

# KINGDOM REVELATOR

CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ■ ISSUE 76

NOT MY WILL  
BUT HIS  
WILL

A LIFE DEDICATED TO THE  
**CONVERSION  
OF SINNERS**

ULTIMATE  
VICTORY  
BELONGS  
**TO HIM**

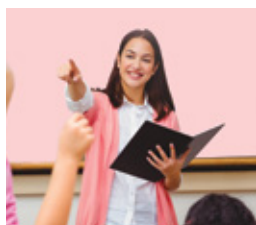


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Mother Mary,  
Pray for our Readers

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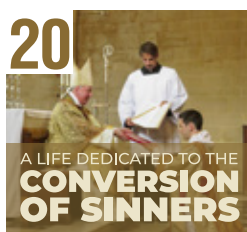
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# What is the Church's judgment on surrogate motherhood and artificial fertilization?



## Editorial

**423: All assistance in conceiving a child through research and medicine must stop when the common bond of parenthood is loosened and destroyed by the intrusion of a third person or when conception becomes a technological act outside of sexual union in marriage. [2374-2377]**

Out of respect for human dignity, the Church cannot approve of the technologically assisted conception of a child through heterologous or homologous insemination. Every child has in God's plan the right to have a father and a mother, to know his parents, and if at all possible to grow up surrounded by their love. Artificial insemination with the sperm of another man (heterologous insemination) also destroys the spirit of marriage, in which husband and wife have the right to become a father or a mother only through the other spouse. But even homologous insemination (in which the sperm comes from the husband) makes a child the product of a technological procedure and does not allow it to originate from the loving union of a personal sexual encounter. If the child becomes a product, however, then that leads immediately to cynical questions about product quality and product liability. The Church also rejects pre-implantation diagnosis, which is carried out for the purpose of killing imperfect embryos. Surrogate motherhood, too, in which an artificially conceived embryo is implanted into another woman, is contrary to human dignity.

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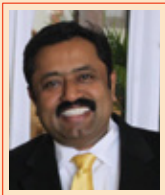
As I walked with my son one late evening, he looked up at the sky and exclaimed, "Mom, look, someone has stolen the moon." As I looked up at the sky, I saw that the clouds had completely covered the moon and so it seemed to my five-year-old that someone had stolen the moon. It was indeed a very interesting insight into the mind of a little boy. As we walked on, I explained to him that the moon is always there, it's just that the clouds cover the moon as they move across it.

Isn't it a similar scenario in our spiritual journey? At times we see clearly the presence of God in our lives but at other times we can't. As we get busy with our lives and as our prayer life dwindles, God sometimes seems to be absent in life, but the reality is far from this. God is always there, it's just that we lose sight of Him due to our sinfulness. When we experience the nearness of Jesus, we are greatly comforted and live in serenity; but losing track of the Lord darkens our path ahead.

We read in Isaiah 55:6, "Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near." This lent, let us rediscover the constant presence of God in our lives and be united in His passion. Let's remind ourselves that if we draw near to God, then He will draw near to us (James 4:8).



# ULTIMATE VICTORY BELONGS TO HIM



*Shyju Lonappan, from Kansas, USA, shares an inspirational story from his life bearing witness to Christ.*

It happened in early 2000, after I had just arrived in the United States. I was new to the city where I was staying. It was less than a year since my arrival. To reduce the expenditure, I shared my living space (an apartment) with three other employees, who worked at the same site. I was the only Catholic; the other three were Hindus. As the apartment lease was in my name, I made some basic home rules - no smoking, no watching porn so that I did not have to rethink my decision to let them in.

It so happened that one of the roommates, Sreenivas (his name has been changed), had to return to India as his project ended. During the connecting flight to the international terminal, there was a minor girl sitting next to him, unaccompanied

by her parents. After landing and disembarking the aircraft, the girl complained to her parents that her co-passenger, my friend, molested her during the one hour flight. As it was an air incident, the FBI got involved and detained Sreenivas, although he steadfastly maintained his innocence. He felt that the officers showed no mercy, more so as he was a foreigner. He was detained, and the magistrate ordered him to be held without bond, calling him a danger to the community and a possible flight risk.

The only contact name and number he gave to the FBI was mine, hence I received calls and searches. Fortunately, my laptop turned out to be of assistance to Sreenivas, as it had only devotional songs, religious books, and catholic articles.



Sreenivas was in custody for about eight months during which he could only place a collect call to me from the prison (which charged \$5 per minute). When he called, his mother would join in the conference call. I barely spoke his native language. It was a huge financial strain and mental stress for me. I approached various Indian organizations for help, including the Indian embassy, but nobody was willing to help given the charge involved.

I then told my friends in the apartment building, that the only way we can work on this, is through Jesus. I talked to the local parish priest and requested him to provide us with the Adoration Chapel for a Night Vigil prayer. I got about 12 of my Hindu friends to join, from



a small window. I asked him to offer his sufferings for a good cause, maybe for the conversion of hearts. Maybe the young girl was trained by her parents to make easy money. I asked him to look at the crucifix and offer himself to the Lord, assuring him that one day truth and justice would prevail. He continued to pray, growing stronger and praising Jesus all the time.

**“The Lord is  
near to the  
broken-hearted  
and saves the  
crushed in  
spirit.  
(Psalm 34:18)**

**“I then told my  
friends, the  
only way we can  
work on this, is  
through Jesus.”**

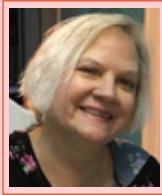
7 pm to 7 am. All we did was pray; I led the Rosary, which they repeated after me, we sang hymns in honor of Mother Mary, read the Bible and reflected. The next day I felt emboldened to face the adversity, giving bold and fearless answers to FBI and the police officers. “I sought the Lord, and he answered me, and delivered me from all my fears” (Psalm 34:4).

The very next week, a famous top American attorney volunteered to help our case free of cost. He told us that he considers one pro bono case per year, and he chose our case! Praise Jesus! “When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears, and rescues them from all their troubles (Psalm 34:17)”. There was no limit to our happiness. We continued our prayers and visited Sreenivas in the prison a couple of times, which meant a 14 hour drive on each occasion. It was amazing to see non-Christians reaching out and praying to the Lord during challenging times. In the prison, Sreenivas said he was consoled by reading the Bible and reflecting upon the Word of God. I spoke with him through

After eight months of fasting and praying, most of the Hindu friends were inspired and grew stronger. “The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned” (Matthew 4:16). Sreenivas got acquitted, the company paid for all my expenses and praised all of us for championing the release, while we gave all glory to God. Sreenivas took a straight flight to India. To this day, he has remained faithful, leading a great life in another part of the world. He still inspires many Hindus and other non-Christians, leading them to Jesus. I praise and thank Jesus for saving us from a great danger in what at the time was an unknown country for all of us.



# Mrs RAINBOWS!



*Christine Ramos, Director of religious education at St Patricia Parish in Chicago, USA, explains why she made a deliberate choice to teach in Catholic schools at the elementary and high school levels.*

This month, we celebrate Catholic Schools around the world and their mission to bring Jesus Christ into the lives of God's children. As I left our school today, I encountered our second-grade class walking socially distanced and masked, down the hall. They were excited to see me and I was excited to see them since we haven't been able to interact with each other like we used to before all of the covid restrictions. Over the last few years, we have shared so many times together in prayer

and song in the Name of Jesus! I saw their smiling eyes, their waving hands, and heard some, "Hi, Mrs Rainbows!" They made my heart smile...Mrs Rainbows! This evening, I was able to visit the religious education (RE) classrooms via Zoom and see God's vision being realized - our teachers bringing God's message to His chosen ones. I had the privilege of hearing the reflections of our confirmation candidates telling me why they are choosing to continue to be members of our Catholic faith



and how they plan to bring their faith to others far into their future. I'm so proud of them. Tonight, my heart truly celebrates!

### **Catholic Education**

I am a firm supporter of Catholic education. Growing up, I attended an RE program, a Catholic grade school, and a Catholic university. My very first educators in my faith were my parents and my older sisters. I remember learning Bible stories from children's books my family would read to me. Mom and Dad made sure I attended Mass with them weekly. We prayed the rosary together. My parents and sisters were involved with our parish, so, as I grew older, I, too, felt comfortable participating in parish activities. While I attended a public high school, I chose to be active in my parish through the teen group and the folk choir. Soon, I began playing the organ and singing at Masses.

After college, I made a deliberate choice to teach in Catholic schools at the elementary and high school levels. Why, you might ask? Because I believed in the importance of children knowing God, because children who know God grow up to be adults who know God. Thirty-six years later, I still hold that same belief. I recently read that 85% of adults who believe in Jesus learned about Him sometime between kindergarten and twelfth grade. "Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray" (Proverb 22:6). How important that time is for our children and our teens to learn that they are not going to walk this journey of life alone, that they have their brother Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and their Heavenly Father to help, love, and guide them!

### **Precious Gift**

With a thankful heart, I remember my parents, my sisters, teachers, nuns, priests, and all those who helped me to grow in my faith. It has been one of the most precious gifts in my life, and one I have chosen to share with thousands

of young people over the years. I ask you to take some time to reflect back on your own faith journey. Who helped you to learn about your Catholic faith in a positively beautiful and memorable way? Take a moment to say a prayer for them and thank them in your heart. I also encourage you to become an active supporter of Catholic education. It may be by sharing your faith with your children or grandchildren. "All your children shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the prosperity of your children" (Isaiah 54:13). It may be by affirming our Catholic teachers and catechists. It may be by making a donation to a Catholic School or Religious Education Program. It may be by your prayers for us and our mission, to bring Jesus to the children of the world.

***I believed in the importance of children knowing God, because children who know God grow up to be adults who know God.***

I invite you to celebrate with us in prayer, the precious gift of Catholic education. Sending you all God's joy, peace, love, and, of course, rainbows!



# MEET THE PROPHET EZEKIEL



BY Henoch Sony,  
Luton, UK

## WHO WAS EZEKIEL?

Ezekiel is acknowledged as a Hebrew prophet and priest. The name Ezekiel means 'God's Strength'. He is also known as the writer of the book of Ezekiel which reveals the prophecies of the destruction of Jerusalem and the restoration of the land of Israel.

## A BRIEF HISTORY

Ezekiel was the son of Buzzi, a descent of a priestly family in the land of Chaldeans. He and his wife lived during the Babylonian captivity on the banks of River Chebar in Tel Abib with other exiles from Judah. The author of the book (Ezekiel) mentions the date of the first divine encounter which he represents as "In the thirtieth year," which is five years after the exile of Judah's King Jehoiachin by the Babylonians. According to Jewish Tradition, Ezekiel did not write, the Book of Ezekiel, but rather his prophecies were collected and written by the Men of the Great Assembly.

## GOD'S MESSAGE THROUGH EZEKIEL

Ezekiel prophesied that the exiles from both Judah and Israel would return to Palestine, leaving none in the Diaspora. In the new age to come, a new covenant would be made with the restored house of Israel, to whom God would put in each a new spirit and a new heart. Ezekiel had many visions, like the vision of the scroll, the slaughter of the idolaters, the two eagles and the vine, the boiling pot, the valley of dry bones and the vision of the new temple. God showed Ezekiel his words of lamentation, mourning and woe. In the book of Ezekiel God asks His people to recognize him as the Lord of everything. The prophet emphasises the covenant relationship, restoration of God's people and the fact that the difference between life and death is found in the presence of God's Spirit.

## IS EZEKIEL'S MESSAGE STILL APPLICABLE IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY?

When we fall into temptation, we worry about the fact that we have let God down and we are most likely too ashamed to ask for forgiveness, but our God is a God of mercy and compassion. He feels sorry for us and He knows that we will sin over and over again. He promises a fresh start in our lives when we repent and turn back to Him. He asks us to always stay close to him in whatever circumstance we are in. God is the true Shepherd and all of us who have gone astray are called to come back to Him as he promised in Ezekiel 36:26 "A new heart I will give you and a new Spirit I will put within you, and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh."



# TRUE FRIENDSHIP



*Deepa Tom, from Ireland, suggests some traits of real friendship.*

In today's world, where friendships seem to be shallow and self-oriented, the Bible gives us examples of true friendship, such as Jonathan, son of King Saul and David the shepherd. King Saul wanted his son to become the next king of Israel, but God chose David instead. This caused enmity between David and King Saul. However, not withstanding the circumstances, there developed an innocent and true friendship between Jonathan and David.

Some of the distinctive features of their friendship are noteworthy.

## **Selfless Love**

They started their friendship by making a covenant. "Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that he was wearing, and gave it to David, and his armour, and even his sword and his bow and his belt." (1 Samuel 18:3-4)

## **Mutual Faith and Understanding**

David was able to share his anxieties and worries with Jonathan, even though his father, King Saul, was trying to

kill him. David trusted that Jonathan could rescue him from the king's anger.

## **Helping a Friend in Need**

Jonathan interceded for the life of his friend to the king. Even in very difficult situations, Jonathan gave signs to David to run away so that he would be safe from the king's anger.

“Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.”

## **Absence of Jealousy**

Jonathan loved David dearly even though he knew that David was going to take his position as heir to the throne.

## **Kind and Generous**

David searched and found the disabled son of Jonathan after his death and looked after him for the rest of his life. "Do not be afraid, for I will show you kindness for the sake of

your father Jonathan; I will restore to you all the land of your grandfather Saul, and you yourself shall eat at my table always." (2 Samuel 9:7)

God appointed David as King of Israel while Saul and Jonathan were still alive. The depth of David's love towards Jonathan was revealed when he came to know that Jonathan and Saul were killed in a war. He wrote a song to mourn their death and instructed everyone in his kingdom to learn it: "Saul and Jonathan, beloved and dear, separated neither in life nor death, swifter than eagles, stronger than lions! Women of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet and in finery, covered your clothing with ornaments of gold." (2 Samuel 1:23-24)

Our loving God has given us all the instructions and advice we need to lead a heaven-oriented life on this earth. It is important to make sure that the friendships we have nowadays holds these virtues so that they may be fruitful and lasting.





# FLY LIKE AN EAGLE



*Rajni Manoj, from Derby, UK, invites you to give up the everyday luxuries of life during this lent and discover the deeper meaning of Easter.*

**W**ho wouldn't like to fly like an eagle? Isaiah 40:31 promises, "Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." When we are happy and life is smooth, it is easy to believe these words, but to remain positive and look forward to the future with hope and faith is indeed difficult during testing times. Those who believe in the Lord will surely mount up with wings like eagles. It's worth mentioning what St Padre Pio once said, "What does it matter to you whether Jesus wishes to guide you to heaven by way of the

desert or by the meadow. So long as He is always with you and you arrive at the possession of blessed eternity."

## **An Open Invitation**

The Gospel of John chapter 3:16 says, "For 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." We have an open invitation to possess eternal life from Jesus who is waiting to receive and welcome us to it. No matter what challenges we face in our lives, if we carry on by placing our trust in the Lord, we will neither faint while we walk nor be weary while we run in the journey of life.

Two thousand years ago the people of Israel were awaiting the coming of the Messiah. They were expecting a king, probably someone who would be born in a palace and reign over them. In stark contrast to their expectations, He was born of a poor virgin in a stable. Shepherds and the wise men came to pay homage to the infant Jesus, laying emphasis on the fact that Jesus did not come just to save the poor or the rich, but to save everyone! John 17:2-3 tells us, "Since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus



Christ whom you have sent.” To know someone, you have to know him and learn about him. The best way to learn about Jesus is by reading the Bible and meditating on the Word of God.

### **Embark on a Journey**

Lent is a reminder to us to give up the everyday luxuries we take for granted just for a few weeks so that we can experience a life with Jesus. It’s difficult to find Him in our excess, rather, He is near to the poor in Spirit and the broken hearted. St Francis of Assisi was astounded that God was so humble that He came from heaven to live on earth, sharing the life of creation, by becoming one amongst us. His view on the birth of Christ as a human in a stable was that His poverty enriches those

who embrace it. To have an encounter with Jesus we need to embark on the journey that God is asking of us today.

*“What does it matter to you whether Jesus wishes to guide you to heaven by way of the desert or by the meadow. So long as He is always with you and you arrive at the possession of blessed eternity.”*

*Saint Padre Pio*

### **Oasis of Life**

Easter assures us that the salvation Jesus offers is open to anyone, regardless of their nationality, race or gender. Salvation comes

to people through Jesus, by following in Christ’s footsteps. Becoming a disciple of Jesus is worth any price. For a believer, to have a Good Friday experience in life is as important as having an Easter experience. We need to die to sin to have a resurrection in Christ. There is no point in complaining about a desert experience in our life because it leads us to the Oasis of life. We are citizens of heaven. Hence let us strive to follow in the footsteps of our saviour and our Lord Jesus. “But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 3:20). Wherever you find yourself today, pray to God to give you wisdom and energy to persevere for His glory. ◆◆



**G**olgotha is an Aramaic word meaning, ‘the place of the skull’. According to all four gospels, Mathew 27:33, Mark 15:22, Luke 23:33, and John 19:17, Golgotha was the place where Jesus was crucified. The Latin term is Calvaria, from where the name Calvary comes from. The reason why it was called ‘the place of the skull’ is possibly because the hill was shaped like a human skull. The exact

## **PLACES FROM THE BIBLE**

# **GOLGOTHA**

By Stacey Illikal from USA

location is unknown, but we do know that Jesus was taken outside of Jerusalem to be crucified. Hebrews 13:12 states, “And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood.” It is also believed that Golgotha is on Mount Moriah, which means Jesus might have been crucified at the summit of Mount Moriah.

According to the evangelist, it was a well-known spot outside the gate (Hebrews 13:12) and near the city (Luke 23:26), containing a garden

(John 19:41). The hillock above Jeremiah's Grotto, to the north of the city, is in all probability the true site of Calvary. The skull-like rock in the southern area of the hillock is very remarkable due to its appearance.

Golgotha is located in Jerusalem and is an attraction site for many. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the Christian Quarter of the Old City is where Christ was crucified, buried and resurrected. This is one of the most venerated sites in Christendom, and a major pilgrimage destination. ◆◆



*Anish Thomas, from Rugby, UK, shares an incident from his life that changed his view about how we pray.*

# NOT MY WILL BUT HIS WILL

## ***Have you ever felt that your prayer is never heard by our Lord?***

Today I'm a father of four beautiful children. Our fourth baby went to be with God in heaven. When my wife conceived our fifth child, she had many complications, as was the case with her each pregnancy. Romans 8:28 says, "We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose." Due to the complications she had in every pregnancy, my wife was closely monitored by a consultant. Almost half-way through this pregnancy, the consultant informed us that the baby was breech, but nothing to worry about





as we have plenty of time for the baby to change position. Further, since all our other babies were delivered normally, we were reassured that there was a high chance that the breech would correct naturally.

We shared this information in our prayer group and requested everyone's prayer as we believed in Hebrews 10:36 which states, "You need endurance to do the will of God and receive what He has promised." All our friends and family were praying for my wife to have a normal delivery. Many people advised us to pray earnestly for this. We also heard many testimonies of God's miraculous intervention in such cases. Luke 1:37 tells us, "For nothing will be impossible for God." However, my wife and I never felt the need to pray for such a favour.

One day I had the thought in my mind that I must pray for this specific intention, so I took my Bible and sat down to pray. Suddenly, I heard this voice in my heart, "Do not pray to change the baby's position, only pray for My will to happen." From this day onwards we started praying for God's will to happen in our lives. Isaiah 30:18 promises: "Truly, the Lord is waiting to be gracious to you, truly, He shall rise to show you mercy; For the Lord is a God of justice: happy are all who wait for Him!"

Towards the end of the pregnancy, there was no change in the baby's position, and so my wife was admitted to the hospital for her first Caesarean section.

Upon physical examination, the consultant said that the baby has changed its position so she wouldn't need surgery. But they decided to do an ultrasound scan to confirm that the position had changed. As the consultant went to get a scanner, I said to my wife that I'm sure the consultant is wrong. Following the scan, the consultant said to us, "Sorry, the baby is still in breech position, so she needs to be taken to the operation theatre for surgery." She was soon taken to the theatre and I accompanied her. During the surgery, while they were taking out the baby, the consultant exclaimed that the baby's umbilical cord was wrapped around the baby's neck twice! When I heard this, a great pain went through my heart. It immediately put clarity into my heart as to why God told me to pray for His will in this matter. If I had ignored the voice of God and prayed for a normal delivery, lots of complications or even a disaster could have happened.

Many times, in our prayer life we ask God for what we want but hardly give enough time to hear what He has to say to us about our prayer intention. As we live in a very busy and competitive world, we have a natural tendency to catch up with others. Hence, we have no time to listen but only to ask. This we do in our prayer life too. And then we complain about how things have gone wrong and didn't work according to our plans. Consequently, we end up blaming God for not answering our prayers and being upset with God and life. But God reminds

us in Isaiah 65:24, "Before they call, I will answer; while they are yet speaking, I will hear." So, it's not that God is not listening or not answering our prayers but rather He has a specific plan for our lives.

**BEFORE THEY  
CALL, I WILL  
ANSWER;  
WHILE THEY  
ARE YET  
SPEAKING,  
I WILL HEAR.**

**(ISAIAH 65:24)**

This incident changed my spiritual life. My perspective on prayer has changed and I have started surrendering my life to the will of God, even in difficult situations. 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 have learnt to imitate our Lord Jesus, as He prayed in Gethsemane, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will" (Matthew 26:39). Let us pray for this Word of God to be fulfilled in our life in every situation.



# Being Honest with God



*Soumya Joseph from Florida, USA, encourages the readers to place their hope in the Lord amidst difficult times.*

Isolation, alienation from your friends and families and stay-at-home orders anyone can make an extensive list about the things they hate during this pandemic. Unfortunately for many of us, we are also losing hope, questioning when this is all going to end and if we will ever go back to normal circumstances. Whenever these gloomy thoughts come to your mind, it's important to replace them with hopeful ones. 1 Peter 5:10 says, "And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast."

“TAKE DELIGHT IN THE LORD AND HE WILL GIVE YOU THE DESIRES OF YOUR HEART.”

(PSALM 37:4)

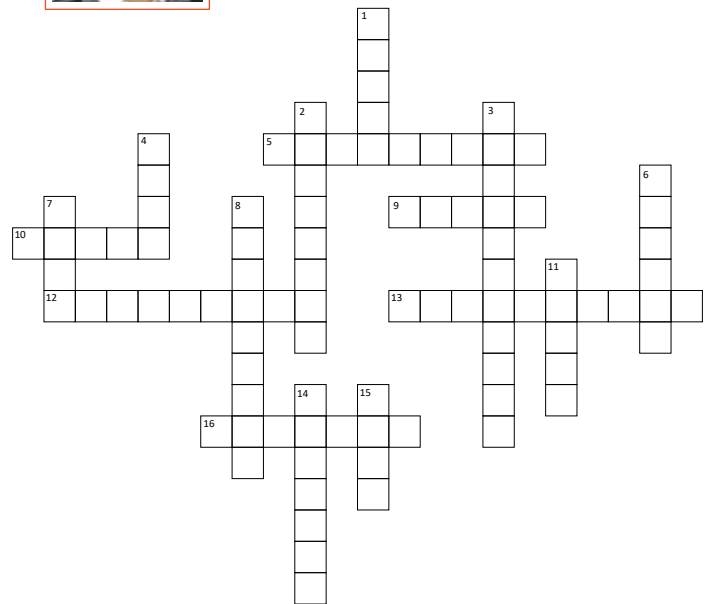
Reading and believing verses like this even in your bleakest moments will help you immensely in your faith. During this pandemic, improving your prayer life is beneficial. Earlier, I found it hard to sit down and pray. My mind would wander somewhere else. But over time, I realized I had to get my priorities straight. I was honest with the Lord. I told Him everything; about the desire in my heart for Him to teach me how to pray, every thought in my mind and everything I thought I was doing wrong. That helped tremendously, just be honest with Him. ♦♦♦



## CROSSWORD



By Heinz Sony, Luton, Uk



### Across

5. He does not care for the sheep.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ are looked after by shepherds.
10. He cannot perform signs.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ cannot be annulled.
13. He opens the gate.
- 16 The thief comes only to steal and kill and \_\_\_\_\_.

### Down

- 1 My sheep hear my \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 Special signs.
- 3 People who do not believe.
- 4 The author of the fourth Gospel.
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_ and I are one.
- 7 They tried to stone Him.
- 8 The festival of Dedication took place in \_\_\_\_\_.
- 11 \_\_\_\_\_ is God.
- 14 Jesus gives us \_\_\_\_\_ life.
- 15 The \_\_\_\_\_ scatters the sheep.



# FIVE PICKS



## APP



### Shalom World TV

SHALOM WORLD is a free 24/7 Family entertainment TV streaming app, broadcasting live channels and on-demand videos that reaches out to the world with the truth of Christ.



## BLOG



### Father Z's Blog

The Blog is about what it is to be a Catholic in this increasingly difficult age, clear, straight commentary on Catholic issues, liturgy and life.



## SONG



### Way Maker By Leeland



## MOVIE

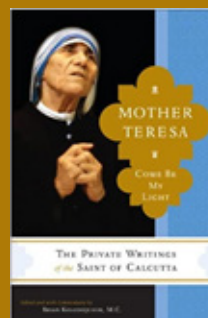


### I am Potential

A father's journey to help his blind and wheel-chair bound son to overcome impossible odds and allow the world to see his God-given potential.



## BOOK



### Come be My Light - 'The private writings of the Saint of Calcutta'

This collection of Mother Teresa's writing and reflections, almost all of which have never been made public before, sheds light on Mother Teresa's interior life in a way that reveals the depth and intensity of her holiness for the first time.



# UNTIL DEATH DO US APART



*Molly Mathew,  
from Houston, USA,  
ponders over the  
importance of the  
marital vows.*

## ***Dearly Missed***

It was a beautiful sunny day. I visited my husband's resting place at the cemetery. Spent some time there at the grave praying, gathered courage as I renewed my faith and returned home feeling refreshed. I was gradually getting used to the life of a single mother, with routine responsibilities of managing the house and work, attending to social responsibilities, especially

during COVID-19 pandemic, taking the role of both parents while battling with spiritual warfare in my personal life. While missing my husband dearly with a heavy heart, I am trying to surrender my life to fulfil God's will for me. As I was returning home my mind was filled with mixed emotions and thoughts about our beautiful life together, and I thanked God for the gift of great love and trust we had for each other. All Glory to God.





### ***Struggling in Love***

Later that day I received a phone call informing me that a couple who were married for many years were seeking a divorce due to some minor family issues. As I pondered this news, I asked myself...do they really understand the true meaning of the sacrament of marriage? Do they appreciate the tremendous trauma that they will cause their children?

Do they know they are failing in their responsibilities? Do they realise the great responsibility they have to save souls and achieve salvation? It was heart breaking to see what once were two loving souls, now getting separated and filled with hatred and anger. Are they forgetting the vow they took during their marriage ceremony that they will stay together until death do them apart? They have not experienced the pain of loss and are now forgetting how blessed they are to make their house a heaven. With a little encouragement and support, a bit of counseling and prayer, by practicing little forgiveness and love, you can make miracles happen in life.

### ***Complete Devotion***

In the afternoon I was about to take a nap, when another friend called me in despair that her husband who was bedridden for many years is now very sick and his health was declining. This dedicated wife was taking care of her husband with love and compassion, prayer and joy, accepting him as he was while surrendering her life as a devoted wife. I went to her house; I could see in her eyes the hidden anxiety of losing her husband. My mind was mixed with complex emotions. A few minutes earlier a family was fighting and seeking to be separated, while another family was craving to live together, despite of sickness and physical disabilities. Here I found the true meaning of love! A role model of self-sacrificing love expecting nothing in return. She looked

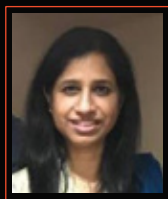
very tired and her eyes were drooping due to sleepless nights. I insisted that she take a nap while I sat beside him and held his hand while watching an online Holy Mass during which I prayed for them.

**Love bears  
all things,  
believes all  
things, hopes  
all things,  
endures all  
things.**

**(1 Corinthians 13:7)**

I utilized that time thanking God for His mercy and grace in my life to understand the true meaning of love in life, and death, and life after death. True love never ends, just like our life never ends because through Jesus we have eternal life. In 1 Corinthians 13:7 we read, "Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things". Life is very beautiful. Life is like the petals of a rose, at any time they can wither and fall. Time will not wait, so enjoy the fragrance of life and live in the fulness of life into which you were created by holding on the strong stem - Jesus Christ.





*Mariam John,  
from Chicago,  
USA, shares an  
incident from her  
life that helped her  
grow in faith.*

# God's Little angel



I want to share with you, an incident that happened in my life 23 years ago. Though that incident gave me much grief at that time, now I am able to ponder over it and give thanks to the Lord for His guidance.

In January 1996, my husband, son and I contracted chickenpox. I had it more severe. After two weeks I was still unwell, so we went to the doctor. A test revealed that I was six weeks pregnant. The doctor told us that there is only a three percent chance of any complications for the baby. Many people advised us to abort the baby. We trusted in God and firmly believed that there wouldn't be any complications for the baby.

Months went by with no further issues. In the fifth month of my pregnancy, I had a Level 2 ultrasound, and the reports were very positive. All the internal organs of the baby were intact and healthy. One evening, a month before my due date, my 5-year-old son and I were snacking on some carrots. My husband was not at home. Suddenly, I started choking and gasping for breath. My young son did back blows and by the grace of God, I was able to breathe again. But soon I realized that the baby in my womb was not moving. This happened around 6' o clock in the evening. That whole night my baby didn't move. I called the doctor next morning and was given some tips to follow, but they didn't work.

I was told to go to the doctor's office. They did the ultrasound

and other tests on the baby and found that there was no heartbeat. I received the devastating news that the baby had died in the womb! At that time my husband was at work and my son was at school. My son had been getting ready to receive his baby sister. He had chosen her name and even picked clothes for her. We decided not to show him his still-born baby sister, who had just gone to heaven.

*The greater plan of God will be revealed at the opportune time, I started making baby steps in my spiritual journey.*

I was unable to face people for a long time after the baby's death and no one was able to alleviate my pain. I decided that we would maybe think of another baby after another year. Proverbs 16:1 says, "The plans of the mind belong to mortals, but the answer of the tongue is from the LORD." Our

loving God did indeed have a better plan for us! He blessed us with a baby boy within nine months.

Today, as I look back, I give praise and thanksgiving to the Lord! When God takes something that is really dear to us, He has another plan. That greater plan of His will be revealed at the opportune time. 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." For me, the death of my baby girl was my gateway to Jesus; I started making baby steps in my spiritual journey. Further, I believe that I have an angel in Heaven who is interceding for me and with whom I will be united one day in Heaven.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 tells us: "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with Him those who have died."

#### *Prayer:*

*Lord Jesus, I entrust to you people and families who are going through the same grief that I experienced upon losing my child. Lord, I pray that You console them, take away their grief and fill them with Your divine love. Help them to trust in you and fill them with hope. In the powerful name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.*



## CROSSWORD ANSWERS

**Across :** 5. Hired hand 9. Sheep 10. Demon 12. Scripture 13. Gate keeper 16. Destroy

**Down :** 1. Voice 2. Miracles 3. Unbelievers 4. John 6. Father 7. Jews 8. Jerusalem

11. Jesus 14. Eternal 15. Wolf



# A LIFE DEDICATED TO THE **CONVERSION OF SINNERS**



*Fr Francis Kodiyan, MCBS, CBCI Secretary of Prison Ministry India, shares his vocation and mission experience.*



I hail from a village in Kerala, India which is the land of Thomaraja, the first and only Christian king in India and the home of Vaipikota Seminary of Jesuits. It was demolished in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century by Tippusultan, another Indian King. I come from a big family of 12 children. My two elder sisters are nuns and an older brother is a Carmelite priest. My uncle, a member of the Malabar Missionary Brothers (MMB) influenced and inspired us to be commandos of Jesus.

## **Vocation**

On the day of my First Holy Communion, my mother whispered in my ear to pray to become a priest. Henceforth I prayed after every Holy Communion and as a result, Jesus planted me in the Missionary Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament (MCBS). In May 1981, I made my first religious profession and was sent to St Thomas Apostolic Seminary, Kottayam, Kerala, for priestly studies. There I found a like-minded friend and in December 1981, we decided to dedicate our lives to heal the broken hearted. Spending time praying before the Blessed Sacrament directed us to the peripheries of the city where we encountered slum dwellers, beggars, orphans, robbers and many others.

## God Experience

In March 1983, after spending long hours of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, I received a powerful invitation from the Lord, "Dedicate your life for the conversion of sinners". From then onwards I began to work towards that goal. It proved to be my personal vocation to prison ministry.

## First Prison Visit

In June 1985, I was in the vicinity of the local prison and wanted to enter it but was refused entry. With my decision to do prison ministry while going back to seminary, I noticed a name-board on the way. It was the Indian office of Prison Fellowship International founded by Chuck Colson. With their assistance, we visited Kottayam prison and it touched our hearts. We formed a prayer group called Jesus Fraternity and began to regularly visit the neighbouring prisons. In 1986 we organized a state wide, prison pilgrimage with orchestra and rhapsody. We prepared for this pilgrimage six months in advance with chain fasting and prayer. This pilgrimage brought us an immense experience of God and His divine providence and fraternity.

## Rehabilitation Centers

In January 1989, I was ordained a priest and was appointed as the assistant director of Jesus Fraternity to do prison ministry. In 1995 we extended our ministry nationwide with the name Prison Ministry India (PMI). As a priest, I focused on establishing rehabilitation centres for released prisoners. We raised funds and constructed the first rehabilitation centre for

released male prisoners in Thrissur, Kerala. Then we strove hard to have a home for released women prisoners. In October 1992 we were blessed with a home for them at Monvila, Trivandrum.

One of the major conversions I witnessed during this journey was that of a prisoner called Mathew. He was born and brought up in a Catholic fishermen family. He was seven years old when his father was brutally murdered at sea. Hearing the terrible news, he rushed towards the shore and wept bitterly lying on his father's lifeless body. He grew up lonely in a malicious world of treachery and became a street boy, wandering through the streets crying for food and craving for love. The street gangs dragged him into the world of crimes and cruelties and in course of time, Mathew became a notorious criminal, a hired killer much in demand, a threat to society and a challenge to the police department. However, by the providence of God, he was miraculously rescued and through constant prayers and fastings of many prayer warriors including PMI volunteers. For more than two decades now, Mathew has been serving as the director of Shanti Bhavan, a home for the aged, mental patients, wandering beggars and abuse victims. With the motto of helping, healing and caring for the vulnerable, Mathew takes care of more than 100 destitute by providing them with food, accommodation and shelter. PMI could narrate thousands of similar stories of reformation, rehabilitation and reintegration of hardcore criminals.

## Missionary

In 1993, I was sent to Rome for higher studies and did a doctorate at the Pontifical Gregorian University on my life question, 'how to reform a sinner'. My childhood ambition was to become a missionary and so I was very glad when I was appointed as one of the pioneer missionaries of MCBS mission in the Kalyan Diocese, Mumbai. As MCBS Emmaus provincial I was an instrument in the hands of God to launch mission centres in different states of India, Tanzania and Brazil. In 2020 PMI launched special task forces of which there are 40 members in each group, and these volunteers pray, fast and assist prisoners in their release, reformation, rehabilitation, reintegration and redemption.



## A Life Dedicated for the Lost

My life is dedicated to the lost sheep and I am happy to continue Jesus' mission of searching, serving and saving the lost, as He says in Luke 19:10 – "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost." "For there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance" (Luke 15:7). ♦♦♦



# SAINT SEBASTIAN

PATRON SAINT OF ARCHERS, ATHLETES AND  
PROTECTOR AGAINST PLAGUE



*Shino Merin John  
from Finland  
shares the life of  
Saint Sebastian.*



## Early Life

St Sebastian, born at Narbonne in Gaul, belonged to a wealthy Roman family. He spent his early life in Milan, Italy. He was a man of great faith who was brought up as a Christian in a time when being a Christian was very dangerous. In AD 283, Sebastian joined the Roman army under Emperor Carinus to assist the martyrs in their sufferings. Admiring his courage and excellence, he was made one of the captains of the Praetorian Guards under Diocletian and Maximian. However, they were unaware that he was a Christian.

## Christian Soldier

During Diocletian's persecution of the Christians, Sebastian secretly visited them and also brought supplies and comfort to the prisoners. He made numerous converts, including soldiers as well as a governor. He healed the wife of a soldier with the Sign of the Cross. The

parents of the twin Christian deacon brothers, Marcus and Marcellian, forced them to renounce Christianity while they were imprisoned, but Sebastian convinced both of them to remain steadfast in their faith.

**"THE DEVIL STRAINS EVERY NERVE TO SECURE THE SOULS WHICH BELONG TO CHRIST. WE SHOULD NOT GRUDGE OUR TOIL WRESTLING THEM FROM SATAN AND GIVING THEM BACK TO GOD."**

## Martyrdom

It was discovered during Maximian's persecution of the Christians that Sebastian was a Christian after he converted the Roman governor Chromatius. He was ordered to be shot by the Mauritanian archers with the intention of killing him. Although

his body was full of arrows, miraculously he was not killed. The widow of Castulus, Irene of Rome, finding him alive, nursed him back to health. He marched up to Diocletian and preached to him, upon which he was beaten to death on the Emperor's orders. He was martyred in 288 A.D and buried along the Appian way near the catacombs in Rome, over which a church was built later.

## Veneration

Devotion to St Sebastian spread rapidly and he is typically represented with arrows in his flesh. He is the patron saint of athletes because of his physical endurance after being shot by so many arrows, and his energetic way of defending the Faith. When the bubonic plague ravaged through Europe during the 14<sup>th</sup> century, people prayed to St Sebastian for protection, and because of this, he is the patron saint against plagues. His feast day is celebrated on January 20<sup>th</sup>.



# POPE'S *Voice*

*"Although the life of a person is in a land full of thorns and weeds, there is always a space in which the good seed can grow. You have to trust God."*

Pope Francis

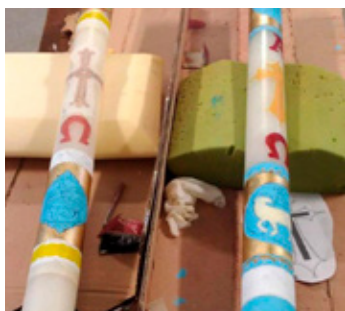


## GLOBAL CATHOLIC NEWS

Compiled by Smitha George

### PASCHAL CANDLE PROGRAM BRINGS LIGHT TO PRISONERS' LIVES

ROME: In an Italian prison 45 miles south of Rome, the paschal candle's meaning takes on a whole new dimension as inmates grab their paintbrushes and decorate paschal candles in preparation for one of the holiest celebrations in Christianity. The "Light of Freedom"



project, an initiative promoted by the Inspectorate General of Italian Prison Chaplains, aims to have hundreds of paschal candles ready for Easter. The project not only gives inmates an opportunity to work, but also instills in them the values of freedom and justice by affirming the dignity of the person.

### PANDEMIC SHOWS NEED FOR NEW MODEL OF CARE FOR ELDERLY



Vienna: A new attitude and approach towards the elderly are needed in today's world, especially in the places and ways they are cared for when they become

more fragile, said the Pontifical Academy for Life. To make sure the needs of older people are met and their gifts appreciated, renewed attention and new solutions must be given to assisted living facilities, architectural barriers, friendships and social support networks, in-home caregivers, families and younger family members and opportunities in parishes, the academy said in a new document. Released on Feb. 9, the 11-page "note" is titled, "Old Age: Our Future. The Elderly After the Pandemic," and was made available in six languages at [academyforlife.va](http://academyforlife.va).

### BISHOP SPRAYS HOLY WATER FROM FIRETRUCK TO 'CLEANSE' COLOMBIAN CITY



Colombia: Bishop Rubén Jaramillo Montoya of a Colombian city that is suffering from a deadly spike in drug violence boarded a firetruck to spray the town's main street with holy water and help to "cleanse it" of evil. The bishop performed the gesture

during a protest against violence in Buenaventura, a city of about half a million people on Colombia's Pacific Coast. During the event, thousands of local residents, dressed in white and wearing face masks, also formed a 12-mile-long human chain that crossed most of the city.

### WYD ORGANIZERS RELEASE OFFICIAL THEME SONG FOR LISBON 2023



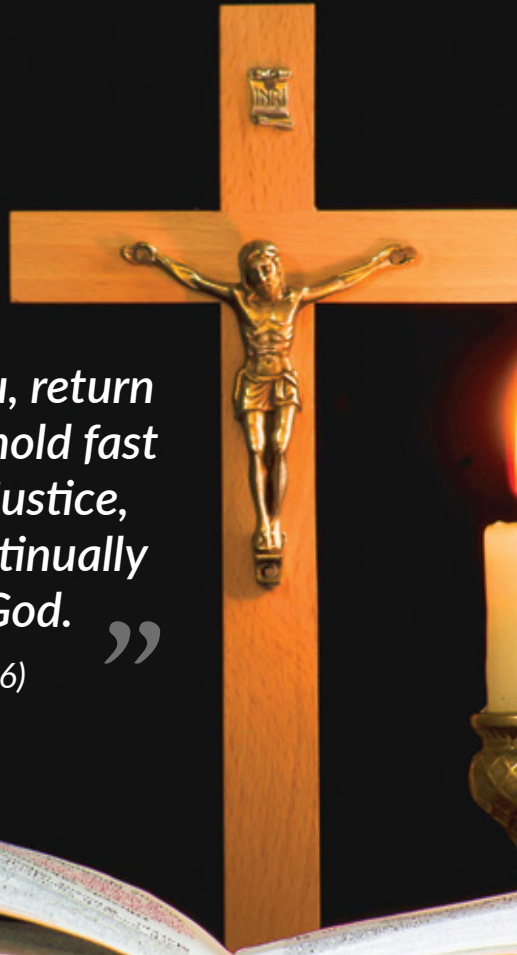
Lisbon: World Youth Day organizers released the winning theme song for the international gathering in Lisbon, Portugal, in 2023. The official song is titled "Ha Pressa no Ar" (There Is Urgency in the Air). The lyrics were written by a 51-year-old priest, Father

Joao Paulo Vaz, and the music was composed by 41-year-old Pedro Ferreira, both from the Diocese of Coimbra, Portugal. The musical arrangement was by Carlos Garcia. The song's lyrics reflect the theme chosen for WYD Lisbon by Pope Francis, "Mary arose and went with haste" — a passage from the Gospel of St. Luke about Mary going to see her cousin Elizabeth after Mary had been visited by an angel who told her she would bear the son of God. The theme song is meant to inspire and invite young people "to identify themselves with Mary" and be eager to serve in a missionary spirit and to transform the world, the press release said.

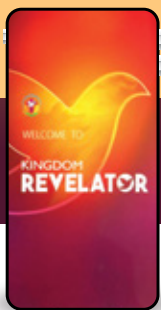
Image Credit: [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)



“  
But as for you, return  
to your God, hold fast  
to love and justice,  
and wait continually  
for your God.”  
(Hosea 12:6)



“  
Lent is a time of truth, which, as in the case of the Good Samaritan,  
makes us pause, recognize our brothers and sisters, and put our time and  
possessions at their service in daily sharing.”  
(Saint John Paul II)



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