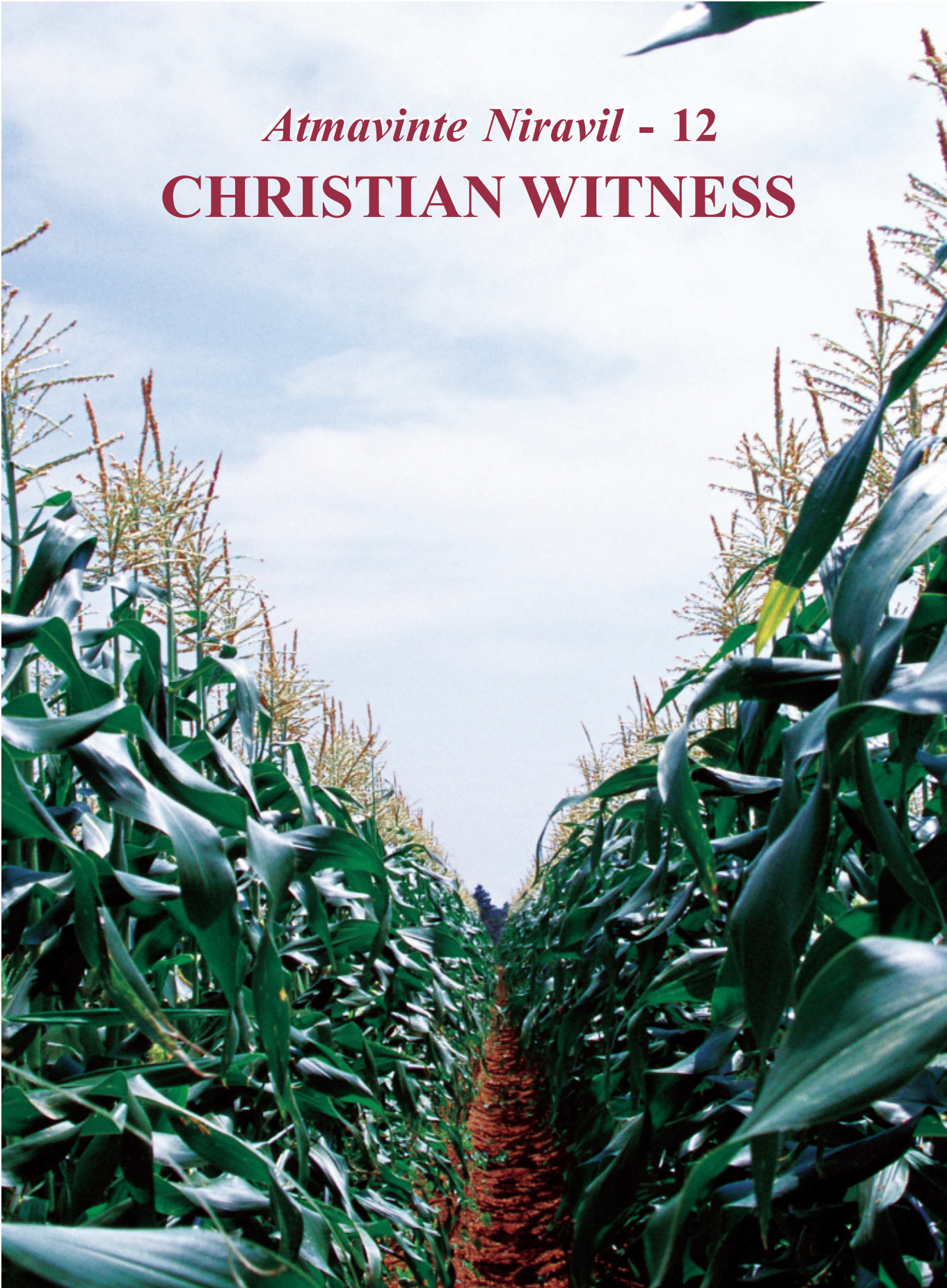


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CHRISTIAN WITNESS



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Imprimatur:

Most Rev. Dr. Soosa Pakiam, Archbishop of Trivandrum

Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Kalathiparambil, Archbishop of Verapoly

Rt. Rev. Dr. Vincent Samuel, Bishop of Neyyattinkara

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Rt. Rev. Dr. James Anaparambil, Coadjutor Bishop of Alleppy

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 Catechetics 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 2019
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 moulds 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 2019

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 overwhelms 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 2019
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 Miss Vera Moses and Rev. Dr. Laurence Culas 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 these texts be enlightened by his divine light.

Trivandrum and Calicut
1st May 2019
Feast of St Joseph, the Worker

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

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THE HOLY BIBLE AND CHRISTIAN LIFE



Christ is the Word that became flesh (John 1:14). Therefore, all those who love Christ mediate the Word. Mother Teresa, who devoted her whole life for the poor, constantly mediated on the Word. Jesus said: “Whoever welcomes this child in my name, welcomes me and whoever welcomes me, welcomes the one who sent me” (Luke 9:48). These words made Mother Teresa’s life blessed. God’s call to Abraham: “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you” (Genesis 12:1). These words urged St. Francis Xavier to leave his own country, house, land and come to India. St. Paul says: “Let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness and not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires” (Romans 13:13-14). These words of St. Paul showed the way to St. Augustine to give up his worldly life.

From the lives of the above-mentioned saints, we perceive that the Word of God is a great support for Christian life. We see the Word of God through Christ, who is the Word made Flesh. Therefore, life in Christ is to live according to the Word of God. We see in Christ what is revealed in the Old Testament and is fulfilled in the New Testament.

2. The Holy Bible in the Life of the Church

Christ is the fulfillment of the Word of God. Therefore, the Word of God is the support for the Church, the Bride of Christ, and the strength for the spiritual life of the members of the Church. For Christ's believers, as the Church teaches, the way to the Holy Bible is wide open. The formation of Church's theology and the ministry of the Word are being done on the basis of the Word of God. In other words, the Church's ministry such as, proclamation of the Word, Catechesis, Liturgy and Administration of the Sacraments, are being carried and exercised on the foundation of the Word of God.

We, the members of the Church, must possess an excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. The best way to this purpose is to study the Holy Bible. Therefore, St. Jerome challenges us: "Ignorance of the Holy Bible is ignorance of Christ." That is why in classes 11 and 12 lessons on the Holy Bible are included.



3. Already Learnt in Class XI

- ★ God is the source of human life.
- ★ The content of the Holy Bible is God's self-revealed words and actions.
- ★ The Word of God is life giving and fruit bearing.
- ★ The Holy Bible is life giving Word and way to eternal life.
- ★ The Holy Bible is God's saving intervention in the history of humankind and the covenant between God and humanity.
- ★ God's self-revelation comes to us through Oral (Tradition) and Written forms. The Holy Bible is the written form of God's self-revelation.
- ★ The division of the books of the Holy Bible.
- ★ A brief account of how the Holy Bible took shape, meaning and origin of words like Bible, Word and Covenant and meaning of Inspiration, Inerrancy and Canonicity of the Holy Bible.

4. To be Studied in Class XII

- ★ History of formation of the Holy Bible.
- ★ Interpretation of the Holy Bible.
- ★ Different levels of meaning in the Holy Bible.
- ★ Different methods of interpreting the Holy Bible.
- ★ Literary forms of the Holy Bible.
- ★ Lectio Divina of the Holy Bible.

5. History of the formation of the Bible

1. Period of Formation

From the time of Exodus from Egypt to John the Apostle, the author of the Fourth Gospel (about 1300 BC to 100 AD), is the period

of formation of the Holy Bible. That means, the formation of the Holy Bible is a long period. The formation of the Holy Bible covers almost 1400 years.

When we say that the formation of the Holy Bible covers a long period, we understand that each book in the Holy Bible has gone through a lengthy process to its final form.

2. Authors of the Holy Bible

Basically the author of the Holy Bible is God (Divine Author). In the presentation of the message of the Holy Bible human beings have played their part (Human Author). This we have already learnt in the previous year. Normally, the books of the Holy Bible are known by the names of those who have written them. But in some cases, the books are known in the name of those persons who have made decisive contribution to the history of the people of God. For example, Pentateuch is traditionally believed to be written by Moses. But the biblical scholars had established that the Deuteronomist author had given final shape to the five books of the Pentateuch.

3. Oral and Written Traditions

The contents of the Holy Bible were circulated for a long time through Oral Tradition. While the message of the Holy Bible was in Oral Tradition, in course of time, it took a definite shape through written circulations. Thus, the books of the Holy Bible received a written form after many years of oral circulation. The first written forms of message of the Holy Bible were the ballads, law codes and epic narratives.

4. Written Form of Old Testament

Many parts of the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy) were the first to be written down.

But the prophetic books were the first books to be formulated.

- ★ The prophecy of Amos was the earliest prophetic book to be formulated. It was formulated around 750 BC.
- ★ After that the book of Hosea, First Isaiah (chapters 1-39) and Micah were formulated in the 7th century BC. Besides these books, Deuteronomy, Samuel and Judges too were formulated in the same century.
- ★ The books of Kings, Obadiah, Ezekiel, Second Isaiah (chapters 40-54), Haggai, Zechariah and Lamentations were formulated in the 6th century BC.
- ★ The five books of the Pentateuch, as we have them today, were formulated in the 5th century BC. Joshua, Malachi, Ruth and some Psalms too appeared during this period.
- ★ The books of Proverbs, Job, some Psalms, Joel and Jonah were formulated in the 4th century BC.
- ★ The books of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs and the remaining Psalms were composed in the 2nd century.

5. Written Form of New Testament

The period of formulation of New Testament books is between Pentecost and the death of John, the evangelist. During this short period (around 30-100 AD) all the books in the New Testament were formulated. The first books to be written in the New Testament were the letters of St. Paul. Among these, First Letter to the Thessalonians was the first book to be written in the New Testament. It was composed in 51 AD. Among the Gospels, the first to be composed was the Gospel according to Mark. St. John's works (Fourth Gospel, 3 Letters and Revelation) were the last books to be composed. They were composed towards the end of the first century.

6. Formation of Chapters in New Testament

In the early period, other than the Psalms, the books in the Holy Bible did not have special divisions. The Psalms had divisions because each Psalm was a different poem. The division of the books into themes was first brought out in the New Testament.

i. Notes on the margin: In the 2nd century Tatian started to indicate the themes of the New Testament books in the margin (*Massorah Marginalis*).

ii. Paragraphs: Some others tried to divide the books into paragraphs. In Greek this kind of division is known as '*titloi*,' which means 'title.'

iii. Headings: Such paragraphs were grouped together under one heading. The Greek name, given for the heading was '*kephalaion*,' which means 'chapter.'

iv. Chapters: In 1216, Stephen Langton divided the books of the New Testament into chapters, as we see today in the Holy Bible. He was a professor in Paris University. Later he became the Metropolitan of Canterbury.

v. Verses: Later there were efforts to separate the New Testament books even into smaller parts. Dividing the chapters into smaller parts was named '*stichoi*,' which means 'lines' or verses. This division was meant to pause in between while reading to grasp the meaning of the text. Accordingly, there were 19,241 verses (*stichoi*) in the New Testament. This division was smaller than the verses we see in the Holy Bible today. But in 1550 Robert Stephen made the verses longer. Thus, currently there are 7,959 verses in the New Testament. His son, Henry Stephen, published Greek New Testament in 1551, having above said number of verses.

7. Formation of Chapters in Old Testament

In the 10th century, Ben Asher tried to carry out the division of the Old Testament into chapters. But the division of Old Testament books into chapters, as we have today, was done by Rabbi Nathan in 1448. The Old Testament with such a division was first printed in 1524. The Latin Bible published by Pagninus in 1528 adopted this style of composition. Thus, in the 16th century Holy Bible with chapters and verses became available. According to the original language, the Holy Bible has 1,189 chapters, 31,173 verses, 7,73,692 words and 35,66,480 letters.

Activity 2

Find out and memorize the number of chapters in each book of the New Testament.

6. Interpretation of the Bible

In the Holy Bible, God speaks to the people in human form. Although the Word of God has been revealed in the human language, to understand it correctly, interpretation is absolutely necessary.

1. Limitations of Interpretation

While trying to interpret the Holy Bible correctly, one has to bear in mind two things: i. What did the human authors truly desire to convey (literal sense)? ii. What does God desire to convey to us through the words of human authors (*sensus plenior* = fuller sense). This is not easy. In order to grasp what the human author wishes to convey we need to take to consideration, the period in which the author lived, the style of writing at the time, the author's semitic thought (thinking of Hebrews), the manner of communication during that time, the author's narrative style, etc. They differ very much from what it is today. Since

God and humans participated in writing the Holy Bible its interpretation becomes very complex. This make it very difficult to grasp what God wants to convey. Therefore, the different levels of meanings contained in the Holy Bible must be explored. Only then can the correct intention of the author be determined and the truths of the Holy Bible be related to the present day. Therefore, attempting to interpret the Holy Bible without understanding its scientific manner of interpretation remain futile.

2. Meaning of the Word ‘Hermeneutics’

Scientific interpretation of the Holy Bible is called hermeneutics. The word, hermeneutics, originates from the Greek word ‘*hermus*’. Hermus is the interpreter of Greek god Jupiter. Hermus also is the messenger of gods.

3. Conditions for Correct Interpretation of the Holy Bible

1. Belief that the Holy Bible is the Word of God.
2. Common sense to distinguish what can be accepted and what cannot be accepted.
3. Knowledge on the background of the Holy Bible, its original languages, history, customs and geography.
4. Loyalty and openness to the Word of God.
5. Holy life and pure intention.

7. Different Levels of Meanings of the Holy Bible

Efforts to interpret the Holy Bible began since its formation. Traditionally two levels of meanings were attributed to the words or passages of the Holy Bible: Literal Sense and Spiritual Sense.

1. Literal Sense

The *literal sense* is the meaning conveyed by the words of the Scripture. It is the principle or basic meaning of the words of the Scripture. In other words, the literal sense of the Scripture is meaning intended by the author. Normally, the literal meaning of the words of the Scripture and the meaning intended by the author are the same. But in some cases it need not necessarily be the same. Therefore, in the interpretation of the Holy Bible, one should not insist solely on literal sense, because very often the authors adopt artistic and poetic style of narration. A few examples can be the following:

John the Baptist says about Jesus: “Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). If we consider this expression merely in the literal sense Jesus becomes a lamb. In other words, Jesus is just an animal. Is it not? But John the Baptist proclaims that Jesus is the one to be sacrificed for the salvation of the humankind by the will of God. So the above expression cannot be taken literally. In the expressions such as, “I am the true vine, my Father is the vine grower” (John 15:1); “I am the bread of life” (John 6:48); “You are Peter. On this rock I will build my Church” (Matthew 16:18), the author does not merely have in mind literal meaning.

In order to find out the exact meaning of the words intended by the authors or conveyed by the Scripture, it is necessary to have recourse to some other branches of knowledge too; for example, Formation Period of the Holy Bible, Biblical Geography, History of Biblical World, Knowledge on Original Languages of the Holy Bible, Literary Forms of Biblical Writings, Cultural Background of Biblical World, Knowledge of the Teachings of the Apostles, Teaching of the Church, etc. Therefore, “literal sense of the Scripture is the meaning conveyed by the words of the Scripture and discovered by exegesis, following the rules of sound interpretation” (CCC 116). According to St. Thomas Aquinas, “All other senses of Sacred Scripture are based on the literal.”

2. Spiritual Sense

The Spiritual Sense is the meaning conveyed beyond the words in the Holy Bible. Thanks to the unity of God's plan, not only the text of Scripture but also the realities and events about which it speaks can be signs. The Spiritual Sense of the Scripture is divided into three: Allegorical, Moral and Anagogical.

- i. The *allegorical sense*. We can acquire a more profound understanding of events by recognizing their significance in Christ; thus the crossing of the Red Sea is a sign or type of Christ's victory and also of Christian Baptism (CCC 117.1).
- ii. The *moral sense*. The events reported in Scripture ought to lead us to act justly. As St. Paul says, they were written "for our instruction" (1 Corinthians 10:11).
- iii. The *anagogical sense* (Greek: *anagoge*, "leading"). We can view realities and events in terms of their eternal significance, leading us toward our true homeland: thus the Church on earth is a sign of the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev 21:1-22:5).

A medieval couplet summarizes the significance of the four senses:

The Letter speaks of deeds;
Allegory to faith;
The Moral how to act;
Anagogy our destiny.

Activity 3

Find out the literal sense, allegorical sense, moral sense and anagogical sense of “I am the vine and you are the branches” (John 15:5).

8. Different methods of Interpreting the Holy Bible

Besides the four senses of the Scripture, given above, there are other methods of interpreting the Holy Bible scientifically. Some of those methods are given below:

1. **Textual criticism:** It is the technique of restoring texts as nearly as possible to their original form. It is the process of attempting to ascertain the original wording of a text (Genuine Text).
2. **Historical criticism:** It refers to the study of ancient texts of the Holy Bible, in terms of their historical origins and development within those contexts.
3. **Source Criticism:** It is a specialized field of biblical studies that seeks to determine the sources used to develop the final form of the biblical text.
4. **Literary Criticism:** It is the formal study and discussion of literary forms of the Holy Bible, for example, judging and explaining their importance and meaning.
5. **Redaction Criticism:** It is a theory applied in the study of the Holy Bible to find the different editors involved in the early biblical writings before a book arrived its final form.
6. **Traditional-Historical Criticism:** It is the study of biblical literature, going beyond the written texts, that attempts to trace the developmental stages of the oral tradition.

7. Structural Criticism: Source criticism, in biblical study, refers to the attempt to establish the sources used by the authors of a biblical text.
8. Canonical Criticism: It is a way of interpreting the Holy Bible, focusing on the text of the biblical canon itself as a finished product. It is also known as Canonical Approach.

According to the contemporary teaching of the Church, the faithful are exhorted to adopt the Canonical Criticism or Canonical Approach in the interpretation of the Holy Bible.

9. Literary Forms of the Holy Bible

In the Old Testament and the New Testament there are different literary forms.

1. Literary forms in the Old Testament

- ★ Pentateuch: It is a narration that includes Laws and exhortations.
- ★ Historical books: It contains the life stories of prophets, fathers of the tribes and kings.
- ★ Proverbs: It is a collection of wise and proverbial sayings.
- ★ Dramatic presentation of theological thought (Job).
- ★ Poetical forms in the prophetic books.
- ★ Besides these literary forms, we also find in the Old Testament the following literary forms: philosophical thinking (Ecclesiastes), spiritual hymns (Psalms), romantic poetry (Song of Songs) and expressions of grief (Lamentations).

2. Literary Forms in the New Testament

- ★ Gospels: Gospels are history. But they are not historical accounts in the real sense of the word. They are the words and works of Jesus stored in memory, recalled and recorded. It is written for the readers to believe in Jesus. Even when we say Gospels are historical books, we find in them different literary forms; for example, parables, miracles of Jesus, etc.
- ★ Acts of the Apostles: This book too is historical. It is the continuation of Gospel according to Luke. It contains the beginning and growth of the Church and the early martyrs.
- ★ Revelation: It contains a literature on the end of the age or apocalyptic literature form. The book of Revelation reveals the symbolic visions of earth, heaven and hell. The topic discussed in the book gives a foresight to the human history, which passes through various stages and reaches its final destination.
- ★ Letters: The remaining books in the New Testament are letters. Including the letter to the Hebrews, 14 letters are attributed to St. Paul. There are 7 Catholic letters, written by James, John (3 letters), Peter (2 letters) and Jude. Thus there are 21 letters in the New Testament.

Activity 4

Prepare a table of parables in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) and miracles in the Gospel according to John.

10. “*Lectio Divina*” (Spiritual Reading) of the Holy Bible

There are various levels of reading a text. One reads to enjoy; another for knowledge; yet another to evaluate. But the one, who thirst to experience God, reads a text for quite a different purpose. Here reading is converted into prayer. This is known as Divine Reading (*Lectio Divina*). So, reading of a biblical text assumes the level of divine reading. Through this form of reading, communication between God and human being becomes possible. St. Augustine says, “When you read the Holy Bible, God speaks to you. When you pray, you speak to God.” In *Lectio Divina* God speaks to human beings and human beings speak to God.

1. Preparation for *Lectio Divina*

- ★ Find a quiet place.
- ★ Direct the calm mind to seclusion.
- ★ Keep repeating small prayers like, “Lord Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner.” “Holy Spirit, come upon me.”
- ★ In an atmosphere of single mindedness enter into *Lectio Divina*.

2. Various Steps of *Lectio Divina*

Generally, there are steps in the divine reading of the Holy Bible.

1. Reading (*Lectio*)

In the first phase of *lectio divina* we understand what the passage we are reading says in itself. This is the literal meaning of the Scripture passage and the lessons everyone should recognize in reading it. At this stage we do not yet consider our own lives in connection with the Scriptures. We do not let our opinions influence our reading, but seek to understand the message of the passage as interpreted by the Church



independently of anyone's opinions. This phase is summarized with the question: *What does the text say that everyone should understand?*

2. Meditation (Meditatio)

In the meditation phase of *lectio divina*, we ask, *what does this text say to me, today, and to my life?* We allow God to pull up certain memories of people, places, and events in our lives that relate to the passage we are reading. Meditation is also an opportunity to see ourselves in the text. We can consider our own feelings as if we were a participant in the text or try to understand what it would be like to be one of the people represented in the text. In this way we come to a deeper appreciation of how God is working in our lives through the Sacred Word. Having entered into the story ourselves, we can return to the present and consider the areas in our own lives that God is calling us to contemplate.

3. Prayer (Oratio)

Through a meditation on Scripture, we experience an intimate encounter with God that leads us to respond in prayer. Having met our Lord in his holy word, we courageously speak to him in our own words. In this way we consider prayer to be a simple conversation with God. It is a conversation that comes in various forms: we ask

petitions (or requests) of him, we give him thanks, and we give him praise. We might also ask for the intercession of Mary or the saints represented in the passage we read. At this phase we can ask ourselves: *What can I say to the Lord in response to his word?*

4. Contemplation (Contemplatio)

A true encounter with the Lord always leads to transformation. Indeed, the Lord God proclaimed, “Behold, I make all things new” (Revelation 21:5). Through contemplation we come to an understanding of the parts of our lives that need to be transformed by God’s grace. We humble ourselves and open our lives up to his transformative power. This step comes with the willingness to change, an openness and trust in God, and the decision to follow God’s will rather than our own. With this decision comes a fear of losing what we find comfortable and safe. At the same time we feel the excitement of a call to heroic adventure and a hopeful future of living the life we are meant to live. At this step in the *lectio divina* process, we ask ourselves: *What conversion of the mind, heart, and life is the Lord asking of me?*

5. Action (Actio)

Finally, although this phase is often not considered to be a part of *lectio divina* proper, it is an essential result of the encounter with God in Sacred Scripture. As Pope Benedict XVI wrote in *Verbum Domini*, “We do well also to remember that the process of *lectio divina* is not concluded until it arrives at action (*actio*), which moves the believer to make his or her life a gift for others in charity” (no. 87). Having received God’s love and grace, we go forth to serve others out of the love we have been given. Our transformation calls us to witness to others; it calls us to selflessly serve our brothers and sisters in Christ. These acts are done not so much out of a sense of duty, but out of the inspiration we receive from the acceptance in faith of God’s love.

In this way, it is possible to put into practice *lectio divina* in individual, family and community life. Divine reading of the Scripture will help us have a close relationship with God and to form our actions according to the will of God.

Activity 5

Have a divine reading (*lectio divina*) of Luke 10:25-37 (Parable of the Good Samaritan) in groups.

Clearing Some Doubts

1. Is there anything to be kept in mind when Catholics buy the Holy Bible?

While buying a copy of the Holy Bible, the Catholics have to ensure that it is printed under the supervision of Catholic authority. For example, while buying a copy of the Holy Bible in Malayalam language, see that you buy a POC publication and if you buy a copy of Holy Bible in English language, make sure that you purchase a Catholic edition. There are Holy Bibles published against the Church teachings and theology. Moreover, Catholic edition of Holy Bible contains 73 books whereas the Protestant version has only 66 books.

2. Is there any significance in the accusation of Protestants that the Catholics do not give due importance to the Holy Bible?

The Protestants argue that for a Christian, Holy Bible alone is sufficient (*Sola Scriptura*). This is not correct. The Christian life of the Early Church began before the writing of the Holy Bible. Before the Holy Bible was formulated it remained in Oral Form (Tradition). Later the apostles not only preserved the Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition – “Deposit of Faith” (*Depositum Fidei*) – but also they handed it down to the entire Church. Following the Apostolic Tradition, we have to value and respect both the Sacred Tradition and the Sacred Scripture. Therefore, Catholics value the Sacraments and other traditions of the Church together with the Word of God. That is why we say Protestants’ argument is completely wrong.

3. Is it necessary to give the Holy Bible as much importance as the Sacraments?

The central focus of the Early Church was Prayer, Breaking of the Bread and Communion. The Sacred Scripture was the driving force behind the Christian life of Early Church. The above mentioned elements of Early Church shaped the Holy Bible. Therefore, we can say Tradition was the basis for the formulation of the Holy Bible.

Jesus, the Bread of Life, is present in the Holy Eucharist. Jesus' presence in the Holy Eucharist enables us to lead a life in the manner of Early Christian community through Prayer, Breaking of the Bread and Communion. Therefore, just as the Holy Bible, Sacraments too are important. Sacraments make the Word of God visible and enable us to experience it.

4. What are the things to be kept in mind while using the Holy Bible?

The Holy Bible is not written for a particular period or people. Instead, it is written for all the people and for all times. Therefore, every day God speaks to us through the Holy Bible. We should remember this whenever we read the Holy Bible. We should handle the Holy Bible with reverence. We should not read it carelessly. We should not scribble in the Holy Bible. The Holy Bible should not be used to preserve other records. Read the Holy Bible daily, attentively, reverently and with faith. Read and mediate the Holy Bible to understand the will of God and live accordingly.

5. What do we mean by saying that in the Holy Eucharist there are two important services: 'Table of the Word' and 'Table of Eucharist'?

We are aware of the journey of two disciples to Emmaus, which is narrated in the Gospel according to Luke (24:18-35). The Risen Christ walks with them, explaining the Scriptures. At the end of their encounter, they spoke of the incident among themselves, saying: "Were not our hearts burning within us when he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:32). When Jesus sat with them for supper, he took bread, blessed, broke and gave it them. Then their eyes were opened. They recognized him. But he disappeared from their sight (Luke 24:30-31). In the daily sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist, our hearts burn with the Word of God. With burning hearts, we are able to recognize Jesus in the form of Bread. In Holy Communion, he comes to us and becomes one with us. Our participation in the Holy Eucharist is incomplete if we do not experience the Breaking of the Word and Breaking of the Bread. , Holy Mass is not complete. Therefore, the Holy Eucharist has two important services: 'Table of the Word' and Table of Eucharist.'

2



**I BELIEVE IN
ONE GOD**



The history of search for God is as old as the history of human beings. Human beings recognize that there exists a greater force than them. This recognition directs them to religiosity. Human beings express their religiosity through different faith expressions and beliefs. However, for some people the search for God still continues and some others teach that God does not exist.

The Catholic profession of faith begins with God, for God is the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End of everything.

“Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god” (Isaiah 44:6).

Isaiah affirms the existence of One and Almighty God. Human beings have two ways to reach the truth: Logic and Revelation.

1. God and Logical Argument

“For all people who were ignorant of God were foolish by nature; and they were unable from the good things that are seen to know the one who exists, nor did they recognize the artisan while paying heed to his works; but they supposed that either fire or wind or swift air, or the circle of the stars, or turbulent water, or the luminaries of heaven were the gods that rule the world. If through delight in the beauty of these things people assumed them to be gods, let them know how much better than these is their Lord, for the author of beauty created them” (Wisdom 13:1-3).

Is there God? What does logic say?

Thirst and water are complementary. Similarly, hunger and food are related. Also, oxygen and respiratory organ have a harmonizing relationship. The ‘hunger’ of respiratory organ to breathe, undoubtedly declares the existence or presence of oxygen. The experience of hunger declares the existence or presence of food somewhere in the world. To quench the physical thirst of the living creatures the existence or presence of water becomes evident. The above mentioned realities are connected to worldly living of human beings or things linked to the sustenance of human living.

From the beginning, beyond the physical hunger and thirst, there exists in human beings another hunger and thirst. This hunger is for goodness, truth, justice, pure love and real satisfaction. Just as there is water to quench physical thirst, food for hunger and oxygen for the respiratory organ, right from the beginning, to quench the spiritual thirst of human beings there is spiritual goodness, spiritual love and true justice. This reality is God.

The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God. God never ceases to draw man to himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for (CCC # 27).

Activity 1

Duplicate of almost everything is available today. No sooner a good watch arrives in the market, the market gets flooded with its duplicates. Duplicates of computer, cell phones, pens, flowers and so on and so forth are available.

But behind the duplicates there is an original. It would be foolish to say the original was made casually.

Scientists came together to give life to a goat named ‘Dolly’ from an existing stem cell. Scientists cannot make anything out of nothing. Is it not? ‘Dolly’ became world news. The world praised the scientists who worked to achieve it.

Even though ‘Dolly’ was a duplicate goat would it be foolish to say that no one was behind its birth? We learn an important lesson from this. Not only in the birth of goats, but even in the birth of all living things, in the universe itself there is a knowledge and power behind their coming into existence. If there is some one behind the birth of the duplicate ‘Dolly,’ is it not foolish to deny the existence of anyone behind the birth of millions of originals?

Psalm 14

Fools say in their hearts, “There is no God.”

They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds;

there is no one who does good.

The LORD looks down from heaven on humankind

to see if there are any who are wise,

who seek after God.

They have all gone astray, they are all alike perverse;

there is no one who does good,

no, not one.

Have they no knowledge, all the evildoers

who eat up my people as they eat bread,

and do not call upon the LORD?

There they shall be in great terror,

for God is with the company of the righteous.

You would confound the plans of the poor,

but the LORD is their refuge.

O that deliverance for Israel would come from Zion!

When the LORD restores the fortunes of his people,

Jacob will rejoice; Israel will be glad.

In the light of above description, have a group discussion to draw an argumentative conversation to convince your friend that God does exist.

One and Almighty God

There is only one God. Another truth that cannot be separated from the reality of God is that **He is Almighty**. It is logical to consider that the highest power (God) should be one too (One being).

Activity 2

Human beings cannot define or understand completely God due to their limitations. Yet let us try to define God within our limitations. Read the definition of God given below and then complete the following:

The everlasting beauty that any other beauty cannot surpass is God.

- ★ The everlasting strength ...
- ★ The everlasting holiness ...
- ★ The everlasting goodness ...
- ★ The everlasting joy ...

Certainty of God: The Order of Divine Revelation

All creatures bear a certain resemblance to God. But human being has the most resemblance of God because human being is created in the image and likeness of God. The manifold significances of creatures – their truth, goodness and beauty – reflect the infinite perfection of God: “For from the greatness and beauty of created things comes a corresponding perception of their Creator” (Wisdom 13:5).

But there is another order of knowledge, which human beings cannot possibly arrive at by their own power: The Order of Divine Revelation. Through an utterly free decision, God revealed himself and given himself to human beings. By revealing himself God wishes



to make human beings capable of responding to him and of knowing him and of loving him far beyond their own natural capacity.

It is only on the basis of God's own revelation that human beings are able to firmly and clearly know a little of his mysteries. In human history we can see many instances of God's revelation to humankind.

In the Old Testament time, God not only revealed himself but also he made covenant with humankind. In God's self-revelation it is perceivable that his Oneness (One God) is inseparable from his existence. God is one in nature, substance and essence. Christian faith confesses this reality of God.

Some Instances of Revelation in the Old Testament

God calls Moses from the midst of a bush that burns without being consumed. "I am the God of your Father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob" (Exodus 3:6). We understand from this revelation that God is the God of the fathers. He is the God from beyond space and time.

"Moses said to God, if I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you' and they ask me 'What is his name?' What shall I say to them?' God said to Moses, '**I AM WHO I AM.**' And he said, 'say to the people of Israel, **I AM** has sent me to you.' God said to Moses, 'thus you shall say to the Israelites, the Lord, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is my name forever and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations'" (Exodus 3:13-15).



**God is the God of the fathers
God is Omnipotent, Omnipresent
Omniscient.**

In the Holy Bible, very often, the name describes the person. In the Holy Bible, name is an important means to denote a person. A person was given a name or a person's name was changed according to his or her special qualities. For example, Moses means 'drawn out of water' and Simon's name was changed to Peter, which means 'rock,' because the Church was founded on him.

God revealed himself: '**I am who I am**' (YHWH). In revealing so, God revealed his nature. The opposite of 'am' is 'am not.' Then the opposite of 'I am who I am' is 'I am not who am not.' In other

words, everything else will have an end but God will never have an end. Therefore, the name of God reveals his nature: God is without a beginning and an end; he is the infinite one. God is infinitely above everything. So he is invisible. At the same time God makes himself close to human beings. So he is visible.

Activity 3

Discus in groups the passages given below and find out how God reveals himself and how human beings have to respond to his presence.

Exodus 3:16	Exodus 33:12-17	Exodus 34:4-5	Exodus 34:10-17
Isaiah 6:1-7	Luke 5:1-11	John 1:5-10	1 John 4:7
James 1:17	Isaiah 44:1-8	Deuteronomy 4:37	Exodus 3:13-15
Psalms 38:1-8	Psalms 102:25-28	Exodus 33:18-23	Isaiah 45:15

Different Names of God and Their Meanings

God chose Israel from among all nations as his own and revealed to Himself to Israel to teach all nations that there is no God like Him in heaven above and on earth beneath. God chose Israel not because of her any particular ability. But God chose this small and weak community to express His particular love. In spite of Israel's unfaithfulness, God continued to love her out of His mercy.



“And because he loved your ancestors, he chose their descendants after them. He brought you out of Egypt with his own presence, by his great power” (Deuteronomy 4:37).

Activity 4

Read in groups the passages given in first table and find out the attributes of God in them. Write the reference of the passage against the attribute given in the second table. If there are other attributes of God in the passage add them also to the list of attributes and write the reference of passage against them.

Group I	Psalms 119: 160, 2 Samuel 7:28, Deuteronomy 7:9, Malachi 2:6, Wisdom 7:19-21, John 18-37, 1 John 5:20
Group II	John 3:16, Hosea 2:14-19, 3:1-5, Isaiah 62:1-5, Isaiah 43:1-7, Isaiah 54:1-6, Isaiah 60:16, Isaiah 60:19
Group III	Revelation 21:23-24, Isaiah 9:1-2, Matthew 4:14-17, Isaiah 62:1, John 8:11-12, John 9:5, 1 John 4:8, 16
Group IV	Isaiah 49:15-16, Isaiah 54:8, Isa 5:10, Ezekiel 34:11-16, John 10:10-18, Ruth 15:1-7, John 4:22-30, John 14:6

Characteristics	Passage
God is Love	
God is Truth	
God is Mercy	
God is Shepherd	
God is Bridegroom	
God is Light	



God is One in Essence and Trinity in Individuality

The word ‘Trinity’ does not figure in the Holy Bible. Then, those who oppose Catholic teaching can approach you saying that Church’s teaching that God is Trinity remains wrong. Opponents’ teaching may sound as right to the listeners. Before we enter into the mystery of Trinity let us try to understand the folly of our opponents’ teaching.

Consider, for example, the word ‘motherhood.’ Did the reality of motherhood come into existence only after it was coined the language? Or did the reality of motherhood begin when the first woman gave birth to her first child? We understand the truth that motherhood began when the first mother of the humanity gave birth to her first child. When we seek the reality of motherhood we should not go in search of that word. Instead we realize that if there is a woman and the child, whom she gave birth, there is motherhood. In

the same way, we should not search for the word ‘Trinity’ in the Holy Bible. But acknowledge with humility whether there is in the Holy Bible the presence of One God in Essence and Trinity in Individuality.

Trinity is a mystery of faith. That means it is ‘a mystery that is hidden in God, which can never be known unless it is revealed by God.’ Therefore, we have to accept this truth and proclaim it in faith. God has left signs of His Trinitarian Existence in His work of creation and in His revelation throughout the Old Testament. But God’s inmost being as Holy Trinity is a mystery that is revealed in the incarnation of His Son and in the sending of the Holy Spirit. In Matthew 28:29 Jesus tells the disciples: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” The disciples did not baptize in their names. The reason is that there is only one God, who is the Almighty Father, His only Son and the Holy Spirit. The faith of the entire faithful is based on the most Holy Trinity. Because, at the time of Baptism, Christians answer, “I do,” to a three-part question: Do you believe in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit?” Only then a person is baptized (CCC # 232).

Activity 5

Father and Son are one in essence.

1. God is Father.
2. Jesus, the Son was sent by the Father.
3. Father and Son are one.
4. The Son works through the Father, who dwells in the Son.
5. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one in essence but Trinity in individuality.
6. Jesus sends the Holy Spirit from the Father.

7. All that the Father has belongs to the Son.
8. The Holy Spirit proclaims what the Son possesses.

Divide into groups and find out the verse given below that correspond to the above eight statements.

GROUP I	GROUP II	GROUP III	GROUP IV
Deut 32:6; Malachi 2:10; Exodus 4:22	Deut 32:6; Malachi 2:10; Exodus 4:22	Deut 32:6; Malachi 2:10; Exodus 4:22	Deut 32:6; Malachi 2:10; Exodus 4:22
John 5:19-21	John 5:22-23	John 5:23	John 5:36-38
John 6:38-39	John 7:16	John 5:26	John 7:28-29
John 7:33	John 8:16	John 7:37-39	John 8:26-27
John 8:28	John 8:38	John 8:18-19	John 8:42
John 14:9-11	John 14:9-11	John 8:54-55	John 14:9-11
John 17:21-23	John 17:21-23	John 14:9-11	John 17:21-23
John 14:15	John 14:15	John 17:21-23	John 14:15
John 14:26	John 14:26	John 14:15	John 14:26
John 15:26	John 15:26	John 14:26	John 15:26
John 16:7-8	John 16:7-8	John 15:26	John 16:7-8
John 16:12-15	John 16:12-15	John 16:17-18	John 16:12-15
		John 16:12-15	

Clearing Some Doubts

1. In Exodus 20:4-5 we read, “You shall not make for yourself an idol ... You shall not bow down to them or worship them.” Does this commandment of God oppose the practice of venerating saints in the Catholic tradition?

God gave the above commandment to Israel through Moses. It is the word of God. The same God had said to Moses: “You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold ... You shall make two cherubim of gold ... There I will meet with you and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the covenant, I will deliver to you all my commands for the Israelites” (Exodus 25:17-22).

In Numbers 21:8-9 we read: “The Lord said to Moses, ‘Make a poisonous serpent and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten



shall look at it and live. So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.”

The above two instances are also the word of God. Therefore, we understand that the commandment in Exodus 20:4-5 must not be taken literally. God forbids worshipping the created things, which have no relation to God, and considering them as God.

Moreover, God remained invisible in the Old Testament whereas in the New Testament God made himself visible by becoming man in Jesus Christ.

God willed His power to flow through the bronze serpent. Similarly, God lets His power flow through the Cross of Christ, His son and other signs. The golden statues of cherubim (angels) remind God’s presence. If so, the statues of Christ Jesus, Holy Mary and other saints point towards God. Our respect to the statues is directed to what they represent as well as to God, whom they proclaimed.

2. Is it necessary to believe in God? Is it not sufficient to lead a good life?

Oxygen is necessary for regular breathing. Then, will anyone ask ‘is there a need for oxygen to survive?’ Even to say that one does not need oxygen, he or she needs oxygen. To deny the need of oxygen is to affirm its need. It is like saying to the mother, ‘you are not my mother.’ Since the mother has given birth to one, he or she is here on earth to deny the mother. To say to mother, ‘you have not given birth to me’ is similar to say ‘you have given birth to me.’

If there is no oxygen where you live, you cease to exist. Even though you cease to exist, oxygen is not exhausted. In the same way, if you do not believe in God, God does not cease to exist. If you do

not believe in God, ultimately you cease to exist. To believe in God is not God's need but it is your need. Therefore, believe in God. It is not sufficient to do good alone. Say to the one who says that it is sufficient to do good and live: 'If you are doing good, how you can deny the one who is Good Himself?'

For a Christian, God and eternal life are not ideas or possibilities. Instead, they are realities proclaimed through teachings, signs, especially resurrection and continual presence of Jesus Christ in history. Therefore, merely leading a good life is not sufficient. But it is necessary to believe in the Lord and Saviour sent by God, profess him with mouth, receive the food established for our spiritual nourishment and remain the active member of His mystical body.



3. Why do we say Christ is the only intermediary between the Father and humankind?

1 Timothy 2:5 says: “For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself a ransom for all.” Jesus is the only mediator because “he gave himself a ransom for all.” It means that the salvation of humankind is effected only through the blood of Christ. Jesus is the only mediator who reconciled the world to God, the Father.

When we say Jesus is the only mediator between God and humankind, it also implies that any faithful can intercede for anyone in the name of Jesus. Therefore, St. Paul makes it clear in 1 Timothy 2:1-4: “First of all, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings be made for everyone ... This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.”

In short, St. Paul strongly urges that all who live eternally, having given their life for the sake of Christ, and all who live here on earth, to intercede for others in the name of the Lord.

In 1 Corinthians 12:13 St. Paul says: “For in one Spirit we were all baptized.” Again in 1 Corinthians 12:27 St. Paul says: “You are the body of Christ and individually members of it.” In 1 Corinthians 12:26 we read: “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.” 1 Corinthians 12:21 says: “The eye cannot say to the hand ‘I have no need of you’ nor again the head to the feet, ‘I have no need of you.’ To say so is not possible.” St. Paul dwells on this truth in all his letters only because Jesus had revealed it to him. The Church that follows the apostolic tradition is really the Body of Christ. Jesus affirms this truth when he

appeared to St. Paul and said the following: “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting” (Acts 9:5; 22:8; 26:15; Galatians 1:13).

The truth that Jesus and the Church remain united is revealed in Jesus words as well: “I am the vine, you are the branches” (John 15:5). The basic relationship of the Church with Christ is here clarified. The saints, who have given their lives for the sake of Christ, are not separated from the Body of Christ but are transformed to become strong members. Therefore, these saints always intercede to Christ for other members of his Body. The living members of the Body of Christ cannot say that they are not in need of the saints, who are now transformed members of Christ’s Body (see, 1 Corinthians 12:21).

4. Is there any truth in saying, ‘Catholics worship God and the saints’?

There is no truth in it. It is just a misunderstanding. The Catholic Church adores the Triune God alone. The Holy Virgin Mary is given great veneration. The saints are also venerated. The reasons why we venerate the saints is clear in Jesus’ words: “Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do, and in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father” (John 14:12).

“Everyone, therefore, who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven” (Matthew 10:32-33).

God acknowledges Holy Mother and the saints. If so, who has the authority on earth to deny them?

3



**HOLY SPIRIT
AND CHRISTIAN BELIEF**



Time runs fast. Science is fast growing. Socio-cultural and scientific growth brings the happenings of the world in finger tips of human beings. History proves that this splendid growth is not often leading the people to goodness. Scientific growth has sometime led to the destruction of humankind as well as the denial of God.

British Scientist, Professor Richard Dawkins, in his book, “The Blind Watchmaker,” has re-written Darwin’s evolution theory. Like Darwin he denied the existence of the Creator. Instead, Dawkins substituted the Creator with natural evolution. Thereby, he was denying the common principle that behind every created thing there is creator.

Like the above mentioned instances, there are other examples of denial of the existence of God. But the journey of human beings, in search for their existence, ultimately reaches God, the Supreme Truth. God, who is the eternal truth, transcends time and space – the past, present and future.

Human Beings' Search for God

The desire for God is written in the human heart. The reason is that human beings are created for and by God. In the beginning, while God created the human being, “he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living being” (Genesis 2:7). The spirit of the Lord dwells in the human beings. Therefore, as long as human beings have life, they thirst for God (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19). Human beings can quench this thirst only through their union with God because God is the truth and happiness whom human beings never stop searching for.

In the history many people have shown their interest in searching God. Even today, people continue their search for God through their religious belief, expressions of faith, prayers, sacrifices, rituals, mediations and so forth. God knows their longings for the infinite and their search to quench the thirst. Therefore, God never ceases to draw human beings to Himself.

Christians Search the Holy Trinity

Different from other religions, Christians search for their union with the Holy Trinity. Every Christian believes and proclaims: God is truth and one; He is everlasting and omnipresent; He exists without change; He is almighty; God has three persons – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, but God has one essence, substance or nature and God is entirely simple.

Jesus reveals that God is the only God, whom we must love “with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our mind and with all our strength” (Matthew 12:29-30). At the same time, Jesus reveals that He Himself is ‘the Lord’ (Mark 12:35-37). Confessing Jesus as

Lord and proclaiming the Holy Spirit as “Lord and Giver of Life” do not bring any division into the One God.

The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life. It is the mystery that concerns God Himself. Christians are baptized ‘in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit’ (Matthew 28:19).

Activity 1

Find out the occasions in the Holy Eucharist and in other Sacraments where the name of the Holy Trinity is invoked.

God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Holy Trinity. (We have already learnt in detail about the Father and the Son in the previous class). From the beginning, until the “fullness of time” (Galatians 4:14), the Word of the Father, and the Spirit work, according to God’s salvific purpose. The Word of God (God the Son) and His Breath (God the Holy Spirit) are in life of every creature since its origin (Psalms 33:6; 104:30; Genesis 1:2; 2:7). God the Holy Spirit governs, sanctifies and animates every created thing.

Works of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit was not considered as part of God’s essence. But the works of the Lord and the Lord’s Spirit were taken in the same sense (Isaiah 40:13 and 60:10-14).

The Holy Spirit gave life to the earth that was formless (Genesis 1:2; Psalms 33:6). Later, God pours His Spirit to make the barren world to yield (Isaiah 44:3). Also, the same Holy Spirit presents justice and righteousness in the world (Isaiah 32:14-17). Moreover, the Spirit of the Lord transforms the lives of human beings when they distance themselves from God (Ezekiel 11:19-20; 18:31; Psalms 143:10).

According to the plan of God, the Holy Spirit strengthens God's chosen people (Ezekiel 2:2; 3:12, 24; Judges 14:6, 19; 15:14). The Holy Spirit directs them as well (Numbers 27:18-20; 1 Samuel 10:1-3; 16:13; Numbers 4:6).

The Holy Spirit helped Joseph to interpret dreams (Genesis 41:38). God's Spirit spoke through David (2 Samuel 23:2). God the Spirit worked through prophets (1 Kings 18:12; 22:24; Micah 2:8; Isaiah 48:16; Ezekiel 8:3; Zechariah 7:12; Isaiah 6:1). The Spirit of the Lord leads everyone to God (Joel 2:28-29). The Christ, who will come, will be filled with the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 11:2; 42:1; 61:1).

The Hebrew word, '*ruah*' is used in the Old Testament to refer to "spirit." It means breath, air or wind. One's will power, power to comprehend, conscience and immortality are under the control of *ruah*, the Holy Spirit. The Hebrew expression for Holy Spirit is *ruah kadosh*. Greek term for the Holy Spirit is *pneuma haggion*.

The Hebrew word, *nepesh* is also used in the sense of spirit. It means 'life' or 'mind.' The basis of a person's emotions and passions is *nepesh*.

God the Son and the Holy Spirit

The Old Testament clearly proclaims God the Father. The New Testament fully reveals God the Son. In the Holy Bible revelation of the Holy Spirit is limited. However, the breath of life in God the Father and power of life in God the Son are the fullness of God the Holy Spirit.

Significance of Expected Christ

"There shall come forth a shoot from the stem of Jesse and a branch shall grow out of its roots. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him and the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of

Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge and the Fear of the Lord” (Isaiah 11:1-2).

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring the good tidings to the afflicted ... (Isaiah 61:1-2; Luke 4:18-19).

The characteristics of Christ are revealed, above all, in the ‘Servant Songs’ (Isaiah 42:1-9; 49:1-7; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12). These songs proclaim the meaning of Jesus Christ’s passion and show how He will pour out the Holy Spirit to give life to the many.

Even though God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are distinct in their joint mission, they are inseparable. While Jesus Christ is the “anointed one” the Holy Spirit is the “anointing.”

The Holy Spirit glorifies the Son (John 16:14) and the Son in turn sends the Spirit to those who believe in Him (John 17:22). It is only through the Holy Spirit the meaning of Salvation and other matters of faith can be grasped. “No one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:3). Moreover, eternal life is “to know the only true God” (the Father) and “to know Jesus Christ,” whom God has sent (John 17:3). The Holy Spirit makes this eternal life possible for us.

Activity 2

The Gospels reveal the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the salvific mission fulfilled by Jesus. Find out those occasions from the Gospels.

Holy Spirit and God’s Chosen Ones

Just as in the Old Testament, in the New Testament as well, the Holy Spirit is seen in the chosen ones of God. Having filled with the Holy Spirit, Holy Mary, John the Baptist, the Apostles and the members of the Early Church bore witness to Christ.



Mary Witnesses Filled with the Holy Spirit

In the plan of salvation, God the Father found in Holy Mary the dwelling place for His Spirit to realize the incarnation of His Son. Even after giving birth to God the Son, the virginity of Holy Mary was uniquely safeguarded by her obedience and by the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus Mary was proclaimed as ‘Ever Virgin’ – *Aeiparthenos* (*Lumen Gentium* 52). On the day of Pentecost, along with the Apostles, Mary also received the special anointing of the Holy Spirit. Mary gave to the world the visible form of the Word that filled her womb by the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus she lives among us as the mother of the living – the New Eve (John 19:25-27). Having submitted to the will of God Mary said: “Behold, the handmaid of the Lord” (Luke 1:38). Then, filled with the Holy Spirit, Mary hastens to assist her cousin, Elizabeth (Luke 1:39).

From beginning to the end, submitting herself to Christ’s plan of salvation, Mary becomes the ‘co-redemptrix.’ Thus Holy Mary is Christ’s main witness and our greatest model.

Filled with the Holy Spirit John the Baptist Witnesses

John the Baptist was sent by God to make the way for the Son of Man (John 1:6). John was filled with the Holy Spirit even in his mother's womb (Luke 1:15, 41). Filled with the Holy Spirit he became the "voice of one crying in the wilderness" (Luke 3:4). He appealed the people to "bear fruits worthy of repentance" (Luke 3:8). He presented the Son of Man to the world, saying: "Here is the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). saying, he presented the Son of God to the world. He was, finally, imprisoned and killed (Matthew 14:1-12).

The Apostles Witness Filled with the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit remained the link between the glorified Risen Christ and the Apostles. The Apostles are filled with the same Holy Spirit that dwells in Jesus Christ. The Acts of the Apostles calls the Holy Spirit as "Jesus' Spirit" (16:7). The Holy Spirit was the earthly presence of Jesus, who had entered in his glory. Jesus had promised his disciples that another 'Advocate' (*Paraclete*) will come (John 16:7). After the resurrection Jesus breathed on the Apostles and said to them: "Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22). Then, on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came down to them in "tongues as of fire" (Acts 2:1-13). The same Spirit strengthened them to be witnesses to the ends of the world (Acts 1:8). Besides Pentecost, the Holy Spirit fills Peter (Acts 4:8), Stephen (Acts 6:10; 7:55), Deacons (Acts 6:1-3), Paul (Acts 9:17), Barnabas (Acts 11:24) and other believers (Acts 4:24-31).

The Holy Spirit gave courage and strength to the Apostles and other disciples to face martyrdom.

The Early Church Witnesses Filled with the Holy Spirit

Jesus does not reveal the Holy Spirit fully, until He Himself has been glorified through his Death and Resurrection. He speaks about the Holy Spirit partially to Nicodemus (John 3:5-8), to the Samaritan woman (John 4:10, 14:23-24) and to those who came to take part in the feast of Tabernacle (John 7:37-39). Later Jesus gave the Holy Spirit only to the Apostles (John 20:22).

However, after the resurrection, the early Church believed that all those believe in Christ would receive the Holy Spirit. The early Church grew in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:31). The early Church could live in “one heart and soul” being filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:32-37).

The Holy Spirit chose the believers in the early Church for various tasks (Acts 20:28). The early Church did not call upon the Holy Spirit on the Apostles and Fathers only, but as the strength of the whole Church (Acts 1:5, 8). The Spirit was given to all those who believed in Jesus (Luke 5:17; 6:19). Moreover, the Holy Spirit given to the Samaritans, who were considered as outcastes (Acts 8:14-17). All those who believed in Christ were ready to lay down their lives and became martyrs solely by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Holy Spirit and the Church

The Church of Christ is the assembly of people, who live in the apostolic faith and the platform to transmit the Christian faith. The Church is the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has written a new commandment in the hearts of the members of the Church. The Holy Spirit constantly works in them (Galatians 5:25; Matthew 16:24-26). The Holy Spirit gathers and

reconciles the people who are scattered and separated, thus prepares a nation completely for the Lord (Luke 1:17).

The Spirit constantly works in the Church to manifest the Risen Lord to the faithful, to enable them to recall his Word and to open their minds to perceive Christ's mystery. The Church also is filled with the fruits of the Holy Spirit: Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

Since the Holy Spirit dwells in us, we are not in the flesh, but we are in the spirit (Romans 8:9-13). We are, then, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ (Romans 8:14-17).

Titles and Symbols of the Holy Spirit Used in the Church

The proper name of the third person of the Trinity, whom we adore and glorify with the Father and Son, is "Holy Spirit." The Church received this name from the Lord. The Church professes this name in the baptism of her children.

Titles of the Holy Spirit

Paraclete: Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to the Apostles: "If I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you" (John 16:17; 14:16, 26; 15:26). Today the Church experiences the presence of the Holy Spirit in the inspired Scriptures, in the Teachings of the Church – Magisterium – and in the Sacred Liturgy that leads us to Christ through its words and symbols. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit is present in our intercessory prayers, in various charism and ministries of the Church, in the missionary and apostolic life of the faithful and in the witness of the saints. When Jesus proclaims and promises, he calls the Holy Spirit as "*Paraclete*." Literal meaning of this expression is "called to one's aid" – *ad-voatus* (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7).

Other titles used for the Holy Spirit in the Holy Bible are the following:

“The Spirit of Truth” - John 16:13

“The Spirit of Promise” - Galatians 3:14; Ephesians 1:13

“The Spirit of Adoption” - Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6

“The Spirit of Christ” - Romans 8:9

“The Spirit of the Lord” - 2 Corinthians 3:17

“The Spirit of God” - Romans 8:9, 14; 15:19;

1 Corinthians 6:17; 7:40

“The Spirit of Glory” - Peter 4:14

Symbols of the Holy Spirit

Water

Water signifies ritual of cleansing, fruitfulness of life and new life. As a symbol of the Holy Spirit, water in the Sacrament of Baptism signifies our birth into the divine life (1 Corinthians 12:13). Moreover, it denotes our access to eternal life (John 4:10-14; 7:38; 1 Corinthians 10:4).

Anointing

Christ (*Christus* in Greek and *Messiah* in Hebrew) means the anointed one of the Holy Spirit. Anointing with oil is the symbol of the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:20, 27; 2 Corinthians 1:21). Anointing also is the sacramental sign of confirmation.

Fire

Fire symbolizes the transforming energy that happens in a faithful as the result of Holy Spirit's action. Prophet Elijah, who “arose like fire” and whose “word burned like a torch,” brought down fire from heaven on the sacrifice on Mount Carmel (Sirach 48:1; 1 Kings 18:38-

39). In the New Testament, John baptizes with spirit and fire (Luke 1:17; 3:16). Jesus said, “I came to cast fire upon the earth, and would that it were already kindled” (Luke 12:49). On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit rested on the disciples “as tongues of fire” and they were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:3-4). St. Paul exhorts us, “Do not quench the Spirit” that dwells in us (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

Cloud and Light

In the intervention of the Holy Spirit the two images – cloud and light – are inseparable. The Holy Spirit appears in the forms of cloud and light in Moses on Mount Sinai (Exodus 24:15-18), in the Tent of Meeting (Exodus 33:9-10) and during the wandering in the desert (Exodus 40:10-12). They also appear in front of Solomon on the occasion of dedication of the Temple (1 Kings 8:10-12). In the New Testament, the cloud and light come into view during Transfiguration (Luke 9:34-35) and Ascension (Acts 1:9). They will reveal the Son of Man in glory on the last day (Acts 1:9; Luke 21:27).

Seal

Seal is the symbol of anointing. The Father sets his seal on Christ and also seals us in Him (John 6:27; 2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30). This seal is indelibly marked in us through the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders.

Hand or Laying of Hands

Jesus heals the sick and blesses little children by laying of his hands on them (Mark 6:5; 8:23; 10:16). In Jesus’ name the Apostles also pray by laying of hands (Mark 16:18; Acts 5:12; 14:3). The Apostles gave the Holy Spirit to others through the laying of hands (Acts 8:17-19; 13:3; 19:6). The Church continues this practice while invoking the presence of the Holy Spirit during Holy Eucharist (*epiclesis*), in the priestly ordination and in other occasions.

Finger

God wrote the commandments on the tablets of stone by His finger (Exodus 31:18). God wrote new commandments in the hearts of the apostles by His fingers (2 Corinthians 3:3). Jesus could cast out demons by God's finger (Luke 11:20).

Dove

The dove, released by Noah at the end of the deluge, returned with a fresh olive branch in its beak. It was a sign that the earth was again habitable (Genesis 8:8-12). At the baptism of Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes down from heaven in the form a dove and rests on Jesus (Matthew 3:16). Traditionally, Christian iconography presents the picture of dove to represent the Holy Spirit.

Life of Faithful in the Fullness of the Holy Spirit

For the faithful, to believe in the Holy Spirit is to profess the Holy Spirit as one of the persons of the Holy Trinity, one in essence with the Father and the Son and with the Father and the Son, He is worshipped and glorified.

God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts to call Him, 'Abba, Father' (Galatians 4:6). The Spirit that dwells in us lights the flame of faith.

"The Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words" (Romans 8:26).

Church: Tent of Promise in the Holy Spirit

According to Christian tradition, the Church is:

- Liturgical Assembly (1 Corinthians 11:18; 14:19, 28, 34-35)
- Local Community (1 Corinthians 1:2; 16:1)

- Universal Community of Faithful (1 Corinthians 15:9; Galatians 1:13; Philippians 8:6)

These three meanings of the Church are inseparable. The believing community that gathers all over the world:

- Becomes a liturgical community
- Remains locally
- Receives life from Christ's Word (Holy Bible, Adoration and Prayer) and Body (Holy Eucharist and Communion of Faithful)

The Word, "Church"

The word, "Church" means "community of the called." This word comes from the Latin term, *ecclesia*, which is derived from the Greek verb, *ek-kalein*. It means, "to call out." This term was normally used to designate religious assemblies of people. Israel, the community formed out of God's covenant at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19) and the Early Christian Community were called 'Church.' Today the inheritance of Israel and early Christian community is called Christ's Church.

Another Greek term for church is *kyriake*. Meaning of this is "what belongs to the Lord." The German term, *kirche* and English term, church, have their origin from Greek word, *kyriake*.

Different Names and Symbols of the Church

The everlasting mystery of the Church described through its different names and symbols.

1. People of God

The title, "People of God," is a symbol in the Old Testament. This title is used to express God's covenant with Israel. The covenant between God and Israel proclaims that God is Israel's God and Israel is God's people. In the New Testament, Christ's Church is the People of God. Christ's Church is the completion of People of God in the Old Testament.



2. Body of Christ

Christ is the head of the new covenant people. Therefore, the people are Christ's body (Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18; *Lumen Gentium* 9). Jesus spoke of the intimate communion between Him and those who would follow Him: "Abide in me and I in you ... I am the vine and you are the branches" (John 15:4-5). This image clarifies the life in the Church, centered on Christ.

3. Sheep

Christ is the Good Shepherd and the Church is the sheep (John 10:1-10; Isaiah 40:11, Ezekiel 34:11-31). Christ is the door to the Father. Good Shepherd gives his life for the sheep and constantly feeds them.

Activity 3

See the symbols of the Church given below. Study and write how these symbols reveal relation between Christ and the Church.

1. God's Field or Farm Land
2. God's House
3. Our Mother
4. Bride of Christ

5. Christ's Sacrament
6. Temple of the Holy Spirit
7. Priestly-Prophetic-Royal People
8. Heavenly Jerusalem

Church Established Since the Beginning of the World

God created the universe and the humankind to share in His divine life. But sin destroyed the communion between God and humankind and the harmony among the human beings themselves. Thus the purpose of creation was lost. However, God willed to re-establish the communion between God and people and the harmony among people themselves. For this purpose, God wished to send his only Son to save the humankind from dominion of sin and death



through his death on the cross. God also willed that the fruit of salvation gained through His Son's death on the cross be made available to every people of every time. Therefore, God established the Church, the communion of people, who believe in God. Thus it was proved that the origin of the Church – Christ's Bride and Body – was God's divine plan from the beginning. Even though it was divine plan from the beginning, "the origin and growth of the Church are symbolized by the blood and water, which flowed from the open side of the crucified Jesus" (*Lumen Gentium* 3; John 19:34). Hence, St. Ambrose says: "As Eve was formed from the sleeping Adam's side, so too the Church was born from the pierced heart of Christ hanging dead on the Cross."

The Church - revealed by the Holy Spirit

When the work, which the Father gave the Son to do on earth, was accomplished, the Holy Spirit was sent on the day of Pentecost (*Lumen Gentium* 4; John 17:4). Then, the Church was openly displayed to the crowds. Through the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit the Church began the spread of the Gospel (*Ad Gentes* 4). Thus Universal Church remains one people in the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (*Lumen Gentium* 4).

Since the Church is revealed by the Holy Spirit, it is the driving force of the Church. Filled with the Holy Spirit, the Church exists as an 'assembly' for the salvation of all the people. The Church by her very nature is missionary. The Church is, therefore, sent by Christ to all the nations to make disciples of them (Matthew 23:19-20; *Ad Gentes* 2:5-6).

Special Features of the Church

1. The Church is One

The Church is one because of her origin. The origin and model of the Church is the unity of the Holy Trinity.

The Church is one because her founder is One. Jesus, the Word made flesh, reconciled all people to God by the cross. Thus he restored the unity of all in one people and one body.

The Church is one because of her Spirit. The dwelling of the Holy Spirit, in those who believe, brings about a wonderful communion of the faithful. The Holy Spirit joins them together intimately in Christ. St. Clement of Alexandria points out: “What an astonishing mystery! There is one Father of the Universe, one Logos of the Universe and also one Holy Spirit, every where one and the same, there is one Virgin became Mother, and I should like to call her Church.”

Activity 4

Evaluate the activities of Catholic Church in the field of Ecumenism (Unity of the Churches). Prepare an action plan on how to realize the Unity of Churches in our circumstances.

2. The Church is Holy

The Most Holy One is the founder of the Church. The Church, Bride and Body of Christ, is holy since its origin. The Church possesses the Holy Spirit. The holiness endowed in her through the blood of Jesus will never be taken away. There may be sinful or unholy people in the Church. Even then she is holy because the Church has the life of grace. Therefore, among the holy ones, her holiness shines brighter.

3. The Church is Catholic

Christ’s Church is universal. Therefore, she seeks everyone. She is sent to all and embraces all times. She receives from Christ the fullness of the means of salvation and proclaims the fullness of faith.

Particular Church (Diocese or Eparchy) is formed after the model of Universal Church. In and through the Particular Church, the Catholic Church remains one and unique.

While affirming that the Church is one, the Fathers of the Church repeated that ‘outside the Church there is no salvation.’ Very often this affirmation remained a topic for dispute. But it is the truth. It means that salvation of every one comes from the Church, the Head and Body of Christ.

4. The Church is Apostolic

The Church of Christ is built on a lasting foundation. The Church that originates from Christ and sanctified by him is founded on the “twelve apostles of the Lamb” (Revelation 21:14). The Church grew on the blood of these Christ’s witnesses (Ephesians 2:20; Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 9:11; 5:7-8; Galatians 1:1). She cannot be destroyed (Matthew 16:18). She is protected in truth without error. The Pope, the visible head of the Church and the successor of Apostle Peter, and bishops govern the Church.

Missionary Church

“The Church on earth is by her nature missionary: since according to the plan of the Father, she has as her origin the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit” (*Ad Gentes* 2).

Jesus Christ is the only Saviour of the world. God wills that the salvation brought by Christ reaches everyone. So Jesus said: “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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you and so I am with you always, until the close of the age” (Matthew 23:19-20).

In response to this calling of Jesus the apostles began their mission. As St. Paul tells, the apostles carried out Jesus’ mission, because ‘the love of Christ urges them on’ (2 Corinthians 5:14; *Ad Gentes* 6). “Indeed, God desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4).

Church's Missionary Zeal

As St. John Paul II taught, the Holy Spirit is the protagonist, the principal agent of the whole of the Church's mission. The Church continues the same mission of Christ: Bring good news to the poor; proclaim release to the captives; recovery of sight to the blind; let the oppressed go free; proclaim the year of the Lord's favour (Luke 4:18-19; Isaiah 61:1-2; 58:6). This mission continues in the course of history.

The Church is aware that the Holy Spirit leads her in the mission of evangelization. The Church believes that the Holy Spirit reveals the times and places and means of proclaiming the Good News.

"Be a Christian" and "be the Church" mean to be missionary. If a person loves faith it includes that he or she is a witness to it. Lack of interest in witnessing is lack of interest in the faith itself.

New Evangelization

In the general context, evangelization means proclaiming Christ among the people and nations who have not heard about him. But today the human race is living in a new age. The world we live today is fast moving and it has high quality changes. This situation brings about transition of mind and psychological conflicts. Moreover, many people have lost their inner harmony and are forced to live in momentary things.

In this particular context the Church took up the following theme for the Synod of 2012: "New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith." New Evangelization means newly deepening our faith and believe in the Gospel message and going forth to proclaim the Gospel with new vigour and new methods.

In the context of new challenges against witnessing and proclamation of the Gospel, the Church has to be equipped to face

them. The renewal activity carried out by the Church to face these challenges is the essence of New Evangelization.

New Evangelization and Us

New Evangelization is a state of mind. It is a courageous way of performing our mission. It is the ability of the Christian religion to understand how to learn and interpret new areas. Those areas are related to community, civilization, economics, city life, religion, etc.

The central point of proclamation of the Good News is Jesus Christ, whom one believes and witnesses. We have the obligation to proclaim Christ at all times and to all. Catechesis, Liturgy, Sacraments, devotions and witnessing of Christ are part of our evangelization (Pope Paul VI). Therefore, there is no particular time or period to spread the message of Christ. We must become and give the Gospel in the spiritual, economical, cultural, educational, social, environmental and literary areas.

We should be enthusiastic in spreading the message of Christ. In all circumstances we are the Disciples of Christ. In whatever state we are, wherever we are, we must be able to proclaim the Good News. Listen to what St. Paul has to say: “If I proclaim the gospel, this gives me no ground for boasting, for an obligation is laid on me and woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel” (1 Corinthians 9:16). New Evangelization is a synonym of mission activity.

New Heavens and New Earth

The world we live is momentary. At the end of time, a mysterious renewal will happen, transforming the humanity and the world. The Holy Bible calls this renewal as “new heaven and new earth” (2 Peter

3:13; Revelation 21:1). It will be the definitive realization of divine plan to transform in Christ “all things in heaven and things on earth” (Ephesians 1:10).

In this new universe or the heavenly Jerusalem that is awaited, God’s dwelling will be among the people (Revelation 21:5). Then, “he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things has passed away” (Revelation 21:4).

This everlasting union of humankind with God is the realization of God’s plan, prepared since the beginning of creation. The Church, as the “Sacrament of Christ” (*Lumen Gentium* 1), remains in the world for this ultimate union with Christ.



Ultimately, the community that is redeemed by Christ will become “God’s holy city,” “the Bride of the Lamb” (Revelation 21:3-9).

We know neither the moment of consummation of the earth and of the humanity, nor the way in which the universe will be transformed. However, this world, wounded by the sin, will pass away. A new dwelling and a new earth, where righteousness dwells, will be formed. Thus, the desire of peace arising in the hearts of human beings will be fulfilled.

The expectation of new heaven and new earth should not diminish our desire to develop this earth. Instead, our expectation of the heavenly Jerusalem must influence the building of this world because the people, who will be in the new family, grow human in this earth. We, who await the new heavens and the new earth, should spread on earth the fruits of our nature and our enterprise according to the commandment of the Lord and His Spirit. God will, then, be “all in all” in eternal life (1 Corinthians 15:28).

Activity 5

Pope Benedict XVI invited every faithful to engage in the mission of New Evangelization. Accepting this invitation discuss how to transform the world we live into a new heaven and new earth.



**GOD'S COMMANDMENTS:
GUIDELINES OF CHRISTIAN WITNESS**



To get well, a sick person has to follow the doctor's instructions and take the prescribed dosage of medicine at regular intervals. If not, the condition of that person may become worse or even die. In the same way, when things are purchased, instructions to use them have to be followed. If the instructions are not followed, things may get damaged.

As said above, God, being the Creator, has given many instructions to follow to succeed in life and reach glory according to His will. God has given these instructions to remain in love with Him and others as well. These guidelines are called God's commandments. They are the foundations of our moral life.

The Ten Commandments are the laws given by God at Mount Sinai in two tablets.

The Hebrew expression for Ten Commandments is '*Hadbari Asemet*.' The meaning of this expression is 'Ten Words.' They are also known as 'Decalogue' (Exodus 34:28).

In the New Testament, they are known as 'The Commandments' (Matthew 19:17; Romans 13:9; 1 Timothy 1:9-10).

Historical Background of God's Commandments

Moses receiving the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai is a testimony of the Holy Bible (Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 5) and at the same time, a traditional belief. Even before God gave the Ten Commandments to the Israelites through Moses, there would have existed similar laws in the ancient civilizations. For example,

- In the period between 1900-1850 BC, in ancient West Asia, similar laws existed among the shepherds.
- The laws of Babylonian Emperor, Hammurabi and the law system of the Hittite Emperors followed the same model.

According to Jewish Rabbis, God gave the Israelites Ten Commandments in writing (shebiktab) and 613 laws in saying (shebealpeh). The interpretations of these laws are contained in the rabbinic literature, called Talmud and Mishna.

God's Commandments - Foundation of the Covenant

When the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, they were governed by cruel slave laws. God asked Moses to bring the Israelites out of the land of Egypt. God led them, through Moses, from bondage in Egypt to Canaan, a land of independence and prosperity.

On Mount Sinai, God made a covenant with the Israelites and raised them to the status of 'People of God.' In order to preserve the covenantal bond, God gave them the Ten Commandments through Moses. God desired the deepening of covenantal bond with Israel through their proper observance of the Commandments. There is no meaning in observing the Commandments, neglecting the covenantal bond.

Universality of God's Commandments

We need to understand the Ten Commandments in the light of the covenant that God made with Israel. It is through the observance of the Commandments that people remain with God and respond to His love. The Ten Commandments are the basic principles of moral life of the Jewish people and later the Christians.

The Ten Commandments give moral and religious foundation and awareness in the life of Israel, the chosen people. Moreover, they help the Israelites to experience the joy of religious life and God's infinite love. At the same time, the Ten Commandments point to the love relationship that human beings need to have with God, others and themselves.

The essence of the Ten Commandments is the relationship formed out of love. The Commandments give lessons on the kind of loving relationship that one needs to have with God and one's neighbours. Therefore, the Ten Commandments, given by God to the Israelites through Moses, have a universal standing. In giving the Commandments, God aims to keep all His children to be with him at all times.

Activity 1

We see violence in the name of faith in God. In the light of universality of the Commandments suggest ways and means to put an end to such violence.

Commandments Complement One Another

The Ten Commandments, given by God, form a coherent whole. They are related to one another. One Commandment complements another. One refers to the other and to all of them. They reciprocally condition one another. Therefore, to transgress one Commandment is to infringe all the others.

The Ten Commandments were written on the tablets ‘with the finger of God’ (Exodus 31:18; Deuteronomy 5:22). The first tablets were broken and Moses wrote them again (Exodus 34:1; Deuteronomy 5:22). These elements refer to the uniqueness of Ten Commandments. Therefore, the Commandments were given not to extract obedience, but they express our fundamental duties towards God and our neighbour.

The Ten Commandments in the New Testament

We do not see in the New Testament the title, ‘Ten Commandments.’ But some of the Ten Commandments are found in the New Testament. For example, “Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only” (Matthew 4:10); “You shall not commit adultery” (Matthew 5:27); “You shall not swear falsely” (Matthew 5:33, 37).

Jesus is the fulfillment of all the laws given in the Old Testament. Therefore, Jesus has come ‘not to abolish the law but to fulfill it’ (Matthew 5:17).

Jesus, who is the fulfillment of the Law, declares the essence of God’s Commandments in the following manner: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37). “You shall love your neighbour as yourself” (Matthew 22:39).

During the Last Supper, having washed the feet of the disciples Jesus said: “So if I, your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you

also ought to wash one another's feet" (John 13:14). And He continued: "I give you a new Commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34-35).

Following Christ includes keeping the Commandments (Matthew 19:16-21).

The rich young man asked Jesus: "Teacher, what good must I do, to have eternal life?" Jesus answered him: "If you would enter life, keep the Commandments" (Matthew 9:17).

According to Jesus, the essence of Ten Commandments is love. To the question of the Scribe, "What must I do to inherit eternal life," Jesus narrated the parable of the Good Samaritan. At the end Jesus advised him "Go and do likewise" (Luke 10:37).

To attain the Kingdom of God that Jesus shows, to gain eternal life, it is necessary to follow the way Jesus has shown.

Activity 2

We are living in a world of privatization. Following one's own principles, some even keep their own conscience in the dark. Many believe that God's Commandments and virtues are out-dated. They consider them as obstacles to their freedom. They are running at the call of the modern world to worship idols of selfishness and luxury. How do you react to this challenge? Discuss how we can bring about an awareness of following Commandments of God.



First Commandment

I am the Lord your God;

you shall not have other gods before me (Exodus 20:3-6; Matthew 4:10)

These are the words with which Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed begins: “I believe in one God.” The Creed also confesses that there is no other god beside Him. So “the Christian faith confesses that God is one in nature, substance and essence” (CCC # 200).

One God is the basis of the Jewish religion. This basic belief kept the Israelites, ‘the people of God,’ together. To his chosen people, God revealed himself thus: “Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with

all your soul and with all your might” (Deuteronomy 6:4-5). Therefore, the first commandment manifests God’s greatest glory and mystery.

One God - Triune God

From the beginning, the Holy Trinity has been at the very root of the Church’s living faith. God, who is one in essence, has three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. God is eternal Father. The Son with the Father is one in essence. The Holy Spirit is sent by the Father in the Son’s name (John 14:26) as well as sent by the Son from the Father (John 15:26). Together with the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit is adored and glorified.

The Trinity is One. We do not confess three Gods, but one God in three persons. The divine persons do not share the one divinity among themselves, but each of them is God whole and entire. At the same time, “Father,” “Son,” “Holy Spirit” are not simply names designating modalities of the divine being, for they are really distinct from one another.

In the 2nd century, Theophilus, the bishop of Antioch, the capital of Syria, used for the first time the word ‘Trias’ to refer to the Trinity. The theologian, Tertullian (AD 160-220), who lived in Carthage, Africa, used the word, ‘Trinitas’ to point to the Trinity. The word Trinity in English, thus, comes from these two roots, which means ‘three equal persons in one God.’

Idol worship is not allowed

Israelites lived in the midst of states that followed idol worship. So, they had a strong inclination towards idol worship. Making idols of creatures to represent the Almighty, all powerful and infinite God is not allowed. The first commandment prohibits the Israelites from worshipping foreign gods.

Not only placing other gods but also placing any person or thing instead of Almighty God is idol worship. There is nothing more valuable than God in this world. Authority, wealth, status and going after fame and giving more importance to oneself are also expressions of idol worship.

One God, One People

Belief in one God was the basis of the Israelites' faith. So they remained different from other religions. This enabled them to come together as 'one people.' Though they were weak, this faith made them strong indeed.

What does the First Commandment Ask of Us?

1. Believe in God. Hope and trust in Him. Love Him above all.
2. Adore God alone. Pray to Him. Practice the promises and vows made to Him.
3. Avoid superstition. Superstition is a deviation from religious feeling and of the practices this feeling imposes. Fortune telling, soothsaying, prediction, foretelling, magic, jugglery, sorcery, witchcraft, black magic, etc. are all idol worship in different forms. Human beings commit idolatry whenever they honour and revere a creature in the place of God.
4. Testing God through words or deeds, sacrilege and carelessly handling spiritual things are forms of rejection of God.
5. The Christian veneration of saints is not contrary to the first Commandment.
6. Believe in God and love of God is not only manifested through Holy Eucharist and prayer but also through love and acts of mercy to our neighbours.

Second Commandment

**“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain”
(Exodus 20:7; Leviticus 19:12)**

We live in a world, where each one competes to make a name for oneself, forgetting God. The Old Testament, in the narrative of “Tower of Babel” (Genesis 11:1-9), describes an example of this tendency of human beings.

Some may ask, ‘what is there in a name?’ The Babylonians and subsequently the Hebrews believed that the name of a person is related to his or her existence. In the Holy Bible, we see that all that exists have names (Ecclesiastes 6:10) and their substance is in the name itself (Genesis 27:36). In the light of the Holy Bible, to eliminate one’s equal is to make one non-existent (1 Samuel 24:21; 2 Kings 14:27; Job 18:17; Psalms 83:4; Isaiah 14:22; Zephaniah 1:4). Also, we see in the Holy Bible changing of names to give newness to the existence of persons. For example, Abram is changed to Abraham (Genesis 17:5), Sarai is changed to Sarah (Genesis 17:15) and Jacob is changed to Israel (Genesis 35:10). God’s special love and choosing is seen in the process of changing of names (Isaiah 62:2). God gives opportunity to human beings to name all the living creatures (Genesis 2:20). Thus, God bestows on human beings the authority over all living creatures and the responsibility to handle them wisely (Genesis 2:20; Isaiah 40:26).

God’s Name - “*El*”, “*Elohim*”

“*El*” is an important word in Semitic language to denote God. This word is used about 238 times in the Holy Bible. In the Old Testament, “*El*” is used in combination with other names or qualities of God. For example, *El Shaddai* (Almighty God or God Almighty, Exodus 6:3), *Beth-El* (House of God - Genesis 28:19), *El Elyon* (God most High - Genesis 14:19, 22), *El Olam* (Everlasting God - Genesis 21:33), *El Elohe* (Visible God - Genesis 33:20)

“*El*” was mainly used to show respect as well as to proclaim God’s strength. *Elohim* is the plural form. It was mainly used to indicate idols.

The Name Yahweh

Even before God made a covenant with Israel, He revealed His name to Moses: “I am who I am” (Exodus 3:14). “I am” or “To be” does not denote here philosophical substance. Instead, it actually denotes the verb, “save.”

Yahweh taught that what His name reveals is “He.” He is the one who saves. His name dwells in the House of God (Deuteronomy 12:11; 14:23; 16:11; 1 Kings 3:2), in Zion (Isaiah 18:7) and in Shiloh (Jeremiah 7:12).

The Name of Yahweh

The name of Yahweh is the “glorious name” (Psalms 72:19), “great name” (1 Kings 8:42), “awesome name” (Deuteronomy 28:58) and “exalted name” (Psalms 148:13). In His name, people are liberated (Psalms 54:17); they are exalted (Psalm 20:8; 89:5) and receive victory (1 Samuel 17:45, 50). Moreover, all take shelter under His name (Psalms 124:8).

It was very necessary for Moses to know God’s name. Knowing the name is as good as experiencing God. Therefore, His name ought to be uttered with great reverence (Exodus 20:7; Leviticus 24:1; Deuteronomy 5:11).

People of Israel were afraid of uttering the name of God. So ‘Yahweh’ was replaced by the divine title “*Adonai*” (it means ‘Lord’ or Master).

God’s name in the New Testament

Jesus’ main mission was to reveal the Father’s name to the world and to glorify that name by saving humankind (John 12:28). The first part of ‘Our Father’ is “hallowed be **your name**” (Matthew 6:9; Luke 11:2). Jesus’ prayer for his disciples is “Holy Father, protect them in **your name**” (John 17:11).

In the New Testament, the Greek word '*Theos*' is used for God. God is the 'God of Israel' (Acts 2:30; Romans 11:1) and 'Father in Heaven' (Matthew 6:1; 7:11; 10:32). John introduces Jesus also as '*Theos*' (John 1:1, 18, 20, 28). Moreover, the name, '*Kyrios*' (Lord) also is used to call Jesus as it is used to God (Matthew 5:23; Luke 1:6). The New Testament presents Jesus as the 'Holy One of God' (Acts 2:27; 13:35). Furthermore, the New Testament uses the following names for Jesus: Almighty (Revelation 1:8); Saviour (*soter* - John 4:42; Acts 13:23; 1 Timothy 2:3); King of the ages (1 Timothy 1:17; Revelation 15:3).

Significance of Jesus' Name

1. Jesus' name assumes supernatural power (Mark 16:17; Luke 10:17; Acts 3:6; 4:12). However, Jesus' name does not depict miraculous power (Acts 19:13-16). The Apostles taught that Jesus' name will



bring forgiveness of sins and salvation (Acts 10:43; 1 John 2:12). There is no other name than name of Jesus (Acts 4:12).

2. The name of Jesus is greater than any other name (Philippians 2:9-11; Ephesians 1:21). The Christian belief is in Jesus' name (John 3:18). One inherits eternal life through faith in Jesus' name.
3. The disciples have to proclaim the name of Jesus (Acts 5:40; 8:12; 9:15, 28). The message of the Gospel and the person of Jesus remain same. So, to proclaim Gospel means to proclaim Jesus.
4. Christian life is founded on Jesus' name. To call the name of Jesus, one needs the assistance of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:3). The Church and the individual have to pray in the name of Jesus (John 14:3; 16:26). The Christians perform good deeds in the name of Jesus (Matthew 18:5; Colossians 3:17). Jesus demands that for his name everything in this world has to be forsaken (Matthew 19:29).

What does the Second Commandment Ask of Us?

1. God's name must be praised (Psalms 8:1; 98:3; 112:3; Matthew 6:10). People of Israel were afraid of pronouncing God as Yahweh. Instead they uttered the name '*Adoni*' (Master or Lord). The Chief Priest pronounced the holy name of God – Yahweh – only once a year for all the people to hear. This proclamation was made on the Atonement Day by entering the Temple in sack clothes.
2. God's name should not to be blasphemed. In English, 'blaspheme' means to speak without respect about God or to speak against God. This word originates from the Greek root *pheme* (good name). The words uttered against God's name is blasphemy. According to St. Jerome, "There is no evil greater than blasphemy." Therefore, God's name should not be used for evil intention or for selfish motives.

Third Commandment

“Keep Holy the Lord’s Day” (Exodus 20:8-11; Deuteronomy 5:12-15)

The ‘Lord’s Day’ in the Old Testament signifies the Sabbath. It is also used for the Day of Judgment, the last day.

The Day of Sabbath

Two different instances are introduced for the basis of keeping the Sabbath. First, according to a narrative in the book of Exodus, the Sabbath is observed in remembrance of creation (20:11). Second, in the book of Deuteronomy the Sabbath is observed in remembrance of the exodus event (5:15). In short, Sabbath is the memory of creation and salvation.

The word, Sabbath, comes from the Hebrew origin, *shabbat*, which means ‘to rest’ or ‘to stop.’ Greek word, *sabbaton* means ‘to rest from the labour.’ Sabbath is the day kept aside for the service of God, abstaining from all other work.

The basis of Sabbath is on God creating the universe in six days and then resting on the seventh day (Genesis 2:2-3). There existed God’s commandment as well to keep the Sabbath holy (Exodus 20:8-9). For Israelites, Sabbath was a day of rest, joy and worship (Exodus 20:10). The Sabbath lasted from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset (Nehemiah 13:19).

Jesus and the Sabbath

As a Jew, Jesus went to the Synagogue on the Sabbath (Luke 4:16) and taught (Mark 1:21; Luke 13:10). But Jesus strongly rejected the Sabbath observance that neglected respect, love and mercy towards humanity. Therefore, Jesus declared, “The Sabbath was made for humankind and not humankind for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27). This declaration clearly state Jesus’ approach to the Sabbath observance. In

Jesus' approach, the Sabbath is the appropriate time to do good (Mark 3:45; Luke 13:10-17; John 7:21-24). This is the essence of the very observance of Sabbath.

Lord's Day in the New Testament

In the New Testament, Jesus is the Lord of Sabbath (Matthew 12:8; Mark 2:28). Like the Jews, the early Christians also observed Sabbath (Matthew 16:1; Luke 23:56). But in the course of time, Sabbath observance turned to Sunday observance. The early Christians' observance of Sunday was in memory of the Lord's resurrection. Today, we follow the same tradition.

Lord's Day and His Judgment

In the Old Testament, the Lord's Day is also related to Judgment Day. On the Judgment Day, God, who judges will establish His Judgment by justly saving the poor and the downtrodden (Psalms 7:9-17; 24:5; 35:23; 37:6; 146:7).

In the New Testament, Jesus is the Judge. The criterion for eternal judgment is faith in Jesus (Acts 10:42; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Matthew 10:32; Mark 8:38; Luke 12:8). The Judgment will be passed on the Second Coming of Christ (Luke 9:27; Matthew 25:31-46). No one can escape the Judgment on the final day (Luke 12:8-10; Matthew 10:32; 25:31-46; Mark 8:38; 9:27). Moreover, the Judgment Day will reveal the complete meaning of God's creation and saving activity.

What does the Third Commandment Ask of Us?

1. Sabbath represents the completion of the first creation (Genesis 2:12). It was replaced by Sunday that inaugurated the new creation brought through the resurrection of Christ.

2. The Church celebrates the day of Christ's resurrection on the "eighth day," the Sunday, which is rightly called the Lord's Day.
3. Sunday is to be observed as the foremost day of obligation in the Universal Church. On Sundays and other days of obligation the faithful are bound to participate in the Holy Eucharist.
4. Every Christian should avoid making unnecessary demands on others that would hinder them fulfilling the Sunday obligation, resting of human body and communion of the faithful.

Activity 3

Evaluate your participation in Sunday liturgy that is celebrated as the Lord's Day and discuss and find out ways to participate more meaningfully in the Sunday liturgy.

Fourth Commandment

"Honour your father and your mother" (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16)

In the light of the Holy Bible, the Second Vatican Council teaches that God established marriage as the foundation and the beginning of human society.

The family is a domestic church. Therefore, the family participates in all the activities of the Church. Being an indispensable part of the Church, every family participates in the liturgical and social activities of the Church. Each family is vested with the responsibility of bringing the Church close to those living in their vicinity.

Duties to Parents

God desires that we respect our parents and those who are in authority for our welfare.

Children who love and respect their parents merit God's grace:

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and your mother - this is the first commandment with a promise: so that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth” (Ephesians 6:1-3).

In the same way, children who insult and reproach their parents will face troubles in their lives:

“In the last days distressing times will come. For people will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy” (2 Timothy 3:1-2).

Filial respect is shown by true docility and obedience. Respect for parents derives from gratitude towards them. In that way, family life as a whole will become one charming unity.

Children, who do not love and respect their own parents, will not respect elders outside their family too.

Duties to Children

The fourth Commandment, ‘honour your father and mother,’ becomes meaningful not only when the children respect their parents but also when parents fulfill their duties and responsibilities to children. Only when husband and wife love one another will children learn to love and respect them. Children learn their childhood lessons on family life and marriage life from their parents. Parents should teach their children to love and respect the Church and the Church authorities, not only through words but also through their actions.

In the Book of Deuteronomy, the Lord God of Israel gives this advice: “Keep these words that I am commanding you this day, in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise” (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

The Second Vatican Council, in its Decree on Apostolate of Laity, reminds the parents on their duties towards children:

1. Parents must be witnesses of faith and collaborate in obtaining grace for themselves, their children and for other members of the family.
2. They must be the first ones to teach and preach the faith to their children.
3. Parents through their own life and advice must give shape to their children's Christian faith and propagation of the faith.
4. Parents should wisely guide their children in choosing their vocations in life and nourish their lives according to their vocation.

Marriage and Family Life

The conjugal life is established upon the foundation of the vows and consent of the spouses. Marriage and family are ordered to the good of the spouses and to the procreation and education of the children.

The common good of individuals and society, especially the Christian society, is related to the well-being and happiness of the families.

What does the Fourth Commandment Ask of Us?

1. Family life lays the foundation to the existence of individuals and society.
2. The family can become a temple of God through mutual love among the members and praying together.
3. As a miniature of Church life, the family members must be ever ready to bear witness to Christ.

4. Special care, love and protection must be extended to aged parents and to those who are single and to poor neighbours.
5. By adopting orphans and sheltering the homeless, the family can propagate Christ's message.
6. Family members also have the responsibility to extend a helping hand to those undergoing moral and financial problems.

Activity 4

Instances of aged parents being sent to old age homes and to others as a result of quarrels in the family or are left uncared for etc have increased. Have a group discussion to find out how this evil can be stopped.

Fifth Commandment

“You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17)

Human being is created to the image and likeness of God. Therefore, from ancient times, any action against human life was considered to be an action against God himself. Death penalty was also imposed on those who kill (Genesis 9:6).

God is the Lord of Life

God is the author of life. He gives life, sustains it and takes it back. A human being has no authority over life. “In His hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being” (Job 12:10). God has entrusted to human beings the responsibility to preserve life. We are obliged not only to protect our own lives but also the lives of others. Human life, from its beginning, should be protected with great care. In other words, human life from its conception should be safeguarded with great attention.

From conception to death, each person is sacred because human beings are created in the image and likeness of God.

Killing human beings is against their individual greatness and the Creator's holiness. Therefore, it is a grave sin.

Shall not murder

As the result of original sin, anger and jealousy are present from the beginning of human history. An example of this case is the killing of Cain (Genesis 4:8-12). However, accused being executed under law and killing enemies in a war are not against this Commandment.

Moreover, one has the right to protect life lawfully when his or her life is threatened. Love for oneself remains a fundamental principle of morality. It has to be respected. Therefore, in the act of self-defense, the killing of the aggressor is not murder. St. Thomas Aquinas tells: "If a man in self-defense uses more than necessary violence, it will be unlawful: whereas if he repels force with moderation, his defense will be lawful ... One is bound to take more care of one's own life than the others."

We are obliged to protect other people's lives just as we protect our own lives. Yet to protect common good and protect human life it may become necessary to punish the aggressor.

Love your enemies

1. In the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord recalls the Commandment: "You shall not kill" (Matthew 5:21). He also prohibits anger, hatred and vengeance towards another (Matthew 5:22-39). Jesus taught: "Love your enemies" (Matthew 5:44). He told Peter: "Put your sword back into its place (Matthew 26:52).

2. In the life of Christians, love is the greatest virtue (1 Corinthians 13:13). A Christian is not to destroy the life of a friend, but has to follow the teaching and life of Jesus who said: “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (John 15:13).
3. We should be aware of the acts and occasions that pose danger to human life. We should fight against the use of alcohol, drugs, destruction of environment and adulteration.

What does the Fifth Commandment Ask of Us?

1. God alone is the author of life from the beginning until the end. No one, under any circumstance, has the right to destroy human life.
2. Everyone is indebted to God, who gave life. Life should be protected for His glory and for the salvation of souls. We are only protectors of life, not the owners of life.
3. The life of the disabled, sick, elderly and the dying is sacred.
4. Infanticide, fratricide, parricide and murder of one’s spouse are especially grave sins since they break natural bonds.
5. Each one’s right to live should be respected. Just like killing, the thought and desire to destroy others also is a grave sin.
6. Abortion, infanticide, suicide, murder, mercy killing, etc. are all grave sins.
7. God declares: “For your life blood, I will surely require a reckoning from human beings, each one for the blood of another, whoever sheds the blood of a human by a human shall that person’s blood be shed for in his own image God made mankind” (Genesis 9:5-6).

Sixth Commandment

“You shall not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 20:10)

Love is the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being. We must be able to love and be loved. Human beings are born out of the union of love.

Sexuality is an important part of the conjugal love between man and woman. Through sexual union man and woman express their love for each other and beget children. Thereby, they cooperate in God’s creative work and carry out the great responsibility entrusted to them.

As the first commandment of Decalogue demands our indebtedness and trust towards God, the sixth commandment too demands the same trust among the relationship between husband and wife.

Therefore, every sexual relationship outside a husband-wife bond is considered evil. That is adultery. Adultery is the sexual union between



a married person and one unmarried, or between a married person and the spouse of another.

Violation of Marriage Vows

The marriage vows of spouses, expressed by consent, demands fidelity among each other. Thereby, they have the duty to preserve the unity of marriage. By giving life to children, the married couples participate in the fatherhood of God. Therefore, adultery is a grave violation of indebtedness to a life partner, of promise made to each and the trust placed on them.

Not only adultery, but divorce and polygamy are also grave evils against marriage.

Birth Control and Marital Life

The regulation of birth represents one of the aspects of responsibilities of fatherhood and motherhood. But the legitimate intentions on the part of the spouse do not justify the use of immoral means. Direct sterilization, contraception, etc are grave sins.

Christ is the Way to Holiness

Christ is the way to holiness. Christ, who gave his life for God and humans, the “Holy One of God” (John 6:69). Everyone, who has received baptism, in any state or walk of life, is called to lead a holy life. Thus, they receive the grace to “see God face to face” (Isaiah 6:1-3).

Jesus taught that adultery does not rest on the level of act alone, but even a look with lust is also adultery (Matthew 5:27-28). Therefore, we must give up impure gestures and similar sins. Lust, masturbation, fornication, pornography, prostitution, rape, etc. are sins against chastity.

“Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s spirit dwells in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19, 13:20).

What does the Sixth Commandment Ask of Us?

1. By creating man and woman equally, God has given personal dignity equally to them. Therefore, man and woman should acknowledge and accept their sexual identity.
2. Adultery brings about the ruin of marital life. It is a challenge against family and community life. Moreover, adultery is a grave sin against God’s holiness (Leviticus 20:10; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13).
3. All sexual actions outside the marital bond are sins.
4. We must consider Christ as the model to lead a pure life. We must creatively utilize our abilities to love and to be loved for the building of the society. In that way, we will be able to respond faithfully to God’s call to participate in His plan of salvation.
5. We must respect human dignity. The approach and action (scandals) that lead one to evil destroy virtues. This leads to the spiritual death of oneself and the other.

Seventh Commandment

“You shall not steal” (Exodus 20:15; Deuteronomy 5:19; Matthew 9:18)

This universe and everything in it, created by God, belong to every human being. The survival of the human race depends on God’s creation. Even though all created things belong to God, the human race is given authority over them (Genesis 2:19). The authority given

to human race over minerals, flora and animals by God is not to destroy them. But human beings have to protect and preserve them for the future by exercising their moral responsibility. Human beings can satisfy their requirement with the help of created things. Therefore, they should not exploit nature.

Universal Destination of Created Things

God entrusted the earth and its resources to the common stewardship of human beings so that they take care of them, master them by labour and enjoy their fruits. The goods of creation are destined for the whole human race (Genesis 1: 26-29). Therefore, human beings should labour for sustenance of their lives. When they work in union with Christ, their work becomes redemptive. Each one, according to one's labour, can earn justice and true wealth. The right to private property does not abolish the universal destination of goods.

Stealing is Sin

It is forbidden to possess or keep the goods of another unjustly or to cause damage to them. Having possession of someone's wealth is stealing. It is a punishable offense (1 Corinthians 6:10). Stealing tears down God's plan and leads one to eternal ruin. Therefore, St. Paul writes: "Thieves must give up stealing, rather let them labour and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy" (Ephesians 4:28).

Human Dignity must be Respected

Human being is the author, center and goal of all economic and social life. Therefore, human dignity must be respected in the process of handing over of created things. Human beings should not be made slaves for selfish and industrial motives. They should not be sold and

bought as commodities. Any enterprise or economic affair should always aim for the complete development of human beings.

What does the Seventh Commandment Ask of Us?

1. The ultimate aim of the use of the material goods must be the love of God and love of neighbour.
2. Find the people, who are homeless and hungry like Lazarus in the parable of Jesus (Luke 17:19-31). Listen to Jesus, who says, “As you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me” (Matthew 25:45).
3. Giving alms is a witness of our Christian living and fraternal charity. It is a just deed, which is pleasing to God.
4. We should protect the created things and ensure that they reach everyone.
5. We should not lose eternal life through our unjust and unfaithful deeds.

Activity 5

Evaluate the following incident in the light of seventh commandment: A hungry man steals food. The owner catches him. He is punished cruelly.

Eighth Commandment

“You shall not give false witness” (Exodus 20:16; Deuteronomy 5:19-20; Matthew 5:33)

Jesus said to Thomas: “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). Jesus said on another occasion: “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples and you will know the truth and the truth will make you free” (John 8:31-32).

We are Children of God and We Witness to Truth

We are the children of God, who is the truth and desires the truth. God is the origin of everything that is true. His Word is truth. His Law is truth. His faithfulness endures in all generations (Psalms 119:90; Proverbs 8:7; 2 Samuel 7:28; Psalms 119:142; Luke 1:50).

Since Christ is “true” (John 14:6), all those who believe in Christ have to be faithful in their words and deeds. We are children of God and his witnesses. ‘We should not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord’ (2 Timothy 1:8).

What does the Eighth Commandment Ask of Us?

1. This commandment tells us that we need to speak the truth always.
2. For a just judgment, truthful witnesses are necessary. If the witnesses are false and unjust the innocent and just will be in danger.
3. We need to be truthful in all our relationships.
4. We have to respect the reputation and honour of individuals. We have to avoid all detraction and calumny.

Ninth Commandment

“You shall not covet your neighbour’s wife” (Exodus 20:17)

The first eight commandments deal about deeds, whereas the last two commandments deal about desire or thought.

Before a person commits a sinful deed he or she already commits it in the heart or thought. Every sin is born in the heart. “Everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matthew 5:28).

The inclination of the human heart is evil from the beginning (Genesis 8:21). But we are now redeemed by Christ. St. Paul tells to the Ephesians: “All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh and senses and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. But God who is rich in mercy, out of great love with which He loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ - by grace you have been saved” (Ephesians 2:3-5).

First letter of John divides evil desires into three (1 John 2:16):

1. Desire of the flesh
2. Desire of the eyes
3. Pride in riches

Among these three, according to St. Paul, the desire of the flesh is a fight against the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-17; Ephesians 2:3). The heart is the origin of moral individuality. We are obliged to keep our hearts pure. God desires purity of the heart: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God” (Matthew 5:8).

The desires of flesh and eyes should be controlled and pride has to be destroyed because they make the heart impure. “Out of the heart comes evil thoughts, murder, adultery and fornication” (Matthew 15:19). Purity of heart makes one eligible to see God. It enables us to see all things as God sees them.

What does the Ninth Commandment Ask of Us?

1. Remain alert against evil inclinations.
2. Preserve the purity of heart. Purity of the heart demands prayer, the practice of chastity, purity of intention and vision. Purity of heart also requires patience, decency and discretion

3. Saved by Christ, we enjoy freedom. Let us not become slave of anything.
4. “Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (Galatians 5:24). They will live by the Spirit and be led by the Spirit.

Tenth Commandment

“You shall not covet your neighbour’s goods” (Exodus 20:17)

Passion for riches and control over them leads one to amass earthly goods without limit. It is necessary to give-up earthly possessions to attain Kingdom of God. So Jesus said: “Blessed are the poor in Spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven” (Matthew 5:3). Jesus said to those who live in worldly possessions, forgetting God and people: “Woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation” (Luke 6:24).

Sell and Give to the poor

A rich young man came to Jesus seeking the way to eternal life. Knowing that he kept the Commandments, Jesus said, “You lack one thing. Go sell what you own and give the money to the poor and you will have treasures in heaven, then come and follow me” (Mark 10:17-21). But when the young man heard this, he sadly turned back because he had much wealth.

If wealth is a hindrance to enter the Kingdom of God, Jesus teaches to ‘give it up.’ Looking at the rich who are attached to wealth, Jesus said, “Children how hard it is to enter the Kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the Kingdom of God” (Mark 10:24-25).

What does the Tenth Commandment Ask of Us?

1. We are called to earn our living. We have to be content with what we have and have to trust in God, who is the source of everything.
2. Do not envy. Envy is a feeling of discontented or resentful longing aroused by someone else's possessions, qualities or luck. It is a capital sin.
3. The desire of humankind "to see God" is real. This true thirst of humankind will be quenched only by everlasting water (John 4:14). We will not get happiness, peace and eternal life through the earthly wealth we possess.

Conclusion

The essence of God's Commandments is love: Love of God and love of neighbour. "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 also important that "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18). These two are most important commandments. Jesus taught to keep these Commandments (Matthew 22:37-40; Mark 12:30-32; Luke 10:27).

Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) and the rich young man, who went away grieving (Matthew 19:16-22) show us that the essence of the Commandments is love and we should practice charity. Jesus said to his disciples: "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13). He also said: "I give you a new Commandment that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you should also love one another" (John 13:34-35).

Activity 6

Today there are many voluntary groups engaged in works of mercy. Contact some of such groups and find out what they do. Discuss in groups what you can do for the good of the society and prepare an action plan.

Clearing Some Doubts

1. Does the first Commandment prohibit the veneration of statues?

The book of Deuteronomy strongly prohibits the making of idols (Deut 4:15-16) because God is greater than every created being (Sirach 43:27-28) and the Lord of all (Wisdom 13:13). Nevertheless, God permits to make certain images that point to liberation. Thus, a bronze serpent and a tabernacle were made. The Second Council of Nicaea justified not only the veneration of icons of Christ but also of Mother Mary, the angels and all the Saints. Therefore, Christian veneration of images is not contrary to the first Commandment, which prohibits idols. St. Basil teaches: “The honour paid to the icon passes to the prototype and is not intended for the paint and wood. The icon depicts the likeness of the sacred person and not only his physical appearance but his spiritually transformed appearance. Thus the iconographer depicts the *person*, both soul and body.” Veneration of images is not equal to the adoration rendered to God.

2. Why does abortion become a grave sin?

Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of existence a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person. Therefore, direct abortion and formal cooperation in the act of abortion constitute a grave offense. The Church attaches canonical penalty of excommunication to this serious crime against human life. A person who procures a complete abortion incurs excommunication by the very commission of the offense. The Church does not, thereby, intend to restrict the scope of mercy but rather make clear the gravity of the crime committed and the irreparable harm done.

5



HUMANITY





Socrates, the renowned philosopher, was very dear to the youth. He was born in Athens in 469 BC. He was a seeker of truth. He encouraged the youth to ‘always pose questions.’ Socrates taught the youth to know oneself and to receive, everything that is beyond them and everything that exists, with a questioning mind.

We can say that raising questions and seeking the truth are special features of human beings. Even from the childhood human beings ask questions and thus gain knowledge. Knowledge becomes a great strength to human beings. Therefore, every person should know oneself, one’s dignity, God and the Society.

Pope St. Leo, the great, called upon the Christians with the following words: “Christian, remember your dignity, and now that you

share in God's own nature, do not return by sin to your former base condition. Bear in mind who is your head and of whose body you are a member. Do not forget that you have been rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the light of God's kingdom."

Dignity of the Human Person

The dignity of the human persons is rooted in the fact that they are created in the image and likeness of God. "Christ ... by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals humankind to humankind itself and makes (their) supreme calling clear" (*Gaudium et Spes* 22).

Call to Human Dignity

The divine image is present in every human being. From conception human person is destined for eternal glory.

Human beings experience freedom by virtue of their soul and through their spiritual powers of intellect and will.

By virtue of their reason, human beings recognize the voice of God, which urges them to do what is good and avoid what is evil. Thus human beings are called to lead a life with healthy attitudes.

Fall of Human Beings

Human beings, enticed by the Evil One, abused their freedom at the very beginning of history. Even though they succumbed to temptation and did what was evil they still desire the good. But their nature bears the wound of original sin. Therefore, they are inclined to evil and subject to error.

Call to Salvation

The Son of God came to deliver us from the dominion of Satan and sin through his passion and death. Thus grace of the Holy Spirit, which was lost through sin, was restored.

Those who believe in Christ become children of God. The status of children of God makes the human beings capable of doing good and become strong. The disciple of Christ attains perfection or holiness by becoming one with the Saviour.

The moral life that grows in the grace and become matured makes one to attain eternal life or heavenly glory.

Activity 1

In the society where we live today, human dignity is dishonoured. Prepare a questionnaire and evaluate on the different areas where human dignity is dishonoured. In the light of the discussion submit a plan about an ideal society that you dream of.

Christ's Magna Carta for Humanity

The Beatitudes are the essence of Jesus' preaching (Matthew 5:3-12; Luke 6:20-26). They express the vocation of each human being. They shed light on the actions and attitudes that the Christian life needs.

The Beatitudes contain the promises made to the chosen people since Abraham. And the Beatitudes fulfill these promises pointing a life focused on heaven. Thus the Beatitudes respond to the desire for happiness that God has placed in human heart.

The Beatitudes teach us the ultimate end of our life, to where God calls us: Kingdom of God, Vision of God, Participation in the Divine, Eternal Life, Status as Children of God, Rest in God's Abode, etc.

The Beatitudes confront us with decisive choices concerning earthly goods. They purify our hearts in order to teach us to love God above all things. Moreover, the Beatitudes set the standards to discern the use of the earthly goods in keeping with the law of God.

God calls us to his state of blessedness. This call is addressed individually to each one. Blessedness makes us partakers of the divine nature and the eternal life (2 Peter 1:4; John 17:3). Thus, we can enter into Christ's glory.

God has placed us in this world to know, love and serve Him and thereby attain paradise.

Activity 2

Read the Beatitudes of Jesus (Matthew 5:3-12; Luke 6:20-26) in two groups. The Beatitudes contain Christ's vision of Christian life. Find out the challenges the world poses today to live the Christian life, envisioned in the Beatitudes. Prepare an essay or hold a debate in the light of your findings.

Human Freedom and Responsibility

St. Irenaeus wrote about human beings in the following manner: "Man is rational and therefore like God, he is created with free will and is master over his acts."

Human beings can initiate and control their own actions. They are 'left in the hands of their own counsel.

Human beings are created with freedom. They are free to act or not to act, to do this or that.

Freedom is power, rooted in reason and will. It is a great force for growth and maturity rooted in truth and goodness. It attains its perfection when directed towards God.

The choice to disobey and do evil is an abuse of freedom and leads to “the slavery of sin” (Romans 6:17).

When a person does more good deeds he or she enjoys more freedom. There is no real freedom if there is no service in goodness and justice.

Every act is attributed to its author. The Lord asked Eve after the sin in the garden, “What is this that you have done” (Genesis 3:13)? He asked Cain the same question (Genesis 4:10). The prophet Nathan questioned David in the same way after he committed adultery with the wife of Uriah and had him murdered (2 Samuel 12:7-15).

Responsibility that freedom entrusts us with

Freedom has to be exercised in relationship between human beings. Every human being has the right to exercise freedom, especially in moral and religious matters. This right has to be protected by civil authority within the limits of the common good and public order.

The exercise of freedom does not imply the right to say or do everything. Freedom has to be exercised with responsibility; the responsibility of safeguarding the human dignity. By deviating from this responsibility human beings violate their own freedom. Thus they become imprisoned within themselves.

The responsibility for an action can be diminished or nullified by ignorance, force, fear and other psychological or social factors.

We have to live in accordance with the sense of truth and the goodness that God has placed in our hearts. The more docile we are to the promptings divine inspiration, the more we grow in inner freedom. “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (2 Corinthians 3:17).

Morality of Human Acts

Freedom makes the human being a moral subject. When one acts deliberately he or she becomes the master of his or her acts. Therefore, human acts can be morally evaluated. They are either good or evil.

The circumstances are additional factors of moral acts. The circumstances can increase or decrease the responsibility of the one who acts.

For a moral act, common good of the subject, purpose and circumstances are necessary.

There are concrete acts that are chosen wrongly, because their choice entails a moral evil. No one may do a moral evil so that good may result from it.

An act is morally good when a chosen act is accepted by the will and judged whether it is good or evil.

An evil action cannot be justified by reference to a good intention. The end does not justify the means.

Morality of Human Passions

The term “passions” belongs to the Christian patrimony. Feelings or passions are emotions or movements of the sensitive appetite.

The passions are natural components of the human psyche. Jesus taught that human heart is the source from which the passions spring (Mark 7:21).

There are many passions. The most fundamental passion is love. St. Thomas Aquinas taught: “To love is to will the good of another.” All other emotions have their source in this first movement.

St. Augustine teaches: “Only the good can be loved. Passions are evil if love is evil and good if it is good.” When the passions make possible good deeds then passions are morally good. If they do not enable one to do good then passions are evil. Good mind leads the movements of the eyes to the good. Evil mind become slave to evil passions.

Let us raise the emotions and feelings to the status of virtues or consider them as vices. For the fulfillment of the human goodness or righteousness, it is necessary that passions are controlled by the will.

Moral perfection consists not only in human beings’ choice by will but also by their sensitive appetite. Let us sing with the Psalmist: “My heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God” (Psalms 84:2).

Human Beings and Conscience

Human beings have in their hearts a law inscribed by God. It is the inner voice that calls them always to love and to do what is good

and to avoid evil. It resounds in their hearts at the right moment. The conscience is a person's most secret core and his or her sanctuary.

Moral conscience (Romans 2:14-16) present in the hearts of the persons enjoin them the appropriate moment to do good and to avoid evil. When they listen to their conscience, they can hear God speaking.

It is very important for every person to be sufficiently present to themselves in order to hear and follow the voice of their conscience. They must not be forced to act contrary to their conscience; nor must they be prevented from acting according to their conscience especially in religious matters.

In the formation of conscience the Word of God is the light for our path (Psalms 119:105). We must assimilate the Word of God in faith and prayer and put it into practice. Moreover, everyone has to obey the judgment of their right conscience.

“Return to your conscience. Do not question it. Turn inward, brethren. And in everything you do, see God as your witness” (St. Augustine).

Activity 3

Evaluate the following statement: An evil action cannot be justified by reference to a good intention. The end does not justify the means.

The Individual and the Society

Human person is a social being. Human person has to live in the society. Society is not a superfluous entity. But it is a necessary constituent of human nature. Individuals develop their potentials through their sharing, mutual service and dialogue with other and by fulfilling their obligations. Thus they respond to their call.

There is a certain resemblance between the unity of the divine persons in the Holy Trinity and the fraternity that human beings have to establish among themselves in truth and love. Love of neighbour is inseparable from love of God. Each person has certain rights and obligations to the society in which he or she is a member.

Each society is defined in accordance with its purpose. Hence every society has particular laws pertaining to its nature and purpose.

Human Being is the Centre

The human person is and ought to be the principle, the subject and the end of all social institutions. Any system that disregards the importance of human being cannot be accepted.

For the growth of human persons, as per their nature, societal life is necessary. Family and State correspond more directly to the human nature.

Similarly, the formation of associations and institutions must be encouraged. Such associations, both national and international, have to be related to economic and social goals, to cultural and recreational activities, to sport, various professions and to political affairs. This socialization process develops the qualities of individuals.

Socialization also presents dangers. For example, excessive intervention by the State can threaten a person's freedom and initiative. Similarly, a community of a higher order can interfere in the internal matters of a community of a lower order, depriving the latter of its functions.

Human Virtues Needed for Creating Society

A virtue is a habitual and firm disposition to do the good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself or herself.

Human virtues are firm attitudes, stable dispositions and habitual perfections of intellect and will that govern our actions, order our passions, and guide our conduct according to reason and faith. They make possible ease, self-mastery and joy in leading a morally good life. The virtuous person is one who freely practices the good.

Cardinal Virtues

Four virtues play a pivotal role and accordingly are called “cardinal”; all the others are grouped around them. They are: prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance.

Prudence is the virtue that disposes practical reason to discern and to choose the right means of achieving it.

Justice is the moral virtue that consists in the constant and firm will to give their due to God and neighbour.

Fortitude is the moral virtue that ensures firmness in difficulties and constancy in the pursuit of good.

Temperance is the moral virtue that moderates the attraction of pleasures and provides balance in the use of created goods.

Theological Virtues Needed for Creating Society

The theological virtues relate human beings directly to God. They dispose Christians to live in relationship with the Holy Trinity. The Christians have the One and the Triune God for their origin, motive and object.

Theological virtues are three: Faith, Hope and Charity (1 Corinthians 13:13). They give knowledge and life to all moral virtues.

By Faith we believe in God and believe all that he has said and revealed to us, and that Holy Church proposes for our belief, because he is truth itself. “The righteous shall live by faith” (Romans 1:17).

By Hope we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ’s promises and relying on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit.

By Charity, we love God above all things for His own sake and our neighbour as ourselves for the love of God. Charity binds everything together in perfect harmony (Colossians 3:14).

Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit

The moral life of a Christian is sustained by the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. They are: Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety and Fear of the Lord.

According to Church tradition, there are twelve fruits that the Holy Spirit forms in us as first fruits of eternal glory. They are: Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Generosity, Gentleness, Faithfulness, Modesty, Self Control and Chastity (Galatians 5:22-23).

The Individual and the State

Family and state are visible adaptations of human nature. God the Creator does not desire to keep the exercise of the entire authority to Himself. He entrusts the created beings to exercise authority in accordance with their ability. In societal life has to assume this type of governance.

State and Authority

Authorities of the humanity or those who govern the people have to be the ministers of God's care. By authority one means the quality by virtue of which persons or institutions make laws and give orders to people and expect obedience from them.

Every human community and nation needs an authority to govern them. It is necessary for the unity of the nation or state. The role of the political authority is to ensure as far as possible the common good of the society.

According to Christian outlook, authority comes from God. "The choice of the political regime and the appointment of rulers are left to the decision of the citizens" (*Gaudium et Spes* 74). Therefore, the role of the nation is to ensure the common good of the society and to promote its growth. But exercise of authority should not be dictatorial. It must be a "moral force based on freedom and a sense of responsibility" (St. Thomas Aquinas).

Respect for Authority

We must always support and honour the governance that is based on individual freedom and social justice. We need to accept those who exercise authority with due respect and gratitude. St. Paul the apostle reminds us: "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment" (Romans 13:1-2).

Rights of the Citizens

The citizens have the duty give due honour, respect and gratitude to the authorities. At the same time, the rights of the citizen should not be denied.

The citizens need certain rights for their well-being. The rights of the citizens are centred on equality, freedom, law and order. For these rights the citizens receive the legal support of the judiciary. Therefore, discrimination based on race, colour, gender, status, language, place and religion should be avoided.

Obligations of Citizens

Just as the citizens have rights they also have obligations. The obligations of the citizens can be grouped into two: Lawful and Righteous.

The obligation demanded by the laws of nation on the citizen is called lawful obligations. Examples for such obligations are: paying taxes, respecting the national flag, abiding by the actions which avoid all sorts of discriminations, etc.

There are other laws accepted by the society. They are forced on the citizens for the good of the society. They are called laws of righteousness. Therefore, a citizen has the responsibility to obey these laws. Examples of such obligations are: care for the aged, education of children, etc.

Individual and Family

The family is the primary cell of social life. Family is a natural society. The husband and wife are called to dedicate themselves in love and in the gift of life. Family life is an initiation into life in the society. Authority, stability and relationship in the family constitute the foundation for the freedom, security and fraternity in the society.

The family is the community in which one can learn moral values from childhood. In the family the members have to learn to care the young, old, sick, differently-abled and the poor in the family, accept the qualities of each individual within the family and ensuring that sufficient space is given to each one to grow and flourish.

Christian Family

The Christian family is a communion of individuals. Christian family is a sign and image of the communion of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is a community of Faith, Hope and Charity. Therefore, the family is called 'heaven on this earth.' The family also receives the following characteristics: Foundation of community and Primary Seminary.

Responsibility of Family Members

The divine motherhood and fatherhood are the source of human parenthood. Therefore, children should give due respect to their parents.



“My son, keep your father’s commandment and forsake not your mother’s teaching ... When you walk, they will lead you, when you lie down, they will watch over and when you awake, they will talk with you” (Proverbs 6:20-22). “A wise child loves discipline, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke” (Proverbs 13:1).

The parents have to be good model to their children. The parents are invested with the duty of giving their children instruction on faith, prayer, love and good deeds.

Responsibility of the Civil Authorities to Save Families

1. Freedom of the families has to be protected to establish family, give birth to children and to bring up the children in accordance with civic and religious rights.
2. The real nature of marriage and family has to be accepted and preserved.
3. Common good and family splendor has to be nurtured.
4. Freedom to profess one’s faith, to hand over it to the other and to bring up the children in the same faith should not to be denied.
5. Right to personal property, free enterprise, job, habitation and migration has to be honored.
6. Right to health care, security for the aged and assistance for family care has to be ensured.
7. Protection from the dangers to life, especially drugs, obscene art and alcohol has to be provided.

8. The nation has the responsibility to give importance to marriage and family and strengthen the welfare of community life.

Activity 4

Today the greatest challenge to family life is broken family relationships. Evaluate the elements that remain danger to the unity and harmony of family life. Discuss with your own family members the measures needed to safeguard the unity and harmony of family and share your findings in the class.

Church and the Humanity

The Church is the pillar and bulwark of truth in the world. The Church is founded on the Apostles. The Church has taken charge from the Apostles to spread the Kingdom of Christ over all the earth. St. John Paul II teaches: “The Creator has made us responsible for the dignity, preservation and growth of humanity.”

It has to be accepted that humanity is primarily related to that is spiritual (Pope John XXIII). It is necessary to arouse the spiritual and moral abilities in human beings and the need for their internal change. God’s grace is necessary for everyone to become aware of his or her wrong doings and the narrow path he or she chooses.

Jesus taught the way of love: Love of God and love of neighbour. Love is the greatest communal law. Love respects the others and their rights. Love demands just rule. Love alone can enable us to establish justice. Love incites a self-sacrificing life.

“Those who try to save life will lose it but those who lose it will save it” (Luke 17:33).

Church and Her Teaching Authority

Church is the guardian and performer of moral laws. Church has the right to teach the moral laws everywhere and every time. For the Church moral life is a spiritual worship.

The Church receives her right of *Magisterium* (authority to teach) from Christ through the apostles. Pope and the bishops are official authorities of *Magisterium*. They teach the faithful, entrusted to their care, what they have to believe and practice.

Ordinarily, the pastors of the Church exercise their *Magisterium* for catechesis and preaching. Thus from generation to generation the ‘deposit’ of Christian moral teaching is handed on through the able leadership and watchfulness of pastors.



Pope and the bishops, who are in communion with him, using their ordinary and universal *Magisterium*, teach the faithful concerning the truth they have to believe, the love they have to practice and the eternal bliss they have to hope for. This supreme degree of participation in the authority of Christ is ensured by the code of infallibility.

Conclusion

All people are called to the same end: to be with God. The difference we see among the individuals is part of God's plan. He desires that we be of help to one another. Helping is a special virtue that has to grow in us. We must be prepared for material and spiritual sharing so that by helping the needy to receive their right we can establish justice in the society. Being children of the same Father, we must live fraternity focusing our final destiny, the heaven.

Activity 5

Prepare a list of Social Teachings of the Church published from time to time.

Activity 6

Prepare a collage on modern forces and illusions that destroy the true nature of humanity.



CHRISTIAN VISION OF ART AND LITERATURE



There is a famous Aesop story:

A Farmer was driving his wagon along a miry country road after a heavy rain. The horses could hardly drag the load through the deep mud, and at last came to a standstill when one of the wheels sank to the hub in a rut.

The farmer climbed down from his seat and stood beside the wagon looking at it but without making the least effort to get it out of the rut. All he did

was to curse his bad luck and call loudly on Hercules to come to his aid. Then, it is said, Hercules really did appear, saying:

“Put your shoulder to the wheel, man, and urge on your horses. Do you think you can move the wagon by simply looking at it and whining about it? Hercules will not help unless you make some effort to help yourself.”

And when the farmer put his shoulder to the wheel and urged on the horses, the wagon moved very readily, and soon the Farmer was riding along in great content and with a good lesson learned.

The moral of the story is clear: Self help is the best help. Heaven helps those who help themselves. It is futile to call on God sitting idly. Human persons have to fulfill their responsibility; then God will have mercy on them. Where the strength of the human person ends there the strength of God begins.

Literature Gives Message

The above story teaches about the glory of labour. Here we learn the meaning of God’s words: “By the sweat of your face, you shall eat bread” (Genesis 3:19). Prayer is not a choice or refuge of people who are lazy and itinerant. A student who has written the exam without studying can never pass the exam through prayer.

Christian vision is that literature and art have to impart messages to make life fruitful. Literature and art need to have divine and human focus. Ultimately, art and literature have to be for life and humans. The thought, ‘art is art’s sake,’ is unacceptable. But in the stages where art was performed it was declared that the purpose of art is not proclamation of a message. But French artist, Goutier, insisted that

the aim of art is not imparting a message, but art is for art's sake. American artist, Edgar Allan Poe, spread this thought of Gautier. English artists, D.G. Rossetti, Swinburn, Pater, Oscar Wilde, etc., supported the theory, 'art is for art's sake.'

However, Matthew Arnold and others tried to state that art and literature has to aim at the projection of value. Matthew Arnold pointed out the fault in giving prominence to the thought that art is for the sake of enjoyment. He believed that religion and tradition that point out this element of art has to be questioned. But the values and culture that art and literature communicate have to be safeguarded. Even if we fail temporarily in protecting the values of art, Arnold believed that, art would gain the value it imparts. One cannot separate art and its moral, because art is for life. Literature and art have to be the interpretation of life. Art and literature have to liberate life. Life and art are related. Those who think in this manner, eventually arrive at the thought: 'Art is life itself.' The great thinker, Kuttu Krishnan Marar, authored a book: 'Art is Life' (*Kala Jeevitham Thanne*). Ruskin, Tolstoy and Gandhiji propagated the theory that art and literature should aim at the moral life of humankind.

Art and Literature: Search for Meaning

The search for meaning of art and literature began before the time of Christ. Ecstasy is the origin of literature because very often the author pens the writing in a state of ecstasy. If that is the case, the author does not write in a normal state of mind. Plato, disciple of Socrates, synchronized the works that existed before him and then formed new thoughts. His new ideals can be seen in the works like, 'Republic,' 'Symposium,' etc.

God is the ultimate truth and the purpose of thoughts is to seek truth. The external cosmos is the reflection of truth. Hence the cosmos is vanity. Art and literature attempt to embrace the cosmos. Thus art and literature endeavour to establish what the cosmos really represents. Plato's arguments can be summed up in the following manner: Literature is the making of ecstasy; it is the imitation of life. Result of an ecstasy may not be real. Art is the imitation of life. An imitation is twice removed from reality. The author of literary work writes moved by emotions. Therefore, the readers may lose their normal state of mind. That's why Plato wrote in his work, 'Republic:' Authors of literary works have to be exiled.

At the same time, Plato did not hesitate to accept the real literary works. He acclaims, 'Praise of Gods,' 'Heroic Hymns' and 'Tragedies' as great literatures. In short, Plato did not completely neglect the literary works, but pointed out the limitation of literature produced as the result of emotions. In other words, Plato placed real art and literature in their proper location. Plato stated that real literature represents truth, beauty and goodness. That's why he accepted some literature in his work, 'Republic.'

Plato was the first one to say that literature is the imitation of life. He urges that imitation should not be the external covering of the cosmos but of the everlasting truth. Since art and literature are results of stimulation and excitement they have to be considered cautiously. The excitement of the author should not cause danger in the reader or viewer. The art and literature that may cause chaos have to be neglected. Plato also viewed that literature and art must have the unity of order, system and structure. He also opined that literature and art are capable of forming cultural renewal.

Review of Aristotle

Aristotle was Plato's favourite pupil. He later became the master of Alexander, the Great. Even though Plato is his master, Aristotle did not blindly follow him. Aristotle reviewed Plato's theory on art and literature. Aristotelian style was to come to the conclusion after minute observations and scientific examinations. Therefore, many a time disciple differed from master. Plato assimilated all the available literature; whereas Aristotle evaluated the entire literature that was available to him. Aristotle looked at the literature without prejudice but at the same time he reviewed them thoroughly. His views on art and literature can be seen in his composition, 'Poetics.'



Aristotle defines poetry as the mimetic, or imitative, use of language, rhythm and harmony, separately or in combination. Poetry is mimetic in that it creates a representation of objects and events in the world, unlike philosophy, for example, which presents ideas. Humans are naturally drawn to imitation, and so poetry has a strong pull on us. It can also be an excellent learning device, since we can coolly observe imitations of things like dead bodies and disgusting animals when the real thing would disturb us.

Aristotle identifies tragedy as the most refined version of poetry, which deals with lofty matters. Also he identifies comedy as the most refined version of poetry, which deals with base matters. He traces a brief and speculative history of tragedy as it evolved from dithyrambic

hymns in praise of the god Dionysus. Dithyrambs were sung by a large choir, sometimes featuring a narrator. Aeschylus invented tragedy by bringing a second actor into dialogue with the narrator. Sophocles innovated further by introducing a third actor and gradually tragedy shifted to its contemporary dramatic form.

Aesthetics of Art and Literature

Longinus, a Western thinker, had become famous as a result of his thoughts on art and literary works. He lived the 1st century AD. He was the disciple of Plotinus, who developed a life founded on spirituality. It is perceived that Longinus also developed a mystic thinking like that of his master, Plotinus. Thus Longinus journeyed from earthly things to that of spiritual things. This journey, he called: 'Theory of Transportation.' Longinus applied this theory in his literary thoughts. In the light of such thoughts, he wrote the book, *On the Sublime*. Only forty-four chapters of this book are now available. Scholars consider *On the Sublime* parallel to Aristotle's 'Poetics.'

The book, On the Sublime centers on aesthetics and the benefits of strong writing. Longinus does this by analyzing both strong and weak writing from works written over the previous thousand years. The goal, according to Longinus, is to achieve the sublime. In philosophy, the sublime is a quality of greatness. It can be physical, intellectual, moral, aesthetic, spiritual, artistic, or metaphysical. Another quality of the sublime is that it can't be calculated, imitated, or measured. Therefore, Longinus observed literature is not merely to give joy. Writing should forcefully take the readers to a higher level, make them to tread the same path and experience the writer went through while writing. Longinus was convinced that art and literature alone can lift the human hearts to excessive joy, self-respect and strength. Art and literary works have to make the human person to experience their ever-green beauty.

Approach of the Church

The period 4-14 AD is known as Middle Age in the European history. During this period the entire Europe was under Church Supremacy. But some call this period as Dark Age because during this period art and literature were officially banned by the Church. During this time, the Church was strongly accused of being intolerant towards the faith of other religions. But the Church had many reasons in doing so. During the early period of Christianity, Europe witnessed paganism. Polytheism was common in Europe, where sexuality and religious practices were inseparable. Even the practice of homicide to please gods existed that time. God-human relationship was interpreted incorrectly. For example, if gods were not pleased with humans they would even kill the humans. Church's belief in monotheism (belief in one God) was an obstacle for those who were practicing paganism. Hence, the Church adopted a very strict approach to religious practice. As a result of it, art and literature that depicted paganist ideology were prohibited. For a long time, Roman-Hellenistic compositions were placed underground. Some historians opine that even the reading of Sacred Scriptures was banned. Later, during the renaissance period, when the Church had universal acceptance, the art and literature of Middle Age came to light. From then onwards, the Church began to encourage and appreciate art and literature.

Indian Art and Literature

It is necessary to evaluate Indian literary thoughts and art. In these areas, the principal aim of literature and art is 'a heart that rejoices with aesthete.' Art and literature are not only aimed to satisfy the sensitive minds but also to impart value based message. Art has to teach its spectators. It has to stimulate the minds. Early art and literature in India were to experience God's presence. Therefore, the early literature came under the category of 'hymnal literature' (*keerthanasahithyam*). History shows that later it assumed visual effects and developed in temple atmosphere. Early literary works and art reveal that they were founded on values that instruct human minds.

Let us see the story of an early writer Valmiki: Valmiki was initially a thief. He used to steal valuables and money from travelers and used to feed his family from the loot. One day he saw seven divine sages and decided to loot them. He took out his dagger and ordered them to give away their valuables. But one of the sages asked him to repent for his sins. Thus Valmiki turned to contemplation and became enlightened. While sitting in a meditative posture for years, his body got completely covered by an anthill. God was pleased with him. He was given the name Valmiki, since he was reborn from the Valmika (the ant-hill). He became the author of the great epic Ramayana. It is thought provoking to understand that a thief attained enlightenment and later became author through meditation. One who does not meditate is not a poet. Once, a hunter killed one of the pair of herons who were immersed in enjoying love-play in front of Valmiki. Valmiki was enraged after seeing this and cursed the hunter by saying this Shloka: “*Maa Nishaada Pratishthaam Tvamgamah Shaasvatee Samah Yatkrouncha Mithunadeka mavadheeh Kaama Mohitam.*” It meant, “O cruel hunter, you will never get respect in this world because you have killed the innocent heron who was engaged in making love.” Valmiki shows characteristics of a poet, writer and artist by upholding morality, standing against injustice and becoming a prophetic voice.

Even though he became enlightened, Valmiki did not attempt to write literature immediately. Writing is not an immediate response to anything. Writing requires patience or waiting of long years. Writer has to ponder over his or her experiences continually. Experiences lead to feelings. The expression that is influenced by morals of feelings is literature. The hunter killing the heron might have influenced Valmiki. Even then, after long years of waiting that Valmiki wrote Ramayana. Valmiki inquisitively enquired about a person who is merited endowed with every quality about whom he could write: “Who really is that person in this present world, who is principled and also a potential one, a conscientious one, a redeemer, and also a truth-teller and self-

determined in his deed? Who is he conduct-wise blent with good-conduct. Who in respect of all beings is benign? Who is adept and also the ablest one [and] also uniquely good to look to? Who is that courageous one, who controlled his ire, who is brilliant, non-jealous and even whom do the gods fear, when provoked to war?” Therefore, literature and art must be life expressions about morally sound persons. This is the vision of Indian literature and art.

Vision of Vyasan

Including Mahabharata, Vyasa wrote eighteen major ‘Puras’ (vast genre of Indian literature about wide range of topics). They were mainly meant for giving instructions, imparting of messages and giving value oriented ideas. The message of his eighteen puranas can be summed up in the following manner: In all eighteen puranas Vyasa said solely one thing ‘charity is virtue; sin is suffering.’

Vyasa’s thoughts on virtue and sin are very simple and transparent. Virtue is to do good to the other and whatever causes suffering to the other is sin (*Paropakarama punnyam; papama parapeedanam*). Mahabharata describes in its eighteen chapters eighteen days of Kurukshetra War between brothers, Kauravas and Pandavas. Who did win and who did lose in that war? Technically one could say that Pandavas won the war because among the five members, no one died. But hundred members of Kauravas died in the war. Therefore, one could say Kauravas lost the war. But the wordings that come after the end of the war say that Pandavas could not relish the joy of winning the war. The guilt and self-condemnation, for having killed the brothers, haunted them. The war was to own the kingdom. But after the war no one among them wished to occupy the throne. So deep was their guilt feeling! Despair and isolation crept in them. They craved for repentance. Finally, in contemplation, leaving aside everything, they walked together, focusing heaven. No one wins the war; but everyone loses it. This is the moral of Mahabharata. Poets like, Bhasan and Kalidasa also expressed through their writings that having endured the suffering and pain in life, everyone, who walks courageously, submitting oneself in the hands of God, will attain eternal bliss.

Audio and Visual

Great people had divided art into visual and audio. Visual Arts is an art that can be enjoyed by the sense of sight (eyes). Audio Art is an art that can be enjoyed by the sense of hearing (ears). Mixing of both audio and visual arts makes enjoyment more perfect. Drama, motion picture, statue making, dance, etc. are examples of visual art. Literary art and sound art (music) come under audio art. Great people say that there are 64 kinds of arts. Among them, some art forms contain the expertise for personal enjoyment and others for commercial entertainment.

Literature is a body of written works in different languages. We know that language is a system of communication which consists of a set of sounds and written symbols which are used by the people of a particular country or region for talking or writing. Therefore, communication takes place easily through language. But literary language is normally suitable for literature. Simple language can communicate the idea of the author. However, literary language can bring in more aroma and beauty to the work.

The art of literature is not reducible to the words on the page; they are there solely because of the craft of writing. As an art, literature might be described as the organization of words to give pleasure. Yet through words literature elevates and transforms experience beyond “mere” pleasure. Literature is very often related to life. Therefore, literature can be called as the story of human life. The basis of literature is human persons and their lives. Every drama, poetry and prose narrates the story of human life. If so, does the story of animals and birds form part of literature? Yes, it does, because among the animals and birds there are some who think and act as humans. They also express human emotions. Therefore, literature expresses the realities in and around us. But just copying life and life story cannot be called literature. Re-writing of human life and human story in an artistic manner becomes literature.

Non-Literary Arts

Church construction, house construction, making of statues, icons and pictures are part of non-literary arts. Construction of churches includes temples and mosques. We see great temples all over India. Southern States like, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh and Northern States in general have the presence of very many great temples. The statues of gods and goddesses, carved out of stones, depict our sense of beauty. The carved images found in caves of Ajantha, Ellora and Khajuraho are very famous. Mural paintings (piece of artwork painted and applied directly on a wall, ceiling or other permanent surface) and extraordinary colour paintings are invaluable pieces of art work found in many parts of India.

Church Architecture

Church Architecture deserves deeper study and discussion. Our magnificent churches are built after the style and beauty of Western churches. The purpose of the church architect is to assist those who come to the church to raise their minds and hearts to God in prayer. A significant example of this style is the style of tower that takes the form of joined hands raised in prayer. In many places churches are constructed in the Gothic style. The main purpose of adapting this style was to create simplicity. The altar should make one feel the living memory of God's presence. The context and icons of the Holy Bible are extensively used in Gothic style. Besides Gothic style, Latin, Byzantine, Roman and Asiatic styles had been used in church architecture. Recall the famous architects like Michelangelo and Bramante. The four basilicas in Rome – St. Peter's, St. Paul's, Lateran,



and Mary Major – depict divine splendor. Moreover, *Notre Dame* Cathedral in Paris, Cathedral of Florence, basilicas of pilgrim centres in Lourde and Fatima and the Anglican church of West Minster Abbey are some great examples of church architecture.

Building of Statues

Christians have made great contributions to the building of statues as well. The tradition of venerating the saints exists in the Catholic Church since long time. The Church constantly adores God, the Father Almighty. She also gives importance to the veneration of saints. The Church teaches undoubtedly that adoration of God and veneration of saints are surely distinct. The Church's theology makes it clear that statues resembling the saints enable the faithful to raise their minds and hearts to God. Saints are people like us who lived on this earth. Their heroic and virtuous life raised them to sainthood. We also can reach the heavenly abode by deeply respecting and imitating them. Statues and pictures of saints help us to imprint their holy memory in

our minds. Therefore, the Church permits making of their statues. We remember the great works of Michelangelo, Leonardo De Vinci, Raphael, etc. Beautiful statues of Pieta, David, Moses, etc., carved out of a single piece of marble, instill in us devotion. Colourful pictures like, Last Supper, Last Judgment, Creation, etc., are marvelous pictures in the ceilings of the famous extensive Basilicas of Rome, which are great attraction to everyone.

Catacombs

In the early centuries Christians were persecuted. Even the dead bodies of the Christians were disrespected. Therefore, the dead bodies of Christians were buried secretly. If it became known that the deceased was a Christian, the enemies would not hesitate to disrespect the corpse. As it was the custom in Palestine and other places, the early Christians in Rome buried the dead in the crevices of rocks. The human-made 4th and 5th century cemeteries in the crevices of rocks are called catacombs. Catacombs, constructed 33 to 49 feet below the earth, have been found and are being preserved. They are situated along the Roman territory. Below the rocks, like galleries, the catacombs are constructed in three and four rows. There, the rock is opened and the dead body is inserted into tomb and is again closed with rock. Name and details are carved outside. Some are decorated with paint. Normally darkness covered the catacombs. Through tiny gaps light could enter the catacombs. Also, air entered through small holes that were made. Such places were carefully preserved from the sight of enemies. The believers gathered there for prayers. In later years, these catacombs were discovered as the result of excavations and are preserved. The catacombs in the names of saints Sylvester,



Calister and Sebastian are even now considered as centers of pilgrimage. The beauty of these catacombs is that they are hewn in rocks. Nothing else is used or done. During the time of Pope Pius I electricity was provided to the catacombs. Catacombs have been also found in Naples, Sicily, Sardinia, Malta, etc. During the period, when public worship was impossible, the believers gathered in catacombs for Breaking of the Bread. Therefore, they may be considered as churches. The catacombs, constructed without the use of improvised architecture and tools too might be considered as part of church construction.

Contribution of the Missionaries

The contribution of foreign missionaries towards language, grammar and literature in Kerala is amazing. Inspired by the Holy Spirit they reached Kerala during the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries to spread the Gospel, traversing the sea. There are also written records that show the early missionary presence in Kerala. But during the above three centuries the contribution of Carmelite missionaries to Kerala's religious and cultural field remains very enormous. The missionaries, who reached Kerala, targeted mainly the common people. They focused on the ordinary people, who endured the evil fruits of awful caste system that prevailed in the State. The ordinary people, who were considered low-caste and uncivilized, lived in the peripheries of the society. The first dedicated work of the missionaries was to restore the dignity of these people. The missionaries shed the light of literacy to these people. They built schools (*pallikkudam*) alongside the churches. The education ministry of the missionaries was to impart education equally to the so called high caste and the outcaste, assisting them to sit on the same bench.

Importance of Prose

Prose is a form of language that exhibits a natural flow of speech and grammatical structure. But the condition of this important literary form, used by ordinary people, was very deplorable in ancient Kerala. Prose was neglected completely, considering that it is the language of an ordinary person. Therefore, prose, at that time, did not have a formal structure or system. Language is judged by its grammar. Grammar is the science of language. Grammar texts in Malayalam were the contributions of Latin Catholic Missionaries. The first grammar text was written by Most Rev. Dr. Angelo Francis OCD. He was the Bishop of Verapoly Vicariate from 1700 to 1712. He is also the author of first Malayalam thesaurus. Thereafter, Bishop John the Baptist (1673-1750), Fr. Stephen of St. Peter and Paul (1692-1767) and Fr. Germiniani

of St. Octavia (1702-1768), all from the OCD Congregation, wrote grammar for the composition of prose.

Fr. Arnos S.J. (1681-1732) is yet another renowned scholar, who wrote the grammar for Sanskrit language. His composition, *Puthanpana* and contribution to grammar and poetry are specially mentioned in the Kerala Language Literary History. He took note of the devotional recital of the Ramayana at twilight in Hindu homes. So he introduced a similar hymnal for the Christians. *Puthanpana* is his most famous literary work. It was recited at twilight in Christian homes, especially during Lent. The poem consists of 14 padams (stanzas). The 12th padam of *Puthanpana*, portraying the lament of Virgin Mary at the Crucifixion and Death of Jesus, is very touching. But some argue that the 12th stanza, written in folk art, is a separate poem and it does not form part of *Puthanpana*. *Marana Parvam*, *Vidhi Parvam*, *Moksha Parvam*, *Naraka Parvam*, *Umma Parvam*, *Misiha Charitham* and *Jehova Parvam* are also the works of Arnos Pathiri. He was the one who made significant contributions for the growth and development of Malayalam. Many Sanskrit Scholars recognized Fr. Arnos as their teacher.

Another Carmelite priest, who wrote many books in prose and poetry, was Fr. Paulinos (1748-1806). He was in Kerala only for 13 years. Even then his contribution was extensive. Rama Varma, the King of Travancore, who was known as Dharma Raja, was a fan of Fr. Paulinos. His works included Grammar, *India Orientalis*, *Christiana* (Christian Religion in Ancient India), Collection of 100 Proverbs, Biography of St. Teresa, etc.

Margam Kali

Among the Christian folk arts, *Margam Kali* and *Chavittu Nadakam* are well-known. The central theme of *margam kali* is the mission activity of St. Thomas the Apostle. The music used in *margam kali* is a mixture of Syrian and Karnatic music. Typically, a dozen dancers sing and dance, clapping around a *Nilavilakku*, wearing the

traditional white dhoti ('mundu') and blouse ('chatta'). The lamp placed in the centre represents Christ. The performance is usually held in two parts ('padham') and begins with songs and dances narrating the life of Saint Thomas, the apostle. It then takes a striking turn with a martial play of artificial swords and shields. *Margam kali* does not use any instruments other than two small palm size cymbals played by the same person who sings the song. It was originally played by men and afterwards by boys, but nowadays women perform *margam kali*. In central Kerala, *margam kali* is performed among the Knanaya Christians a day before the marriage. But often *margam kali* is performed to make celebrations very attractive. Since 1984 *margam kali* has been included as one of the performances at Kerala School Youth Festival.

Chavittu Nadakam

Chavittu Nadakam is a highly colourful Latin Christian classical art form, which had taken roots in coastal regions of Kerala. The script of *chavittu nadakam* is known as 'chuvadi.' In her research



on *chavittum nadakam*, Mrs Sebina Rafi observes that *chavittu nadakam* is a mixture of Kerala classical art forms like, *koothu*, *koodiyattam* and *kadha kali* and the Western art form, Opera. It is noted for its attractive make-up of characters, their elaborate costumes, detailed gestures and well-defined body movements presented in tune with the rhythmic playback music and complementary percussion. *chavittum nadakam* depicts normally heroic actors. Therefore, the style and steps of heroes are characteristic of this classical art and they are applied in a scientific and systematic manner. The actors themselves sing and act. Drum, cymbal and clarinet are the main musical instruments used in this art. Stories from the Holy Bible and Church History are chosen. Some notable performances of this art are: *Carlsman Charitham*, *Angelica nadakam*, *Alphonse nadakam* and *Brisheena nadakam*. V.S. Andrews from Chellanam is a giant in this platform. Attractive costumes and stage equipments make *Chavittu Nadakam* a costly affair. Since fights are enacted, use of weapons and training in martial arts are essential. The main aim of *Chavittu Nadakam* is to spread the Good News.

Parichamuttu-kali and Devadasthavili

Parichamuttu-kali is an ancient martial art form performed by the Christians in Kerala. The origin of the art can be traced back to



ancient days when ‘*Kalari-payattu*,’ the martial art of Kerala, was in style. ‘*Parichamuttu-kali*’ is a group dance performed by men bearing swords and shields, made of wood, and follow the movements and steps of *Kalari-payattu*. The dancers tie a string of bells around the ankles and they move in a circle. The leader of the group sings songs to the chimes of a bell. Musical accompaniment is restricted to small cymbals and the din made by the rhythmic clapping of swords and shields. As the pace of the dance gradually heightens, the music also reaches a crescendo. The dancers are usually dressed in a white loin-cloth with red wrist-bands. They sing in chorus as they dance. This dance form is indeed a means to spread the Good News.

Devasthavili is yet another art form found in the coastal belt in Kerala. It is devotional art form. The artists began the *Devasthavili* during the Lenten season (from Ash Wednesday to Easter) after the church bell rings in the evening. It is recited at night, when the people at large are in slumber and when the world is under the clutches of deep silence. *Devasthavili* was performed in Sanskrit and Tamil languages. The purpose of *Devasthavili* is to bring prayerful experiences of Jesus’ passion in the hearers. It is performed in house compound, an open space, placing a wooden cross in the centre, which is visible under the candle light. In some places the recital goes on till dawn. The efforts of ‘Kripasanam’ at Alappuzha, in safeguarding this ancient Christian custom, remain praiseworthy.

Vision of the Church

The Church appreciates and exhibits the artistic forms in the propagation of the Word of God and in the liturgy. The history states that the Popes have always appreciated and encouraged those who contributed to the growth of art and literature. Even the artisans were sustained by the Popes. Church has always shown foremost

consideration for art, sculpturing, music as well as architecture. Music has an important place in church services. The church has a special musical rendering, named Gregorian music, for its liturgical services. St. Augustine says: “He, who sings, prays twice.” Many of the hymns sung at church services have been written by St. Thomas Aquinas. It is noteworthy that the church has produced systematically several guidelines for the liturgical singing and music.

In the Church Documents

The documents of the Second Vatican Council state church’s plans to use art as means to propagate the Gospel. The historical Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, which was held from 1962 to 1965, was opened by Pope John XXIII and concluded by Pope Paul VI. Among the 16 documents issued by the Council, *Gaudium et spes* (GS) is one of them. Following is a relevant portion from this valuable document:

“Literature and the arts are also, in their own way, of great importance to the life of the Church. They strive to make known the proper nature of man, his problems and his experiences in trying to know and perfect both himself and the world. They have much to do with revealing man’s place in history and in the world; with illustrating the miseries and joys, the needs and strengths of man and with foreshadowing a better life for him. Thus they are able to elevate human life, expressed in multifold forms according to various times and regions. Efforts must be made so that those who foster these arts feel that the Church recognizes their activity... The Church acknowledges also new forms of art which are adapted to our age ...They may be brought into the sanctuary since they raise the mind to God” (GS 62).

The Council document on Liturgy clarifies this stand of the Church: “The People of God, united with the Holy Spirit, as the Mystical Body of Christ, should offer public worship to God the Father. The summit of liturgical worship is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and it

demands the wholehearted participation of the faithful says the document. Art and literature have a part to play. And liturgical music has a special role. To the extent they are in tune with the spirit of liturgy we must make use of them. These arts, by their very nature, are oriented toward the infinite beauty of God which they attempt in some way to portray by the work of human hands; they achieve their purpose of redounding to God's praise and glory in proportion as they are directed the more exclusively to the single aim of turning men's minds devoutly toward God... seminarians are to be taught about the history and development of sacred art, and about the sound principles governing the production of its works. In consequence they will be able to appreciate and preserve the Church's venerable monuments, and be in a position to aid, by good advice, artists who are engaged in producing works of art" (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 122 and 129).

The Decree on Social Communications – *Inter Mirifica* – also should be studied in this regard. It states that the print media and visual media are also important for evangelization. The decree speaks of the creative use of newspapers, cinema, plays, radio and television in evangelization. It also discusses the approach of the writers, actors, artists, sculptures, producers and critics of respective fields. Catholic publications should be whole heartedly encouraged. It is good to make convenient workshops and symposiums for priests, religious and laity of this field. Each diocese must start new media outlets and training centers. It is also true that some such centers already exist in many of the dioceses. Already Church has media structures in the national and international level. In connection with the proclamation of the Word, the service rendered by Vatican Radio is unequalled. The Vatican official newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* not only spreads Church news and Church policies but also proclaims the Gospel.

Church Appreciate Artists and Writers

The Church considers the contemporary artists and writers, who engage in the spreading of the Word of God through plays and

literary works, as wealth of the Church. There are a number of great personalities, who have contributed very much to the Church in the above field and are now no more. The Church takes special care in remembering them. The Church in Kerala appreciates and honours the artists and literary writers every year through Kerala Catholic Bishops Council (KCBC) Commission for Media.

The Church is always aware of the immeasurable strength of the artists and writers. Therefore, the Church is always attentive to include them in evangelization. It has been already mentioned in this chapter about artists and writers, who have been under the paternal guidance of the Popes. The Church always views and respects their contribution to the spread of the Good News. They had been also recognized and honored.

Conclusion

Spirituality gives inner strength to develop Christian art vision. Art and literature should bear good message, provide good value and remain as an inspiration. Art is not for art's sake. But Church envisions that art should promote good life. Art depicts the divine beauty. Therefore, the artists are principal assistants of God. The one who manifest the artistic instinct presents his or her art as an act of thanksgiving to God. Art should be used to form and imitate good ideals and messages. The best ornament of the artist is humility; not pride.

In strict sense, evangelization is to reveal God's mercy and love to others. Art and literary works should present the idea of God's infinite mercy and his immeasurable love. Humanity should live in love and fraternity. Humanity has to declare God's glory through service. Literary works and art are like sharp two edged sword. They should be used with care or else they will sow disaster. Qualitative art makes the human heart to focus on God. It makes the human person to become one with the everlasting beauty that is God. But impure,

immature, immoral and absurd art trouble the mind. The visualization and audition that corrupts human mind cannot be called art.

Generally evangelization means to bring the Good News where it has not reached. In the present context, using modern means and techniques to spread the Good News is New Evangelization. Preaching the Good News again where the Good News had reached but not borne fruit is Re-Evangelization. Evangelization or Re-Evangelization through New Evangelization is the need of the hour. The Church invites us to engage in this mission. Church calls for new ways, new methods and new means to effectively communicate the Word of God. Therefore, the Church uses art and literary works at all times and everywhere for the propagation of the Good News and to realize the New Heaven and the New Earth.

Activity

1. Organize a symposium on the current need of good arts and literary works.
2. Evaluate whether news and entertainment programmes in television channels assist in our cultural resurgence.
3. Prepare a script for a short play or skit with good ideology.
4. Present the ancient Christian art form of *Chavittu Nadakam* and organize a class about its importance.
5. View an educational documentary or feature film and discuss its good and bad points.
6. Gather the artists and writers in your parish and give them an opportunity to share their experiences.
7. Visit the diocesan media office and evaluate its activities.
8. What can you do to begin a Video-Audio Library at Forone or Diocesan Level?

7



DEATH AND LIFE AFTER DEATH



Death is the one thing which every human here has to face. It is the end which every human will be facing one time or another after spending life here. It is a grim fact that everyone who has been born in this world will have to die someday as death is inevitable and every human has to face it. Death is the opposite of life and the moment of death separates humans from living to being dead. Death is a bridge which everyone has to cross at the end of their life.

The German thinker, Martin Heidegger describes human in this manner: “Human being is dedicated to death.” In short, everyone born in this world cannot escape the reality of death.

“We must all die; we are like water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again” (2 Samuel 14:14).

Certainty of Death

Every beginning has an end, including human beings and all living creatures. Only God has no beginning and no end. The human soul, created in the image and likeness of the everlasting God (Genesis 1:26-27) and that participates in God's life, remains eternal. But the body that embodies five senses has a beginning and is limited. Therefore, it is destined to die. According to Christian faith, the separation of the soul from the body is death. Scientifically, death occurs due to destruction of the cells.

Even when the body is perishing, we can experience an inner force within everyone that is demonstrated strongly. There are good many examples to illustrate the above mentioned inner force is in every human person: Martyrs, who have stood for truth in spite of challenges and sufferings; leaders, who burned with zeal for their motherland in spite of physical and mental torture, leaders who stood firm in their commitment despite being deserted by their followers.

We have seen that the body that depends on five senses is temporal. Death is the completion of temporal state. We also understand that even when the body is prey to temporal destiny the soul remains steady. Therefore it is natural that soul exists even after the body perishes.

Activity 1

The following are the last words of some famous people

“If you drink Christian life like water, then death will be like sweet wine” (G. K. Chesterton).

“I am already on the point of being sacrificed; the time for my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day” (2 Timothy 4:6-8).

“For me to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21).

“I am expecting to face God with my terrible face” (Chinese Communist Leader Mao to American State Secretary, Henry Kissinger).

“According to my fate, without God, I cannot be saved from my present suffering” (Chopin Hower, a German Nazi, to his doctor).

“In spite of knowing many doctors, I die. I killed Lenin by giving him poison. I sent spies and got Trotsky killed. To remain in power I killed 50 lakhs. Now, I am afraid to live and to die. My shadow itself, I fear. Here I am going into darkness” (Communist Leader, Stalin).

“My death is near. Sing the song ‘Death my friend.’ How beautiful you are; I did not know” (St. Francis Assisi).

A Military General requested these words to be engraved on his tombstone: “Here lies a fool.” His friends asked him the reason for it. The General replied: “This fool thought of all things. But I did not think about life after death.”

Activity 2

As given above, some faced death cheerfully and others faced death with fear. Discuss in groups in the light of the last words given above and estimate how their lives would have been.

Once a Persian King called world famous thinkers and asked them a question: “What is the greatest sorrow a person has to face in this life?” ‘No one to protect in old age is the greatest sorrow a person has to face,’ said a Greek thinker. A Persian thinker said, ‘the sorrow that no one to comfort is the greatest sorrow.’ But an Indian thinker said, ‘death without good deeds is the greatest sorrow a person has to face.’ The response of the Indian thinker won the prize.

Human life is time bound. Therefore, a person has only a limited period of time to reach success in life. The thought of death makes one lead a good life.

Views of Different Religions on Death and Death after Life

According to Hinduism, the purpose of human life is to be liberated from this world and become united with God. Hinduism believes that everything in this world is illusion and one can attain liberation (*mukthi*), having become conscious of oneself through real knowledge and meditation.

According to Buddhism, main cause of every evil is desire. Therefore, Buddhism teaches that purpose of life is to obtain release from these desires.

Islam teaches that the purpose of life is to obtain individual happiness after death.

Confucianism suggests temperance and Maoism suggests selfless action in life to attain liberation.

From the above opinions we understand that there is life after death and the ultimate purpose of life is union with God. Also, these thoughts teach us that deeds of love during our life on earth can assist us to reach God's abode.

Life after Death: Jewish Thinking

Jewish religion does not have a centralized teaching on life after death. We see that the Jewish beliefs progressed from time to time throughout its history. In the early days Jewish perception on life after death was completely vague. Jews believed that the dead lived in their tombs. Gradually they believed in a common place where the dead live. They called this common place as 'Sheol.' They commonly believed that 'Sheol' was a deep abyss between the earth and the oceans. Around 6 BC the Jews began to consider that God being just will reward the dead according to their good or bad deeds. In Jewish religion, hell is not eternal. It is merely a purifying place. Paradise represents the reward after death. Eternal life of the soul and resurrection are central beliefs of the Jews.

Life after Death: Christian Vision

According to Christian understanding, Christ's resurrection is complete victory over death. Resurrection and eternal life remains the centre of Christian belief. All the evangelists record that through resurrection Jesus has won victory over death (Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-10; Acts 1:3-4; 1 Corinthians 15:4-8).

“Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone, but if it dies, it bears much fruit” (John 12:24).

Christ himself makes it clear that death is a journey to the eternal home:

“I am the Resurrection and the Life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die” (John:11:25-26)

Christ’s vision of death receives expression in the Liturgy of the Church:

“Lord, for your faithful people, life is changed, not ended. When the body of our earthly dwelling lies in death we gain an everlasting dwelling place in heaven” (Roman Missal, Preface of Christian Death).

Christ’s Death

All four gospels state that the Son of God, who became man, had to embrace death. Christian understanding of reality of death received depth and importance only after the death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. When Word became flesh, Son of God took upon himself death and all the weaknesses of the human nature. He became the sacrificial lamb for the sins of the world. Thus Christ’s death accomplished the redemption of humanity and restored the world to God. Christ turned death into a passage from this world to the abode of God the Father. Through his death Christ removed the distance between life and death.

“None of us lives to himself and none of us dies to himself. If we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then whether we live or whether we die; we are the Lord’s. For to this end, Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living” (Romans 14:7-9).

Therefore, for a Christian both life and death are blessings.

Christ's Resurrection

Christ's resurrection makes his death meaningful. In the opinion of Teilhard de Chardin, "Christ has conquered death. The bad effects of death had been suppressed. Through Christ's resurrection, the deadly poison of death had been changed into life giving nectar. Hereafter we are not subject to death, but death is our right."

What do we mean when we say 'Jesus rose from the dead'? Is it that the body buried in the tomb came to life? Of course, it is not. Lazarus, widow's son at Nain and Jairus' daughter came back to life. They were resuscitated. They came to life, having destined to death – resuscitation. In Jesus' case, what happened was resurrection. It is not coming back to mortal life again. It is a transformation into a life that is beyond time and space. on earth in time. It is a return from earth to God.

Proofs of Jesus' Resurrection from the Holy Bible

- Empty Tomb
- Linen that covered Jesus' body in the tomb.
- Post-resurrection apparitions.

Belief in Jesus' resurrection is the centre of Christian life. Moreover, the New Testament recognizes the truth of rising from the dead, contained in Old Testament. The words of Martha are an example:

"I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (John 11:24).

Acts of the Apostles indicate the resurrection hope of the Pharisees:

“I have a hope in God – a hope that they themselves also accept – that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous” (Acts 24:15). We do not merely rest on the Old Testament belief of resurrection. But belief in Christ’s resurrection, given in the New Testament, is the basis of our belief in resurrection.

Life after Death in Jesus’ Teaching

The contemporaries of Jesus’ time had a materialistic outlook about life after death. But Jesus’ understanding of life after death was quite different. We could comprehend Jesus’ understanding of life after death from his teaching.

Look at some teachings of Jesus on life after death:

1. Real treasure (Matthew 6:19-20)
2. Narrow door (Matthew 7:13-14)
3. Parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-13)
4. Parable of the ten coins (Luke 19:12-29)
5. Parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31)
6. Jesus’ promise to the good thief (Luke 23:43)

These passages speak about life after death. We also see in the Gospels many times Jesus foretelling about his resurrection.

Jesus Raises the Dead

Three instances of Jesus raising the dead are recorded in the Gospels: Raising of Jairus’ daughter (Matthew 9:18-36), raising of only son of the widow at Naim (Luke 7:11-16) and raising of Lazarus, the friend of Jesus (John 11:1-44). These signs witness Jesus, who is resurrection and life.

Resurrection of the Dead

God gave to his people the truth about the resurrection of the dead step by step. Complete human person, comprised of body and soul, who is the result of faith in the Creator God, is the hope of resurrection of the dead. “The hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear His voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment” (John 5:28-29).

State after Death

Purgatory

Cleansing is required where there is sin. There is no one without sin before God. After death we are in need of cleansing from unforgiven venial sins and the debts of forgiven sins and the stain inflicted in us by the debts of forgiven sins. But nothing unclean can enter the presence of the Most Holy God (Revelation 21:27). Therefore, all the souls of the dead pass through purgatory before being welcomed in heaven.

The teaching of the Church on purgatory is a dogma of the Church. Hence, there is no place to doubt whether purgatory exists or not. However, there will be difference of opinion as regards the exact location of purgatory, time span the soul spends there and the duration of suffering in purgatory. Without giving importance to the place of purgatory, time spent there and duration of suffering let us remember the suffering souls in purgatory, offer Holy Eucharist for their intention masses and pray for them. Let us also undertake alms giving and other works of penance on their behalf.

Definition of Purgatory

“All who die in God’s grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven” (CCC # 1030).

“The fire of Purgatory is the same as the fire of hell: and hence they are in the same place. The chief purpose of the punishment of Purgatory is to cleanse us from the remains of sin; and consequently the pain of fire only is ascribed to Purgatory, because fire cleanses and consumes” (St. Thomas Aquinas).

“That there should be some fire even after this life is not incredible, and it can be inquired into and either be discovered or left hidden whether some of the faithful may be saved, some more slowly and some more quickly in the greater or lesser degree in which they loved the good things that perish, through a certain purgatorial fire” (St. Augustine).

“It is better to suffer all the pains in this world rather spend one day in purgatory” (Cyril of Alexandria).

The Church calls the final purification place of the souls as purgatory. It is different from the punishment of the damned. The Church formulated doctrine of faith on purgatory mainly at the Councils of Florence and Trent.

We must believe that there is purifying fire for lesser faults before the final judgment. But “whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin” (Mark 3:29). Thus we understand that certain offences can be forgiven in the age to come and certain others cannot be forgiven in the age to come.

Judgment

Once, the King of Bulgaria ordered the artists to draw a picture, which will frighten everyone. But the artists were not able to comply with it. Then missionary of Bulgaria, St. Methodius, drew the picture of Jesus, the Judge and approached the King. The King saw the picture and was afraid. He asked what it was. The saint replied that it was the picture of Jesus, the Judge at the end of the world. Then, the King, the members of his family and even the citizens of the Kingdom upheld Christian faith.

Judgment has many meanings such as order, command, court reply, decision and opinion. It is all the works of man that are taken into account. And he is judged on the basis of the works being good or bad/evil and the good will be rewarded and the wicked punished. It is necessary that this judgment should be absolutely a just one.

Two kinds of Judgments

A human soul has to face two kinds of judgments.

1. Individual Judgment

Individual judgment takes place at the very moment of one's death. All good and bad deeds of that person, done during life time, will be taken into account at the moment of death. Parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-29), Parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), etc are examples of individual judgment.

The following instances show that even saints were afraid of judgment:

➤ St. Jerome, who translated the Holy Bible into Latin, striking his breast with a stone, prayed: “Lord on the Day of Judgment, have mercy on me.”

➤ St. Philip Neri told a great sinner, in order to convert him: “Today, before you go to bed, kneel down on your bed and say three times: ‘Today if I die, I will die in a sinful state. Therefore, when Jesus judges, I will go to hell.’ Then lie down and sleep.” The man said it twice. He was not able to say it the third time. He got up immediately, went to see St. Philip Neri, made his confession and became a new person.

2. Common Judgment

Common judgment is mentioned in Synoptic Gospels (Matthew 24:29-35; Mark 13:24-27; Luke 21:25-27).

Matthew 25:31-46 teaches us evidently to love our brothers and sisters, seeing in them Christ and thus become eligible for eternal happiness. Neglecting to do so will become the cause for eternal punishment.

In 1979 Mother Teresa won the Nobel Prize. In her speech Mother Teresa said that the reason for her success in life was Jesus’ words: “When you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.”

The parable of the Ten Virgins in Matthew 25:1-13 points to the common judgment. The foolish virgins, who did not carry oil along with their lamps, were left out. God’s love and fraternal love is implied here.

(The biblical passages Matthew 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-28 and 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 teach us what is holiness).

In the book of Revelation we read: “I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne and books were opened. Also another book was opened, which is the Book of Life and the dead were judged by what was written in the books, by what they had done” (Revelation 20:12). These words remind us every human being must face judgment.

Heaven

“Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundations of the world” (Matthew 25:34).

“The perfect life with the Most Holy Trinity – this communion of life and love with the Trinity, with the Virgin Mary, the angels and all the blessed – is called “heaven.” Heaven is the ultimate end and fulfillment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness” (CCC # 1024). Thus heavenly Church is formed. Contemplating God in full light the members of the heavenly Church ‘greet one another with a holy kiss’ (1 Corinthians 13:12).

“The real and true life then is the Father, who through the Son in the Holy Spirit pours forth as from a fountain His heavenly gifts to all; and through His love to man, the blessings of the life eternal are promised without fail to us men also” (St. Cyril of Jerusalem).

Relation between Jesus and Heaven

From the beginning, before the world was made, Jesus was with the Father in heaven (John 17:5). He was in the bosom of the Father (John 1:18). Jesus came to the earth from heaven (John 3:13). Jesus tells that he is the bread of life that came down from heaven (John 6:33-51). At Baptism (Matthew 3:16-17), during Transfiguration (Matthew 17:5) and when he was troubled (John 12:27) the voice

from heaven witnessed the divinity of Jesus. Jesus returned to heaven after the Resurrection.

Holiness of life leads us to heavenly life. A person who has loved on earth loving God and neighbour rejoices in seeing God face to face after death. This state of life is heaven.

Jesus' ascension into heaven assures us of heavenly life (Matthew 16:19; Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:6-11). Holy Virgin Mary's assumption, further, strengthens our hope of a heavenly life. Holy Virgin Mary alone has been taken up to heaven with body and soul.

Heavenly Bliss

We cannot fully comprehend heavenly bliss. Seeing God face to face is the highest heavenly joy. See the passages that reveal the mystery of heavenly bliss:

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Corinthians 2:9).

“I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (Romans 8:18).

“The righteous will shine like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father” (Matthew 13:43)

St. Augustine says: “Heaven is real, joy, safety, peace, heart full of joy, blissful reality, real presence of God. There we rest, see while resting, praise while seeing, love while praising and partake in the heavenly bliss while loving.”

Church's Teaching on Heavenly Bliss

* Those souls, which after the reception of baptism, have incurred no stain whatsoever of sin, those too, which after contracting the

stain of sin, have been purified, are received into heaven (Second Council of Lyon, 1274).

✱ The souls of those who have incurred no stain of sin whatsoever after baptism, as well as souls who after incurring the stain of sin have been cleansed whether in their bodies or outside their bodies, as was stated above, are straightaway received into heaven and clearly behold the triune God as he is, yet one person more perfectly than another according to the difference of their merits (Ecumenical Council of Florence).

✱ The souls of all the saints and other faithful who died after receiving Christ's holy Baptism are and will be in heaven, in the heavenly Kingdom and celestial paradise with Christ, joined to the company of the holy angels (Benedict XII, 1336).

✱ In that celestial vision it will be granted to the eyes of the human mind strengthened by the light of glory, to contemplate the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in an utterly ineffable manner, to assist throughout eternity at the processions of the Divine Persons, and to rejoice with a happiness like to that with which the holy and undivided Trinity is happy (Pope Pius XII, Mystical Body, 1943).

The above teachings of the Church indicate that human beings desire to find joy in goodness and remain in it because God has created human beings to partake in his goodness. God, the perfect joy, is the ultimate aim and life of human persons.

Means to attain happy death

Participate daily in the Holy Eucharist and receive Holy Communion.

Devotion to the Holy Virgin Mary.

Devotion to Rosary

Seeking the special intercession of St. Joseph.
Realize the futility of worldly life.
Unite your sufferings with that of Christ.
See God's image in others and do good to them.
Do away with retaliation, antipathy and revenge.
Live according to Gospel vision.

Punishment of Hell

Many religions teach the existence of Hell, where the wicked are punished. It is a state where the souls are tortured. Hinduism speaks about Hell, where sinners are tormented after death. It is also the abode of Yama, the god of Death. Quran teaches about an after life place of punishment for evildoers. The punishments are carried in accordance with the degree of evil, one has done during his life. Teachings of Zoroastrian religion describe the most horrible punishments and tortures adapted to the sins committed by the damned. According to the modern Jewish scholars, the hell is a place of cleansing, that is, a temporary place of punishment.

Punishment of Hell in the Holy Bible

In the Old Testament and New Testament there are many instances, regarding the punishment after death. The Old Testament views on Hell and punishment after death correspond to the views of Palestinian people. The New Testament views on this matter are influenced greatly by the Jewish beliefs and modern thinking.

Hell in the Old Testament

The Old Testament clearly mentions about the wrath of God on the evil ones.

“All flesh shall come to worship before Me and they shall go forth and look on the dead bodies of the men that have rebelled against

me; for their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh” (Isaiah 66:23-24).

According to the Jewish belief, the dead go to Sheol. The Jews understand Sheol as a place from where no one can ever return. It is a place of darkness and torture, situated beneath the earth. The Jews believe that Sheol, a place undesired by all, is a great chasm somewhere beneath the earth. This thought is found in the book of Job: “He who goes down to Sheol does not come up” (Job 7:9). Sheol is a place filled with slime and worms. The only consolation for them was they could see their ancestors from there.

Later this idea of Jews underwent a change. They began to consider two different places for the dead: Gehenna and Paradise (Parousia). The wicked ones are tortured in Gehenna. The good ones will enjoy Paradise, in other words Abraham’s bosom where they await the final resurrection. Even though there is mention about Hell and Sheol in the Old Testament, the nature of Hell is not clear. The New Testament clearly presents the eternal punishment and eternal life.

Hell in the New Testament

The New Testament understanding on Hell and Purgatory are formed from the Jewish perception on life after death. In the teachings of Christ, especially in the Parables, we can see a number of indications on eternal punishment: Parable about weeds (Matthew 13:24-43), Parable of the net (Matthew 13:47-50), Parable of the wedding feast (Matthew 22:1-14), Parable of the virgins (Matthew 25:1-13), Parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30). In all these parables ‘weeping and gnashing of teeth,’ ‘casting out,’ and ‘consuming fire’ are mentioned.

Jesus in his teaching also mentions about Hell. For example, he says: “But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister,

you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, ‘You fool,’ you will be liable to the hell of fire” (Matthew 5:22). Jesus says again, “It is better you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown to hell” (Matthew 5:29).

St. John and St. Paul speak about the punishment in hell. In the Gospel according to John, ‘death’ is a state where one loses light and remains lifeless. John calls ‘eternal hell’ as ‘second death.’ John writes: “Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:15).

St. Paul calls the state of being eternally separated from God as hell.

“For those who are self-seeking and who obey not the truth but wickedness, there will be wrath and fury” (Romans 2:8). The Letter to the Hebrews tells: “A fearful prospect of judgment and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries” (Hebrews 10:27).

The Gospels mention about two different places – Hades and Genenna – where the wicked ones are punished contrary to those who enjoy eternal bliss. Hades as a place of suffering is mentioned only once in the New Testament. It is in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:22-23).

Gehenna

Gehenna is described as Hell. The name Gehenna originates from the word ‘Hinnom.’ In the Old Testament times, Kings, who were not God fearing, performed human sacrifices at Hinnom. King Ahaz “burned incense in the valley of the Son of Hinnom and burned his sons as an offering” (2 Chronicles 28:3). Later on Hinnom became a place disliked by all. It became a place where the waste was dumped. As the waste got accumulated there were worms. So the accumulated waste was burned. The process of accumulation of waste, gathering

of worms in the waste and putting fire on the waste repeated again and again. Thus Hinnom gradually represented the place of fire and worms. In the light this representation ehenna assumed the figure of Hell or eternal punishment. Prophet Isaiah uses this image to indicate hell: “For their worms shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched” (Isaiah 66:24).

Arnold Len, member of Anglican Church and English poet and literary critic embraced Catholic faith. He was asked: ‘Why did you embrace Catholicism?’ He replied to the question: “If Christ is God, no one can deny the existence of hell. While studying world history and Holy Bible one becomes aware of the fact that Christ is God. Christ, the true God, speaks twenty nine times about the existence of hell. This particular thought forced me to leave Anglican faith and embrace Catholic faith.”

Prayer for the Dead

All religions pray for the dead. Even in the ancient days there was the tradition of praying for the dead.



To pray for the dead, to be cleansed of their sins, is a holy and good practice.

“He also took up a collection ... and sent it to Jerusalem to provide for a sin offering. In doing this he acted very well and honorably, taking account of the resurrection ... It was a holy and pious thought” (2 Maccabees 12:43-45).

Fathers of the Church, Saints and Theologians speak of the existence of purgatory and the necessity to pray for the dead.

Pope St. Clement advises us: “Pray for the souls of the deceased brethren, that the Almighty God may have mercy on them and liberate them.”

“Whoever says a word against the Son of God will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven either in this age or in the age to come” (Matthew 12:32; Mark 3:28-29). This is proof of the existence of purgatory.

The Council of Florence declares that since it is true that souls in purgatory can be liberated through the prayers of Christians, therefore, offering Holy Eucharist, prayers and doing good works on their behalf is the tradition of the Church and it is obligatory (1431 - 1445).

“There is purgatory. The souls in the purgatory obtain relief and peace through the offering of Holy Eucharist and prayers of the faithful” (Council of Trent).

If our parents, brothers, sisters and relatives are suffering in purgatory, it is our duty to get them released. They are not able to do anything for themselves. But they can help us with their prayers and suffering. As far as God permits them they can have knowledge about us.

St. John Bosco and his co-worker Camilo made an agreement that the one who dies first will visit the other. Camilo died first. One day he appeared to St. John Bosco. After praying he disappeared (St. John Bosco's Life History). However, all who die do not appear, but they expect our prayers.

Conclusion

Death is inevitable. No one can escape death. For a Christian death is not the end. But it is an entrance to eternal life. Life does not end with death. Christ's resurrection is complete victory over death. Death is only a way to God, to be united with God. "For this is the will of my father. Everyone who sees the son and believes in him should have eternal life" (John 6:40). "I live because of the father, so he who eats me will live because of me" (John 6:57).

Teilhard de Chardin says: "If you can see God in death, you can conquer death." To find God through death, we must obey Christ's teaching and live. A plant, which grows slanting to one side, will fall on that side. In the same way, during life time, if we live in God's presence, in death we can attain God.

Clearing Some Doubts

1. Should we be praying for the dead?

It is appointed for mortals to die once, after this comes judgment (see, Hebrews 9:27-29). But the Holy Bible does not assure us whether all will be eligible to the blissful vision at the moment of judgment. Listen to the words of Jesus on the Last Judgment: "Do not be astonished at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and will come out – those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the

resurrection of condemnation” (John 5:28-29). Jesus also tells to those who lived uprightly: “Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:31). But to the wicked Jesus tells: “You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41). The Holy Bible also teaches that it is salvific to pray and do virtuous deed for the dead (2 Maccabees (13).

Not feeding a hungry orphan to sustain his or her life is a dreadful sin. Not extending a helping hand to a drowning person also is a terrible sin. Then who else is in a more urgent need of our prayers and good deeds than the drowning souls of purgatory? The hunger and suffering of this world is nothing compared to the pain and suffering in purgatory. The souls of purgatory deserve our urgent help. Our prayers and good works can purify them and thus enable them to enter into the presence of God.

2. How long should the souls be in purgatory?

The duration of the souls in purgatory depends on the following elements:

1. The amount of sins committed
2. Intentional and willful sins committed
3. The amount of penances done and undone for the sins committed
4. The number of prayers offered after death

3. How can we help the souls in purgatory?

The first means to help the souls in purgatory is to join in the ‘group of souls in purgatory.’ The conditions for joining this group are simple:

- Recite a prayer daily for the souls in purgatory.

- Offer them all the good works, prayers and sufferings of a day in a week.
- Offer them all indulgences.

The second means is to offer Holy Eucharist for them. This is a very fruitful means to liberate the souls from purgatory. Those who are unable to offer Holy Eucharist for this intention due to financial difficulty can attend as many as Holy Eucharist with this intention.

The other means to join the ‘group of souls in purgatory’ is to recite holy rosary and participate in the Holy Eucharist which give indulgence.

4. What is resurrection of the dead?

“Encounters with the risen Christ characterize the Christian hope of resurrection. We shall rise like Christ, with him, and through him” (CC 995).

“In death, the separation of the soul from the body, the human body decays and the soul goes to meet God, while awaiting its reunion with its glorified body. God, in his almighty power, will definitively grant incorruptible life to our bodies by reuniting them with our souls, through the power of Jesus’ Resurrection” (CCC 997).

St. Alphonsa of the Immaculate Conception



Sanit Alphonsa was born on 19 August 1910 to Joseph and Mary Muttathupadathu in kudamaloor and was baptized Anna. As a child, Anna was so fascinated by the life of St Therese of Lisieux tha she set herself the twin-objective of becoming a “nun” as well as “saint” through the practice of prayer and penance. However, an aunt who had brought her up since the untimely death of her mother, had mar-

riage in mind for her. Resolved never to marry, Anna planned to disfigure herself by putting her foot a big fire. But she accidentally slipped and fell right into the fire! He recovery from the resultant burns was eventually followed by the necessary assent from her aunt to fulfil her dream!

Anna’s preparation for entering religious life entailed further study, and so it was only in 1928 that she was finally able to join the Clarist Convent in Bharnanganam as a postulant, taking the name Alphonsa. She received the habit in the year 1930. entered the “novitiate” in 1935, and took her vows on 12 August 1936. Incidentally, illness in various forms, as well as misunderstandings and helpness were to dog her life and formation. Yet, her virtues of steadfastness, concern and patience, coupled with her fervent devotion to St Therese and BI Kuriakose Elias Chavara, stood her in good stead.

At one stage in life, she was also in a statue of shock for some time after a thief broke into her convent, giving her a severe fright. Interestingly, her recovery was marked with the return of her ability to read which she had lost months earlier. She was also, suddenly found to be gifted with proficiency in

Tamil, a language she had hitherto not known.

In time, Sister Alphonsa came to be known for certain special characteristics, like the gift of foreknowledge. People sought her advice and in her generosity of heart, particularly towards those who misjudged her or disliked her, she was a Source of great amazement and edification to all.

In 1945, in answer to her prayer for further suffering, Alphonsa experienced bouts of convulsions, whereby she was unable to eat despite feeling hungry. Initially, these convulsions came on a Friday, each spell lasting some three to seven hours. But out consideration for others she asked and receive from the Lord the favour that the attacks may occur at specific times. When this prompted her superiors to suggest that she should pray for permanent relief, she answered: "I am ready to suffer not only this but anything. The modern world has sunk to the lowest depths in the pursuit of pleasure. Let the Lord do with me as he wills, trampling over, wounding or piercing me, a humble sacrificail offering for the sake of a world that is on its way to ruin and for the priests and religious who are growing less fervent in their spiritual life." Amazingly, her sufferings notwithstanding, she generally appeared merely tired, causing those who visited her to forget her actual physical condition.

Sr Alphonsa breathed her last on 28 July 1946, just three weeks before her 36th birthday. She was beatified on 8 February 1986 at Kottayam, Kerala Pope John Paul II during his pastoral visit to India and was canonized by Pope Benedict XVI at St. Peter's in Rome on 12 October 2008.

