KINGDOM

CATHOLIC PUBLICATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



YOU BELONG TO GOD

NEVER IGNORE CHRIST

CHANGING YOUR WAR TACTICS



ISSUE 64



REVELATOR



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WHY CAN WE BE CONFIDENT THAT OUR PRAYER IS HEARD BY GOD?



YOUCAT

478: Many people called on Jesus during His earthly life for healing, and their prayers were answered. Jesus, who rose from the dead, listens to our petitions and brings them to the Father. [CCC 2615-2616, 2621]

Even today we know the name of the synagogue official: Jairus was the name of the man who begged Jesus for help, and his prayer was answered. His little daughter was deathly ill. No one could help her. Jesus not just healed his little girl, He actually raised her from the dead (Mark 5:21-43). Jesus worked a whole series of well-attested cures. He performed signs and miracles. The lame, the lepers, and the blind did not ask Jesus in vain. There are testimonies also of prayers answered by all the saints of the Church. Many Christians can tell stories of how they called to God and God heard their prayer. God, however, is not an automat. We must leave it up to Him as to how and when He will answer our petitions.

"Jesus prays for us, as our priest; He prays in us, as our Head; we pray to Him, as our God. Let us therefore hear our voice in Him and His voice in us." St Augustine.

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Editorial

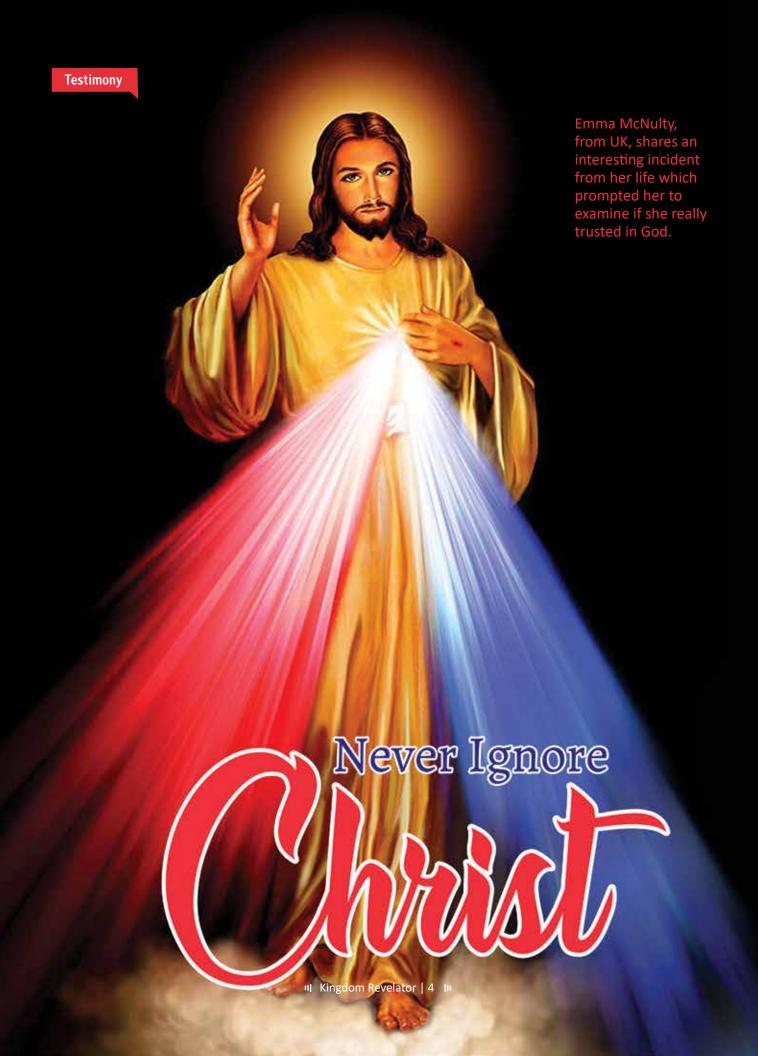
n the Gospel of St Luke, chapter 11:9, we read, 'ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you.' The first word 'ask' contains the whole meaning of this promise; A- Ask, S- Seek, K- Knock. If you need to ask someone for a favour, you need to first have a relationship with them. If not, then you will be reluctant to seek their help. So, it is important to have a personal relationship with God before we feel free to seek His help and favour. We can develop this relationship with God through prayer.

Even if God does not answer our prayers immediately, He will answer them in His time and in His way, if we continue to pray and have faith in His power, love, and faithfulness. He will either remove the thorn in the flesh or grant the grace that is sufficient to bear it. Even the meanest person, who ask earnestly and in faith, will have his petition granted.

God encourages fervency and constancy in prayer. In prayer we must ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, for by the promptings of the Holy Spirit we are brought to a greater knowledge of God and ourselves, and on the importance of the need to

repent, believe in, and love Christ. Our heavenly Father is ready to bestow on anyone every blessing that is asked for in faith, just like an indulgent parent who is ready to give food to a hungry child. So, continue to 'ASK' and be blessed.





grew up in a family that is quite religious. We would begin the day by praying together, going to Mass and end the day praying together. The rest of the day I would do as I liked but generally, I didn't think of God much.

This changed on a family holiday one year. We had been travelling around the country visiting famous historical sites and I was really enjoying the trip. On one afternoon however, the front tyre, which had just been replaced, exploded causing my father to lose control of the car which went off the road, crossed a rocky field and ended up landing on its roof in a fast-flowing river. Fortunately, the river level was much lower than usual. My father managed to rescue us all. We were all safe and unhurt with not even a bruise, but the bag filled with souvenirs was not so lucky. Most of the items that were inside the bag were either broken or wet. There was only one object in the car that day that was not wet or damaged at all - a picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It was undamaged. It was in a delicate frame with an embossed paper border covered in roses, and it looked just as it had been when we bought it the day before. My parents had bought me this image to encourage me to pray and they were surprised and relieved to see that it had not been damaged by the accident. When we returned home, I put the image on my desk. Apart from ourselves, this was the only thing that had escaped undamaged.

The picture sat there for eight years before I realised what it was telling me. I was a teenager by

now and I had found a poster I liked of the Divine Mercy. I pinned it to the wall just above my picture of the Sacred Heart, where I could see it whenever I was in my room. One afternoon, I came back from school and I sat in front of my display, staring at it intently. I had just had quite a bad day at school and I looked at the images before me. I read the words below the Divine Mercy image, which I had read many times before: "Jesus, I trust in you."

1 spent most of my time ignoring God and yet He did not ignore me.

I suddenly started thinking, "But do I?" I stood up, walked over to the picture of the Sacred Heart and taking it in my hands, I looked into His eyes and remembered what my parents had said all those years ago when they gave the image to me, "This is for you dear, look after it. The Sacred Heart may have saved our lives that day.' My mother has always been open-minded and honest with me, but despite having heard the emergency team say that

we should not have survived the accident, the surprise I felt when my mother said these words has stayed with me. I remember holding the picture and feeling bitterly ashamed. I spent most of my time ignoring God and yet He did not ignore me. The only perfect item from the wrecked car became my perfect prayer of thanks.

Every day, since that fateful day, I look at the picture and think, always remember Christ as on that day of our car accident, we all survived because He remembered us. He was with me then, is with me now and I know He will never desert me in the future. Throughout the day, I pray now either saying, "Jesus, I trust in you," or pray this prayer:

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, we thee adore,

Help us to love you, more and more.

May your footsteps lead me, May your light quide me, May your peace fill me, May your faith restore me, May your wisdom teach me, May your strength protect me, May your love enfold me. May I give faith to those who doubt,

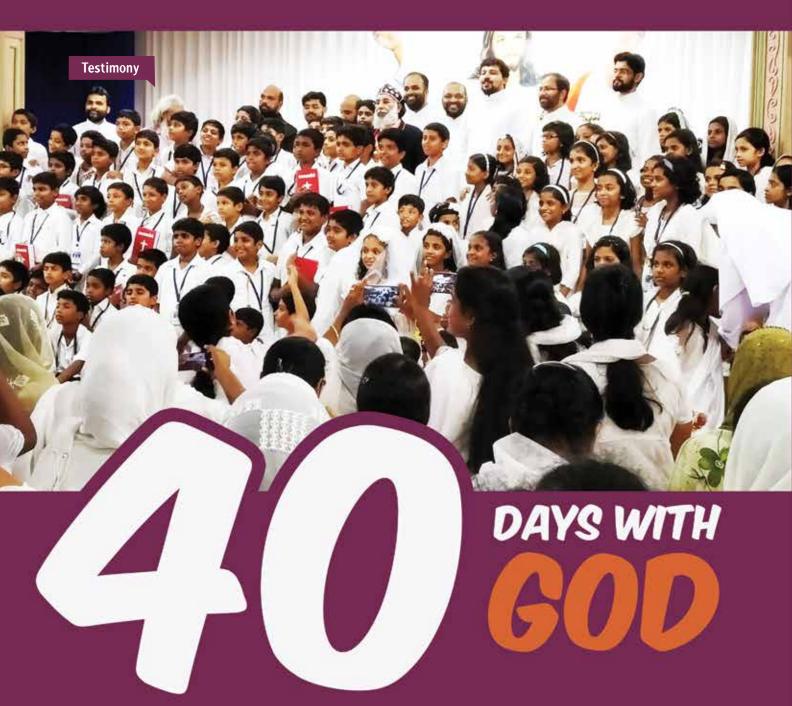
Peace to the distressed, Comfort to those in pain, Joy to those in sorrow, Strength to the weak.

May I lead those who stray back to you.

May I do all this with grace and the assurance

that all who find you are resting in the safety of your Cove.







would like to share my experience about the 40 days I spent with my loving Lord at Mount Carmel Retreat Centre (MCRC) in Trivandrum, Kerala, India. Fr Daniel Poovannathil, Director of MCRC, had received an inspiration to lead a retreat for 10-year olds in their spiritual journey. I was privileged to be one of the 105 students at the retreat. It was such a joy to meet him!

When I reached the MCRC, I felt deep down in my heart that it was going to be great. However, when my dad

left me there, I felt sad because it would be 40 days before I would see my family again. At the same time though, I felt happy that I was going to experience the love of my Heavenly Father. I firmly believe that this was God's plan for me. "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners" (Isaiah 61:1).

Every day was a new experience; we had different sessions each day and various classes and testimonies from many gifted speakers. I also enjoyed the prayers, such as the Rosary, Divine Mercy chaplet, Way of the Cross etc. All the sessions showed me how to lead a holy life and how to grow spiritually. I saw Jesus' face in many people, especially the volunteers who looked after us, without expecting anything in return. Thank you Lord for such wonderful people! Many times, I also experienced the presence of our Lady at the retreat centre, through her divine fragrance.

I have never experienced such a holy and divine time as I did at this retreat. While I was there, I could sense Jesus holding His victorious right hand over me. Every day was special to me, but the most unforgettable day was June 9th, 2019, the Feast of the Pentecost when I experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit.

"The Holy
Bible is my
Heavenly Father's
love letter to me
and I find great joy
in reading it."

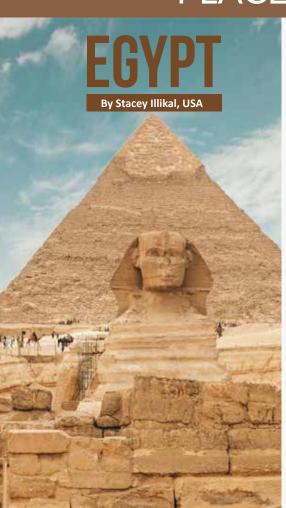
Since the retreat, I begin each day by asking my Heavenly Father in prayer what He wants me to do, because each moment is a gift from Him. Scripture reading is part of my daily prayer life now. The Holy Bible is my

Heavenly Father's love letter to me and I find great joy in reading it. I am also praying to the Heavenly Father every day to bless all our priests. "The Lord will fulfil his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands" (Psalm 138:8).

I thank my loving Father in Heaven for giving me such a great opportunity to journey with Him. "I thank you, Lord, with all my heart; I sing praise to you before the gods" (Psalm 138:1). Since attending the retreat, I want to live for God until death and I pray to the Holy Spirit to help me to fulfil my God-given vocation. "To you alone, O Lord, to you alone, and not to us, must glory be given because of your constant Love and faithfulness" (Psalm 115:1).

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PLACES FROM THE BIBLE



ocated between northeast Africa and the Middle East, Egypt is known for its pyramids and historical figures, and is the bed of one of the most ancient civilizations. It is also the largest Arab nation in the present time. Egypt was a place of healings and miracles, a place chosen by God in ancient times for His people to take refuge during a time of great famine. Later, it is also the land that the Holy Family fled to when King Herod ordered all the male new born babies to be killed.

The land of Goshen, located in the eastern Delta of the Nile, in the lower part of Egypt, was given to the Hebrews by the Pharaoh who ruled in the time of Joseph. Moses grew up and was educated in Egypt. He was the prophet chosen by God to deliver the Israelite people out of slavery in Egypt and lead them to the Holy Land that God had promised them.

Egypt is mentioned hundreds of times in the Bible, mainly in the Old Testament. Isaiah Chapter 19 mentions an oracle concerning Egypt. Verses 21-22 state: "The Lord shall make himself known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day; they shall offer sacrifices and oblations, make vows to the Lord and fulfill them. Although the LORD shall smite Egypt severely, he shall heal them; they shall turn to the Lord and he shall be moved by their entreaty and heal them."







Abraham George from Birmingham, UK, compares human love with God's love.

was frequently falling asleep whilst sitting at my mother's bed side, where she had been hospitalized for a few days. She was very ill and even struggling to breathe normally. At the age of 75, her life had been a testimony of the wonderful love, care and protection of God she had enjoyed throughout her life.

Having not slept for three days, I fell into a deep sleep in my chair. Suddenly a loud noise woke me up and I found my mother was gasping for breath. I informed the doctors immediately, and they were able to give her the proper treatment that brought

her quick relief. I prayed to Jesus from my heart to heal my mother, and I requested prayer support from friends and family. Thanks to everybody's prayers, she is well and back to normal life once again.

Later when she was sitting up, I asked her why she didn't wake me up when she was struggling to breathe. She replied in a very fragile voice, "Dear son, even though I am sick and cannot do anything on my own, I have seen your troubles. Day and night, you are awake, watching and protecting me. Through you, I experienced the love of God. I decided not to wake you up so



Jesus' Love

If this is the greatest love of all, what about Jesus' love? If you could measure love in terms of its size, then how big is God's love? Has it ever been measured? My mother loves me

Love itself is all about giving up everything we have and emptying ourselves.

that you may get some rest. I was sure that Jesus would protect me while you slept."

I stood there speechless for a while, not believing my ears. Was she joking? How could my mother let me rest and enjoy a nap while she herself was fighting for her life? A number of questions crossed my mind. Is this real, self-emptying love? Jesus Christ Himself said in John 15:13, "There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friend." I concluded that there is no greater love in this world than this and no human could love me as much as my mother loves me.

and her affection towards me is tender, pure and unceasing. She gave birth to me, endured many hardships and raised me well so I can now enjoy a reasonably happy life. But doesn't every mother do the same? Even animals give birth to and protect their young from predators, sometimes at the cost of their own lives!

П

In spite of all these mixed feelings, it dawned on me that even though my mother's love is humanly unparalleled, it is by no means equal to God's love for me. God's love is so deep that He sent His only begotten Son to the world to live among us. What

harm did Jesus do to the world and its people? What led to His arrest, trial, and subsequent torture and death on the cross? He only taught us to love one another, forgive others and to pray for our enemies. Yet, He paid the price for our sins by His passion and death. Even when He was dying on the cross, He begged His Father to forgive the very people who tormented Him. Jesus taught if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, offer him the other cheek as well. This is the greatest love of all.

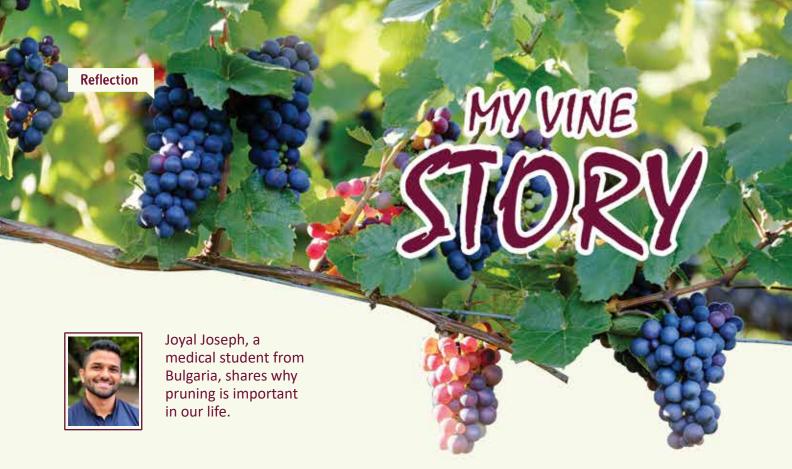
The Depth of God's Love

Loving one's friends and dear ones is easy. People are ready to give up their life for their loved ones. But not everyone can freely give up their life for their enemies. People may give up their life for a good cause, but we rarely hear of anyone praying for and sacrificing their life for their enemies. This love is unique, exceptional and infinite. This is God's love.

Love One Another

We are the children of God. God loves His children without any prejudice or condition. So, let us love one another unconditionally, just as Jesus taught us to do. There is no need to determine who loves you more or how deep is someone's love for you. Love itself is all about giving up everything we have and emptying ourselves. When we do this, we will love God and obey His commandments. Then God will be pleased with us and we will be able to enjoy eternal peace and happiness even in this world. All our sorrows will disappear, and this world will become a better place for everyone to live; like a paradise.





stumbled across this passage in John Chapter 15, where Jesus says that He is the true vine and we, His followers, are the branches and that God the Father is the vine dresser.

I have never seen or grown a vine, and neither has my mum grown one in our garden. Being inquisitive I googled vine, vine yard and everything associated with vines came up; and of course, the ever-faithful Google suggested a YouTube video titled 'How to prune a vine'. While watching this video, the Holy Spirit started stirring my heart.

John 15:1-2 says, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit." In the video, the vine grower mentioned a few things which made me ponder. He said that every year he has to remove the last year's branches because they can no

longer produce fruit. Secondly, he cuts the branch at the right point and at the place where he cuts it, two new branches will be produced in the next season. Furthermore, he prunes at the right time; for if he cuts it too

God prunes at the perfect moment; He is never late, nor early. His timing is impeccable!

soon, it would just leak out and if he is too late it will become just dead wood.

As I watched this video, I came to understand why pruning is

necessary in our life. God has to remove what is old in us because those old things are not going to help us in any way; in fact, they will only hinder our growth. Moreover, God prunes us so that we will produce double fruit, just like one branch will produce the two. And finally, God prunes at the perfect moment - He is never too late nor is He too early, His timing is impeccable!

What I learnt from this story is that God has a perfect plan for our lives and that this plan is for our well-being. When God removes something from us, even a good thing from our life, it is for the best because as our Father vine dresser. He wants to see a double portion of fruits. I want to leave you with this promise that God gives us in Jeremiah 29:11: "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."

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PROPHET OBADIAH 'SERVANT OF THE LORD'

By Munnu Fenil from UK

WHO WAS OBADIAH?

Obadiah means "Servant of the Lord". Obadiah was one of the twelve Minor Prophets and the author of the Book of Obadiah in the Old Testament. The Book of Obadiah is the shortest book in the Old Testament, containing only one chapter. The chapter begins with the prophecy of destruction of Edom, a relative nation of Israel, continues with divine judgment for all nations and ends with the hope of victory for God's people.

GOD'S MESSAGE THROUGH OBADIAH

The Book of Obadiah reveals
God's heart, a heart that seeks
humility. Pride always leads to
downfall, whether it is in a nation or in
an individual. God was unhappy with the
Edomites due to their unwillingness to
help those who were vulnerable or in
need of assistance. God sees failure to
help those in need and rejoicing in the
misfortune of others as sin. Through
the Book of Obadiah, we encounter
a God of justice who fights for the
vulnerable.

A BRIEF HISTORY

Due to the scant historical information contained in the Book, nothing much is known about the personal life of Obadiah. Unlike other prophets, Obadiah prophesied against Edom. Edomites were descendants of Easu, the twin brother of Jacob, and nurtured a hatred against Israel who were descendants of Jacob. Jacob's deception regarding Esau's birthright was the beginning of this rivalry. During the time of the Babylonian invasion of Israel, Edom arrogantly stood back as a spectator to see the destruction of Israel and even enjoyed watching their misfortune and was cruel to the helpless Israeli refugees. Edom's geographical position meant that it was well secured and believed that nothing could destroy it. The Edomites unwillingness to help their brothers in need displeased God. Hence, Obadiah was called to declare the judgment of God on them.

IS OBADIAH'S MESSAGE APPLICABLE TO THE 21" CENTURY?

We are often taught to be selfconfident and pursue our dreams. However, in doing so if we become selfish and prideful in a self-serving manner hurting those around us, then God warns us that it can lead to self-destruction. Another Important message from this Book is not to reloice in the downfall of others. It may be easy for us to help a complete stranger, but harder to help someone we consider an enemy. We may even be unconsciously happy about their tragedies. God wants us to have a heart which is ready to help others and to stay by their side during their difficult times, even if we don't like them.

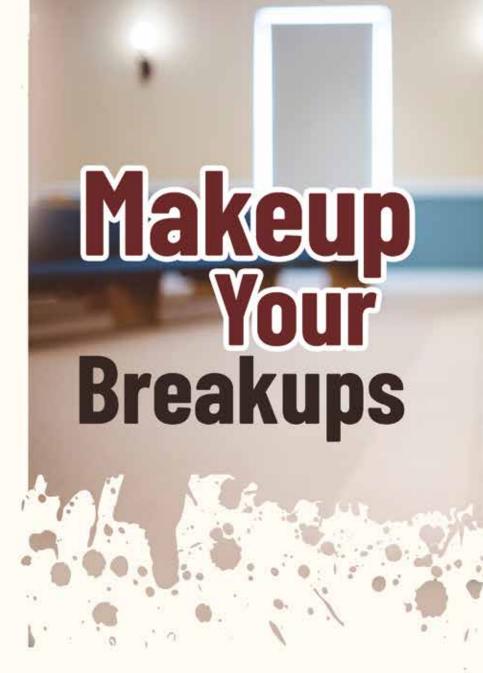


Merril Sebastian, from Melbourne, Australia, ponders on why there is an increase in depression and suicide in the modern millennials.

or God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life (John 3:16). Yet it seems that the latest trend amongst us is the feeling of depression. This generation's youth is being devoured by the feeling of being unwanted, unappreciated and unloved. Suicides are increasing at an alarming rate which drives us into wonder why modern millennials should feel the need to take their own life; the precious gift our God has blessed us with. "Breakups" are held to be the leading cause of suicide among young people. A study showed that 40% of youth experienced clinical depression following the end of a romantic relationship. Added to this, FMRI (Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging) research shows that relationship loss causes activation of biochemical reactions in brains similar to those experiencing drug withdrawal. It is statistics like these that emphasize how truly lost our generation is.

Relationship With Others

When someone has ended a relationship of any kind with someone else, they feel a pit forming in their lives that needs to be filled, even bigger than what it was before. Hence



when someone stops giving their love to us, we feel the innate urge to find someone to give us more love than what was taken away from us. This is the start of a vicious and unending cycle of feeling unsatisfied in any relationship and of feeling the constant need to be in a relationship, regardless of the harm it can do to us. This empty pit of lack of love can only be filled by God's love. We must discern our feeling of being unloved and how it is connected to the unquenchable thirst for God in our lives.

God's Love

"God is love" and when there is no love, there is no God. When we feel unloved, it is actually because we don't have enough of God in our lives. When we feel lonely, the evil one places



deceptive, lethal seeds in our minds that lead us to grow weeds of loneliness and unwantedness that chokes our spirituality and our healthy thoughts.

Through the Scriptures it is made evident that God has an incomprehensible amount of love for us. Isaiah 49:15 says: "Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you." God tells us that His love for us is so magnanimous that it overrides the love our own mothers have for us. It is then up to us to wonder why we feel so lonely, unloved and isolated when we are forsaken by our peers. We tend to forget that nothing we say, do or think can lessen the love our eternal Father has for us. Why should we feel unloved when the Creator of the universe sacrificed His own Son as a sign of His passionate and unconditional love for

Relationship with God

When we become so entangled in worldly relationships, we tend to forget to nourish and strengthen the relationship with our God. We neglect this heavenly relationship so much that when there is some damage done to our earthly relationships, we feel as if we have nobody to love us. This is where prayer and the word of God helps us to sustain a consistent and strong feeling that we are loved. The more we talk to God, the more we realize how paramount His love for us is, and the more we realize that no amount of human love can be a replacement for it.

Next time you feel like you are not loved, turn to God in prayer. As soon as we commit to a relationship with God, the love He has for us stops becoming one sided, and our eyes and hearts are opened to how fulfilling God's love really is. We should never feel unloved as our God has called us His sons and daughters - His very own. What right do we have to neglect the infinite love our God has for us, for the sake of the temporary and wavering love humans have for us? "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind" (Luke 10:27) and you will never feel unloved again.



am one of those people who like to have well thought out plans for life and everything prepared for in advance. I like knowing who and what I am dealing with. I hate uncertainty. Needless to say, an invisible God with a mysterious plan was a pretty difficult notion to wrap my head around. Actually, it still is a pretty difficult notion for me to grasp, and I am sure it always will be so. However God calls me to live in a certain way, walking by faith and not by sight.

Joshua 1:9 says: "Have I not commanded you, be strong and of good courage; be not frightened, neither be dismayed; for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." God doesn't ask but He demands that we trust in Him; that we believe that He has a plan for our welfare and that He knows what He's doing. So, here's my story of having to do just that.

When I was in year 11, like most students in England, I had to do my GCSE. At the time I was actively ministering with



The things that scare me don't stand a chance against my

Anointing Fire Catholic Ministry and I did not want to stop doing that during the exams. Matthew 6:33 says, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be yours as well"; this Bible verse was deeply rooted within me and so I carried on with ministry, trusting in God's faithfulness.

I am a hard-working student, so I studied for these exams and I prayed that I would perform well in them. I specially asked St Joseph of Cupertino to intercede for me. For the English exam, we had to memorise key quotes from two plays, one nineteenth century novel and fifteen poems. If you didn't know the quotes, you could wave goodbye to a good grade. I encountered more troubles for my History and Chemistry papers as well. I went from someone who thought she had everything sorted out, to not really knowing what was going to happen. I had no choice but to trust that God would sort things out for me.

It shouldn't have been a surprise really. God is faithful; He has been since the beginning of time and will be till the end. Straight A*s were still a bit of a shock. Trusting God isn't second nature to me, but he's shown in my life, time and time again that he makes all things work for good. So, I try not to worry, because the things that scares me don't stand a chance against my God.



CROSSWORD

By Anu Bibin

REVELATOR

Across

- Zechariah entered the sanctuary of the Lord to offer _____.
- Mary stayed with Elizabeth for _____ months before returning home.
- 8. She is the Mother of St John the Baptist.
- 9. On which side of the altar of incense did the angel Gabriel appear to Zechariah?
- Name given by the angel to Zechariah for his son.
- Jesus went with His parents to Jerusalem temple as a boy for this festival.
- 14. St Luke was a _____ before following
- 15. How old was Jesus when He stayed back in the Jerusalem temple as a boy?
- 16. Jesus began His public ministry at this age.

Down

- The house of Zechariah and Elizabeth was in this town.
- Elizabeth was ____ months pregnant when Mary visited her.
- Joseph and Mary went to _____ to register their name according to the decree of Emperor Augustus.
- 5. According to the custom, what should have been the name of St John the Baptist?

- Canticle of Mary is also known as _____
- This angel announced the birth of St John the Baptist and Jesus.
- 12. In what form did the Holy Spirit descend on Jesus during His baptism?





Geenu Kunnengode, from Chicago, USA, suggests a superb tactic to turn your failures into success.

The Conquest of Ai

No matter how hard we try or how prepared we are to face the Goliath in our lives, we do inevitably encounter setbacks. In this context, I want to share an excerpt from the book of Joshua, chapters 7 and 8, which recount how Joshua led the Israelites to the Promised Land. Their first stop was to conquer the city of Jericho. The Lord was with them and they won their first battle easily.

Joshua then decided to conquer Ai, which was a fairly smaller town compared to Jericho. He sent some of his

men to evaluate the town first, and they came back and reported that Ai could easily be conquered by just a few thousand Israelites. Accordingly, a smaller group of warriors set out to conquer Ai, but the people of Ai chased them down the valley, killed, and defeated the Israelites. This was a shocker to the people of Israel! Joshua lay prostrate before the Lord and so did the people of Israel. God then revealed to them that someone among them had disobeyed His command. The Lord had given them strict orders not to take anything from the people of





"Sanctify yourselves, since tomorrow the Lord will work wonders among you."

(Joshua 3.5)



Jericho; rather, everything had to be burned down. However, an Israelite by the name of Achan had disobeyed the Lord; he had hidden some of the loot for himself and this had brought the wrath of the Lord upon Israel. Consequently, Achan was punished and the Lord told Joshua to proceed against Ai once more.

Following the directions of the Lord, Joshua asked a group of warriors to hide behind the town while he and rest of the Israelites were to attack Ai from the front. When the people of Ai saw them, they began to wage war against them. However, the Israelites pretended to be defeated and ran back. The people of Ai, prideful from their previous victory, chased them down the valley. Once they were far away from their town, the warriors who were hiding behind the town entered and set the town on fire. The people of Ai were trapped and the Israelites easily won. This really amazed me!

A War Tactic

When the Israelites disobeyed God, they faced defeat even in a small battle. Once they repented and set their ways straight with the Lord, He turned their defeat into victory by transforming the same retreat into a war tactic. The first time they ran for their life, but the second time they ran back in pretense, as a superb war tactic. Only they, God's chosen nation, knew the truth.

Are Frequent Failures and Setbacks Bringing You Down?

Dear friends in Christ, you might be discouraged when you face frequent setbacks in your life. You may be perceived as good for nothing, and whatever you undertake may usually end up as a disaster. It is time to act! Instead of complaining when we face setbacks in our life we should rather examine our ways. We should spend time to evaluate where we went wrong and seek the guidance of the Holy spirit. "Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord", (Ephesians 5:10). Repent, confess your sins and ask God to intervene in your life.

Once you accept and make Jesus the priority in your life, He will set things straight for you. Do not underestimate the power of God. He can turn those frequent failures into causes for victory. Just as the people of Ai and the rest of the world marveled at the war tactics of Israel, God can change your defeats into successes, whereby your friends, family, and even your enemies would marvel at and glorify God! Joshua said to the people, "Sanctify yourselves, since tomorrow the Lord will work wonders among vou." (Joshua 3.5)

So today let us pray for a deeper understanding of God's purpose for our lives, and for a stronger conviction that no matter what happens in our lives, God is there for us. Remember His promise to us: "For the mountains may depart, and the hills be removed; but my unfailing love for you shall never be shaken, neither shall my covenant of peace be removed, says the Lord who has compassion on you." (Isaiah 54.10)



YOU BELONG TO GOD



Anney Ngugi, from Ireland, explains when we accomplish the purpose of our life, we can gladly return to Heaven when the time comes.

Life, A Gift From God

Your life is in God's hands, so when He calls you 'Precious one' or 'the Apple of His eye', don't be surprised, because He has already put a seal on you and paid the first instalment by giving us His spirit in our hearts (2 Corinthians 1:22). You see, you can't pay instalments for something that isn't yours. So, the seal is proof that you and I belong to Him. This is why He said, "you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). Our lives have a purpose, and that purpose is in Christ.

Fulfil Our Purpose

Inside the tent of our body, is a soul that is controlled by the breath of God. When He takes it, there will be no life left within us. Once we know this truth, we won't get carried away by the ways of the world. So, let us "offer our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God as our spiritual worship" (Romans 12:1). Even Jesus the Son of God, came to earth for this purpose and when He accomplished it, He went back to Heaven. Our goal should therefore be to fulfil our purpose in Christ so that we can gladly return to Heaven when the time comes.

Do the Will of God

To do the will of God, we have to allow our mind to be transformed (Romans 12:2). In Mathew 16:23, Jesus rebukes Peter by saying; "You are thinking not as God

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does, but as human beings do."
From this, we learn that it is
actually possible to imitate Christ
and transform our hearts and
lives by aligning ourselves to the
will of God. When we do so, the
Lord is glorified in us and through

Jesus is all love and compassion. In Mathew 11:29 we read, "He is gentle and kind of heart." Thus, His will for us is not something we cannot handle but is in keeping with our abilities and weaknesses. He said, "My Grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9). This implies that God is well aware of our every weakness, and when we offer it up to Him in humility, then He can use it for His glory. His light shines through our brokenness.

A Vessel in the Hands of the Master

Like clay in the hands of the potter, so are we in the hands of the Lord who is the Master of all. "But now, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand" (Isaiah 64:8). This means that He has every right to mold each one of us according to His purpose and we must submit to Him in humility for He knows best. St Paul's letter to Timothy says; "In a large house there are utensils not only of gold and silver but also of wood and

clay, some for special use, some for ordinary." (2 Timothy 2:20). None of us can choose what kind of vessel we can become for the Lord's use, but He chooses, molds and fashions us according to the divine plan that He had predestined for us.

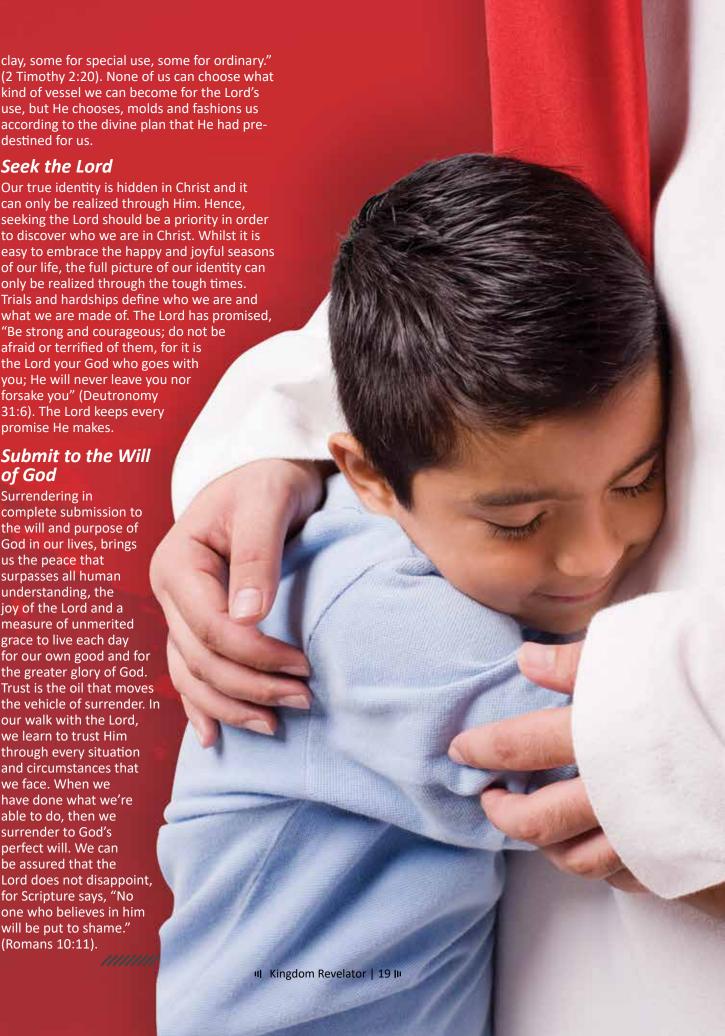
Seek the Lord

Our true identity is hidden in Christ and it can only be realized through Him. Hence, seeking the Lord should be a priority in order to discover who we are in Christ. Whilst it is easy to embrace the happy and joyful seasons of our life, the full picture of our identity can only be realized through the tough times. Trials and hardships define who we are and what we are made of. The Lord has promised, "Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid or terrified of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you" (Deutronomy

Submit to the Will of God

promise He makes.

Surrendering in complete submission to the will and purpose of God in our lives, brings us the peace that surpasses all human understanding, the joy of the Lord and a measure of unmerited grace to live each day for our own good and for the greater glory of God. Trust is the oil that moves the vehicle of surrender. In our walk with the Lord, we learn to trust Him through every situation and circumstances that we face. When we have done what we're able to do, then we surrender to God's perfect will. We can be assured that the Lord does not disappoint, for Scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame." (Romans 10:11).



The Helper From HOUVEN



Rosemary
Joy, from
Birmingham,
UK, writes
about how the
Holy Spirit is
unlike any other
companion we
may have.

magine the feelings of the disciples after Jesus tells them that He must go back to heaven. They must have felt confused and even abandoned. It is in this situation that Jesus comforts them by promising to send a Helper who will be with them forever. This Helper is none other than the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. The Holy Spirit is God Himself. "And I will ask the

Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever" (John 14:16). The Holy Spirit is unlike any other companion we may have. He is with us 24/7 because He lives within us!

Why do we need the Holy Spirit? The answer to that question is endless, because nothing good can be done without the power of the Holy Spirit. The

Holy Spirit convicts us of sin and strengthens us against sin. A life with God is impossible without the Holy Spirit. He is the power of God within us that allows us to enter through the gates of Heaven.

St John Maria Vianney once said: "If the saints were asked, 'Why are you in heaven?' they would answer, 'For having listened to the Holy Spirit."

The Holy Spirit and Sin

"And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment" (John 16:8). When the light of the Holy Spirit

is shed into our souls, we are able to see how our lives hurt God. In the Old Testament we see how King David was convicted of his sin of adultery, and how he acknowledged his sin and cried out to God for forgiveness. The **Holy Spirit does** not convict us of our sins to

make us feel worthless. Rather, He convicts us like any good father would correct his child because he wants what's best for his child. The Holy Spirit points out the areas of sin in our life so that we

"If the saints
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may repent of those sins and begin a new life free from sin.

Holiness Through the Holy Spirit

We are all weak human beings with a tendency to lean more towards sin than holiness. God knows this. He knows how frail we are on our own. Holiness may seem like an unrealistic goal to us. It may even seem rather daunting and that's exactly where the Holy Spirit comes in, to turn our weakness into strength, our fear into courage and ultimately to give us the power to live as children of God. There is a constant battle raging between our flesh and our mind. Our mind knows what the right thing is, but our weak body often gives into temptation. Jesus knows about this weakness in us. Remember how He said, "Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41). When we pray for the Holy Spirit to help us in our battle against sin, He will surely come to our aid and

become our shield. There is no power that can destroy us if we seek the help of the Holy Spirit living within us.

Prayer of St Augustine to the Holy Spirit

St Augustine lived a life filled with lust until the Holy Spirit came upon him and transformed him into one of the greatest saints of the Catholic Church. Here is a prayer of St Augustine to the Holy Spirit:

"Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit, that all my thoughts may be holy. Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work too may be holy. Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I may love what is holy. Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy in me. Guard me then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy."



CROSSWORD A N S W E R S Across: 4. Incense 6. Three 8. Elizabeth 9. Right 11. John 13. Passover 14. Doctor 15. Twelve 16. Thirty

Down: 1. Judea 2. Six 3. Bethlehem 5. Zechariah 7. Magnificat 10. Gabriel 12. Dove



Seena Jijimon, from Wolverhampton, UK, enquires if our every encounter with the Lord prompts us to sing out like those in the Bible.

In scripture, both in the Old and New Testaments, we read how different people met God in different circumstances, and how that led them to glorify the Lord, each in their own special ways. In Deuteronomy chapter 32:1-43, we read the song of Moses which, in a nutshell, was his experience with God throughout his life; in the Book of Judges, chapter 5:1-31, is the song of Deborah; in 1 Samuel chapter 2:1–10, Hannah glorifies the Lord after giving birth and weaning Samuel, and in Daniel chapter 3:51-91, we read about Daniel and his companions glorifying the Lord who protected them in the fiery furnace.

Likewise, in the New Testament we read three Canticles (songs) - Canticles of Mary, Simeon and

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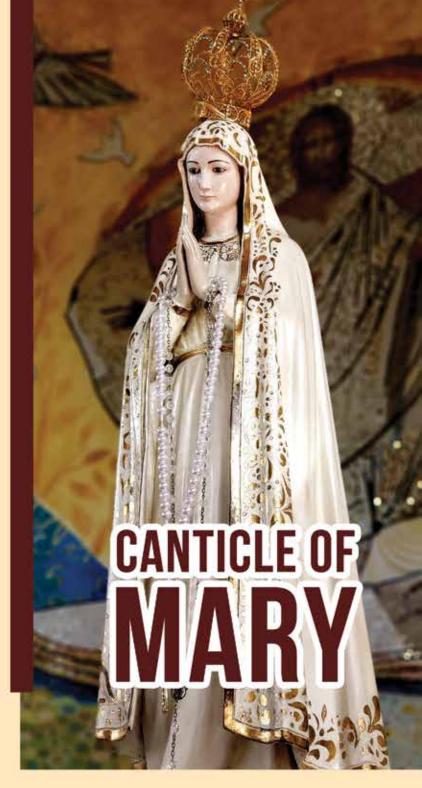
we meet Jesus in

each Holy Mass?

Zechariah.
All canticles are these proclamations of faith, thanksgiving and trust in the Lord after an encounter with Him in their lives.
The famous one is the canticle of

Mary known as the Magnificat, which became part of the daily prayers of seminarians, priests, religious and laity.

Have you ever wondered what happens to us when we meet Jesus in each Holy Mass? Does our spirit rejoice in God our saviour like Mary? Do we feel the inner joy like Elizabeth? Does our soul glorify our Lord Jesus Christ? Can we feel the assurance that the Almighty works marvels for us? Are we able to praise His name and His holiness? Are we ready to proclaim His mercy from age to age? Do we have the assurance that the Lord will scatter the proud and raise up the lowly? Do we feel satisfied with the Lord's goodness or are we still needy and running after the world's pleasures? Do we have faith that the Lord will



protect us in His mercy according to His promises? Can we sing a song, a canticle like all the above people after meeting Jesus in the Eucharist? If so, we are Abraham's descendants; the children of the living God. If you have this faith, let us sing the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55) with our lady. But if we can't rejoice after receiving the Lord in the Eucharist, then we haven't actually met Jesus. Therefore, let's pray like the apostles, Lord increase our faith.





"We must listen to God without reservations, without postponements, and without calculations."

Pope Francis



GLOBAL CATHOLIC NEWS

Compiled by Smitha George

FROM ESPN TO THE PRIESTHOOD

New York: Antony Federico was working as the content editor for



the mobile web in ESPN. He was fired from ESPN in 2012 for inadvertently making a racist pun through a headline he had authored. At just 28 years old, Federico's budding sports media career was shattered. Federico's life took an abrupt turn in the ensuing seven years. After a year and a half, he felt an intense calling to become a priest. He Googled "How do you become a Catholic priest" and ended up talking to the Vocations Director in the Hartford archdiocese who helped him through the process. In June 2019, he was ordained as a Catholic priest.

FROM BASKETBALL STAR TO A CLOISTERED NUN

Alexandria, Virginia: Shelly Pennefather, now known as Sister Rose Marie of the Queen of Angels, is a former professional



basketball player. She was the sweetest of shooting stars and an All-American at Villanova University. Winner of the Wade Trophy (given to the best women's college basketball player in the U.S) in 1987, she went on to play premier league basketball in Japan before retiring to a monastic life. Since 1991, she has lived at the Poor Clare Monastery, at the end of a quiet cul-de-sac in a very modest middle-class neighborhood. She renounced her worldly life, including a six-figure salary as a professional basketball star. On June 6, 1997, six years after entering the convent, she took her solemn vows as a bride of Christ and twenty-two years later, on June 9, 2019, Sister Rose Marie professed perpetual vows as a cloistered nun.

SHINING A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

Orleans: Accepting his father's invitation to join him at his original airport shoeshine stand, Wayne Kendrick has polished shoes at the airport and shares his Catholic faith with customers and co-workers who ask for prayers.



He considers shoeshine stand as his pulpit, said Kendrick, 60, who recently was honored by the New Orleans Aviation Board for his 35 years of service as "the mayor of the airport." He has developed a sixth sense in knowing what a traveler might be going through. His talks with passengers and co-workers about their families sometimes evolve into requests for prayers. Kendrick uses small pieces of notepaper to compile a growing prayer list, which he keeps in the drawer with his polishes.

BISHOP ORDAINED IN CHINA



Beijing: The ordination of Bishop Anthony Yao Shun of Jining in China's Inner Mongolia autonomous region was the first Episcopal ordination in the country following the provisional agreement signed in 2018 between

China and the Vatican. The nomination and assignment of bishops had been a key sticking point in Vatican-Chinese relations for decades; the Catholic Church insisted that bishops be appointed by the pope, and the Chinese government maintained that would amount to foreign interference in China's internal affairs. Catholic communities that have refused to register with the government and refused to follow government-appointed bishops commonly are referred to as belonging to the underground church.

OBEYING GOD IS KEY TO CHRISTIAN LIFE

Vatican: An important aspect of the Christian life is obeying God even when there may be consequences for going against the commands of others, Pope Francis said during the general audience on fourth Wednesday of August.



"This means listening to God without reservations, without postponements, without calculations," he said. The sick and disturbed were all healed at the hands of the apostles. This is what it means to be a witness, manifesting Christ "both with words and with bodily presence."

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