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Overcoming
Challenges in
Faith Formation

Golden Jubilee Wedding Anniversary

8th February 2021



50
years of togetherness

K.K. Lazar and Rosily Lazar

With lots and lots of love

Siji, Johnson, Justin, Robin
Sijo, Priya, Ryan

St. George Church,
Panvel

50th Wedding Anniversary

25th January, 2021



Your Golden Anniversary is a time to celebrate the moments you've shared and the memories you've made over 50 years. Happy 50 Golden years of marriage to our loving parents.

With love & prayers:

Daughters: Lovely, Shali & Julie
Son-in-laws: Shaju, Joffy & Martin
Grandchildren: Patricia, Kathryn,
Anna, Joshua, Johan, Rachel & Raizel

Mr. C.F. Joseph & Mrs. Kochuthresia

San Jos Parish, Wagle Estate



YOUR WORD IS A LAMP TO
MY FEET & A LIGHT TO MY PATH

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നല്ല പാഠങ്ങൾ

കോവിഡ്-19 മനുഷ്യന് അതിജീവനത്തിനുള്ള കരുത്ത് നൽകി - ചില നല്ല പാഠങ്ങൾ നൽകി.

1. മറ്റുള്ളവരുടെ കൂടി നന്മയ്ക്കായി നമ്മുടെ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യം ബലികഴിച്ചും 'നിന്റെ ആരോഗ്യം എന്റെ ഉത്തരവാദിത്വം' എന്ന ചിന്ത നമ്മിലുണർത്തി.
2. ശുചിത്വം: ശരീരവും, വീടും, പരിസരവും അനിവാര്യഘടകം.
3. ഒഴിവില്ലാത്ത പല തീരക്കും നമ്മുക്കു മാറ്റിവയ്ക്കാം.
4. വീട്ടിലിരുന്നാൽ പല രോഗങ്ങളും സുഖപ്പെടും.
5. കൃഷി ചെയ്യാനും പാചകം ചെയ്യാനും പഠിച്ചു.
6. പ്രകൃതിയേയും പ്രപഞ്ചത്തേയും സ്നേഹിക്കാൻ പഠിച്ചു.
7. ഏകാന്തതയെ അതിജീവിക്കാൻ നല്ല ബന്ധങ്ങൾ വേണം.
8. സ്വയം സ്നേഹിക്കാനും സന്തോഷം കണ്ടെത്താനും പഠിച്ചു. ഒറ്റയ്ക്ക് ജീവിക്കുവാനും ഒറ്റപ്പെട്ടുപോകാതെ ഏകാന്തതയിൽ, മനസ്സിന്റെ ആഴങ്ങളെ തിരിച്ചറിയാൻ പഠിച്ചു.
9. സാങ്കേതികതയും-ജീവിതവും അഭേദ്യമായ ബന്ധമുണ്ടെന്നും, ലഭിക്കുന്ന അറിവുകൾ ശരിയായരീതിയിൽ ബോധപൂർവ്വവും, ഉത്തരവാദിത്വപൂർണ്ണവും ചെയ്യണമെന്നും പഠിപ്പിച്ചു.
10. യഥാർത്ഥരാഷ്ട്രീയം - ജനനന്മയും, മനുഷ്യസേവനമാണെന്നും, അവ ആദരിക്കപ്പെടേണ്ടതാണെന്നും പഠിപ്പിച്ചു.

ഈ ലക്കത്തിലൂടെ...

കോവിഡ് - 19 എന്ന മഹാമാരിയിലൂടെ കടന്നുപോയപ്പോൾ നേരിട്ട വെല്ലുവിളികൾ നമ്മുടെ വിശ്വാസജീവിതത്തെ എത്രമാത്രം കരുത്തുറ്റതാക്കിയെന്ന് പ്രതിപാദിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു.

കൂടുതൽ ജാഗ്രതയോടെ, അകലം പാലിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് എന്നാൽ ആത്മീയതയിൽ ഒന്നായികൊണ്ട് നമ്മുക്ക് മുന്നേറാം.



കോവിഡ് കാല കുടുംബതല വിശ്വാസ രൂപീകരണം



ഫാ. സിബി പാലാക്കുഴി
തലശ്ശേരി അതിരൂപത

ആമുഖം

കുടുംബം കൂട്ടായ്മയുടെ പ്രതിച്ഛായയാണ്. ബന്ധങ്ങൾ പുഷ്പിക്കുന്നതും, ഫലം ചൂടുന്നതും, പരിശീലിപ്പിക്കപ്പെടുന്നതുമായ വിദ്യാലയമാണത്. സഭയുടെയും, സമൂഹത്തിന്റെയും, രാഷ്ട്രത്തിന്റെയും നിർമ്മിതിയിൽ സജീവപങ്കാളികളാകാനുള്ളവർ രൂപം കൊള്ളുക കുടുംബത്തിലാണല്ലോ. കുടുംബത്തിന്റെ നിലനിൽപ്പ് അതിലെ അംഗങ്ങളുടെ ദൈവവിശ്വാസത്തിലും, പരസ്പര ബഹുമാനത്തിലും, ഉത്തരവാദിത്വങ്ങളിലും, പരസ്പരാശ്രയങ്ങളിലും അടങ്ങിയിരിക്കുന്നു.



ഇവയെല്ലാം കുടുംബത്തിലാണ് പരിശീലിക്കപ്പെടേണ്ടത്. കുടുംബം പകരുന്ന സദഗുണങ്ങൾ ഹൃദയത്തിൽ പാകപ്പെടുന്ന നല്ല വിത്തുകളാണ്. വിശ്വാസത്തിരൂപം 2004 -ൽ കുടുംബങ്ങൾക്കെഴുതിയ കത്തിൽ ഇപ്രകാരം പറയുന്നു. 'കുടുംബത്തിൽ കുട്ടികൾ വ്യവസ്ഥാതീതമായി സ്നേഹിക്കപ്പെടുന്നിടത്തോളം സ്നേഹിക്കാൻ പഠിക്കുന്നു. അവർ ബഹുമാനിക്കപ്പെടുന്നിടത്തോളം മറ്റുള്ളവരെ ബഹുമാനിക്കാൻ പഠിക്കുന്നു. അവരെ പൂർണ്ണമായ് ശ്രദ്ധിക്കുന്ന മാതാപിതാവിനും പിതാവിൽനിന്നും ദൈവമുഖത്തെക്കുറിച്ച് ആദ്യവെളിപാടു സ്വീകരിക്കുന്നിടത്തോളം അവർ ദൈവമുഖം അറിയാൻ പഠിക്കുന്നു'.

ഹുൾട്ടൻ ജെ ഷീൻ പറഞ്ഞു 'We do not have to fear atomic bombs but we have to fear Godless men' - ആറ്റംബോംബിനെക്കാൾ ഭയപ്പെടേണ്ടത് ദൈവമില്ലാത്തവരയാണെന്നത് വാസ്തവം. ദൈവവിശ്വാസമില്ലാത്തതിടത്ത് പാപബോധവും ഇല്ലാതാകുന്നു. അത്തരത്തിലുള്ളവരുടെ ജീവിതം സകല തിന്മകളുടെയും ദുരാഗ്രഹങ്ങളുടെയും വേദിയായിരിക്കും. ദൈവഭയമില്ലാത്തതിടത്ത് പാപത്തെ ആരും ഭയപ്പെടുന്നില്ല "Only where there is sense of God, there is sense of Sin". ഈ പശ്ചാത്തലത്തിൽ കോവിഡ് കാല കുടുംബതല വിശ്വാസ രൂപീകരണത്തെക്കുറിച്ച് ചിന്തിക്കുന്നത് അനുഗ്രഹപ്രദമാണല്ലോ.

കോവിഡ് കാല വിശ്വാസ പ്രതിസന്ധികളും വെല്ലുവിളികളും

ദൈവാലയ വിശുദ്ധകർമ്മങ്ങളിൽ ഭയലേശമെന്യേ പങ്കെടുക്കാൻ സാധിക്കാത്ത അവസ്ഥയാണ് പ്രഥമ വിശ്വാസ പ്രതിസന്ധി. എന്നാൽ ഒരാളുടെ ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ പ്രധാന വിശ്വാസ രൂപീകരണ കാലം അച്ഛനമ്മമാരോടുകൂടി ചെലവഴിക്കുന്ന കാലഘട്ടമാണ്. പിന്നീട് ആയിത്തീരുവാനുള്ളതിന്റെയെല്ലാം അടിത്തറ പാകുന്നത് ഈ കാലഘട്ടത്തിലാണ്. ഈ കോവിഡ് കാലഘട്ടത്തിൽ അച്ഛനമ്മമാരുടെ സാന്നിധ്യം കുട്ടികളുടെ വ്യക്തിത്വവളർച്ചക്ക് സുപ്രധാനമാണ്. മക്കൾക്ക് ജന്മം നൽകുവാനോ അവർക്ക് സ്നേഹം കൊടുക്കുവാനോ വിശ്വാസത്തിൽ വളർത്തുവാനോ സമയമില്ലാത്തവരായി മാറുകയാണ് ഇന്നത്തെ ദമ്പതികൾ. വീട്ടിൽ മാതാപിതാക്കന്മാർ തമ്മിലുണ്ടാകുന്ന അനൈക്യവും സ്നേഹമില്ലായ്മയുമാണ് പലരുടെയും വ്യക്തിത്വത്തിലെ ക്രമക്കേടുകൾക്ക് കാരണമാകുന്നത്. സ്നേഹത്തിലും സേവന മനോഭാവത്തിലും ജീവിക്കുന്ന മാതാപിതാക്കന്മാരാണ് കുടുംബങ്ങളുടെ ഏറ്റവും വലിയ നിയമി.

പിന്നുവീണ കുഞ്ഞിന് സാമൂഹികതയോ മാനുഷികതയോ ഇല്ലെന്നാണ് പ്രസിദ്ധരായ സാമൂഹ്യശാസ്ത്രജ്ഞന്മാരുടെ അഭിപ്രായം. കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങളുടെ സാമൂഹ്യ-വിശ്വാസ വൽക്കരണപ്രക്രിയയിൽ നിരവധിപേർ പങ്കാളികളാകുന്നു. ക്ലിലും മാതാപിതാക്കളുടെ സംഭാവനയാണ് പരമപ്രധാനം. അവർക്കു പകരവയ്ക്കാൻ ഭൂമിയിൽ മറ്റൊരുമില്ല, സംവിധാനങ്ങളുമില്ല. **Babysitter, Daycare, K.G. classes, ട്യൂഷൻ സെന്ററുകൾ** ഇവയൊക്കെ മാതാപിതാക്കൾക്കു പകരക്കാരാണ് എന്നൊരു ധാരണ ഏറ്റെടുക്കേണ്ടത്. പക്ഷേ, പത്തമ്മ ചമഞ്ഞു വന്നാലും പെറ്റമ്മയോടൊക്കുമോ? എന്ന പഴമൊഴി വെളിവാക്കുന്ന സത്യം നിഷേധിക്കാനാക്കില്ല.

അമ്മയുടെ സംഭാവന അപ്പനോ അപ്പന്റെ അമ്മയ്ക്കോ തൃപ്തികരമായി കൊടുക്കാനാവില്ല. വൈകാരിക ഭദ്രത, ഈശ്വരവിശ്വാസം, ആർദ്രത തുടങ്ങിയ ഗുണങ്ങൾ അമ്മയിൽനിന്ന് ലഭിക്കുമ്പോൾ ഉത്തരവാദിത്വം, സത്യം, നീതി, ധീരത മുതലായവുമുല്പാദനങ്ങൾ അപ്പനിൽനിന്നാണ് കിട്ടുന്നത്. മാതാപിതാക്കളുടെ അലസതാഭാവം കുട്ടികളിൽ മുല്യശോഷണത്തിന് കാരണമാകുന്നു.

വ്യക്തിത്വവളർച്ചക്ക് അനുകരണം ഒരു പ്രധാന മാർഗമാണ്. അപ്പനെയും അമ്മയെയും മോഡലുകളായി കണ്ട് കുട്ടികൾ അവരെ അനുകരിക്കാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുന്നു. മോഡലിനെ കാണാനില്ലെങ്കിൽ ക തിന്നോടിണങ്ങുമെന്ന് പ്രത്യേകം പറയേണ്ടതില്ല. അപ്പന്റെ അസാന്നിധ്യത്തിൽ വീട്ടിൽ കാര്യാനുഷ്ഠനം നടത്താൻ കയറിയിറങ്ങുന്നവർ ശ്രേഷ്ഠഗുണങ്ങൾ നൽകണമെന്നില്ല. വളരെ അടുത്ത ബന്ധുക്കളിൽ നിന്നുപോലും ലൈംഗികപീഡനം സഹിക്കുന്ന കുട്ടികളുടെ എണ്ണം ഏറിവരുന്നു. ഇന്ന് കുട്ടികൾ പലവിധ ദുരുപയോഗങ്ങൾക്കു വിധേയമാകുന്നുണ്ട്.

മുല്യങ്ങളും പാരമ്പര്യങ്ങളുമെല്ലാം വരുംതലമുറയ്ക്ക് കൈമാറിയിരുന്ന വയോധികരുടെ എണ്ണം കുടുംബങ്ങളിൽ കുറയുകയും വൃദ്ധസന്ദനങ്ങളിൽ വർദ്ധിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. ഇതുകാരണം കുടുംബങ്ങളിൽ മുല്യശോഷണം സംഭവിച്ചു കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങൾ വളർന്നുവരുന്നു. ഇത് കുടുംബങ്ങളുടെ അടിത്തറയുടെ കോട്ടത്തിന് കാരണമാകുന്നു. പ്രായം ചെന്നവർ പണിതൂയർത്തിയ അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിലാണ് പുതിയ തലമുറ പണിയപ്പെടുന്നത്. അടിത്തറയില്ലാതായാൽ എല്ലാം നാശമാകും എന്ന സത്യം ഓർക്കുക.

മാധ്യമങ്ങൾക്ക് ഇന്ന് സമൂഹത്തിലുള്ള സ്വാധീനം വളരെ വലുതാണ്. നമ്മുടെ കുടുംബബന്ധങ്ങളിൽ വിശ്വാസവും സ്നേഹവും ഐക്യവും നഷ്ടപ്പെടുന്നുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ മാധ്യമങ്ങൾക്ക് അതിൽ വലിയ പങ്കുണ്ട്. പുതിയ തലമുറ മാധ്യമങ്ങളെ

ആശ്രയിച്ചാണ് കഴിയുന്നത്. മാതാപിതാക്കളോടൊത്ത് എന്നതിനേക്കാൾ പല കുട്ടികളുടെയും ജീവിതം മാധ്യമങ്ങളോടൊപ്പമാണ്. ധാർമ്മികതയെ നശിപ്പിക്കുന്ന മാധ്യമങ്ങളുടെ സ്വാധീനത്തിൽനിന്നും നമ്മുടെ കുടുംബങ്ങളെ നാം രക്ഷിക്കണം.

ഇന്ന് ഒഴുക്കിനൊത്ത് ഒഴുകാനാണ് എല്ലാവർക്കും താല്പര്യം. എതിർക്കപ്പെടേണ്ട പ്രവണതകളോട്

തിരിക്കാനാവില്ല. സർക്കാർ ശമ്പളം കൃത്യമായ കണക്ക് പറഞ്ഞ് വാങ്ങുകയും എന്നാൽ ജോലിക്കാര്യത്തിൽ വീഴ്ച വരുത്തുന്നവനും ഇത് തന്നെ പറയുന്നു. മറ്റുള്ളവരാരും ചത്തുകിടന്ന് പണിയുന്നില്ലല്ലോ പിന്നെ ഞാൻ മാത്രം എന്തിനാ കഷ്ടപ്പെടുന്നത്?

മാധ്യമങ്ങളിൽ പരിചയപ്പെടുന്നവരെ അനുകരിക്കാനുള്ള പ്രവണതയും ഇന്ന് യുവതലമുറയിൽ



ക്രിസ്തീയ ജീവിതം പങ്കുവെയ്ക്കലിന്റെ ജീവിതമാണ്. അപ്പസ്തോലന്മാരുടെ നേതൃത്വത്തിൽ വിശ്വാസികൾ ഏക മനസ്സായി ജീവിക്കാനും അവരുടെ ഇടയിൽ ദാരിദ്ര്യ മനുഭവിക്കുന്നവർ ആരുമുണ്ടായിരുന്നില്ലെന്നും തിരുവചനം സാക്ഷ്യപ്പെടുത്തുന്നു. ഈ കാര്യത്തിന്റെ വിശ്വാസ ജീവിത മാതൃക കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങൾക്ക് കുടുംബത്തിൽ ലഭ്യമാകണം.

നോ പറയാൻ ഏവർക്കും വൈമനസ്യമാണ്. ഒഴുക്കിനൊപ്പം ഒഴുകുന്നതാണ് ഏറെ സുഖകരം. നീരൊഴുക്കിനെതിരെ ഒഴുകുന്നത് വലിയ വെല്ലുവിളിയാണ്. ഈ വെല്ലുവിളിയാണ് ഇന്ന് ക്രിസ്തീയ കുടുംബങ്ങൾക്ക് മുന്നിലുള്ളത്.

സമൂഹത്തിലേക്കൊന്ന് നോക്കുക. ഒഴുക്കിനൊത്ത് ഒഴുകുന്ന പാഴ്ത്തടികൾ ധാരാളം കാണാം. മദ്യപനായ ഒരാളോട് വീടും നാടും മുടിക്കുന്ന ഈ മദ്യപാനം എന്തിന് എന്ന് ചോദിക്കുക. അയാൾ പറയും.... എൻറെ ജോലി സ്ഥലത്തുള്ള എല്ലാവരും മദ്യപിക്കും. അതുകൊണ്ട് ഞാനും മദ്യപിക്കുന്നു. കൈക്കൂലി വാങ്ങുന്നവനോട് ഇത് തെറ്റല്ലേ എന്ന് ചോദിച്ചാൽ അവന്റെ മറുപടി ഇങ്ങനെയാകും. ഈ നാട്ടിൽ ഇന്ന് കൈക്കൂലി വാങ്ങാത്തവരായ ആരാണുള്ളത്. അതുകൊണ്ട് യാതൊരു തെറ്റും ഞാൻ ഇക്കാര്യത്തിൽ കാണുന്നില്ല. നികുതി വെട്ടിക്കുന്നവനും തുടർച്ചയായ് കുറ്റകൃത്യങ്ങളിൽ വീഴുന്നവനും മോഷണം, അതിക്രമം ഇവയൊക്കെ നടത്തുന്നവനും നൽകുന്ന മറുചോദ്യം, ... ഇതൊക്കെ ചെയ്യാത്തവർ ഈ രാജ്യത്ത് ആരാണുള്ളത് എന്നാകും. എല്ലാവരും ചെയ്യുന്നു, അതുകൊണ്ട് എനിക്കും ചെയ്യാ

വളരുകയാണ്. വേഷവിധാനങ്ങളും പദപ്രയോഗങ്ങളുമെല്ലാം പലപ്പോഴും മാധ്യമങ്ങളിൽ കാണുന്നവരിൽനിന്നു കടമെടുക്കുന്നു. സിനിമാ താരങ്ങളും കായികപ്രതിഭകളുമാണല്ലോ പലരുടേയും വീരപുരുഷന്മാർ. അവർ ഏതു വിഷയത്തെക്കുറിച്ചു പറഞ്ഞാലും അതാകും പലരുടേയും മാനദണ്ഡങ്ങൾ. മാധ്യമങ്ങളിൽ പരിചയപ്പെടുന്ന ഭാഷയും പദപ്രയോഗങ്ങളുമാണ് പലസദസ്സുകളിലും നമ്മുടെ കേൾക്കാൻ കഴിയുക.

പരിഹാരമാർഗ്ഗങ്ങളും നിർദ്ദേശങ്ങളും

ഈ കോവിഡ് കാലത്ത് വിശ്വാസരൂപീകരണത്തിൽ നമ്മുടെ ചിന്തയിലും, മനോഭാവത്തിലും, വാക്കിലും, പ്രവൃത്തിയിലും വ്യത്യസ്തത പുലർത്തുക എന്നുള്ളതാണ് പ്രഥമ പരിഹാരമാർഗ്ഗം. എല്ലാവരും അശുഭരാകാൻ മത്സരിക്കുമ്പോൾ ക്രിസ്തീയ കുടുംബം വിശുദ്ധി കാംക്ഷിക്കണം. എല്ലാവരും കൈക്കൂലി വാങ്ങുമ്പോഴും പൊതുജനാവ് ധൂർത്തടിക്കുമ്പോഴും ക്രിസ്ത്യാനി ഭിന്നനാകണം. എല്ലാവരും സന്യസ്തരെ കുറ്റം പറഞ്ഞ് രസിക്കുമ്പോൾ

അവരോടൊപ്പമിരുന്ന് നാമും അങ്ങനെ ചെയ്താൽ എന്ത് ഗുണമാണുള്ളത്? അളവില്ലാത്ത സ്ത്രീധനം നൽകി സ്വന്തം മകളെ വിവാഹം കഴിച്ചയക്കുമ്പോൾ ഒരു സാധു യുവതിക്ക് എളിയ തോതിലേക്കിലും മംഗല്യ സഹായം നൽകാൻ കഴിയുമ്പോഴാണ് നമ്മുടെ ഐഡൻറിറ്റി പ്രകാശിതമാകുന്നത്.

മാതാപിതാക്കൾ ദൈവദത്തമായ തങ്ങളുടെ ഉത്തരവാദിത്വങ്ങളിൽ വിശ്വസ്ഥതയുള്ളവരാകുമ്പോൾ, പരസ്പരം സംപൂർണ്ണമായി പങ്കുവെക്കുന്നവരാകുമ്പോൾ, അറിവിലും ദൈവഭക്തിയിലും വളരുന്നപോൾ, പാരമ്പര്യം കൈമാറ്റം ചെയ്ത വിശ്വാസത്തിന്റെ ജീവിക്കുന്ന പ്രതിരൂപങ്ങളാകുമ്പോൾ, ക്രിസ്തുവും സഭയും എന്നപോലെ തങ്ങളുടെ ദൈവവിളിയിൽ പ്രശോഭിക്കുമ്പോൾ കോവിഡാനന്തര കുടുംബം/ സമൂഹം അഭിഷേകമുള്ളതായി ഉയിർത്തെഴുന്നേൽക്കും.

ഫാ. ഡാമിയനെ മൊളോക്കോയിലെ കുഷ്ഠരോഗികൾക്കു വേണ്ടി സമർപ്പിക്കാൻ പ്രേരിപ്പിച്ചതും, ഫ്ലോറൻസ് നൈറ്റിങ്ഗേലിനെ മുറിവേറ്റു പട്ടാളക്കാരുടെ മനസ്സിലെ പ്രത്യാശയുടെ വിളക്കേന്തിയവനിതയാക്കിയതും, മധ്യപ്രദേശിലെ ആദിവാസികളുടെ വിമോചനത്തിനായി പ്രവർത്തിച്ച സി. റാണി മരിയയെ രക്തസാക്ഷിയാക്കിയതും വിശ്വാസത്തിൽനിന്ന് ഉത്ഭവമായ സ്നേഹമാണ്. കുടുംബം സ്നേഹബന്ധങ്ങളുടെ ഉറവിടമാകണം.

ക്രിസ്തീയ ജീവിതം പങ്കുവെയ്ക്കലിന്റെ ജീവിതമാണ്. അപ്പസ്തോലന്മാരുടെ നേതൃത്വത്തിൽ വിശ്വാസികൾ ഏക മനസ്സായി ജീവിക്കാനും അവരുടെ ഇടയിൽ ദാരിദ്ര്യമനുഭവിക്കുന്നവർ ആരുമുണ്ടായിരുന്നില്ലെന്നും തിരുവചനം സാക്ഷ്യപ്പെടുത്തുന്നു. ഈ കാര്യത്തിന്റെ വിശ്വാസ ജീവിത മാതൃക കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങൾക്ക് കുടുംബത്തിൽ ലഭ്യമാകണം.

കുടുംബാംഗങ്ങൾ മാസത്തിലൊരിക്കൽ കുമ്പസാരിച്ച് പ്രസാദവരാവസ്ഥയിൽ ജീവിക്കാൻ പൈശാചിക ബന്ധനങ്ങൾ ആ ഭവനത്തെ ബാധിക്കുകയില്ല. കുടുംബാംഗങ്ങളിലാരും ഞായറാഴ്ച കുർബാന മുടക്കുന്നില്ല എന്ന് മാതാപിതാക്കൾ ഉറപ്പുവരുത്തണം.

നമ്മുടെ സമൂഹത്തിൽ ഉള്ളവനും ഇല്ലാത്തവനും തമ്മിലുള്ള അന്തരം ക്രമാതീതമായി വർദ്ധിക്കുന്ന സാഹചര്യത്തിൽ ഫ്രാൻസിസ് മാർപാപ്പയുടെ ഏറ്റവും പുതിയ ചാക്രിയലേഖനം 'നമ്മൾ സഹോദരങ്ങൾ' കുടുംബാംഗങ്ങൾ മനസ്സിൽ എന്നും സൂക്ഷിക്കണം. ഏതുസാഹചര്യത്തിലും കുടുംബാംഗങ്ങൾ തമ്മിൽ പരസ്പരം കൈകോർക്കുന്ന വിശ്വസാഹോദര്യത്തിന്റെ വിശാലമാനവികത കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങൾക്ക് ഈ കോവിഡ് കാലത്ത് കുടുംബങ്ങളിൽ ലഭ്യമാകണം.

കാര്യമാണ് സുവിശേഷത്തിന്റെ ഹൃദയം. ആധുനിക ലോകത്ത് കരുണ വറ്റിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുകയാണ്. അനാഥരും വിധവകളും രോഗികളും ഇന്ന് ജീവിക്കാൻ വഴിയല്ലാതെ അലയുന്നുണ്ട്. ഇവരെ ദൈവമക്കളായി കരുതി സംരക്ഷിക്കാൻ മാതൃകാകുടുംബമായി നാം മാറണം. അപരന്റെ അനർത്ഥങ്ങളിൽ ആർദ്രത സൂക്ഷിക്കാൻ വിശ്വാസിക്കാകണം. ദശാംശം കൊടുക്കുക എന്ന ദൈവകൽപന സാമ്പത്തിക അസമത്വങ്ങളെ പരിഹരിക്കാനുള്ളതാണ്. ഇത് നാമും അനുവർത്തിക്കണം.

പള്ളിയും കുരിശും കാണുമ്പോൾ കുരിശുവരച്ച് സ്വയം ആശീർവദിക്കുകയും സന്ധ്യാമണി അടിക്കുമ്പോൾ പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുകയും വൈദികരെയും സന്യസ്തരെയും ആദരിക്കുകയും അതിനായി കൂട്ടികളെ പരിശീലിപ്പിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുക. ദൈവവിളി പ്രോത്സാഹനം കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങൾക്ക് മാതാപിതാക്കളുടെ അധരങ്ങളിൽനിന്നും ലഭ്യമാകണം. ഇപ്രകാരം കുടുംബങ്ങളിൽ കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങൾ വിശ്വാസഭദ്രതയിൽ വേരുന്നി വളരാൻ ഈ കോവിഡ്/ കോവിഡാനന്തര കാലഘട്ടത്തിൽ സാധ്യമാകട്ടെയെന്നാണെന്റെ പ്രാർത്ഥന.

ഉപസംഹാരം

നമ്മുടെ ജീവിതശൈലി അടിമുടി മാറ്റേണ്ടിയിരിക്കുന്നു. ഈശ്വരവിശ്വാസം പേരിനുമാത്രമുള്ള കുറേ മനുഷ്യരുപങ്ങളായി നാം മാറിയിരിക്കുന്നു. പ്രായോഗിക നിരീശ്വരവാദവും ദൈവനിഷേധവും പുതിയ രൂപങ്ങളിൽ തലപൊക്കിത്തുടങ്ങിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. വിദ്യാഭ്യാസവും മെച്ചപ്പെട്ട തൊഴിൽ സാഹചര്യങ്ങളും നമ്മുടെ കൈയ്യിൽ പണം വച്ചുതരുന്നു. ഏതുവിധേന അവ ഉപയോഗിക്കണമെന്ന് നാം ഇതുവരെ പഠിച്ചിട്ടില്ല. ഉള്ളതുകൊണ്ട് സംതൃപ്തമായി ജീവിക്കാൻ നമുക്കാകണം. മനുഷ്യനെ നിത്യവും ആഗ്രഹങ്ങളുടെ തടവറയിലിട്ട് ക്ലേശപ്പെടുത്താൻ ഉപഭോഗസംസ്കാരത്തിന്റെ പ്രയോക്താക്കൾ ശ്രമിക്കുന്നു. പരസ്യ-മാധ്യമങ്ങളുടെ വിവേകപൂർണ്ണമായ ഉപയോഗം കാലഘട്ടം ആവശ്യപ്പെടുന്നു. പരിധിയിൽകവിഞ്ഞ് സമ്പത്തുചെലവഴിക്കുന്നതിനെ അപരന് നന്മചെയ്യാനുള്ള മാർഗ്ഗമാക്കി രൂപാന്തരപ്പെടുത്തുക. കുടുംബം ദേവാലയമാക്കി ദൈവീകകാര്യങ്ങളിലും കർമ്മരംഗം സാർവത്രികമാക്കി ഭൗതിക കാര്യങ്ങളിലും ഉണർന്ന് പ്രശോഭിക്കുവാൻ ഈ കോവിഡ് കാലത്ത് നിങ്ങളോരോരുത്തരെയും ആഹ്വാനംചെയ്തുകൊണ്ട് നിർത്തട്ടെ.



THE CHALLENGES OF STAYING AWAY FROM THE CHURCH



Fr. Raphael Ainickal

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Firstly, we must trust in the Providence of God and start living a life full of zeal and fervour. Since, health is wealth, we also have to take care of our health too, only then we will be able to gain our former enthusiasm.

We, from our childhood, have heard the great saying by Aristotle, the legendary Greek philosopher, 'Man, by nature, is a social animal' and through our survival needs, we still continue projecting ourselves to be necessarily related to others. But this COVID-19 pandemic has paved the way for us to think in a different manner. Even though physical distancing and separation are safer modes of living during this time, we, yet, have to realize that the nature of man basically doesn't change with this change in the mode of living. As we are almost a year into this secluded mode, people, for quenching their survival needs have definitely started moving out of this 'hibernation' and started living with double enthusiasm and energy. We are gradually realizing that this 'seclusion' really threatens the very fabric of what makes us human.

The Church and the Online Platform

During this pandemic, the Church, knowing the basic nature of a human being, gave us the privilege to have almost 'everything' on the

online platform. This privilege was granted by considering the contagious nature and the adverse after-effects of the disease spread through the novel coronavirus, which were unknown till then. Therefore, it is required that this privilege be viewed in the matrix of certain conditions of the pandemic. This online platform was also a ministry (means of evangelization) by which the Church used (and is still using) modern technology to bring the Lord's healing and comfort. (cf. Inter Mirifica # 13).

Now, as the gravity of this pandemic is ebbing away by the dawn of vaccines and the gradual natural immunity response of our body, we, now, have to come out from this 'seclusion', so as to live our lives with double enthusiasm and energy. Having spent months of social distancing with periods of isolation, the thought of being in proximity and interacting with others seem to be a fearsome and formidable prospect, but if this 'seclusion' isn't broken away, it can pose certain threats to our spiritual and societal life. It is indeed true that physical proximity and interaction play a vital role in the embellishing of our human nature.

The Impact of Staying Away from the Church

Etymologically seen, the Church is an assembly usually gathered for religious purposes (CCC 751). The prime goal of Church is to be a sign and instrument of the inner union of men with God i.e., a sacrament of the unity of human race (cf. CCC 775). If it is so, then staying away from church, in the long run, will definitely cause our relationship with God, with others and myself to dwindle and break into pieces. Following are the after-effects which we are facing now, due to this staying away from church:

(i) Relationship with God

- We are unable to receive Jesus physically.
- We are 'sacramentally dead'.

(ii) Relationship with Others

- The warmth of our relationship with others,

gained by religious gatherings, is turning cold, thereby making oneself lonely and depressed, especially the elderly and kids.

- The aspect of faith formation in children, void of physical interaction, turns merely to an academic prospect.

- We fear about reaching out to others.

(iii) Relationship with Self

- We become enclosed in our small world, thus minimizing our horizons.
- We succumb to our own mental depressions.

These after-effects, in the long run, will definitely pose threats to us and our forthcoming generations.

Who can make this better and how?

In order to avoid these after-effects, each one of us has to break out of our shells. Firstly, we must trust in the Providence of God and start living a life full of zeal and fervour. Since, health is wealth, we also have to take care of our health too, only then we will be able to gain our former enthusiasm. If we consider these two aspects, we can retrieve the spirit of the first Christian community (cf. Acts 2:42). We all know very well that we are medicated till our disease is warded off; therefore this online platform has to be considered as a 'medicine' till our pandemic is warded off. Gradually, as the pandemic is clearing out, we have to realize that coming out from this 'seclusion' is a requisite for getting things better. Let us also ask the intercession of Blessed Virgin Mary, who gathered the scattered disciples to have a 'Pentecost experience' after the death of their Master, Jesus, to regain the lost energy and dynamism of today's Church. Let us be aware, with a tinge of faith, of our human nature, that needs the 'other', be it God, or another person, and pass this awareness to the younger generation. Only then we can witness a confident dawn awakening in our horizon.

CHALLENGES IN FAITH FORMATION AMID THE PANDEMIC



Ajimon Francis
Secretary, Department of
Catechism, Eparchy of Kalyan

The Head Teachers of the Kalyan Diocese were briefed in February 2020 about the coming year's activities, and the annual catechetical unit evaluations were being completed when the lockdown hit. The Department of Catechism had to make some quick decisions. The Word of God gave us the courage and showed us the way.

'Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.' (Proverbs 3:5-6)

For us in the core team of the Department of Catechesis, the big question was – What's the way forward? Many dioceses were video

recording their classes and uploading them on YouTube channels. We had to take a 'Leap of Faith' to impart Faith Formation to our students using technology, keeping in mind the challenges in Mumbai, Thane, Pune, Nashik, etc. Instead of uploading video recorded lessons on YouTube channels, a combination of Whatsapp groups and Google Meet/Zoom was agreed upon. Our Director, Fr. Biju Mannamcheril, was ever encouraging – even though each one of us was gingerly taking first steps in going online.

The Forane Secretaries stood shoulder to shoulder. Teams were formed by HMs across the diocese to prepare lessons. Related videos, appropriate hymns, animations etc were all put together for each lesson, every week and sent to be further distributed to respective teachers – all coordinated by Forane Secretaries and HMs. It was a clockwork that worked effectively. Activities/weekly assignments accompanied each lesson to ensure that the students were involved.

Our Catechism teachers stood tall during these uncertain times. Although new to online teaching, a team of 1000+ catechism teachers ensured that their students received the learning material and did their weekly tasks. Most of the teachers were soon taking video call classes. Although the personal touch was missing, online classes did help in ensuring that time was used efficiently, flexibly and creatively to engage with every student.

The success and failure of this entire programme dwelt on the clamour for devices at home. Considering the friction for use of devices, the decision to use Whatsapp groups for effective imparting of learning material worked well. Students were given five days to complete their lessons and activities, parents got space to WFH, and children found appropriate time to learn and to complete the weekly tasks. While the Department emphasized on the vital role of parents in the Ministry of Faith Formation, it was in 2020 that it really found its mooring.

There were several blessings in disguise for the family. Parents were finally getting time with each other and with children - time to really listen to each other, to discuss, to eat and to have fun together. Most importantly, the family prayed together. The real faith formators in 2020 were the parents.

'And they said, believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.'
Acts 16:31

A weekly tracker of activity submission percentage showed a consistent 90 to 95% rate across all Foranes! And that too for most parts of June to December period.

Our Catechism teachers stood tall during these uncertain times. Although new to online teaching, a team of 1000+ catechism teachers ensured that their students received the learning material and did their weekly tasks.



Many Firsts in the Lockdown:

This was made possible due to some amazing



tech warriors who stepped in and provided the best of tech platforms, support, programming, and know-how. Tinu Joy, a Catechism teacher, a veteran from Infosys and Don Bosco, the Joint Secretary of Catechism, made online learning, functions and activities possible with amazing dedication and fortitude. Our PRO Jolly Thomas ensured that all teams were well informed. Our Assistant Director Fr. Danny Chittilappilly put in unending hours to check and proofread all the content. Fr. Biju Mannamcheril, Catechism Director, was 24/7 ready and available for any help.

The year started with four weeks of Refresher of Basic Christian Prayers for all students.

Vidhyaarambham was conducted online on 14th June 2020 with a prayer and Mass dedication from our beloved Bishop Mar Thomas Elavanal.

BCT - Basic Catechetical Training, a learning platform for all catechism teachers on Church teachings, was flagged in April 2020. The lockdown allowed teachers to use online platform proactively and over 900 teachers

were able to complete the course modules.

The Year of Marian Devotion was celebrated online for the academic year 2020-21. Accordingly, several initiatives and programmes were conducted online - Drawings, Dance, Singing, Rosary, Online Quiz, etc.

With the second wave of lockdown looming high, the team continues the online classes and will be conducting annual exams (on the planned dates) in an online format.



A famous quote by St. Bernard of Clairvaux on Marian Devotion sums up our Faith Formation journey through the Pandemic "While She holds your hand, you cannot fall." It has been a surreal year. But in the end, we've all persisted in grace and in faith.



Interactive Faith Learning: A RESOURCE LIST FOR CATECHISM TEACHERS



Leo Chacko

Catechism Head Teacher,
Sacred Heart Church, Bhayandar

The following is a list of interesting games and activities that can be referred to by teachers to make their online catechism classes interactive.

Note: *Google Meet or Zoom could be used for conducting live competitions. Children can also submit pre-recorded videos for the competition to teachers on Whatsapp or upload them on Google drive folder links provided by teachers

- 1) **Heal the World:** Painting competition: In this pandemic situation, what the world needs is healing. With this theme, organize a painting competition online. Children need to switch on their camera. Teachers need to moderate them while they are painting. After completing the painting, children need to upload the picture of the painting on a pre-decided google link or email their work to their teachers.
- 2) **Book Flick:** Ask everyone to get the NRSV bible from their house. The teacher shouts out a page number. Children then have to find that page number and tell everyone in the group to see who wins. For each round, how you win changes. For example the first round winner is the person who has the longest verse, second round – the shortest verse, third round - longest name etc.
- 3) **Fancy Dress:** They can dress up as any biblical character or saint with costumes and describe the character in any one language (Malayalam or English). Send a video of minimum 20 seconds and maximum 30 seconds to the teacher
- 4) **Solo Singing:** Theme: Devotion to Mother Mary (English or Malayalam) minimum 2 min and maximum 3 min video. Judging criteria: melody, rhythm, presentation

- 5) **Talk like Jesus:** Imagine yourself as Jesus and speak to the world. Any language (English or Malayalam) can be used. Video should be minimum 60 seconds and maximum 90 seconds. Judging criteria: Creativity, Presentation, Clarity, Content
- 6) **Bible Quiz:** Use Google form to design a question paper with multiple choice questions. Provide a question bank to students in prior (50 questions) to the sub juniors section and ask any 10 questions from it. For junior and senior sections, provide chapters details: Example 3 chapters for each test. Accept only one entry per participant. Google form link to be provided to students on assigned dates.
- 7) **Bible Verse Recitation:** Maximum number of bible verses need to be learnt and recited on the competition day without referring to any notes. A document consisting of 100 bible verses need to be provided to students 3 weeks in prior. Children need to study from the document provided to them
- 8) **Memorise the Screen:** This game involves using the 'Share Screen' option on Zoom. Teacher needs to prepare something in advance that can be shared with the group for 30 seconds. The group needs to look and remember what was on the screen and then recreate it, or list it, on a piece of paper. Examples of what could be on the screen – a picture, a pattern, a list of numbers, random pictures of objects, pictures of famous landmarks, pictures of famous people, titles of biblical characters etc. Give the group a time limit to write down what they remember, those who remember the most win a point, or points for every detail you remember.
- 9) **Describe an Object:** Each member of the group has to find a random object in their house, bring it back to the call, but not show it on screen. Each player takes turns to describe their object, and everyone else has to guess what it is. Points for those that guess it first.
- 10) **Who am I?:** Choose a person from the group (player 1) and the teacher puts others into a 'breakout room' for a minute (or ask them to leave the call briefly). During that time, the rest of the group members decide on the name of a famous bible character person for player 1 to be. Player 1 is then brought back from the breakout room to the main call. Player 1 asks questions to find out which famous person they are. The rest of the group can only answer with 'yes' or 'no'. The aim is to discover who you are with the least number of questions.
- 11) **Scavenger Hunt:** The teacher names an item and then the children run around the house to try and find it. The first one back wins a point. Play a number of rounds and keep score. Some ideas of objects to be found could be... a sock, a toothbrush, something green, something beginning with the letter B, something made of paper, a cuddly toy, a shoelace etc.
- 12) **Daily Bible verse for Lent season:** Ask each child to recite anyone bible verse that has influenced him the most in their lives. A 1 minute video reciting the bible verse and explaining its significance is to be uploaded on the google drive link provided by the teacher.
- 13) **Crosswords:** Crosswords based on names of prophets, disciples, important characters in the Bible could be displayed during regular class to make the class lively. Students have to complete the entire crossword in limited time and the one completing the maximum correct answers in the time given will be declared as the winner. Students need to send answers to the teacher on Whatsapp.
- 14) **Complete the Story:** The teacher starts the story with the first few words then each student continues the story. The teacher can mention when to pause and then ask the other students to continue the story. This can go on for a few rounds till the story is more or less coherent and complete.
- 15) **Jesus and Satan says:** The teacher shouts out one of 6 instructions, however the children have to do the opposite of what is instructed if they hear 'Satan says' and exactly what they are instructed if they hear 'Jesus says'. Eg. Satan says, Left (hold up your right hand) → Right (hold up your left hand) → Up (duck down so your head can't be seen) → Down (stand up) → Turn (do nothing) → Still (turn around). The faster you shout them out the more fun it will be. If a player does it wrong,

then they lose a life (you can decide on how many lives you can allow them to have).

- 16) **Finish the Sentence:** Each person in the group takes a turn introducing themselves and finishes a predetermined sentence, eg. "I am blessed because...". This gives everyone a chance to know each other a little better.



- 17) **Bible Pictionary:** The teacher lists out several scenes from the Bible onto pieces of paper and places them in a bowl and divides the group into two teams. The teacher picks a piece of paper and sends a personal message via phone to the child and the child draws out the scene on a large piece of paper or dry-erase board and after completing shares the picture to the class. The other members of the team will try to guess what scene from the Bible is drawn.

- 18) **Bible Hangman:** This is played similar to the traditional "hangman" game but uses words or

phrases from the Bible. Break the group up into two teams. The first team will do the drawing, the second team will guess the letters. The game continues until the second team either guesses the word or phrase correctly or is "hung". Then have the teams switch places and repeat the process. Keep track of which team guesses more words or phrases correctly, and offer the winning team a prize.

- 19) **Name Game:** Have one person start out by saying the name of a character from the Bible. The next person has to come up with a character from the Bible whose name starts with the last letter of the previously stated Bible character. Continue on with this until the group gets stumped or someone repeats a name.
- 20) **Who Am I?:** The teacher will assign an index card for each person in the group and write the name of a popular Bible character on each index card. The teacher will pick up each card and read out the name of the student and describe the biblical character assigned to him. Everyone in the class has to guess the character. If the student whose name is called out, himself guesses the correct answer then he gets 10 points for his/her group and other students who answer it correctly will get 5 points for his/her group.
- 21) **Bible Bingo:** This is similar to the traditional Bingo game, but instead of using numbers on the Bingo cards, use words or phrases from the Bible. An announcer will shout out the word or phrase, and if it appears on their game card, the group member will check it off with a marker. The first person to get all words or phrases in a row yells out "Bible Bingo"
- 22) **Bible Scavenger Hunt:** The teacher reads out a Bible quotation (book name, chapter number and verse number). Whoever gets the bible verse needs to inform the teacher either by unmuting their mike or in the chatbox. The student that finds the most bible verses in the time allotted wins the game and a prize.
- 23) **Name that Hymn:** A piano / keyboard / karaoke music is required for this game, as well as someone who is familiar with songs from the

church hymnal and how to play them. Divide the group up into two teams. The pianist will play the song without singing the words. The first group to guess the most correct hymns will win the game. To make this game more challenging, try starting the song in the middle of a verse.

- 24) **Bible Scene:** Break the group up into small teams, and have each team choose a scene from the Bible that they would like to re-enact. Allow the



teams enough time to put their scene together and choose who will play each role. Each team will perform their Bible scene, and the group will vote on which team's scene was the best. Offer the winning team a prize. This is a great game to end the retreat with since the group members will be comfortable with each other by then and it is a memorable way to finish off their time there.

- 25) **Letter to Jesus:** Ask children to write a personal letter to Jesus one week prior to the class, then in the regular catechism class ask the students to read their letters out to the entire class.
- 26) **Number Game:** Have one person in your group quickly say a string of one-digit numbers while another adds the numbers in his or her head. The entire time, have other kids say random numbers aloud to distract the adding person. Afterward, ask: How easy or hard was it to focus with all the distractions? Read aloud Psalm 119:12. Ask: According to this verse, what does the psalmist concentrate on? What distractions do we have that

keep us from doing what's right? How can concentration help us do what's right?

- 27) **Releasing the Stress:** Ask children to arrange for a balloon to inflate and tie tight. Have children each place the balloon under one of their feet on video call.

Teacher: I'm going to call out things that can cause stress in your life. Maybe the thing I call out causes a little stress for you. If so, put a little pressure on your balloon. Or perhaps the thing I call out causes a lot of stress for you. If so, put a lot of pressure on your balloon. Don't release the pressure between things that I call out. Call out things that can cause stress in a child's life, such as parents fighting, a test at school, a family move, being sick, a pet dying, too much to do, breaking a friend's toy, and so on. Continue to call out stresses kids face until the list is exhausted or the balloons are broken.

- 28) **Doing the Impossible:** Ask children to get a biscuit packet. The challenge is to eat at least one biscuit from the packet — as long as you don't use your hands to unwrap them. Allow them time to do this while keeping their videos on. While this is a near-impossible task, applaud your kids' creativity and efforts. Afterward, ask: Would you say this was an impossible task? Why or why not?

Read aloud Matthew 19:26. The teacher can Ask: What are things that are impossible for us to do that God can do? Is there anything that is impossible for God to do? Why or why not? What's something you're facing that seems impossible? What do you think Jesus would have you do about that "impossible" thing?

- 29) **What's Changed?:** Choose a player to start. Everyone stares at their screen for 30 seconds. The player stops their video and has 30 seconds to change something (e.g. they change their hair, or move something that was in the background etc) Then, when they turn on their camera again, the first person to notice the change wins.
- 30) **Act it Out:** The players can take it in turns to act out titles of biblical characters, biblical scenes and everyone else has to try and guess them correctly.

A PARENT'S TESTIMONY



Ritty Josemon

St. Thomas Catholic Church, Vashi

The pandemic has definitely struck the best of us in its own way. Some faced health issues whereas some are going through financial crises. In our case, my husband, who is the only earning member in our family, lost his job. But as Romans 8:28 says “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”

The past nine months were undoubtedly the best days in my life. My whole family was with me day in and day out. Even during strict lockdown, we experienced God's grace in unimaginable ways. All our needs were taken care of unbelievably. One such incident I remember was from the time when the lockdown had just started. We were cooking with whatever we had. I remember that I ran out of garlic. This may sound unimportant, considering all the bigger issues the world was fighting then but then to my surprise, the very next day, I received it through some online shopping site at my doorstep. It was like God was keeping a tab. Just like this, all our needs were taken care of by Him. It was like seeing God's handiwork in our lives. My husband also started getting freelance work here and there.

Eventually we decided to move to Kerala for the time being, which helped our children have a better connect with nature. They got to spend time with their grandparents which is helpful for their emotional and spiritual wellbeing.

There are two ways to look at this situation. Either you can focus on the misery part or look at it believing that this is exactly the situation that God has planned for us. Let me explain. Looking at my past and childhood, I have faced many difficulties. Growing up, I've realised that all those experiences helped me to become the person that I am today. In the same way, when my children go through any difficult time (pandemic or anything else) in their lives, I try

All things
for
good
Romans 8:28

to see it as an experience that God wants them to go through so that eventually they become the individuals that God intends them to be. My job as a parent here is to keep them always connected to God through intercession, family prayers and a lot of shared time. Thanks to the pandemic, we do have that kind of time now.

Life will not always be the way you want it to be. Through these experiences, we could mould our children to be joyful and thankful in all situations and to never lose hope. We can give them the conviction that whatever happens in our lives, is a part of God's divine plan for us.

OVERCOMING CONSTRAINTS IN FAITH FORMATION DURING THE PANDEMIC

The onset of the pandemic was accompanied by great uncertainty in the functioning of all domains. It was very important to make sure that there weren't any obstacles in imparting faith to our young children. At a time when the Holy Qurbana was being viewed online, it was very necessary and of utmost importance to shift from the traditional practices of imparting faith and embrace the new change.



We made sure that every session was delivered in a creative way so that children would have a wonderful experience of their journey encountering Christ. Weekly activities were included in the learning format so that children were always kept on track and never went astray in their spiritual journey.

The entire catechism department did strive hard in these difficult times of the pandemic, embraced the new change, adapted quickly and always stood aside our young children with the common goal of imparting faith and encountering Christ.

Nikhil Xavier

Malad Forane

A smooth sea never makes a skilful sailor", says an anonymous author. Never in the wildest of our dreams had we imagined that we would be confined to our homes for a whole year. At the beginning of this academic year, all of us were clueless as to what we can do and what we should do to continue catechism.



However, as very true to human nature, we learned very fast to adapt to the situation. "When we least expect it, life sets us a challenge to test our courage and willingness to change," writes Paulo Coelho. And we did exactly that. Of course, we had difficulties, we had problems, the biggest being poor internet connectivity.

The biggest challenge was getting everybody on the same wavelength. The take away from this pandemic challenge can be summarised into: "If it's good, it's wonderful. If it's bad, it is experience." It was tough for all of us but it was a learning experience. We have learned to make the best use of technology. We now know that there are different ways for learning. To put it in a nutshell, I borrow the words of John Kennedy, "In a crisis, be aware of the danger, but recognize the opportunity". Let us make the best use of this learning experience and build upon this in the post pandemic period to make learning interesting for our children.

Thomas Abraham

Vasai Forane

This Catechetical year was indeed a different experience all together. It was really wonderful and everyone was equally enthusiastic to explore new methodology to tutor catechism classes virtually. All the Parish priests, forane secretaries, HM, teachers, students and parents welcomed this methodology and cooperated very well with our Diocesan team. Special thanks to our Catechism diocesan core team for they have taken innumerable efforts to make sure that we still continue to impart our faith to our children even in such unprecedented times. Understanding to the fact that this was not that easy to implement, several challenges had come across to bring everyone on a single platform like technical glitches, lack of technical support at some point, reachability to the fullest just to name a few. All these concerns were addressed and were taken care effectively. To sum it up, we could experience the Grace of our Lord work amongst us in a wonderful manner.



Nonitha Shajan

Panvel Forane

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff - they comfort me' (Psalm 23 :4). It has been a tough year with a lot of uncertainties and unpredictability looming all around due to fear of a hitherto unknown disease. However, in hindsight, it really was a great learning opportunity.



very diligently submitted assignments / activities which led to learning on a weekly basis unlike the cramming done during half yearly and annual examinations during normal times.

Kudos to all the Teachers who properly followed up to ensure that students are submitting the Assignments promptly. Though nostalgic about Parish, Sunday Catechism Classes and various activities, Zoom Meetings and Google Meets were the order of the day and filled the vacuum to a large extent. In spite of all the qualms, we pulled off what seemed to be an insurmountable task in the beginning of the Academic Year and the challenging times brought out the best in all of us.

Sunil Ignatious

Pune Forane

At the fag end of this academic year, the real heroes are the parents, who took the bull by its horns with their greater than before involvement in Catechism and various online activities, complementing efforts of the Catechism Teachers. The Diocesan Team rose to the occasion and provided interesting learning material and assignments in soft copies which could be easily transferred to students through WhatsApp Groups on a weekly basis. Students

The coronavirus pandemic has presented unprecedented challenges forcing everyone including teachers, parents and students to adapt to new practices for the long run. The pandemic has interrupted the norm for parents who have suddenly become more involved in the learning of their children, and for the Forane Secretaries, HM's and teachers themselves because they have not been prepared for this. Hence, there was a need to build competencies for



Anthony Varghese

Kalina Forane

teachers to help them overcome the impact of the global health crisis on the delivery of faith formation to the children.

Sharing a few challenges and how we overcame it below:.

Sr.No	Challenges	How did we Overcome
1	Difficulty in teaching faith formation through online class via Zoom and Google meet app using an entirely virtual model	We gave an opportunity to the teachers to learn and understand the Zoom and Google Meet apps by asking them to conduct a few classes without teaching any chapter. Once they understood the apps, they then made the class interesting by conducting games, showing biblical movies, guest teacher appearances etc. along with taking the respective text book chapters.
2	Absenteeism due to non-availability of laptop / Mobile devices and Internet Connectivity and Non-completion of activities	Many parents had to purchase new mobiles/buy Internet packages and this issue was resolved after 3-4 classes which helped the students continue their learning. Further, each teacher would speak to the parents of the children who were absent so that they attend the next class and inform those parents whose children had not completed the activities.
3.	Students not being attentive during the online class.	The activities shared by the diocese where teachers had to specifically give instructions for the completion of the activity helped the children to be attentive in the class. Games and movies also helped the children to be attentive.
4.	Teaching using textbook	Easy availability of learning material every week chapter-wise from the diocese via WhatsApp helped the HMs and the teachers to teach their children online using zoom/google meet apps.

When the pandemic closed all doors of a normal life, 'online' became the 'new normal'. Be it in terms of payment, meetings, conferences, seminars, education and even attending social functions like a wedding to even celebrating the Holy Qurbana online, we had to evolve into accepting this technical era.

It was quite a challenge when the Department of Catechism had to 'impart faith' through technology. With no options available, we did feel sceptical as we knew that the feedback of taking an online class would deeply vary in comparison to that of a regular one. All worries were laid to rest when our core team led by Fr. Biju came out with a very systematic planning of reaching out to each and every child. With the grace of our Lord, we can proudly vouch that He worked miraculously among us and blessed the fruits of our efforts. Not only were we able to connect with the children, but also enjoyed the class to the optimum. It was more of a 'family catechism' when the parents took initiative to ensure that their child/children attend the class and would monitor the same. The classes were conducted on WhatsApp/Zoom/Google Meet as per the convenience of all the students and this rendered a feeling of being important and students started opening up and 'connectivity' was restored. Their coordination to the activities provided was indeed astonishing. There were some teething problems to begin with: students

encountered some difficulty in joining the "class", or when classmates forgot to switch off their microphones during a session, we'd hear background disturbances — younger siblings shouting etc. But over time, as we all got used to the online video classes, things started working beautifully. In the unavailability of textbooks at the start, elaborate PDFs and videos were prepared and posted, so that they could learn as well as enjoy their lessons. Weekly activities helped us to ascertain the level of understanding each child had on the topics covered.

Apart from the curriculum, informative sessions on Vocation and Pro Life were also taken up to deepen the faith of the children. The Mamma Mary Quiz to a great extent made the children aware of many facts about our dear Mother. Events like Faith Formation and Feast Days were celebrated on a virtual platform. One of our parishes produced a short movie of 30 minutes titled "Ah Lockdown Dinangal" and a short video 'A virtual meeting with Mother Mary', which was a wonderful feat considering that the students were locked down in different parts of the country.

Compiled with inputs from
multiple teachers - Thane Forane

Challenges are part of every life. But this year, the Covid-19 pandemic made us face a challenge at a great level. When we were informed to start the Faith Formation classes for the children, there were doubts in my mind, as to how it is possible with the churches closed and people not allowed to meet each other. But when I discussed with Head teachers of our Forane, they were ready to accept this challenge and move ahead and conduct classes with the help of media.



I appreciate the help and guidance given by the Catechism expert team under the able leadership of our catechism director, Rev. Fr. Biju Manamcheril. We received wonderful videos and study materials every week which made teaching easier for the teachers. It was challenging to make the children watch the videos and do the weekly

activity of the lessons. There were families who had shifted base to Kerala due to the pandemic where there were net connectivity issues. The teachers called the students personally and understood their problems and helped them to submit on time.

The next challenge was to make the class interesting and interactive just like before pandemic. For that purpose, several quizzes and competitions were conducted by individual parishes to make them actively involved. Several interesting videos of the program were made and circulated. Even though there were multiple challenges this year, it was a learning experience to me as well as the whole team.

Alice Mathew

Andheri Forane

2020 is a year that would be etched in our memories. Not because of the pandemic but because of how we changed from our “usual lifestyle” to the “new normal”. And the most baffled among them were the children, the ones entrusted to us. To whom we had to impart faith – online now.



This realization sent a shockwave, but this Bible verse ensured that God is still in control of everything. “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” - Joshua 1:9

It was important that we adapted to the new change without losing the charisma of the old one. Few challenges that we faced and actions taken during this period:

From having face-to-face interaction to moving virtual was one of the biggest tests we faced. We started with sending recorded audio messages and also initiated virtual classes for better interaction and good teacher-student relationship. In this year's Catechism, parents played an important role as they were the primary faith

formators available to the children. This was evidently seen throughout for the junior section. As we progressed, we noticed some students were making the weekly activity submission late and also a few of them skipping it. For this we tried to encourage the children by announcing “Early-Bird” submissions and giving them brownie points/stars and thus motivated them to complete the activity on time. It was noticed that regular weekly activities got monotonous and children were not much keen in doing it. This made us shift to giving them activities that were artistic or creative based; which helped us to keep the children's interest going. To keep the importance lit in their minds, we made sure that all the activities/ feast days and other celebrations were out virtually.

We thought that this phase would be dark, but it came with its silver lining and only with HIS grace we could sail through it.

Jeslin George

Kalyan Forane

Due to the pandemic, all of us have been restricted to our houses. Because of the lockdown and social distancing rules, we had to conduct catechism online and various activities too had to be rescheduled to the online space. Many of the catechists and the students likewise faced a lot of issues. First of all, the whole concept of online teaching and learning was altogether new to a lot of us. There were many concerns such as,



1. Teachers not fully aware of how to use online platforms
2. Not knowing how to effectively conduct classes using online platforms
3. Need to learn how to inculcate values and faith using digital space

Many of the students also were either unable to log in due to connectivity issues or other reasons making attendance initially very low, a lot of them also missed their friends due to which many were not interested in

attending online classes. But despite the initial trouble, with a bit of training for the teachers and a regular routine of online Sunday classes, we were able to overcome many of the challenges that we faced. But we would not have been able to do this without the parents, who were our greatest support, especially in conducting classes for the lower standards. Online programmes and online activities like online faith formation day, online Marian quiz, Kerygma etc, have helped online teaching, learning and evaluation more friendly. In due course, students and teachers got used to these new methods of teachings.

In this entire process, I have learnt that imparting faith does not need to be face to face or in a certain place and that in a new age and dawn, the methods may change but we can still inculcate our values and faith. I would like to conclude with a quote, “Catechists are people who keep the memory of God alive, they keep it alive in themselves and they are able to revive it in others.” - Pope Francis.

Shali Joffy

Powai Forane

Imagination begins with reality and then grows. Faith formation cannot happen in a vacuum environment. It is moulded and formed by all that is happening around.

The way faith is formed depends upon the spirit of age. After a lot of deliberations, we were determined that we



would need to introduce and adapt to 'Online Catechism Classes' in such a manner wherein the family members too would be actively involved along with their child, thereby leading to an effective 'Family Catechesis'.

It was not easy to introduce such a model, especially to the younger classes as we had families wherein both the parents were working and also other issues like non-availability of mobile / laptop /

internet etc. Teachers had to often speak to the parents, conduct multiple trials of online classes, fix class timings as per mutual convenience and get them into confidence that 'We are in this together'.

By the dedicated efforts of all the catechism teachers, the immaculate planning and regular monitoring by the Catechetical Departmental Team we could overcome all the barriers and conduct 'Effective Online' Faith Formation classes. Needless to mention that this could not have been possible without the guidance of Parish Priest and the leadership of our HMs.

Manoj Joseph

Borivili Forane

In All Your Ways Submit To Him, And He Will Make Your Paths Straight. (Proverb 3.5-6)

There are good reasons to believe that faith formation leans on practices and rituals. The body and brain work well with practices. During covid pandemic when things changed so rapidly, during the months of June, we realized faith formation was going to be vastly different than what we had been doing, we needed to pivot. And I can proudly say that our teachers did just that. We realized that we had to change everything. Faith formation can't happen in vacuum. We needed to do more to engage our children. With the challenge of learning new communication methods and finding new ways to connect with our children, we experience the power of the Holy Spirit on us. We realized that the more chances we take on trusting the supernatural power of the creator, the more our trust in God grows.

In the early days, we have faced a huge challenge to remove the negative worries from the minds of our young champs. Children have feared the illness itself, but more than that, they have feared the effects of isolation. The news which bombarded them every hour of the day wasn't always helpful either. We told them that the worries were based on a reality we can't change. What we can change is how we interpret it. We can change our thoughts from I can't to "It is difficult, but I will manage". We also gave them the live examples of front line warriors of covid pandemic who are working day in and day out to help us overcome this tough situation. We asked them to



take this situation as an opportunity to serve the underprivileged section of the society who are not able to get their daily bread due to lockdown and no earnings. We also filled their hearts with hope by telling them this time too shall pass, so we should focus on the positive things that we are experiencing and how we can make the most of the time that is available to us. We encouraged them to up skill their abilities, improve their fitness and spend quality time with their parents and grandparents.

We were a little sceptical about the success of online classes in faith formation. But all those doubts were erased by the availability of quality study material that we received every week and seeing the interest of our children in attending the classes. As people of faith, we utilized the time to strengthen our spiritual disciplines, especially prayer. Children are constantly being reminded during this pandemic to protect themselves by washing hands, not touching on face, and practicing social distancing. We told them that these tasks however, don't necessarily protect us from the emotional, mental, and spiritual distress we are encountering. This is the reason why prayer is so critical at this time. We have conducted online rosary in the month of September and October by dedicating and involving all families in our parish.

During this pandemic we teachers also have learned that being trustworthy is basic for faith formation and as important as ever. And we have learned that faith formation can be nurtured and achieved even virtually.

Viji Varghese

Nashik Forane

അനുരജ്ഞനവും സമാധാനവും



മാർ തോമസ് ഇലവനാൽ

കല്യാൺ രൂപതയുടെ മെത്രാൻ

സർഗ്ഗവാസികളുടെ സമാധാനം

‘സർഗ്ഗവാസികളുടെ സമാധാനവും ഭൂവാസികളുടെ പ്രത്യാശവുമായ മിശിഹായേ’ എന്നു തുടങ്ങുന്ന പ്രാർത്ഥനയോടെയാണ് കുർബ്ബാനയിലെ അനുരജ്ഞനശുശ്രൂഷ ആരംഭിക്കുന്നത്. അനുരജ്ഞനശുശ്രൂഷ സമാധാനത്തിനുവേണ്ടിയുള്ള പ്രാർത്ഥനയോടെ തുടങ്ങുന്നത് അനുരജ്ഞനത്തിന്റെ ഫലമാണ് സമാധാനം എന്ന് നമ്മെ ഓർമ്മിപ്പിക്കുവാനാണ്. ‘സർഗ്ഗവാസികളുടെ സമാധാനം’ എന്നു തുടങ്ങുന്ന ഈ പ്രാർത്ഥനയിൽ പ്രധാനമായി നാലു കാര്യങ്ങളാണ് ദൈവത്തോടപേക്ഷിക്കുന്നത്. ‘ലോകത്തിലും സഭയിലും ശാന്തിയും സമാധാനവും പുലർത്തണമേയെന്നും ‘സഭയേയും രാഷ്ട്രത്തേയും ഐക്യത്തിൽ സംരക്ഷിക്കണമേയെന്നും’ ‘യുദ്ധങ്ങൾ ഒഴിവാക്കണമേയെന്നും’ ‘സമാധാനപൂർവ്വകവും ശാന്തവുമായ ജീവിതം നയിക്കുവാൻ ഇടയാക്കണമേ’ എന്നുമാണത്. സർഗ്ഗവാസികളുടെ സമാധാനമെന്നാണ് ഈ പ്രാർത്ഥനയിൽ മിശിഹായെ വിശേഷിപ്പിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നത്. മിശിഹായുടെ ഉത്ഥാനത്തിന്റെ സമാധാനം ദൈവസന്നിധിയിൽ അതിന്റെ പൂർണ്ണതയിൽ അനുഭവിക്കുന്നവരാണ് സർഗ്ഗവാസികൾ.

ഭൂവാസികളുടെ പ്രത്യാശ

ഭൂവാസികളുടെ പ്രത്യാശയാണ് മിശിഹാ എന്നാണ് രണ്ടാമത് അനുസ്മരിപ്പിക്കുന്നത്. കാരണം, ഭൂവാസികൾ തങ്ങളുടെ എല്ലാ സഹനങ്ങളിലും മിശിഹായിൽ പ്രത്യാശ വച്ചിരിക്കുന്നവരാണ്. സർഗ്ഗവാസികളേയും ഭൂവാസികളേയും സമാധാനവും പ്രത്യാശയും നല്കി തമ്മിൽ ബന്ധിപ്പിക്കുന്നത്, സമാധാനത്തിന്റേയും പ്രത്യാശയുടേയും ഉറവിടവും കേന്ദ്രവുമായ മിശിഹായാണ്. സർഗ്ഗത്തിലും ഭൂമിയിലുമുള്ളതെല്ലാം അവിടുന്ന് തന്നോടനുരജ്ജിപ്പിക്കുകയും സമാധാനം സ്മാപിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു എന്ന് വി. പൗലോസ് അനുസ്മരിപ്പിക്കുന്നു (കൊളോ. 1:20). കർത്താവിലൂടെയുള്ള രക്ഷാകർമ്മത്തിന്റേയും അനുരജ്ഞനത്തിന്റേയും ഫലമായി നാമെല്ലാവരും

“വിശുദ്ധരുടെ സഹപൗരന്മാരും ദൈവഭവനത്തിലെ അംഗങ്ങളുമാണ്” (എഫേ. 2:19). എന്ന വചനം ഇവിടെ നമുക്ക് ഓർക്കാം. കാരണം, ‘കാലത്തിന്റെ പൂർണ്ണതയിൽ സർഗ്ഗത്തിലും ഭൂമിയിലുമുള്ള എല്ലാറ്റിനേയും അവിടുന്ന് ക്രിസ്തുവിൽ ഒന്നിപ്പിച്ചു” (എഫേ. 1:10). അങ്ങനെയാണ് അവിടുന്ന് സർഗ്ഗവാസികളുടെ സമാധാനവും ഭൂവാസികളുടെ പ്രത്യാശയുമായിത്തീർന്നത്. ഭൂമിയിൽ മനുഷ്യർക്ക് സമാധാനവും പ്രത്യാശയും എന്ന് കുർബ്ബാനയുടെ ആരംഭത്തിൽ നമ്മൾ ചൊല്ലുന്നുണ്ടല്ലോ. ഈ സമാധാനവും പ്രത്യാശയും മിശിഹായാണെന്ന് പ്രാർത്ഥനയിൽ ഏറ്റുപറയുന്നു.

ലോകത്തിന്റെ നാനാഭാഗങ്ങളിലും

തുടർന്നു പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുന്നത് “ലോകത്തിന്റെ നാനാഭാഗങ്ങളിലും വിശിഷ്ട പ. കത്തോലിക്കാസഭയിലും നിന്റെ ശാന്തിയും സമാധാനവും പുലർത്തണമേ” എന്നാണ്. വി. പൗലോസ് അനുസ്മരിപ്പിക്കുന്നതുപോലെ ‘ഈശോ, കുരിശുവഴി ഓരോ ശരീരത്തിൽ ഇരുകൂട്ടരേയും ദൈവത്തോട് അനുരജ്ഞിപ്പിക്കുകയും സമാധാനം സ്മാപിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു’ (എഫേ. 2:14-19). കർത്താവിന്റെ കുരിശിലൂടെയാണ് സമാധാനം സ്മാപിച്ചത്. ഈ സമാധാനം സഭയിൽ മാത്രമല്ല ലോകം മുഴുവനിലുമുണ്ടാകുവാൻ വേണ്ടിയാണ് പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുന്നത്. പുരോഹിതൻ അനാഫൊറായുടെ ആരംഭത്തിൽ അൾത്താരയെ സമീപിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് ചൊല്ലുന്ന പ്രാർത്ഥനയിൽ ഇപ്രകാരം കാണാം. “ലോകം മുഴുവന്റേയും അനുരജ്ഞനത്തിനും എല്ലാ സഭകളുടേയും സമാധാനത്തിനും ശാന്തിക്കും വേണ്ടി ഞാൻ ഇവ അനുഷ്ഠിക്കുന്നു”. നാലാമത്തെ ഗേഹന്ത പ്രാർത്ഥനയിലും “ജീവിതം കാലം മുഴുവൻ അങ്ങയുടെ ശാന്തിയും സമാധാനവും ഞങ്ങൾക്കു നല്കണമേ” എന്ന് നമ്മൾ പ്രാർത്ഥിച്ചു.

ലോകമുഴുവനിലും സഭയിലും ദൈവത്തിന്റെ ശാന്തിയും സമാധാനവും പുലരാൻ ഇടയാക്കണമേ എന്ന്

പല പ്രാവശ്യം നമ്മൾ വി. കുർബ്ബാനയിൽ പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. കുർബ്ബാനയിലെ പൊതുവായ കാരോസുസായിലും ഇതുപോലെയുള്ള പ്രാർത്ഥനകൾ കാണാം. “സമസ്ത ലോകത്തിന്റേയും സകല സഭകളുടേയും സമാധാനത്തിനും ഐക്യത്തിനും നിലനില്പിനും വേണ്ടി പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുന്നു”. കൂടാതെ കാരോസുസായുടെ അവസാനത്തിൽ “നിന്റെ ശാന്തിയും സമാധാനവും ഞങ്ങളിൽ വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കുകയും ഞങ്ങളെ അനുഗ്രഹിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യണമേ” എന്ന് പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. ‘നമ്മുടെ യാചനകൾ ദൈവത്തിനു സമർപ്പിക്കുക, അവിടുന്ന് നമ്മുടെ ഹൃദയങ്ങളെ സമാധാനത്തിൽ കാത്തുകൊള്ളൂ’ എന്ന് വി. പൗലോസ് അനുസ്മരിപ്പിക്കുന്നുണ്ടല്ലോ (ഫിലി. 4:7). അതുകൊണ്ടാണ് സമാധാനത്തിനുവേണ്ടി സഭ എന്നും പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുന്നത്.

സഭയേയും രാഷ്ട്രത്തേയും

തുടർന്ന്, പ്രപഞ്ചത്തെ സൃഷ്ടിക്കുകയും എല്ലാ ജനതകളേയും പരിപാലിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്ന ദൈവത്തോടപേക്ഷിക്കുന്നത് “സഭയേയും രാഷ്ട്രത്തേയും ഐക്യത്തിൽ സംരക്ഷിക്കണമേ” എന്നാണ്. മനുഷ്യന്റെ ഭൗതിക സുസ്ഥിതിക്കുവേണ്ടി പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്ന രാഷ്ട്രത്തേയും ആത്മീയനന്മക്കായി പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്ന സഭയേയും ഐക്യത്തിൽ നിലനിറുത്തണമേ എന്ന പ്രാർത്ഥനയാണിത്. സഭയുടെ ആത്മീയപ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾക്ക് രാഷ്ട്രത്തിന്റെ സഹകരണവും സംരക്ഷണവും ആവശ്യമാണല്ലോ. സഭയും രാഷ്ട്രവും ഒന്നിച്ചു പ്രവർത്തിക്കുമ്പോഴാണ് മനുഷ്യൻ സമാധാനവും സുസ്ഥിതിയും കൈവരുന്നത്. മിശിഹ നല്കുന്ന ശാന്തിയും സമാധാനവും പുലരുന്നിടത്ത് സഭയും രാഷ്ട്രവും തമ്മിൽ പൂർണ്ണ ഐക്യമുണ്ടായിരിക്കും.

യുദ്ധങ്ങൾ ഒഴിവാക്കണമേ

മനുഷ്യൻ ശാന്തമായ ജീവിതം നയിക്കുവാൻ അവസരമുണ്ടാകുവാൻ സമാധാനം നിലനില്ക്കണം. അതിന്

ലോകത്തിൽ യുദ്ധമില്ലാതാകണം. അതിന് യുദ്ധപ്രിയരായവർ അകന്നു നിലക്കുവാൻ ഇടയാകണം. അതുകൊണ്ട് “യുദ്ധപ്രിയരായ ജനങ്ങളെ ചിതറിക്കണമേ” എന്ന സങ്കീർത്തകന്റെ പ്രാർത്ഥനയാണ് (68:30) ഇവിടെയും എടുത്തിരിക്കുന്നത്. സമാധാനത്തിന് എതിരായ മനോഭാവം വച്ചു പുലർത്തുന്നവരാണ് യുദ്ധപ്രിയരായവർ. അവരൊണ് അകറ്റി നിറുത്തുവാൻ പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുന്നത്.

ശാന്തമായ ജീവിതം നയിക്കാൻ ഇടയാക്കണമേ

“വിനയത്തിലും ദൈവഭയത്തിലും സമാധാനപൂർവ്വകവും ശാന്തവുമായ ജീവിതം നയിക്കുവാൻ ഞങ്ങൾക്ക് ഇടയാകട്ടെ” എന്നാണ് പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുന്നത്. “എല്ലാ ഭക്തിയിലും വിശുദ്ധിയിലും ശാന്തവും സമാധാനപൂർണ്ണവുമായ ജീവിതം നയിക്കുവാൻ നമുക്കിടയാകത്തക്കവിധം” പ്രാർത്ഥനകൾ അർപ്പിക്കണമെന്ന് വി. പൗലോസ് ഉദ്ബോധിപ്പിക്കുന്നു (1 തിമോ. 2:2). വിനയവും ദൈവഭയവുമുള്ളിടത്താണ് നമുക്ക് സമാധാനപൂർവ്വകവും ശാന്തവുമായ ജീവിതം നയിക്കാൻ ഇടയാകുന്നതെന്നും പ്രാർത്ഥന നമ്മെ അനുസ്മരിപ്പിക്കുന്നു.

നിന്റെ നാമത്തിന് മഹത്വം

“നിന്റെ നാമത്തിന് മഹത്വമുണ്ടാകട്ടെ” എന്നാണ് പ്രാർത്ഥന അവസാനിക്കുന്നത്. നമ്മൾ സമാധാനപൂർവ്വകവും ശാന്തവുമായ ജീവിതം നയിക്കാനിടയാകുമ്പോഴാണ് ദൈവത്തിന് മഹത്വമുണ്ടാകുന്നത്. ഇവിടെ നമ്മൾ പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുന്ന “ഞങ്ങൾക്കല്ല കർത്താവേ ഞങ്ങൾക്കല്ല നിന്റെ നാമത്തിനു മഹത്വമുണ്ടാകട്ടെ” എന്ന പ്രാർത്ഥന സങ്കീർത്തനത്തിൽ നിന്നുള്ളതാണ് (115:1). നമ്മൾ പരിചിന്തനം ചെയ്യുന്ന ഈ പ്രാർത്ഥന വളരെ അർത്ഥവത്തും മനോഹരവുമാണെന്നു കാണാം. ഈ പ്രാർത്ഥന ഐച്ഛികമായതുകൊണ്ട് പലപ്പോഴും സമൂഹം ഇത് ചൊല്ലി കേൾക്കാൻ ഇടയാകുന്നില്ല.

Reconciliation and Peace

The rite of reconciliation in the Qurbana begins with the prayer “O, Christ, you are the peace of the heavenly court and the hope of the earthly beings”. The fact that the rite of reconciliation is begun with the prayer for peace reminds us that peace is the fruit of reconciliation. Four petitions are made to God in this prayer: bring peace and harmony in this world, preserve the church and

the nation in harmony, banish wars from the face of the earth and grant that we may lead a life in peace and tranquility.

Peace of the heavenly Court

Here in this prayer Jesus is qualified as the peace of heavenly court. All those who are in heaven in the presence of God, enjoy the peace of Christ. So

too, Jesus is the hope of humankind. For, all those who are on earth and have to undergo suffering, have placed their hope in Christ. It is Jesus who is the source and centre of peace and hope who brings together those who are in heaven and on earth giving them peace and hope. St. Paul says "God made peace through the blood of Christ and so brought back to himself all things both on earth and in heaven" (Col. 1:20). As a result of redemption and reconciliation in Christ God will complete His plan "to bring all creation together, everything in heaven and on earth with Christ as the head" (Ep. 1:10). Thus Jesus will become the peace of those in heaven and the hope of all earthly beings. At the beginning of our Qurbana the priest recites "peace and hope to people on earth". This prayer of reconciliation reminds us that Jesus is our peace and our hope.

Peace in the Church and in the World

Again we pray "Bring peace and harmony to the world, especially to the holy Catholic Church". As St. Paul reminds us 'Christ himself has brought us peace. By His death on the cross He destroyed enmity and united them into one body and brought them back to God' (Ep. 2:14-19). We pray that the peace established by Christ may reign not only in the Church but also in the whole world. As the celebrant approaches the altar at the beginning of the anaphora he recites "I celebrate these divine mysteries for... the reconciliation of the whole world and for peace and tranquility of all the Churches". In the fourth ghehantha we prayed "grant us your peace and tranquility all the days of our lives".

In the Qurbana we pray several times for peace and tranquility in the church and in the world. In the Karozusa we pray "For peace, unity and stability of the whole world and all the Churches." and at the conclusion of the Karozusa again "make your peace and tranquility abound in us". St. Paul reminds us "but in all your prayers ask God for what you need... And God's peace which is far beyond human understanding will keep your hearts and minds safe in union with Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:7). Hence the Church in the Liturgy always prays for peace in the world.

The Church and the Nation

We continue our prayer asking God to "preserve the Church and the nation in harmony". The Church is established by Christ to work for the spiritual growth of the people and the nation is to work for the material well being of the people. They should work together in harmony. Even for the spiritual activities of the Church, the Church is in need of the support and protection of the nation. Only when the church and the nation work together, the people will be able to enjoy peace, tranquility and well being.

Banish Wars from the Earth

Only in a peaceful atmosphere can man live a life of tranquility, for that there should not be wars in the world and for that there should not be enmity and enemies in other words enemies should be scattered. Hence we pray in the words of Psalmist "Scatter those people who love to make war" (the war mongers) (Ps. 68:30). Those who love to make wars are enemies of peace and hence they should be scattered.

Life in Peace and Tranquility

We pray that "we may lead a humble and God-fearing life in peace and tranquility". St. Paul reminds us "petitions and prayers must be offered to God that we may live a quiet and peaceful life" (Tim. 2:1-2). The prayer reminds us that the prerequisite for peace and tranquility is a life of humility and fear of God.

Let there be Glory to your Name

Finally we pray "Let there be glory, not for us, but for your Holy Names". This is exactly the prayer of the Psalmist (Ps. 115:1). This prayer reminds us that God is glorified only when His people are able to live a life of peace and tranquility. This prayer at the beginning of the rite of reconciliation is very meaningful and beautiful. As this prayer is given as optional the people often do not get a chance to hear this beautiful prayer.





Safeguarding the Faith of Children amid the Pandemic



“God is our shelter and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. So we will not be afraid, even if the earth is shaken and mountains fall into the ocean depths; even if the seas roar and rage, and the hills are shaken by the violence.” – Psalms 46: 1 – 2

Throughout this year, ever since coronavirus struck the world, we all have spent more time at home than usual. Our daily schedules and timetables have all gone for a toss. Does this mean there won't be an end to this? Will we never get to go to the movies in theatre again? Will we never have cricket and football tournaments? Will this struggle have an end?

We have always heard of characters in the Bible who have seen victory after a lot of struggle/pain. For example, in the book of Exodus, we see how Israelites had to wait for 40 years to enter the promised land. Zechariah and Elizabeth had to wait for a very long time to get a child of their own. But when we read their entire story, we realize that the hard times they went through were just a stepping stone to experience the greater glory of our Lord. There are many more such beautiful stories in the Bible that tell us whatever hardships or struggles that a person undergoes are only for a better tomorrow.

So why do you think Covid-19 pandemic happened? Does it mean that God, our Lord has left us alone? The fact is that, today, if you are reading this article, he has taken care of you throughout this. I personally take such situations as testing times. It is also because sometime, it is important to pause and start reflecting on ourselves.

As children we all have experienced a lot of troubles and discomfort during these times. We are not able to go to school, not able to meet our friends, not able to play outside, not able to celebrate birthday parties, no able to go to church, too. But if we look at the other side of it, there are many good things that we received because of the lockdown. We are able to spend quality time with our

family, we are able to try our hand in a variety of art and craft activities, we have been able to discover our hidden talents. Not just us, birds and animals, too are able to live peacefully in a much cleaner environment. During this time, we have learned to distinguish between what's important and what's not. We step out of the house, only if it is important. Most importantly, we all have started spending more time with our Lord.

We are all beautiful creations of God and we don't have the supreme power over everything. But the one who has control over the entire universe is just a call away from us. Yes, you heard it right, just a call away. Not a phone call. We don't have to travel or take an appointment to meet him. What we need to do is just close our eyes and start talking. That's it! He is all ready to hear us and do what's best for us.

As children we can classify ourselves into 3 buckets:

First bucket, where we can sit and complain about the problems we face.

Second bucket, where we do everything as per our wish without thinking what is good/bad. Third bucket, where we do whatever best we can and leave the rest in the hands of the Almighty! It is up to us to select which bucket we want to be part of. So children, rather than crying about the current situation which is not under our control, let us submit ourselves to our Lord. Let's believe that he will be there to watch us. Always remember, difficult times will come and go, but our Lord will always be there with us as our best friend. Let's see what we can do to make our bond stronger with our loving God:

- Read the Word of God everyday
- Participate in family prayer daily
- Every night, thank Jesus for the blessings you have had. Also, think about any wrong doings you may have done. Promise Jesus, you will be a better person each day.
- Pray for one new person everyday
- Smile when you pray (P.S. this is a request that has specially come from heaven!)

Let this beautiful poem by be an inspiration for us to overcome any challenges that may come in our way:

"Today is ours, let's live it.
And love is strong, let's give it.
A song can help, let's sing it.
And peace is dear, let's bring it.
The past is gone, don't rue it.
Our work is here, let's do it.
The world is wrong, let's right it.
The battle is hard, let's fight it.
The road is rough, let's clear it.
The future vast, don't fear it.
Is faith asleep? Let's wake it.
Because today is ours, let's take it."
- Beah Richards

ACTIVITY - 1

#12Months #12Ways

Make the most of the new year. There are 12 months in a year, so send us 12 ways in which you can grow your faith and be one step closer to our Lord. Points to note:

- The Theme for all your 12 ways/ideas should be "Faith"
- You cannot repeat any idea Let me give an example:

Jan: I will learn one Chapter from the Bible. (For example: Psalms 91)

Feb: I will try to learn a song that tells me of God's unconditional love (God's love is so wonderful)

March: I will try to find out the meaning of the most commonly used words in our prayers such as "Alleluia", "Amen" etc.

So, what are you waiting for? Put on your thinking hats and send us 12 most creative ways that you can use to grow in faith and do share it with us at lanternkidsroom@gmail.com. Instagram users may also share it on your page by tagging "Kalyan Lantern" with the hashtag #12Months #12Ways. The winners will be featured in the next issue of Lantern.

ACTIVITY 2: FUN BIBLE RIDDLES

- 1) How does Moses make his coffee?
Ans: He-brews it
- 2) What did Adam say on the day before Christmas?
Ans: It's Christmas, Eve!
- 3) Why did the unemployed man get excited while looking through his Bible?
Ans: He thought he saw a job.
- 4) It is greater than God and more evil than the devil. The poor have it, the rich need it and if you eat it you'll die. What is it?
Ans: Nothing
- 5) I look like the letter t and am a symbol of Christianity. What am I?
Ans: The Cross
- 6) What do we have that Adam never had?
Ans: Ancestors
- 7) Who was the first tennis player in the Bible?
Ans: Joseph (he served in Pharaoh's court)

Simi Ajin &

Rose Jose Chiriyankandath

Catechism Teachers, St. Thomas Catholic Church, Vashi

Activity: Pic with Grandparents



"Her invisible hand, blend of laughter and unconditional love makes the taste of life overloaded with sweetness"

Sherin Anthony

Confirmation section,
Christ The King Church , Bhandup



"Grandparents make the world: a little softer, a little kinder, a little warmer."

Shawn Jaison

Pre-communion, St.Thomas Cathedral Church, Kalyan west



"A grandparent is a little bit parent, a little bit teacher, and a little bit best friend."

Jessica Toyson

Youth section, St. Mary's Church, Malad East

Activity: Portrait Drawing: "Caring for the Elderly"



Maria Pinto

Pre-Confirmation Section, Mother Of
Victory Shrine Tikujiniwadi, Thane (West).



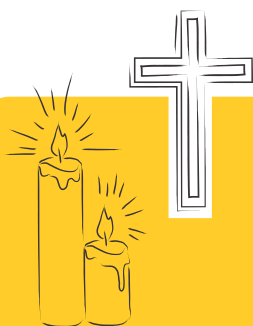
Marylene Francis

Post Communion Section
St. Alphonsa Church, Mankhurd



Ann Manoj

Sacred Heart Church, Bhayandar



Question:

What is the importance of 'community' for our faith?



Answer:

Let us consider two questions with respect to the optimum functioning of an authentic personal existence and meaningful life, in the context of our Christian faith and its living.

- a) Why do I go to participate on Sundays in the liturgical celebrations of a parish church?
- b) Is it possible to find God without the help of a parish church worshipping community?

In the Bible, God called the Israelites to be a worshipping community. As in the beginning, God called Abraham and his descendants to be His own people that came together to worship Him. This was realised in the covenant of God ratified at the Sinai (Exodus 24, 6-8; 34, 20-ff). Then, in the New Testament, St Peter, the first pope, taught that we, the Christians are called to be a "people". He says, "You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession" (1 Peter 2, 9). This is to say that we Christians are called to worship God being in assembly.

This is why we gather.

It is our duty to gather and offer sacrifices of praise for the gift of forgiveness and eternity. It is not the priest-celebrant who celebrates the Holy Mass. It is the baptised faithful who celebrate mass. The priest only serves and ministers them to live the *royal priesthood* of the faithful who come together in the parish church. It is in this context that John Chrysostom (+AD 407), a Father of the Church, says, "church is the name of gathering" (*ecclesia enim est nomen conventus et congregationis*). It means that the Church does not, or cannot exist, without the coming together that happens in its local assembly. Without our coming together, Christ cannot make Himself manifest in our village and town. We cannot live the faith in Christ without coming together. We cannot live our call to royal priesthood without celebrating the Holy Eucharist.

Fr. Binu Thadathil
Archdiocese of Thalassery

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GOC202065952



THANKSGIVING TO ST. JUDE

Shaju Raphel — Goregaon (E)
Shaju Raphel — Goregaon (E)
Irene Joshy — Powai



The tallest pindi and decorations at Christ the King Church, Bhandup, as part of St Sebastian's feast celebration during 15-24 January 2021.



വത്തിക്കാനിലെ പൊന്തിഫിക്കൽ കൗൺസിൽ ഫോർ ലെജിസ്ലേറ്റീവ് ടെക്സ്റ്റ്സ് ഉപദേശകനായി തൃശൂർ അതിരൂപത ആർച്ച്ബിഷപ്പ് മാർ ആൻഡ്രൂസ് താഴത്ത് നിയമിതനായി.

For they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels
and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. (Luke 20:36)

1st Death Anniversary

10th February, 2021

*Man is mortal but the love for them is immortal.
Though you are not present here with all of us,
but your memory is stored on our mind.
Rest peacefully in heaven!*

Fondly missed & deeply mourned by:

Wife: Thressia George

Sons: Trejo George & Trevor George

Daughter-In-Law: Rehna Trejo & Dona Trevor

Grand Children: Victor Trejo, Gloria Trejo & Eric Trevor

Family, Relatives & Friends

George Lonappan Poolon

Gifted by the Lord : 20-11-1946

Taken by the Lord : 10-02-2020

**San Jos Church (Wagle Estate, Thane)
Don Bosco Unit**



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