

Atmavinte Niravil - 10

CHRISTIAN YOUTH



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Atmavinte Niravil - 10

Faith Formation Series of Kerala Latin Catholic Church



CHRISTIAN YOUTH

MESSAGE

Preserving perpetually fresh the command of our Lord Jesus Christ to his apostles “*go into the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation*” (Mk 16:15), the Church always holds in high esteem the Faith Formation, the essential element in the process of evangelization, as a means to keep alive the proclamation and transmission of the Word of God to the future generation.



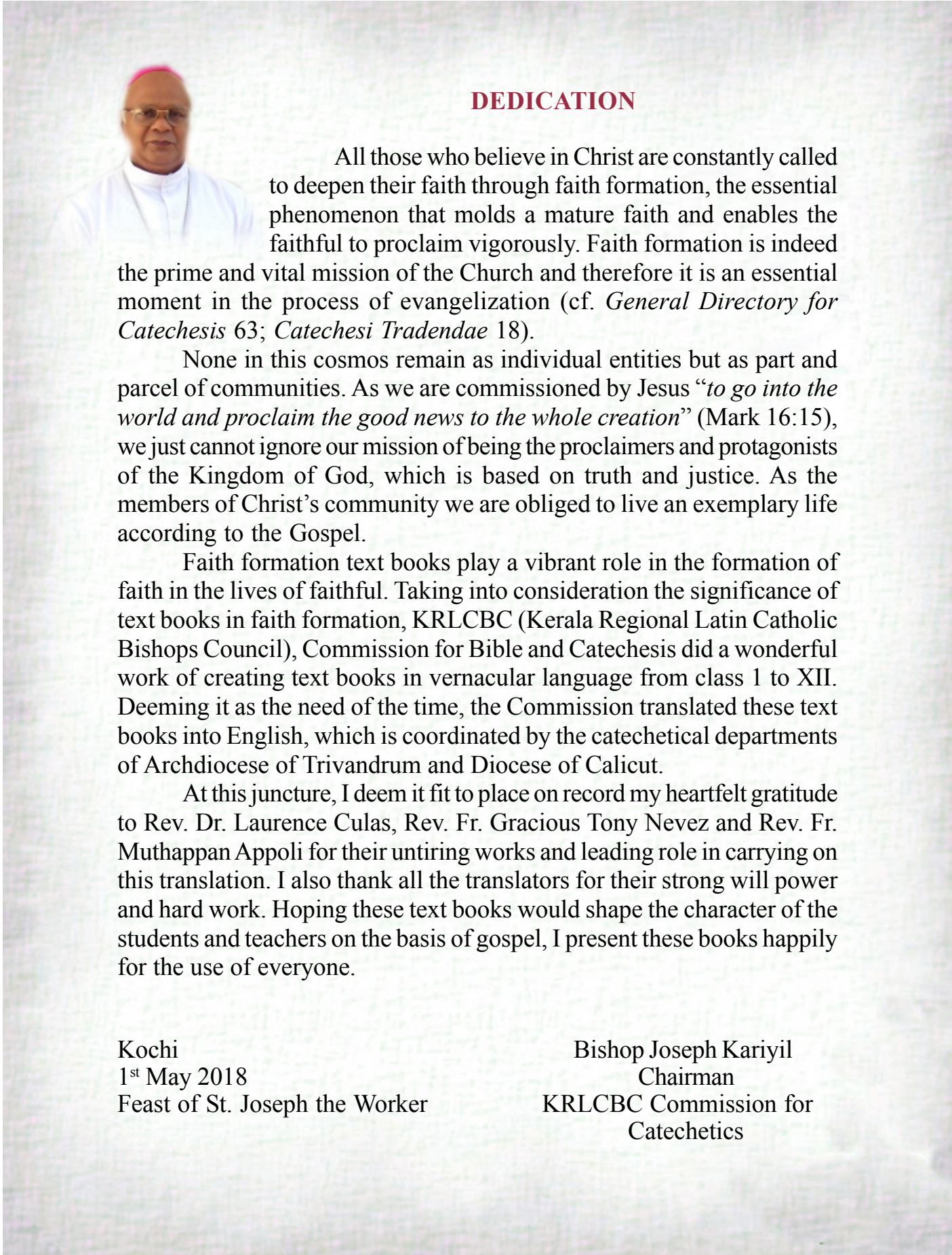
Emphasizing the significance of catechetical ministry, St. John Paul II in his Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae*, exhorts: “*Quite early on, the name Catechesis was given to the totality of the Church’s efforts to make disciples, to help people believe that Jesus is the Son of God so that believing they might have life in his name and to educate and instruct them in this life, thus building up the Body of Christ*” (CT 1). Catechesis enables the faithful to inculcate God’s grace in their day today lives, to experience the invisible power of God through the celebration of the sacraments within the community and to bear witness to it with self-denial.

Noting the prime and vital role of the catechism texts in the Faith Formation process, KRLCBC’s (Kerala Regional Latin Catholic Bishops Council) Commission for Catechetical took a bold step in forming these texts in vernacular language from standard 1 to XII in the year 2007. The content presentation of these texts are noteworthy and needs to be appreciated; its presentation is simple and elegant and uses modern teaching techniques. Care has been taken to depict true beliefs along with the inclusion of the history of the Latin Catholic Church and the special characteristics of the sacraments. Sensing the need of the modern epoch, these texts are now translated into English, which further widens the scope of these texts. I pen down my sincere appreciation to the catechetical departments of Archdiocese of Trivandrum and Diocese of Calicut for initiating this venture. I also take this opportunity to congratulate Rev. Dr. Laurence Culas, Rev. Fr. Gracious Tony Nevez and Rev. Fr. Muthappan Appoli and their colleagues who helped in translation, correction, DTP and page layout.

I extend my good wishes to all the children who desire to deepen their faith through faith formation. May you like Jesus grow and become strong, be filled with wisdom and the favour of God be upon you’ (cf. Luke 2:40). Let God’s light shine upon each one of you!

Trivandrum
1st May 2018
Feast of St. Joseph the Worker

Archbishop Soosa Pakiam M.
President, KRLCBC
Archbishop of Trivandrum



DEDICATION

All those who believe in Christ are constantly called to deepen their faith through faith formation, the essential phenomenon that molds a mature faith and enables the faithful to proclaim vigorously. Faith formation is indeed the prime and vital mission of the Church and therefore it is an essential moment in the process of evangelization (cf. *General Directory for Catechesis* 63; *Catechesi Tradendae* 18).

None in this cosmos remain as individual entities but as part and parcel of communities. As we are commissioned by Jesus “*to go into the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation*” (Mark 16:15), we just cannot ignore our mission of being the proclaimers and protagonists of the Kingdom of God, which is based on truth and justice. As the members of Christ’s community we are obliged to live an exemplary life according to the Gospel.

Faith formation text books play a vibrant role in the formation of faith in the lives of faithful. Taking into consideration the significance of text books in faith formation, KRLCBC (Kerala Regional Latin Catholic Bishops Council), Commission for Bible and Catechesis did a wonderful work of creating text books in vernacular language from class 1 to XII. Deeming it as the need of the time, the Commission translated these text books into English, which is coordinated by the catechetical departments of Archdiocese of Trivandrum and Diocese of Calicut.

At this juncture, I deem it fit to place on record my heartfelt gratitude to Rev. Dr. Laurence Culas, Rev. Fr. Gracious Tony Nevez and Rev. Fr. Muthappan Appoli for their untiring works and leading role in carrying on this translation. I also thank all the translators for their strong will power and hard work. Hoping these text books would shape the character of the students and teachers on the basis of gospel, I present these books happily for the use of everyone.

Kochi
1st May 2018
Feast of St. Joseph the Worker

Bishop Joseph Kariyil
Chairman
KRLCBC Commission for
Catechetics

MESSAGE

“To begin with, it is clear that the Church has always looked on catechesis as a sacred duty and an inalienable right. On the one hand, it is certainly a duty springing from a command given by the Lord and resting above all on those who in the new covenant receive the call to the ministry of being pastors. On the other hand, one can likewise speak of a right: from the theological point of view every baptized person, precisely the reason of being baptized, has the right to receive from the Church instruction and education enabling him or her to enter on a truly Christian life” (*Catechesi Tradendae* 14).

KRLCBC Commission for Catechesis, in its whole hearted efforts owning this mind of the Mother Church regarding catechesis, deemed it necessary to present the Catechism texts in languages more comfortable to the students. So, the translation of the current vernacular text into English and Tamil was included in the decennial plan presented in the Vallarpadam Mission Congress and BCC Convention as one of the primary objectives to be achieved. Moreover, constant plea from the part of students and their parents as well as the teachers necessitated this huge venture.

The great and praise worthy efforts invested by the Pastoral Ministry of Latin Archdiocese of Trivandrum under the direction of Rev. Dr. Laurence Culas and Rev. Fr. Muthappan Appoli and by the diocese of Calicut under the guidance of Rev. Fr. Gracious Tony Nevez towards the realization of this objective have been of immense worth. Their service to the formation of the new generation in the Latin Church of Kerala goes gratefully and proudly marked. This will go a long way to realize the specific aim of catechesis as St. Pope John Paul II says: “to develop, with God’s help, an as yet initial faith, and to advance in fullness and to nourish day by day the Christian life of the faithful young and old...Catechesis aims therefore at developing understanding of the mystery of Christ in the light of God’s word, so that the whole of a person’s humanity is impregnated by that word” (*Catechesi Tradendae* 20).

On behalf of the Chairman of the Commission for Catechetics and its members my heart overflows with great appreciation for and deep gratitude to all those who toiled to make this dream come true. May God bless them and reward them with the joy of seeing the new generations “to maturity to the measure of the full stature of Christ” (Eph 4:13).

Kochi
1st May 2018
Feast of St. Joseph, the Worker

Rev. Dr. Joy Puthenveetil
Secretary
KRLCBC Commission for
Catechetics

GRATITUDE

The word Catechesis, derived from the Greek word '*katekheisis*' means 'echo;' implying that as catechists, we echo the teachings of Christ and of the apostles. Catechism texts, playing a vital and inevitable role throughout the faith formation process, must be biblically, theologically and doctrinally reliable and infallible; thus enabling us to proclaim with Jesus, "*My teaching is not mine but his who sent me*" (John 7:16).

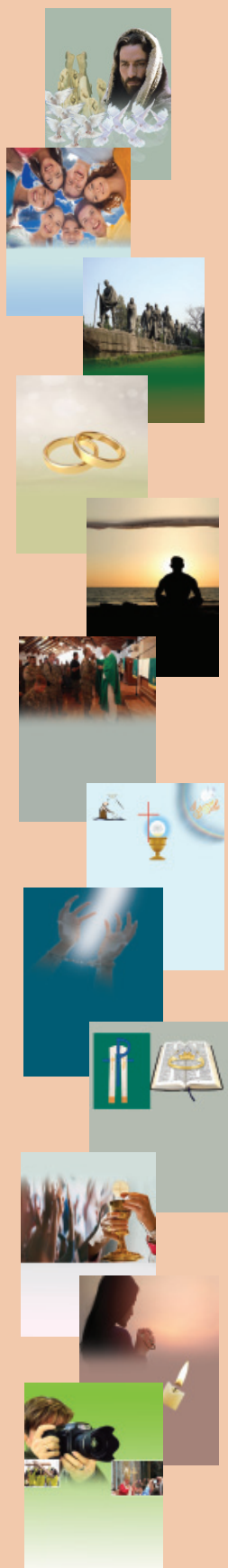
KRLCBC (Kerala Regional Latin Catholic Bishops Council), Commission for Catechetics was authorized to consolidate the contents and to formulate catechism texts for the usage of the faithful of Latin Catholic Dioceses in Kerala. The principal task of this commission was to review and evaluate the biblical and theological contents and doctrinal accuracy of the texts for children and youth; as a result of which catechism texts for standard 1 to 12 was formulated in Malayalam and implemented for usage since 2007. Taking into consideration, the dire need of the modern era, now these texts are translated into English for further usage.

With appreciation we place on record our sincere gratitude to Archbishop Soosa Pakiam M, the President of KRLCBC and Bishop Joseph Kariyil, the Chairman, KRLCBC Commission for Bible and Catechetics and Rev. Dr. Joy Puthenveetil, Secretary, KRLCBC Commission for Catechetics. We are indebted to the translators for their competence and hard work, especially Dr. Elma John for the translation of this text. We are also very thankful to all those who corrected the texts. A special thanks to Mrs. Reena Shabu, Mrs. Sahayamary Delvan, Ms. Francisca T and Mrs. Sophi Godfrey for DTP work, page layout and graphics and to Chackala printers.

Bringing the entire nations to Jesus and assisting everyone to have a personal relationship with him will take place only when we, the faithful deepen our faith through faith formation, have a very personal relationship with him, which in turn strengthens us to proclaim genuinely the message of the Gospel with joy and courage; and thus attracting the entire people to him. Let the light of Jesus reflect through these texts and let everyone who use this texts be enlightened by his divine light.

Trivandrum and Calicut
1st May 2018
Feast of St Joseph, the Worker

Rev. Dr. Laurence Culas
Rev. Fr. Gracious Tony Nevez
Rev. Fr. Muthappan Appoli



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1

YOUTH BLOSSOMS IN CHRIST



Introductory activity

“I believe that there is nothing more beautiful, impenetrable, highly attractive and full of vital energy and perfect in this world than Christ. There can be nothing nobler than him in this world. I wish to hold on to Christ even if anyone is able to prove otherwise” said Dostoevsky.

Dostoevsky reveals the Christ he has experienced in his life through these words. How will you describe to others the Christ whom you have experienced in your life? Discuss the topic in separate groups and present the report in class.

For youth, Jesus is a symbol of love, sacrifice, instruction and practice of religious rites. For the youth of all times, Christ is the only perfect model. The holy Church has only one solution for all the problems and weaknesses of the youth – Jesus Christ. All the virtues of youth are seen in their perfection in Jesus Christ.

Temptations faced by Christ

The young Christ began his mission just like any other youth of his time, facing various temptations and crises, in fact in a higher degree and overcoming them (Matthew 4:1-11), having a definite aim. Jesus gained the strength to overcome this at the time of his baptism when the Holy Spirit descended upon him (Matthew 4:6) and also through the strength of the Word of God.

Let us contemplate upon the three types of temptations and the ways through which he overcame them (Matthew 4:1-11).

1. The temptation to change stones into bread to eat

The spirit which had descended upon him at baptism (Matthew 3:16) leads Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted (Matthew 4:1). The declaration that Jesus is the Son of God at the time of his baptism (Matthew 3:17) is being put to test by the devil.

Self-abandonment in the divine presence and self-sacrifice are two aspects revealed through the baptism of Jesus. By asking Jesus to turn the stones into bread, the devil was tempting him to misuse his position as the Son of God to gain political and social supremacy. It was also an exhortation to make use of his divine power to perform miracles for selfish gains. Jesus, who understood the mysterious motives of the devil, refused to deviate from the path of the Divine Will. “One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Deuteronomy 8:3). By quoting these Divine Words Jesus affirms his deep faith in Divine providence.

We observe here that the young Jesus was able to overcome the usual temptation of the youth to place personal likes above Divine Will.



2. The Temptation to jump off the temple tower

The challenge Satan presented the second time before Christ was to jump off the temple tower to prove his faith in divine intercession to save him from harm (Matthew 4:5-6).

Jesus did not wish to prove to Satan his state of being the Son of God and his faith in the Divine Power by performing miracles. We find that Jesus had to face often these types of temptations not only during his ministry but even while on the cross. The last temptation was to come down from the cross to prove that he was the Son of God. But just as he refused to jump off the temple tower, he was not ready to step down from the cross.

By overcoming the second temptation Jesus teaches us that we should not wait for miracles and signs to happen in our lives in order to believe in God.

3. The temptation to worship Satan instead of God

The third temptation faced by Jesus was to reject God in order to gain worldly possessions.

Jesus declared: “Away with you, Satan! for it is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only’” (Matthew 4:10). Thus Jesus overcame temptations of anti-God friendships and worldly Messiahship.

Just like young Jesus we are also living in an era where we have to combat trials and tribulations right from birth to death. Take note of the

words of Jesus who had overcome all these: “Occasions for stumbling are bound to come, but woe to the one by whom the stumbling block comes” (Matthew 18:7). Jesus exhorts us not to put a stumbling block before even to the smallest of beings, who believe in him (Matthew 18:6). Jesus reminds us also not to let any of our organ to commit sin (Matthew 18:8-9). Satan will always be trying to tempt us to live a life of pleasure, going against the wishes of God and indulging in selfish motives and avoiding endurance.

We are all the sons and daughters of God. Jesus Christ had understood the divinity of his life as the Son of God and lived a life befitting to his divine nature, depending on prayer and avoiding temptations. In the same manner, Jesus wants us to follow him without acceding to trials and tribulations, by giving prime importance to God.

Temptations are natural. The manner in which we deal with them makes them right or wrong, sin or virtue. We know that the quality of gold increases in the furnace of fire. We should not forget the fact that virtue grows only in the midst of temptations.

The Vision of Christ: Kingdom of God

“The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the Good News” (Mark 1:15). Pronouncing thus, Jesus introduced the idea of the Kingdom of God to the world.

The Kingdom of God imagined by Jesus was not one of geographical extent or the population on earth or its political leaders. Basically, it was novel and entirely different. God’s salvation and liberating process consists of saving of humankind from all evils and bondage through His unconditional and endless love – that was the Kingdom of God envisaged by Jesus.

God’s paternity and universal brotherhood constitute the divine **vision**. The **law** of the Kingdom of God is unconditional love, even loving the enemies.

Repentance and conviction seen in actions are the basic **norms** for entry into the Kingdom of God.

The **fruits** of the children of the Kingdom of God are the intrinsic love and brotherhood and freedom resulting from the practice of harmony, sharing and freedom.

From untruth to truth, from darkness to light, from death to life, is the **mark** of the Kingdom of God.

**With the experience of the Kingdom of God,
substantial changes occur in the individual and society.**

- ◆ Everyone experiences the unconditional love of the Father through the person of Jesus.
- ◆ By the experience of the divine love, good results of repentance occur in individuals.
- ◆ All people come to the realization that they are the children of God and brothers and sisters.
- ◆ When all others around us are considered as brothers and sisters, we are ready to forgive their misdeeds and extend services to them as and when needed.
- ◆ A society full of truth, justice and love evolves eventually.

We, the youth, have to be active participants in the ideals of the Kingdom of God which the young Christ held close to his heart. Through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, God the Father reveals to us that each one of us is known personally and loved deeply by Him. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

Just like Zacchaeus, the sinner, who turned away from sin, having experienced God through his Son Jesus (Luke 19:1-10) the youth are also invited to experience the Kingdom of God and lead a new life. We, the youth of today have to be active in bringing about this vision of Christ to create the Kingdom of God by loving each other, being of service to society and through the personal and combined effort to create a just society.

The social commitment of Jesus Christ

Human person is a social animal. Right from birth to death, in all our interactions we are connected with other fellow beings and the universe. This relationship makes us indebted to all movable and immovable things. This indebtedness makes us to be committed to the society. This is also a mission that the Creator entrusts to us.

There is a tendency for human persons to forget this mission and to act selfishly. This was prevalent in the period of Jesus also. Jesus lived in an era when people believed that orphans, widows, destitute, sinners and tax collectors are cursed by God and therefore to be avoided. To add to this, blind and irrational belief and wrong rules of law and denial of justice made the situation really hard to endure. It is under such circumstances that Jesus began his mission with great social commitment. Jesus declared thus: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour” (Luke 4:18-19).

Jesus Christ reacted to the problems and crises of his society in a creative way. He was fully aware that his duty was to preach the word of God to the poor, to liberate those in bondage, to give sight to the blind and to give freedom to the oppressed.

“As Jesus went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things” (Mark 6:34).

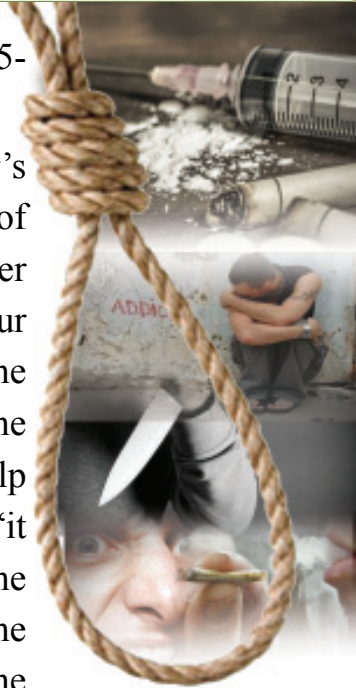
Specifying the importance of human life, Jesus worked for the total liberation of humankind. By feeding the hungry 5000 people with five loaves (Matthew 14:13-21), healing the sick (Matthew 4:23-24), forgiving the sins of the penitent (Luke 7:36-50), shedding tears at Lazarus’ tomb along with the grief-stricken family (John 11:28-36), saving the face of the groom at the wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11) and glorifying the poor widow’s donation to the temple (Mark 12:41-44), Jesus stood for the total liberation of humankind. Thus the Kingdom of God promised by

God through the prophets came into being (Isaiah 5:5-6; 29:18-20; Luke 7:22-23).

The indifference of Cain in “Am I my brother’s keeper?” (Genesis 4:9) and the avaricious attitude of Judas in “What will you give me if I hand Jesus over to you” (Matthew 26:15) are still growing strong in our society. The youth of today must be guided by the attitude of the good Samaritan - delving deep into the situation and the individual - to extend necessary help to those in need (Luke 10:25-37). The wise saying “it is not the cruelty of the wicked, but the silence of the good that is more disastrous” is noteworthy. It is the duty of the youngsters to act with dedication as the living tongue, eyes, ears and other organs of the resurrected Christ in Church and society today. The words of Christ to his disciples when they set out on their mission to go about it bravely, innocently and wisely should be our strength and inspiration: “I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves” (Matthew 10:16).

Our situation is not very much different from that of Jesus’ time. How many are the poisonous trends around us? When there are so many problems like lack of morals, increase in the number of suicides, increase in liquor addiction, influence of materialism, broken marriages, sexual anarchy, lack of family prayer, etc. it is the duty of the young to raise a stir in the fields of toil, prayer, protest and defense.

In this world of evils, only the young generation can strongly work with commitment. The Church of Christ is dedicating much hope on the youth. In this world of disintegration, the Church believes that the youth will become the proponents of peace and universal brotherhood.



The concluding message of the Second Vatican council was delivered to youth: “You, young people, you are the ones who have to assume charge of the torch handed down by your forefathers to live in a period of massive changes in history. You are the ones to configure tomorrow’s society taking into heed the excellent advice received from your parents and teachers. In this process you will either be saving yourselves or else you will be destroyed along with this new generation.”

The self-emptying of Christ

Jesus Christ, the son of God shows us through his own example the qualities of giving his own self and making himself a cipher.

- ◆ Even though He is the creator, he chose cattle shed as his place of birth.
- ◆ Even though he was the son of God, he grew up as the obedient son of a carpenter.
- ◆ Though not a sinner, becoming one with us, he took up the state of repentance.
- ◆ Even when the crowd tried to put him on a pedestal, he chose the role of the servant.
- ◆ He was one who chose a donkey to travel upon while entering majestically the city of Jerusalem.
- ◆ He took the side of the marginalized and the sick.
- ◆ He did not have a roof over his head.
- ◆ He chose the downtrodden in society as his associates in mission.
- ◆ He conveyed the idea that we must love our enemies.
- ◆ Even though he was the master and saviour, by washing the feet of his followers he became the servant.
- ◆ He gave himself up at the last supper.

“Jesus Christ, who, though was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death - even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:6-8).

Jesus Christ made it clear “the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many ” (Mark 10:45). He exhorted his followers through his own example of washing their feet and saying: “If I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet” (John 13:14).

People are pursuing the easy path of victory and fame. But finally they fall into sin, sorrow and misery. It is hard to find anyone following the path of self-emptying. Jesus taught us “unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit” (John 12:24). Jesus invites us into the field of self-emptying, full of challenges and trials. Listen to the words of St Paul who laid his life for the sake of God and his brothers and sisters like a soldier of Jesus: “Let the same mind be in you that in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5).

Jesus had to face great social, political and religious impediments in his pursuit of self-emptying. Instead of becoming dejected in the face of these difficulties, Jesus was able to proceed undaunted towards his goal. It is in this manner that the youth of today should proceed to attain their goal of liberating themselves and the society.



The prayerful life of Christ

The young Christ was one who lived a life of prayer. The Gospel presents the picture of Christ praying in times of crisis. Everyday Jesus used to gain energy to begin his day’s work through his morning prayers (Mark 1:35). Jesus prays before beginning his mission, fasting and praying for forty days and nights (Matthew 4:2). So also prayed before choosing the apostles (Luke 6:12-13), for their sanctification (John 17:1-26), before the multiplication of bread (Matthew 14:19), at the time of raising Lazarus

(John 11:41-42), at the institution of the Eucharist (Luke 22:17-19), in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-42), at the last moment on the cross (Matthew 27:46). We read in the Gospel Jesus going to pray with his apostles (Luke 9:28). Jesus' prayer life was a model and inspiration for his followers (Luke 11:1-2).

The essence of Christ's prayer was his union with the Father. The Son of God seeks the will of God through prayer. He taught us also to pray to Our Father with filial love (Matthew 6:5-15). "Ask, and you will receive; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7). Thus he assured the efficacy of prayer. The will of God can be understood and the strength to execute it can be had from prayer. He gives us a lifestyle fulfilled through prayer.

Once a journalist asked Mother Teresa: "How is it possible for you to achieve, seemingly impossible things so easily?" Mother explained: "Jesus gives us the strength for it. We pray for a long time in the presence of Jesus' divine mercy. If we do not pray we will become timid or weak in mind."

Prayer is living in the presence of God and having an open conversation with him. We cannot overlook the importance of prayer in our daily life. Gandhiji, who closely imitated, Jesus explains prayer thus: "Prayer is the key of dawn and the bolt of dusk." For Jesus prayer was food (John 4:34). For Mother Teresa it was strength. For Gandhiji it was the key of dawn and the bolt of dusk. What is it for us?

The most important phase of human life is "youth." It is a period of trials and tribulations. Imitating the young Christ, the youth have an obligation to bloom into perfection. Just like Jesus Christ faced the temptations and crises depending upon his Father, and submitting to the divine will, the youth of today have to build up a new culture of love following the path of social commitment, ending their ego and taking strength from prayer.

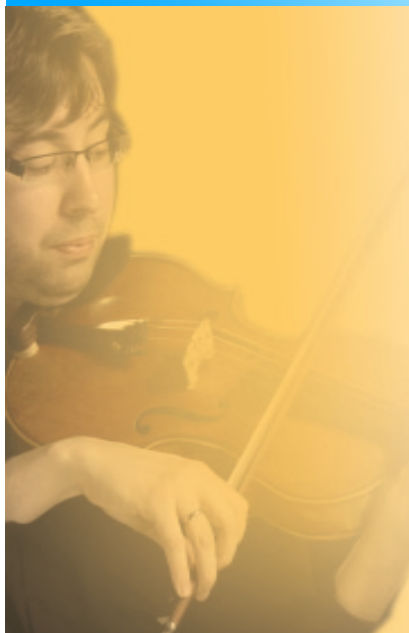
Let us find the answers:

1. What is the role of temptation in human life? How does Christ demonstrate, through his life, that the youth of today should overcome this?
2. What is the Kingdom of God envisaged by Christ? Why is it necessary for the youth to take initiative in this matter?
3. What is the example given by Christ in the field of social commitment? Describe.
4. The Son of God, through his life gives us an example of self-sacrifice and self-emptying. Explain.
5. The young Christ was a person who lived a life of prayer. In the life of youth, what is the importance of prayer? Describe.

Work 2

Conduct an interview with senior members of Christian youth organisations to find out solutions for the challenges faced by the youth today in their pursuit of model Christian life.

Song



Christ, the model for youth
 New era consciousness
 To make life divine love
 Serving fellow beings!
 Let us devote ourselves
 For social commitment
 Let us transmit love and peace
 To create a new era!
 For doing good deeds
 Let prayer be the nutrient
 To establish the Kingdom of God
 Let our youth awaken!



2 YOUTH AND PERSONALITY

Introductory activity

Each one has to assess one's own life to find out five good qualities, then write them down and pass it on to his/her best friend. The friend has to read it aloud in the class. Thus, while the class leader is writing down on the black board the qualities, the others can write down ten qualities, worth imitating, in their note books.

Both Johnny and Thomas are twenty years old. But both are two personalities. Their manners, walking and sitting are different. Then we will say that Johnny's personality is not Thomas'. While Johnny and Thomas are both, like other human beings, we have to acknowledge the fact that there are certain invisible personal matters which differentiate them.

In every individual there exist two types of personalities: external and internal. Characteristics that a person acquires through social interaction are called external. Those which are inherent in an individual as a result of hereditary and traditional factors are called internal. Therefore the sum total of all qualities acquired through one's own means as well as through social interaction – physical, mental and emotional – can be called personality. In this regard we can say that personality is like a magnet which attracts another individual.

There are several factors involved in the formation of a personality. A person's idea, goal, capability, emotion, wish, life, perspective, zeal or ardent desire, course of action, etc. are all part of his/her personality. We can always say that these are treasures of an individual. The personality of an individual helps him/her to have peaceful and morally good life. In short, for a successful life an attractive personality is essential.

Levels of Personality Development

1. Intellectual maturity

This consists of one's sensible thinking, correct judgment and response. There might be differences in the intellectual maturity of youth in the same age. Their interests and aptitudes also differ.

2. Emotional Maturity

A person's emotions reflect his/her personality. It manifests in two ways: positively and negatively. Positive response occurs when one expresses his/her emotions at the right time and in the right manner. All those who acknowledge the merits of others and cultivate good relationships, even while protesting against injustice, belong to this group.

Negative response occurs when a person brings harm to himself/herself by suppressing his/her emotions and when he/she does not pay heed to the emotions of others and brings harm to others. They are cold people who cannot empathize with the sorrow of others and be happy in the happiness of others. All those who sacrifice prudence, to be ruled by emotion, are not mature personalities.

3. Spiritual Maturity

Spiritual maturity manifests itself in fulfilling God's will, leading a moral life and living in God's grace. All those who are spiritually mature are not disheartened by failures in their lives. They are able to see God's will in all happenings. They are able to see good in everything and do good to everybody. Role models in family, Church, catechetical field, and Christian groups contribute to the enrichment of spiritual maturity.

4. Social Maturity

Social maturity involves the ability of the individual to understand the greatness of human beings and their rights and duties and the ability to interact with the other members of the cosmos. Three factors determine social maturity of an individual. They are:

knowledge, conduct and responsibility

Knowledge is the ability to determine what to do and what not to do at a particular time.

Conduct is the participation of an individual in a society to acquire the skills for the sustenance of the relationship of God-human-cosmos.

Responsibility is the moral obligation which helps people to live in harmony. Self-sacrifice, cooperation, courteous manners, control of emotions, tolerance and readiness to help others are visible manifestations of social responsibility.

For a healthy personality

According to James Coleman the psychologist, the characteristic traits of a healthy personality are the following:

Sense of security: It is a state of absence of fear and anxiety.

Objective self-analysis: A person with a healthy personality will become aware of his/her abilities and weaknesses.

Authentic sense of purpose: A mature person will have definite aims and projects.

Sense of reality: A mentally sound person will have a sense of reality. A mental patient will not have this sense of reality.

Continence and firmness in action: A personality with constant changes in ideas, actions and emotions is not at all a healthy personality.

Ability to learn from earlier experiences:

Ability to react to different situations:

Ability to handle emotions in the appropriate way: Emotions in themselves are not good or bad. Their expressions make them good or bad.

Social commitment: As far as an individual is concerned, in spite of having all the above mentioned qualities, if one is not able to get along smoothly in society, then his/her personality is not a mature one. It is the responsibility of a young person to understand and acquire these characteristics of a mature personality.

Activity 2

How do you assess people with below mentioned characteristics?

Possessive Nature: Materialistic minded consumers who are ready to do anything to achieve their goals belong to this group.

Clinging Nature: This group always depends on others.

Down with criticism: This group withers even at the least criticism.

Up with flattery: These are those who forget themselves in face of flattery and who do not have self-respect and sense of reality.

The model given by Jesus

The best role model for us at all times is Jesus Christ. We see the fulfillment of personality in the life of Jesus. Jesus taught: "Truth will set you free" (John 8:32). He never deviated from practising what he taught. Neither the authorities nor the crowd could prevent Jesus from doing what he wanted to do. Jesus never bowed down before the crooked means of his enemies or became a coward or a fickle-minded person. To surrender when it is necessary and to offer resistance when needed are marks of exceptional life.

We can see that Jesus used to take very mature stand in all circumstances, however complicated they might be. Let us examine certain incidents and teachings in his public life.

Matthew 4:1-11: we can find here Jesus overcoming successfully the temptations and challenges of his life.

Matthew 5:23-24: “When you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister and then come back and offer your gift.” Jesus confirms here that healthy relationship with one’s fellow beings is the basis of God-human relationship.

Matthew 5:37: Jesus taught “let your word be ‘yes, yes’ or ‘no, no.’ Jesus never uttered an unnecessary word in his life.

Matthew 5:39: “Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn other also.” Jesus exhorts us to win over evil with good and to endure hardships for justice.

Luke 6:35: “Love your enemies.” Jesus puts forth his vision based on love. This is evident even from his prayer for his enemies while on the cross.

Matthew 6:6 “When you pray, go to your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret.” Jesus is a man of prayer. Only if we pray with full concentration like Jesus will we be able to execute our daily chores efficiently.

Luke 6:42: “Take the log out of your own eye, then you will see clearly.” Instead of finding fault with others, Jesus asks us to be perfect.



Mark 6:34: “As Jesus went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd.” Jesus exhibits the virtue compassion to all, especially to the poor, the hungry, the exploited, the sick, the sinners and the tax collectors.

John 13:5: “Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied round him.” By humbling himself Jesus was teaching us the lesson of humility.

Luke 13:32: Jesus said: “Go tell that fox [Herod] for me, ‘Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work.’” Here we find the strength of Jesus’ character to take a stand always with firm conviction - even before the death threat of Herod.

Jesus’ response to his different life situations point to his strong personality. Jesus’ personality remains the beacon light, burning bright, inspiring every youth of our time.

We have already seen that all the characteristics of a mature personality in its perfect form can be seen in Jesus Christ. God has created humans in his own resemblance. Our personality, combined with this resemblance, is God-given. In the eyes of Christ, a mature personality is living the life of a real human person. A person becomes good by loving someone who has not loved in return; by doing good to those who have done wrong; and by forgiving with good intention the faults of others. Taking inspiration from the life of Jesus, let us all become light emitting persons, the guiding light for others.

Ways of developing our personalities

- ♦ We have to balance all the realms of maturity. Paying more attention to one aspect and neglecting another aspect might make the personality a crippled one. Therefore, the development should be balanced.
- ♦ Maturity is something which has to be acquired and it is very difficult also.

- ◆ Personality development occurs when there is cooperation between the teachers and parents and open discussion to solve problems.
- ◆ Everyone has to control one's fears and sorrows.
- ◆ Constant effort has to be taken to channel the emotions in the right path.
- ◆ Remove fear and timidity through interaction with others and involvement in social activities.
- ◆ Alienate inferiority complex by cultivating self-esteem.
- ◆ Depend on God in the face of trials.
- ◆ Seek the advice of experienced people when you are in crisis.
- ◆ Have self-confidence and self-esteem.

Activity 3

Certain questions are given below which will help to assess one's personality. After going through the questions, tick the 'yes' or 'no' answers. According to the answers ascertain your personality.

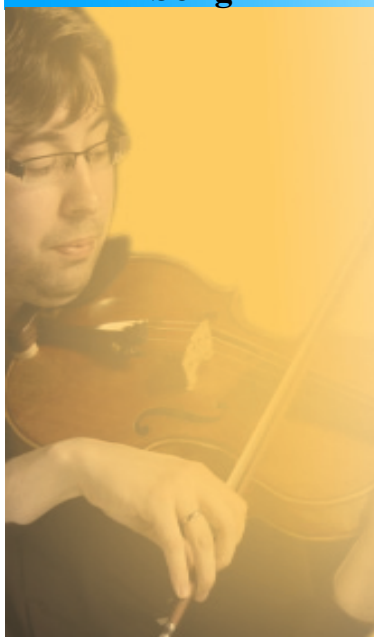
| | | | | |
|---|-----|--|----|--|
| Do you know your strengths and weaknesses? | Yes | | No | |
| Do you have an aim in life? | Yes | | No | |
| Do you have self-confidence? | Yes | | No | |
| Are you able to control your emotions? | Yes | | No | |
| Do you cultivate sense of morality? | Yes | | No | |
| Do you have sense of responsibility? | Yes | | No | |
| Are you able to get along well with others around you? | Yes | | No | |
| Do you stick to your own convictions only? | Yes | | No | |
| Do you get angry when your faults are pointed out to you? | Yes | | No | |
| Do you have any hobbies or preferences? | Yes | | No | |
| Do you spend time lazily? | Yes | | No | |

| | | | | |
|---|-----|--|----|--|
| Do you give importance for praying? | Yes | | No | |
| Do you learn from past experience? | Yes | | No | |
| Are you able to react according to the situation? | Yes | | No | |
| Are you able to share the sorrows of others? | Yes | | No | |
| Do you feel jealous in another's growth? | Yes | | No | |
| Do you feel that you are better than others? | Yes | | No | |
| Do you dress yourself respectably? | Yes | | No | |
| Do you like sharing? | Yes | | No | |
| Do you apologize when you go wrong? | Yes | | No | |

Let us find out the answers

1. What is personality?
2. What are the levels of personality development?
3. What are the characteristics of a mature personality?
4. Describe the ways of personality development.
5. Why do we say that Jesus is the best example for 'youth personality'?

Song



Is it not the reflection of myself
My personality?
Is it not this that differentiates
Me from others?

To gain a respectable personality
We have to work from the early stage.
And when we proceed with maturity
Personality becomes attractive.

To find the best example of personality
We have to look up to Jesus
To gain an untainted personality
We have to follow the footsteps of Jesus.

3 YOUTH AND PROPHETIC LEADERSHIP



Introductory activity

The sight of birds flying together, one following the other, amuse us a lot. Similarly, the freedom fighters following the father of our nation, Gandhiji, is pleasing to our eyes. Discuss and find out the differences in these two followings.

Undoubtedly leadership quality is present in every human being. At a certain point, human beings are capable of directing their instincts to good deeds. In this broad sense, everyone may have leadership quality. However, they need not be good leaders. This lesson discusses the prophetic leadership that the youth of our times need to cultivate.

Leadership – a reality

Birds and animals live according to their instincts. The world of thought is alien to them. For this same reason, an animal is not able to lead another animal or a bird is not able to lead another bird. To lead them, another higher animal, namely human being is needed.

Therefore, the case of a human being is different. Characteristics like intelligence and will power enable the human person to lead oneself and others creatively. These two internal realities, which distinguish human person from other animals, are actually the qualities of the Spirit (Mark 8:36-37).

In other words, the head of a human body coordinates the respective functions of the different organs for the development of the entire body. In the same way, the leader of a group coordinates the aptitudes and activities of the different individuals for the benefit of the entire society. Good leaders are always needed in a society, because their mission is essential for its existence and growth.

A vehicle reaches its destination safely when its driver guides it with concentration. Similarly a family stands solidly and grows well when the husband and wife perform their duties in harmony. Nations develop when they are ruled by wise people with correct viewpoints and insights. Therefore, leadership is an essential reality in human life.

Leadership – faulty and perfect

We see, on the one side, healthy individuals, happy families and progressive nations. On the other side, we see deceased bodies and minds, broken family ties and shattering nations as a result of corruption and inefficiency. Why is it so?

Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation, led our nation to freedom. He realized it using the weapon of non-violence. How did Adolf Hitler lead Germany? He brutally killed thousands of Jews in the Nazi prisons. Both are well known leaders. One sacrificed his life for the building of the nation, while the other indulged in frenzied murders, making use of power. One thing is very evident: Great leaders manifested element of goodness both in their goal and in the means they adapted to achieve it.

What is leadership? Who is a leader? Some findings:

We can see today leadership techniques of dictatorship and democracy.

- ♦ The leadership technique that considers others as less qualified and thus forcing them to obey.
- ♦ The technique of gaining the aim either by coercion or by sympathy.
- ♦ Others show leadership technique through taking control of an emergency situation and providing effective solutions in critical circumstances.
- ♦ There are yet others who lead people only after explaining the details to them and ensuring their cooperation.

All these leadership techniques are not to be followed blindly. According to a given situation we can adopt certain leadership techniques. Taking into consideration the common good, rights and duties of human persons and their liberty, we can define leadership as follows:

Leadership is the art of motivating a group of people to act towards achieving a common goal. Therefore, leadership involves: 1. establishing clear vision; 2. sharing that vision with others; 3. providing the information, knowledge and methods to realize that vision; 4. coordinating and balancing the conflicting interests of all members.

The components of leadership

For the leadership to be good there should be the following components:

- ◆ Ideology based on truth, morals and justice
- ◆ Continuous pursuit of a virtuous goal
- ◆ Ability to summon up the creative aptitude of the followers
- ◆ Ability to get the cooperation of the followers
- ◆ Ability to organize discussions on the goals and the mode of action.
- ◆ Using good and creative methods to achieve the goal.
- ◆ Creating opportunity for others to become leaders

Good qualities of a good leader

The qualities that a good leader should have are enumerated in the words of great persons given below. Those words may not be perfect. However, when those words are taken together they can lead to the qualities of a good leader.

Leader has vision and sense of purpose; leader is a good listener and orator:

“Leadership is starting goals that excite people and lift their sights. It is setting the personal example, putting enthusiasm into the operation, communicating both ways (listening as well as talking). It is the right combination of these so that people will do the work that makes a business successful because they want to see it happen” (Frederick R. Kappel).

Leader has the insight that power is service; leader has a sense of reality and a sense of gratitude:

“The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say thank you. In between the two, the leader must become a servant and a debtor” (Max De Pree).

“Leaders are great servants of the others” (Francis M. Cosgrove Jr.).

“Leadership is action, not position” (Donald H. Mc Gannon).

“If you wish to be a leader you will be frustrated, for very few people wish to be led. If you aim to be a servant you will never be frustrated” (Frank F. Warren).

Leader knows everyone; has sympathy for everyone; motivates others:

“The art of leading is the art of dealing with humanity, of working diligently on behalf of men, of being sympathetic with them, but equally, of insisting that they make a square facing toward their own problems” (S.L.A. Marshall).

“Leadership is the art of getting someone else to do something that you want done because he wants to do it” (Dwight D. Eisenhower)

Leader promotes other to leadership:

“The final test of a leader is that he leaves behind him in other men the conviction and the will to carry on” (Walter Lippmann).

“A leader who produces other leaders multiplies their influences” (John C. Maxwell)

A wise leader defines circumstances:

“Reason and judgement are the qualities of a leader” (Tacitus).

Leadership involves suffering:

“Any follower of Christ who seeks to lead like Jesus must be willing to be treated like Jesus. Some will follow. Others will throw stones” (C. Gene Wilkes).

Leader understands the needs:

“Leadership should be born out of the understanding of the needs of those who would be affected by it” (Marian Anderson)

Leader waits for opportunity and admit change for good:

“In periods where there is no leadership, society stands still. Progress occurs when courageous, skillful leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better” (Harry S. Truman).

Prophetic leadership

Prophetic leadership is seen in the prophets of Holy Bible and especially in the life of Jesus Christ. A prophet is the voice of God, the leader, for the entire humanity and the cosmos. Prophetic leadership is as old as the human being. Whenever the people or the leaders sinned, God sent prophets to guide them back into the right path. We have already studied in the lower classes that God had chosen prophets like Moses, Elijah, Nathan, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc. Prophetic leadership is not from the humans; it is God-given.



Let us try to understand the prophetic leadership which bloomed in Moses, who was chosen to lead the Israelites when they were in bondage under the Egyptian Pharaoh.

Before God chose Moses:

- ◆ Even though Moses had grown up in the palace, he hated the autocratic rule of the Pharaoh.
- ◆ It was not the luxury of the palace that lured him, but the suffering of the afflicted Hebrew brethren that influenced him more (Exodus 2:11).
- ◆ The incident of the murder of an afflicter of his Hebrew brother made Moses to become aware of the fact that he had not matured to be a prophetic leader.
- ◆ In the wilderness Moses gradually understands the truth of his own self and those around him.
- ◆ God descends before Moses to reveal himself, when Moses expresses the inclination to depend on God.

The experience of the selection of Moses and the ensuing expression of leadership:

- ◆ The burning bush, which did not reduce to ashes, teaches Moses important lessons regarding leadership (Exodus 3).
- ◆ God is the real leader; I am only the “sent one” and a partaker of His power.
- ◆ In order to lead the people, God fills me with the fire of the spirit.
- ◆ The given power is not to destroy, but to lead, purify, protect, nurture, liberate and serve the people.
- ◆ When the people suffer, a leader should never alienate himself from them. On the other hand, he should spread like a fire of purifying light and a force which does not destroy good.
- ◆ A real leader is one who depends on the power of the one who has ‘sent’ him to overcome the shortcomings of his life.
- ◆ Even though the threat of the sea, the unpleasant experiences in the desert, the sword of the enemy, hunger and thirst, isolation and accusations are the sacramental experiences, the powerful intercession of God helps him to overcome the situation.
- ◆ A leader is an instrument to establish a pact of love between people and God.
- ◆ God gives the gift of leadership not only to me, but to many others also for the integral development of the society (Exodus 18:19-26).
- ◆ Even though Moses led the people to the Promised Land of Canan, he was not able to enter it. From a real leader we never hear the words: “What will I get in return?”

The leadership of Jesus

Till now we tried to understand the leadership qualities evident in certain individuals and quotes of great persons on leadership. Also we are acquainted with the prophetic leadership exhibited by Moses. Even though we have seen the different aspects of leadership in different people, we have to admit that the real picture of a prophetic leader in its perfect form is found only in Jesus.

Activity 2

Read the word of God given below in different groups and present in the class the good qualities found in Jesus. Each group can choose a particular evangelist for discussion.

| Matt. | Mark | Luke | John |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 5:13-16 | 1:35 | 4:14 | 10:1-18 |
| 5:38-42 | 6:34 | 4:18-19 | 13:14 |
| 10:1-4 | 8:34 | 6:11 | 17:21-23 |
| 18:10-14 | 10:42-45 | 6:27-36 | 20:21-23 |
| 18:15-17 | | 12:4 | 21:15-17 |
| 28:18-20 | | 13:31-32 | |
| | | 22:19-20 | |

The leadership qualities revealed in Jesus

- ♦ The mission of Jesus, the leader, is the establishment of Kingdom of God.
- ♦ This Kingdom of God is ensured by Jesus through his life and teachings, bound by universal fraternity, avowing God's paternity filled with the Holy Spirit.
- ♦ With the firm belief that he has been sent by God, in order to find out the desire of the one who has sent him, Jesus is a leader who proceeds with his work, continuously praying and fasting.
- ♦ The special attention shown to the weak, the children and the parents is never considered as a neglect of other family members. In the same way the special love that Jesus extended to the orphans, the widows, the sick, the handicapped, the sinners and the tax collectors is a special characteristic of the Kingdom of God (Luke 7:22-23).
- ♦ The policies of casting down the mighty from their thrones, lifting up the lowly, filling the hungry with good things and sending away the rich empty are all characteristics of the Kingdom of God (Luke 1:5-53). The birth of the creator of the world in the manger, the sacrifice of his own life for the others, even though he himself had restored the lives of many, the humility shown in the washing of the feet of his followers to prove that power is for service (Luke 13:14), the mercy which embraced the sinners (Luke 19:10) are the manifestations of the basic tenets of the Kingdom of God. Loving the enemies, praying and doing good for them and living in harmony and sharing are the rules of the Kingdom of God.

- ♦ To give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's is the justice of the Kingdom of God (Matthew 22:21).
- ♦ In order to fulfil His vision of the Kingdom of God, the path chosen by Jesus was the Cross (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34).
- ♦ In order to experience this Kingdom of God pivoting around Christ, always and everywhere, Jesus chose his disciples, filled them with the Holy Spirit and sent them out into the world with all his authority (John 20:21; Matthew 28:19-20).

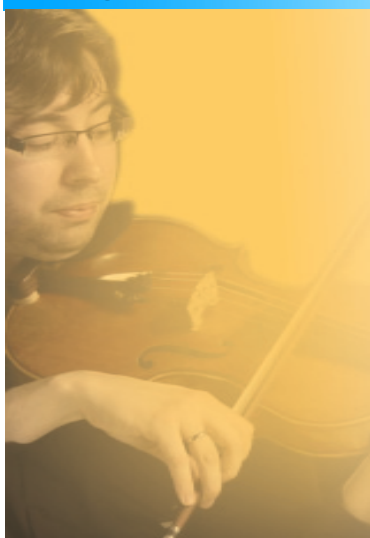
Let us find out the answer

1. Why do we say that good leaders are necessary for the society?
2. What are the good characteristics that an ideal leader should have?
3. What are the components that differentiate prophetic leadership from a normal leadership?
4. We find a true, clear and complete picture of a leader in Jesus Christ. How?

Activity 3

The teacher and students interview BCC unit leaders and leaders of various associations to learn the necessity of involving in the activities of the parish and society as a team.

Song



To do good and to sacrifice
 The leaders should be ready always
 Instead of gaining, the leaders should
 Be willing to give always.
 Leaders should always be yearning for
 The success of their brethren
 So also telling truth boldly
 Should be the mark of the true leader.
 To spread the message of kindness and mercy,
 The leaders should give instruction
 To do service, the example of Jesus
 Can be followed by the leaders.

4

SEXUALITY: GIFT AND RESPONSIBILITY



Introductory activity

Fire is good. However, if it is not dealt with carefully it can turn everything to ashes. We cannot live without water. But even a bucket of water can suffocate and kill a small child. In the same way sexuality, a God-given gift is good. But if it is not handled carefully, it can usher in danger.

Divide the class into different groups and discuss the dangers involved if this God-given gift is handled irresponsibly.

Today, we have a situation where the topic of sexuality is discussed openly unlike in the earlier times, when it was considered taboo. Under these circumstances it is highly necessary to understand the real meaning and aim of sexuality.

Sex is a great gift of God to human beings right from the time of creation. Therefore, it can be considered as influencing all the aspects of life. The existence of human being is meaningless without sexuality. Sexuality has influence over the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual life of human beings.

Human being: male and female

“God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27). This difference, which has been there from the beginning and will remain till the end, is complementary. That is, they have been created as per God’s wishes. On the one hand, as individuals they are equal; on the other hand, they are man and woman in their respective existences. Man and woman are owners of irremovable identical nobility. This nobility is gained directly from God, the creator. Man and woman reflect God’s knowledge and goodness.

Complementarity

When we look at the world around us, we find that not only human beings, but all living creatures are created with this gender difference. It is with the intention of reproduction. The aim of the creation of man and woman is realised in the close and deep relationship and



sharing. For example, let us take into consideration the position of the two wings of the birds. In the place of the left wing there has to be the left wing and in the right, the right wing. In practice both serve the same purpose. When both wings perform together the bird is able to fly and become perfect. In the same way because man and woman are complementary, they have to unite together to become one perfect entity. The movement towards this is evident in every aspect of their lives. The words from the Holy Bible, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner” (Gen. 2:18), proves that man and woman are destined to become one perfect being through this union.

Sexuality: God’s gift

From the fact that God created man and woman it is evident that they must live together in love. Through God’s gift of sexuality they give birth to children and participate in God’s process of creation.

There are three purposes of sexuality:

- 1. From the time of marriage man and woman have to grow in nuptial love.**
- 2. To give birth to children through nuptial relationship**
- 3. The partners become source of happiness to each other**

God has designed sexuality in such a way as to achieve the above mentioned purposes. Therefore, sexuality is good and holy. In the light of all this we understand that sexuality is the totality of all good instincts and enjoyment, to love God selflessly and to give birth to the next generation.

The perspective of the Second Vatican Council on sexuality is explained in the following words: “By their very nature, the institution of matrimony itself and conjugal love are ordained for the procreation and education of children and find in them their ultimate crown. Thus a man and a woman, who by the marriage covenant of conjugal love ‘are no

longer two, but one flesh,’ render mutual help and service to each other through an intimate union of their persons and of their actions” (Church in the Modern World, 49). Therefore, sexuality is the origin of a meaningful and pleasant experience. The depth of the great gift of God can be realized responsibly only in marriage.

Sexual Act: Gift and Responsibility

We understand that humanity, consisting of man and woman, is blessed by God with sexuality. By their divine union, a new life is generated. Thus, their pure love, combined with sexual love, results in gaining the form of flesh. This flesh then gains life. This is the will of God; the greatness of creation. The man and woman, who become one through marriage, are presented with God’s gift in the form of children. God reminds the humanity about the purpose and greatness of marriage through the gift of children. As the children are the gifts of God, the wedded couple is bound to bring up their children according to will of God; therefore, they have to be good role models for their children.



The importance of purity

Purity is associated with the goal and responsibility of sexuality. We have read the life history of St. Maria Goretti. In order to preserve the purity of her body, because of her love of God, Maria Goretti had sacrificed her life. In today’s world of finding pleasure in obscenity, we have to safeguard the glory of purity even at the cost of sacrificing our lives like Maria Goretti rather than losing our lives, living in sin.

Purity entitles the attitude of utilizing the sexual ability solely to the purpose prescribed by God. Sexuality, which is the expression of marital

love, when used as a method of satisfying one's carnal pleasure alone, becomes a sin.

Purity also implies curbing of one's lustful desires; it involves utilizing human freedom in the right way. Thus "purity" helps us to control our desires and to indulge in ideal human relationships.

We, Christians, have pledged our lives and souls to God through Baptism. Through this sacrament we become the temples of the Holy Spirit and the parts of the body of Christ.

"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God and that you are not your own?" (1 Corinthians 6:19).

"Anyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:28).

The best method to retain purity is to surrender ourselves to the Holy Spirit. Christians are clothed with Christ, the perfect example of purity (Galatians 3:27). Therefore, all Christians are called to lead a life of chastity according to their vocation.

Sexual Evils

We understand that sexuality is an intrinsic component of the human self and therefore it is our duty to use it in the proper way. When we overlook God's designs in sexuality, we fall into sexual sin. This creates anarchy in the society. Forgetting the presence of divine grace, humanity degenerates into a lower level.



Moreover, we understand sexuality is intended to fill the married couples with divine love, which they transmit in marital union and thus

partake in the act of creation. However, today we receive reports of sexual abuse and wrong understanding about the meaning of sexuality. Watching obscene scenes in television channels, films, internet, mobile phone, etc. have led the youth away from the right path. This inappropriate behaviour is the result of failure to understand the fact that human body is sacred and it has to be kept pure. In other words, human body is not just another consumer commodity.

The sexual sins, detrimental to human dignity, prevalent in the society are given below:

1. Lust

The excessive longing for sensual pleasure or uncontrolled enjoyment of it is known as lust. When the sensual enjoyment is distanced from marital love and reproduction – the ultimate aim of sexuality – it becomes morally irregular.

2. Masturbation

This is a process of artificially creating sexual arousal. When it is thus achieved, without the aim of reproduction, it is against the natural process. Divine sensuality is a process involving the natural outcome of love between the couple – total surrender of one partner to the other and consequent production of progeny. This is absent in masturbation.

3. Pre-marital Sex

The sexual relationship between two partners who are not married to each other is known as illicit affair. This is against the interests of Divine design, individual nobility, natural married life and reproduction and education of children.

4. Vulgarity

The purposeful exhibition of real or imaginary sexual acts before individuals other than one's married partner is known as the art of obscenity or vulgarity.

5. Adultery

The sexual relationship between man and woman outside of their marriage is known as adultery. This ruins the nobility of the individual because sexual act deteriorates to the level of an instrument for sexual satisfaction. The purity of the individual promised at the time of baptism is broken and consequently the dwelling of the Holy Spirit is maligned.

6. Rape

The violation of one's sexuality by force is violation of one's justice and love. This hurts profoundly an individual's right to self respect, liberty, mental and physical integrity or completeness.

7. Homosexuality

The sexual attraction towards one's own sex, known as homosexuality, is against the natural human instinct and heinous in the eyes of God. This prevents the mutual dedication in marital love and ensuing production of children. When the libido is used against the natural instincts, the final goal of sex is hindered.

8. Extra Marital Sex

The sixth commandment teaches that to have sexual relations outside marriage is adultery. In the sexual act within marriage a person surrenders himself or herself to the partner wholeheartedly. It is not possible to have this total surrender outside marriage. Therefore, such an act is great deception and sin.

The above mentioned evils lead the people into the most heinous downfall. Therefore, we are called to fight against them.

The apostle St. Paul reminds us: "Therefore take up the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist and put on the breastplate of righteousness. As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:13-17).

Understanding the meaning of these words let us fight against evil and lead a virtuous life.

Some short cuts to overcome sexual evils

- ♦ Constant prayer
- ♦ Active participation in the sacraments
- ♦ Habit of good reading
- ♦ Proper sense of purpose
- ♦ Good habits
- ♦ Good friends
- ♦ Proper utilization of time

The Church teaches about sexual morality in the light of Jesus' teachings. The studies about sexuality projected by Church based on the gospel truth, help to us discover the real glory of the individuals and thereby, to lead them to



freedom. Real sexual freedom occurs when the emotions are not suppressed but directed to real love. Persons, who experience such freedom, involve completely in working for the welfare of the society. The mark of a true Christian believer should be that of Christ, who hated sin but loved the sinner. Sexuality is both God-given gift and our great responsibility to God. Like Christ, let us lead a life of selfless love and righteousness.

Let us find answers to the following questions

1. What is sexuality?
2. How does it become a God-given gift?
3. What are the areas of sexual misuse?
4. What is the significance of purity?
5. How can we overcome sexual evils?

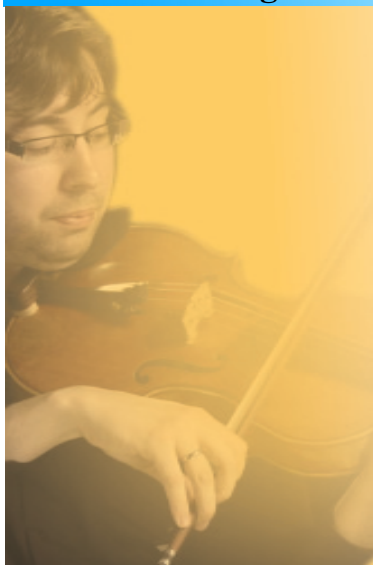
Activity

Based on the following words of God, discuss the sexual evils present in society today and report the same.

“It is what comes out of a person that defiles. For it is from within, from the human heart that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within and they defile a person (Mark 7:20-23). “Therefore, do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions” (Romans 6:12).

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body” (1 Corinthians 6:18-20).

Song



The mortal body on this earth
Is the temple of the Holy Spirit.
There should be conscious effort
To preserve its sanctity till the end of life.
We should consider it noble
Upholding its purity
Remember the martyrs, who
Sacrificed lives in pursuit of purity.
Behold and listen to good
Contemplate on purity of life
Have only God in your thoughts
And remain as noble citizens.



5

YOUTH AND DIVINE WORSHIP

Introductory Activity

Human beings normally believe in God and pay homage to him. We, Christian, take part in the liturgical services as a community. In which way are our liturgical services different from the liturgical services of other religions? Discuss and report.

Ancient people looked up to the forces of nature with awe and admiration. This instigated them to adore the natural forces as gods and to win favour from them. As a result birds, animals and agricultural produce were sacrificed to these gods.

Based on different methods of worship, various religions were formed. The central element of the religions was sacrifice. Through adoration and sacrifice people imbibed God experience. The adoration of God aims at the appeasement of God, remission of sins and thanksgiving for grant of favours.

The organized religions, which were formed in the course of time, had Creed, Code, Cult and Community.

The Old Testament repeatedly insists that people should worship God: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” (Deuteronomy 6:5). “It is written: Worship the Lord your God and serve him only” ((Luke 4:8). Creed and Code result in the society only through worshipping God.

Christian worship

The humanity was delivered from the eternal damnation, brought about by the original sin, through the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Church, the body of Christ, through its worship celebrates the passion, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. Christian worship is the celebration, experience and the proclamation of the Paschal Mystery in the Church. The Church celebrates, experiences and proclaims the Paschal Mystery so that those who believe in Christ may receive life and bear witness to Christ in the world.

Liturgy - the act of the Holy Trinity

In the Church of Christ worship of God is the act of the Trinity.

- ♦ God the Father is the origin and goal of liturgy.
- ♦ The worship is possible through the glorified Christ.

- ♦ Liturgy is the holy and purifying act of the Church done with the help of the Holy Spirit.

The liturgy helps members of the Church to partake in the life and union of Holy Trinity, to live as one community and to bear witness to Christ. Through liturgy the Christ's believers are enabled to imbibe and manifest the Paschal Mystery and the true nature of Church.

Fruits of worship

- ♦ Renewal of the soul
- ♦ Participation in the mission of the Church
- ♦ Service for the unity of the Church

Liturgy

The word liturgy comes from the Greek word "Leiturgia." It means either "a common activity" or "a service in the name of or for people." In Christian tradition it is described as people's participation in God's activity. Therefore, liturgy is not a private action. It is a celebration of God's people in the Church united and formed under the authority of bishop.

As an act of Christ, liturgy is also the activity of his Church. The Church functions as the image of Christ, the sole "Leitourgos" (Minister). Through liturgy Christ our saviour and chief priest continues the process of salvation in the Church, with the Church and through the Church. The Holy Eucharist, other sacraments, the liturgical year, the sacramentals, prayers of the Church, etc., are part of the liturgy.

Liturgy is not only the worship of God and the proclamation of the word of God; it is also the service to God and neighbour. Through the participation in the liturgy, the children of God participate in the prophetic (proclamation), royal (mutual service) and priestly ministry of Christ. Moreover, the liturgy is foretaste of heavenly banquet.

Signs and symbols of liturgy

God communicates with people through natural signs. For that matter, light, darkness, air, fire, water, sand, trees, crop, etc., speak to people about God. They also reveal the glory of God.

Children of God respond to God through the symbols, actions and prayers in the celebration of the sacraments. This is made possible by the sacramental signs given by Christ himself.

Seasons of liturgy

The liturgical year begins with the first Sunday of preparation for Christmas, the first coming of Christ. This begins with the first evening prayers on November 30th or the Sunday following it. The last Sunday of the liturgical calendar indicates the second coming of Christ as the judge. With the feast of Christ the King the liturgical year comes to an end. In short, the period between the two ‘comings’ of Christ constitute the liturgical calendar.

For the celebration of the Paschal Mystery there are six main seasons in the Church:

1. Advent
2. Christmastide
3. Lent
4. Paschal Triduum
5. Eastertide
6. Ordinary Time

Advent

Advent begins from the last week of November or the Sunday following it and it continues till Christmas Eve. This is the time of awaiting the birth of child Jesus. There are four Sundays in this period. It is the remembrance of Son of God coming into the midst of humanity for the first time. Through Advent the Church also invites the believers to Christ’s second coming at the end of the world.

Christmastide

Days from Christmas to Epiphany is known as Christmastide. This period occupies the second important position in the liturgical calendar. Many important feasts fall during this period: Holy Family, St. Stephen, the first martyr, St. John, the Apostle, the holy innocents and Mary, Mother of God. The Baptism of Jesus, which falls on the Sunday after 6th January, is also celebrated during this liturgical period.



Lent

Lent starts on Ash Wednesday and continues till the Eucharistic celebration at Maundy Thursday. It is a period of preparation for the celebration of Jesus' passion. We observe this period bringing to mind forty days of Jesus' preparation in prayer and fasting in the desert before his public ministry. Therefore, prayer, fasting and alms giving are characteristics of this period. The days of preparation in fasting for the celebration of our Lord's Passion is commonly known as Lent. In short, season of Lent consists of forty days of fasting, prayer and penitence beginning at Ash Wednesday and concludes at sundown on Holy Thursday.

Paschal Triduum

The "Great Three Days" celebration, beginning with the Eucharistic celebration of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, continuing with the celebration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday and concluding with the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday is known as Paschal Triduum. In the liturgical calendar, this is the most important period. The central point of this celebration and remembrance is the redemption of humanity brought through the Paschal Mystery: Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ.

Eastertide

This period of the liturgical year consists of fifty days starting from Easter and ending at Pentecost. Just like the apostles waited with mother Mary after the resurrection of Christ for the arrival of the Holy Spirit the Church awaits happily these fifty days for the arrival of the Holy Spirit. There are seven Sundays during this period. These Sundays are known as resurrection Sundays. The fifty days of the Pentecost end with the Pentecost Sunday.



Ordinary Time

Ordinary Time refers to all those parts of the liturgical year that aren't included in the major seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter. Ordinary Time encompasses two different periods in the Church's calendar. First period of Ordinary Time begins on the Monday after the first Sunday after January 6 and ends on Ash Wednesday. Second period of Ordinary Time begins on the Monday after Pentecost Sunday and ends on Saturday before the first Sunday of Advent. There are about thirty three or thirty four Sundays in this period.

The colours of the liturgical calendar

The sense of sight, including colour, plays an important role in Catholic worship. The colours used at different liturgical celebrations help the faithful to know that certain celebrations are at hand.

White colour

White symbolizes light, innocence, purity, joy, triumph and glory. The Altar cloths and chasuble will be in white colour for the following liturgical celebrations: Season of Christmas, Easter Season, Feasts of the Lord (other than of His passion), Feasts of Mary, the angels and saints, who are not martyrs, All Saints (1 November), Feasts of the Apostles and Nuptial Masses.

Red colour

Red represents the Passion, blood, fire, God's love and martyrdom. Red colour is used for liturgical services on Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Feasts of Lord's Passion, Pentecost and Feasts of the martyrs.

Green colour

Green colour, the colour of nature, soothes the eyes and is the symbol of hope. This colour also represents the Church awaiting the second coming of Christ. On all ordinary days, green colour vestments are used to denote the awaiting of Christ's second coming.

Violet colour

Violet is the symbol of penance and humility. Violet colour vestments are used during Lent and Advent and for the funeral services.

Rose colour

Rose colour symbolizes joy. This colour is used on the third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday) and on the fourth Sunday of Lent (Laetare Sunday).

Gold colour

Gold colour also represents joy. It is used on special feast days. Gold colour is usually used instead of white vestments.

Sacred articles on the altar

Chalice

The meaning of chalice is cup. It holds the wine for the Holy Mass. We traditionally use chalice for Holy Mass because Christ used it while instituting Holy Eucharist at the last supper. This is the most important vessel used at the altar.



Ciborium

Ciborium is a covered container used to hold the consecrated small Hosts. It is similar to a chalice but covered ad larger, used for small Communion hosts of the faithful.



Paten



It is a small plate upon which the big host for consecration is kept.

Corporal

It is a square piece of linen in white colour. It is spread out on the altar and the chalice, ciborium and paten are placed upon it.



Purificator



Purificator is a small piece of white linen, marked with a cross in the centre, used by the priest in the celebration of Mass. It is folded in three layers and used by the priest to purify his fingers and the chalice and paten after Holy Communion.

Monstrance

The monstrance is the sacred vessel which contains the consecrated Host when exposed or carried in procession.



Thurible

Thurible is a vessel in which incense is burned at liturgical services. It consists of a cup-shaped metal body for holding charcoal and incense, with a separate lid for controlling the smoke and fire and chains, allowing the vessel to swing safely without spilling its contents.

Cruets

Cruets are two small bottles to contain water and wine used for the Consecration of the Mass. They are presented as offerings of the faithful at the Offertory.



Pall

Pall is a sacred covering. It is a stiff square cardboard, spread over the top of the chalice at the Mass.



Pyx



Pyx is a metal box in which the Blessed Sacrament is carried for the sick.

Sprinkler

Sprinkler or aspergillum is a sacred vessel used to sprinkle holy water.



Bells

Big bells are used to announce the time of the various services in the church, to denote the important liturgical services and to exhort the people to pray at different times. Small bells are used inside the church to attract the attention of the faithful at important events of liturgical celebration.



Sacred places and articles inside the church

Altar

The altar, on which the Holy Mass is offered, occupies central portion of the church. It is the dining table of Jesus Christ. The People of God are invited to this table. The altar is also the cross of Christ. The sacraments of Paschal Mystery arise from the altar. From this central part of the church, the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross is presented through symbols of sacraments.

Ambo

Ambo or pulpit is an elevated stand for reading the word of God and preaching. The glory of the word of God demands a prominent place in the church to attract the attention of the entire gathering.

Crucifix

The crucifix is a cross with the figure of the body of Jesus Christ attached to it. It is placed above the altar where the Eucharist is celebrated. Thus the faithful understand that the sacrifice offered on the altar and the sacrifice on the cross are one and the same.

Tabernacle

Tabernacle is a holy case for the exclusive reservation of the Blessed Sacrament. It has to be fixed in a very ideal place inside the church. The honour, position and safety of the tabernacle promote the real presence of Christ in the church.

Presidential Chair

Bishop's Cathedra or priest's chair has to be placed in a befitting place in the church. It manifests priest's presidential position among the assembly of faithful and his mission of leading the prayers.

Confessional

Christian life always demands renewal, which takes place through the reception of sacrament of confession. Therefore, confessionals has to be placed in appropriate places to receive the penitents.

Baptistery /Baptismal Font

The assembly of the People of God begins with Baptism. Therefore there should be Baptistery or Baptismal Font inside the church for the celebration of Baptism.

The Church

The church is the place where the Holy Eucharist is celebrated and preserved and believers assemble to offer prayers. In the Church the assembled faithful experience the presence of Christ, who was sacrificed for the help and solace of the believers. This abode of God should, therefore, be suitable for holy rites. It should exude the presence of God.

Sacred articles used for the celebration of Holy Eucharist

Water, wine, host, incense, ointment for anointing, candles, ash, etc., are the other important objects used on the altar. All these are used symbolically in the church services.

Liturgical Books

Missal

Missal is the book containing the prescribed prayers, chants and instructions for the celebration of the Holy Mass in the Church. It was prepared and used in the Roman/ Latin Church for the first time in 1570 during the time of Pope Pius V. Missal represents the mode of prayers used by the Roman/Latin Church.

Lectionary

The Lectionary (book of lessons) is the collection of Scripture readings for the Holy Mass. According to the liturgical calendar the readings for each day are compiled in the Lectionary. Lectionary contains three different types of readings: Sundays, Feast days and Week days. The readings for Sundays are arranged in A, B and C cycles. If A cycle is read 2017, in 2018 and 2019 B and C are read. In A cycle Gospel reading is mainly from Matthew, in B and C it is from Mark and Luke respectively. The Gospel according to John is read on some Sundays of the liturgical year.

On week days there are two readings, one from Gospel and the other from Old Testament or Epistles. The week day readings are organized in a manner that the major part of the Bible is read and heard by the people in two years.

On Sundays and Feast days one reading each from the Gospel, Epistle and Old Testament are read.

In the Latin rite there are seven books for reading. The three books, classified under the names A, B and C, are used on Sundays and Feast days. The rest are the following:

Lectionary L I, L II include the readings for Advent, Christmastide, Lent and Eastertide.

Lectionary L III contains the readings of week days for 1 to 17 Ordinary Weeks.

Lectionary L IV: has the readings of week days for 18 to 34 Ordinary weeks.

Symbols in the Eucharist

Bowing in front of the Tabernacle, kissing the altar, incensing the altar, incensing the priest, sign of the cross before Gospel reading, kissing the Gospel, adding of water in the wine, washing of the hand after offertory and mixing a part of the big host in the wine are all symbols in the Holy Mass.

Offertory rite

The Eucharistic rites, consisting of thanksgiving prayers and consecration rite, is the heart of the Holy Mass. The entire Church offers thanks for the glorious works of God (creation, redemption and sanctification) revealed to humanity through Jesus Christ. Preparing the articles for offertory, offertory prayer, Eucharistic prayer, preface, Epiclesis, consecration words, Lord's Prayer, sign of peace and receiving of the Holy Communion are the parts of the Eucharistic rites.

We are called to be living witnesses of Christ by personally experiencing Christ our Saviour in the liturgical celebration. We find in the Gospels Jesus going to the temple and synagogues for worship and prayer. Exhorting us to worship God in spirit and truth, Jesus instituted the sacraments. The liturgical celebration, therefore, is the manifestation of worshipping God in spirit and truth.

Let us find out the answers

1. What are the characteristics of liturgy until Old Testament time?
2. Why is it said that liturgy is the act of the Trinity?
3. What do you mean by Liturgy?
4. What are the seasons of the Liturgy?
5. What is Easter Triduum?

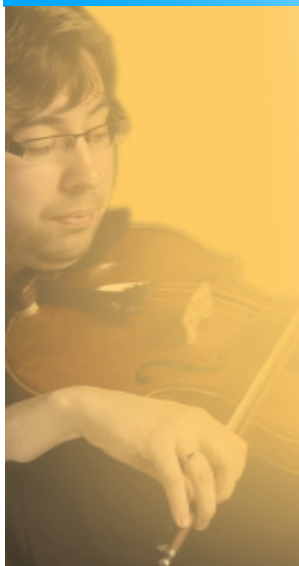
Activity 2

In the light of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles find out the situations of liturgical participation of Jesus, Apostles and the Early Church.

Sacred vestments



Song



Redemption, in the Paschal Mystery
 We should celebrate
 For, when we proclaim it, we do
 Worship, worship of Christ!
 The death of Christ and his resurrection
 Brought to humanity
 Redemption from eternal ruin
 Caused by the original sin.
 When we participate in the worship
 We become witnesses of Christ
 And rid of sins, we become
 Achievers of Eternal Life.



6 YOUTH AND SACRAMENTAL LIFE

Introductory activity

When St. Pius X visited his mother soon after he became bishop (before becoming Pope) he proudly showed his ‘ring of seal’ to her. She then proudly raised her hand, having the wedding ring, and declared: “Son, if I had not worn this, you would not have got that ring.” We attribute more importance to the rings worn at wedding and at the ascent to ecclesiastical positions than to other rings.

In the same way, when a flower from a beautiful garden is plucked and offered to a friend on birthday it assumes deeper meaning than any other flower.

What are the connotations that we attribute to the above mentioned symbols? Discuss and report also various symbols and signs we use in everyday life and sacramental life and bring out their significance.

God created the universe in such a way that the human beings can easily understand the signs of the creator in it. Darkness and light, air and fire, water and sand, tree and fruit, speak about God; they testify the glory and presence of God (CCC # 1147). This picturesque reality thus expresses the action of God who sanctifies humans and the action of humans who offer worship to God (CCC # 1148). In short, God communicates with us through this visible, created world.

In order to communicate with others, language, gestures and actions alone will not suffice; we need signs and symbols as well. This is essential in our communication with God also.

Signs

Signs can be divided into two: natural signs and assigned signs.

Natural signs are those which have normal association with reality; example, the natural sign of fire is smoke.

Assigned signs are those for which human person assigns connection; example, the national flag.

Signs and symbols

There are differences between signs and symbols. All symbols are signs while all signs need not be symbols.

Signs: direction boards and signal lights are signs.

Symbols: the blindfolded lady carrying the weighing scales is the symbol of justice to be imparted without bias. In the same way, the dove with olive leaf in its beak represents peace.

Sacramental signs

- ◆ The sacramental celebration is filled with signs and symbols.
- ◆ Their meanings are rooted in creation and human culture.
- ◆ They are based on incidents in the Old Testament and revealed completely through Christ and his acts in the New Testament.

- ◆ The symbols of the sacraments in the New Testament can be found in the practices described in the Old Testament. For example, circumcision, the submission and anointing of the kings and priests, 'laying on of hands' for service (blessing), sacrifices and above all, the Passover.
- ◆ The sacraments are instituted by Christ. Moreover, the sacraments of the New Testament fulfill the symbols and images of the Old Testament.
- ◆ Natural signs denote the reality. But sacramental signs indicate reality and its proximity.

From the Gospels we learn that during the preaching of Kingdom of God, Jesus made use of signs and symbols to cure sicknesses. For example in John 9:6-7 we read:

“When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, saying to him, ‘Go, wash in the pool of Siloam’ (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see.”

After his resurrection, Christ continued his sanctifying act through sacraments in the early church that was formed after Pentecost.

The Church, through the sacramental celebration, does not annihilate the wealth of signs in the society and the universe; in fact, the Church purifies and completes them.

The word “Sacrament”

Understanding the origin of the word “sacrament” will help us to perceive its working and effect.

The word “sacrament” originates from the Hebrew word “*kadash*.” The meaning of the word is ‘cut off.’ This term denotes the process of removing or cutting off evil to purify someone or something.

In the Acadian language, we find the word, “*kudashoo*” which means ‘to shine’ or ‘to enlighten.’ The sacrament removes the darkness of evil in the individual to shed light. This is, in fact, the aim of sacrament.

Greek word “*mysterion*” is another word used for ‘sacrament.’ This term means ‘something that is revealed.’ The reality contained in the sacrament is revealed to us through the rites it involves.

The English word sacrament is derived from the Latin word ‘*sacramentum*.’ Meaning of this term is to ‘purify’ or ‘make sacred.’ To purify not only means to remove dirt, but also to make complete. In other words, through the reception of sacraments an individual rises to purity and completeness.

Sacraments: definition

Sacraments are protecting signs. They separate us from evil forces, giving us perfection and blessedness, revealing the divine truth and enlightening us in Christ.

Sacraments are visible signs of invisible grace, instituted by Christ, to help individuals in their spiritual life and to grow in holiness.

“Sacrament is a sign that commemorates what precedes it - Christ’s Passion; demonstrates what is accomplished in us through Christ’s Passion - grace; and prefigures what that Passion pledges to us - future glory” (St. Thomas Aquinas).

The efficacy of sacraments

Working of the Holy Spirit

Just like fire consumes everything that it comes into contact with and transforms them into ashes, the Holy Spirit transforms everything that comes into contact with it into divine.

As St. Thomas Aquinas teaches, sacrament does not work according to the ethics of the priest or the recipient, but it works by the power of God. Sacraments work by their administering (*ex opera operato*),

that is, they work because of the fact that they are being performed. However, the efficacy of the sacrament depends upon the mindset of the recipient.

The Church affirms that all the sacraments of the new covenant are essential for salvation. The sacramental grace are given by Christ and the grace received through each sacrament is the blessing of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit transforms the recipients of the sacraments into Christ like persons and unite them with him and make them participants of divine grace. This is the effect of the sacraments.

The working of faith

Faith is a very important aspect in the administering and reception of the sacraments. The sacraments have to administered and received with due faith and prayer. When the sacraments are administered, the Church reaffirms the faith received from the apostles. That is why we have the following saying: “The law of praying is the law of believing” (Lex orandi, Lex credendi) or “Let the law of prayer determine the law of belief” (Legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi).

The goal of the sacraments

The sacrament aims at purifying human persons, building up the Body of Christ, the Church and to offer worship to God.

Each sacrament imparts special blessing to the faithful. On special occasions in the life of an individual, different sacraments bestow special blessings that are necessary.

Division of the Sacraments

According to the blessing received the sacraments are divided into three:

Initial Sacraments

The basic sacraments of Christian life, namely, **Baptism**, **Confirmation** and **The Eucharist** (Holy Communion) are called Initial Sacraments.

The followers of Christ gain rebirth through Baptism, get strengthened by Confirmation and are enriched in their everyday life by the Holy Communion.

Each one of the initial sacraments connects us with the Holy Trinity in a special way.

- ♦ Through Baptism we are reborn as the children of God the Father.
- ♦ Through Confirmation we are raised to a mature Christian life by God the Holy Spirit.
- ♦ Through the Eucharist (Holy Communion) God the Son enriches us daily to become partakers of divine life.

Sacraments of Healing

Confession (Reconciliation) and the Anointing of the Sick are called sacraments of healing. We hold God's grace in our mortal bodies like the treasure in earthen vessel. There is every possibility that the God given benefits can be weakened and destroyed. The healing sacraments help us to preserve God's grace. Therefore, the healing sacraments are instituted by Christ to free us from sins and diseases.

Sacraments fostering ministry of communion

The Holy Orders and Matrimony can be called sacraments forstering communion. Even though these two sacraments help one to attain personal salvation, they are meant mainly for the salvation of others. Those who receive these sacraments are called to serve for the sanctification of the humanity and for spreading the Word of God.

Those who receive the Holy Orders are ordained to lead the Church in the name of Christ through the Word and grace.

Christian couples are strengthened and established to perform the duties of marital life and to preserve the sanctity of matrimony.

Sacramental life

We are bound to form our lives on the basis of graces showered on us by God through the sacraments and to become living witnesses of Christ.

We understand from the table given below the different stages in the life of a believer who receives the sacraments. It also presents the transformation taking place in us through the sacraments.

| Important situations in human life | Sacraments | Transformation in divine life |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Birth | Baptism | Rebirth in Christ |
| Maturing | Confirmation | Maturing to be witness of Christ |
| Nourishment (food + knowledge) | The Eucharist | Becoming divine by receiving the body and blood of Christ |
| Treatment | Confession | Being freed from sin become united with God and brethren |
| Rest | Anointing of the sick | Healing from sickness and gaining physical and spiritual health in communion with the Church |
| Duty Responsibility | Holy Orders Matrimony | Taking on the responsibility to serve society (Parish, Family) |

Examine the table below to find out the sacraments, the symbols, performers, prayers and effects.

| Sacrament | Signs | Minister | Religious rite | Effects |
|---------------|----------------|--|---|---|
| Baptism | Water | Bishop, priest, deacon, in certain circumstances any individual, even those who are not baptized can give baptism in the name of the Trinity | Pouring water thrice on the head of the aspirant, the priest says: “(name), I baptize you in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit” | Receives deliverance from the original sins; become the adopted children of God, member of Christ’s body, the Church and the temple of the Holy Spirit; receives indelible mark on the soul. |
| Confirmation | Holy Oil | Bishop, in dire circumstances a priest delegated by the Bishop | Saying the following words, “Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit” the candidate is anointed | Indelible mark on the soul, eligibility to call God ‘Father’, deeper union with Christ, increase in the graces of the Holy Spirit, complete relationship with the Church, grace to become strong witness of Christ. |
| The Eucharist | Bread and wine | Bishop, priest | The words of institution of the Eucharist: “Take this, all of you and eat of it, for this is my body, which will be given up for you.” “Take this, all of you and drink from it, for this is the chalice of my blood, the blood of the new and eternal covenant, which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in memory of me.” | Deeper union with Christ as a result of the reception of the body and blood of Christ, forgiveness of sins, protection from mortal sins, strong communion among the members of the Church, foretaste of heavenly bliss. |

| Sacrament | Signs | Minister | Religious rite | Effects |
|-----------------------|--|----------------|---|--|
| Reconciliation | Confession of sins | Bishop, priest | God, the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son has reconciled the world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit | Reconciliation with God; restoration of God's grace; reconciliation with the Church; reducing of temporal punishment for sins; peace and serenity of conscience with strong spiritual consolation; restoration of the dignity and blessings of the life of the children of God |
| Anointing of the Sick | Prayer with laying of hands and anointing of the forehead and arms | Bishop, priest | Through this holy anointing, may the Lord in his mercy and love, with the grace of the Holy Spirit, may the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up | By the grace of this sacrament the sick person receives the strength and the gift of uniting oneself more closely to Christ's Passion: the sick person is consecrated to bear fruit by configuration to Saviour's redemptive Passion |

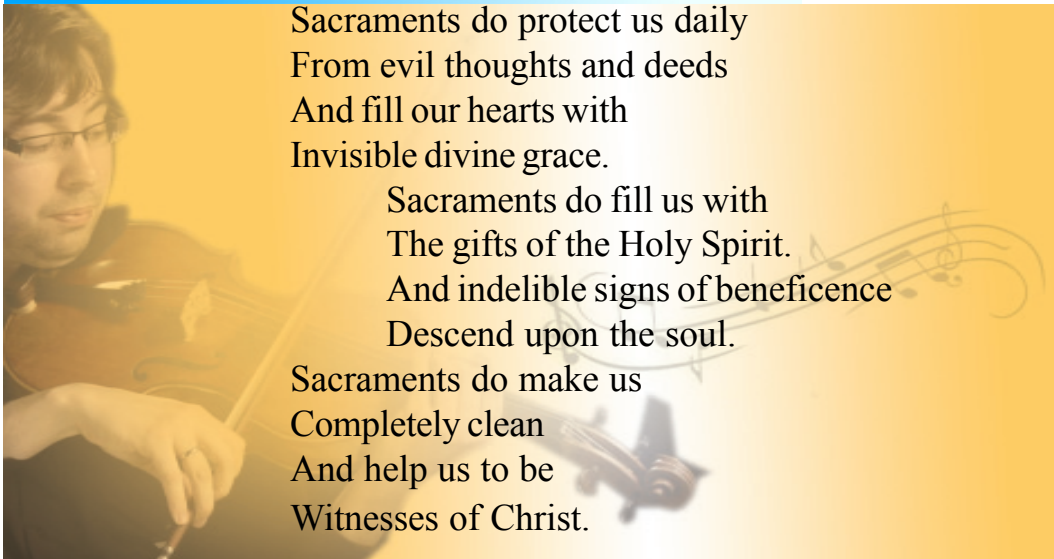
| Sacrament | Signs | Minister | Religious rite | Effects |
|-------------|--|----------------------|---|---|
| Holy Orders | Laying of the hands on the head of the candidate by the Bishop | Bishop | Prayer of consecration to shower blessings of the Holy Spirit for the priestly ministry | Indelible mark of the Holy Spirit; by the grace of the Holy Spirit participation in the priestly, prophetic and shepherding mission of Christ, the Master and Shepherd |
| Matrimony | Mutual consent | Bride and bridegroom | I take you as my lawful wife/husband. From this moment till death parts us, I promise to live with you in happiness and in sorrow, in wealth and in poverty, in health and in sickness, faithfully, in love and respect | The approval mark of God for the mutual consent of the couple; the blessing for the fulfillment of their inseparable love; grace to gain purity in marital life; reception and training of children |

We understand now how much desirable it is to receive sacraments and experience their effects. Therefore, the youth are invited to receive faithfully the sacraments instituted by Christ and thus grow in purity and become witnesses of Christ and thereby attain salvation.

Let us find out the answers

1. What are the sacramental signs? How are they different from other signs?
2. How are the sacraments divided? What is the basis of the division?
3. Describe how sacraments are associated with the different stages in the life of a believer.
4. Why are the sacraments of Holy Orders and Matrimony called the sacraments for fostering communion?
5. Describe the ministers, signs and effects of the sacraments of Confirmation, Holy Orders and Matrimony.

Song



Sacraments do protect us daily
 From evil thoughts and deeds
 And fill our hearts with
 Invisible divine grace.

Sacraments do fill us with
 The gifts of the Holy Spirit.
 And indelible signs of beneficence
 Descend upon the soul.

Sacraments do make us
 Completely clean
 And help us to be
 Witnesses of Christ.



7

YOUTH AND THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION (Baptism, Holy Eucharist, Confirmation)

Introductory activity

Das and Peter are studying in X standard. Das is a good boy. He is accustomed to help his classmates in their need. To do good in a larger level he joined a group in his parish. But Peter was not like Das. Everybody poses the question on seeing Peter: “Why does this young boy behave like this?”

But through the preparation for and reception of Confirmation Peter became a new person. He also started doing good deeds like Das.

Divide into groups to discuss what we can do to retain and enrich the graces received through the sacraments.

We are learning about the initial sacraments in Christian life namely, Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist. **Baptism** makes us the children of God the Father. **Confirmation** fills us with the special strength of God the Holy Spirit. **The Holy Eucharist** nourishes us with the body and blood of Christ, God the Son. Through this threefold experience we become partakers in the life of the Trinity for the first time. Therefore, these three sacraments are called Initial Sacraments.

Initial Sacraments: Through Christ in the Church

Jesus Christ accomplished his God-given mission by the strength of the Holy Spirit. The apostles could fulfill their mission of preaching the Good News through the reception of the Holy Spirit, promised by Christ. Christ instituted the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist in order to help the people of all times to fulfill their duty of spreading the word of God through the Church.

1. Baptism

Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life and the gate way to life in the Spirit and the door which gives access to the other sacraments.

Jesus began his public life after receiving Baptism (Matthew 3:13). There is a different dimension to the baptism of Jesus compared to our baptism. Jesus, the sinless one, received the baptism of repentance, which John the Baptist gave to sinners. Even though he was Son of God Jesus received baptism to identify with the people and to empty himself (Philippines 2:7). The Holy Spirit, which hovered over the water during the first creation, descended upon Christ at baptism as new creation. God the Father revealed Jesus as his “Beloved Son” (Matthew 3:16-17).

What is baptism?

The sacrament through which we are freed from sin, reborn as sons and daughters of God, become members of Christ, incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission is called Baptism.

Baptism in the Church

From the very day of Pentecost the Church has celebrated and administered baptism. This practice was in line with the command of risen Jesus (Matthew 28:19-20).

Peter declared to the crowd astounded by his preaching: “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him. So those who welcomed his message were baptized and that day about three thousand persons were added” (Acts 2:38-41).

Entry into the kingdom of God and infant baptism

“No one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit (John 3:5). The meaning contained in this teaching of Jesus is that everyone, including children, has to receive this sacrament of salvation. Since adults are mature enough to take decisions God expects their knowledge and concurrence to receive this sacrament. But children are incapable of expressing their consent; therefore, God does not expect that from children. In the normal life, to ensure material progress for the immature, the mature people give assurance on their behalf. Similarly, the adult parents are bound to give their assurance in the spiritual growth of their children. Therefore, the assurance of the parents and god-parents is sufficient to confer baptism to the child. As the child grows up it becomes aware of this fact. Besides, to ensure this fact of discretion, at Easter vigil the faithful hold lighted candles in their hands and renew baptismal vow and experience.

Infant baptism in the Holy Bible

- ◆ Every member of Cornelius’ family and his friends received the sacrament of baptism (Acts 10: 24-48).
- ◆ Entire family of Lydia received baptism (Acts 16:15).
- ◆ Everyone in the family of Stephen received baptism (1 Corinthians 1:16).
- ◆ “Believe in the Lord, Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household,” Paul said to the jail keeper. Immediately he and his family received baptism (Acts 16:31-33).

Thus when the entire family was baptized there is no mention of children being excluded.

- ♦ Born with a fallen human nature and tainted by original sin, children also have need of the new birth in Baptism.
- ♦ The sheer gratuitousness of the grace of salvation is particularly manifest in infant Baptism.
- ♦ The Church and the parents would deny a child the priceless grace of becoming a child of God when they do not confer Baptism shortly after birth.
- ♦ The practice of infant Baptism is an immemorial tradition of the Church. There is explicit testimony to this practice from the second century onwards. St Hippolytus of Rome, who lived in the second century, says in Apostolic Tradition: “Baptize first the children; and if they can speak for themselves, let them do so. Otherwise, let their parents or other relatives speak for them.”

Bathed in wisdom and enlightened

‘To baptize’ (Greek *baptizein*) means to ‘plunge’ or ‘immerse.’ Usually Baptism is administered by immersing the aspirant in water or by pouring water on the head. The immersion into the water symbolizes the aspirant’s burial into Christ’s death, from which he/she rises up by resurrection with Christ, as “a new creature.” This sacrament is also called “the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit.”

Having received in Baptism the Word, “the true light that enlightens every one,” the person baptized has been “enlightened,” he/she becomes a “son/daughter of light.”

The necessity of baptism

‘Siloam’ in John 9:1-7 means ‘the one who is sent.’ Jesus is the one sent by God the Father. We should be enlightened by Christ, ‘light of the world,’ sent by God.

To the one who had lived in darkness (the blind man) Jesus said to take a dip in Siloam (in the one who is sent). In other words, Jesus asked him to be washed in the one sent by God. Thus the eyes of the blind were opened. He began to see light; he began to bear witness without fear. In this incident the real light of wisdom and cleansing are quite evident. So when we receive baptism, we become enlightened in Christ and are baptized in wisdom, who is Christ himself.



The one who receives baptism is

- ◆ United with Christ's death
- ◆ Buried with Christ (Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12)
- ◆ Clothed with Christ (Galatians 3:27)
- ◆ Justified in the Holy Spirit
- ◆ Purified in the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:11; 12-13)

Through the sacrament of baptism one is

- ◆ Delivered from original sin as well as from personal sins if any
- ◆ Exempted from punishment for sins
- ◆ Born into new life
- ◆ Made adopted son or daughter of God the Father
- ◆ Made a part of body of Christ, the Son of God
- ◆ Given an inheritance in Christ
- ◆ Made the temple of the Holy Spirit
- ◆ Made the member of the Church, the body of Christ
- ◆ Called to build the Church
- ◆ Made participants in Christ's priestly, prophetic and royal missions
- ◆ Received into eternal life

The rights and duties of a baptised person

Duties

- ◆ The one who receives baptism, becoming the member of the Church belongs not to himself but to Christ, who died and rose from the dead (1 Corinthians 6:19; 2 Corinthians 5:15)
- ◆ From the time of baptism the faithful is called to serve those in the Church community, as the member of society, to obey the Church authorities, to be subservient to the Church and to be friendly and cordial to everyone.
- ◆ The faith received from God through the Church binds the recipient of baptism to proclaim that faith before others and to participate in apostolic mission of the Church.

Rights

Some of the rights of a person who receives baptism are: Receive sacraments; be nourished by the Word of God; be protected by spiritual help of the Church (*Lumen Gentium* 37).

Special note

Can we receive baptism a second time?

Baptism makes a deep indelible imprint on our spirit. It installs the recipient to Christian worship. This sacrament cannot be received again because of this permanent imprint.

Is there salvation for those who are not baptized?

Those who have not yet received the Gospel are related in various ways to the people of God. Those who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and moved by grace strive by their deeds to do God's will also attain salvation (*Lumen Gentium* 16).

Who are authorized to administer baptism?

The ordinary ministers of baptism are the bishop, priest and deacons (in Syro-Malabar Rite the Deacon is not authorized). In case of necessity, anyone, even a non-baptized person, with the required intention, can baptize, by using the Trinitarian baptismal formula. The Church finds the reason for this possibility in the universal saving will of God (CCC # 1257).

Activity 2

As a person who has received baptism, discuss how your attitude and your actions are different from those of others in the social, cultural and educational fields.

2. Holy Eucharist

The reception of the Holy Eucharist marks the completion of Christian initiation. A faithful, who is raised to the glory of royal priesthood through baptism and deeply transformed with Christ through Confirmation, partakes in the sacrifice of Christ along with the rest of the community.

The Apostles and believing community nourished by the Holy Eucharist

The Early Christian community, which was formed through the reception of baptism and the subsequent outpouring of the Holy Spirit, participated in the breaking of the bread and were nourished by the body and blood of Christ (Acts 2:42). The breaking of the bread in the early church was the primary representation of today's celebration of Holy Mass.



St. Paul says: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Corinthians 11:26). This saying convinces the believers about their part in the Holy Eucharist and the mystery of salvation it professes and the necessity to continue it till the second coming of Christ.

The memorial given in the form of bread and wine is:

- ◆ The sacrament of love
- ◆ The symbol of unity
- ◆ The relationship of universal love
- ◆ The Passover
- ◆ The source and the summit of Christian life

Jesus told the disciples: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20). The disciples did as Jesus commanded. Many received baptism from the disciples and were filled with the Holy Spirit. In the same way, those who receive the initial sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist have the experience of the Early Church. Moreover, the communion and sharing of the Early Church is a challenge to those who receive initial sacraments.

3. Confirmation

In the Old Testament the prophets (700-600 BC) announced that the Spirit of the Lord would rest on the hoped-for Messiah for his saving mission.

The descent of the Holy Spirit on Jesus at his baptism by John was the sign that according to Old Testament prophecy Jesus is the one to come, the Messiah, the Son of God.

“By the sacrament of Confirmation, the baptized are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed” (CCC # 1285).

Spirit filled life of Christ

The Old Testament prophets declared that the Spirit of the Lord would dwell in the expected messiah and the Spirit of the Lord would help him in his mission of salvation (Isaiah 11:2; 61:1; Luke 4:16-22). The Holy Spirit descending on Jesus during the baptism is a sign that Jesus is

the Messiah (Matthew 3:13-17; John 1:33-34). Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit. His whole life and his whole mission are carried out in total communion with the Holy Spirit whom the Father gives him ‘without measure.’

Spirit filled disciples and faithful

In the last days of his public life Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit – an advocate, a helper (John 16:7, 13; Luke 24:49). After the crucifixion of Jesus the disciples were frightened. But they were filled with the Holy Spirit, promised by Jesus (Acts 12:3-4). Then they began to proclaim the Gospel courageously.

The same Holy Spirit, which descended upon Jesus and the disciples, comes upon the faithful through the initial sacraments. Listen to the words of apostle Peter: “Peter standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, ‘Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams... Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved’... Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’ Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized



every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.’ And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, ‘Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.’ So those who welcomed his message were baptized and that day about three thousand persons were added. They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers (Acts 2:14-17, 21, 37-42).

Peter taught that this anointing by the Holy Spirit is the sign of the Messianic era (Acts 2:11; 2:17-18). Those who were baptized after believing in the preaching of the apostles received the gifts of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

Effects of Confirmation

- ◆ It roots us more deeply in the divine filiation which makes us cry, “Abba! Father.”
- ◆ It unites us more firmly to Christ
- ◆ It increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us
- ◆ It renders our bond with the Church more perfect
- ◆ It gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ, to confess the name of Christ boldly and never to be ashamed of the cross

Confirmation – who administers, to whom and when?

A person who receives Baptism in the Roman or Latin Rite needs to be formed in faith formation for many years. The faithful who complete their training in faith formation receive the sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Eucharist.

In the Roman or Latin Rite, the ordinary minister of Confirmation is the bishop. As the members of the church increased and the Bishop was the only person authorized to administer Confirmation the celebration of Confirmation was separated from Baptism.

Let us not forget

- ♦ Confirmation, like Baptism, imprints a spiritual or indelible character on the Christian's soul. For this reason one can receive this sacrament only once in one's life.
- ♦ The reception of Sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. Through this sacrament the baptized person become the true witness of Christ by spreading and defending the faith by word and deed.


Let us find out the answers for the following

1. What are the initial sacraments? What is the three-fold impact they produce on us?
2. What does the Holy Bible teach us about infant baptism?
3. What are the effects of the Sacrament of Confirmation?
4. Give an appreciation on the Spirit-filled life of Early Christians.
5. What role did the practice of 'breaking of the bread' play in keeping the unity of the Early Church?

Activity 3

When the Apostles and the Early Christians were filled with the Holy Spirit they became courageous and were ready to die for Christ. Read Ephesians 6:13-17 and present a report on how we can fulfill our mission, given by the Sacrament of Confirmation, even when truth, justice and love are denied.

Song



Baptism and Confirmation
 Together with the Holy Eucharist
 Make us partakers of
 The initial sacraments
 Being bathed in Christ's wisdom
 Baptism is a permanent imprint
 The gift of holy body and blood is
 Received in the Holy Eucharist
 To fulfill the mission of spreading the word
 With the help of the Holy Spirit
 Take the first step to faith
 With the strength of Confirmation



8

SACRAMENTS OF HEALING

(Confession and Anointing of the sick)

Introductory activity

Sin is primarily a crime against God. It destroys the relationship to one's own, to the universe and to his/her brothers and sisters. Discuss and report how strong the effect of evils that destroy the social relationships and family ties and propose measures to eradicate those evils.

All our sins – original sin and other personal sins – are forgiven first by the the reception of the sacrament baptism. Even though through baptism the sins are forgiven, the tendency to fall into sin is not removed. The apostle Peter reminds us: “Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in faith” (1 Peter 5:8-9). We must overcome the tendency to sin by relying daily on the grace of Jesus Christ.



Only Christ who has delivered us from darkness can break the divisions, discord, disruptions and differences of opinions, caused by sin in our relationship with God and brethren (Colossians 1:13). For, “we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (Colossians 1:14) in Jesus Christ.

Universality of sin

As in the case of the first parents, even now sin hurts human nature and severs unity. As St. Paul reminds us, we “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

In all human dealings an element of sin can be seen. No one except Christ is exempt from sin (Hebrews 4:15). The Holy Bible always reminds us of the universality of sin. “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:8-9).

During his public ministry, Jesus healed the sick and forgave the sins of the people. Jesus instituted the Sacraments of Healing – Confession and Anointing of the Sick – so that the Church can continue with the help of the Holy Spirit works of redemption through healing the sick and forgiving the sins.

Divisions caused by sin

Sin causes mainly four types of divisions

- ♦ Division in the relationship between God and human beings
- ♦ Division among human beings themselves
- ♦ Division in oneself
- ♦ Division in the relationship between human beings and universe

1. Reconciliation or Confession

Jesus calls us to conversion. This call is an essential part of the proclamation of the kingdom: “Time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15). Christ’s call to conversion continues to resound in the lives of Christians.

Conversion is a change of heart from bad state of life created by sin to God, the merciful Father. The Greek word for conversion is ‘metanoia.’ Conversion is not just an outward expression of wearing sackcloth, putting on ashes, fasting and penance. But it is a transformative or spiritual change of heart. Through conversion the sinful repentant rises to new life. Listen to the words of the psalmist: “The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise” (Psalm 51:17).

Through the parable of the prodigal son, Christ teaches us the right attitude of conversion. Look at the words of the prodigal son: “I will arise and go to my father” (Luke 15:18). Peter’s conversion after he had denied the master three times is also remarkable. Jesus’ look of infinite mercy drew tears of repentance from Peter. In order to re-establish the relationship, ruined through the denial of the master, Peter makes threefold affirmation of love for the master after the resurrection.

Through the re-establishing of broken relationships caused by sins, will we be able to bring about peace and happiness in individual life, in families and in the society. All those who create discord and division in relationships have to do works of penance to re-establish the strained relationships. Therefore, we should constantly ponder over the words of Jesus: “Leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister and then come and offer your gift” (Matthew 5:24).

Therefore, repentance is a total reorientation of our whole life. It is a return to God and to our brethren with all our heart. It entails the desire and resolution to change one's life, with hope in God's mercy and trust in the help of his grace.

Conversion

- ◆ Returning to God wholeheartedly
- ◆ Turning back from sin
- ◆ Dislike towards the evil deeds done by us and distancing from them
- ◆ Re-establishing strained relationships

Authority to absolve sins

- ◆ In Capernaum, healing a paralytic Jesus said: "Son, your sins are forgiven" (Mark 2:5).
- ◆ That only God alone can forgive our sins was the firm belief in the Old Testament (Exodus 34:7; Numbers 14:19; Psalm 99:8; 103:3).
- ◆ On the basis of this belief, when Jesus forgave sins, the lawyers questioned his authority: "Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone" (Mark 2:7).
- ◆ But to prove that the Son of God has authority to do this in this world, he says to the crippled: "I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home" (Mark 2:11).

Jesus proved that he had the authority to forgive the sins of every one. So he wished that his bride, the Church, through prayer, life and action, become the sign and instrument of forgiveness, which Jesus gained by shedding his blood on the cross.

The practice of authority to forgive sins was envisaged through apostolic mission. The risen Christ appeared to the disciples and declared: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you ... Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins

of any, they are retained” (John 20:21-23). The authority to forgive sins handed down by the apostles is still continued in the form of the sacrament of confession. The priest in the confessional forgives the sins, using this authority.

The work of the penitent

The Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, (John 1:29) instituted the sacrament of confession for all the children of the Church. This sacrament is instituted by Christ to redeem those who have fallen into sin after Baptism and lost their divine grace (divine life). Through this sacrament severed relationship with God, brethren and the univers is restored. In order to perform the sacrament fruitfully the following aspects are necessary:

Contrition

Among the penitent’s acts, contrition occupies first place. According to St. Paul, mercy of God leads one to contrition (Romans 2:4). Contrition is not just feeling guilty. Contrition is sorrow of the soul and detestation for the sins committed, together with the resolution not to sin again.



We know that the prodigal son returned to his father’s house when he became aware of his sins and repented his sins. The cause for this contrition was the love and longing of the father for his son’s return. Instead of imperfect contrition which is born of the fear of eternal damnation, we should have perfect contrition, which arises from a love by which God is loved above all else.

Imperfect contrition cannot obtain the forgiveness of grave sins. But approaching the sacrament of confession with perfect contrition one receives forgiveness of venial sins. It also obtains forgiveness of mortal sins, if the contrition includes the firm resolution to have recourse to sacramental confession as soon as possible.

We allow the saving light of God's love and compassion to enter into our hearts when we open it with the key of repentance. "I reprove and discipline those whom I love. Be earnest, therefore, and repent. Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you and you with me. To the one who conquers I will give a place with me on my throne, just as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne" (Revelation 3:19-21).

Confession of Sins

The essence of Confession is the confession of sins. After examination of the conscience the sinner should confess even the smallest sins committed.

It can be embarrassing to confess sins to another person. Therefore, many people keep themselves away from going to the sacrament of confession or they hide their sins. But as a sacrament, when we consider the necessity of confessing the sins, its resulting satisfaction, feeling being forgiven and the experience of God's love and mercy can override this embarrassment. According to the Church's command, "after having attained the age of discretion, each of the faithful is bound by an obligation faithfully to confess serious sins at least once a year" (CCC # 1457).



Example of confession

The Holy Bible gives us a few examples of confession of sins. The prodigal son who confesses his sin to his father (Luke 15:21), tax collector Zacchaeus (Luke 19:8), the tax collector who went into the temple to pray (Luke 18:13) and Peter who confessed his sins when Jesus called him (Luke 5:8) are good examples of confession of sins. What St. James reminds us of confessing our sins is worthy of consideration: "Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed" (James 5:16).

Why should we confess our sins to the priest?

As the Holy Bible attests, the authority to absolve sins was given by Jesus to the apostles. Jesus declared: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you ... If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them. If you retain the sins of any, they are retained (John 20:21-23). This power given to the apostles is handed on to the bishops and priests through the sacrament of Holy Orders.

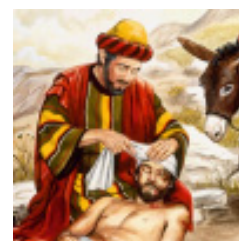
St. Paul says: “We are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:20). The Acts of the Apostles describes the practice of confessing the sins since the apostolic time: “Many of those who became believers confessed and disclosed their practices” (Acts 19:18).

However, there are certain anti-church groups which declare that priests do not have the authority to forgive sins and that there is no point in confessing to an equally sinful and weak priest. Therefore, they argue that we can confess directly to God. This perception is not correct. This kind of wrong teaching not only denies the Church tradition but also the teachings of the Holy Bible.

Sin divides God-human relationship. The priest, appointed by Christ, is the mediator for God-human relationship. Therefore, it is appropriate that the priest, who is the representative of the Church, listens to the confession of sins. In the sacrament of Confession absolution of sins and reconciliation occur not by the power of the priest, but by the authority bestowed on him by Jesus.

The Church insists that the confession be highly confidential. The priest who has listened to the confession, the penitent, the translator if any, or another person who happened to hear it, are bound under severe penalties to keep absolute secrecy regarding the sins.

In the Early Christian communities the believers confessed their sins to the whole community publicly. But this practice gave rise to many problems in the society. Therefore, the present practice of confessing secretly to the priest was adopted by the Church.



Penance

The blessing of absolution for sins, administered by the priest, the representative of Christ, removes all the sins. However, it does not remove all the irregularities caused by the sins. Even though the sinner is rid of sins, the person has not fully regained spiritual health. After the confession, when the sinner decides to move out of the state of sin, in order to reinstate the ruined relationships, the priest dictates certain acts of penance.

By doing penance for the sins the sinner gets the opportunity “to live with Jesus” (Romans 8:17).

The priest proclaims the penance taking into consideration the sinner’s personal circumstances and for his/her spiritual benefit. For example:

- ◆ Return the stolen goods
- ◆ Reinstate the good name of the person damaged through wrong sayings
- ◆ Make compensation for the evil deeds
- ◆ Make an attempt for reconciliation with the neighbour
- ◆ Continuous receiving of the sacraments
- ◆ Interest in the welfare of the neighbour
- ◆ Practice of charity
- ◆ Seeking the intercession of saints
- ◆ Practice of law and justice
- ◆ Confession of wrong done to others and its reparation
- ◆ Reading of the Holy Bible, continuous prayers, etc.

Conciliation and counselling

As counseling is very common today, a wrong notion has crept into the minds of some people that instead of confession counselling can suffice. The sacrament of confession can never be compared or equated with counselling. Confession which gives forgiveness of sins, healing

and sacramental grace to the human soul is actually very much spiritual. In the sacrament of confession one experiences real reconciliation and fullness of grace. When we expose ourselves before the loving father without hiding our weaknesses and failings, he looks at us and repeatedly says: “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more” (John 8:11). In counselling neither forgiveness of sins nor fullness of grace occurs.

Let us not forget

- ◆ Confession is not the license to commit sins again and again.
- ◆ Without real preparation and repentance we should not go for confession.
- ◆ Necessary facility and time should be there for confession.
- ◆ The penitent should reveal to the priest the state of life.
- ◆ The essential elements of the sacrament of penance are contrition and confession of sins.
- ◆ All those who have attained the age of reason should confess their deadly sins at least once a year.
- ◆ A person who has done a mortal sin should receive the sacramental forgiveness of sin before receiving Holy Communion even if he/she feels repentance for the same.

Activity 2

Confession is a reconciliatory experience which is characteristic of the Catholic Church only. Write a letter to a non-Catholic friend explaining the characteristics and results of the sacrament of confession.

Prepare an imaginary interview with the prodigal son who landed up in the piggery because of his sins.

2. Anointing of the Sick

In the gospels we see Jesus curing the sick and imparting physical and spiritual strength. Most of the miracles of Jesus are associated with cure of diseases. Christ is the divine physician who understands the sick

personally and consequently bringing them back to health. Notice what he is doing while curing the deaf man:

“He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into ears, and spat and touched his tongue. Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, ‘Ephphatha,’ that is, ‘Be opened.’ And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released and he spoke plainly” (Mark 7: 33-35).

For sinners, weak and the suffering Jesus is the necessary physician. He teaches us: “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick” (Matthew 9:12).

Diseases are not the punishment for sins

The Jews considered diseases as the punishment for sins. In the Old Testament time this idea was very much established. Therefore, the sufferings of Job were interpreted by his friends as punishment for his sins: “If your children sinned against him, he delivered them into the power of their transgression” (Job 8:4). This idea can be seen in the Psalms: “There is no soundness in my flesh because of your indignation; there is no health in my bones because of my sin” (Psalm 38:3).

Jesus corrected this Jewish notion of diseases and tribulations as the punishment for sins. One day while passing by, Jesus saw a man born blind. His disciples asked him: “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him’” (John 9:1-3).

For the cure of sickness: God’s compassion and human’s faith

Jesus healing the sick is a sign of his compassion and affection. Jesus had the power not only to heal but also to forgive sins. He came to heal the whole person, body and soul. He had compassion towards all who suffered and healing was the result of his compassion.

Once a leper came to Jesus begging him, “If you choose, you can make me clean. Moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, ‘I do choose. Be made clean!’ Immediately the leprosy left him” (Mark 1:40-42). The healing of blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46-52) and raising the son of widow of Nain from dead (Luke 7:11-17) show Jesus’ compassion for the sick.

On certain other occasions the faith of the sick brought about their healing. The faith of the Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:21-28) and the woman with hemorrhage (Mark 5:25-34) are examples for this. The faith of those who companied the sick also resulted in healing the sick. The faith of the men who brought the paralytic (Luke 5:17-26) and the faith of the centurion pleading for his servant's life (Luke 7:1-10) prove this fact.

Being the Messiah, healing of the sick by Jesus is a sign of the kingdom of God. All those who put their trust in Jesus were actually placing their trust in the kingdom of God.

Healing in the Church

The healing ministry began by Jesus continues even today in the Church. "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). The continuation of this proclamation by Jesus is found in the service of the sick and their healing in the Church today.

The Holy Bible describes Jesus inviting his disciples to participate in the healing ministry. The risen Jesus renewed this invitation: "These signs will accompany those who believe: ... they will lay their hands on the sick and they will recover" (Mark 16:17-18). The disciples set out, preaching the necessity of conversion. They cast out many devils; healed many sick, anointing them with the holy oil (Mark 6:12-13).

In the early church, there are ample incidents to prove that the Holy Spirit showered blessings profusely on the sick. St. Peter healing a cripple from birth, in the name of Christ (Acts 13:18) and the sick being laid on the wayside where the shadow of St. Peter passing by might fall on them are proof for this healing ministry being carried out in the Church.

St. James testifies the presence of the practice of praying for the sick as an observance in the apostolic time: "Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of the faith will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven" (James 5:14-15).

Christ continues in the Church through the Holy Spirit that flows from the sacrament of anointing the sick, which gives healing to the whole



person. This sacrament of anointing the sick is performed through redemptive signs, calling the name of the Lord.

Since this sacrament gives comfort to the sick, it is called anointing of the sick. It can be received either with or without the sacrament of confession.

Anointing of the sick is also administered to the dying. For this reason it was called Extreme Unction. In fact, this sacrament was believed to be the sacrament for the dying. This wrong understanding prompted the common people to keep themselves away from this sacrament.

Viaticum for last journey

This is the Holy Communion received just before a person's journey from this world to the eternal world. This is the seed of eternal life and the strength for resurrection (CCC # 320).

The celebration of the sacrament

The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick consists of two important rites

1. The official prayer of the Church conducted by the priest for the sick

2. Anointing with the Holy Oil

- ◆ Oil gives solace to bruises and wounds. The oil blessed during the Chrism Mass on Maundy Thursday is used for the anointing of the sick.
- ◆ The oil used for the sacrament of anointing of the sick denotes prosperity and happiness.
- ◆ Bishops and Priests are the only administrators of this sacrament.
- ◆ The central part of the celebration of this sacrament is anointing of the sick with oil on the forehead and arms and then the fervent prayer by the priest for the grace of God.
- ◆ Normal recovery from sickness is possible through other prayers also. But extraordinary recovery of health and forgiveness of sins are attained through this sacrament.

The effects of the sacrament of the anointing of the sick

- ◆ This sacrament offers spiritual healing, forgiveness of sins and physical health.
- ◆ If the patient is not able to get forgiveness of sins through the sacrament of confession, it is possible through the sacrament of anointing of the sick.
- ◆ The one who receives this sacrament identifies oneself with Christ's suffering and death and works for the welfare of the people of God.
- ◆ The conforming to the death and resurrection of Christ begun at Baptism, finds its culmination in this sacrament of anointing of the sick.

Let us not forget

- ◆ This sacrament is not solely for those who are in the death-bed. Any believer who is sick can receive it.
- ◆ A person who has received this sacrament regains health and becomes sick again can receive this sacrament again.
- ◆ This sacrament is not a substitute for medication. Using the necessary medicines for the body is not against the will of God.

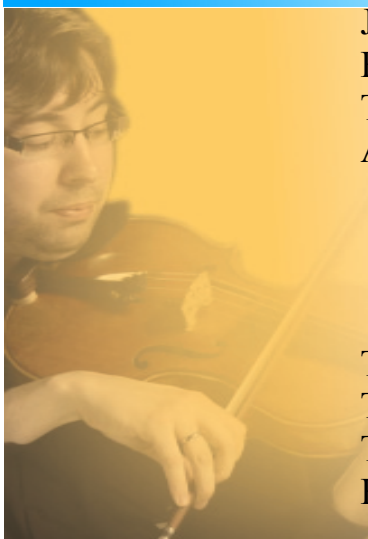
Let us find out the answers

1. What are the works of the penitent?
2. What is the necessity of confessing the sins to the priest?
3. Counselling is not a substitute for confession. Discuss.
4. Why is that for the healing of sick mercy of God and faith of human person are needed?
5. What are the effects of sacrament of anointing of the sick?

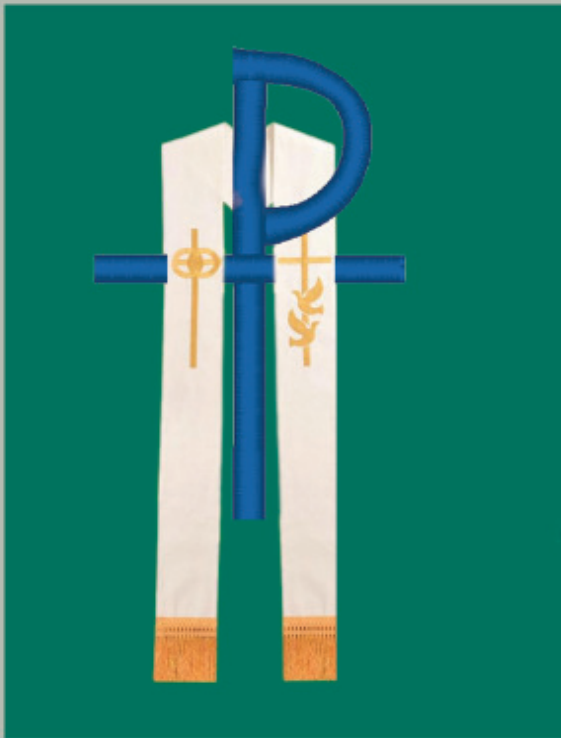
Activity 3

Find out the details regarding bed ridden patients in your parish, with the help of the BCC leaders and organize different programmes for them under the guidance of the parish priest. Visit the orphanages and palliative care centres in your locality and present programmes which could bring happiness to these suffering people.

Song



Jesus passed by
 Forgiving sins and comforting sick
 These acts still continue in church
 As healing sacraments
 In order to fill the division produced by sin
 And to re-establish relationships
 To repent and do penance
 Sacrament of confession is the only way
 The sick get recovery and solace
 Through the sacrament of anointing of the sick
 The passion, death and suffering of Christ
 Become beneficial because of this sacrament.



9

YOUTH AND SACRAMENTS OF SERVICE (Holy Orders and Matrimony)

Introductory Activity

Holy Orders and matrimony are called sacraments of service. More than being personal, these sacraments help in building up the People of God and eternal salvation.

Those who receive Holy Orders are ordained to serve the People of God in the name of Jesus and with the sacramental grace and Word of God. Those who receive the sacrament of matrimony are called to fulfill the duties of marital life and to safeguard its glory and thereby build the Church.

Discuss and report how much these two sacraments contribute to the formation of societies and building of the Kingdom of God.

In this lesson we aim at studying the sacraments of Holy Orders and Matrimony through which those who receive these sacraments serve the society in union with Christ.

1. Holy Orders

Holy Orders is the sacrament through which the mission entrusted by Christ to his apostles continues to be exercised in the Church until the end of time.

The word Holy Orders

The word ‘order’ designates an established position or rank. “Holy Orders,” therefore, means holy positions or holy ranks. But this is not just an election by society or an appointment or giving of a title or establishing oneself into a holy rank. But it is handed on to the Church by Christ. The recipient of the Holy Orders is empowered by the grace of the Holy Spirit to administer sacred rites.

In the ancient Rome the word “ordo” indicated an established civil body, especially a governing body. A person becomes part of this body through “ordination.” The word “ordo” is derived from the Latin word, “ordines.”

The rite of giving Holy Orders is known as consecration. It is a process of choosing certain people from Christ’s Church for priestly mission of sanctification.

Priesthood in the Old Testament

The chosen people, Israel was constituted by God as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exodus 19:5-6; 1 Peter 2:9). But within the people of Israel, God chose one of the twelve tribes, that of Levi and set it apart for liturgical services: “I hereby accept the Levites from among the Israelites as substitutes for all the firstborn ... The Levites shall be mine” (Numbers 3:12). God himself was its inheritance.

The priests were appointed to act on behalf of the people in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins (Hebrews 5:1).

Melchizedek and Christ

Melchizedek was known as the king of Salem - Jerusalem - (Genesis 14:18-20). He was the priest of God Almighty. People sang on the day

of coronation of the king: “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek” (Psalm 110:4).

The Holy Bible does not say anything about Melchizedek’s previous or later life. When Abraham returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and other kings, Melchizedek was with the king of Sodom to receive Abraham. Melchizedek presented bread and wine to Abraham and blessed him. The blessing Abraham received from Melchizedek was a priestly blessing.



The word Melchizedek means “my king is justice.” The king of justice and peace is Christ, the eternal priest (Hebrews 5:5-10; 6:20; 7:21). Melchizedek is the image of the Son of God (Hebrews 7:1-3) who is higher than Abraham (Hebrews 7:4-10) and Aaron (Hebrews 7:11-17).

The Christian tradition considers Melchizedek, the priest of God Most High, as a prefiguration of the priesthood of Christ (Hebrews 7:23-28; 8:1; 10:18): “Having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek” (Hebrews 5:10).

Without father, mother, or descendance, having neither beginning nor end, Melchizedek resembles Christ, the Son of God (Hebrews 7:3). In short, by presenting Melchizedek with Christ, the eternal priesthood and sovereignty of Jesus is revealed to us.

The priesthood of Christ

The God-human relationship was broken due to sin. To restore this relationship there has to be a worthy person, who can be identified both as God and human. According to God’s plan of salvation, Jesus Christ, who is fully divine and fully human, the High Priest, is the only worth person that the world has seen.

Jesus Christ, the one mediator between God and humankind (1 Tim 2:5) is the fulfillment of Old Testament priesthood. We read in letter

to the Hebrews 7:26-27: “For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heaven. Unlike the other high priests, he has no need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins and then for those of the people; this he did once for all when he offered himself.”

Christ’s sacrifice of salvation is unique and it is offered once for all. Therefore, it made possible the salvation of everyone and it cannot be performed by anyone else. Moreover, Christ’s sacrifice of salvation need not be repeated.

Christ’s sacrifice, the thanksgiving sacrifice (Eucharist) is present in the Church from dawn to dusk without any blemish through the ministerial priesthood. This happens according to the wish of Christ, the high priest. “The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me’” (I Corinthians 11:23-25).

The word ‘priest’

Priest means ‘the one placed in front.’ A priest is one who is placed by God in front of his people and the one who is presented by the Church before God. Christ is the only mediator between God and humankind (1 Timothy 2:5). The priest, who takes part in the priesthood of Christ, becomes the intermediary in God-human relationship.

As an intermediary the priest, through the celebration of Holy Eucharist, offering of prayers and doing of good works, places the people in God’s presence. And as the representative of God he imparts God’s blessings to the people.

The threefold mission of Ministerial Priesthood

Jesus wished not to be separated from his people and to let the people enjoy the benefits of salvation made possible by his sacrifice always and everywhere. Jesus asked the apostles to celebrate the salvation till his second coming. In order to perform and celebrate the salvation in a worthy manner, he ordained the apostles as priests of the New Testament.

The entire Church is priestly people. Through Baptism all faithful become partakers in Christ’s priesthood. This partnership is called common priesthood.

Based on this common priesthood and for its service there is another partnership in the priesthood of Christ. It is known as ministerial priesthood or the Holy Orders. The mission of ministerial priesthood is to serve among the people in the name and person of Christ.

The ministerial priesthood is different from the common priesthood. The ministerial priesthood receives a divine sanction to serve ministerial priesthood. Those who receive the Holy Orders or the ministerial priesthood serve the People of God through teaching (teaching or prophetic mission), through the celebration of the liturgy (sacramental or priestly mission) and through pastoring (pastoral or kingly mission).

Teaching or prophetic mission

Jesus exhorted the disciples: “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation” (Mark 16:15). According to this exhortation the chief mission of priesthood is to teach everyone the word of God. Through the ministry of teaching the word of God the Church aims to form and nurture the people of God for the whole world.

Sanctifying or priestly mission

God alone remains holy. God alone can sanctify others. The priest, ordained by Bishop, through the celebration of liturgy, fulfill the priestly mission for God with the help of the Holy Spirit. For example, through Baptism, the priest leads people into the company of people of God. Through the sacrament of confession he reconciles the sinner with God and the Church. Through the anointing of the sick he comforts the sick and the suffering. Above all, in the sacramental celebration of Holy Eucharist he performs the sacrifice of Christ.

Pastoral or kingly mission

Through the pastoral mission, the priest builds up the Church, body of Christ, enabling the people of God to live as brothers and sisters. In the pastoral mission, Jesus, the Good Shepherd, is the model for the priest. Therefore, without seeking gratification of people, the priest follows Christian doctrine and Christian life. The priest takes great care to help the faithful to follow their vocation according to the word of God, to

grow in Christian freedom, to become witnesses of Christ and to build a community of love by living in harmony with each other.

Three Degrees of Priesthood or Holy Orders

The divinely instituted ecclesiastical ministry is exercised in different degrees by those who even from ancient times have been called bishops, priests and deacons. According to Catholic doctrine, there are two degrees of ministerial participation in the priesthood of Christ: the episcopacy and presbyterate. For this reason the term ‘priest’ denotes bishops and priests but not deacons. Yet, Catholic doctrine teaches that episcopate, presbyterate and diaconate are conferred by a sacramental act called “ordination,” that is by the sacrament of Holy Orders.

Three degrees of the Holy Orders are conferred by the Bishop.

The Episcopate and its Duties

The fullness of the sacrament of Holy Orders is conferred by episcopal ordination. Through episcopal ordination the bishop becomes the member of episcopal body. Bishop, moreover, participates in the mission and responsibility of Pope who is the successor of apostle. The bishop receives threefold mission: teaching, sanctifying and governing.



The Presbyterate and its Duties



The priest is joined to the bishop through the degree of presbyterate. At the same time, priest depends on the bishop in fulfilling his pastoral mission. Priests are the wise colleagues of the bishop. With the bishop they take up the responsibility of the local Church and become one presbyterium. From the bishop they take the responsibility of a parish or other ecclesiastical duty.

The Diaconate and its Duties

The diaconate is intended to serve the episcopate and presbyterate. Those who receive the degree of diaconate are called deacons. They do

not have ministerial priesthood. But they are ordained deacons to preach the word of God, to assist in the celebration of the liturgy and to help in certain pastoral services. They have to exercise their duties at the direction of the bishop.



Conferring of the Holy Orders

Since the sacrament of Holy Orders is the sacrament of the apostolic ministry, it is for the bishops as the successors of the apostles to hand on the “gift of the Spirit,” the “apostolic line.” Validly ordained bishops confer the three degrees of the sacrament of Holy Orders.

Candidates for Holy Orders

Only a baptized man validly receives sacred ordination. However, no one has a right to receive the sacrament of Holy Orders. Indeed no one claims this office for himself. He is called to it by God.

All the ordained ministers of Latin Church, with the exception of permanent deacons are normally chosen among men of faith who will live a celibate life and who intend to remain celibate “for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.

The effects of the Holy Orders

There are mainly four effects of this sacrament:

- ♦ As in the case of Baptism and Confirmation, the participation in salvific mission of Christ is given once and for all through this sacrament. Like the other two sacraments this also produces an indelible mark on the recipient. Therefore, this sacrament cannot be received more than once or given temporarily.
“In the eyes of people of this world, there is no other sacrament as noble and honourable as priesthood” (St. Augustine). “Jesus Christ has deposited his strength in priests” (St. Tertullian).
- ♦ The priest identifies himself with Christ the priest and is given the power to act in the name of Christ.
“I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do what is in my heart and in my mind” (1 Samuel 2:35).
- ♦ As the co-workers of the Bishop, priests become the shepherds of the faithful to preach, to celebrate liturgy, especially the Holy Eucharist. The priest gathers strength from the Holy Eucharist.

“The Eucharist is the principal and central *raison d’être* of sacrament of the priesthood, which effectively came into being at the moment of the institution of the Eucharist” (Pope John Paul II).

- ♦ With the grace of the Holy Spirit the priest identifies himself with Christ, his Master and Shepherd.

“The priest works for the good of the whole Church in the name of Christ and his position” (Pope Benedict XVI).

“It is priest who continues the work of redemption here on earth ... O, how great is the priest! If he realized what he is, he would die ... Priesthood is the love of the heart of Jesus (St. John Marie Vianny).

Activity 2

Interview the parents of a few priests either from your own parish or neighbouring parish to find out the circumstances that led them to choose this vocation.

2. Matrimony

The Sacrament of Matrimony is the second Sacrament of Communion.

In every culture marriage is holy and eternal relationship. Christian marriage goes one step higher because it is a call to men and women to participate in the communion of Trinity and to part take in the process of creation. Thus those who are called to marital life are sanctified and attain eternal salvation.

“By their very nature, the institution of matrimony itself and conjugal love are ordained for the procreation and education of children” (*Gaudium et Spes* 48).

Marriage in God’s Plan

Marriage is neither an institution nor a human contract. It is the fulfillment of God’s plan established eternally. Marriage and the family formed as a result of it have important place in God’s plan of salvation. Marriage is a holy and eternal relationship. Holy Bible presents relationship of man and woman in marital life as a symbol of relationship between God and Israel and Christ and the Church.

The indirect promise of salvation offered to humanity after its fall (Genesis 3:15) becomes visible in the promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3). God's promise progressed through the patriarchs, who lived in the families. God's promise reaches its summit in the holy family in Nazareth.

"The intimate community of life and love which constitutes the married state has been established by the Creator and endowed by him with its own proper laws. ... God himself is the author of marriage" (*Gaudium et Spes* 48).

Marriage is a Sacrament

The marriage consent between two baptized individuals was raised to the level of a sacrament by Jesus. In the Church, at all times, marriage was the medium to receive the invisible grace required for dignity of family life. Even then, it was only in the Second Lateran Council in 1139 that marriage was officially declared as a sacrament by the Church. God's grace showered on the couple makes possible their self-sanctification and the sanctification of each other.

The sacrament of Matrimony binds the couples together until death and enables them to grow their children in a virtuous manner.

The central element of the sacrament of marriage is the mutual acceptance of the couples and their complete surrender to each other. Quite different from other sacraments, the ministers of this sacrament are the bride and bridegroom and the offerings are their body and mind. It is by offering their body and mind that the couples become the ministers of the sacrament of matrimony.

The image of Christ and the Church

Recognizing the total surrender of the partners to each other and the inseparable nature of their unity the Church considers Christian marriage as the symbol of ever lasting covenant of Christ and the Church.

"Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her" (Ephesians 5:22-23, 25).

Just as the Church, the body of Christ, is related to Christ, the head, the couples are related to each other. Just as Christ loves his bride, the Church, giving his life and the Church bears witness to her bridegroom, Christ, husband and wife have to love unconditionally and serve each other. The active presence of Christ in this world and the surrender of the Church to Christ are revealed to the whole world through the intimate relationship of Christ and the Church. Similarly, “intimate union of marriage, as a mutual giving of two persons and the good of the children, demand total fidelity from the spouses and require an unbreakable union between them” (*Gaudium et Spes* 48).

Marital consent

The consent of the marriage partners is the basis of marriage. The Church holds the exchange of consent between the spouses to be the indispensable element that makes the marriage. Mental disability, misunderstanding and external pressure are impediments to free consent. “The parties to a marriage covenant are a baptized man and woman, free to contract marriage, who freely express their consent; ‘to be free’ means: not being under constraint; not impeded by any natural or ecclesiastical law” (CCC # 1625).

The priest gets the consent of the couple in the name of the Church before blessing the marriage. The presence of the priest and the witnesses makes it clear that marriage is an ecclesiastical reality.

The Grace of the Sacrament of Matrimony

It is through the Sacrament of Matrimony that the Christian couple get the grace to live in mutual love, respecting each other till the end of their life. Christ is the source of this grace. “Just as of old God encountered his people with a covenant of love and fidelity, so our Saviour, the spouse of the Church, now encounters Christian spouses through the sacrament of Matrimony. Christ dwells with them, gives them the strength to take up their crosses and so follow him, to rise again after they have fallen, to forgive one another, to bear one another’s burdens, to be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ, and to love one another with supernatural, tender and fruitful love. In the joys of their love and family life he gives them here on earth a foretaste of the wedding feast of the Lamb” (CCC # 1642).

Fidelity in marriage

By its very nature conjugal love requires the inviolable fidelity of the spouses. The mutual belief and fidelity prompt the spouses to live in unity and love. When fidelity is lost mutual love is destroyed and the family disintegrates. Christ's fidelity to the Church is the guiding force for the spouses' fidelity. Through the Sacrament of Matrimony the spouses are enabled to represent this fidelity and witness to it. Through their mutual fidelity the spouse give witness to Christ's faithful love.

Unity and Indissolubility of Marriage

Unity, indissolubility and openness to fertility are essential elements of marriage.

Unity

Married life that demands total love and surrender naturally implies one wife and one husband. Adam describes his wife as "this at 1st is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Genesis 2:23). It describes that marriage is the unity of one husband and one wife. Polygamy is against the unity of the marriage.

Indissolubility

To the man who asked, 'is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife' Jesus tells: "What God has joined together, let no one separate" (Matthew 19:3-6). Marriage is a relationship joined by God. Therefore, humans do not have the right or authority to separate this relationship. This is known as indissolubility of marriage. The Christian spouses who are lawfully united through the sacrament of Matrimony are expected to remain one untill death separates their life. St. Paul insists: "The wife should not separate from her husband and the husband should not divorce his wife" (1 Corinthians 7:10-11).

The indissolubility of marriage is stressed even from ancient times without any compromise. A married life completed with physical relationship can never be separated.

Openness to fertility

By its every nature the institution of marriage and married love is ordered to the procreation and education of the offspring. Children are the supreme gift of marriage and contribute greatly to the good of the parents themselves. Spouses to whom God has not granted children can

nevertheless have a conjugal life full of meaning, in both human and Christian terms.

Goals of marriage

In the book of Genesis we find two descriptions regarding the institution of marriage. First description is about reproduction and the second stresses the importance of man-woman companionship.

“God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it’” (Genesis 1:27-28). This command stresses that the spouses partake in God’s creating activity through the procreation of children.

The man-woman companionship in the second description begins with the following words: “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner” (Genesis 2:18). Man named every living creature that God created for him (Genesis 2:19). But for man there was not a partner. “So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, ‘This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken’” (Genesis 2:21-23). Thus God gave man a woman to be his partner as a helper and companion. For this reason man leaves his parents and joins to his wife and become one. Being mutually complementary the spouses are called to grow in God’s love. Thus participation in God’s creating act and growth in love - two basic goals of created being - have to be fulfilled in marriage.

In the light of the New Testament the mission of Christian spouses is to build the Church. This is fulfilled when the spouses, just like Christ loves the Church, love each other deeply and give birth to children and bring them up for the good of the Church and society and teach them to remain holy.

The Effects of Sacrament of Marriage

Quoting St. Augustine, Church teaches that children, fidelity and sacramentality are the effects of marriage. Through the grace received from the sacrament of marriage the spouses are equipped to love, forgive

tolerate and be faithful. They are also enabled to bring up their children in a manner that they become good to the society.

“By its very nature the institution of marriage and married love is ordered to the procreation and education of the offspring” (*Gaudium et Spes* 50). Not merely procreation of children but responsible parenthood is expected from Christian couples.

The Factors of Validity of Marriage

- ◆ For the validity of marriage certain rules have to be followed. Sanction from the Church is necessary for a Christian marriage. According to the Canon Law, 16 years old man and 14 years old woman can engage in marriage. Being the citizens of a nation we have to follow the rules of the nation. In India age for marriage is: 21 years for man and 18 for woman.
- ◆ Remarriage is not permitted when a valid marriage exists. Such an act is punishable offense.
- ◆ The non-baptized, priests, deacons and religious cannot marry without prior permission.
- ◆ Consanguineous marriages are invalid.
- ◆ Impotency before and after marriage nullifies marriage.
- ◆ For the validity of Christian marriage presence of a lawful priest and blessing are essential. Marriage has to be blessed in the presence of two witnesses.
- ◆ Mental imbalance before and after marriage is an impediment to marriage.
- ◆ No one can separate a valid marriage.

Divorce

In the Catholic Church there is no divorce. If a marriage has taken place, fulfilling all the factors that make it valid, then it is a relationship joined by God for ever. Therefore, Catholic Church always protects a valid marriage. But on the wedding day even if the rite of marriage has been performed, in certain cases, there might have been situations, where any of the aforesaid conditions have not been fulfilled and as a result of which problems arise. When such situations are brought to the notice, the Church studies the case and tries to find out whether the marriage

was blessed validly. On examination, it may be proved that conditions that make a marriage invalid were in reality present at the time of marriage. Such marriages will be declared as null and void, saying that on the wedding day only the rituals were performed but there was no exchange of hearts in the presence of God.

The second Vatican Council considers four reasons against divorce:

- ◆ **The welfare of the spouses:** Divorce destroys the union of love and prevents the progress of the individual through mutual help.
- ◆ **The welfare of the children:** The future of the children is marred. Therefore, it is an irreparable loss for the children.
- ◆ **The welfare of the society:** Good families are needed for the formation of a good society. As divorce destroys the permanence of family, it prevents the growth of society.
- ◆ **Indissolubility:** The basis of Christian marriage is indissoluble relationship that Christ has with the Church. Therefore, the Christian marriage has to be indissoluble.

The preparation for marriage

For priesthood and religious life several years of preparation, training, prayers and meditation are essential. Therefore, when stepping into a serious, responsible married life, necessary preparation is needed. Most importantly three factors should be taken into account:

- ◆ Those who receive the sacrament of matrimony have to be in a state of grace.
- ◆ They have to understand clearly the duties of married life.
- ◆ They have to obey the laws related to marriage.

The above mentioned factors prove that in order to receive the sacrament of marriage, spiritual and physical preparation are essential. Since marriage is the exchange of two hearts, not two bodies, spiritual preparation is more needed than external preparation.

Giving more importance for externals of marriage celebration one forgets the essential factors of marriage. Thus the sanctity and sacramentality of marriage and family are neglected.

Write the answers for the following

1. How is Christ's priesthood different from the Old Testament priesthood?
2. What is the threefold mission of ministerial priesthood? How can they be put into practice?
3. What are the effects and goals of the sacrament of matrimony?
4. What is meant by the validity of marriage?
5. Why is divorce not allowed in the Church?

Activity

Compared to the earlier times, today the number of divorces is increasing in our society. Discuss ways to prevent this dangerous situation.

Song



The Holy Orders and Matrimony
 Sacraments of service
 Materialized to build up
 The people of God.
 To continue the sacrifice of salvation
 And to do service to mankind
 The noble priesthood becomes
 The altar of self sacrifice.
 Like the relationship of God and Israel
 Marriage is strong
 By mutual surrender
 It is the eternal symbol of love.

10

YOUTH AND THE HOLY EUCHARIST



Introductory Activity

Today the tendency “to watch” the Eucharistic celebration in the television is increasing. Moreover, while entering the church, many fail to adore the Tabernacle, where there is the lively presence of Christ. Even while participating in the Eucharist, many are just onlookers and do not receive the Holy Communion.

Discuss in groups how these lapses can be overcome and prepare a report.

Also, ask the aged parents about the adoration of the Eucharist in their days and estimate the variations seen in the present day.

The central part of Christian life is the Eucharist. Jesus, the Saviour is present amidst us always in the Eucharist. The Holy Communion is the food for our soul and the security for our future glory. Christ, who is forever present in the Eucharist, is our life and our hope.

By instituting the Eucharist Christ invites the entire community of believers to be partakers of the divine food, which enables everyone to be active members of the Church, the mystical body of Christ.

The Eucharist is, at the same time, a sacrifice, a feast, a sacrament, a memorial, a celebration and worship.

Holy Eucharist: Sacrifice of Christ

Christ's sacrifice on the cross and the Eucharist, which we celebrate every day and offer daily, are one and the same; what is offered is also the same. In the sacrifice on the cross, Jesus is both the offerer and the offering. Jesus, who offered himself on the cross, offers himself again in the Eucharist through the ministry of the priests. In other words, the one who offered himself on the altar offer the cross becomes present on the altar of the Church and offers himself without bloodshed (Hebrews 9:14, 27).

The sacrifice of Christ fulfills all the Old Testament sacrifices (Abel's sacrifice - Genesis 4:4; Abraham's sacrifice - Genesis 22:1-17; the sacrifice of Melchizedek - Genesis 14:18) and stands above all these. The nature of Christ's sacrifice, which fulfills all the sacrifices of the Old Testament, is evident in the consecration words of the Eucharist: "This is my body which is given for you ... This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22: 19-20). In the Eucharist Christ gives his same body sacrificed on the cross and the same blood "shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:28).

The Eucharist is the sacrifice of the Church too. The Church, the body of Christ, takes part in the sacrifice of its head, Christ. Thus the entire body, the Church, takes part in the sacrifice.

Sacrifice and Its Goals

The sacrifice is a person's or community's offering to God to

express one's relationship and solidarity to God. The aims of the sacrifice are the following:

- ◆ To affirm the fatherhood of God
- ◆ To adore, praise and thank God
- ◆ To receive blessings from God
- ◆ To do penance for the sins

The Sacrifice with the shedding of blood

The Jews, who believed 'blood is the seat of life,' taught: "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Hebrews 9:22). Therefore, for the forgiveness of sins they shed the blood of animals on the altar stone. But Christ offered himself on the cross, shedding his blood, for the forgiveness of the sins of humankind.

The Eucharist: the Banquet of Love

Christ, the living bread (John 6) that descended from heaven, broke himself and gave to everyone. The one, who had fed five thousand with five loaves of bread, gives himself in the one bread of Eucharist (Matthew 14:13-21; 15:32-39). He invites us to this feast which he prepares every day: "Take and eat this ... take and drink this." Receiving Holy Communion is essential for full participation in the Eucharist: "Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you" (John 6:53).

To receive Holy Communion in a worthy manner.

- ◆ Remain in the state of grace
- ◆ Fast for an hour before receiving Holy Communion
- ◆ Have necessary devotion to and preparation for Holy Communion

All those who commit grave sins should confess their sins before receiving Holy Communion. The Church advises the believing community to receive Holy Communion every time they participate in the Eucharist. However, it is not advisable to receive Holy Communion unworthily.

"Whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup" (1 Corinthians 11:27-28).

The Fruits of Holy Communion (CCC # 1391-1397)

- ◆ Holy Communion augments our union with Christ.
- ◆ It makes possible communion with the flesh of the risen Christ.
- ◆ Holy Communion separates us from sin.
- ◆ It strengthens our charity.
- ◆ It preserves us from future mortal sins.
- ◆ It unites us with the Church, the mystical body of Christ.
- ◆ It commits us to the poor.

The Eucharist: Sacrament of Love and Unity

Every sacrament administered in the Church, every service in the Church and Church's missionary work are related to the Eucharist. They are centred on the Eucharist. The sacrifice on Calvary was by shedding of the blood; but the sacrifice on the altar is bloodless. In essence both sacrifices are the same; but in their presentation they are different. The Eucharist re-presents the signs of the Last Supper - bread and wine. Hence it becomes a sacrament. The Eucharist, which contains the whole spiritual wealth of the Church, is the sacrament of sacraments. It is the sacrament of love and unity.

The Eucharist not only makes possible the communion in the divine life of the believers, but it also helps the Church to remain forever in mutual love and unity. Partaking in the flesh and blood of Christ given in love, the entire Church grows into one body (1 Corinthians 10:16-17). Just like many grains of wheat bind together to form one loaf of bread, the whole church joins together in Christ to bring to reality the idea of the 'communion of saints' described in the creed.

St. Paul reminds us of the unity of believers: "Just as the body is one and has many members and all the members of the body, though many, are one body ... You are the body of Christ and individually members of it" (1 Corinthians 12:12, 27). St. Paul teaches us that every member of the body should work in harmony without any division: "If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured all rejoice together with it" (1 Corinthians 12:26).

Jesus prays for the unity of the Church: "... that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one" (John 17:21-22).

The Eucharist: A Memorial

Jesus instituted the sacrament of Eucharist at the Last Supper. During the Last Supper, Jesus took the bread, blessed it and said: "This is my body, which is given for you." Then he took the cup, filled with wine and said: "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 22:19-20). Jesus commanded: "Do this in remembrance of me" (1 Corinthians 11:24-25). We celebrate the Eucharist in fulfillment of Jesus' commandment.

The Eucharist is not merely a memorial of past events. But it is the proclamation of the mighty works wrought by God for people (Exodus 13:3). In the liturgical celebration these events become in a certain way present and real (Hebrews 7:25-27; *Lumen Gentium* 3; 1 Corinthians 5:7).

The sacramental form of the sacrifice at Calvary was fulfilled at the Last Supper. Therefore, the Eucharist is the memorial of paschal mystery, the memorial of Christ's life, suffering, death, resurrection, ascension, second coming and his mediation in the presence of his Father's abode (1 Corinthians 11:26).

The Eucharist as 'memorial' is also a 're-enactment.' As Christ's paschal sacrifice cannot be repeated, in all Eucharistic sacrifices Christ event is re-enacted. In the form of the consecrated bread and wine, the living and glorified Christ is really and truly present.

Paschal lamb

The Hebrew word 'pesah' means 'passover.' When God sent the tenth plague upon Egypt - the killing of the first-born - the Israelites were protected by the blood of the lamb smeared on the top of the doorframe

(Exodus 12:22). A lasting ordinance was given by the Lord to celebrate Passover every year to commemorate this miraculous saving of Israelites (Exodus 12:14). The Israelites celebrated their second Passover when they encamped at the foot of the Mount Sinai (Numbers 9:1-5).



- ♦ The Jews conducted pilgrimages during Passover.
- ♦ Jesus also went to Jerusalem during this festival (Luke 2:42; John 2:13; 6:4).
- ♦ The Last Supper with the disciples was the Passover meal (Matthew 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26; Luke 22:13, 15-20).
- ♦ Jesus died during Passover festival (John 13:1).
- ♦ St. Paul depicts Jesus as the Passover Lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7).
- ♦ John the Baptist gave Jesus the title, “Lamb of God” (John 1:29, 36).
- ♦ St. Peter presents Jesus as the lamb without defect (1 Pet. 1:19)
- ♦ The term lamb appears in the Book of Revelation 28 times in connection with Christ (Revelation 5:6, 12; 7:14; 12:11; 13:8)

The Eucharist: Celebration of the People of God

Knowing that the hour had come to leave this world and return to the Father, in the course of a meal he washed their feet and gave them the commandment of love. In order to leave them a pledge of this love, never to depart from his own and to make them sharers in his Passover, he instituted the Eucharist as the memorial of his death and Resurrection and commanded his apostles to celebrate it until his return (CCC # 1337).

Obedying the commandment of the Lord, since the apostolic time, the people of God celebrate the Eucharist. They devoted themselves to the teachings of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers (Acts 2:42). The people of God with deep belief, filial love and unity, experience the presence of their saviour and creator Jesus Christ, daily in the Eucharist.

The Eucharist: Participation in the Heavenly Worship

The Church is basically a worshipping community. The Eucharist is the most important form of worship. Church, the body of Christ, joins with its head, Christ and the inhabitants of the earth and heaven offer worship to God through the Eucharist.

The Eucharist is the culmination of the worship that people offer to Christ and through Him to the Father in the Holy Spirit. By the Eucharistic celebration we already unite ourselves with the heavenly liturgy.

“The Church is His [Christ’s] beloved Bride who calls to her Lord and through Him offers worship to the Eternal Father” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* 7)

Different names given to the Eucharist

The inexhaustible richness of the Eucharist is expressed in the different names we give it. Each name evokes certain aspects of Eucharist.

Thanksgiving

The Eucharist is an action of thanksgiving to God. To Greek words *eucharistein* (Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24) and *eulogein* (Matthew 26:26; Mark 14:22) recall the Jewish blessings that proclaim, especially during meals, God’s works: creation, redemption and sanctification.

Lord’s Supper

The Eucharist is called Lord’s Supper because of its connection with the supper which the Lord took with his disciples on the eve of his Passion. It anticipates the wedding feast of the Lamb in the heavenly Jerusalem (1 Corinthians 11:20; Revelation 19:9).

Breaking of the bread

As the master of the table at Jewish meal, Jesus blessed, broke and distributed the bread at the Last Supper (Matthew 26:26; 1 Corinthians 11:24). By this action of breaking of bread the disciples recognized Jesus after his resurrection (Luke 24:13-35). The early Christians used this expression, ‘breaking of bread,’ to designate their Eucharistic gatherings (Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7, 11).

Explaining Abbreviations

IHC – This refers to Jesus Christ. Greek word for Jesus is IHCOUC. Taking the first two letters and the last letter this monogram is formed.

IHS – IHS is the combination of the first letters of the Latin phrase, *Iesus Homminum Salvator*. It means ‘Jesus, the Saviour of Humanity.’

INRI – These four letters are the first letters of four Latin words: *Iesus Nazareus Rex Iudaeorum*. Jesus the Nazarene king of Jews – meaning Jesus of Nazareth King of Jews. This was the inscription that Pilate placed on the cross, on which Jesus was crucified (John 19:19).

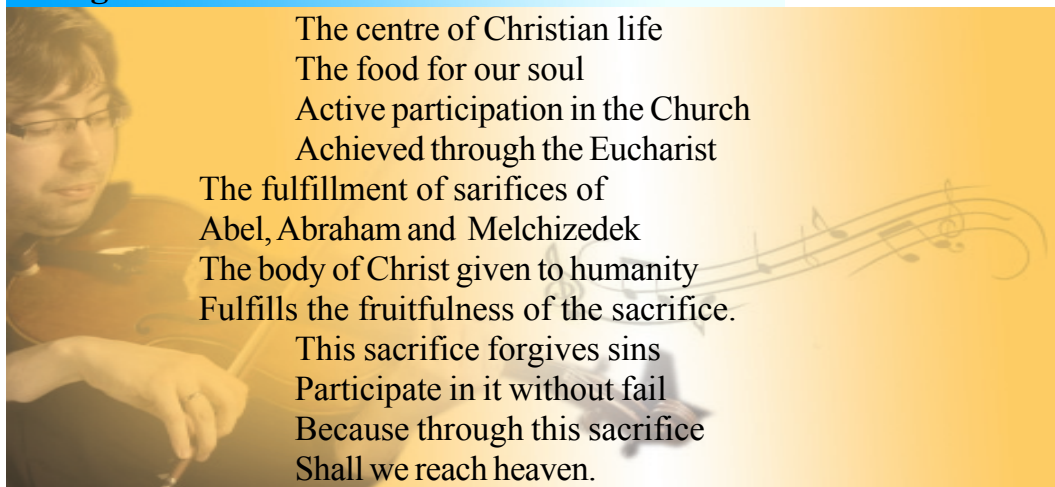
Let us find out the answers

1. What are the dimensions of sacrifice in the Eucharist?
2. How does the Eucharist become a memorial?
3. Why do we say that the Eucharist is the celebration of the people of God?
4. What are the fruits of the receiving of Holy Communion?
5. Describe the different names given to the Eucharist.

Activity

The Eucharist is the food of eternal life and the supreme form of worship. You must have heard of the many miracles associated with the Eucharist. Make an investigation regarding this and prepare a report.

Song



The centre of Christian life
 The food for our soul
 Active participation in the Church
 Achieved through the Eucharist
 The fulfillment of sacrifices of
 Abel, Abraham and Melchizedek
 The body of Christ given to humanity
 Fulfills the fruitfulness of the sacrifice.
 This sacrifice forgives sins
 Participate in it without fail
 Because through this sacrifice
 Shall we reach heaven.



11 MARY MOTHER OF YOUTH

Introductory Activity

“As God cannot reach everywhere, he gave us mothers,” says an old Jewish saying. This proverb proves the role mothers play in shaping our lives. Prepare a list of motherly qualities that you find in Virgin Mary, who is the model for our mothers.

According to the Holy Bible the angel of God addressed Mother Mary: “Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you” (Luke 1:28).

This greeting of the angel proves how favoured was Mary, an ordinary village virgin! Mary became highly favoured one of God by overcoming the trials and tribulations in her life, dedicating her pure life to do good work for God and by cooperating with God in His work of redemption. Thus Mary becomes the model for the young men and women of today.

Mary mother of God

The position of mother of God makes Mary totally respectable and noble. She was elevated to this high position by God from the beginning. This reality is undoubtedly revealed by Nicene creed: “By whom all things were made, who for us men for our salvation, came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man.”

Genesis 3:15 tells about the salvation God will offer: “I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head and you will strike his heel.” Isaiah 7:14 says: “The Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel.” Both the woman in Genesis and the young woman in Isaiah refer to Virgin Mary.

- ♦ The word, which was God, became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14). He was called Immanuel, “God with us” (Matthew 1:23). Jesus, the Immanuel was born of virgin Mary. Thus she became the mother of God.
- ♦ The Church has been using the terms “mother of Jesus”, “Virgin Mary,” and “mother of God” for centuries. These terms prove that the motherhood of Virgin Mary is deeply connected with the incarnation of God as a human persons.
- ♦ Mary began to be called the mother of God from the third century onwards. Pope John Paul II teaches us that calling Mary ‘the mother of God’ originated from the faith of the Christian community.

- ♦ The Council of Ephesus in AD 431 officially acknowledged the term “mother of God” (Theotokos).
- ♦ The Eastern and Western Churches added hymns of Mary’s motherhood along with the hymns of Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

We magnify you who are honourable than the Cherubim
 And incomparably more glorious than the Seraphim.
 You who, without losing your virginity, gave birth
 To the word of God.
 You who are truly the Mother of God!
 (Mother of the Redeemer, 32)

Immaculate Conception of Virgin Mary

Right from the beginning the Catholic Church believed that Virgin Mary was born without the original sin. This belief was proclaimed by Pope Pius IX through his Apostolic Constitution, “*Ineffabilis Deus*,” in 1854. The essence of his teaching is: “We declare, pronounce and define that the doctrine which holds the most Virgin Mary in the first instance of her conception by a singular grace and privilege granted by Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin, is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore to be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful.”

In order to give birth to a sinless son there is the necessity of a sinless mother. Therefore right from the time of conception God protected Mary from all



sins. That is why Pope emphasizes the phrase: ‘in view of the merits of Jesus Christ.’ The title, “immaculate,” is a special gift by God; the best example of God’s grace.

Mary was not chosen as the mother of the Saviour at the time of the Annunciation. The Second Vatican Council teaches that Mary was chosen as Mother of God from the time when God decided to manifest himself in the human form (cf. *Lumen Gentium* 55-59). Therefore, the angel of God addressed Mary: “Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women” (Luke 1:28, 42).

“Only you [Jesus] and your mother are more beautiful than everything. For on you, O Lord, there is no mark; neither is there any stain in your mother” (St. Ephrem).

“Mother Mary is virgin in conceiving, virgin in giving birth, virgin with child, Virgin Mother and virgin forever” (St. Augustine).

- ◆ In 1830, Mother Mary appeared to Sr. Catherin Laboure in Paris to reveal that she is Immaculate.
- ◆ In 1858 when Mother Mary appeared in Lourdes she repeated the same truth.
- ◆ Pope Sixtus IV established the feast of Immaculate Conception (December 8).
- ◆ Pope Alexander VII issued an exhortation on the meaning and aim of celebrating the feast of Immaculate Conception

We who are born with the original sin get God’s grace through Baptism and other sacraments. So let us preserve this grace and receive blessings through the intercession of Immaculate Mother Mary.

Perpetual Virginity of Mother Mary

According to the plan of salvation, God had decided that His son should be born of a virgin. This is clear from the description Jesus’ birth by St. Luke:

“In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary ... The angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son and you will name him Jesus.’ ... Mary said to the angel: ‘how can this be, since I am a virgin?’ (Luke 1:26-34).



Later the angel of God appeared to Joseph in a dream and revealed God’s design about Mary: “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:20-21). We find here Mother Mary affirming her virginity (Luke 1:34) and God declaring her virgin (Matthew 1:20-21).

The virginity of Mary revealed through the Holy Bible is considered by the Church since long time as part of its belief: “Jesus was conceived solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary” (CCC # 496).

In the liturgy of the Church, Mary is declared as perpetual virgin (*Lumen Gentium* 52). The Church teaches us the true belief that even after the birth of the Son of God there was no damage to Mary’s virginity (*Lumen Gentium* 57).

St. Irenaeus, St. Clement of Alexandria, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, St. Jerome and other learned people and fathers of the Church have affirmed and taught the perpetual virginity of Mary.

“Mary remained virgin during Conception and after giving birth” (St. Augustine).

In 1555, Pope Paul IV confirmed the belief that before the birth (pre-natum), at the time of birth (in-natum) and after the birth (post-natum), Mary was a virgin.

We have to accept the perpetual virginity of Mary as a belief and understand it as a mystery of God. To understand this mystery of God we need the spiritual eyes of faith.

Mary, Co-Redemptrix

Through his death Christ made possible the salvation of the world. We find in the gospels the picture of Mary, who submitted herself to God



at the time of Annunciation. Moreover, till the end of Christ's life on earth, participating in the sufferings of her son, Mary accompanied Jesus. In this way she becomes the co-redemptrix in Jesus' salvific mission.

We find in the Gospel, Mary following her son in his path of suffering, like a mother sacrificing everything for her son. From the time of the conception of Jesus,

Mary's life was full of problems. Mother Mary suffers with the Saviour till the end of his life. Mother Mary witnessed the heart-breaking sight of her son dying on the cross. What must have been the thoughts fleeing across her mind when her son's body was taken down from the cross and laid on her lap! The prediction of Simeon at the Temple during child Jesus' purification ceremony is fulfilled in Mary's life: "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be opposed ... and a sword will pierce your own soul too" (Luke 2:34-35). The agony that the son underwent was received by the mother in her heart.

In 1935 Pope Pius XI conferred the special title "co-redemptrix" to Mary for the first time. Mary was not a mere ineffective tool in the hands of God. The Second Vatican Council teaches us, quoting the fathers of the Church, that Mary took part in the process of human

salvation with firm independent decision, belief and obedience (*Lumen Gentium* 61).

Second Eve

The first mother, Eve, listening to the words of the Satan succumbed to sin and estranged herself from God. As a result of this, humankind, which rose from her was born with the original sin. But Mary submitted to God's will with the following words: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to you word" (Luke 1:38).

A woman (Eve) was the cause for the original sin. But God chose another woman (Mary) to redeem the humanity from that sin. Thus Mary came to be called Second Eve.

Mary, the co-redemptrix, is with the Church even today, partaking in the process of salvation. Let us also join hands with this mother in the mission of salvation of humankind, which has to be carried on till the end of the world. While engaging in the welfare of others, we may have to encounter difficulties. We could easily overcome them, comparing them with the sufferings of Christ. Mother Mary is a good model for the youth to follow in this regard.

Assumption of Mary into Heaven

The Christian faith affirms that at the end of her life on earth Mary was assumed, body and soul, into heaven. The Immaculate Virgin Mary, preserved free from original sin, was granted this unique privilege by God the Father. As a result of it, Mother Mary was not subject to the law of remaining in the corruption of the grave.

St. Paul teaches: "Just as sin came into the world through one man and death came through sin and so death spread to all because all have sinned" (Romans 5:12). But Mary, who was filled with divine grace and immaculate, instead of succumbing to



death, which is the result of sin, and ensuing degeneration of body, was wholly taken into heaven.

From the fifth century onwards the feast of the Assumption of Mary is being celebrated. In 847 Pope Leo IV exhorted the Church to celebrate the Feast of Assumption. This doctrine of Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary was dogmatically defined by Pope Pius XII through his apostolic constitution, *Munificentissimus Deus* on November 1, 1950. He declared: “After the completion of her earthly life, Mary was assumed body and soul into the glory of heaven.”

The Second Vatican Council says: “The Immaculate Virgin, preserved free from all guilt of original sin, on the completion of her earthly sojourn, was taken up body and soul into heaven and exalted by the Lord as Queen of the universe, that she might be more fully conformed to her Son, the Lord of lords and the conqueror of sin and death” (*Lumen Gentium* 59).

The Catholic Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary on August 15. Immaculate Mary is our joy and our expectation. The Assumption of Mary reminds us that life in this world is an opportunity for preparation for the life in the next world and that our mortal body would become immortal one day.

Mary - Mother of the Church

Pope Paul VI, who proclaimed Virgin Mary as the Mother of the Church exhorted all Christians to address Mary as Mother Mary to respect her. When we call Mary Mother of the Church, we understand that Mary becomes not only the Mother of God but also the Mother of all faithful.

The Second Vatican Council proclaims that the Church, prompted by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, with filial love, venerates Mary as loving Mother (*Lumen Gentium* 53)

Pope John Paul II says that the faithful began to call Mary “Mother of God,” “Mother of the faithful” and “Our Mother.”

Mary's maternal relation with the Church according to the New Testament

- ◆ We see that the first miracle that Jesus performed at the wedding in Cana was through the intercession of Mary. The disciples believed in Jesus through the intervention of Mary. Thus the community of believers were formed with the help of Mary (John 2:11).
- ◆ All through Christ's journey, especially in his moments of suffering, Mary followed and remained with him. Thus she becomes the symbol of the Church and the model for her children.
- ◆ Finally, at the moment of his death on the cross, we find Jesus entrusting his mother to the representative of the group of believers, John, saying: "Behold your mother" and turning to his mother saying, "Woman, behold your son" (John 19:26-27).
- ◆ As a mother taking care of the Church, right from childhood, Mary was with the apostles and the others instilling courage in them. "They all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus and with his brethren" (Acts 1:14).
- ◆ Mary, who was the strength and model for the apostles, remained with the Church all through its growth. The mother and the intermediary of the Church, is even today our strength and model.

Looking at Mary as our mother we acknowledge and proclaim her as our own mother. This understanding exhorts us to love the Church and remain loyal to it.

Mary - Model of Prayer and Service

Model of Prayer

Like Christ, Mary is also a good model of prayer for us. In all walks of her life, we find Mary in prayer.

The most important moments of prayer in the life of Mary

- ◆ During the Annunciation (Luke 26:38)
- ◆ In the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-53)
- ◆ In the Synagogue and Jerusalem Temple (Luke 2:21-24)
- ◆ During the Passover Feast (Luke 2:41-52)
- ◆ At the foot of the cross (John 13:25-27)
- ◆ During the Pentecost (Acts 1:14)

Model of Service

“The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). We find Mary practising these words of her own Son in her life too.

- ♦ Mary offered herself for the service of God saying, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord” (Luke 1:38).
- ♦ Mary served Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-45).
- ♦ Mary rendered service at the wedding of Cana (John 2:1-11).
- ♦ Mary served as house-wife, mother and servant.
- ♦ As the mother of the Church, Mary even now attends to our needs.

Praying incessantly and meditating on the word of God, at home and in the Temple, Mary experienced God’s presence. She made her service to others as a part of adoring God. Thus she is the model of prayer and service for all of us.

Even today, Mary exhorts us, the young men and women, to live for the growth of the Church and to glorify God through constant prayer, meditation on the word of God and through service to the other. The Mother of God and Immaculate Virgin Mary is the daughter of God the Father, Mother of Jesus Christ and the bride of the Holy Spirit. She remains forever as our model and protector.

“Loving Mother of the Redeemer,
Gate of Heaven,
Star of the sea,
Assist your people who have fallen
Yet strives to rise again.
To the wonderment of nature you bore your creator!”
(Mother of the Redeemer)

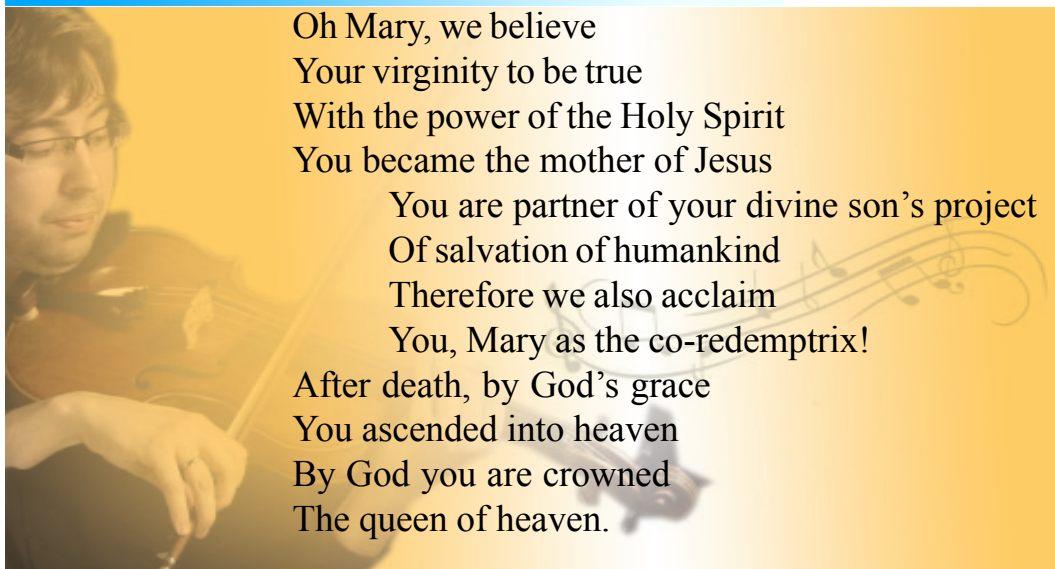
Let us find out the answers

1. How does the Scripture prove that Mary is perpetual virgin?
2. What does the Vatican Council teach about Mary's perpetual virginity?
3. How does Mary become the "co-redemptrix"?
4. Why do we call Mary the 'Second Eve'?
5. How do we prove that Mary is the model of service?

Activity

- ♦ Find out and record the various names of Mary.
- ♦ Find out the differences between the Ascension of Jesus and the Assumption of Mary.
- ♦ Find out the places where Mary appeared and the year of her apparitions and their particular characteristics.
- ♦ Prepare an essay on the influence of Holy Mary's life on you.

Song



Oh Mary, we believe
 Your virginity to be true
 With the power of the Holy Spirit
 You became the mother of Jesus
 You are partner of your divine son's project
 Of salvation of humankind
 Therefore we also acclaim
 You, Mary as the co-redemptrix!
 After death, by God's grace
 You ascended into heaven
 By God you are crowned
 The queen of heaven.



12 YOUTH AND MEDIA

Introductory Activity

Roe Garci was a clever high school student in New York. Watching television for hours was his habit. His father forbade him from watching the television thinking that this habit would be detrimental to his future life. The angry Garci shot himself. The suicide note in his pocket said: “I carry my television in my heart. I love the television so much.” You must have come across similar cases.

In the light of the above mentioned incident, discuss the influence of good and bad effects of media on the young generation of today.

“World has become one
With wire and wireless tools
Not with the heart!”

This little poem reveals the merits and the demerits of interactive media. In this onrush of media the world has become a global village. Time and distance do not become a problem to communicate. We get everything at the tip of our fingers on a small screen. It is foolish to reject this great achievement. Let us then understand the merits of media.

Media: A definition

Media is a means of conveying the idea in a person's mind in a credible and acceptable way to another person.

The media can deeply influence the thoughts, culture, and moral values of people. There are different types of media: newspapers, magazines, radio, television, computer, telephone, cell phone and the internet.

More than the exchange of knowledge, the media can effect a new language, called media language and new way of life. Now a days, we are forced to travel along the new atmosphere and new ground created by media. It has united the continents and oceans. At the pressing down of a finger we can see and converse with persons kilometers away, sharing our joys and sorrows; expressing our solidarity with them. These are great blessings showered upon people by God. But there is the limitation of the small tree planted in the middle of Garden of Eden.

Pope John Paul II in his media day message in the year 1992 wrote: “On this day we celebrate the blessings of speech, of hearing and of sight, which enables us to emerge from our isolation and loneliness in order to exchange with those around us the thoughts and sentiments which arise in our hearts.” These words of Pope remind us of the relevance of media in the present day world.

The general function of media is communication. By getting knowledge and conveying it, interactive media helps in bringing people together to form platforms for companionship.

Goals and functions of media

It can be said that media has three goals:

- ♦ Giving information
- ♦ Educating
- ♦ Providing entertainment

Giving information

Media is able to provide information regarding the minute aspects of political, social, cultural, spiritual, educational, scientific and economic areas without any delay. It always keeps people connected to the world of information.

Educating

Media helps to develop the knowledge gained from the family, educational institutions and from social, cultural and spiritual areas and to shape the individuals according to the needs of the time.

Providing entertainment

Entertainment is essential for mental health. It is necessary to overcome the stress of everyday and to be stable in mind. The colourful amazement created by media, plays a major role in providing renewed energy and cheerfulness.

Media education

Media education is the process through which individuals become media literate to critically choose what is needed for their growth.

Media education helps the youth to accept the good and to reject the bad.

Media education has five components:

- ♦ Awareness
- ♦ Analysis
- ♦ Interpretation
- ♦ Interrogation
- ♦ Intervention

Media today does not provide what is needed for the audience; in fact it provides what pleases the audience. Media education helps us to understand this foul play and to counter it.

If we receive and make use of the media wisely, it would be helpful in our growth. The media can ruin the life, if used with poor judgement. The youth must be equipped to receive the media given by God prayerfully and to utilize it with maturity.

Today a child is born into the world of media. Soon after birth the child is looked after by the home nurse, then the child is the day care or with the servant and then in the play school. In the mean time, in many houses the television takes care of the children. The number of children, brought up by the television, is on the increase. The ocular culture imparted by the television puts the child's real character in disorder. After seeing the celebration of aggression and sexuality in the television, the child's mind becomes benumbed. The early years, which lay the foundation for the child's character development, are marred by the light and sound of this world of illusion (maya). By imbibing more knowledge from the screen than from parents and elders, even the genetic background can be upset.

"Those who make use of the media of communications, especially the young, should take steps to accustom themselves to moderation and self-control in their regard. They should, moreover, endeavour to deepen their understanding of what they see, hear or read. Parents should remember that they have a most serious duty to guard carefully lest shows, publications and other things of this sort, which may be morally harmful, enter their homes or affect their children under other circumstances" (*Inter Mirifica* 10).

The Influence of Media on the Youth

Media influences the youth immensely. Most of the consumers of media are young people. Those who work in the field of media are also the young people. This field has helped them a lot to grow and to reap good benefits. In spite of all these, a major part of the youth today is in the invisible imprisonment of media. Media plays a great role in their lives. The stories of distressed people, who had fallen into the trap set by the Internet and the mobile phone, and who finally had to end their lives, are great concern for us. Media is good if used discerningly; if it is without control, it can definitely pull us into ruin.

Some defects of media

- ◆ Destroys the creative ability of the young people
- ◆ Increases the chance of subjecting to bad habits
- ◆ Develops materialism
- ◆ Influences badly the attitudes and decisions
- ◆ Dissuades from the world of reading
- ◆ Disrupts family relationships
- ◆ Develops mental disorder
- ◆ Destroys the spiritual foundation of families and individuals
- ◆ Makes students lazy
- ◆ Develops blind hero worship and fascination for fashion
- ◆ Destroys relationships within the family and between families
- ◆ Develops sexual anarchy and aggressiveness

It is foolish to blindly reject media. It should be consumed with discernment and caution.

Media and the Formation of Conscience of Youth

There is a natural and intrinsic tendency in every individual to do good and avoid evil. This is the conscience or the voice of God. Media has a large role to play in cultivating this awareness in individual, family life and social life and in forming a good conscience. When the media is consumed against the conscience, the tendency to do good is suppressed. The natural tendency to discern good and bad is destroyed. This can be considered as one of the main problems of youth today. It is not a surprise to see people with frozen consciences turning to violence, crimes and terrorism. They lose their capacity for discernment to such an extent that they are even ready to sacrifice their lives and to belong to the suicide squad. They are led to the path of destruction. Therefore, there is the necessity of proper use of media to develop a good conscience and to become the proponents of goodness in the Church and the society.

Media and Teaching of Values

Media plays a major role in the process of instilling values in one's conscience. Media plays this function by highlighting the injustice in the socio-political, cultural, societal, spiritual and educational fields. We also find at times the media remaining just as scarecrows, when truth, justice,

peace and love are trampled upon. Media is bound to reveal the importance of humankind by exposing the core values. If media goes hand in glove with injustice it is against its function and ethics. It is the duty of the youth to outlive the bad tendencies of media and to rejuvenate the conscience of everyone.

Media and the Church

Media plays a vital role in the proclamation of the word of God. The mission of the Church is to proclaim the word of God to all the nations. This mission is achieved easily and effectively through media.

At appropriate times media wonderfully made available to the people the teachings of different Popes. Also, through the internet, valuable Church information and the programmes of the Pope reach the common people very easily. Through the publications, picturizations, cartoons, musical creations, literary works and fine arts of moral values, the Christian morals are propagated by media to make life better.



Understanding the rising importance of media Pope Paul VI published his exhortation “*Communio et Progressio*.” This important document reveals Church’s approach to and viewpoint of media. “The Ethics in Internet” and “The Church and Internet” published in 2002 describe the challenges of internet that the Church faces. Pope John Paul II reminds us that the Church is forced to make arrangements to face the challenges put forth by the internet. The Church teaches not to distance ourselves from the media, but the appropriate use of it.

With regard to the media the Church has to perform certain important responsibilities:

- ◆ Understand the challenges of media to utilize them for the growth of the people.
- ◆ Make use of the media to bring about the unity and progress of nations and humanity.
- ◆ Remind incessantly that the function of media is to be the voice of the voiceless and the oppressed.
- ◆ Dissuade the youth from the culture of death propagated by media and to accept the culture of life.
- ◆ Make use of media to nurture the foundation of personal life and family life, namely spirituality and human code of ethics.
- ◆ Enable to become conscious of what one reads and sees.
- ◆ Direct the minds of the youth to a life of prayer, dissuading them from the culture of death propagated by media.

Media and the Proclamation of the Word of God

The Church insists that the media should be utilized fruitfully for the proclamation of the word of God: “The first proclamation and the further deepening of faith cannot do without the mass media. When they are put at the service of the Gospel, they are capable of increasing almost indefinitely the area in which the word of God is heard; they enable the Good News to reach millions of people” (*Evangelii Nuntiandi* 45)

The Church holds that apart from audio visual media, the print media also must be utilized for the proclamation of the word of God. We should not overlook the possibilities of fast growing cyber space and videos in presenting the Gospel messages.

“All the children of the Church should join, without delay and with greatest effort in a common work, to make effective use of the media of social communication in various apostolic endeavours. Pastors should hasten to fulfill their duty in this respect. The laity, too, who have something to do with the use of these media, should endeavour to bear witness to Christ (*Inter Mirifica* 13).

Thus we will be able to do justice to the words of Jesus: “What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops” (Matthew 10:27).


Let us find out the answers

1. What do you mean by media?
2. What is media education? What are its effects?
3. Describe the goals and functions of media.
4. What is the role of media in the formation of the conscience of youth?
5. Estimate the role of media in the proclamation of the word of God.

Activity

- ♦ Is internet dangerous? Discuss.
- ♦ Mobile is not needed for students: Debate on this topic.

Song



To turn the world to a global village
 Remember! A powerful tool is media
 To communicate, to get things live
 Media is the only way today
 Media invigorates our life
 Increases our imagination
 Widens the horizon of knowledge
 Throws light on the path to be followed
 Even then we have to be careful and discreet
 Not to fall into the traps, but to retrieve virtue
 Reap benefits and through them gain
 Expansion of the kingdom of God

Saint Thomas More (1478-1535)



The Church, which was founded by Christ by giving up his life, was nurtured by the blood of martyrs. In the 16th century, it was Thomas More who gave up his life for the Church and for the supreme authority of its visible head, the Pope.

During the rule of Henry the seventh, Thomas More was born as the only son of Sir John More, a famous member of a group of lawyers and Agnes Granger on February 7th 1478. His father, John More was a believer of God and full of good qualities. These qualities were handed down to Thomas also.

Thomas began his primary education in the St. Antony's School in Thread Needle Street.

In his 16th year, he joined Oxford University to pursue higher education. In 1494, after leaving the university he began studying law according to his father's suggestion.

In his 26th year Thomas More was chosen as the member of the people's commune. As the member of this body, he began to oppose the wrong path of King Henry the seventh, and this was very much appreciated by the people and thus for his unusual bravery, he became famous.

In the meantime, he married the daughter of the Duke of Essex, Colt of Nether hall. Their family life was a happy one. But they were not able to enjoy it for long. Within the span of six years, she left this world for her heavenly abode after presenting him with three daughters and a son.

Even though he was not interested in another marriage, considering the future of his children whom he loved dearly, he got ready for remarriage. He was a model of ideal master of the house.

In 1509 Henry VIII was crowned King of England. Before long More got into the good books of the King and the minister, Cardinal Wolsey. In 1529 Henry VIII appointed More as the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

This was a period of dissemination of Lutheran blasphemy (absence of faith in God or religion). Thomas More, through his writings strongly reacted

against this and exposed the meaninglessness of Luther's arguments. The 'Utopia' exposing the evils in the code of Law prevalent in England at that time and the life history of King Richard III are important contributions by Thomas More. A man of proficiency in many subjects, More was well versed in his mother tongue as he was in Latin. He was a great worshipper of his father. This Chancellor of England went to the royal assembly via the West Minster Hall where his father, John More was a lawyer in the lower court. Every time that Thomas passed through this place, he used to kneel down before his father to get his blessings.

Thomas More was not able to suppress the compassion he felt for the poor and the destitute. Whenever he had the time for it, he used to visit the streets where these people lived, enquiring about their welfare and helping them as needed. When he was too busy with his work, he used to depute his family members to do the same. He took a house on rent, near his home to house the sick, the destitute and the aged, to do service to them. He, who took care to participate in the Holy Mass every day, usually joined the choir also.

Thomas More was able to understand the hypocrisy of King Henry VIII from the beginning. The king had married the wife of his own brother, Catherine. The king had gained special sanction from the Pope for this marriage and they lived together for 20 years. It was at this time that he developed a special interest on beautiful Anne Boleyn. The king began to device tactics to marry her. The cunning and crooked king began to give the impression that his earlier marriage was illegal and against the Church. Finally he himself proclaimed that it was illegal and made preparations to marry Anne Boleyn. He approached the Pope for sanction, but the Pope strongly refused the request.

Thomas More who was well aware of the situation felt that if he continued in his office, he would be forced to act against his conscience. More, who cared much for righteousness and truth, resigned from his post of the chancellor in 1532. Actually this sacrifice gave him much happiness. But his wife could not contain this. In 1533, Henry VIII defying the Pope's prohibition secretly married Anne Boleyn and very shortly crowned her as the queen of England. The Pope punished him with excommunication. The king severed all connection with the papacy and proclaimed himself as the head of the Church of England. The king tortured in many ways, all those who disobeyed him. In order to give protection for his second marriage and to bring an end to the Pope's supreme power in England, he brought about change in legislation. There was even a clause which had the power to kill people who were not ready to take the oath acknowledging that law.

Thomas More, however, was not ready to acknowledge any law denying papal supremacy. On April 13, 1534, he was summoned to the palace. Knowing very well what fate he was going to face, Thomas More participated in the Holy Mass, received communion and then presented himself at the palace. As he refused to take the oath prescribed by the king, he was put in jail. Four days later members of the royal commission visited him to persuade him once more to take the oath. But More stood his ground. Soon he was transferred to the London Tower where, those punished for treason are jailed. When his wife advised him to retrieve his wealth by taking the oath according to the royal decree, he told his wife: “Do you think that I will sacrifice eternal happiness for one thousand years of prosperity?”

In the jail, More left behind days of difficulty and distress. On July 1st 1535, More was presented before the court in a fatigued condition. With the help of false witnesses he was established as a guilty person. The verdict was to drag him to the place of execution, Tyburn and then to hang him. But the king intervened to make it death by beheading. Even though More was condemned to death, the king did not wish More to be killed. Therefore, the king deputed many people to persuade More to forsake his religion. But More had prepared himself to die rather than reject Christianity and Papal supremacy.

On July 6th 1535, More was ushered into the place of execution. But he was cool, unafraid and happy. On the platform he said: “I am dying, a devotee of God and the nation. All must pray for me.” He requested all those present there to witness his death as the member of the Catholic Church, dying for the Church. Reciting the Psalms, praising God, he was ready to die. The executioner severed Thomas More’s head. It was the practice in those days to exhibit the heads of those who were beheaded, on spears positioned on the London Bridge. Thomas More’s head also faced similar fate. The body was taken over by his daughter Margaret who made arrangements for it to be buried in St. Peter’s church in the London Tower. The head was retrieved by Margaret a month later, by bribing the servants and preserving it in her house, worthy of reverence.

This great martyr is a good role model for the members of the Church of all times. He had sacrificed all prosperity and positions that anyone would covet, for Christ’s church and the supremacy of the Pope.

On December 29, 1886, Pope Leo XIII proclaimed Thomas More, “Blessed.” On May 19, 1935, Pope Pius XI raised him to the position of Saint.

The Church celebrates his feast on June 22.