

# 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 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.

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 Catechetic 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 favor of God be upon you' (cf. Luke 2:40). Let God's light shine upon each one of you!

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

Archbishop Soosa Pakiam M.
President, KRLCBC
Archbishop of Trivandrum



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

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

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

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

Kochi 1<sup>st</sup> May 2018 Feast of St. Joseph the Worker Bishop Joseph Kariyil
Chairman
KRLCBC Commission for
Catechetics

## **MESSAGE**

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

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

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

On behalf of the Chairman of the Commission for Catechetics and its members my heart 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 1<sup>st</sup> May 2018 Feast of St. Joseph, the Worker Rev. Dr. Joy Puthenveetil Srecretary KRLCBC Commission for

#### **GRATITUDE**

The word Catechesis, derived from the Greek word 'katekhesis' 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 Mr. Thadeus Gonsalvez. 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.

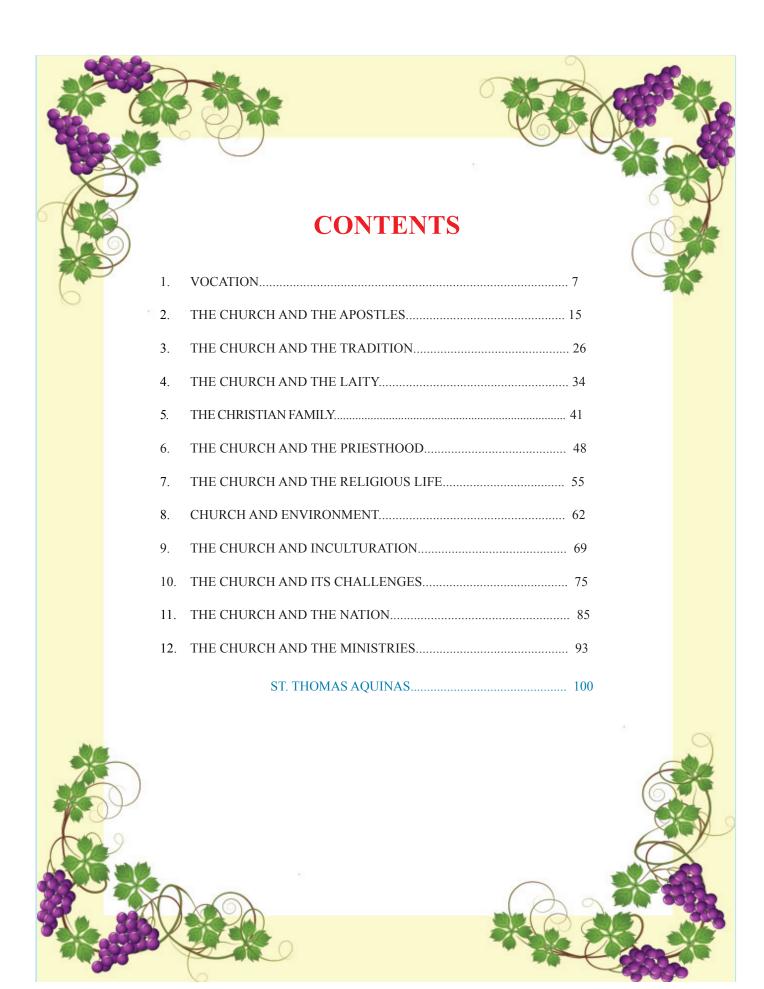
Bringing the entire nation to Jesus and assisting everyone to have a personal relationship with him will take place only when we, the faithful deepen our faith through faith formation, have a very personal relationship with him, which in turn strengthens us to proclaim genuinely the message of the Gospel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

Trivandrum and Calicut

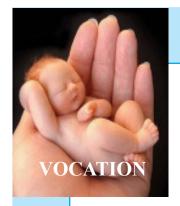
1st May 2018

Feast of St Joseph, the Worker

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







Henry was an outstanding class leader of his school. One morning when he entered the classroom he was totally disappointed at what he saw in the classroom. For, the previous day with the assistance of his classmates Henry had decorated the classroom with beautiful pictures for the Christmas

celebration. But now everything is destroyed. The classroom is now like a battlefield after the war. Henry's mind ached gravely. Henry came forward and asked angrily: "Who did create such commotion here?" "Why did they do it?" "Whom did they do for?" Nobody uttered anything. There was silence pervading through the class. Only half an hour left for the commencement of the class. Henry helplessly asked, "who will assist me to decorate the classroom beautifully for the celebration." Having understood the inability of Henry, certain students came forward and together they beautified the classroom better than ever.

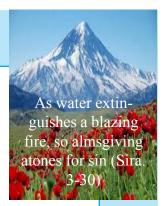
God created the world with his infinite wisdom and intelligence and entrusted it in the hands of humanity to protect and prosper it. But the greedy humans started to exploit the Mother Earth. Consequently harmony of the universe is disordered, ecological imbalance occurred. By looking at the disordered universe, God regretted for creating man and entrusting the whole world on him (Genesis 6:6). God examined the situation. Finally the merciful God invited the broadminded people for restructuring the world created. Such people, invited by God, for recreating the Kingdom of God, are called the children of God.

#### **Vocation**



We are the children of God. God welcomes us to live in his love and liberty and to grow in perfection. This is called vocation (cf. Mathew 5:48). Moreover, vocation is an invitation of God to grow and spread wide, in the generosity of

God, who made the sun rise and showers of the sky fall on both good and evil. Those who are chosen for such vocation of God are destined to love both foes and friends, to protect the universe, to sustain social justice and to be compassionate, after the model of Christ.



## The leaders who heard the voice of God

The Hebrews were the nomadic tribe without a proper leader to guide them. Finally Abraham was chosen to form a God-loving society out of this nomadic tribe and lead them to the promised land of Canan with harmony and prosperity (Genesis 12:1-4). Abraham was a blessing for everyone.

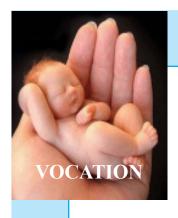
By listening to the lamentation of and experiencing the sufferings of the people of Israel, God chose Moses to liberate Israelites from the slavery of Egypt and to save them from social extinction (Exodus 3:1-22).

A boy named Jeremiah was called by God to demolish all the devilish deeds and behaviours and to recreate or rebuild them according to the will of God (Jeremiah 1:9-10).

Peter, the fisherman, was called by God to catch human beings (Luke 5:1-10).

## What are the criteria of Vocation?

- God calls those whom he wants (Mark 3:13)
- It is a call to be with God
- Those who are called should succumb to vocation by utilising their liberty
- Vocation is for the building up of the kingdom of God



- We are called to preach the kingdom of God all over the world (Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:19-20)
- Vocation is the gift of God and the mission received through vocation has to be responsibly exercised
- The one who received the call should remain faithful to it

Whatever the situation and wherever the people live and mingle with, they have to listen to the voice of God and respond to his call. What matters to the call of God is not the greatness, distinctions and titles of the chosen ones but God's love for them and His promise towards the people of God. Each and everyone should be accountable to his or her own vocation by upholding the values scribed in the words of the scripture in life situations.

# Various aspects of vocation

Vocation: God calls those whom He likes

Election: From those who are called some are chosen

Mission: The chosen ones are given mission

## **Duties of the called**

Every Christian through baptism partakes in the tri-faceted duty of Christ: The king, priest and prophet.

# **Priestly Mission**

We are priestly people. Hence we are destined to preserve the wisdom of God in our lives and to live according to God's desire (Malachi 2:7, Hosea 4:6). It is our duty to lead those, whom we meet, to God as to the wisdom of God. We participate in the priesthood Mission of God by executing priesthood services throughout our lives.

We, the priestly people must live in Holiness and should prompt others to live in Holiness (1 Thessalonians 4:7)

## **Prophetic Mission**

The prophets proclaim that people of God should return to the covenant made between God and his people. We also become the part of the prophetic mission when we live and help others to live in accordance with divine justice by discriminating and resisting the challenges of the era.

before all other

things. (Sira. 1-4)

As the prophetic people, we should resist injustice. We should try to set designs to make justice flow like water and peace as eternal rivulets (Amos 5:24).

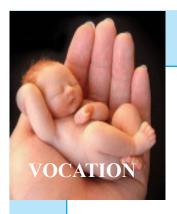
## **Kingly Mission (Serving Mission)**

Since Christ is both priest and prophet, he is also the king, Leader and Shepherd. The evangelistic mission of Christ was to bring the Kingdom of God on the earth. By baptism, we all partake in the kingly mission of Christ. Just as Jesus Christ served and died for others on the earth, we should fulfil our kingly mission by serving the needful and living for those who were deprived of justice and truth and deserted by all.

The kingly mission reminds us of protecting everybody and leading them to God and his kingdom.

# What is kingdom of God? Where is it? How can we own it?

The state of being lived with God, being led by God and being reigned by God, is called Kingdom of God. Christ teaches us that Kingdom of God is in and within us.



- Since we are the children of God the Father in Heaven, all are brothers and sisters.
- We are specially called by God. We respond to our vocation wholeheartedly by fulfilling our daily duties and responsibilities with dedication and good will.
- Then God will entrust upon us more responsibilities. All our words and deeds should be for the glory of God and should aim at the betterment of the society.

#### Song

God calls us to live in his love
God calls us to live in his liberty
God calls us to build his Kingdom
How fortunate! How glorious are we!

God calls us to love all friends and foes
God calls us to project nature and life
God calls us to preserve justice in the world
How fortunate! How Glorious are us!

Are we turned to witness the glory of God And respond to his vocation Humbly and whole heartedly.

# Questions

- Service W
- Why is God sad at the creation of man?
- What are the duties of those who were called by God?
- Why did God call Abraham?
- What does God require from us according to Jeremiah?
- How should we be faithful to vocation?

# **Activity**

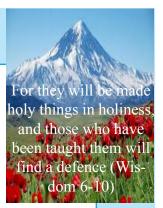
- Conduct a discussion on what are the things we can do to construct the Kingdom of God and prepare a plan for our parish.
- Read the Old Testament and prepare a list of leaders who were called by God.
- Discuss the duties of ourselves as we have been called by God.

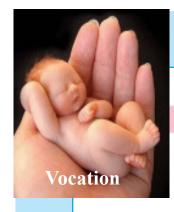
# **Word of God**

Jesus said, Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, who will not receive a hundred fold now in this age and in the age to come to eternal life (Mark 10:29-30).

# **Prayer**

Lord, you taught us that the kingdom of God is in ourselves, please make us listen to your call and to live as to your wish and to be the epitome of your grace and glory.



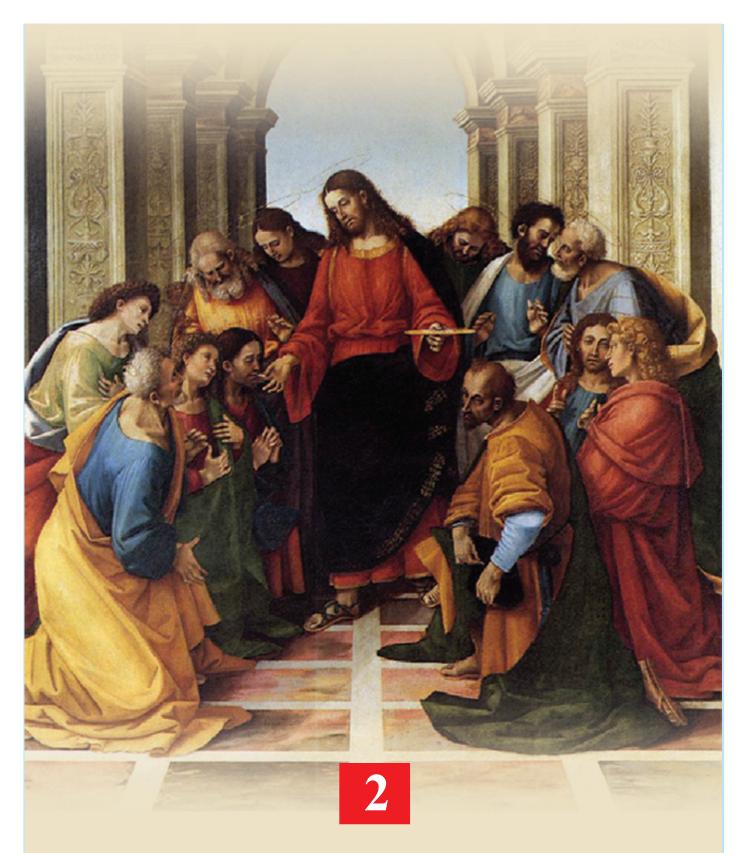


# Memorize

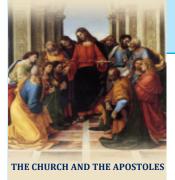


"Christian life means to continue the life of Christ and complete it in ourselves. Each one should be the other Christ on earth" (St. John Judes).





THE CHURCH AND THE APOSTLES

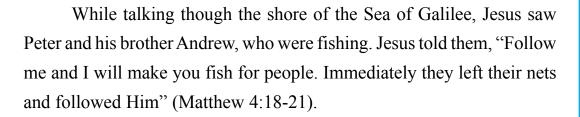


We all are called to build the Kingdom of God. Christ proclaimed and built a kingdom that is founded on justice and quality.

Jesus came into this world proclaiming the good news of hope and liberation for the oppressed, neglected and the marginalized. Jesus appeared in this world, promising light to those who were spiritually and physically blind. He pledged freedom to the captives. He assured days of parity, fraternity and joy (cf. Luke 4:18-21).

In order to proclaim this good news of the Kingdom of God forever and for everybody Jesus chose twelve ordinary men. They are named apostles. Peter was the most prominent among the Apostles. He was considered to be a rock and on which finally Christ built the Church.

# The vocation of Apostles and their election



Fishermen were called to catch people for the Kingdom of God.

As Jesus went from there, he saw two other brothers, James (Jacob) and John. They were in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. He called them also. "Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed Jesus" (Matthew 4:21-22). They are the first four disciples called by Jesus.

As soon as they heard Jesus calling them, they immediately renounced everything and followed Jesus.

Later Jesus called Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Mathew, the tax collector, James son of Alpheus, Thaddeus [Judas Thaddeus], Simon the Cananaean and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Jesus (cf. Matthew 10:1-4). The disciples of Jesus thus increased.

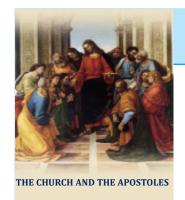
"And He appointed twelve from His disciples, whom he also called Apostles to be with Him, and to be sent out to proclaim the message and to have authority to cast out demons" (Mark 3:14-15).

- The Apostles are called, chosen and sent out by Jesus.
- Jesus gave them authority to heal the sick, to cast out demons and to pardon the sins.
- The Church continues the mission of Jesus through the successors of the Apostles (Luke 9:1-5).

As promised at His Ascension, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, upon the Apostles (Acts of the Apostles 2:4). Filled with the Holy Spirit, the Apostles shed out their fears and strengthened themselves and began preaching the Gospel. The Apostles are the first members and preachers of the Church.

Apostles realised the goal and mission of Jesus preaching through the resurrection experience. They proclaimed:

"We declare to you, what was from the beginning, whatever we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes. What we have looked at and touched with our hands concerning the word of life" (John 1:1).



We must know and experience Jesus, like the Apostles. After having experienced Jesus we should preach the life giving Gospel to everyone.

We are called to devote our lives for Jesus and to His mission of preaching the Kingdom of God.

# St. Peter, the head of the Church Family

Jesus said to Peter, who confessed his faith in the Lord, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16), "Blessed are you Simon, son of Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in Heaven. And I tell you, You are Peter, and on his rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:17-18). Peter was appointed the head of His Church (John 21:15-19).

#### Rome

Even though Herod Agrippa III imprisoned Peter he miraculously escaped from there. After having guided the Church for seven years in Antioch, Peter had been the head of the Church in Rome for around twenty five years. During the reign of Emperor Nero there was religious persecution. At this time of religious persecution, Peter was martyred by crucifying upside down. Rome is well acclaimed in the history of the Catholic Church because Peter, the most prominent among the disciples and who held prime position in the Ancient Church, led the Church for around twenty five years and was martyred in Rome. The Popes are elected as the successors of Peter to be the leaders of the Roman Church. Rome thus became the centre of the Catholic Church.

• The corner stone of the Church that is built on Peter, the rock and upon the foundation of Apostles, is Christ Jesus himself (Ephesians 2:20).

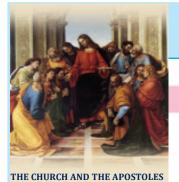


- Among the apostles Peter is named first (Matthew 10:2; Mark 3:16; Luke 6:14).
- Peter is the first among the apostles to perform miracles in the name of Jesus (Acts of the Apostles 1:10).
- Peter initiated the selection of Mathias in the place of Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus (Acts of the Apostles 1:15-26).
- Like Jesus, consoling the sick and the suffering, Peter led the Church fearlessly.
- By accepting Cornelius into the Church, Peter opened doors of the Church to the Gentiles (Acts of the Apostles 10:1-13)
- St. Chrysostom attributes Peter as "the tongue of the Apostles."
- St. Jerome writes: "I ought to consult the Chair of Peter and the faith praised by the mouth of the Apostle."

# St. Peter's complete dedication, firm belief, boundless love and strong witness are good examples for us.

Peter, who steered the Church after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, spent his last days in Rome. During the Religious persecution of the Emperor Nero, he united all the Christians together, empowered and guided them. In between AD 65-67 Peter was martyred. As Peter found himself unworthy to be crucified like Jesus Christ, he was crucified upside down as per his wish.

Two letters written by Peter are included in the Bible. Those letters are known as Catholic Letters, letters for the Universal Church.



St. Peter the Rock



Peter, who was named Simon, is the most prominent among the twelve Apostles. The literary meaning of Peter is 'rock.' When Peter, representing the Apostles, professed faith

in Jesus, saying "You are the Son of the living God," Jesus named him 'Rock' and proclaimed that upon this rock He will build the Church. Moreover, Peter was authorised not only to preach, lead and sanctify but also to pardon sins (cf. Matthew 16:13-20).

Since Peter is prominent among the Apostles he is authorised to lead the Early Church. Peter initiated the selection of Mathias instead of Judas Iscariot. He explained the Pentecost to the multitude. Peter visited the churches of Samaria, Galilee, Lida, Sharon and Joppa.

# St. Paul the Apostle of Gentiles

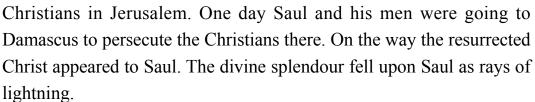


St. Paul was born in a Gentile town called Tarsus, which was under the Roman Empire. Saul obtained the Roman citizenship (Acts of the Apostles 16:37). He studied the Law and Tradition of Jews under Rabbi Gamaliel (Acts of the Apostles 22:3) and gradually become a staunch Pharisee. The Greek culture of Tarsus and the Jewish culture of Jerusalem influenced the life and thought of Saul.

According to Jewish perception, cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree (cf. Deuteronomy 21:23). Therefore, Saul perceived Jesus as a cursed man, abandoned by God, because He was from Nazareth and was crucified.

It was impossible for Saul to consider a cursed man as the Messiah, the hope of centuries.

When the crucified Jesus was proclaimed as Christ, Saul and other people, who believed in One God, considered it as heresy and blasphemy. Soon, Saul stated persecuting the



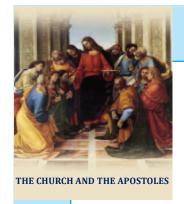
A voice said: "Saul, Saul why do you persecute me" (Acts of the Apostles 9:4)? This question was echoed in the air (Acts of the Apostles 9:1-18, 22:3-21). Immediately Saul became blind. The voice and the question touched Saul. The blind Saul approached Ananias, the disciple of Christ, who cured him off his blindness and baptized him as the disciple



of Christ. Undergoing three years of prayer and meditation, Saul arrived at Jerusalem and with the collaboration of Apostles started preaching Gospel (Acts of the Apostle 9:26-29).

St. Paul was particularly destined by Christ to preach Gospel among the Gentiles. Hence he is called the Apostles of Gentiles (Acts of the Apostle 9:15). Paul who is filled with the love of God, who lived solely for the preaching of the Gospel, is a model for us.





#### The Missionary Journeys of St. Paul

From AD 43 to 58, St. Paul conducted three Missionary Journeys and laid foundation for the Church at important centres.

Missionary Journey	Co-traveller(s)	Places visited
First Missionary Journey	Barnabas	Cyprus, Pamphylia, Pisidia
AD 45-49 Second Missionary Journey AD 49-52	Mark	Cilicia, Iconium,
		Galatia, Troas, Philippi, Thessalonica,
		Athens, Corinth,
Third Missionary Journey (AD 52-58)		Ephesus, Samos, Caesarea Antioch, Phrygia,
		Ephesus, Philippi,
		Thessalonica, Corinth

After the third missionary journey Paul arrived at Rome. He was imprisoned in AD 64 during the religious persecution of Nero, the Emperor, and finally around AD 65-67 he was beheaded.

St. Peter and St. Paul are strong pillars of the Catholic Church. They guided the Early Church with the power of the Holy Spirit.

St. Paul has written thirteen letters in order to cater the needs of each and every Christian community he founded. These letters can be classified into four sections:

• Early Letters :1, 2 Thessalonians

• Prominent Letters :Romans, 1, 2 Corinthians, Galatians

• Captivity Letters : Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians

• Pastoral Letters: 1, 2 Timothy, Titus

# Reflect on the following:

Saul went to Damascus to persecute the Christians.

Paul carried out missionary journeys.

# We are the Apostles of Christ

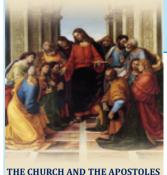


Apostles drew inspiration from Christ. They sacrificed themselves for others, devoted their lives for Christ and the Kingdom of God. Today the Church resumes its victorious journey on the track of holiness, missionary deeds and faith built by Apostles.

Like the apostles, our aim is to proclaim the Risen Christ to others and to desire the good of others. The commandment of love taught by Jesus (John 13:34-35) is to control our behaviour, not others. We should not desire for what are suitable for us but on the other hand for what are right and suitable for others. We, who live for the glory of God and for the well-being of humanity, should take pride in the Gospel and should suffer everything for the sake of the Gospel.

# "Woe to me if I don't proclaim the Gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:16).

- The Apostles, who boldly proclaimed their faith in Christ, are the best models for us.
- Like Apostles we should proclaim our faith in Christ everywhere.
- We should resist the challenges of our faith.
- We should protect our faith.
- We should not do anything against our faith.



The Greek word "Apostolos" means a 'messenger', the "one who is sent", 'chief,' etc. The Hebrew word for apostle is "shaliah," which means "representative of chief." In short, apostle means "the one who works at the command of another person."

#### Song

Disciples are many Among them are twelve apostles They are strong pillars of the church Peter, the most prominent among them

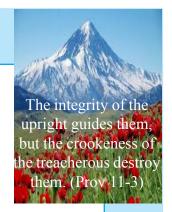
On the way to Damascus Saul underwent a mental transformation Finally being a staunch evangelist Was baptized as Paul

We too Apostles of Christ Destined to carry out His orders And proclaim the resurrection of Christ And we should be proud of that

## Questions

- 1. What is the essence of Christ's proclamation of liberation?
- 2. Why did Christ choose Apostles?
- 3. Who are the first four disciples called by Christ? What is the speciality of their selection?

- 4. What was the speciality of the good news proclaimed by the Apostles?
- 5. Why didn't Saul accept Jesus Christ in the beginning?



## **Activity**

- 1. Present the conversion of Saul on the stage.
- 2. Prepare a speech, comparing St. Peter and St. Paul?
- 3. Conduct a debate on 'who is greater St. Peter or St. Paul?

## Word of God

"You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name" (John 15:16).

# Prayer

Christ our Lord, who commanded us to go and preach the Gospel to all creation, strengthen us to remain with the Church even at the time of adversities, like the Apostles, who sacrificed their lives for the sake of the Gospel.

#### Memorize

"Remember day and night him who speaks the Word of God to you. Honour him as you do the Lord. For wherever the lordly rule is uttered, there is the Lord" (Didache).



Generally faith and religion are linked to its origin. Solely through this one can claim historical continuity. The Christian faith that we staunchly uphold and live today is handed on to us through generations. We call this process as tradition.



How did the word tradition originate? The Greek word 'paradosis' and the Latin word 'thradere' or 'thraditio' contribute to the word tradition. The word means 'handover' or 'entrust.' In the perspective of inheriting, something from father or ancestors, the word tradition can be called heritage.

Tradition is handing over of belief, values, rituals and practices.

#### What are the dimensions of tradition?

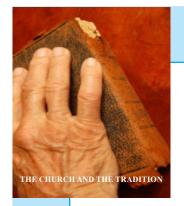
Tradition has three phases: Past, Present and Future. The process of past phase becoming present phase is called tradition. Being in the present, tradition moulds the future phase.

Tradition makes easy the uninterrupted flow of the history. Tradition connects the present with the past and it is linked to the future.

# **Tradition and the Sacred Scriptures**

The Holy Bible is the handing over of Christian faith in the written form. Tradition is the handing over of Christian faith in the oral form.

Both the Holy Bible and Tradition are the fundamental sources of the Christian faith. Interpretation is required for the comprehension of the Holy Scriptures (Acts of the Apostles 8:31). Tradition is indispensible for interpretation and explanation, because the meaning and depth of the



Holy Scriptures are made possible through Tradition. Hence the Holy Scriptures and Tradition are interlinked.

The origin of the Holy Scriptures and Tradition is the Lord God. The aims of these two entities are to know God and make Him known to others. Hence we accept both

Holy Scriptures and Tradition with same respect and gratitude.

The Sacred Scriptures are formed out of Tradition. Tradition has also been formed even after the formation of the Sacred Scriptures.

#### **Tradition and Proclamation**

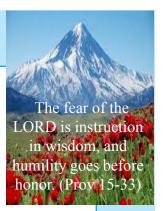
Tradition is not only the handing over of historical events but also description and proclamation. Tradition of the Church is the description of plan of salvation completed by Jesus and the proclamation of message of salvation handed on to us in history. The words of Jesus are relevant today as they were in the past. These words are proclaimed today for the present generation as per the requirements of the time.

#### **Tradition and Christ**

The unaltered source of tradition is Christ himself. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

Christ himself is the real subject of Christian tradition. Traditions that hand over Jesus Christ are really Christian. Entire words and deeds of Jesus are not contained in the Holy Scriptures (John 21:25). Therefore, Jesus' teachings and deeds, the writings and preaching of the apostles (1 Thessalonians 2:15) are topics of Church's Tradition.

As to the promise given to human race by God, Christ is the one who was born and lived in Jewish tradition. But Christ opposed the blind belief of tradition. Christ did not consider the practices of tradition devoid of "justice, mercy and faith" (Matthew 23:23).



## **Tradition and Holy Spirit**

The tradition of the Holy Catholic Church becomes dynamic by the working of Holy Spirit. We cannot interpret and comprehend the tradition without the assistance of God's Spirit. The message of Jesus and his salvific deeds remain vibrant exclusively with the help of the Holy Spirit.

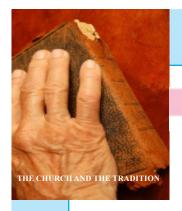
#### Tradition and the Church

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the foundation of Christian Tradition. The Gospel and the redemption are received and materialized in the Church. Hence the Christian Tradition is part and parcel of the Church.

Tradition is not merely the Holy Scriptures and the teachings of the Church. But it also includes Sacraments, the authority and procedures of the Church and the Sacred Liturgy and the rituals.

The Tradition that exists in the Church contains many human aspects. Therefore, the Tradition requires renewal from time to time. The Church takes responsibility to submit the Tradition for necessary renewal. The periodical renewal that the Church brings in the Tradition makes it more rich and dynamic.

#### Traditionalism and Modernism



Traditionalists are those who blindly depend on past history and experience and theorize them. And they firmly hold on to their principles and assert that such principles alone are right. But, on the other hand, modernists are those who oppose the ideologies of traditionalist and remain firmly

on new ideologies. But these two approaches are wrong.

#### Tradition and Transformation

Tradition is not merely the sustenance and continuation of past ideas or systems, but a dynamic and lively sustenance and continuation.

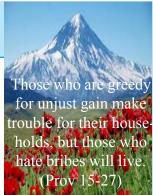
The Second Vatican Council Constitution, "The Church in the Modern World," provides the Catholic vision of discerning the signs of the time and responding to it.

The Christian faith does not merely remain in institutional growth. Instead it demands new interpretations and approaches. Hence, there is periodical updating of the lessons concerning faith, liturgical symbols and pastoral approaches. These changes are necessary since the Church is pilgrim by nature.

#### Sabbath

As far as the Jews are concerned the Sabbath is very holy, observed and repeated every week. God completed the process of creation in six days and He rested on the seventh day (Genesis 2:2-3). The renewal of this memory is the foundation of the Sabbath observation. One of the commandments that God gave to Moses is: "Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8-9). On the Sabbath day humans or animals were not permitted to do any work (Exodus 20:10). The Lord

blessed the Sabbath day and consecrated it (Exodus 20:11). The Sabbath begins at sunset on Friday and ends at sunset on Saturday (cf. Nehemiah 13:19).



Everyone is obliged to strictly follow the Sabbath rules.

Literal observance of the Sabbath is considered to be an appropriate expression of one's loyalty to God. Hence there existed a rule to condemn to death the one who violated the Sabbath rules (Exodus 35:2; Numbers 15:32-36). However, it was permitted to have holy convocations on the Sabbath day (Leviticus 23:8).

#### **Tradition and Our Society**

Tradition is born in the society. It grows, undergoes transformation and finally preserved safely in the society. Every society should preserve its tradition in order to demonstrate its identity. The practice and preservation of indigenous traditions increase unity and togetherness among the members of societies. The life style and culture of a society are the outcome of its tradition. Tradition ensures society's continuity. Tradition passes responsibly the cultural values to new generation. It also links the present generation to the part era. Our languages, laws, symbols, ideologies, etc. are obtained from the ancient time.

Just like the Holy Scriptures, tradition too is the foundation of our faith. We should creatively protect, preserve and hand over the future generation our ancestor's faith life, rites and rituals.



- We should accept and honour our faith tradition. We should be proud of being Christians.
- Jesus Christ daily speaks to us through the Holy Scriptures. Hence we should live accordingly to the Word of God.
- We should be grateful to God, thinking of our ancestors, who transmitted the faith to us and we should create the right atmosphere for the future generation to grow in the Christian faith.



#### Song

Generation after generation
Had we got the tradition
As coming from our forefathers
Or our predecessors, it is heritage.

Christian faith in oral form
It is called tradition
Christian faith in written form
It is called Holy Scriptures.

For tradition to become dynamic Need us the aid of Holy Spirit. But remember divine verbosity Is nobler than tradition.

# **Questions**

- 1. What is tradition?
- 2. What is the relation between tradition and heritage?
- 3. What is the relation between tradition and the Sacred Scriptures?
- 4. How does the Christ become the topic of Christian tradition?
- 5. What are the factors of Christian tradition?

# **Activity**

#### Conduct a debate:

- 1. Not Tradition, but the Word of God is more important.
- 2. Tradition and Christ!
- 3. Prepare a speech on tradition and transformation!

# The word of God

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not abolish but to fulfil. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished" (Matthew 5:17-18).

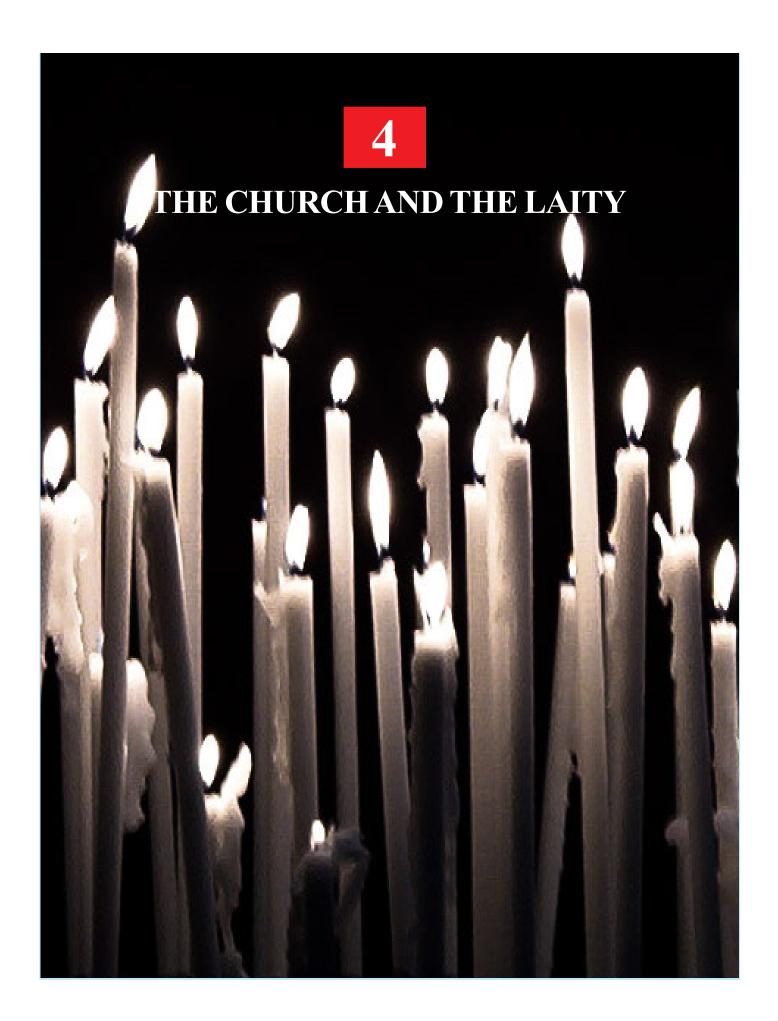
## **Prayer**

Christ, our Lord, you have revealed to us the infinite God. We implore you to shower on us the grace to live in accordance with the teachings of the Church and to grown as genuine children of Christ's Church.

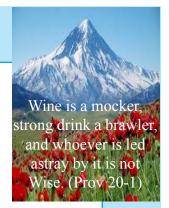
#### Memorize

"The reason you have a body as well as a soul is that you may win the favour of the visible world. But ask that you may have revelations of what is unseen. In that way you will lack nothing and have an abundance of every gift" (St. Ignatius of Antioch).





We all are called to witness Christ and to invite others to Christ throughout our life. This call of all the baptized can be called the vocation of the laity.



## Who is the Laity

Generally, the faithful who are not ordained as deacons, priests or bishops and not members of any religious congregation, officially accepted by the Church, are called lay people. But according to the description of the Second Vatican Council lay people are "the faithful who by Baptism are incorporated into Christ, are placed in the People of God, and in their own way share the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ, and to the best of their ability carry on the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world" (*Lumen Gentium* 31).

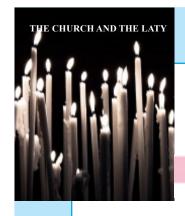
# **Mission of the Laity**

The participation of the laity in the apostolic mission of the Church is known as the mission of the laity. An apostle is the one authentically sent by Christ. Since the Church is Apostolic, all the members of the Church participate in its apostolic mission.

Through the Baptism lay people become part of Christ and one with him. Consequently they are formed as the people of God and participate in Christ's priestly, prophetic and kingly role.

The members of the Church, being the recipients of Baptism, are vested with the vocation and mission of preaching the Gospel of Christ. Accordingly, the Church gives the following instructions to the laity:

- Offer spiritual sacrifice
- Praise the Lord and pray to Him
- Become an acceptable sacrifice to God and to the society



Grow in sacramental life

# The Dimensions of Mission of the Laity

The dimensions of laity's mission can be broadly grouped into three:

- Individual level
- Family level
- Community level

#### **Individual Level**

The faithful, who received Baptism, leading a Christ-centre life, becomes gospel for others. The one who is not evangelized cannot evangelize others.

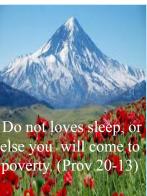
# **Family Level**

Family is the primary place of evangelization. Parents sow the first seeds of faith in the minds of the children. An infant does not first read the written Gospel, but its parents' 'gospel of life.' Parents' thoughts, words, look and behaviour should become the gospel for the children. For the children parents are their visible God. We recall the traditional saying: "Mother, Father and Master are like God."

# **Community Level**

As the lay people are the members of the Church they are also the members of the society. Hence they are obliged to fulfil their responsibility

both towards the Church and the society. As a result the laity has the responsibility to actively participate in the cultural, economic and political spheres of the society and become the salt of the earth and light of the word. Fight against injustice, violence, exploitation and corruption is a Christian virtue. We are to use all our God given gifts for the prosperity of our society.



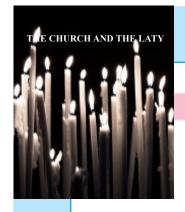
The laity has to remain always with the Church and should withstand firmly the challenges posed by the divisive forces.

"Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in Heaven (Matthew 5:16).

# Common Priesthood and the Ministerial Priesthood

Lay people participate in the common priesthood. Partaking in the common priesthood through Baptism we realise its relation to the ministerial priesthood. The priests, who receive ministerial priesthood, while executing their responsibilities, exercise primarily two important things: 1. Knowing, acknowledging and encouraging the different gifts of ministerial priesthood, the ministerial priesthood synchronises them for the building up of God's Kingdom. 2. Utilising and sharpening the skills of common priesthood, the ministerial priesthood motivates and guides them divinely for the common good.

The common priesthood have to understand that the ministerial priesthood is consecrated by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:21) to lead the Church, redeemed by the precious Blood of Christ. The laity has to accept as model Jesus Christ, who fulfilled the words of prophets that obedience is better than sacrifice. The ministerial priesthood should maintain a serious and responsible relationship with the laity.



# **Relevance of Lay Apostolate**



To the question of the Lord, "whom shall I send and who will go for us" we must respond like prophet Isaiah, "Here am I, send me" (1saiah 6:8) and bear witness to Christ. The

foundation of lay apostolate is the fulfilment of God's wish that all people should be saved and come to knowledge of truth.

## **Christian Call is Call to Mission**

We have to share Christ's love in all spheres of our life. Looking at our deeds and behaviour others will recognize that we are the beloved children of Jesus Christ.

We must wipe the tears of those who weep, feed the hungry and give hope to the depressed. Say 'no' to drugs and pornographic films. They mislead the children. Avoid bad dress style and immoral utterances. They become disgrace to the children. On the other hand, guide others on the path of true through moral life.

We can become good witnesses to Christ through respecting the elders, leading a prayer centred and holy life, being good models as individuals, in the family and society.

The speciality of laity is that they always live in constant touch with the outside world. They intervene in all the spheres of human life. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the laity to christionize all the realms of their public life. This obligation of the laity is realized through witnessing Christ and his Gospel. Family, education, employment, medical service, politics, etc., remain the appropriate situations of mission of the laity.

Song

Lay people are not priests
Lay people are not religious
But lay people are called
To live the vision of God

We are called by God
To become gospel and to give gospel
We are the salt and light of the earth
Should work as leaven in the process

God's graces we received
Be used for the prosperity
We should shine in the world
To propagate the greatness of God

When one will not listen to the law, even one's prayers are an abomination.

(Prov 28-9)

# Questions

- 1. What is the call of the laity?
- 2. What is the definition for the laity given by the Second Vatican Council?
- 3. What do you mean by the word Lay Apostolate?
- 4. What are the different dimensions of the Lay Apostolate?
- 5. Why do we call both the Common Priesthood and the Ministerial Priesthood are complementary?

# **Activity**

- 1. Discus: The Ministerial Priesthood is superior to the Common Priesthood.
- 2. Prepare a speech on the topic: Role of Laity in the mission of the Church.
- 3 Prepare a write up on the topic: What can the lay people do in parish and in the Diocese.



# The Word of God

"You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people" (1 Peter 2:9).

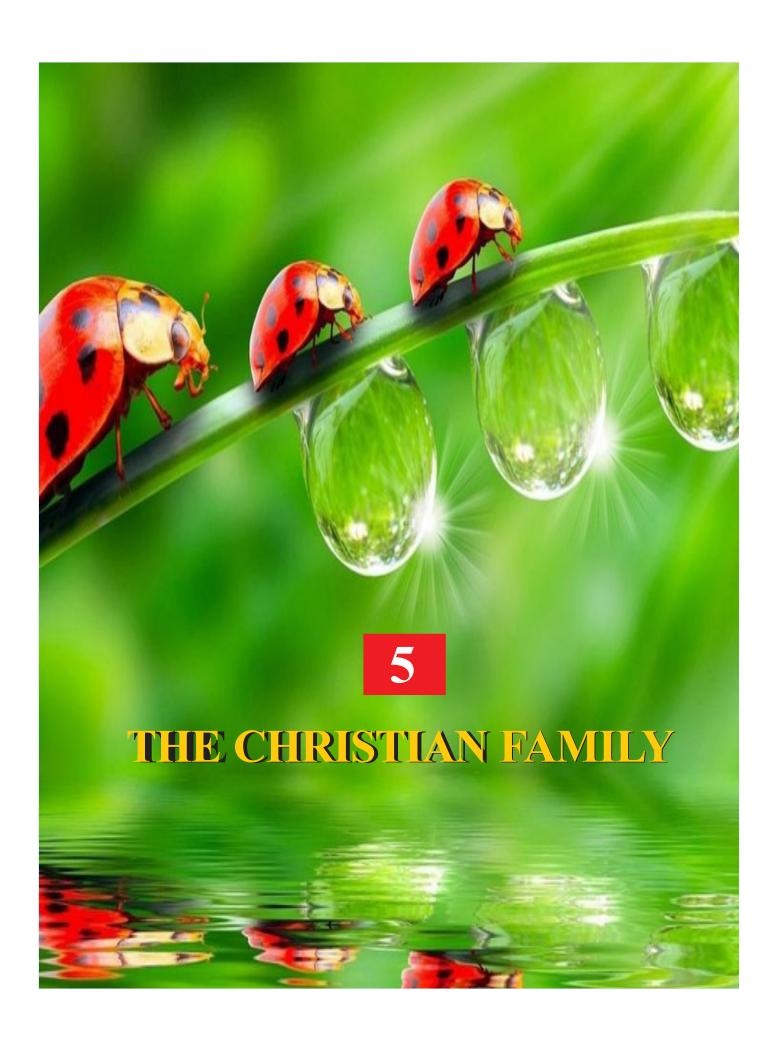
# Prayer

Lord, you taught us you are the vine and we are the branches. Shower your grace upon us to execute the mission that you entrusted to us through Baptism.

## Memorize

"Let your baptism be always your weapon, faith your helmet, charity your spear and patience your complete armour" (St. Ignatius of Antioch).







Family is close to God's heart. In fact, family was His idea in the first place. God established family. He sustains and protects it. God created the first man, Adam and gave him Eve as a suitable life partner. Thus God established the first family in the universe. God placed them in the Garden of Eden. Even

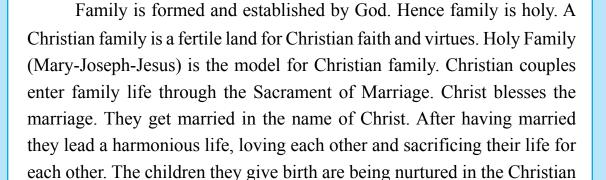
when they sinned and were thrown out of Garden of Eden, God did not destroy the existence of the family. God gave Adam and Eve generations of offspring.

Family remains the most beautiful communion in the society. Human life is born, grown and perfected in the family. Consequently, family and family life have prominent place in human life.

Family is the basic unit of the society. Family life is beginning of societal life. Good families form good societies.

An individual learns to cry, smile, share and reconcile in the family. One learns in the family to distinguish between necessity and exuberance. As a result, a member in the family discovers to forgo the innumerable selfish desires and practices self-discipline.

# **Holiness of family**



values. Consequently they become part of God's love and creation.

Family is the initial ground for the practise of Christian faith. Parents are models for their children. They advice the children time and again to live a life based on Christian values and mission. Parents' responsibility is completed only when they mould their children as responsible or dutiful members of the family, society and the Church.



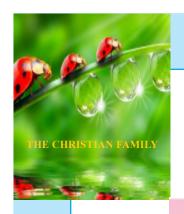
Parents and children preserve the holiness of family by loving each other, by sharing among themselves and suffering together.

## The Missionary Family

We find a lot of families in the Acts of Apostles, who have offered themselves for the missionary works. For instance, Stephen (Acts of the Apostles 6:1-7), Cornelius (Acts of the Apostles 10:24-33) and Lydia (Acts of the Apostles 16:11-15) were received into the Church by the special intervention of God. The couple Aquila and Priscilla dedicated their lives for the Church and its mission. The missionary spirit of such families remains one of the prominent factors that led to the growth of the Early Church

Our families also must be filled with missionary spirit. If the children learn to respect their parents they will surely learn to respect the elders in the society. If the members of family love each other and share among themselves whatever they have, they will be able to love others as brothers and sister and share their riches with the needy and thus remain united with everyone. If we consider everybody as our parents and siblings, the entire universe would become a family.

A model and perfect family, as Christ described, is the leaven in the society. Families that lead ideal Christian life can attract others to Christ. Individuals filled with the divine grace of service, both in the Church and



in the society, are formed in families. Good priests, religious, dedicated social workers and sincere politicians and leaders are formed in the family.

## Family and Moral Values

Characteristic traits like love, respect, consideration, credibility, sincerity, etc. are transacted to the society by family. Special regard for the suffering and the poor should be practised in the family. Family plays a virtual role in the society, where the values of truth, justice and love pervade.

The above said human virtues – truth, justice and love – assist in human personality development and to become perfect human beings. One is strengthened in human virtues through the practise of good habits in life. All these human virtues are developed in families. Growth of human virtues is possible where there is love, freedom and respect.

## Family and prayer

The events like birth, education, employment, marriage, disease, death, etc., can lead the families to God.

We first hear about God in family. The basics of prayer are taught in the family. Family prayer, entire family praying together, becomes the first community prayer in the life of a family member.

The community prayer guaranties unity among the members of the family. It showers God's grace into the family. In the evening the family should gather together to pray the rosary and to read and meditate a passage from the Bible. Family prayer should become a daily routine for the family. Family that prays together stays together; absence of prayer scatters the family.

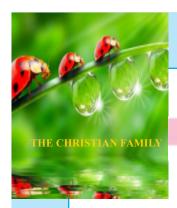


- Family is a group of persons.
- Love should be the trademark of this group.
- Family is the fertile land of human virtues.
- Family is the primary stage for instructional values.
- A family is generally called domestic church, for it is a smallest group of faithful.
- Family is the foretaste of the kingdom of God.

In the Apostolic Exhortation, "Family is a Communion," St. John Paul II speaks about four responsibilities of Christian family:

- Form a community of individuals
- Cooperate with the growth of life
- Partake in the development of the society
- Participate in Church's mission and life

The children, who love, respect and obey their parents, and parents, who love each other and nurture their offspring in accordance with social values and religious morality, constitute model Christian families that preserve to be the essence of society. These Christian families nourish the society in a missionary way as a light tower on the mountain. So let's be good testimonies to Jesus Christ by growing in wisdom and age and in the favour of god and people.



## Song

Earth the habitat filled with
Graces of God
The first family is that of Adam and Eve
They are first parents.

Family the inevitable factor
Is the lovable community on earth.
Eternal family is the culmination
Of all these lovable societies on earth.

Family the field for love and virtues
To be grown and spread
Holy family the epitome
Modelled to follow.

## Questions

- 1. What are the characteristics of a Christian family?
- 2. How does Christian family become the primary ground for practising faith?
- 3. What are the missionary deeds of Christian family?
- 4. Why do we say that "Christian family is the fertile land for moral values"?
- 5. What is the relevance of prayer in family?

# **Activity**

1. In the Bible we come across individuals or families completely devoted to God. Prepare a brief write-up on any two of them.

2. In the light of a discussion prepare a report on the problems faced by the contemporary families.

## Word of God

"Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

'Honour your father and mother'—this is the first commandment with a promise: 'so that it may be well with you and may live long on the earth'" (Ephesians 6:1-3).

# Prayer

God our Father, you have instituted family for the sustenance of human race and for their salvation. Shower your grace on us, to grow as your faithful disciples by living in complete obedience and love of our parents and siblings.

#### Memorize

"Unity of hearts forms a family. It takes hands to build a house, but only hearts can build a family" (Anonymous).







When a faithful thinks of parish church, the faces that come to his / her mind are that of parish priest and assistant parish priest. This is because priests exert a great influence in the life of Christians. The Church carries out its mission of serving its people through bishops who are the successors of Apostles. The priests in collaboration and assistance with the bishop guide the faithful. God loves his people. Jesus, the Sor



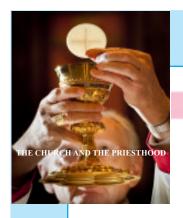
bishop guide the faithful. God loves his people. Jesus, the Son of God, sacrificed his life on the cross for the people of God. The whole dedicated life of Jesus Christ that gives "life in abundance" (John 10:10) is continued incessantly through priesthood in the Church.

## **Priest: One who stands in front**

The word 'priest' is derived from the Latin word 'presbyter.' The Malayalam word 'purohithan' is derived from the Sanskrit word 'purohitha.' The expression 'priest' means 'the one who stands in front' or 'one who guides.' And commonly used word in Malayalam is 'vaidheekan,' which means 'the one who knows Vedas.' 'Kohen' is the word used in Hebrew language to refer to priests. 'Kohen' means 'the one who knows the will of God and who propagates it among His people.' Ultimately, priest is called to build the bridge of relationship between people and God.

#### **Priesthood in Old Testament**

In the Old Testament the Tribe of Levis was a priestly tribe. Everyone born in this tribe were chosen as priests. The Tribe of Levi did not receive the inheritance in the Land of Israel like the other tribes. Instead "the Lord God of Israel is their inheritance" (Joshua 13:33). They are to "eat the sacrifices that are the Lord's portion" (Deuteronomy 18:1). It was the duty of other tribes to give the means of sustenance to the priestly tribe of Levi.



## The Old Testament priests had four-fold mission:

- Protecting the holy place: The Tribe of Levi protected the Tent of Meeting where the Arc of the Covenant was kept (Numbers 3:8)
- Revealing the will of God: In order to understand the will of God, people of God approached priests (Malachi 2:7)
- Teaching: Priests were authorized to teach and interpret Laws given by God (Jeremiah 2:8; 18:18)
- Offering Sacrifice: Priests performed various types of sacrifices and offerings on the Alter (Leviticus 1:4-9).

#### **Priesthood in New Testament**

When Jesus saw a great crowd, who came to hear him, he had compassion for them (Matthew 14:14; 15:32) because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without shepherd (Matthew 9:36). Hence Jesus instituted priesthood in the Church to lead such people. The priests, who part take in the priesthood of Jesus Christ, are anointed by the Holy Spirit, to lead the Church which had been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ (Acts of the Apostles 20:28).

"From the rising of the sun to its setting" (Malachi 1:11) the priest prepares the people of God to offer a pure sacrifice to the Lord. He calls his people by name and 'lays down his life for them' (John 10:15). Thus, the priest submits his and his people's lives to God through His Son Jesus Christ.

Jesus instituted the Holy Eucharist by offering his body and blood as a bread and wine.

Jesus commanded: "Do this in memory of me" (Luke 22:19).

#### **Duties of Priesthood**



## The priesthood of Christ has three-fold duties:

- Teach: In the light of the Word of God surrender the life to Christ the Prophet.
- Lead: Give testimony to Christ the King by leading the people of God to God the Father.
- Sanctify: Through the administering of the Sacraments partake in the priesthood of Jesus Christ.

## **Responsibilities of Priest**



In the Church some people are chosen and ordained as priests. They are publically and authoritatively commissioned to serve the people of God. Therefore, primarily priests are called to offer the material and spiritual affairs of the faithful as the acceptable sacrifice to God.

The main duties of the priests are:

- Preach the Word of God
- Administrate the Sacraments
- Pardon sins
- Teach
- Sanctify
- Lead

# Holy Eucharist is the life and centre of the priesthood.

Moreover, in the light of the Word of God, the priests have the duty to distinguish between good and evil and to teach and form the people of God to accept good and avoid evil. A priest, leading a life oriented to God, becomes a model to people of God. Priests, who participate in the priesthood of Christ, are called to serve the people like Jesus.



# The Bishop and the Priest

A priest ordained through 'laying of the hands' by bishop. Therefore, in the exercise of apostolic mission priests are collaborators of bishop. Every priest has to respect the authority of Christ, the Chief Shepherd, present in the person

of bishop.

The perfection of priesthood rests in bishop.

Priests are faithful collaborators of bishop.

Through sincere docility and charity every priest works in cooperation with his bishop.

## **Christ, the Eternal Priest**

The main celebrant of every priestly service is Christ, the Son of God. The duty of priestly service is to reveal the presence of Eternal Priest among the people. Hence we are invited to love, respect and obey the ordained priests, who exercise priestly services for the faithful.

#### We are the Priests of Christ

Through the reception of the Sacrament of Baptism we participate in the common priesthood of Christ. Consequently, those who are in the common priesthood become one with Christ (1 Peter 2:4-10). Together with Christ, they constantly offer sacrifice to God and sacrifice their lives for the well-being of the other.

Hence let us carry out the priestly mission we received through baptism. The participation in the Holy Eucharist and reception of other sacraments can help us to carry out our priestly mission. Let us also partake in the redemptive mission of the pilgrimage Church together with the ordained priests, who walk in front, leading the people of God.

# Remember



 Common priesthood demands from us to remain submissive and obedient to ministerial priesthood. This is equal to the submissiveness and obedience to Christ's priesthood.



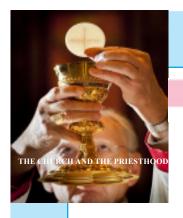
• The relation between the parish priest and parishioners is that of father and son. Priest gives rebirth to the parishioners through Baptism and preaching of the Gospel.

#### Song

The one who stands in front
Is the priest of Christ who
Bravely leads the gentry of God
Architect is the priest who
Builds a bridge of relationship
Between God and humanity
Good are the priest who
Prepare the people of God.

To offer the Holy Mass
Holy are the priests who
Offer their own life and
The lives of Gods own people.

To their best friend God our Lord
Priests are the ones consecrated by God
To sanctify and to preach his Gospel
And priests are the ones
To do good to others
And to perform the services
And finally to melt like a candle.



## **Questions**

- 1. What is the meaning of the word 'purohitha' or priest?
- 2. What are the four-fold missions of the Old Testament priest?
- 3. What are the responsibilities of priests in the light of the New Testament?
- 4. What are the duties of priesthood?
- 5. What is the relation between priest and bishop?

#### **Activities**

- 1. How does a faithful participate in the priesthood of Christ through Baptism?
- 2. What is the role of the priest who works in a parish?

#### **Word of God**

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15).

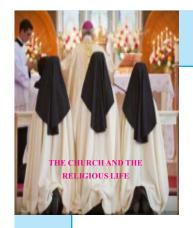
# Prayer

Jesus, our Lord and eternal priest, who became a sacrifice for ourselves, shower ourselves with your grace to love, honour and obey the priests who were constituted to sanctity, teach and lead us to goodness.

## Memorize

"In love, the master received us; because of His love for us, Jesus Christ our Lord, gave his blood for us, by the will of God. He offered his flesh for our flesh and his soul for our souls" (St. Pope Clement).





There were a lot of men and women who followed Jesus during his public ministry. For instance, Veronica, who dared to wipe the face of Jesus Christ during his journey to Calvary, Simon who carried the cross of Christ and other men and women who followed Jesus to the foot of the cross.

God invites priests, religious and people of God for the service of His kingdom. Religious, who renounce everything, are called to follow Jesus very closely.

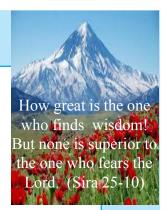
They move ahead by renouncing everything (Matthew 19:21) and taking up their crosses for the sake of the Kingdom of God, preached by Jesus. They live by knowing, experiencing and sharing with others, the Kingdom of God. By denying themselves and offering themselves through Evangelical Counsels they follow Jesus Christ who became a sacrifice for the salvation of humankind. They glorify God, rendering their service to the people of God.

# Religious Communities: Origin and growth

In the Early Church religions lived at home or in secluded centres. Among them, there were religious who led an ascetic life. Egypt is the cradle of the religious life. St. Antony of Egypt (+356) is the innovator of asceticism. During the time of St. Pachomius (+347) even children were accepted into religious life. Religious life was strengthened in Europe or Western Church during the time of St. Athanasius of Alexandria (+347), St. Eusebius of Verchia (+371) and St. Ambrose of Milan (+397).

The emergence of Benedictine monks is remarkable in the history of progress of monastic or religious life. Religious communities remained under the Benedictine rules and regulations from 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> century. 13<sup>th</sup> century was considered to be a turning point in the religious life. Until

13<sup>th</sup> century the religious or ascetics lived giving importance only for the spiritual well-being. However, since 13<sup>th</sup> century the religions started to reach out to the public and started working for the betterment of the society.

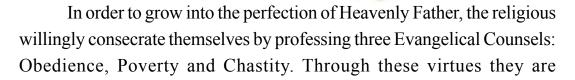


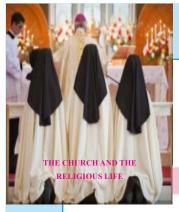
The Franciscans concentrated on social service, pastoral ministry, education and missionary work. The Dominicans concentrated especially on education. They instructed the people in the discipline of theology. They played a vital role developing the intellectual and moral standards of the people.

The emergence of Capuchin religious and the Society of Jesus in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, greately contributed to the growth of the Church. The Society of Jesus showed much interest in the promotion of the education. When the Council of Trent decided to establish Seminaries, the responsibilities of such endeavour was entrusted to the Society of Jesus. The Capuchins focused on social service and the upliftment of ordinary and poor people.

By the beginning of 17<sup>th</sup> century many religious congregations were formed and began to involve in educational and missionary activities. Pope Pious X11 approved a new community titled "Secular Institute" in 1947, to sanctify the world by being in the world. The Second Vatican Council requires that the essence of every ancient or contemporary religious congregation should be based on the Gospel of Christ Jesus.

# **Religious Vows**





strengthened in their relationship with God and in their love for human beings. These gospel virtues in the religious life are called Religious Vows.

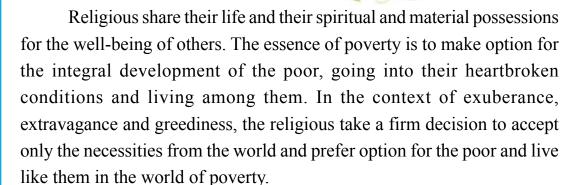
#### **Obedience**



Saying, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me to complete his work" (John 4:34) Jesus submitted himself to the will of God, even when he felt lonely and in the desertion at Gethsemane. Finally, he became obedient by offering himself on the cross (Philippines 2:8). This divine grace is the foundation of the vow obedience.

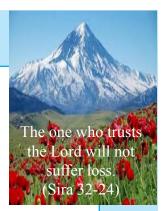
Love and fidelity of Christ towards God, the Father and people, inspired Jesus to offer the sacrifice of obedience. In the vow of obedience the love and fidelity towards God and people are more important. The faith and sacrifice of Abraham and Blessed Virgin Mary are the best example of obedience. The Kingdom of God grows among the religious through this vow of obedience. When the religious offer themselves as an acceptable sacrifice to God divine mercy becomes visible in the world (Hosea 6:6; Matthew 9:13).

# **Poverty**



Those who live in the spirit of poverty invest treasure in heaven (cf. Matthew 6:19-20).

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Luke 12:34). Through the vow of poverty the religious live other worldly life, being in the world.



## Chastity

Chastity is a voluntary option made by those who wish to serve God and the people of God whole heartedly. Through this vow a religious finds God in everybody and becomes everything for everyone and considers everyone as their own and serve everyone from the bottom of their heart.

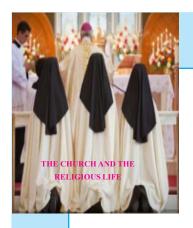
Chastity is like a river that flows without possessing anything or anyone in order to become everything for everyone.

The religious see this world as their own family.

Like Jesus who went about doing good (Acts 10:38) our life also is to be lived, serving others selflessly. God's call to live a life for others still continues. We have to devote our life for the poor, suppressed, refugees, children in the streets and the sexually abused, comforting and liberating them as Jesus did. Living the constraints of our life situations let us also do our part to serve others sincerely.

# **Community Life**

Religious, who sacrifice their lives for the perfection of the Gospel, lead a community life. The Kingdom of God, which is to be proclaimed to the world, they live in their communities. Religious draw stimulation and strength to live from their respective communities. The prayer life is the source of strength for their community life. Through prayers religious get strength to reconcile with God and brethren. Thus they realise the words of the psalmist: "How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity" (Psalm 133:1)!



Even though there are various religious congregations working all over the world, they have different charism (ways of working). Each community has its own unique perspective of spirituality. Constant prayers, community life and the spirit of Gospel lead each religious to deep God experience, universal fraternity and eventually to the

perfection of holiness. Prayer life leads to meditation. Mediation leads to the presence of God. Presence of God facilitates the religious to engage in activities for the growth of the People of God. The aim of religious is not the salvation of their own souls, but the salvation and liberation of other people together with their own souls. In their pilgrim journey, focused on God, religious remain arrows pointing the Kingdom of God, the ultimate destination of everyone. They devotedly pray as well for everyone in the world.

## Song

Religious renounce everything
They follow Christ devotedly
Religious renounce everything
For God and his people.

Poverty, charity, obedience
Three evangelical counsels
Religious guard and live
Sacrificing themselves for others.

Religious melt life for others

Consider everyone their own

Religious live in community

Become messengers of Jesus' consolation.

## **Questions**

- 1. Who are religious?
- 2. What are the three evangelical counsels?
- 3. What is the foundation of vow of obedience?
- 4. What is the essence of vow of poverty?
- 5. What is the aim of vow of chastity?

## Activity

- Prepare a speech on the characteristic features of religious' social commitment.
- Discuss: Religious and social work.

#### Word of God

"No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the Kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62).

## Prayer

Christ our Lord, you sacrificed yourself to liberate us from the slavery of sins. Strengthen the religious, who follow you by sacrificing everything in order to serve the people of God. And bless us also to build the Kingdom of God together with the religious.

#### Memorize

"The person who abides in solitude and quiet is delivered from fighting three battles: hearing, speech and sight. Then there remains one battle to fight – the battle of the heart" (St. Antony the Great).





The earth we live is our mother. The relation between the earth and humanity is that of give and take. It is the duty and responsibility of human beings to love and protect the earth and its animate and inanimate beings, for the Earth and its possessions are God's creation.



# 1. The Universe: the gift and creation of God

The universe is the visible as well as invisible world created by God for humans. The world created by God's word, "Let there be," is the epitome of God's love. God reveals himself in the creation. The psalmist sings:

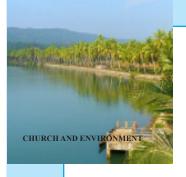
"The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork" (Psalm 9:1).

God constantly cares the wonderful creation, the earth and everything in it. God gives himself and shows his mercy through his creation.

"Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are have been understood and seen through the things he has made" (Romans 1:20).

The universe is the gift of God for human beings. Humans are the guardians of the universe. God bestowed the universe to humans out of His love. Hence the humans have to protect it responsibly. The earth has to be utilized for the good of humanity and every living being.

"God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the Earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth" (Genesis 1:28).



But this commandment given by God to the humanity is misinterpreted. The words like 'subdue' and 'dominion' are misinterpreted as excessive power given to human beings over the universe; therefore they can misuse and exploit its resources excessively and indiscriminately for their selfish needs. The consideration that human person is the dictator

over the universe led to its over exploitation. Consequently various ecological imbalances look intently at the humanity. The major threat to environment is the defective perceptions of the humanity towards the universe. The commandment, given by God, is for the protection of the Universe. The present ecological imbalances can be solved only by humanity reconciling with the universe.

#### 2. The Earth Our Habitat

Since human person is made of dust (Genesis 2:7) and is God's creation he or she is part of the universe. God, who created this world and everything in it, planted a garden in Eden, in the east and there he placed the human being he formed (Genesis 2:8).

The earth is not only the habitat of the humans but also the protecting and encouraging mother. There is an inevitable relation between humans and the earth. It is necessary that humans and the universe co-exist for the survival of both. It is our responsibility to make our home worthy of living. Likewise it is our need and responsibility to make our universe a perfect blend of living.

"The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world and those who live in it" (Psalms 24:1).

# 3. Don't Exploit the Nature

Human beings should not misuse the universe for their cruel and selfish motives. Since the earlier time there had been retaliation by way of destroying created things. During wars towns, forts and fortresses were demolished; cattle were robbed; fields were burnt. The aim of such cruel deeds was that the survivors of the war may die of starvation (cf. Deuteronomy 20:8-20). The victors of the war spread salt and sulphur on lands that was left empty after theft and loot. Salt was considered as the symbol of infertility and fruitlessness. Thus they desired that should become desert without vegetation (cf. Judges 9:45; Deute



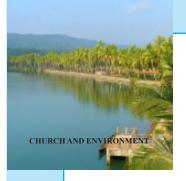
symbol of infertility and fruitlessness. Thus they desired that the land should become desert without vegetation (cf. Judges 9:45; Deuteronomy 29:23; Jeremiah 17:6; Psalms 107:34; Job 39:6). But the nature hates those who exploit the nature. Israel's poets wrote about praise of trees and plants at the demise of King of Babylon (cf. Isaiah 14:18).

If this is the ancient story, the environment issues caused by present day exploitation of the nature are more dangerous.

#### 4. Environmental Issues

The list of environmental issues and concerns caused by modern development system is very long.

- The non-availability of pure air, water and soil due to the dumping of waste into water bodies, air and land.
- The size of agricultural land is drastically reducing day by day.
- The earthly treasure of fossil fuel is getting depleted vastly due to excessive consumption.
- Poisonous gas emitted from factories destroys the ozone layer that protects the earthly life from harmful rays of the sun.
- The warning that ice-layers are melting due to global warming threatens human life on earth.



- A lot of animal species face the threat of extinction.
- Deforestation takes place all over the world.
- Non-rhythmic seasonal occurrence like constant flood and draught cause danger to human life.
- Unknown diseases are rampant, threatening life on the Earth.
- E-waste pollutes the air.

In short, the earth is at the brim of destruction due to irresponsible exploitation and pollution. We should not forget the fact that we live among the crores of living species on the universe. Every living creature is the rightful heir of the universe.

#### 5. The Universe Renewed in Christ

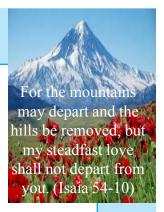
The universe can be best understood in and through Christ. We get the real knowledge about God, people and universe through Christ. Jesus spoke about the Kingdom of God using symbols and phenomena of the universe. Christ deemed not only human beings but the entire universe and its living beings like wild life, fauna and flora, are under the care of God. The entire universe participates in the glory of Christ's resurrection.

## 6. Let Us Love the Nature

Our responsibility towards our neighbour, entire earthly being and towards ourselves can be termed protection of the universe. The incorrect attitude towards nature is equal to incorrect attitude towards God. Such an attitude is arrogance.

The Church has the responsibility to invite its members to meditate on the topics of environment and to practice love and care for the universe. Thus the Church makes its members to experience the Kingdom of God.

The Church constantly teaches that when someone exploits the universe he or she ends up in great lose. We discern and love the universe, not to exploit it but protect and glorify. Our vocation is neither to control the universe nor to remain passive to the universe but being in union with God to proclaim the glory of the universe.



"For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God" (Romans 8:20-21).

St. Francis of Assisi, inspired by the love of God and being one with the created universe, considered the universe the abode of God and accepted its living beings as his siblings. Let us also practice in our lives that lesson of universal fellowship.

The universe, the creation of God

#### Song

A gift for humans in it
We are its custodians
For the good of others it to be used.
Prosperity would permeate everyone
When humanity and nature co-exist
Our duty to protect the universe
Since it is the abode of humans
Impure water and air would
Cause in the destruction of life on earth
Holy deeds of ours would

Preserve the sanctity of creation.



#### **Questions**

- 1. How does the universe become the creation and part of God?
- 2. How do the greedy humans destroy the universe, God's creation and His gift?
- 3. Why could we protect the universe, the abode of human life?
- 4. What are the environmental issues faced by the humans?
- 5. How does environmental protection become the mission of the Catholic Church?

#### **Activities**

- 1. After a discussion on the topic, "How to protect the universe gifted by God," prepare a list of activities.
- 2. Compose a poem of eight lines about universe.

#### Word of God

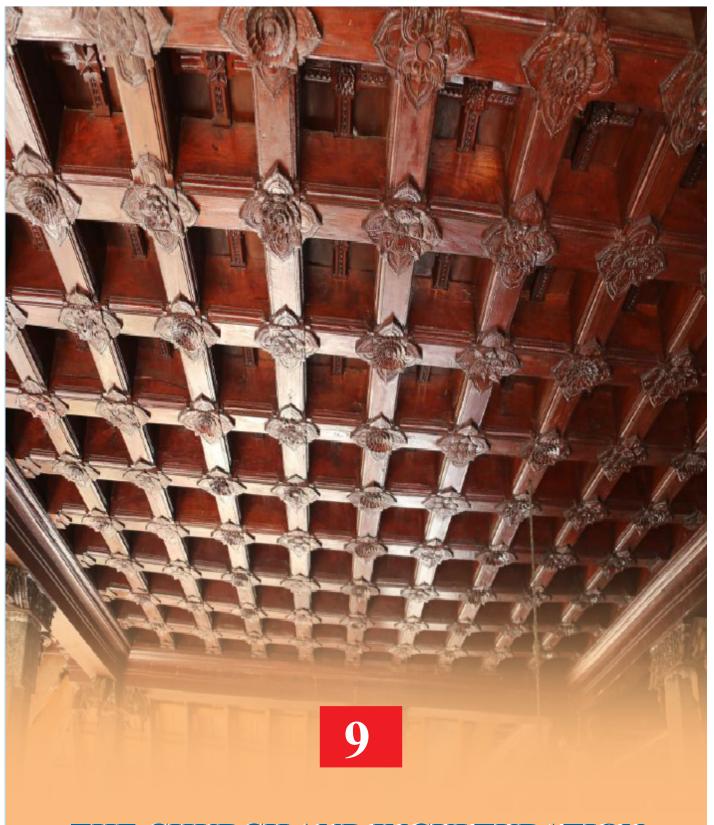
"O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures" (Psalm104:24)

## Prayer

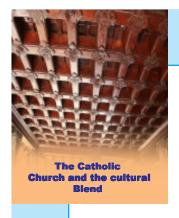
God, creator of the Universe, you created everything for us. We thank you for your eternal love for us. We implore you to shower your grace upon us to love and protect the earthly creation, both animate and inanimate.

#### Memorize

"My experiences with science led me to God. They challenge science to prove the existence of God. But must we really light a candle to see the sun?" (Wernher von Braun).



THE CHURCH AND INCULTURATION



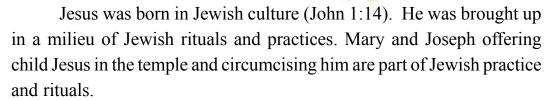
Culture came into existence since the time humans had been created. Culture and humanity cannot be separated. A person's thoughts, conservation, dress-code, rituals, practices, characteristic features, faith, liturgy and communication media are part and parcel of culture.

# Culture is a perspective on life and life according to that perspective.

Jesus Christ commanded his disciples to proclaim the Gospel to the whole world (Mark 16:15). The world is heterogeneous in nature, having diversity of language, lifestyle and culture. Therefore, the Gospel of Christ was proclaimed in accordance with the diverse culture of the place.

The Church, without losing her special culture and essence but being in accordance with the culture of each place, executing her mission of evangelization is called "inculturation." The Church has to carry out its evangelization being in tune with the culture of each place and time.

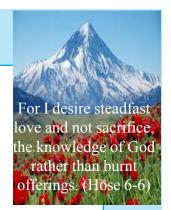
#### Jesus and Inculturation



"When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ... They offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord" (Luke 2:22, 24).

- Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day according to the Jewish rituals (Luke 2:22-24)
- At the age of twelve Jesus went to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover (Luke 2:41-42)

- Regularly Jesus went to synagogue and prayed (Luke 4:16)
- Jesus ate Passover (Luke 22:15-20)
- He was buried according to the Jewish customs (John 19:38-42)



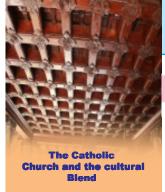
# **Inculturation and the Early Church**

In the Early Church most of the Christians, who received Baptism, were Jews. Even though they become Christians, they continued many of their Jewish rituals and practices. For instance:

- They received circumcision before the Baptism.
- Besides participating in the Christian prayer gatherings they also prayed in synagogues.
- They recited all Jewish prayers.
- Besides celebrating Christian festivals they also celebrated Jewish feasts like, Passover, and Pentecost.
- They observed Sabbath as Jews.

## Jerusalem Council

The Jerusalem Council, held in AD 47, is the first Council in the history of the Church. The Council discussed the topic of inculturation. When Christianity spread outside Palestine inculturation posed a serious threat. Very particularly, practice of circumcision and certain food styles created problem in the early church (Acts 15:1-35). The Jerusalem Council solved these issues. Thus the Jerusalem Council recognized the relevance and popularity of inculturation.



#### **Second Vatican Council**



The relevance and the popularity of inculturation was much talked and discussed in the second Vatican Council. The Second Vatican Council stated that when mission works are carried out in particular churches their culture should not be disregarded but the mission work should integrate their different cultures.

The Universal Church is aware that construction of churches, art and literary fields, rituals and practices, vestments and religious habits in particular churches are not westernised.

#### The Relevance of Inculturation



The Good News of Jesus Christ has to be proclaimed and interpreted taking into consideration the ideas and aspirations of people living in particular place and their life situations. When the Word of God is presented in the particular life situations of the people it gives solutions to their various problems. Eventually people are able to realize and accept God in their cultural background.

As each and every one accept and respect his or her own culture, he or she should accept and respect others' culture and heritage.

Teachings and practices of Jesus and the Church should be proclaimed in to different communities, integrating their practices and life style. Then it will be easy and accessible for the communities to understand and accept accurately the teachings and practices of Jesus and the Church.



# Song



Part and Parcel are the
Lifestyle, culture
Thought, language, conversation
Religious faith of the culture.

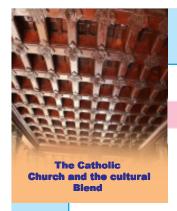
I have come to call not the righteous but sinners. (Mark 2-17)

Proclaim the faith in Jesus
In the midst of all cultures
Preach his word by blending
Various diverse cultures.

Likewise everyone
Receive the message of Jesus
Let everyone live together
In the concept of universal fraternity.

# Questions

- 1. What do you mean by inculturation?
- 2. How did Jesus, being in Jewish culture, live in accordance with his culture?
- 3. What was the place of Jewish culture in the practice of early church rituals?
- 4. How did Jerusalem Council encourage inculturation?
- 5. What does Second Vatican Council teach about inculturation?



# Activity

Discuss

- 1. The relevance of inculturation
- 2. Indian Church and inculturation

#### **Word of God**

"For in the one spirit, we were all baptized into one body - Jews or Greeks, staves or free - and we were all made to drink of one spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:13).

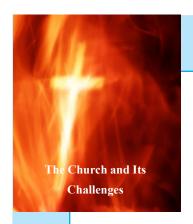
# Prayer

Lord our creator, you have asked us to preach the Gospel in the whole world. Strengthen us with the spirit of Gospel to carry out the missionary works, in accordance with the culture of various nations.

#### Memorize

"The greatest sin is the absence of love and compassion" (St. Antony, the Great)





Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay conquered the peak of Everest having undergone various challenges like, extreme cold, frightening height, dangerous curves, steep rocks, deep snow falls, etc. Nobody would dare to adventure it. But firm decision, steady interest and confidence led them

to the destination. So such challenges had happened in the lives of many peoples, nations and movements. But the challenges that Christ's Church had to face had been worse than the above mentioned. The way of the cross is entirely different from the rest. It is quite often that there is no crown without cross.

# **Challenges of Christ's Disciples**

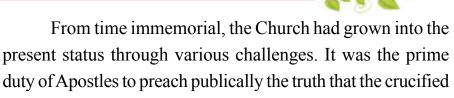
"If anyone want to become my followers, let them deny themselves, and take up their cross and follow me" (Matthew16:24). It is a great challenge to be the disciple of Christ. It is a journey after Christ. Christ's discipleship demands an entirely different way of life or lifestyle from that of the world. He teaches us in the Sermon on the Mount:

"Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44).

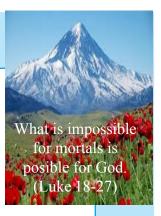
"Do not resist the evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also" (Matthew 5:39).

Such teachings of Jesus were odd and unheard till then. For those who were acquainted to "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" (Exodus 21:24) these teachings of Jesus posed a great challenge. We cannot live the teachings of Christ without challenges (John 6:66-67).

# The Church that grows through the challenges



Christ had risen. But this mission was not an easy one.



St. Stephen is the first one to receive martyrdom for boldly preaching the faith in risen Christ. The daring proclamation of faith by Stephen and his martyrdom accelerated the growth of the Early Church. Like St. Stephen numerous people came forward to firmly proclaim their faith in Christ and to become martyrs by facing the challenges. But the persecution against the Early Christians increased day by day.

# **Protest from Leaders of the People**

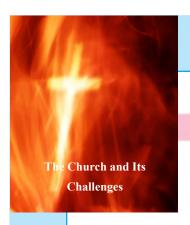
Jewish officials prevented Christ's disciples from preaching the Gospel (Acts 4:13-20; 5:40).

Christ's disciples were imprisoned, cruelly persecuted and tortured in various ways (Acts 16:16-24).

Many faithful were stoned to death (Acts 7:54-60). Many were put to death with the sword (Acts 12:1-5). Others were burnt alive. Some others were hunted by wild animals. The rest were exiled.

# **Controversy Regarding Circumcision**

Some Jewish Christians strongly argued that the Gentile Christians should compulsorily undergo circumcision. This raised a strong challenge in the Early Church. Finally a solution was found in the Jerusalem Council.



# Challenges faced by Church in the Middle Era

As in the ancient period, the Church underwent many challenges in the middle era as well. Let us examine them briefly.

Theological controversies and doctrines against the Church created a lot of challenges to the Church. The ideological difference between Pope and heads of various particular churches led to division of the Catholic Church into two: Eastern (Oriental) and Western (Occidental). This event became a great threat to the unity of the Church.

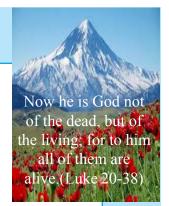
#### **Protestant Reformation**

Corruption in the Church, political association of Church officials, absence of deep faith and controversy on indulgence (Indulgence is a grant by the Pope of remission of the temporal punishment in purgatory still due for sins after absolution) instigated German Augustine monk, Martin Luther to carry out reformation in the Church.

On October 31, 1517, at the front door of Wittenberg Cathedral, Martin Luther presented 95 articles of reformation ideas. This was the beginning of his open disagreement with the Church. His thoughts made the Church to rethink about its functioning. However, the Church opposed the stand adopted by Luther, which was entirely different from the teaching and faith of the Church. Consequently, 1521 Pope Leo X excommunicated him from the Church.

A Protestant denomination was formed under the leadership of Martin Luther. Protestantism spread into the neighbouring countries. The denomination attained a new image and likeness. As the result of activities of Frenchman, John Calvin (1509-1564), a new denomination, known as, Calvinism or Presbyterian Church came into being. Calvin formed constitutional council for the growth of his church. He appointed

four levels of ministers in order to perform duties in the church: Pastor, Counsellor, Master and Deacon. During this time, the relationship between the king of England, Henry VIII (1509-1547) and the Roman Catholic Church became worse. Marital relation of Henry with Catherine worsened. King Henry wanted to declare his marriage with Catherine illicit and marry Anne



Boleyn. But the Catholic Church did not agree to the desire of King Henry. So he began Anglican Church and proclaimed himself as its head.

The Protestant reformation that happened in the Western church during 16<sup>th</sup> century paved the way for reformation movements in the Catholic Church. Reformation in the Catholic Church gained momentum with the Council of Trent, convened by Pope Paul III in 1545.

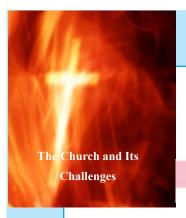
- Detaching himself from the Catholic Church and forming a new church Martin Luther challenged the Catholic Church.
- Some Kings and Emperors challenged the Church. Henry VIII formed Anglican Church in order to satiate his personal interests.
- Crusades (Religious wars by Catholic Church) were organized against Muslim rulers who had prohibited Christians from entering the Holy Land. Consequently, the Church had to face bitter challenges.
- French revolution, Industrial revolution in Europe and Communism in Russia posed serious threats to the Church.

# **Today's Challenges**

Presently, there are a number of challenges from within and from outside the Catholic Church.

# **Challenges from within the Church**

- Decadence of faith in families and society
- Disunity among Christians



- Social and economic imbalance
- Superstition

# Challenges from outside the Church

- Movements against the church and the challenges raised by political parties
- Problem raised by the atheists
- Disregard towards minority
- Religious and cultural fanaticism
- Negative influence of Media
- Influence of consumerism
- Anti-conversion Bills

# Challenges we face

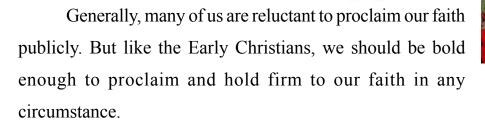
We should be proud of being Christ's disciples. We are bound to protect our faith. When we live firmly sticking to our faith, we may have to face a lot of challenges.

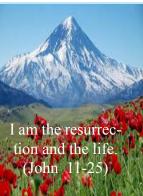
#### **Atheism**

There are a lot of principles, institutions and individuals criticising God and spiritual values.

We should be vigilant against these institutions and principles. But we should not hate atheists. They should behave with them kindly. We should have love and compassion for them. Moreover, we should always pray for them. Thus we can lead them to faith.

#### **Faith**





# Reluctance in obeying God's commandments

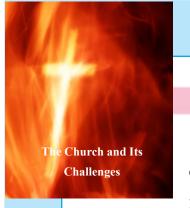
It is wrong to dishonour and disobey the commandments of God and the Church. These commandments teach us to love God and the Church and to grow in love and faith. When we live obeying these commandments our life become worthy and meaningful.

#### **Drugs**

At present use of liquor and drugs is rapidly increasing. The consumption of such substances will destroy us physically and spiritually. They will move us away from faith and goal of life. Hence we should be very alert against such menace.

#### Misuse of Media

Modern media lead us to progress. But we must be aware of the advantages and disadvantages of media. Pornographic pictures and writings, misuse of cell phone and internet lead us to destruction. Hence we should utilize media discriminately and discourage its unnecessary usage.



#### **Passion for Luxury**

Money, gold, dress, celebrations, beautification, etc. can turn us aside from Christian values. They should be used for necessity. Uncontrollable embellishments, celebrations

and lavish spending will result in our ruin. When we spend lavishly, we disregard the poor around us. It is a great sin to live lavishly without sharing what we have with the poor around us.

#### Disinterest in sacramental life

Sacramental life strengthens and deepens our bond with God. But when we distance ourselves from sacramental life we deviate from our relationship with God. Thus laziness is stored in us and we are distanced from the grace of God. Hence we should be watchful to receive sacraments happily. Occasional reception of Holy Communion would help us to lead a sacramental life.

# Disinterest in listening to the Word of God

God speaks to us and declares his grace through the Sacred Scriptures. When we are not interested in listening to the Word of God we curtail our growth in faith. Consequently, we are secluded from our neighbour and God. Hence we should concentrate more on the study of the Holy Bible and build a pray life, centred on Holy Bible.

# Let's face challenges

Christ's Church is built on rock. It cannot be shattered by waves and storm. The church has grown in the midst of troubles. History shows that testimony of faith greatly increased while the persecutions were on the rise. The blood of martyrs fertilized the growth of the Church.

know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you Jesus Christ, the head of the Church, would be there have sent. (John 17-

eternally to guide the Church. The Church emphasizes truth, justice and love. Its internal strength is Holy Spirit. The Church journeys on the way of the cross. Since we are called to follow the blood-stained footsteps of Jesus Christ, let us resist the false and unfair challenges. Constant reading of the Holy Bible, reception of sacraments and fervent prayers would strengthen us. Let us join ourselves together with the Church in order to build up a new and harmonious world.

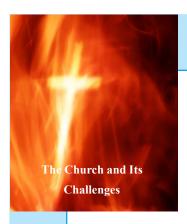


#### Song

New challenge is to Become Christ's disciples Destined are we to follow Blood stained footprints of Christ

Familiarised are we with Saying 'eye for an eye' But vision given by Christ Is to love our enemies

Boldly shall we face All the challenges in future For are we the Church built on rock Will never shatter in storm.



# Questions

- 1. What are the challenges faced by Christ's disciple?
- 2. What were the challenges faced by the Early Church?
- 3. What were the challenges faced by the Church in the medieval period?
- 4. What are the challenges we face today?
- 5. How can we face the challenges?

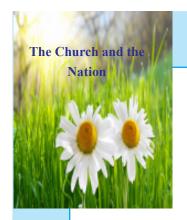
# **Activity**

- 1. Write a report in the light of a discussion on "the challenges we face in the spiritual realm."
- 2. Prepare an action plan in the light of a discussion on "how to overcome the challenges faced by the Church?"

# The word of God

"If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, be uprooted and planted in the sea, and it would obey you" (Luke 17:6).





Christ's Church is spread across several countries. Christ believers in each country deepen their faith in Christ, inculcating their proper culture and laws. The mother Church instructs her children wherever they are to carry out the mission of evangelization, according to the spirit and model

of Jesus Christ. We must bear testimony to Christ in accordance with the culture and customs of our country.

#### Political Atmosphere during Christ's Era

Palestine was under the colonial reign of Roman Empire during the time of Jesus. Palestinians bore the pain of colonial rule. They were tortured. Therefore, people were arrogant and atrocious towards the foreign rule. Imperial forces intervened in the Jewish religious faith, culture, rituals and practices. According to the census taken once in fourteen years Romans levied upon people unlawful and indiscriminate taxes and collections. Roman officials controlled the powers of Sanhedrin (Sanhedrin is the religious tribunal of Jews). Being helpless and deserted, Palestinian people endured silently and without provocation all the inhuman deeds of Roman rule. However a small group of revolutionaries called 'Zealots' fought with weapons against Roman Empire.

In this political scene, where people suffered endlessly under the Roman invasion and religious violence, Jesus appeared with the Good News of coming of the kingdom of God. Jesus proclaimed God's Kingdom centred on justice, equality, peace, happiness and prosperity. Jesus announced at the Synagogue in Nazareth:

"The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me, to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim, release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind.

to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour" (Luke 4:18).



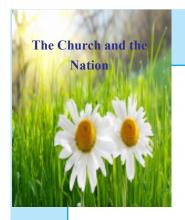
#### Jubilee Year

Jubilee Year begins on the Day of Atonement on the forty ninth year. Forty nine years are comprised of seven Sabbath years (7x7=49). Trumpet was blown to mark the beginning of the Jubilee Year. Jews freed their servants and slaves without any conditions during this year. The wealth accumulated through loans, theft and borrowing is given back to the owners. Sowing and harvesting were forbidden during the Jubilee Year. Each and every Jew was ordered to return to their real and rightful place. Jubilee Year gives the message of equality and liberty.

Jesus had a clear vision about his mission. He desired to build up a world devoid of fear and slavery but based on the principles of mutual love, togetherness and justice. He satirised hypocrisy and hollowness of the political leaders. Jesus asked his followers to give to the Emperor the things that are Emperor's and to God the things that are God's.

#### The Church and Politics

The Church exists to continue in this world Christ's vision of God's Kingdom. Upliftment of the poor, liberation to the captives and promotion of equality and unity among the people are also goals of the Church. Therefore, the teachings of the Church remain guidelines in the political realm. Political system envisages ideal community, a life lacking nothing. It prepares the ground for solving the social problems, ensuring common good. It forms the activities of the individuals and groups for the common good. It provides sufficient resources for the existence of all levels of people.



The Church has to intervene creatively in the political process which decides the fate of a country in particular and the whole world in general. The goal of the Church is to build the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is a reality that begins in this world and ends in the other world. Conversion of heart is the necessary condition to enter into the Kingdom

of God. Social structure and relations have to be reinterpreted and restructured in the light of the Gospel. Changing the earthly life to that of divine justice is part of establishing the Kingdom of God. Hence the Church has to influence politics, based on the message of the Gospel in order to transform the social life.

Creating human-centred political environment is the part of building the Kingdom of God.

Since the Church seriously considers the liberation and upliftment of the poor and helpless it does not take politics slightly.

- The basic of relation between the Church and politics is Gospel values.
- Being the moral authority the Church can exert a decisive influence for the growth of the society.
- Christian ideals won't be irrelevant at any time. Christian concepts were rarely criticized.
- "Your Kingdom come" is the constant prayer of the Church. Sociopolitical links are inevitable in Church's efforts to establish the Kingdom of God.

There is no individual or temporary solution to the problems. The Church aims at constant transformation. Emancipation of the helpless, upliftment of minorities, prosperity of the labourers and the liberation of the suppressed are the constant slogans of the Church.

• The Church desires that the politicians and the political parties liberate themselves from the evil clutches of corruption, sectional and political animosity and illegal traffic or trade.

- The Church reminds the politicians to give-up activities that challenge the religious harmony and create religious fanaticism.
- Political parties' nurture defective politics in the name of universal values. This practice will disorder social life and establishment. Whenever Church aims at common good through its prophetic voice it draws the strong hostility of political parties. Nevertheless, Church's voice that intervenes in the politics should remain as the prophetic voice.
- The Church detests atheism and atheistic establishments.
- The Church vehemently protests any effort to create enmity between the Church officials and members and to disintegrate the Church members on behalf of certain ideologies. Unscientific, out-dated and impracticable ideologies should be up-rooted.

#### Civic Duty of a Christian

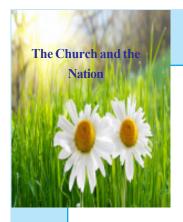
We the Christians have double citizenship. Being the members of the Church we are the citizens of Kingdom of God. Being the people of India we are citizens of India. We love, respect and obey the Church and the Church canons. Similarly, we have to love, respect and obey our mother country and its constitution, laws and responsibilities. As we are the children of our mother Church, we too are the children of our mother India. We should be proud of our Church and Nation.

Each Christian is obliged to obey the commandments of God, accepting the reality of nation.

We perceive a number of disintegrating factors that are threat to the unity of our nation.

# 1. Anti-religiosity and Communalism

Ideal religious faith is centred on universal togetherness. All religious leaders instruct their hearers about the need of patriotism and responsibility



towards the nation building. But the propagators of antireligiosity and communalism persuade the people to fight among themselves in the name of religion. Thus anti-religiosity and communalism destroy universal togetherness, real sense of nationalism and responsibility as citizens.

#### 2. Casteism and Rebelliousness

There are people who create disunity and discrimination, adhering to caste system. Hence it is our obligation to resist and conquer the dark forces that create disunity among the people in the name of caste. We should not ignore our obligation to safeguard the unity and prosperity of our nation.

## 3. Language and Particular Interest

Everyone has to love and respect his or her own language and place. But it is not desirable to discard other languages and places, considering ours as superior. All languages and localities are valuable treasures of our nation.

The Church and nation are two entities that go hand in hand. The Church is the conscience of the nation. The prophetic mission of the Church arouses our obligation to protect the morals of our nation. Since we are the children of the Church, we have to be the messengers of the Kingdom of God and the followers of Gospel values. We have to protect and nuture unity, sustainability and prosperity of our nation. We, Christians are bound to enlighten the nation by the light of the Gospel.

#### **Rerum Novarum**

As a result of Industrial Revolution by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century exploitation, corruption and injustice were rampant in the society. The Church could not ignore the naked truth of such malice. In order to

highlight the miseries of labourers all over the world, Pope Leo XIII issued an encyclical, named *Rerum Novarum* (The Plight of Labourers), on May 15, 1891. This significant document highlighted the need of good relation between the employers and employees and proposed solutions to the problems of labourers.



# Song

Is the sole aim of the nation.

But to import holiness to it
Is the sole aim of the Church.
And to be the propagators of ideas
Is the duty of all the people.
To eradicate injustice
And corruption all over
Let us be the leaders
To foster truth, mission and justice
Let us be the prophets

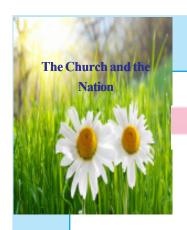
Service for the goodness of people

# **Questions**

1. What was the political atmosphere of Palestine during the time of Jesus?

Through sacrifice of our lives

- 2. What was the mission of liberation proclaimed by Jesus in the Synagogue of Nazareth?
- 3. Why do we say that Christians have double citizenship?
- 4. Why do we say that Church has the responsibility to intervene in the politics?
- 5. Why do we say that Church and Nation should go hand in hand?



# **Activity**

- 1. Conduct a debate on "is it suitable for the Church to intervene in the politics?
- 2. Conduct a discussion on "how can a Christian make a difference in political field"?

## Word of God

"You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above, therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin" (John 19:11).

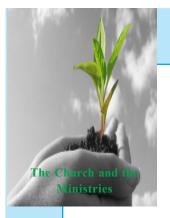
# Prayer

God, our Lord, you taught us to give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's and to God that are God's. Shower your grace on us to love and serve our country and people and to make the nation honourable by the preaching of the Gospel.

#### Memorize

"I am the most beloved servant of the King, but first of God" (St. Thomas Moore).





The Apostles could not concentrate on the various demands of the Church as the Church in Jerusalem started growing. Hence the Apostles who preached the Word of God appointed deacons filled with Holy Spirit in order to fulfil the various ministries of the Church (Act 6:3). Both deacons and the Apostles, inspired by the Word of God, accelerated the growth

of the Church. Consequently various establishments and organisations were formed in the Church.

# **Basic Christian Communities (BCC)**

Volta Redonda is an industrial town in Brazil. This region is thickly populated by poor labourers. These labourers did not get regular priestly services due to the scarcity of priests. Hence they often gathered in a house. During the gathering they read passage from the Holy Bible. In the light of faith they discussed problems and issues related to their life, region and nation. With the help of the Word of God they sought solution to their problems. This habitual gathering of the labourers helped them prosper spiritually and materially. The labourers of Volta Redonda gathered, modelling the Early Christians, who participated enthusiastically in the apostolic instruction, communion, breaking of the bread and prayer.

Therefore, Basic Christian communities (BCC) are communion of persons where life situations are interpreted in the light of the Word of God and Word-centric vision of life and life style are formed.

BCC is not an organisation or a movement. But it is a humble life style that enables to fulfil the great mission of building the Kingdom of God. BCC prepares the atmosphere to read Holy Bible, pray, reflect and work together. This gathering strengthens the Christians and leads them to progress in life.

"To Kingdom of God through Small Communities" is the slogan of BCC. Christian communion and Christian life style would assist the entire humanity to remain on universal fraternity and thus reach God.



We become a liturgical community being the members of BCC. Living the spirit of Early Christians prepares us to experience the Kingdom of God. Hence we should participate regularly in BCC to strengthen our communion and faith.

Besides BCC many ministries are carried out in the Catholic Church imitating Jesus. The Church becomes the community of believers and its members grow through different ministries. Let's understand some significant ministries in the Church.

# 1. Pastoral Ministry



The centre of Pastoral Ministry is Jesus, the Good Shepherd (John 10:11). After the model of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, the shepherds of Christ work in the Church by loving and protecting the faithful. God gives his people priests, who guard knowledge in their lips and seek instruction from God's mouth (Malachi1:7). Through Pastoral Ministry, the Church leads the sheep to the green pastures and still waters (Psalm 23) and give them life abundantly (John 10:10). The compassionate heart of Jesus that palpates for his sheep (Matthew 9:35; 14:14; 15:32) desires the integral well-being of his people. This pastoral vision of Christ is the central idea of Pastoral Ministry. The Church carries out her pastoral mission through the services of priests, religious and lay leaders.



Bible Apostolate, Faith Formation, Liturgy, Family Apostolate, Youth Apostolate, Ecumenism, Inter-religious Dialogue, Evangelization, Inculturation, Pious Association and Lay Associations are part of Pastoral Ministry.

## 2. Education Ministry

Ignorance is darkness, knowledge is light. The basis of Education Ministry is to impart necessary knowledge to God's people and lead them to the light of Christ from the darkness of ignorance. Fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.

We could prosper values in the minds of children for the building up of God's Kingdom. Through education the children could be brought to the mainstream of the society. Education, moreover, initiate the children to creative activity. Primarily, the aim of Education Ministry is to demolish the wall of fear, slavery and injustice and to help the members of the Church to travel in the track of truth, freedom and fraternity. We could achieve integral development of the society through Education Ministry.

# 3. Social Action Ministry

The basis of Social Action Ministry is Jesus Christ himself, who became bread for the hungry, comfort for the afflicted, healing for the sick, liberation for the oppressed, saviour for the sinner and life for the dead. The aim of the Social Action Ministry is to form a society based on the values of love, justice, truth, peace and liberty.

The Church tries to uplift the marginalised section of the people through various services. The Church focuses its activities in order to develop the God-given talents of each individual. Special action plans are formed to empower women, children and youth. The Church goes ahead providing shelter to the homeless, job to jobless, financial assistance to the poor, medical care to the sick and protection to the orphans. Thus the Church is committed to create a healthy environment in the society.



The Church proceeds to realize Jesus' dream: God is Father and all people are brothers and sisters. By understanding the signs of the time, aiming the integration and liberation of all in the light of the Gospel, the Church continues to work for the building up of the Kingdom of God. In this process of building up of the Kingdom of God among us, we should actively participate in the social activities of the Church. Let all our work aim at the building up of God's Kingdom.

# Questions

- 1. Why did the apostles choose deacons?
- 2. What are the various ministries of the church?
- 3. What is the aim of BCC?
- 4. What do you mean by Pastoral Ministry?
- 5. What is the aim of Education Ministry?



# Song

Mind seeks communion
In spiritual wave of ancient church
A group of believers built on love
In the light of word of God

Mind grows in thought that
All in society are brethren
A group of believers who gather together
For praying and working

Mind works every day

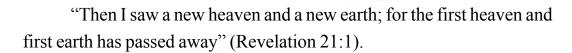
To realize God's Kingdom on the earth
A group of believers who practice

Mercy and fraternity of Jesus

# **Activity**

- 1. Discuss on the relevance of the pastoral ministry.
- 2. Present functioning of BCC: Success or failure, discuss.
- 3. Discuss and formulate an action plan for the functioning of BCC.

# Word of God



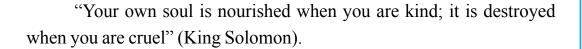
# Prayer



Lord Jesus, you taught us to pray: "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy Kingdom come, thy will be done." Make all our intentions and actions for the building up of the Kingdom of God.

# For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? (Mark 8-36)

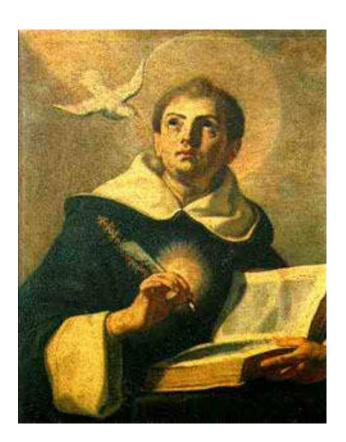
# Memorize





# St. Thomas Aquinas

The youngest son of Landolfo of Aquino and Teodora of Chieti, St Thomas was received as a Benedictine oblate at Monte Cassino at the age of 5. He entered Naples University at the age of 11, and went on to become a Dominican at the age of 18. But his family, one of Italy's most prominent by virtue of its being related to Emperor Frederic II, bitterly resented his joining the young mendicant order and kept him imprisoned in a tower for 2 years. During this confinement, however, his sister procured for him the Scriptures and books on Philosophy. After his escape, effected by some Dominican friars by way of letting him down in a basket like St Paul, he was found to have mastered these subjects so well



that he was sent to Cologne and paris to complete his studies under St Albert the Great. Post ordination and a Doctorate in Theology, he started to teach with such lucidity, accuracy and inspiration, that students were attracted by the thousands--the University of Paris at that time counted 30,000 students!

This "Angelic Doctor" and "Prince of Catholic Theolgians" was the principal exponet of scholastic philosophy which interpreted Aristotle's system in the light of Christian teaching.

In his relatively short life of 49 years he is known to have composed some 60 works. Far surpassing everything else was his unrivalled *Summa Theologica*, a summary of Christian philosophy and theology. "Since the principal aim of this sacred science is to impart knowledge of God--not only as he is in himself, but also as the beginning and end of everything, especially of the rational creature-we shall first treat of God, secondly of the rational creature's approach towards God and thirdly of Christ who, being man, is the Way by which we come to God," he would say.

Having first invoked God's assistance in contemplation and prayer before taking up any study, Thomas would become so absorbed in his work that a friar had to be appointed to ensure that he did not completely forget his meals and rest. When faced with the interpretation of obscure Bible passages, he would undertake special fasts, and Heaven came to his aid in a definite and supernatural way, for that alone can explain his extraordinary intellectural powers and sanctity. The beautiful Office and Mass for Corpus Christi, with its much loved hymns *Tantum ergo* and *O Salutaris Hostia*, were composed by him on the Pope's orders.

Thomas died while on his way to the Council of Lyons, He was canonized by Pope John XXII on 18 July 1323, elevated to the Dignity of Doctor of the Church by Pope Pius V on 11 April 1567 and in 1918 his name was included in the Code of Canon Law. Among other citations, St. Thomas Aquinas has also been declared the special Patron of all Catholic Universities and educational institutions.

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