



“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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PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

What is prayer? Our immediate response to this question would be prayer is talking to God, intercession or listening to God. We may have various answers but as the Psalmist says prayer is none other than our submission to God. **Prayer is the steering wheel that God gives us to hold on to him.**

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 says, *Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*”

We have heard of the above passage from first letter to Thessalonians and

simply don't know what to make of it. How is that possible? Give thanks all the time? Even when we fail a test, when we are homesick, or when things don't turn out the way we want them to be. We don't think we can do that." We desire to be the best Christians, but often we fall short of perfection, especially, in the realm of prayer. Nonetheless, we need to persevere and "pray without ceasing."

First, we need to resolve to make prayer a part of our daily life, not just when-I-get-time or when going through some difficulty. Once that desire takes root, we begin gradually to incorporate different forms of prayer. Consider the reflection of St Therese of the child Jesus from her book "The Story of a soul": *"For me, prayer is an aspiration of the heart; it is a simple glance directed to heaven, it is a cry of gratitude and love in the midst of trial as well as joy; finally, it is something great, supernatural, which expands my soul and unites me to Jesus."* For St Therese, prayer is something that takes her into the domain of the divine. We are all entitled to enter into the domain of the divine where Jesus is ready to accept us as we are.

Here are some ways of Unceasing Prayer, one of which you might consider adding to your day :

1. Constant Gratitude.

From the moment we wake up until we go to bed, we try to be grateful. When we put our feet on the floor, we thank God for a new day. Before we get into the shower, we intentionally thank God for our hands and fingers, shoulders and arms, feet and toes, legs and knees, all our senses – and we ask Him to bless us and others that day. We thank him for the clean water, for keeping our family safe, for giving us a job, anything else that comes to our mind. At our work place we thank Him for our colleagues and work situations. As the day progresses, we turn to thank Him whenever appropriate. At the end of the day, we reflect gratefully on whatever we experienced, whether joyful or difficult.

2. Special Time

We carve out time for specific prayerful activities. Daily mass can be one of the important spiritual activities for anyone. Besides, we can try morning, evening and night prayers. We can pray the rosary or divine mercy chaplet as often as possible.

3. Frequent Intercession.

We may receive requests to pray for people and come across special intentions. We can reflect on those needs and people, be it our family, our community or parish and pray expecting God to bless them. There are moments that we find a person randomly coming to mind, or a specific situation, or a place, or a country. We can pray for the people or situation or places.

4. Meditation.

We can reserve time for external silence as well as internal silence. We can meditate by taking a scripture verse. We can move to a place where we are not thinking of anything but simply contemplating on God's love and his mercy. No doubt, it's a gift from God but we need to nurture this gift.

5. Christian Music.

We can listen to gospel music while driving. We can listen to our favourite song on our phone and use it for our praise, thanks and meditation.

We need to live in an awareness of God with us; in our thoughts and actions. With this in mind we can move forward trusting and believing in God's providence. **We need to take every thought in prayer and every prayer into thanksgiving.** Philippians 4:6 says, **...we have to make known our requests to God.** Prayer is a special wing God gives us, so that we can sail through safely. Prayer is a weapon that helps us to fight the spiritual battle. Prayer should be the first response to every fearful situation that God allows it to happen. A lack of prayer will cause us to depend on ourselves instead of depending on God's grace.

As we reflect in the coming months on the theme "**Watch and Pray**," let us devote ourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving (Colossians 4:2). Let us make every effort by the power of the Holy spirit to *Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication.* (Ephesians 6:18).

Core Team

When we pray, God hears more than we say, answers more than we ask, gives more than we imagine..... in His own time and in His own way.....

HOLY SPIRIT NOVENA - TIME OF MIRACLES - A TESTIMONY

Last year I developed pain in my joints, especially in my elbow, wrist, shoulders and fingers. I ignored it for some time thinking it could be related to spondylitis for which I was on some exercises. As days passed the pain increased to such an extent that it was getting difficult even to perform my daily regular work like lifting my hand bag, cutting vegetables etc. I visited three different doctors who asked me to get various tests done. Most of my reports were normal but the level of calcium in the blood was showing high as the absorption of calcium was not taking place due to lack of Vitamin D. This is what the doctors said. The doctors also advised me to go for walk in the morning to get the morning sunlight and also to start with Vitamin D tablets.

As I need to report to school by 7 in the morning it was not possible to go for the morning walk. The tablets did not make much difference and the pain became worse. Romans 5: 3-4, .“Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character and character, hope”. During my personal prayer I would offer up this pain and claim the word and the Lord would faithfully provide me the strength to endure and overcome the pain. All this time my husband, my kids and some of our brothers and sisters of our prayer group were praying for me. A sincere thanks to all of them.

Every year the Lord has done mighty wonders during the novena to the Holy Spirit and I believed that this year too He had something wonderful in store for all. When sister Carmine shared on repentance, I realized that there was one particular area of my life where I needed to really repent and ask forgiveness from the Lord. Resentment and unforgiveness can be major blocks for healings to take place. On the third day when sister Revathi was sharing on Joy, during the worship session, I felt both of my hands were being touched. A feeling of warmth ran down through my fingers. Truly it was the Lord who touched me and healed me. From that moment the pain in my joints has left completely. ‘1 Peter 2:24- “He himself bore our sins. In His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness, by His wounds you have been healed.” Praise be to God who is ever faithful and listens to those who cry out in distress.

The Lord truly worked wonders through all the brothers and sisters who shared during the novena to the Holy Spirit . May the Lord use you all more mightily in his vineyard.

Sagaya Louis

ONE WHO HUMBLER HIMSELF WILL BE EXALTED (A SHORT REFLECTION ON PRIDE)

In a small village there lived a girl Angie who was one of the prettiest girls. She relied on her beauty to the extent that it made her proud. Her parents would remind her time and again not be proud but all their ways of trying to make her understand went futile. Angie’s birthday was fast approaching and the parents decided to give her a gift. However on the day of her birthday she had to go to the neighbouring village. The parents nonetheless sent her the gifts. Angie was very happy on receiving the gifts. She opened the first gift and found a mirror. She was not very happy on seeing the gift and was angry with her mom. As she looked in the mirror she saw her reflection and something inscribed below the mirror. The words read, “This is who you are”.

She then opened the second gift which to her great astonishment was a skull. She was angry yet again and noticed something inscribed below the skull. The words read, “This is what you will become”. She understood that all her makeup and beauty would all be in vain and she would end up like the skull. She finally opened the third gift and on opening she found the statue of Mother Mary. Below the statue were the words, “This is what you should be.” The daughter Angie got the message that her mother was trying to tell her.

This story is a reminder that in one way or another we too fall into this category of pride. It is said that every disease in the world can be cured but the disease of pride cannot be cured. Our Lord Jesus wants us to humble ourselves. The Bible says, “the one who humbles himself will be exalted and the one who exalts himself will be humbled.”

We will receive three blessings when we humble ourselves:

1. God will increase our faith.

When we humble ourselves God will enter our life and make himself known to us.

2. **God will give us the grace to embrace our sufferings.**

An example of embracing our sufferings is beautifully mentioned below by the legendary Wimbledon player, Arthur Ash.

WHY ME?

Arthur Ashe, the legendary Wimbledon player was dying of AIDS which he got due to infected blood he received during a heart surgery in 1983.

From the world over, he received letters from his fans, one of them conveyed: "Why does God have to select you for such a bad disease?".

To this Arthur Ashe replied: The world over--50,000,000 children start playing tennis, 5,000,000 learn to play tennis, 500,000 learn professional tennis, 50,000 come to the circuit, 5000 reach the grand slam, 50 reach the Wimbledon, 4 to semi finals, 2 to finals. When I was the one holding the cup, I never asked God "Why me?".

And today in pain, I should not be asking GOD "why me?"

In the reading of Mathew 11:28 we read Jesus inviting us to come to him and he will give us rest. Let us take our heavy burdens and place them at the feet of Jesus, who knows all about us and our situations. Jesus invites us to take his yoke and learn from him, for he is gentle and humble of heart. Coming to him in submission and surrender is the first step of faith we can take. Finally, let our response be "Jesus meek and humble of heart, make my heart like unto thine."

Glen Brooks

POSITIVE THOUGHT IS A SILENT PRAYER - A TESTIMONY

The Lord humbled me during the Lenten retreat that was held in our Parish from 24 – 29 March by Rev. Fr. Mathew from Pota, Kerala. I was very excited about the retreat but got my priorities all wrong. My intention to attend mass was only because I wanted to be seated in church to hear Fr. Mathew and be anointed by the holy water that was sprinkled on us.

During the retreat Fr. Mathew announced two people getting healed of

giddiness when they wake up in the morning. I claimed the healing and never felt giddy all the days of the retreat. After the retreat was over, at our next MIPC prayer meeting many brothers and sisters came forward and testified about their healing. I too got up to testify but reluctantly.

The following month I had a severe attack of vertigo. I had been to the doctor and was prescribed tablets, however these tablets gave me severe headache. I asked myself why is it that I claimed healing but did not get healed. I sat before the Lord and he prompted me to read the notes I had taken down from an earlier retreat. In one of the notes it mentioned your tongue is your health and wealth. What you say you will receive. It also said, *“A complaining heart blocks God’s presence and a praising heart anoints his or her body.”* A positive thought is a silent prayer and a negative thought is a silent curse. Proverbs 4:23 says, *“Be careful what you think, your life is shaped by your thoughts.”*

I used to come home with lots of complains about students, colleagues and authorities. But God wanted me to change my thinking. He wanted me to purify my tongue and thoughts. He enlightened me with his words. Brothers and sisters, this is my anointing and healing. I’ve decided to see the good in others and refrain from complaining. I’ve decided to praise and profess health, and healing in my life. Praise and Thank God.

Zoie Rachel Joseph

HOLY EUCHARIST- THE SOURCE AND SUMMIT OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

Continued from the last issue...

Masses offered for souls on their **death** anniversary and on their **birth** anniversary are known to be the most effective in obtaining pardon for their sins and helping them attain eternal glory. We also offer thanksgiving masses on occasions of our birthdays and wedding anniversaries. Masses for special intentions can be offered for the living and the best gift one could give our friends on their birthdays would be a mass offering. We must not forget to pray for the good health and protection of our **priests** and offer masses for their intentions too. Only an ordained priest can consecrate the bread and wine so that it becomes the body and blood of

Jesus. Without priests, we would not be able to have a celebration of the Eucharist. All those who assist at the **first mass** or **jubilee mass** of a **priest** can gain a **plenary indulgence**.

So let us try to go for Mass every day, or as often as we can, and long to receive **Jesus** in a worthy manner. As Saints like **St. Gertrude** and **St. John Vianney** said, **“One mass celebrated during our lifetime, is more profitable than many masses offered for our soul after death.”** And after mass as we go back to our homes, let us remember **St. Paul’s** words, **“It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me” (Gal 2:20)**. And so, let us live lives that are pleasing to God reminding ourselves that we have just received Jesus in our hearts. Let us stand firm in our faith and not be influenced by those who question our faith or the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. **Let us remember the source and summit of our Christian life and spend as much time as we can in the Blessed Sacrament.**

Dr Nelly De Sa

BENEFITS OF "COUPLES' PRAYER" IN MARRIAGE

The Bible is full of families, births, love stories and family crises. This is true from its very first page, with the appearance of Adam and Eve’s family with all its burden of violence but also its enduring strength (*Gen 4*) to its very last page, where we behold the wedding feast of the Bride and the Lamb (*Rev 21:2, 9*).

Marriage is “a gift” from the Lord (*1 Cor 7:7*). At the same time, precisely because of this positive understanding, the New Testament strongly emphasizes the need to safeguard God’s gift: “Let marriage be held in honour among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled” (*Heb 13:4*).

“Jesus, who reconciled all things in himself, restored marriage and the family to their original form (*Mt 10:1-12*). Marriage and the family have been redeemed by Christ (*Eph 5:21-32*) and restored in the image of the Holy Trinity, the mystery from which all true love flows. The spousal covenant, originating in creation and revealed in the history of salvation, takes on its full meaning in Christ and his Church. Through his Church, Christ bestows on marriage and the family the grace necessary to bear

witness to the love of God and to live the life of communion. (*Amoris Laetitia* – 8, 61 & 63).

It is in our hands to preserve what the Lord has given us - the gift of marriage. We need to safeguard this gift. The strength of the Christian marriage depends on the power of God which the couples receive everyday as they encounter the Lord in prayer. God not only wants us to remain faithful to one another in marriage, but, he wants us to have fullness in marriage with a joyful, loving and stable family life. This becomes a reality when the couples devote some time for praying together.

Here are some of the blessings that will follow the praying couples.

Prayer strengthens the BONDS of marriage

Prayer not only opens communication between you and God, it strengthens the BONDS of marriage. Studies have found the old adage, “Couples that pray together, stay together” to be true. In a recent poll it was revealed that “among married couples who attend church together regularly, the divorce rate is one out of two. That is the same statistic for marriages outside the church. However, among married couples who *pray together daily*, the divorce rate drops to one out of 1,153.” Prayer reinforces the connection between couples and as a result, their marriages are strengthened!

Prayer encourages unity

As we come before God as a couple, we are coming as a team and reminding ourselves that we are on the same side. Team players have common goals and direction. Praying together reinforces those goals and that connection. When we offer our prayers to God together we are naturally aligning our hearts as couples for one shared hope and outcome.

Prayer promotes emotional intimacy

Sharing our desires and deepest longings with each other in prayer gives one another an intimate glimpse into the other person’s heart. The tender moments that are created when our hearts are open and vulnerable to each other grow our love and level of intimacy in our relationship.

Prayer invites God into your relationship

When God is at the center of our marriage, we have a “built in” compass

and guide. God gives direction and wisdom that we as couples long for in our relationship. By praying together we are inviting God into our marriage and welcoming His hand on our lives. He will bring healing and joy as He tenderly leads us on the path He has set out for us.

Prayer changes marriages

Praying together cannot help but change our marriages for the better. The connection that develops and grows when we pray together deepens our love and strengthens the BOND in our relationship. Marriages that are struggling or in crisis can be mended when God is at its center. He is always faithful and wants the best for us. Even good marriages can be made great when we are open to God's leading and direction through prayer

It is the grace of the Sacrament of Marriage that enables the couple to live their marriage in a Christian way. The couple that prays together will not only live in grace but also work hard to handle the challenges of their marriage in a Christian way. As the couple grows in maturity they even inspire other couples to live their marriage to its fullness. A happy Christian marriage is a powerful witness to Christ in our world because it enriches the Church and society by their love.

Hilda Rasquinha

THE LORD IS MY HEALER – A TESTIMONY

I attended and prayed with deep faith during the Lenten Retreat in our Parish from 24th- 29th March 2017 by Rev Fr. Mathew Naickomparambil and his team. I was not able to lift my right hand due to a fall in July, and had shoulder pain since then. But, during the praise and worship, I would support my hand with the other and raise it to praise God. I tried to raise my hands but due to severe pain could not do it with ease. After the third day, Fr. Mathew said that a few have been healed of shoulder pain, that time I knew, it was my chance to claim my healing. In faith I started raising my hand, though at times the pain persisted.

But, during the special healing service in the afternoon, as I raised my hands to praise, I felt heaviness in my shoulder. Fr. Mathew said people

have got physical healing and asked to check. I moved my hand up and down without any pain. I was healed. PRAISE GOD for there is no pain now.

I have also been having high BP for the past 3 years, but recently it was always high. Doctor had advised to change the dose. As my BP was fluctuating, I requested for a lower dose.

During one of the services Fr. Mathew Announced that a lady with high BP is healed. I never paid much heed. But when I went to the school nurse next morning, to my surprise, it read 126/84 which had never been. And is the same now. This is what my loving God has done for me. I PRAISE AND THANK GOD!!

Sherida De Souza

QUIZ ON ACTS OF THE APOSTLES CH. 3 to 5

Tick (√) the right answer

Bible to refer : Catholic Edition of **The New Revised Standard Version** only.

1. At what time of day were Peter and John going to pray when the lame man was healed?
A. Three O'clock B. Six O'clock C. Nine O'clock
2. According to Ch. 3 what was the name of the portico from which Peter preached?
A. David's Portico B. Solomon's Portico C. Herod's Portico
3. For how many years the lame man mentioned Ch. 3 and 4 was in that condition?
A. 25 B. 35. C. more than 40
4. What did those high priests in Ch. 4 notice about Peter and John?
A. Boldness B. Lack of education C. They had been with Jesus
D. A,B & C
5. What did they command Peter and John?
A. To leave Jerusalem B. To quit having church services
C. not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus
6. Who is mentioned in Ch. 4 as selling his land and bringing the

- money to the apostles' feet?
- A. Barnabas B. Cornelius C. Philip D. Nicolaus
- 7 According to Ch. 4, Barnabas is from which country ?
- A. Cyprus. B. Galatia. C. Phoenicia.
8. What were the apostles accused of filling Jerusalem with?
- A. Discord B. New converts C. Their teaching D. Violence
9. According to Ch. 5, were the Apostles highly esteemed by the people of Jerusalem?
- A. No B. They were esteemed by the Gentiles, but hated by the Jews.
C. Yes
10. According to Ch 5, the high priest was a member of which group?
- A. The Sadducees. B. The Pharisees. C. The Scribes.

Fill in the blanks with actual words from Acts Ch. 3 (Bible: Catholic NRSV Only)

11. Peter looked intently at him, as did John, and said, " _____ _ _ _
12. But you rejected the _____ and _____ and asked to have a murderer given to you.
13. And you killed the _____ whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses.
14. _____ said: the _____, your _____ will raise up for you from your own people a _____ like me.

ANSWERS FOR THE QUIZ ON ACTS OF THE APOSTLES CH 1&2

1. (1:3) Forty days The kingdom of God. 2. (1:12) Mount called olivet Sabbath days journey away. 3. (2: 39) Promise Children far away Lord God. 4. (1: 9) Cloud 5. (1: 23) Justus Matthias. 6. (2:2) rush violent wind. 7.(2:16) Joel 8. (2:19) blood fire smoky mist. 9. (2:29) David both tomb. 10. (2: 32) witnesses. 11.(2: 36) Israel Lord Messiah Jesus crucified. 12. (2: 40) save yourselves corrupt generation.

Hearty congratulations to Susana Pinto and Juliet D'Souza for the correct answers. We also appreciate Jessie Fernandes, Ivy Pacheco, Ethel Fernandes, Lauren Fernandes and Jason D'Souza for participating.

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