatest challenge today is **obedience**. If we are obedient we become God's disciples. We read in John 14:15 "*If you love me you will keep my commandments.*" Do you love God the way he wants you to love Him? He wants to live in our hearts, he wants to lead us and guide us. If you are His disciple you will praise God with your heart, soul, mind and strength.

We read in Mathew 10:24 "*The student is not above the teacher, nor a servant above his master*" The second part is **humility**. Many people have the wrong idea about God, the Bible and humility, or being humble. They think being humble means grovelling in front of others or thinking they are no good and others are better. God says when you are humble, you are free from pride and arrogance. You know that in your flesh you are inadequate, yet you also know who you are in Christ. We need to lead like Jesus, in our family, work place, and society. We read in John 13:35 "*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.*"

Do you want to know the coolest thing about the One who gave up the crown of heaven for a crown of thorns? He did it for you. Just for you.

Most of the time our *ego* comes in the way. What is this ego? Man is made up of spirit, soul and body. The soul consists of our mind, will and emotions. We read in Romans 8:6-7 *“To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit^{ls} is life and peace.”*⁷ *For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law—indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”* When we feed ourselves with the worldly desires, we feed this ego and we need to kill this ego within us. We need to be submissive to each other, and develop a relationship with the Spirit. You can’t own the spirit. Only when the spirit owns you that you can do miracles. Let the Spirit kill the flesh. When we become like Peter, James or John, will we be able to Watch and Pray.

Philip Balfour

HOLY EUCHARIST- THE SOURCE AND SUMMIT OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

The Eucharist is called the **Sacrament of Sacraments**, and by this sacrament we unite ourselves to Christ who makes us sharers in His Body and Blood. It is called **Eucharist** because it is a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God. The Greek words **“eucharistein and eulogien”** recall the Jewish blessings that proclaim God’s works of **creation, redemption and salvation**. It is also called as Holy Mass, Holy Communion and the Lord’s Supper. Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us that Eucharist is the **“source and summit of Christian life.”** (CCC 1324). The other sacraments, ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented towards it.

Jesus instituted the Sacrament of the Eucharist on the day of the Last Supper with His Apostles, when He took the bread and wine and transformed it into his body and blood and asked them to do it in memory of Him. **St. Paul** writes in his letter to the **Corinthians 1: 23-26**, that Jesus said, **“For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”** Thus He instituted the Eucharist as a **memorial of His death and Resurrection** and commanded them to **celebrate it until His return**, in order to leave them a pledge of His love

and never to depart from them and in order to make them sharers in His Passover. Thereby, He instituted **Priesthood**.

Right from the beginning, the **Church** has been faithful to the Lord's command. In the **Acts of the Apostles**, we read that the early Christians devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. They spent much time together in the temple. (**Acts 2:42, 46**)

By the **Eucharistic celebration**, we unite ourselves with the heavenly liturgy. It consists of two parts, the **Liturgy of the word** (readings, homily and general intercessions) and the **Liturgy of the Eucharist** (the offering of bread and wine, consecration and communion). Thus we experience the **real presence of Christ** in this celebration, as we hear **His word** and receive **His body and blood**.

The Eucharist is the most beautiful gift that Jesus could ever give us. A gift of Himself to us, a gift of His love and sacrifice and a **miracle** that is beyond human understanding and science. And only a heart that experiences this miracle can tell of the joy one can get in receiving this sacrament. **St. Padre Pio, the stigmatic priest said, "The world could exist more easily without the sun, than without the Holy Eucharist."** St. Padre Pio even experienced during Mass, the passion of Jesus, including agony in the garden, the sweating of blood, the scourging, the crowning with thorns and the crucifixion. **St Gregory and St Augustine** said that angels surround the altar and come to assist the priest when he is celebrating mass. There were **saints who lived only on the Eucharist** and no other food.

Eucharist is the most powerful form of prayer: it has the power to heal, the power to bring about deliverance and the power to help us fight temptations and gain victories over trials. It has the power to give us fortitude in suffering. I have seen critically ill patients, recovering miraculously after receiving Holy Communion. **What material food produces in our bodily life, Holy Communion wonderfully achieves in our spiritual life.** In order to attain spiritual growth, we need the nourishment of Eucharistic communion and we need to continue receiving it until the moment of our death. It is a communion with the flesh of the risen Christ. Through Holy Mass, we can be preserved from many

dangers that could have befallen us. We can even **shorten our purgatory** with every mass that we celebrate, by decreasing the temporal punishment that we incur upon ourselves on account of our sins.

Though we have such a powerful Sacrament in our church, how often do we go to receive the Eucharist? Do we meaningfully partake in this celebration or do we ‘attend’ mass or ‘hear’ mass, as we casually tend to say? As sharers in the Lord’s Passover, we are called to be active members of this celebration and not just spectators. And as sharers in the meal, we need to be very much present inside the church and not outside or far away where we can get distracted. We need to dress modestly and remember that we are in the temple of the Lord. We should attentively listen to the **word of God** that is read and the **homily** that is preached and also actively participate in the **prayers, responses and hymns**.

When we love someone, we want to spend as much time as we can with that person. If we really love **Jesus**, should we not have the desire to receive him as often as we can? When we go to watch a movie or a match, we make sure that we are always in time or ahead of time. Do we have the same desire to be in time to celebrate mass or do we reach late even for Sunday Mass? It would be desirable to reach a little before mass to prepare our intentions and our offertory to our Lord. At the **offertory**, we offer the bread and wine which will undergo **transubstantiation**, which means transformation by the power of the Holy Spirit into the body and blood of Jesus at consecration time. Thus at the time of offertory, we can offer ourselves or lift up our prayer intentions and ask the Lord to heal us, transform us and hear our prayers. **During the time of consecration of the host and wine, prayers are said to be most powerful.** At this time as well, we can lift up our prayer intentions, keeping our eyes and focus on the body and blood of Jesus. Consecration time is the most sacred moment of the Eucharistic celebration. I heard the testimony of a nun at a retreat, who said that she would write down all her prayer intentions and those of the people who asked her to pray and she would carry them for Mass everyday and pray intently to the Lord at consecration time. She testified that all her prayers were answered. So great is the power of the Holy Eucharist.

Christ's real presence in the Eucharist has been shown time and again in the various **Eucharistic miracles** that have taken place all over the world. **St. Theresa of the child Jesus** writes in her autobiography, that her first Holy Communion day was the most beautiful day of all the days of her life. She says it was her first embrace of Jesus where she felt loved, as it was a perfect union. She experienced **tears of happiness** after receiving communion which many people experience even today.

When we come forward to receive the Eucharist, we need to do so in deep reverence. It is most desirable to receive the Eucharist on our tongue. And whenever we receive the Eucharist on our hands, we need to make sure that our hands are clean and not carrying things like keys, handkerchiefs or mobiles. It is our Lord Jesus whom we are going to receive and utmost care has to be taken to receive Him in a **worthy manner**. All those in mortal sin, should abstain from receiving communion until they confess their sins. Unless there is a grave reason and there is no opportunity to go for confession, in this case the person has to remember the obligation to make an act of contrition and a resolution to go for confession as soon as possible. In case of venial sins, an act of contrition before receiving communion is desirable.

To be continued.....

QUIZ ON ACTS OF THE APOSTLES CH. 1 & 2

Fill in the blanks with actual words by matching the scripture verses given below. Bible to refer : **The New Revised Standard Version-Catholic Edition**

1. After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during _____ and speaking about _____.
2. Then they returned to Jerusalem from the _____ which is near Jerusalem, a _____.
3. For the _____ is for you, for your _____, and for all who are _____ everyone whom the _____ our _____ calls to him.
4. When he said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a _____ took him from their sight

5. So they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as _____ and _____.
6. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the _____ of a _____ and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.
7. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet _____ .
8. And I will show portents in the heavens above and signs on the earth below: _____ and _____ and _____ .
9. Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor _____ that he _____ died and was buried, and his _____ is with us to this day.
10. This Jesus God raised up; and of that all of us are _____ .
11. Therefore let the entire house of _____ know with certainty that God has made him both _____ and _____ this _____ whom you _____.
12. And he testified with many other arguments, and exhorted them saying, “ _____ from this _____ ”.

2:16, 1:9, 2:19, 1:3, 2:29, 2:32, 2:2, 2:36, 1:23, 2:40, 1:12, 2.:39

ANSWERS FOR THE LENTEN QUIZ

- 1) Egypt 2) John 3) He claimed to be the Son of God 4) John.
 5) Caiaphas 6) Mark 7) Luke 8) Gethsemane 9) 3 PM (the ninth hour)
 10) Joseph of Arimathea 11. Jeremiah

Hearty congratulations to Susana Pinto, Yohan Yesudas and Ivy Pacheco for the correct answers. We also appreciate Jessie Fernandes, Ethel Fernandes, Lauren Fernandes and Caleb Fernandes for participating.



MIPC Prayer Meeting: Every Thursday at 8:00 pm in the Parish Hall.
General Intercessory Meeting: Last Monday of every month at 8:00 pm.