

KINGDOM

REVELATOR

|||| CATHOLIC MAGAZINE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ■ ISSUE 45

SAY 'YES'
TO THE LORD

SUNDAY
IS A HOLY DAY
NOT A HOLIDAY



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In 1975, Blessed Pope Paul VI famously said that today people "listen more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if they do listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses." The same applies to youth and young adults in today's Church. Kingdom Revelator is a new venture in evangelization that holds out the testimonies to faith in Jesus Christ by young people to their peers. It is an excellent instrument for discussion at youth retreats and other gatherings of Catholic youth in parishes and schools.

I am happy to endorse your magazine as a tool for leading youth and young adults to experience the joy of the Catholic Faith. My hope is that as the publication attracts new readers it will be used by Catechists and Youth Ministers across many cultures.

May your work continue to flourish.

Sincerely in Christ,

James Massa

Most Reverend James Massa
Auxiliary Bishop of Brooklyn



Mother Mary, Pray for our Readers.

OUR HEAVENLY PATRONESS

Our Lady Seat of Wisdom, pray for us.

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February marks an important point in the Church year as we begin the liturgical season of Lent - yes, celebrations have come to an end as we transition from feasting into fasting. It's Lent already! For many of us, this is that time of the year when we fret about how to go the extra mile during these forty days, as we attempt to unite ourselves more closely to the mystery of Jesus in the desert (CCC 540). This month's issue explores ways in which we can grow in intimacy with Christ by various means such as attendance at Holy Mass on Sundays, saying 'yes' to the Lord, living chaste and holy lives and so forth. Though these can sometimes appear to be a leap into the dark, we must remind ourselves that it was the Holy Spirit who led Jesus into the wilderness to be tried and tested. The same Holy Spirit will guide and help us on our Lenten journey.

Here are some handy tips for making the most of Lent this year:

1 Prayer - Lent is a time when God calls each one of us to contemplate the passion, death and resurrection of His Son – how you do this is your choice. It might be by praying the Stations of the Cross or the Sorrowful Mysteries, watching 'The Passion of the Christ', or reflecting on Gospel passages describing Jesus' passion and death.

2 Fasting - As soon as we hear the word 'fasting', let's not jump to the conclusion that we must give up chocolate or coffee or anything that tastes nice for that matter. Lent is an opportune time to voluntarily deny ourselves something that we really enjoy. It could mean Instagram, that one item of makeup we think we simply cannot live without, snacking between meals, sleeping for those extra fifteen minutes... the possibilities are endless.

3 Almsgiving - This is not just for adults. The general rule is to give and not to receive; we can give someone a listening ear, a smile, our time or our talents. It is from this act of giving that we grow in the virtue of love.

Let us pray that this Lent we will grow in holiness and love.



SUNDAY IS A HOLY DAY NOT A HOLIDAY



**A reflection
by Fr Shyju
Naduvathaniyil, a
priest living in
Buckinghamshire,
England.**

Sometimes when I meet my parishioners during the week, if I have not seen them at Sunday Mass, I ask them why they were not there. There is often a very good reason, they may have gone elsewhere or have been ill but many just ignore the question or answer with a shrug of their shoulders. To deliberately miss Sunday Mass without a valid reason is a mortal (serious) sin, and if we do, then we must go to confession to ask God

for forgiveness. We must also not receive Holy Communion until we have received forgiveness for committing a mortal sin. It's very sad that even Catholics are not motivated enough to participate in Holy Mass on Sundays. Perhaps we need to ask ourselves why we go to Mass? The question is very simple but if we do not consider it for ourselves, we are in danger of falling away and missing out on so much.

There are only ten commandments and one of them is, "Remember to keep holy

the Lord's Day". God could have chosen many other things that He wanted us to remember to do, instead He asked us to keep His day sacred! This is because He knew the importance of keeping Him at the centre of our lives.

The Eucharist

When we miss Mass on Sunday, it means that we miss out on encountering the Lord in the Eucharist, who waits for us. Speaking at his weekly General Audience on December 13, the Pope reflected on the question: "Why go to Mass on Sunday?" His answer was that, "We go to Mass each week to meet the resurrected Lord – or better still – to let ourselves be welcomed by Him, to hear His word, eat at His table, and by His grace fulfil our mission as members of the Mystical Body of the Church." The Church asks us to celebrate the Lord's Day as a day of joy and rest from servile work as a sign of our dignity as children of God. The Eucharist

that we receive gives us the strength to live with trust and courage and go forth with hope.

Face To Face

Sunday is a holy day for Christians. It is rendered holy by the celebration of the Eucharist where we meet Jesus face to face. In the Mass we receive the grace to live holy lives following His

commandments. This opportunity to encounter God is the highlight of our lives. The Eucharist has been called the source and summit of our faith (CCC 1324).

It is easy to take our faith for granted but we should not forget that there are many Christians around the world who are forbidden from gathering together to celebrate Mass. Despite being persecuted, they have a strong faith and long for the freedom to encounter Jesus in the Eucharist. I know a priest from Africa who has to walk about eight kilometres to celebrate Mass for his parishioners as there is no other way of getting there. Another missionary priest from north India told me that some of his poorer parishioners have to start walking from their villages at four o'clock on Sunday morning to reach the nearest Mass that starts at 9am.

A Source Of Grace

The quality of our Christian life is measured by our capacity to love others, but how can we faithfully follow Jesus without drawing from the strength that He has provided for us through the Eucharist?

We go to Mass not to give something to God, but to receive from Him the grace and strength to remain faithful to His word, to follow His commandments and, through His living presence within us, to be witnesses of His goodness and love in the world. So we should not miss Mass on a Sunday or on a Holy Day of Obligation but always strive to meet Jesus in the Eucharist, so that we can receive His strength and grace to lead a beautiful Christian life.

We go to Mass not to give something to God, but to receive from Him the grace and strength to remain faithful to His word.





Simon Leigh, from Manchester in the UK continues his testimony, sharing what he has discovered as a convert to the Catholic Church.

DON'T BE FOOLED BY THE LIES

A brief and ultimately doomed love affair in my twenties reignited my appetite for a deeper love, a continual love, a perfect love. Before then I had become a cynical survivor making the best of an imperfect world and searching for kicks in the wrong places. Out of my juvenile heartbreak came a realisation that no human being (whether lover, friend or parent) could give me the love that I craved. Certainly not if that human being was as selfish as


me. So I searched for truth and happened to come across the God, who is Love. I was introduced to a couple of books written by Christian authors; then I met a very inspiring Catholic priest who was able to answer many questions that were burning inside of me. Through confession my eyes were opened and I saw that I needed to make a radical change in my lifestyle, cooperate with God's grace and take my Catholic faith seriously. This was the wake up call that I



needed so that I could grow in holiness and really come to know God. I now meet Him every day mentally and emotionally in prayer and physically in the Mass. And it feels good. I found my way home, to where I was always meant to be, doing what I was always meant to do, following God's first commandment that man should love Him with all his heart, with all his soul and with all his mind.

However, it has taken me 47 years to get to this point so I can hardly blame others for their indifference. Conversion means to turn around. I turned towards God. But I always knew that He was there (I think deep down we all do). So why did it take me so long? It's because the world lied to me and I willingly conspired in this lie. Deep down I knew I was wrong but I ploughed on and hid behind my fake objections. I pushed Him to one side and tried to justify this to myself. There's no scientific proof to God's existence. Religion is just a crutch or an opiate for the old, the weak and the brain washed.

I always knew these objections were convenient excuses. So what was my real reason for avoiding Him, for rejecting Him? I wanted to be happy. I wanted to be



*Dive in and you
will find love,
peace, joy and all
that your heart
desires.*

completely free to do what I wanted to do. I didn't want a God or a Church telling me what to do. I wanted to live life to the full without any rules to hold me back. To follow God and His Church seemed boring, like a school or a prison. They were worthy and well intentioned maybe, but a poor substitute for being free to do whatever took my fancy.

In short, I fell for the oldest lie in the book, the one whispered to Eve in the book of Genesis that God only demands your obedience so as to restrict you. He wants to stop you from enjoying every fruit in the garden, so ignore Him. If you turn away from Him, you'll be fine, you will not die or lose out. Like all the most powerful lies, the lie that I lived contained elements of the truth. God is everywhere and everything He has created is good, if used in the right way.

I had roughly 14 adult years living outside the Church, studiously avoiding God and 14 years inside stumbling towards Him. My experience has taught me that outside the Church is the prison whereas inside the Church, I have found freedom. My Catholic faith allows me to live life to the full. All the pursuits of pleasure outside the Church are merely substitutes for praising and worshipping God, which is what we are created to do. So I say to those outside, please do come in, dive in and you will find love, peace, joy and all that your heart desires. "All who want it may have the water of life, and have it for free." I say to the Catholics inside the Church, keep the faith and be assured that you have not missed out on anything. The far off land may appear seductive but it is ultimately deceptive. Its fruits become less and less satisfying the more we eat of them.

Not that I expect anyone to take my word for it. My own experience is limited but hasn't the last half century, revealed a bigger pattern emerging before our very eyes? The western world has played out a controlled experiment over the last fifty years to remove God from public view to find out what happens. In 1967, it was the summer of love, as 100,000 people gathered in San Francisco to enjoy unlimited sex, drugs and rock n roll. In the UK, The Beatles were topping the charts with the psychedelic Strawberry Fields Forever and abortion was legalised. Change was in the air. The tide had probably turned against the Church and it's doctrines many years before, but at that time it was sweeping them aside. Over the past five decades, the drive to eliminate God from our lives has only increased. This is the battle of indifference, hostility and apathy that we now face when trying to spread the Gospel.

But we should not give up hope. Jesus warned us that before He returns again, "Many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because of the increase of lawlessness, the love of many will grow cold. But anyone who endures to the end will be saved. And this Good News of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations; and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:11-14). Let us pray for an outpouring of missionary zeal on the Church so that she can go out boldly and spread the Gospel message.





Feona Pazhuka from the USA, explains how we can have a deeper encounter with God.

SAY 'YES' TO THE LORD

Make Time For God

There are many reasons why we turn to the Lord. It might be after our prayers are answered or when we need His help. Perhaps when we are troubled or lonely, we reach out to the Lord. But God wants to be involved in all aspects of our lives. He does not want to be just someone that we call on when we are desperate. After all, if we leave no time for Him each day, how can He begin to work in our lives?

God accepts us just as we are, when we turn to Him in repentance and love. His love for us has never changed and never will. The balance in our bank account is not what matters to Him, nor our social status. Jesus searches our hearts, to see how much love, repentance, open-mindedness and space there is for Him.

When other things take priority in our lives, they block us from encountering Christ and our hearts can become hardened due to sin. There is nothing more important or exciting than experiencing the Lord in our daily lives. God is constantly looking for opportunities to reveal Himself to us, if we will only say, "Yes" and let Him in.



It's Your Choice

God has given us a free will to choose how we live. "It was He who created humankind in the beginning, and He left them in the power of their own free choice" (Sirach 15:14). What better decision could we make than to invite God to be the Lord of our lives? When we choose to follow Him closely, we will experience joy, happiness, love and peace in abundance. "God will fulfill all your needs out of the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). The riches of Christ are limitless and they will flow bountifully into our lives if we let them.

Jesus said that, "the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matthew 7:14). Today, God is asking us to be one of the few, who choose the road that leads to life. By following in the right path, we will have all that we need, supplied by the riches of Jesus Christ. St Augustine always regretted that it took him so long to turn to the Lord after wasting many years of his life. "Late have I loved you, O beauty ever ancient,



**"YOU WERE
WITHIN ME, BUT
I WAS OUTSIDE,
AND IT WAS
THERE THAT I
SEARCHED FOR
YOU."**

ST AUGUSTINE

ever new, late have I loved you! You were within me, but I was outside, and it was there that I searched for you." Instead of having a similar regret, let us turn back to the Lord today!

"Do not delay to turn back to the Lord, and do not postpone it from day to day" (Sirach 5:7). One moment is all that it takes to say, "Yes" to God and open the doors of our heart to Him. Our Heavenly Father is rich in mercy, grace and love, so why wait? Invite Him into your heart. Give Him control of your life and watch how the Lord will begin to do wondrous things with it!

A FEW THINGS TO GIVE UP FOR LENT

- 1) Snoozing your alarm
- 2) Saying 'I can't be bothered'
- 3) YouTube videos
- 4) Listening to music in the car
- 5) Using emojis
- 6) Snacking at night
- 7) Your favourite series on Netflix
- 8) Drinking coffee in the morning
- 9) Complaining
- 10) Snapchat filters
- 11) Fizzy drinks
- 12) Avoiding helping parents with house chores
- 13) Using hashtags on social media
- 14) Using the elevator/lift
- 15) Sleeping with a pillow
- 16) Eating out
- 17) Scrolling through Instagram for more than 15 minutes
- 18) Online shopping
- 19) Extra salt and pepper on your food
- 20) Sweets & chocolates



THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN



Each decade of the Rosary helps us to meditate on one aspect of our salvation and how much God loves us in giving us Jesus to be our redeemer and the Blessed Virgin Mary to be our mother. June Palmer looks at the first sorrowful mystery.

Why was Jesus in Agony?

When meditating on 'The Agony in the Garden' I had always assumed that Jesus was suffering the agony because He knew what sort of death He was about to undergo. When He said, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet not my will but yours be done," I had assumed that He was asking God to spare Him such a painful death. But when you think about it, this doesn't make sense.

The Martyrs

Many of the Saints were martyrs who went to their deaths joyfully. They were certainly not in agony as they contemplated their future. Some were even tortured to try to get them to renounce their faith but they happily accepted death rather than deny Jesus. St Maximilian Kolbe was a Catholic priest who was imprisoned in a concentration camp during the Second World War. He led a group of people, mainly Jewish prisoners, singing and praising God while they waited for their deaths in a starvation bunker in Auschwitz. There are many witnesses who can testify that God has given His martyrs the grace to endure incredible suffering and torture. Throughout history, from St Polycarp in the early days of the Church until the present time, many martyrs have

joyfully gone to their deaths. So why would Jesus be any different? Yes, He knew that He was going to die but He also knew that this was the reason that He had come into the world. Out of His great love for us, He was willing to suffer the pain of an agonizing death, so that we could be saved.

Spiritual Agony

The answer is that the agony that Jesus suffered in the Garden of Gethsemane was mainly a spiritual agony as a result of Him taking upon Himself the sins

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"Some were even tortured to try to get them to renounce their faith but they happily accepted death rather than deny Jesus."

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of the world. It may be difficult for us to imagine what this must be like but it was demonstrated at a talk that I attended recently. The speaker selected a lady sitting on the front row and asked her how she felt. "Fine" she replied. Then he said to her now imagine that you have to bear the guilt for all the things that you have ever done wrong in your life. She didn't feel quite so good then. Next



“When He was abused, He did not return abuse; when He suffered, He did not threaten.”

someone. Every possible sin was laid upon Him. We cannot imagine how incredibly difficult this would have been and yet He was still willing to do it for our sakes.

Separation

Also He knew that when He took on our sins, it would separate Him from His beloved Father, who He had been close to all His life. It is no wonder that He was suffering agony as He realised that this was what He had to do to fulfil His mission. But He went through with it because He loves us and He knew that this was the only way that we could be saved. “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in His mouth. When He was abused, He did not return abuse; when He suffered, He did not threaten; but He entrusted Himself to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by His wounds you have been healed” (1 Peter 2:22 - 24).



he asked her to add on the weight of all the sins that she would ever do in the future. She became more uncomfortable. There was a silence and then he asked her to take on the responsibility for all the sins past, present and future, of all the people sitting on the front row. The atmosphere was now getting heavier as we all sympathised with the poor lady who had been randomly chosen.

The Weight Of Sin

This continued as the speaker

added the sins of all the people in the room, then in the town and then in the country, but thankfully he halted the experiment before the lady became too distressed. This gave us all a glimpse of what Jesus must have suffered on the cross as well as the physical pain. Jesus was the only man who had never sinned, so He had never experienced feelings of guilt or remorse before. Then during His passion He became aware of what it was like to have deliberately hurt others, stolen from them, cheated and even murdered



THE POWER OF CHASTITY

A final year medical student from the UK, writes about one of the challenges that young people face today.

Being a young person, I have always found the concept of purity a very difficult challenge. Before encountering Jesus on a personal level, I never had to worry about being pure in mind and body. Who of our age worries about being chaste? In fact, we live in a culture where we spend more time worrying about how not to be chaste to avoid being ridiculed by our peers for being a prude, or a “holy person” or just a weirdo. However, after coming to know what Jesus did for me and recognising that I need Jesus more in my life, it became apparent how important chastity is but also how hard it is. In fact like many of you reading this, I have even considered giving up the struggle sometimes.

Is Chastity That Important?

Often we become involved in relationships, not because they are good for us, but because we don’t like to be alone. Society is constantly telling us that

it’s normal if you’re dating to enter into a deeper relationship with that person. However, in reality we watch and do things which are sinful in order to fill the emptiness within us. Admittedly, living unchastely brings temporary happiness and enjoyment, but it leaves us with that void which only God can fill.

Commandments Are Virtues

Young people often find it hard to stick to the rules so the trick is not to think of the commandments as rules, full of restrictions and prohibitions, but as St Thomas Aquinas said, to consider them as virtues. We all like to consider ourselves to be virtuous people intending good for others and trying to do no harm. Similarly, if we consider all the commandments as virtues then we realise that chastity is not just a commandment but is in fact a virtue to behold and develop. Just like any muscle in the body which requires time and

effort to strengthen if it is injured, chastity too needs time and active effort on our part to develop and flourish in us. It is not something we can achieve instantly without any effort.

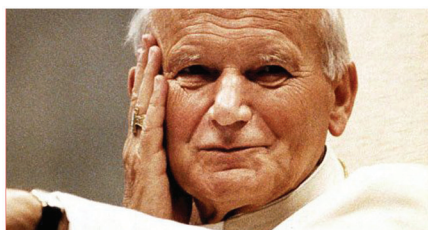
Virtue Is A Power

In Mark 5:24-30, we encounter an unnamed woman who had suffered from a haemorrhage for 12 years. She trusted in Jesus' mercy and saving power to free her from her illness and isolation and touched the fringe of His coat. Immediately He knew that "power had gone out of Him" (Mark 5:30). In St Jerome's translation of the Holy Bible, the word "power", is translated as "virtus" or "virtutem" which in English is virtue. In other words, Jesus felt the virtue, i.e. "the power" go out from Him. Virtue is a power that helps us to realise in an authentic sense what God has given us, especially to understand that God has given us chastity not to be burdened by it but to be empowered by it. Chastity as a virtue gives us the power to love and to be loved in the way that God intended for us.

Respect Ourselves

To be chaste means to love and have respect for ourselves. Living an unchaste life damages our soul. We feel like the woman caught in adultery who was thrown at Jesus' feet and stays there even after no one was found to throw a stone at her. Often when we give into temptations, we feel like her, useless and ashamed with little dignity left. Christ however, looks

at us, not with condemnation but with mercy and offers us His hand and gives us the grace not to sin again, "Go your way, and from now on do not sin again" (John 8:11).



"TO GIVE YOUR BODY TO ANOTHER PERSON, SYMBOLISES THE TOTAL GIFT OF YOURSELF TO THAT PERSON." ST JOHN PAUL II

Is Chastity Possible?

Preserving one's chastity can seem impossible because the whole concept seems to be non-existent in today's society. Whether it's advertisements or programs on TV or talking with college friends, to be chaste is considered 'un-cool'. When we read the Holy Bible or if we attend youth conferences, we are constantly reminded of that one difficult word – "HOLINESS". And then comes the talk on the 6th commandment – do not commit adultery. This can make us feel even more guilty than before, like a good-for-nothing-fake Christian for giving in to the sin of lust. So chastity can seem impossible and holiness unattainable. We are

tempted to opt for the easy route and not try to be chaste. But both chastity and holiness are possible with the help of the Holy Spirit.

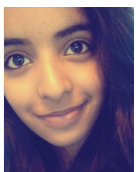
Power To Live Freely

A girl was once being taunted and mocked by her friends for not giving up her virginity when they all had. She turned around to them and said, "You are only jealous because I have something precious that you have given away freely and can never have back". Chastity is like that. The moment we give it up, we have given a part of ourselves that we can never get back. If we live chastely, it is not only virtue that is within us, but the power is in our hands. Chastity allows us to live freely, love unconditionally and be at peace. It is a power that we have but it needs to be cultivated further by the grace of God primarily, but also by our cooperation with God's grace.

Don't forget that its never too late to turn your life back to Jesus and seek forgiveness for past failings. We can reset ourselves again and again because losing one battle does not mean that we have lost the war. Christ has won the victory for us already and so we just have to turn back to Him in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and openly confess our sins against chastity, and Christ will give us back the power, for "power came out from Him and healed all of them" (Luke 6:19). Chastity is not impossible – everything is possible with God's grace.



"Chastity means the successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of man in his bodily and spiritual being. Sexuality, in which man's belonging to the bodily and biological world is expressed, becomes personal and truly human when it is integrated into the relationship of one person to another, in the complete and lifelong mutual gift of a man and a woman" (CCC 2337). Chastity means not having any sexual relations before marriage. It also means fidelity to husband or wife during marriage. In Catholic morality, chastity is placed opposite the deadly sin of lust, and is classified as one of seven virtues. The moderation of sexual desires is required to be virtuous.



*Anes Lavy,
aged 17
from the UK,
looks at
what may
be holding
us back in
life.*

What Is Fear?

Fear is the opposite of freedom. It destroys our personal happiness and prevents us from discovering who we truly are. Many people today are crippled within themselves because they have never experienced the freedom of knowing who they really are, and they can't realise their full potential because fear blocks their awareness of God's love and purpose for them. It can be argued that These people are similar to eaglets (young eagles) who are afraid to stretch out their wings and fly in case they fall. However, just as the parent eagle teaches its

young how to fly, God our Father shows us what true freedom is. When we develop a strong, personal relationship with God we can be freed from our fear.

Have Courage

I experienced the fear of change last year. Quite simply, I really struggled when it was time to leave behind my old school and closest friends and move on to college - it wasn't easy! I could not imagine starting afresh at a different place with so many new faces. But I soon came to realise that life is indeed all

about change, whether I liked it or not. There is no life where there is no change. Life can never remain static. We each have the responsibility to work out which changes will be good for us and which will not and the Holy Spirit will help us to discern this. As far as possible, we should willingly accept those changes which will benefit us, make us more alive and help us to grow in holiness. There is no change which cannot be used to help us to grow. Jesus used His crucifixion to destroy sin because He gave the agony which He suffered in His passion to His loving Father. Throughout His life, "Jesus grew in wisdom and stature" (Luke 2:52). He was open to change and He is a great example to us. Unless we let go of the fear and embrace change, it will destroy our inner peace.

Healing

Praying for healing is a labor of love. When we pray for healing for others God will answer our prayers in a far more powerful way than we can ask or imagine. Our love for those in need of healing helps both us and them to accept God's love. It also shows them that they are not alone and have no need to fear because God

is with them. I know from experience that it is difficult to pray when we are suffering ourselves, and so it is important to pray for others who are paralysed by fear. Christ, who is with us when we pray, presents our petitions to the Father. This

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is why, in faith, we believe that they will be answered because it

is Christ's prayer for us and for those we love, which brings healing, peace and acceptance.

Trust In The Lord

It is easy to trust God with our lives when things are going well but what happens when things start falling apart? Do we trust Him then? We have to learn to trust God's ways. Once we know God as a loving Father, then our lives take on a different dimension. We will no longer feel alone because we will know that we have a Father who is able to love us unconditionally and wants the best for us. We are one with God the Father through Christ's love for us. When suffering comes our way, we will be able to talk to God about what worries us the most, just as a child seeks reassurance from a loving parent. We can pour out our problems to God and He will hold us in His arms and brings us the gift of His peace. It is no coincidence that God says 365 times in the Bible "Do not be afraid", once for everyday of the year. If we trust in God, we have nothing to fear.





"Call to me and I will answer you"

PRAYER LINE

FRIENDS, ARE YOU WORRIED...?

CONFUSED...?

HAVING PROBLEMS...?

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John Hesketh
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making true
friends.

When I was a teenager, I wondered why other people had so many friends when I just had one or two. This did not change once I became an adult, although my friendships did. It was only when I began to ask people about their friendships that I realised everyone was just like me. Most people only have two or three friends. I mean people they really call friends, and the rest of the people seem to be acquaintances. This surprised me and gave me comfort to know I was not alone in having a small group of friends.

The Bible tells us about the importance of friendship because God did not create us to be alone. God created each one of us with the desire to feel wanted, loved and appreciated. It can be difficult to develop friendships especially when people keep letting us down. Maybe your “friends” don’t value you as a friend as much as you value them, and this can be very painful.

The Bible tells us to be very careful about friendship. In the Book of Sirach chapter 6, we are advised to be slow to make friends with people. “When you gain friends, gain them through testing, and

do not trust them hastily. For there are friends who are such when it suits them, but they will not stand by you in time of trouble” (Sirach 6:7-8).

Testing your friend means being patient and not sharing everything about your life with that person straight away. It takes time to develop trust.

The Bible tells us that there are four different types of friends (Sirach 6); and out of these four, three of them are not good friendships. ‘The first kind of friend is only a friend when it suits them’ (Sirach 6:8). This friend will ignore you one minute and be your friend the next. I call this kind of friendship a “one way street”; because you are doing all the running around. You’re the one texting or calling or inviting your friend to different places. The reason why it’s a one way street is because your friend doesn’t invite you to do anything or go anywhere. The only time this person wants to be your friend is when they have no one else. This is not a real friendship. You deserve better and deep down you know it.

The second kind of friend is one who ‘stabs you in the back’ (Sirach 6:9). They are your friend when everything is going

well between you, but the moment you fall out or have an argument, this friend shares your secrets with other people. They may encourage others to laugh at you and tell everyone about your argument. This is not a real friend. This person is using you in the name of friendship and is hungry for attention and likes to play the victim, telling everyone how they have been hurt by you, when they are the ones who hurt you in the first place.

The third kind of friend is a real let down (Sirach 6:10). You are always

together, hanging out; you go to each other's house and things seem to be going well until...something bad happens in your life. Maybe sickness in the family or someone is threatening to hurt you. All of a sudden this friend is no longer answering your texts or your calls. They do not want to be involved in your troubles or sufferings because they don't understand loyalty.

Then there is the fourth kind of friend. "A loyal friend is the elixir of life, and those who fear the Lord will find one. Whoever fears

the Lord makes true friends, for as a person is, so is his friend too" (Sirach 6:14-17). This is a true friend. The Bible calls this person a loyal friend: "A loyal friend is a powerful defence: whoever finds one has indeed found a treasure. A loyal friend is something beyond price, there is no measuring his worth."

In order for us to have true friends, we need to ask God to help us be a good friend, so that the friends we make are our 'second selves'.



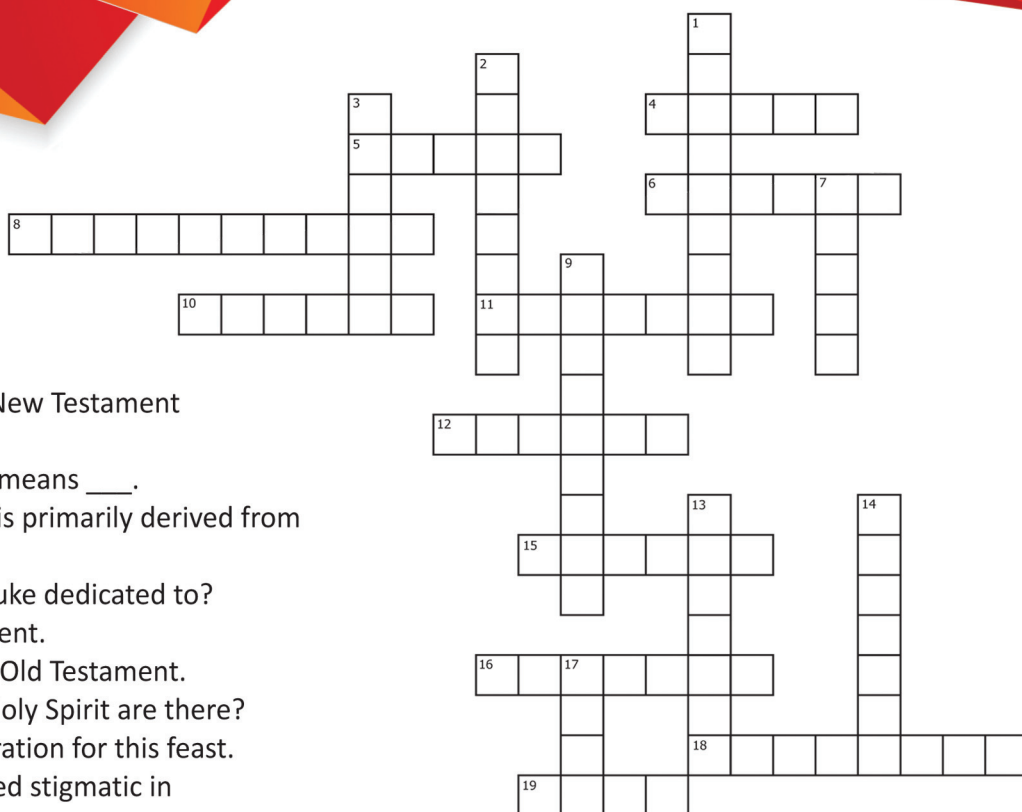
CROSS WORD

Across

4. What language was the New Testament originally written in?
5. The Greek word angelos means ____.
6. The Liturgy of the Hours is primarily derived from the Book of ____.
8. Who was the gospel of Luke dedicated to?
10. The liturgical colour for Lent.
11. The shortest book in the Old Testament.
12. How many fruits of the Holy Spirit are there?
15. Lent is a period of preparation for this feast.
16. St. ____ is the first recorded stigmatic in Christianity.
18. Psalm 23 speaks of the Lord as a Good ____.
19. In the dream that Joseph interpreted for the Pharaoh's cupbearer, the 3 branches represented 3 ____.

Down

1. St Polycarp and the early martyrs were executed because they would not deny that they were a ____.
2. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "If anyone is in Christ, there is a new ____".



3. Which prophet anointed David as a king?
7. Paul was shipwrecked on this island.
9. other term for the Feast of the Presentation.
13. What are the members of The Society of Jesus (religious congregation) known as?
14. The city in which St John Chrysostom was born.
17. The prophetess who was in the temple during the Presentation of Jesus.

MIRACLES CAN H A P P E N !



*Alisha James
from
India,
looks at
how we
can reach
our full
potential
in life.*

We Are Unique

God created us in His own image and likeness. He created each one of us with great love and care and we all have a unique purpose. He knows everything about us, our strengths, our weaknesses even the problems that we face. "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you;

before you were born I set you apart" (Jeremiah 1:5). We are all unique with different personalities, interests, skills and talents. So instead of comparing ourselves with others, we should try to get a better understanding of ourselves and develop the abilities and talents that God has given us so that we can live our lives to the fullest.



Everything
is Possible



Our Dreams

One of the most beautiful gifts that God has given us is life itself, so we should live it in a fruitful manner. As young people, we tend to look to the future with excitement as we make plans for our lives. We have many dreams, goals and ambitions that we want to achieve. No doubt we will have some successes as well as some failures as we journey through life. At times we will experience difficulties and set backs and we might even be tempted to give up hope, but we can always turn to God asking for His help, because nothing is impossible for Him. "I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours" (Mark 11:24). God is the best listener, because He hears even the silent prayer of our hearts. He knows what we need even before we ask for it.

Prayer

Sometimes we feel that God doesn't hear our prayers when they don't seem to be answered

"Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."
(Mark 11:24)

but He may be making us wait for the right time or He has better plans for us. So we should pray, "God, even though these are my plans and my desires let your will be done in my life, because your plans are always better than mine". We can also pray for the Holy Spirit to guide us and help us to understand what God is trying to say to us. Prayer is a conversation between ourselves and God, so as well as saying what

we need, we should try to listen to what He wants from us. When we start listening to Him and doing His will, we'll be able to achieve so much more than if we follow our own plans. "Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand." (Isaiah 41:10)

Thanksgiving

When we have faith that God is in control of our lives, give 100 percent of our effort and leave the rest to God then miracles will happen. Even the things that we think we could never achieve become possible through Him. But we mustn't forget to show our gratitude. When our prayers are answered we should always thank Him. It is very easy to forget that when He has helped us through our difficulties and things get easier. He is our Heavenly Father who loves us and enjoys it when we spend time with Him, talking to Him and sharing all the things that have happened in our lives, just as we do with our friends. ○○

CROSS WORD ANSWERS

ACROSS: 4. Greek 5. Angel 6. Psalms 8. Theophilus 10. Purple 11. Obadiah 12. Twelve 15. Easter 16. Francis 18. Shepherd 19. Days

DOWN: 1. Christian 2. Creation 3. Samuel 7. Malta 9. Candlemas 13. Jesuits 14. Antioch 17. Anna

In the days when many people in high office were corrupt and self-seeking, the Lord Chancellor, Thomas More could have compromised his faith and supported the king. However his loyalty to the Catholic faith meant that he would suffer a traitor's death.

A Martyr For The Faith

ST THOMAS MORE

Patron saint of statesmen, politicians and lawyers

Early Years

Thomas More was born in London around the year 1477. His father was a successful lawyer and Thomas went to one of the best schools. He was a very good scholar and when he left school he was taken on as a page to the Archbishop of Canterbury, John Morton, who was also the Lord Chancellor of England. Young Thomas went to Oxford to study for two years, then returned to London to train as a lawyer. He was a good student, he had a

brilliant and enquiring mind and his kindness gained him many friends and admirers. Thomas enjoyed his studies but as a young man he was unsure what God was calling him to do.

Religious Life

Thomas felt called to the priesthood so he joined a Carthusian monastery to test that calling. He followed the monks' way of life as much as he could, while still working as a lawyer. For two years he studied and prayed with the monks trying to discern what God wanted him to do. He was deeply religious but also felt called to live in the world. Eventually he decided, as he said to a friend, "to be a chaste husband rather than an impure priest." He left the monastery and married his first wife, Jane Colt in 1505. They subsequently had four children before Jane died in 1511. Shortly afterwards he married again. His second wife, Alice Middleton was a widow and became step-mother to his young children.

Writings

Thomas was also a prolific writer of letters and books. His famous work, *Utopia*, was published in



1516. It describes an ideal political system that was created on an imaginary island. The title has become synonymous with a perfect society ever since. Thomas was a progressive thinker for the time and insisted that his three daughters were given the same classical education as his son, they were all fluent in Greek and Latin.

Political Life

In 1504, Thomas had been elected to Parliament and rose through the ranks of public service, first becoming an undersheriff, where he gained a reputation for fairness and impartiality. He became a diplomat and in 1521 was knighted, becoming Sir Thomas More. He was not always comfortable mixing with the rich and powerful government officials as he would much rather have been working among the poor people. He was a man of prayer and piety and his faith gave him strength to cope with the demands of high office, when he became secretary and personal advisor to King Henry VIII.

The Royal Marriage

Catherine of Aragon, a Spanish princess was King Henry's wife. For many years, the marriage was happy especially after their daughter, Mary was born. However, Queen Catherine suffered a number of miscarriages and still births over the years and could not give Henry what he desperately wanted; a son and heir to succeed him to the throne. The king fell in love with one of Catherine's maids, Anne Boleyn, and desired to marry her, so that she would bear him a son. Henry already had an illegitimate son so he put the blame for the lack of a male heir on the Queen.

Diplomatic Wrangling

Henry needed an annulment so he looked for reasons why his

**“In the faith
and for the
faith of the
Catholic
Church I die,
the king’s good
servant but
God’s first.”**

marriage was not valid. As Catherine had been previously married to his brother, Arthur who died aged 15, the King proposed that his marriage was not legal and was against biblical teaching. So he petitioned the Pope for an annulment. This was not granted as the Pontiff had given a dispensation to allow their marriage in the first place. He was also pressured by Catherine's relatives not to allow it. For seven years the diplomatic wrangling continued between Henry's ambassadors and the Pope. Thomas More tried to support the king's position but it put him in a very difficult position. His support was important to the king because the people would listen and follow what Thomas said. But as he believed that Catherine was the King's true wife, he would not publicly support the king.

Supreme Head of The Church

Finally, in 1533, Henry decided that the only way that he could get a divorce was to reject the authority of the Pope. He declared himself the Supreme Head of a new Church of England and the Archbishop of Canterbury, granted the divorce. This put Thomas in a very difficult position because in 1529, he had been appointed as

Lord Chancellor. This was a great honor - Thomas was the first lay man ever to hold this exalted position - but he could not support the king. When he was asked to sign a document acknowledging that Henry was the supreme head of the church, Thomas resigned from his position.

Persecution

Henry surrounded himself with new ministers who would support him as head of the Church. They were anti-Catholic and threatened Thomas with death if he did not publicly acknowledge the king's marriage to Anne Boleyn and his position as head of the church. In 1534, after refusing to attend the coronation of Anne Boleyn, Thomas was brought to trial. He assured them of his loyalty to the king and he was released. Shortly afterwards he was asked to sign the Act of Succession that recognised Anne as the king's legal wife and their children as legitimate heirs to the throne. Thomas could have signed this but there was a clause which said “any foreign authority, prince or potentate” was to be rejected. This was clearly aimed at the Catholic Church and Thomas could not agree with this. So in April 1534, Thomas was imprisoned in the Tower of London.

Martyrdom

He suffered greatly for over a year in prison and on 1st July 1535, he was found guilty of high treason and sentenced to death. He was taken to the scaffold five days later, where he addressed the crowd, “In the faith and for the faith of the Catholic Church I die, the king’s good servant but God’s first.” St Thomas More was beatified in 1886, and canonised, along with St John Fisher, by Pope Pius XI in 1935. His feast day is on 22nd June. He is the patron saint of statesmen and politicians and lawyers.





HOLINESS IS POSSIBLE



*Written by
Rosemary Joy,
aged eighteen,
from
Birmingham in
the UK.*

Good News

The good news of the Gospel message is that we can become more holy and it is not just by our own efforts. We don't need to worry about striving to be good and beating ourselves up each time we fail because Jesus has already won the victory for us. He has experienced our poor, weak nature and has given us the Holy Spirit to help us

to become more like Him. It is the Holy Spirit working through us who will guide us to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

Trust In God's Mercy

Our Heavenly Father is a God of mercy and He never tires of forgiving us. No matter how many times we've turned our back on Him or failed to live up to His standards, He is waiting for us to repent so that He can pour out His mercy on us. "Therefore the Lord waits to be gracious to you; Therefore he will rise up to show mercy to you." (Isaiah 30:18)

Confession

In the Sacrament of Reconciliation we can approach our loving Father

like a child, full of trust and confidence in His goodness. When we confess our sins with a repentant heart, our loving Father will embrace us and forgive and forget our sins. This is the beautiful reality of what happens in the Sacrament of Confession, where Jesus Himself absolves us from our sins through His representative, the priest. So let us be courageous and go to the Sacrament to receive the freedom which Christ offers us. Pope St John Paul II described Confession as: "an act of honesty and courage – an act entrusting ourselves, beyond sin, to the mercy of a loving and forgiving God."

Resist Temptation

St Paul tells us, "God did not call us to impurity but in holiness" (1 Thessalonians 4:7). To be holy means to be one with Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit. "I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Even though we're surrounded by so much sin and temptation, we can overcome every obstacle the devil puts in our way, by being united to Christ and never letting go of Him, no matter how strongly the world is tempting us to sin.

Pray For Purity

Never be discouraged into thinking that holiness is not possible. By our own efforts it is difficult but by the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus has provided us with every grace that we need. Just a few days before St Gemma Galgani died, even though she did not even have the strength to stand up, she was seen kneeling, reciting her three Hail Mary's for purity. Many saints have practiced this and encouraged others to take up this beautiful devotion. Like St Gemma, let's also be faithful in praying daily for the virtue of purity because Our Blessed Mother Mary will never allow any of her children to be defeated by sin.



POPE'S *Voice*

"Truth, according to the Christian faith, is God's love for us in Jesus Christ. Therefore, truth is a relationship."

Pope Francis

GLOBAL CATHOLIC NEWS

Compiled by Smitha George

UK'S YOUNGEST ORDER GETS FIRST CONVENT



England: The newest religious community in the UK, The Community of Our Lady of Walsingham has just moved into its first convent, a converted barn complex near Dereham in Norfolk. Called the "House of the Divine Will", the building is monastic in style with cloisters, a double staircase and an oratory. The community began in 2004 in the Slipper Chapel at the Catholic Shrine to Our Lady in Walsingham, a major pilgrimage centre. Founded in the Carmelite tradition, it includes religious and lay members.

PERUVIAN PRISONERS MAKE 300,000 ROSARIES FOR POPE'S VISIT

Lima: For three months, inmates at twelve Peruvian prisons have been busy making rosaries in preparation for the papal visit. They made about three hundred thousand rosaries. The initiative organised by the National Penitentiary Institute, working with the Archdiocese of Lima, raised money to help cover some of the costs of Pope Francis' visit, as well as allowing the 650 prisoners to feel part of this special celebration of the faith in Peru.



POPE MARRIES COUPLE ABOARD PLANE



Santiago: Two flight attendants were married by Pope Francis in an impromptu mid-air wedding during a flight from Santiago to Iquique, Chile. Carlo Ciuffardi Elorriga and Paula Podest Ruiz, were both working as cabin crew when the unplanned ceremony took place. Pope Francis discovered that they had been married in a civil ceremony in 2010, but had not been able to hold the religious ceremony afterwards because an earthquake had damaged their church in Santiago. They were both delighted and after completing the paperwork and organising witnesses, Pope Francis married the couple at 36,000 feet.



COLLECTION BASKETS GO DIGITAL IN PARIS CATHOLIC CHURCHES

Paris: The Catholic Church in Paris is now trialling an option for digital donation as well as the traditional collection baskets at Mass. Worshippers at Saint-Francois de Molitor Church can now make donations using a contactless payment terminal with their credit or debit cards. The user just taps their card on the terminal, selects one of the optional amounts, and the payment is processed immediately. The response by the congregation has been very positive.

MUSLIMS CONVERTING TO CHRISTIANITY INCREASES IN AUSTRIA

Vienna: The ongoing refugee crisis has led to Austria recording a significant number of Muslims converting to Christianity. Three quarters of the 750 adults who were baptised in 2017 were immigrants from Muslim countries, according to the official spokesman for the Archdiocese of Vienna. Official figures show that in 2016, 1.2 million asylum seekers arrived in Europe, and of these 39,860 settled in Austria.



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"For what will
it profit them
if they gain the
whole world but
forfeit their
life? Or what
will they give
in return for
their life?"

(Matthew 16:26)



The church teaches that every spiritual soul is created immediately by God - it is not "produced" by the parents - and also that it is immortal: it does not perish when it separates from the body at death, and it will be reunited with the body at the final Resurrection (CCC 366).

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