

KINGDOM REVELATOR

|||| CATHOLIC MAGAZINE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ■ ISSUE 48

WHAT IS
YOUR
STRATEGY?

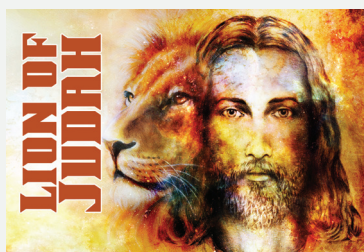
CONFUSION
IN FAITH



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CONFUSION
IN FAITH

Mother Mary, Pray for our Readers.

OUR HEAVENLY PATRONESS

Our Lady Seat of Wisdom, pray for us.

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USA. Date: April 21, 2016

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The Editorial Board wish to give all
the Glory to God. Without his divine
help the production of this magazine
would not have been possible.

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“Call to me and I will answer you”

PRAYER LINE

Friends, are you worried...? confused...? having problems...?

We have a dedicated prayer team waiting to pray for you...!

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WHY DO WE HAND ON THE FAITH?



YOU CAT S P E A K S

Q11. We hand on the faith because Jesus commands us: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28:19). [91]

No genuine Christian leaves the transmission of the faith exclusively to specialists (teachers, pastors, missionaries). We are Christ for others. This means that every genuine Christian would like God to come to other people, too. He says to himself, "The Lord needs me! I have been baptized and confirmed and am responsible for helping the people around me to learn about God and 'to come to the knowledge of the truth' (1 Tim 2:4b)." Mother Teresa used a good comparison: "Often you can see power lines running alongside the street. Unless current is flowing through them, there is no light. The power line is you and I! The current is God! We have the power to allow the current to flow through us and thus to generate the light of the world: JESUS or to refuse to be used and, thus, allow the darkness to spread."

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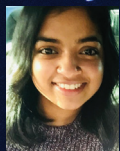
EDITORIAL

Jesus said to His disciples: "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15). And for those of you who are accustomed to the way things are here at Kingdom Revelator, you know what word is up next - evangelisation. There was a time when I would simultaneously shudder and cringe at that very word. So, before you let a sigh escape your mouth, hold your thoughts; the 'e' word is not just about a stage and a crowd.

The Holy Father's intention for the month of May is clear: that the lay faithful may each fulfil their mission of evangelisation. Allow me to elaborate. The very word 'Christian' means in itself 'follower of Christ' and the best way to follow Christ (or in other words imitate Him), is through the example of our lives. Some are often taken aback by the word 'proclaim' and fall into the misconception that the mission of evangelisation is simply for preachers or the religious. However, there's a saying that is particularly applicable in this instance - actions speak louder than words. To proclaim the good news is simply to live out the good news. In every thought, word and action, we ought to share the light and love of Jesus Christ with the world. Pope Francis cautioned believers saying that if they do not proclaim Jesus with their lives, then the Church becomes "not the mother, but the babysitter."

Speaking of mothers, this month is also dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The mother of God, upon receiving the Incarnate Word, went out in haste to meet her cousin Elizabeth. Freely she received, and freely she gave; an example we are all called to follow. So then, what are you waiting for?





Irine Joseph from Northampton, UK explains how God's plans are bigger and better than our own.

YOU ARE CHO

Imagine, billions of years ago God the Father, seated on His throne in heaven, has a genius idea to create the universe. The Trinity then plans the millions of galaxies, stars, planets and come down to their finale; Earth. This is their favourite planet and they want it to be the best. God the Father wants Earth to be incomparable to any other planet and the finest of His creation to be living here. After planning the light, land, animals and more, God decides He wants to put human beings on Earth and begins to create the entire human race. God carefully chooses how each person will be and makes a plan for each individual.

Now this might seem like the introduction of a sci-fi movie, but

I like to think this is how the creation story began. However, this is not any old story from a book. Ephesians 1:4 says, "just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love". The Word of God clearly says here that even before the foundations of the world were 'laid', God the Father had chosen every single one of us. Before creating the whole universe itself, God had already chosen each person that would live here on earth. It's amazing to think that billions of years ago, someone had already planned where we would go, what we would do and whom we would meet in our lives (of course, this depends on the choices we make).

Jeremiah 29:11 says "For surely, I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." I'm sure many of us have seen and read this Bible verse many times. Despite this, it never occurred to me that the plans God had for me were made before the foundation of the world; that He separated me from others and chose me as His child. This alone gives us enough reason to have complete trust in God in every situation of our lives. So no matter what we face, good or bad, we should face it with complete confidence in Him. In difficult situation or when faced with complicated choices, the best way forward is to ask God



SEN

what His plans are because His plans are the best ones. Don't just take my word for it, the Word of God promises us too. Our loving Father wants us to make our own choices and use the talents that we have been given wisely, but it is up to us.

One of the most famous of Jesus' miracles is the 'feeding of the five thousand'. The little boy in this miracle plays a crucial role that we sometimes overlook. John 6:8-9 says, "One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?" The little boy bravely came forward to give his bread and fish to Jesus but the disciples almost sneer at

him, thinking that nothing in particular will happen. But how wrong they were! Similarly how

—“—
How wrong
we are when we
undermine God's
great plans for us.
”—

wrong we are when we undermine His great plans for us. The only thing the little boy had

with him was five loaves and two fish and without hesitation, he offered it all to Jesus. In the same way, if we surrender everything to our Lord, He will transform our lives in a way that we could never have imagined.

2 Timothy 4:17 says, "But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength". Let us therefore remember that God is with us and it is He who gives us the strength to live our lives according to His will, for His glory. Whichever path we take in life, we should have the assurance that "all things work together for good for those who love God" (Romans 8:28). After all, He was the one who chose us all those billions of years ago and I am sure He doesn't make mistakes. ○○

THE LION OF JUDAH



Aaron Sales from Salford, explores the prophecies about Jesus in the Old Testament.

Jacob's Final Blessing

We're going to explore the story of Jacob (the grandson of Abraham). Now Jacob had twelve sons and four wives. After a lot of family problems, slavery, prison and some crazy dreams, the family moved from Canaan to Egypt. Towards the end of the Book of Genesis, at the deathbed of Jacob he is blessing each of his sons one by one.

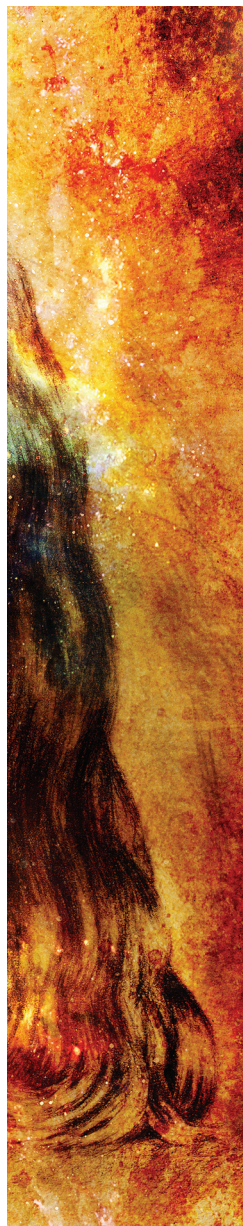
Now, when he gets to his fourth son, Judah, he seems to bless him in a different way than the others. He says, "Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand will be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons shall bow down before you. Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He crouches down, he stretches like a lion, like a lioness - who dares rouse him up? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until obedience comes to him; and the obedience of his people is his. Binding his foal to the vine and his donkey's colt in

the choice vine, he washes his garments in wine and his robe in the blood of grapes; his eyes are darker than wine, and his teeth whiter than milk" (Genesis 49:8-12).

What is He on About?

In the first Book of Samuel, we see the fulfillment of these prophecies. When Jacob talks about the 'scepter', he gives a clear image of a king's scepter with which he rules. The first king from the line of David is King David (remember the story of David and Goliath from 1 Samuel 17).

Now, ever since David, there had



always been a direct descendant who reigned as king (until the Exile to Babylon in around 598 BC. This can be found in 2 Kings 25 & 2 Chronicles 36:15-21). After the exile, the line of kings is forgotten about, until Jesus appears on the scene, who is of the descent of David, Judah and Abraham. And, as we all know, Jesus is our king who reigns for eternity in heaven.

Balaam's Prophecy

Another prophecy is that of a false prophet named Balaam. The background to this story is as follows: the people of Israel, who had just been freed from the Egyptians, formed a covenant with God and are on their way to the promised land.

On the way, they start to argue with God and Moses (the one who brought them out of Egypt), saying that they were better off in Egypt (this can be found in the Book of Numbers). Soon, they arrive at the city of Moab and camp outside it (remember, they're still quarrelling).

Now in the city, the King of Moab, King Balak, knows that the Israelites have camped outside his city - and he is terrified! He and his people have heard by now of what the God of Israel is capable of. He parted the Red Sea, destroyed the Egyptian army, annihilated some other

kingdoms on the way and is probably going to destroy Moab as well. He is petrified, hence decides to summon divine help rather than prepare for war. He calls for this false prophet, Balaam (check out Numbers 22).

Balak asks Balaam to curse Israel for him. So Balaam goes to the top of the mountain, opens his mouth and tries to curse Israel. But when he opens his mouth, he can only utter blessings upon them. Four times he blesses them and the third time, he says, "He crouched, he lay down like a lion, and like a lioness; who will rouse him up?" (Numbers 24:9). WOAHH! That's the exact same thing that Jacob said to Judah. Yet again, we're told that a lion will arise from Jacob (and we already know that Jesus is the lion of the tribe of Judah). And in his fourth oracle (prophecy), he says even more! "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near - a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel; it shall crush the borderlands of Moab, and the territory of all the Shethites" (Numbers 24:17).

The Link Starts to Appear

Now, the part about the star is important. When we read Matthew 2:2, we find some wise men looking for Jesus, saying that they "had seen his star in the East and have come to worship him." This is further implied

when we look at the Book of the prophet Micah: "...O Bethlehem ...from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel" (Micah 5:2). Now, Bethlehem is a city in... Judah! And it's actually called 'The City of David'. Now the pieces are coming together. Jesus, though raised in Nazareth, was born in Bethlehem, which is what Micah foretold. And Balaam even mentioned the scepter that Jacob spoke about! Then he talked about crushing Moab.

Do not weep. See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered.

Revelation 5:5

This is an echo of the promise made by God to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Another word for 'Borderlands' is forehead. And we already know that God had said that He will send someone to crush the head of the serpent. And so, when we look at the prophecies altogether, they point to the coming of someone who is going to rid the world of evil by becoming a king and dying for us. And all this was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. ○○○

TIME SPENT IS GAINED



Mercymole Michael from the United States explores why it is important to spend quality time with God.

God loves each one of us, no matter what situation we're in. Even in our sinfulness when we call out for help, our loving Father hastens to our rescue. He doesn't judge us based on the wrongdoings of our past; instead He holds us close to Him and embraces us with His infinite love and mercy. Have you experienced this love?

upon whether or not we have made any effort to spend at least one percent of this time with the one who blesses us with this gift. We never fail to spend time with our friends and family, to please them and gain their favour. God created us in His own image and likeness, and protects us



The length of our journey here on earth is unknown to us. Each new day that we are blessed with, accounts for 24 hours that are added to our life. Let us ponder

every second of our life. Some of us fail to remember this. We fail to show our gratitude by spending time with Him in prayer.

When we spend time with our loved ones, our relationship with them grows stronger. Likewise, we should spend time with Jesus for our relationship with Him to grow deeper. When we realise the depth of God's love for us, nothing in this world can tear us apart from it. Unlike most of our friends, God doesn't love us because of our wealth, popularity or beauty. No matter what situation we are in, God wants us to be with Him. He thirsts for our friendship and calls us His sons and daughters. He looks at us and tells us, "you are mine". Caught up in worldly things, we often fail to hear it. 'For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life?' (Matthew 16:26)

Faith is a gift from God. It is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. God our creator and sustainer may not be visible to our human eyes. He has given us wisdom to differentiate between right and wrong, and in His great love, He has bestowed upon us the freedom to make decisions for ourselves. Let us believe that He is the living God. We need God's grace to avoid sin and all the situations that lead us to sin. In order to attain this grace, we must spend time with Jesus in prayer.

I have heard some people say that they don't know how to pray. Prayer is just the act of being with God. In solitude, just like you would with your friend, you can share your problems, your happiness and even ask Him your unanswered questions. Take a decision here and now, to spend at least a few minutes each day with Jesus. This will transform you, for He will help you fight the good fight and reward you with eternal life.

Let the hope of eternal life lead us to the foot of the Cross, so that we may experience a joy and peace that is unlike any other we have experienced before. Time waits for no man; so come, let us find some time to spend in the presence of our Creator.





Sunita Kottoor from the United States explains why we should pray the rosary every day and invite others to do so.

The rosary is primarily a Christ-centred prayer in which we pray to the Son through His mother Mary. The foundations of devotion to Mary can be found in both Scripture and tradition. Those who pray the rosary regularly obtain many graces, which help them to pass through the narrow gate that leads to heaven. The rosary is a powerful weapon that helps to ward off temptations. It purifies our souls, washes away our sins and helps us conquer our vices. Our Lady desires to attain the virtue of purity for all those who pray the rosary regularly. St Padre Pio instructed his spiritual children, “Abandon yourself in the hands of Mary. She will take care of you.” She always leads us to her Son, and presents our needs before Him. Here are four things daily rosaries do:

1. Transforms the World

Our Lady appeared several times to three children at the beginning of the twentieth century at Fatima. She stressed the importance of praying the rosary in each of her apparitions, asking the children to pray the rosary every day for world peace.

Pope St John Paul II was hailed for hastening the collapse of the Soviet Union

SCHOOL OF MARY



by encouraging freedom and human dignity (particularly through the nine-day public pilgrimage to Poland). He however attributed the fall of the communist regime to the rosary, thanks to the worldwide daily rosaries inspired by the Fatima apparitions. There is no reason that the same woman who solved the Soviet crisis can't solve the world's problems today!

2. Transforms Families

We have all heard the saying, “a family that prays together stays together.” One of the most tragic realities in the modern world is the breakup of the family unit, which is the domestic church. Every family should make a concerted effort to

pray the rosary together for the sake of unity within their own family, as well as for all the families of the world. Our Lady has promised that those who recite the rosary faithfully are her beloved children, the brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ.

3. Transforms Individuals

Everyone who met Pope St John Paul II or St Teresa of Calcutta, immediately sensed their holiness and magnetic personality. They were wonderful people who followed a strict prayer regime. We too can gain a little bit of what they had through reciting a daily rosary, because we will then enjoy the

faithful protection of Mother Mary from all evil. Through it, she will lead us to Jesus, her Son. It was upon His Mother's request, that Jesus performed His very first miracle during the wedding at Cana, even though His "time had not yet come". Even now, Jesus

recitation of the rosary, you will start to see your life changing gradually. Mary will guide you to happiness and to a life filled with love. In the words of Pope Pius IX, "Among all the devotions approved by the Church, none has been so favoured by so many miracles as the devotion of the

rosary, we deepen our relationship with God and grow in His love. Many saints have recommended daily meditative prayer; the rosary is exactly that. It gradually brings us to perfect knowledge of Jesus Christ. Pope St John Paul II referred to the rosary as the "school of Mary," in which she teaches "by obtaining for us in abundance the gifts of the Holy Spirit," so as to form her children into the likeness of her divine Son.

St Louis de Montfort, one of the greatest authorities on Mariology said, "When the holy

NO ONE CAN LIVE CONTINUALLY IN SIN AND CONTINUE TO SAY THE ROSARY: EITHER THEY WILL GIVE UP SIN OR THEY WILL GIVE UP THE ROSARY.

BISHOP HUGH DOYLE



continues to respect and listen to His Mother.

The rosary is also incompatible with sinfulness. To explain this, Bishop Hugh Doyle said, "No one can live continually in sin and continue to say the rosary: either they will give up sin or they will give up the rosary." With daily

most holy rosary."

4. Transforms Our Relationship with Jesus

In various apparitions, our Lady has appeared holding a rosary and has asked that we continue to pray this prayer. By meditating on the life of Christ through the

rosary is said well, it gives Jesus and Mary more glory and is more meritorious than any other prayer." It is an effective aid to counter the devastating effects of the many crises plaguing our age. So essentially, there really is no good reason to neglect a daily rosary.



Rose Joe (KR USA Prison Ministry Coordinator) from Houston, shares an inspiring testimony on the miraculous ways in which God uses Kingdom Revelator magazine to speak to His loved ones.

My sister, working at a hospital in Houston, happened to care for a young boy aged 17 who was diagnosed with terminal cancer—he had days to live. Despite him being an atheist, she spoke to him about Jesus and His love. The boy questioned her as to why he was suffering from cancer if an

omnibenevolent God existed. In response to this, my sister handed the boy a copy of Kingdom Revelator magazine (Issue 33) in which there was an article titled, 'Why is God Doing This to Me'. She asked him to read it and left it at that for the night. On the following day, when my sister went into work, the boy was in tears and explained that until that day, no one had spoken to Him about the love of God. In short, he accepted Jesus as his Saviour and passed away that same night. Upon hearing this, I became convinced that this is more than just a magazine; rather, I believe that it is a powerful instrument of evangelization.





HITTING ROCK BOTTOM

A college student from the United States testifies to how God can work wonders in our lives when we give Him a chance.

There's a saying, "When one door closes, another door opens." When I look back at my life, I feel this quote is quite applicable for me. My life took a 180 degree turn when I met the love of my life, my redeemer and liberator - my beloved Jesus! Finally, I had found the purpose of my life. I felt God smacking me on the head and saying, "Hey, get up! It's time to get on your feet, leave everything, focus on me, and follow me!"

My life before meeting Jesus had been a series of brokenness, shame, addiction, fear, regret and anger. I was unhappy and

distanced myself from everyone, especially my parents. They raised me in a very strong Catholic faith, but over the last few years, I began to grow disinterested in spiritual matters. Amidst the chaos of my personal life, the lack of love I felt as a young child and the addictions I was chained to, I began to nurse hatred towards God.

Before I knew it, I started losing my faith. I always thought, if a loving God really existed, why

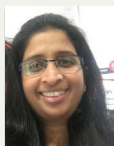
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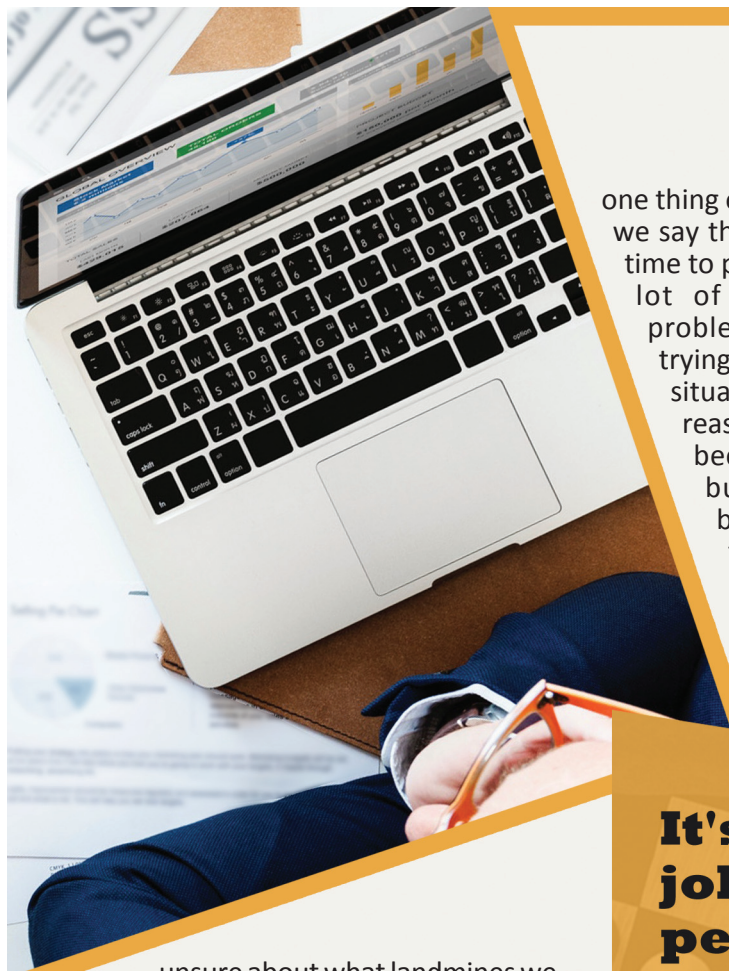


WHAT IS YOUR STRATEGY?

Rajni Manoj from Derby, UK shares a combat plan to tackle your problems like a true Christian.



Life is beautiful, especially when we are having a good time. But what about when we are faced with problems? When we have an argument with a loved one or a friend, sometimes it just seems like a losing battle. During those heated moments, we are often



unsure about what landmines we might step on. Just because we argue a lot, it doesn't mean we fight well.

In our daily lives, there always seems to be something to fight for. Despite the many challenges that come our way, very few of us know how to fight the right way. In other words, we need a prayer strategy - a prayer for each area of our lives. But, there are occasions when we moan about not having enough time to pray and read the Bible. If we look to the Scriptures, it teaches us that problem solving isn't our task; it is the Lord's. Our responsibility is to simply pray with faith, and believe that nothing is impossible for God (Luke 1:37).

Like most spiritual people, we would like to say we believe in God and that Jesus is important to us. Whatever stage we are at in life, we are always busy with

one thing or the other. Although we say that there isn't enough time to pray, we spend quite a lot of time arguing and problem solving. We keep trying to fix people and the situations around us. The reason we fight is mostly because we love them, but this love is often buried under a lot of frustration and so it cannot be seen. Essentially, most of

It's not our job to fix people or situations. Instead, it's our job to love and pray for everyone around us.

us have enough time to fight a losing battle. Truth of the matter is that it gets us nowhere. Have you ever wondered why? Because it's not our job to fix people or situations. Instead, it's our job to love and pray for everyone around us. All we have to do is learn to fight every battle with the right weapons. The Bible has the answers to all our

problems. As 2 Thessalonians 3:3 says, "But the Lord is faithful; he will strengthen you and guard you from the evil one."

In spite of all our shortcomings, God still loves us. He offers salvation to anyone who turns to Him in repentance. However, we cannot ask Him to forgive us when we do not forgive others first. Yes, it is hard to forgive but when we do, we are set free. John 10:10 says, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." In order to enjoy the beauty of life, we need God on our side. And if we are to have victory over situations in our own lives, we ought to let God take the steering wheel. Become warriors of prayer and when we do pray, we should pray for our opponents too. Each of us need a measure of His grace to love our enemy, and forgive those around us. That is why it is written in 2 Corinthians 12:9, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness."

Often we complain that our prayers are not answered. Mostly it's because we haven't prayed as we should. We should first acknowledge our own shortcomings and sins before the Lord and ask for His forgiveness. Then, we just need to step down from being in control and ask the Lord to take over: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). Our final victory and joy is found in Jesus alone.





Most Reverend Anthony Fisher, Archbishop of Sydney

The Australian Catholic Youth Festival (ACYF), held in December 2017 at the iconic Sydney Olympic park, was deemed one of the greatest opportunities for Australian youth to encounter Jesus. This 3-day initiative was established by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) and was marked as a milestone of success by the Australian Catholic Church.

THE ROAD OF BLESSINGS

*Australian Catholic Youth Festival 2017
Kingdom Revelator Counter*



"HOW CAN YOUNG PEOPLE KEEP THEIR WAY PURE? BY GUARDING IT ACCORDING TO YOUR WORD" PSALM 119:9

and musical celebrities, ensured the right degree of pomp for the festival. The event also offered opportunities for Australian youth to showcase their musical, artistic and film making talents. How incredibly uplifting it was to see the joy

of Christ reflected on the faces of festival participants!

After contributing to the success of Ignite Conference 2017 held in Brisbane, Kingdom Revelator (KR), by God's grace, ventured into making its national presence felt at the ACYF. Securing a booth in the centre of the Expo, the KR team members of Anointing Fire Catholic Ministries (AFCM) were blessed to have a



More than 100 ministries and 17,000 individuals participated in this significant national gathering of young Catholics. The theme of the Festival was, 'Open New Horizons for Spreading Joy: Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment'. Featured events included a series of workshops, concerts, exhibitions, keynote addresses and plenary sessions exploring different aspects of the Catholic faith. The presence of the Australian Catholic bishops, prominent speakers



joyful experience in sharing the love of Christ with the youth of Australia. Even as the festival commenced, a huge inflow of attendees packed the expo. The KR booth was visited by archbishops, bishops, priests, seminarians, ministry leaders, school teachers, and many youngsters. Bishop Bosco Puthur, the patron of Kingdom Revelator magazine, honoured us with his gracious presence and officially launched the new KR website (<http://kingdomrevelator.com.au>) for Australia. "Let me give you a blessing!" were the words spoken by Most Reverend Julian Charles Porteous the Catholic Archbishop of Hobart, Tasmania as he stood amazed by the KR magazine and the team's commitment.

Kingdom Revelator garnered appreciation from the ACYF organisers as well as participating ministries and individual attendees, for the attractive presentation of the magazine and for the real-life testimonies and relevant topics published in it. A few youngsters even expressed interest in writing for the magazine. More than 4000 free gifts were offered to the booth visitors; among them were 2000 copies of the KR magazine, 1500 magnets with scripture verses, a few collections of popular AFCM publications such as Exceeding Joy, Power of the Name of Jesus, Lord of Sick and more.

The success of KR booth at ACYF would never have been possible without the prayers and support of the AFCM team. We give all glory and praise to Jesus Christ for helping us overcome many hurdles. ACYF 2017 will be recorded as a great chapter in the journey of Anointing Fire Catholic Ministries in Australia as the country opened its doors for KR to reach out to a multitude of young souls.



KINGDOM

REVELATOR

WORD
SEARCH

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APOCALYPSE
BLESSED
EVANGELISATION
GRACE
MINISTRY
PENTECOST
TRINITY

APOSTLES
COMMANDMENTS
FATIMA
HOLINESS
MIRACLES
REDEMPTION
TRUTH

ASCENSION
COVENANT
FULFILMENT
LAITY
MYSTICAL
ROSARY
VISITATION

CONFUSION IN FAITH

It's normal to have doubts in our faith - a Sehion youth minister shares his thoughts.

I remember attending a conference once and coming back home with a new zeal for the Lord. There was an eagerness within me and it felt as though a fire had been lit inside my heart. I can recall how consistent and good my prayer life was; I could read the Bible, pray the rosary and attend Holy Mass without losing focus. It is precisely at this time of feeling spiritually uplifted that all of a sudden, a question somebody asks me or a passing thought causes me to doubt. Am I being delusional in believing in God? Is that bread, once consecrated, really Jesus? Is God actually alive or am I fooling myself?

From the Beginning

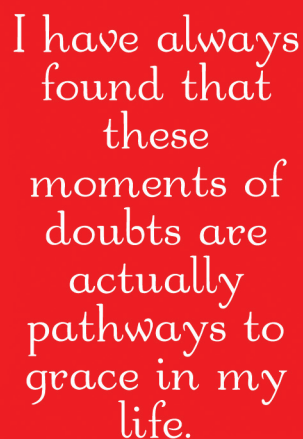
It is important to understand that the devil does not want us to grow closer to Christ. This is because the moment we start trusting in Jesus and solely relying on Him, the devil no longer has any influence over us. Therefore, the devil will craftily plant doubts in our minds just as he tricked Eve into thinking that by eating the fruit, she would be able to discern between good and evil (Genesis 3:5). In fact Eve, being made in the image of God, already knew what was right and wrong because she knew that it was wrong to eat from the tree that God had forbidden (Genesis 3:3). The devil however, planted a seed of doubt in her head that bloomed and she was not only able to convince herself, but Adam too, that God had not granted them the ability to distinguish between good and evil. This was nothing but a trick which finally led them to sin.

Overthinking

Many of us often complain about the Holy Bible and how challenging it can be to believe what is written in it. This is because we attempt to perceive God and His divine Word with our intellect. The problem is that though we want to have faith, we are unwilling to surrender our intellect and minds to God who is the source and fountain of all wisdom (Proverb 2:6). Sometimes, we are as St Paul says, “darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of their ignorance and hardness of heart.” (Ephesians 4:18) Trying to confine God to our own understanding is a natural tendency but this simply leads to a state where our minds become veiled, and we are unable to understand God (2 Corinthians 3:14).

St Therese of Lisieux

In a way, confusion and struggles with faith is a blessing in disguise because God is nudging us to move from overthinking with our brains to thinking with our hearts. Sometimes, when doubts arise, we have to approach Jesus and make an act of faith by saying “I trust you Jesus”. St Therese of Lisieux, (also known as the ‘Little Flower’) one of the most loved saints, underwent a huge crisis of faith during her life. Just before she died, the Little Flower told her Mother Superior that the worst kind of atheistic arguments had entered her mind about how sooner or later, science would be able to explain everything and so Christianity would fail. She struggled believing in heaven and felt as if God had left her. St Therese fought this temptation of being drawn into desperation by making frequent acts of faith. St Therese wrote “while I do not have the joy of faith, I am trying



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doubts are actually pathways to grace in my life. These are the moments when I force myself to say “I trust in God’s Word and if Jesus said it, I must believe it”. Though at first it seems ludicrous and silly, this small act of faith in God’s Word has lifted many veils that prevented me from seeing the truth. God’s wisdom advises each one of us, “reflect you what you have been commanded, for what is hidden is not your concern” (Sirach 3:22). It is not our concern because everything will be revealed to us by Jesus Himself. Remember that the apostles too had their doubts and indeed, when Jesus opened their minds, they said “now we know that you know all things, and do not need to have anyone question you; by this we believe

“WE WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT.”


(2 Corinthians 5:7)

to carry out its works at least. I believe that I have made more acts of faith in this past year than all through my whole life”. Though this saint struggled with her faith, she ended it with a profound mystical experience and now is acknowledged as a Doctor of the Church. Once, St Therese’s nurse found her awake after midnight, unable to sleep. The nurse asked what she said to God during the long, wakeful hours. St Therese replied, “I do not say anything, Sister, I just love Him.”

Trusting God

Like The Little Flower, in our doubts, we have to live by faith alone. St Paul says in the Bible, “we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7). I have always found that these moments of

that you came from God” (John 16:30). God puts us through these tough times to make us solely reliant on Him, and to walk with Him blindly by placing our trust in Him.

One way to always think about it is that God is giving us a special grace to be united with Him. Just as a blind person requires someone to guide them across the road in busy traffic, these crises of faith are a way of God, granting us a unique grace to depend on Him alone. It is an opportunity for us to rely on Him to guide and navigate us through our darkness. In this way, we participate uniquely in those moments of Jesus at the garden of Gethsemane and on the cross where there was nothing but silence from His Father. 

SWEETNESS



Joyson Joboy from Birmingham, UK explains how our sufferings can be turned to joy when we unite it to the sufferings of Christ.

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:15-16).

St Paul of the Cross was an Italian Mystic and founder of the Passionist Order. Many of his quotes have a moving power to assist us when we go through storms in life. He explains how we can turn setbacks into sweetness; we need not wait until the storm is over, but while we endure it, we can find sweetness in it. Hebrews 4:15-16 affirms that we have a God who experienced first-hand the emotions, tests and sufferings that we ourselves experience in life. He emptied His Divine Nature, became man and even faced temptation just like the rest of us. By His own example, Jesus shows us that we too can resist temptations (through His grace), strengthen our will and gain greater control over our passions. He gives us hope and tells us over and over again not to despair. He promises to be with us, and His nearness turns our sufferings into sweetness.

The Passion of Christ

The reason why we feel burdened by our struggles, pains

or sufferings, is because we either don't realise that God is all-powerful or we haven't completely submitted our lives to Him. We often strive to overcome the suffering by relying on our own abilities. At the time of our Baptism, we were washed with living water, but as

Nature itself assures us that after the bitterness of winter, the beauty of spring will come once more.

we go through life, our soul becomes stained from our sins. The Lord asks us to deposit these impurities into the sea of sorrows which He accepted for our sake, His passion. St Paul reminds us that His passion is an ocean of love. When we offer ourselves completely to the Lord, He will teach us to fish in that ocean. In other words, we will gain victory over our sufferings. We can dive into its depths without harm. St Paul urges us to often look at the

Crucifix, simply gaze at it, and whisper in our heart, "there are centred all my hopes". By doing this often, we can more easily persevere in our struggles. Simply put, when sufferings come our way, we must maintain a welcoming attitude: "I welcome you by setting my hope and trust in the mercy of God and the merits of my Redeemer."

Let Christ Live in You

According to St. Paul, the best way to find sweetness in pain is to entrust ourselves completely to the Lord's care. When we do this, at every moment, God will be present in our mind and wherever we go, we will be accompanied by His presence. When temptations arise, God watches over us and strengthens us to defeat them. The Lord uses the little sufferings that come our way to make our will stronger. He is alive and faithfully guards those who place their trust in Him. We think with our human logic, which can never give us adequate solutions. When we doubt, the still water becomes troubled waters, in which the devil can cast his lines. So be at peace when trials come our way; even when sufferings increase, focus always on doing the Lord's will so that we can discover and enjoy the sweetness of the pain.

Paradise is Calling

Our salvation is in the precious blood of our Lord and at the foot

IN PAIN



of the Cross. This means that without pain, we cannot gain paradise. St Paul says that the Lord never gives us a cross that is too heavy for us to bear. He gives us the strength to persevere through trials and bear our personal cross. At the end, He rewards us with eternal life which was purchased for us by His precious blood. Imagine there is a garden, which transfigures our sufferings into flowers. For every suffering we endure, we will see beautiful flowers adorning that garden. The bigger the trial we face, the more beautiful our garden will be. By the virtue of patience, we can joyfully accept all sufferings

that come our way and offer them to Jesus as a bouquet of flowers, picked from our garden of sufferings. When we grow weary, nature itself assures us that after the bitterness of winter, the beauty of spring will come once more. Let us then maintain a life of love, praise and glorify God in every circumstance. Miseries are unavoidable in this life, but remember that they prepare our soul to receive the riches of heaven. When we look at life from this perspective, we will ask the Lord to send us sufferings, rather than complain about them. In every suffering, pain and trial, the intention of God's fatherly love is the salvation of our soul.



PRAYER:

Lord, forgive our complaints when we perceive you to be absent in our trials. We realise that during trials you walk with us, and your hands are constantly moulding us to be a better person in every way. Help us with your grace to unite our life to your Divine Will. Let us forget ourselves and swim in the ocean of your passionate love. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

ST CLELIA BARBIERI

Patron of Catechists & People ridiculed for their piety



Sharlet Francis Xavier shares the story of a young Italian saint, who is the youngest founder of a religious community in the history of the Church.

Early Life

Clelia Barbieri was born to Giacinta Nannetti and Giuseppe Barbieri in an Italian village called Budrie, in the Archdiocese of Bologna. Her father Giuseppe came from a very poor but committed and faithful Christian family. Giacinta on the other hand, belonged to a rich but pious family. After their marriage, they lived in a humble cottage owned by Barbieri's family who were poor hemp workers. Born on February 13, 1847, Clelia was baptized on the same day with the name Clelia Rachele Maria. The devoted mother, Giacinta, taught Clelia and her sister about the love of Christ and the values of Christian faith early on in their lives which placed the deep desire for sanctity in Clelia's tender heart. One day she asked, "Mother, how can I become a saint?"

In the meantime, Clelia learned the art of sewing, spinning and weaving hemp which was considered the most important work of the village. At the age of eight, Clelia lost her father who became the victim of a cholera epidemic. However, with the generosity of her uncle, the family moved into a house near the parish church. Clelia grew in spirituality during this time and her life became more saintly. She spent all her time either at home weaving and sewing or in church praying and meditating. Clelia was also given first Holy Communion at the age of eleven, due to her unusual catechistic preparation and burning desire to receive the Eucharistic Lord. On this special day, she made a decision concerning her vocation and resolved to become a bride of Christ.

Mystical Experience

Later on, Clelia had her first mystical experience which caused her to feel deep repentance for her own sins and those of the whole world. She began experiencing the agony and suffering of the Crucified Christ and our Lady of Sorrows for the sanctification of souls. From the day of her First Communion, the crucifix and Our Lady of Sorrows

continually inspired her to build her life upon prayer and good works. Clelia imitated Christ and dedicated herself to the service of others through charity and poverty. She practiced self-denial and rejoiced in the inner communion she had with her Spouse. Before the Blessed Sacrament, Clelia was still and rapt in prayer; at home, she was the companion of and model for her fellow working girls. She worked with great joy, praying and thinking of God unceasingly. At other times, she would speak

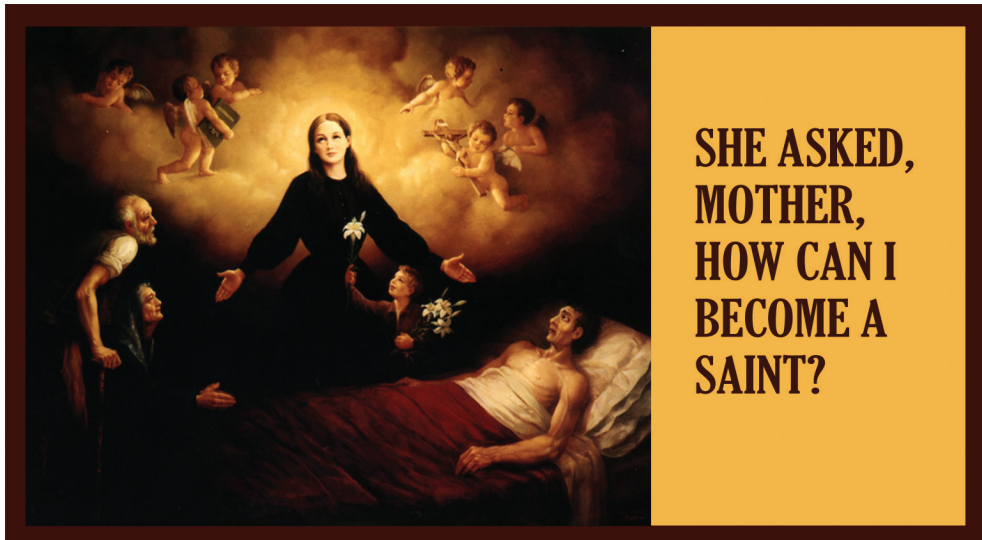
proposed the idea of a community devoted to an apostolic and contemplative way of life. This was to be a life of service centred on the Eucharist. Daily Communion would equip them with the necessary strength to teach catechism to the farmers and labourers of the area.

In 1868, Clelia and her young friends moved into the so-called "teacher's house" where The Christian Catechism Workers used to meet. This was the humble beginning of Clelia Barbieri's religious family which

Her Prophecy

Two years after establishing the order, the young saint died on July 13, 1870 from tuberculosis. Before departing, Clelia prophesied to the sister at her bedside, "I'm leaving, but I'll never abandon you. When in that Alfalfa field next to the church there will be a new community house, I will no longer be with you ... You will grow in number, and you will expand over plains and mountains to work in the vineyard of the Lord. The day will come when here at Budrie many will arrive with carriages and horses". She added, "I'm going to heaven and all those who will die in our community will enjoy eternal life. I shall remain with you always and never abandon you". Clelia's prophecy has been fulfilled and on the first anniversary of her death, her presence in the community was recognised at the time of community prayer when a heavenly voice singing and praying was heard. Since then, the communities in Italy, India and Tanzania have testified to hearing St Clelia's voice in their local language at the time of prayer and spiritual reading.

Today, following in Clelia's footsteps, the sisters of Suore Minime dell'Addolorata zealously continue their great work of service to all those in need. Their number has now spread to over thirty-five community houses. Being only twenty-three at the time of her death, Clelia Barbieri is the youngest founder of a religious community in the history of the Church. She was canonised on April 9, 1989 by Pope John Paul II and her feast day is July 13th.



of Him to her companions. In all and through all, she was immersed in the love of Christ.

Establishing a New Order

At the age of fourteen, Clelia joined 'The Christian Catechism Workers' of the village and was admitted as an assistant teacher. Soon after, her surprising talents became so evident that she was elected as the leader of the group. A few years later, a group of young women nominated Clelia as their leader and

later became known as Suore Minime dell'Addolorata (Sisters Minims of Our Lady of Sorrows). It was not easy for a teenager to gather and lead a group of faithful. However, she was assisted by God's providence and filled with divine wisdom. The small group was inspired and strengthened by Clelia's physical and mental sufferings in her darkest hours and in the absurd humiliations she had to endure. So much so that by the age of twenty-two, Clelia was called 'mother' by her companions.

(Continued from page 11)

all these sufferings? I began desperately to seek happiness elsewhere - the happiness that the world offered. I wanted to feel accepted and welcomed. I tried to please all my friends and joined them in everything they did; all that they called "joy of one's life". However, each time I returned feeling emptier inside. I thought that giving in to the desires of my body would make me feel wanted and heal my inner wounds, so I did that too. But on the contrary, I felt heartbroken and so much so, that I eventually lost the desire to live. Through the lack of prayer, I grew cold and hit rock bottom. With all the bad habits that had enslaved me, and my broken relationship with my parents, my life became a burden.

As my disobedience in the house worsened, I caused much pain and heartache to my parents. They prayed fervently for me. Eventually, they forced me to attend a one day retreat in Columbus, Ohio. I went angrily, without expecting anything to change. I believed that the God I had heard about all my life was purely a fantasy. However, during the deliverance prayers towards the end of the retreat, the Lord gave me a strong conviction through the Word of God I heard that day. I experienced Jesus in a radical way for the first time in my life and the Word of God touched me in a way it never had before! After listening to the Scriptures, I realised it was time for me to make a decision - I must either shut out the Scripture from my life, or I must turn over a new leaf and start a new life, as a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). By His grace, I allowed Jesus to heal and mend my broken heart. During the deliverance prayers, I surrendered all my worries and pains to Him for the first time in my life. During the laying on of hands, the Lord poured out His limitless Spirit (John 3:34) upon me, delivering me from all my addictions and pains. God also healed my relationship with my parents (Psalms 50:15). The next day when I got back home, I ran to my parents, gave them a huge hug and cried

Hey get up!
It's time to get on
your feet, leave
everything, focus
on me, and follow
me.

aloud asking for forgiveness for the first time in my life! I had an encounter with Christ, which I would not exchange for the whole world.

The Word of God that I keep close to my heart is John 14:27, "I do not give as the world gives."

The world gives false happiness that leaves us empty. But our Lord gives only the best to His children, to those who cling to Him (Matthew 7:11). He is faithful even when we are not, and loves us in spite of our shortcomings (2 Timothy 2:13). I found Jesus when I was at the lowest point in my life. Remember, Jesus doesn't look for your perfections but He seeks the sinners and the broken hearted and delights in them! (Luke 5:32) (Psalms 51:17) Romans 8:39 also reassures us, "Nor height, nor depth, nor anything in all creation can separate us from the love of Christ." Never think you are too far gone, or too deep in sin to turn back. The Lord is bigger than any of your sins. He will give you the courage to walk out of your shame for only He can offer hope and healing for your brokenness.

It was almost three years ago that I attended the life-changing retreat. That day I asked God to help me start a new chapter in my life, so that I could lead a life pleasing to Him. Today, I stand as a witness for Christ as He continues to pour out His grace on me and helps me to walk in this journey towards Him. I can confidently say that I have been saved by grace (2 Corinthians 12:9) (Ephesians 2:8). When we feel empty inside, we simply need to turn to Him with outstretched arms to receive His everlasting love. So run to Him now!





POPE FRANCIS ISSUES APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION ON 'HOLINESS'



Vatican: Pope Francis has issued his third exhortation titled *Gaudete et Exsultate* ("Rejoice and be glad") and the subtitle: "On the call to holiness in the contemporary world." In the new exhortation, Pope Francis emphasized that the following of Christ—the path to holiness—is "a way of life," not an intellectual exercise. An apostolic

exhortation is usually considered the second-highest form of papal teaching, after an encyclical letter.

IDENTICAL TWINS CELEBRATE 60 YEARS AS PRIESTS

Sydney: 86 year-old identical twins, Fr Patrick and Fr John O'Neill are celebrating 60 years of ordination as Catholic priests. The twins were ordained as Redemptorist priests on 16th March 1958 in Victoria, Australia. Over the ensuing decades, the priests went separate ways doing mission work in parishes all around Australia and Africa. Celebrating their Diamond Jubilee on 16th March, Fr Patrick and Fr John



said they can see that God's hand has been guiding them all the way. They now live together at the Redemptorist community in Sydney, Australia.

TEXAS IS HOME TO THE WORLD'S SMALLEST CATHOLIC CHURCH



Texas: St Martin's Catholic Church in Warrenton, which is 12 foot by 16 foot has barely enough room for six rows of pews to seat 20 people. According to history, parishioners built the little church using leftovers salvaged from dismantling a larger

church by the same name on the premises. Holy Mass is celebrated once a month for all the intentions left at the altar.

CHINA BANS ONLINE BIBLE SALES

Beijing: As online bookstores in China have pulled the Bible off their shelves, China's seventy million Christians are finding it harder to get a copy of the Holy Bible. China has always controlled the sale of Bibles - only allowing it to be distributed and printed by state-sanctioned churches - but in recent years, it had been available to buy online. As of April, searches for Chinese Bibles on major e-commerce websites including Alibaba's Taobao, JD.com and Amazon China have been to no avail.

CATHOLIC PRIEST WAS KILLED WHILE HEARING CONFESSIONS

Mexico: A Catholic priest, Juan Miguel Contreras Garcia was shot dead in the state of Jalisco on April 20th, the second priest murdered within one week in the country. The 33-year-old priest was performing the sacrament of penance after the celebration of Holy Mass, when he was attacked in his parish sacristy. Twenty three priests have been killed in Mexico since 2012.



ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY IN PAKISTAN OPENS CHRISTIAN CHAPEL

Karachi: For the first time in the history of Pakistan, a Christian chapel has been opened in an Islamic university. The church of St Mary, housed in the atrium of the Agriculture University of Faisalabad, was inaugurated on 15th April by Joseph Arshad, Archbishop of Islamabad-Rawalpindi. The new chapel is a novelty for the Muslim-majority country. Up until now, universities and colleges have only been allowed to build only Islamic mosques.



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When Jesus saw His mother and the disciple whom He loved standing beside her, He said to His mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then He said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home. (John 19:26-27)

Mary, the all-holy ever-virgin Mother of God, is the masterwork of the mission of the Son and the Spirit in the fullness of time. For the first time in the plan of salvation and because His Spirit had prepared her, the Father found the dwelling place where His Son and His Spirit could dwell among men. (CCC 721)

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