



THE DELHI DOMINICAN



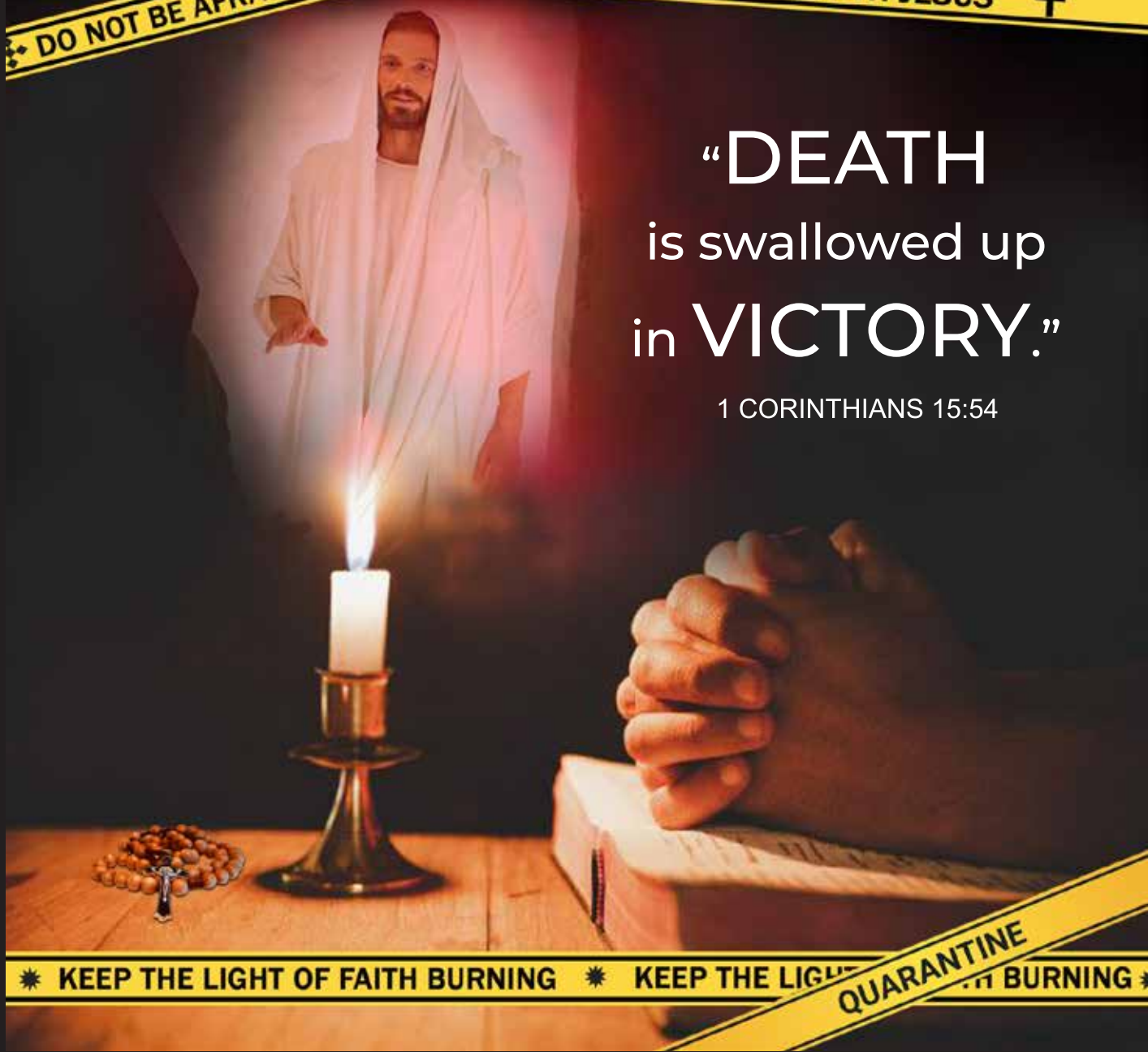
ST DOMINIC'S CHURCH, VASANT VIHAR, NEW DELHI

MAY 2020 | ISSUE 07



“DEATH
is swallowed up
in VICTORY.”

1 CORINTHIANS 15:54



* KEEP THE LIGHT OF FAITH BURNING * KEEP THE LIGHT OF FAITH BURNING * QUARANTINE * KEEP THE LIGHT OF FAITH BURNING *



THE DELHI DOMINICAN

(Parish Newsletter)

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PARISH PRIEST

Speaks...

Fr. Prasad George, OP
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POST-LOCKDOWN WORSHIP

Remember the last public Mass you had at St Dominic's? As you entered the church portico you dipped your hand into the holy water cistern and signed yourself with it. You moved into the church and took any seat that was available, even when the church was crowded. You didn't mind the occasional sneezes and coughs that you heard near or far. You sang and prayed loudly unmindful of the germs that loud singing could spread. When the time for communion came you fell in line with the congregation and received the Holy Communion on your tongue. After the Mass you warmly clasped the hands of people to greet them. You moved to the courtyard to feast on the freshly cooked breakfast. Your soul and heart rejuvenated you bid good bye to your friend with a passing hug and left saying, 'see you next Sunday'.

When will that 'next Sunday' be? When the authorities allow us to congregate again, will you dare to repeat all those rituals of the past?

At Cana the Mother of Jesus told him, "They have no wine." Jesus was standing near the stone jars that were used for the rites of purification by the Jews. Those jars were empty (like our holy water cistern). By his word Jesus made available the best quality wine. Great! The Messiah of the new order is here. New wine seeks new jars! (Mk 2:22) Lockdown message: prepare new jars!

Nicodemus was advised to be born from above, to bathe in water and in Spirit (Jn 3:3 & 5). What matters is a spiritual new birth. The Jews stunned by the action of Jesus cleansing the temple of Jerusalem were forewarned that the ritual based worship had to be replaced by the new worship that Jesus would offer in his body on the cross (Jn 2:19). Again, the Samaritan woman was told that the new kind of worship would be offered in spirit and truth (Jn 4:23-24). "Present your bodies as a living sacrifice" (Rom 12:1).

The true worshippers must stop seeking bread that will perish, but that which will endure for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give (Jn 6:27). He has power over the forces of nature. By his word he multiplied loaves of bread and walked on water. He empowered a paralytic who had been bound to a pallet for 38 years to take control of it and to carry it around (Jn 5:8).

We are under the grip of a microscopic organism. We are told to follow four steps to protect ourselves from being gripped by it: wash/ sanitize, use mask, keep distance and build immunity. During the course of this lockdown can we use these same methods to protect and empower our spiritual lives? 1, be cleansed and be reborn in the Spirit; 2, keep from spreading spiritual contagion (infection) through speech and evil action; 3, keep a distance from all that pollutes our spiritual integrity; and 4. Build a strong spiritual life - "Learn to live in the spirit" (Gal 5:25). When we come together again, may we all be renewed in spirit.

Urbi et Orbi: Message of Pope Francis on Easter



Dear brothers and sisters, Happy Easter!

Today the Church's proclamation echoes throughout the world: "Jesus Christ is risen!" – "He is truly risen."

Like a new flame this Good News springs up in the night: the night of a world already faced with epochal challenges and now oppressed by a pandemic severely testing our whole human family. In this night, the Church's voice rings out: "Christ, my hope, is risen!" This is a different "contagion", a message transmitted from heart to heart – for every human heart awaits this Good News. It is the contagion of hope: "Christ, my hope, is risen!" This is no magic formula that makes problems vanish. No, the resurrection of Christ is not that. Instead, it is the victory of love over the root of evil, a victory that does not "by-pass" suffering and death, but passes through them, opening a path in the abyss, transforming evil into good: this is the unique hallmark of the power of God.

The Risen Lord is also the Crucified One, not someone else. In his glorious body he bears indelible wounds: wounds that have become windows of hope. Let us turn our gaze to him that he may heal the wounds of an afflicted humanity. Today my thoughts turn in the first place to the many

who have been directly affected by the corona virus: the sick, those who have died and family members who mourn the loss of their loved ones, to whom, in some cases, they were unable even to bid a final farewell. May the Lord of life welcome the departed into his kingdom and grant comfort and hope to those still suffering, especially the elderly and those who are alone. May he never withdraw his consolation and help from those who are especially vulnerable, such as persons who work in nursing homes, or live in barracks and prisons.

For many, this is an Easter of solitude lived amid the sorrow and hardship that the pandemic is causing, from physical suffering to economic difficulties.

This disease has not only deprived us of human closeness, but also of the possibility of receiving in person the consolation that flows from the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist and Reconciliation. In many countries, it has not been possible to approach them, but the Lord has not left us alone! United in our prayer, we are convinced that he has laid his hand upon us, firmly reassuring us: Do not be afraid, "I have risen and I am with you still!"

May Jesus, our Passover, grant strength and hope to doctors and nurses, who everywhere offer a witness of care and love for our neighbours, to the point of exhaustion and not infrequently at the expense of their own health. Our gratitude and affection go to them, to all who work diligently to guarantee the essential services necessary for civil society, and to the law enforcement and military personnel who in many countries have helped ease people's difficulties and sufferings.

In these weeks, the lives of millions of people have suddenly changed. For many, remaining at home has been

an opportunity to reflect, to withdraw from the frenetic pace of life, stay with loved ones and enjoy their company. For many, though, this is also a time of worry about an uncertain future, about jobs that are at risk and about other consequences of the current crisis. I encourage political leaders to work actively for the common good, to provide the means and resources needed to enable everyone to lead a dignified life and, when circumstances allow, to assist them in resuming their normal daily activities.

This is not a time for indifference, because the whole world is suffering and needs to be united in facing the pandemic. May the risen Jesus grant hope to all the poor, to those living on the peripheries, to refugees and the homeless. May these, the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters living in the cities and peripheries of every part of the world, not be abandoned. Let us ensure that they do not lack basic necessities (all the more difficult to find now that many businesses are closed) such as medicine and especially the possibility of adequate health care. In light of the present circumstances, may international sanctions be relaxed, since these make it difficult for countries on which they have been imposed to provide adequate support to their citizens, and may all nations be put in a position to meet the greatest needs of the moment through the reduction, if not the forgiveness, of the debt burdening the balance sheets of the poorest nations.

This is not a time for self-centeredness, because the challenge we are facing is shared by all, without distinguishing between persons. Among the many areas of the world affected by the corona virus, I think in a special way of Europe. After the Second World War, this beloved continent was able to rise again, thanks to a concrete spirit of solidarity that enabled it to overcome the rivalries of the past. It is more urgent than ever, especially in the present circumstances, that these rivalries do not regain force, but that all recognize themselves as part of a single family and support one another. The European Union is presently facing an epochal challenge, on which will depend not only its future but that of the whole world. Let us not lose the opportunity to give further proof of solidarity, also by turning to innovative solutions. The only alternative is the selfishness of particular interests and the temptation of a return to the past, at the risk of severely damaging the peaceful coexistence and development of future generations.

This is not a time for division. May Christ our peace enlighten all who have responsibility in conflicts, that they may have the courage to support the appeal for an immediate global ceasefire in all corners of the world. This is not a time for continuing to manufacture and deal in arms, spending vast amounts of money that ought to be used to care for others and save lives. Rather, may this be a time for finally ending the long war that has caused such great bloodshed in Syria, the conflict in Yemen and the hostilities in Iraq and in Lebanon. May this be the time when Israelis and Palestinians resume dialogue in order to find a stable and lasting solution that will allow both to live in peace. May the sufferings of the people who live in the eastern regions of Ukraine come to an end. May the terrorist attacks carried out against so many innocent people in different African countries come to an end.

This is not a time for forgetfulness. The crisis we are facing should not make us forget the many other crises that bring suffering to so many people. May the Lord of life be close to all those in Asia and Africa who are experiencing grave humanitarian crises, as in the Province of Cabo Delgado in the north of Mozambique. May he warm the hearts of the many refugees displaced because of wars, drought and famine. May he grant protection to migrants and refugees, many of them children, who are living in unbearable conditions, especially in Libya and on the border between Greece and Turkey. And I don't want to forget the island of Lesbos. In Venezuela, may he enable concrete and immediate solutions to be reached that can permit international assistance to a population suffering from the grave political, socio-economic and health situation.

Dear brothers and sisters, Indifference, self-centeredness, division and forgetfulness are not words we want to hear at this time. We want to ban these words forever. They seem to prevail when fear and death overwhelm us, that is, when we do not let the Lord Jesus triumph in our hearts and lives. May Christ, who has already defeated death and opened for us the way to eternal salvation, dispel the darkness of our suffering humanity and lead us into the light of his glorious day, a day that knows no end.

With these reflections, I would like to wish you all a happy Easter.

Source Vatican News

Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs/SCCs) are True Expression of Communion

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In Redemptories Missio (RM), St. John Paul II has a specific section in “Basic Ecclesial Communities”(BECs/SCCs) which says: Because the Church is communion, the new Basic Ecclesial Communities or Small Christian Communities, if they truly live in unity with the Church, are a true expression of communion and a means for the construction of a more profound communion. They are thus cause for great hope for the life of the Church. They are groups of Christians who at the level of the families or as Domestic Church, come together for scripture reading, for reflection, for sharing and listening to each other’s problems of everyday life and trying to solve some of them. These communities are a sign of vitality within the church, an instrument of formation and evangelization and a solid starting point for a new society based on a ‘civilization of love’(RM-51). He also continues the same theme in his ecclesial document “Ecclesia in Asia” (EA) and exhorts the churches in Asia to build up communities and to be in communion with one another, if they are to be authentic witnesses to the Lord. The BECs/SCCs should not be viewed as another pious association or a prayer group but it should be seen as the “Way of Living” or “The Way of Being Church” in the neighbourhood. It is a collective responsibility of all the faithful in the community.

Everyone is important. One of the basic truths about BECs/SCCs is that it provides space for everyone to feel a sense of belonging to the church. One of the issues that most of the local churches are facing today is that people feel as if they are strangers in the church, in the community of God’s people. There is an urgency to create a close link between the pastor of the parish and to the members of the community. In large parishes many of the

sheep can be easily lost if there is no effort to reach out to them. This outreach for those already baptized but living in the periphery is a matter of immediate concern which the SCCs have the potential to address.

Then we have another category in our churches namely the nominal Christians who are lukewarm in their faith or who have lost their faith totally. SCC is a tool that could reach out to them as well, with renewed vigor.

Holistic approach of the SCCs. The promotion of the SCCs should not be taken up in isolation. There are certain other urgent socio-pastoral issues that have to be given attention simultaneously. The most important among them would be the pastoral care of the families and caring for the poor. These have a direct ripple effect on the formation of the SCCs. It is not possible to build the SCCs without the pastoral care of the family. While the SCCs are being promoted in a parish, the concern of the parish towards the ‘family’ is crucial in today’s context. It is necessary to understand the situations within which marriage and family are lived today, in order to fulfil the task of “communion”. Without the spirit of communion in the family it will not be practical to think of communion in the BECs/SCCs. It will be like trying to build a house without the foundation. Thus, a greater understanding and care of the existing realities regarding the family is essential in the field of BECs/SCCs (Familiaris Consortio-04).

Today, we certainly need a mechanism to hold our parish communities intact. For that matter there is no better methodology than that of the BECs/SCCs which is not simply a way of promoting communion but rather that which is communion itself.

St. Dominic's plays Host to JNU Researchers

On Sunday 1st March 2020 (just before Lockdown 1.0) a Group of JNU Research Students along with Professor (Dr.) PR Kumaraswamy, were invitees to St. Dominic's Church. The programme requested by the Professor, was agreed to by Fr Prasad OP and attended by Fr Roshan OP, was an experiment of JNU to enlighten Researchers in knowing some aspects of other Religions. They attended Holy Mass (10:30 am) then were ushered to the Basement for a Talk on "*Christians in the Middle East – from a Catholic Point of View*". The topic and the interaction was the

brainchild of Prof Kumaraswamy. It was delivered by Dr. Subash Masters, and post the talk elicited a great many questions on Christianity and Catholicism. For most it was the first time they had entered a Catholic Church, witnessed Mass and Communion. Our Youth (SDYM) served them with light breakfast and tea. The Professor and Researchers were thankful to St Dominic's Church for giving them the opportunity to visit and learn about the plight of Christians in the Middle East.

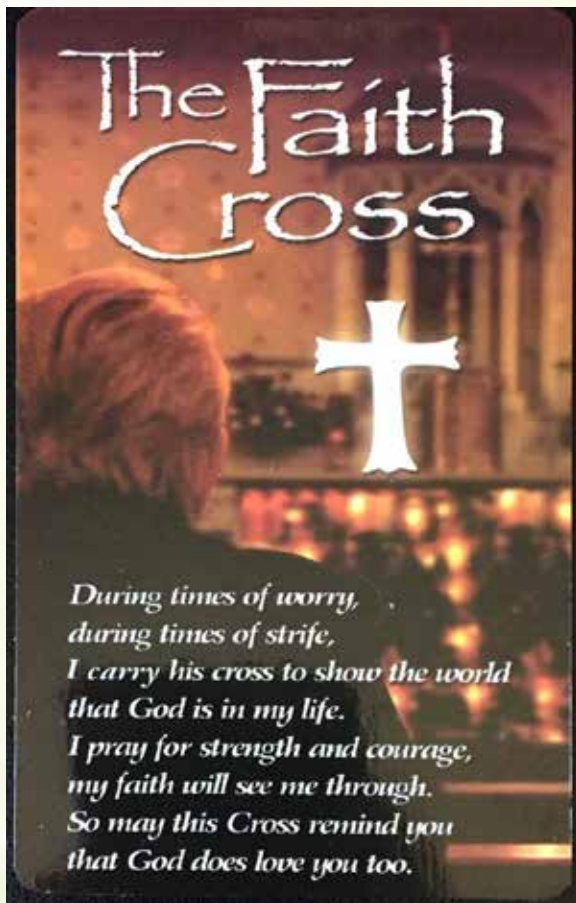


O LORD STRENGTHEN MY FAITH

Dr. Subash Masters
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*One day at a time, Sweet Jesus
That is all I am asking from you
Just give me the strength
To do every day, what I have to do ...*



The impact of the stringent LOCKDOWN did not initially appear to impact my Life. After all, I thought, it's only a few weeks, and anyway I am at home. But when it dragged on (for various good or not so good reasons) further to versions 2.0, 3.0 and now 4.0, I found that Life itself had changed, and with that Me ..or should I say my **attitude towards Life and Faith.**

The subtle changes in my personal Life started actually in

2000 and as the years went by, I found that in the turmoil's that buffeted me, I had no alternative but to ask "Lord help me, or else I perish". The opportunity to be able to attend formal Church, sit at the third last pew, just sit quietly and pray, to attend Mass and receive Holy Eucharist - were soothing elements in my topsy turvy life. At no time, I felt let down, God helped me, protected me every time I came across a bump in the road.

Then this long Lockdown period commenced on March 25, where attending Mass, Rosary, Stations of the Cross was on YouTube, and it got me thinking, *despite all the difficulties one is facing, I am still alive and "kicking"*. But, when so many of my friends were getting crazy, because of the restrictions and find themselves closeted, I somehow did NOT feel any such pressure. So I introspected, as to what helped me (being 68, with long term Diabetes, Hypertension; Heart Issues post stroke; with a recent hypoglycaemic 55 minute fall which injured my head - all which made me comparatively more vulnerable than others) manage this period. A few thoughts that I can share are:

TRUST and FAITH IN THE ALMIGHTY

My initial formative years, my late Mother taught me that we must trust God in all things. We read in the book of Proverbs 3:5: *Trust wholeheartedly in Yahweh, put no faith on your own perception* - if I have faith in God, I was told, not only do I have to trust Him to provide provisions, but I need to be completely confident that He will provide for me, in His own way. And HE HAS.

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?" (Mt 6:25-27)

PRAYER

I learnt to pray as if God is in the room sitting right next to me. In the gospel of *Mark 11:23-24 Jesus says, " In truth I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, be pulled and thrown into the sea, with no doubt in his heart, but believing that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. I tell you, therefore, everything you ask and pray for, believe that you have it already, and it will be yours".* I think its okay to give Him every single one of my burdens, worries, and fears. It's okay to ask God to intervene in my life and ask Him for the provisions that I need. Prayer, as many time I have heard preached - is a personal relationship with Our God, and so it is with me. God helped me overcome the obstacles.

Over the years I have felt that irrespective of the turbulences I went through, it was faith that helped me withstand the ravages that came in my Life. I believe that any form of prayer is fine, whether it be formal or informal, as long as I am able to communicate one-is-to-one with God, I would feel good. I believe that I must *pray and give thanks in all sorts of circumstances*, and I have witnessed a number of situations that tended to shake me, but I continued reaching out to God. I may have faltered many times, but God lifted me and put me back on the right path. In retrospect, when I recall the most darkest moments of my personal space specially between 2015 to 2017, it was HE who carefully led me ahead, I was able to do things I never dreamt I was capable of !

THE SCRIPTURES

These days I make time to sit down and read the Bible and Other books that I have acquired over time. I realised that knowing God's Word goes hand in hand with trusting in God and praying to God. Many years ago, I came across a good booklet on *Psalms – Prayer, Praise and Promises* by Warren Wiersbe, and I take the opportunity to read through the selected portions of the Psalms. The Psalms are an excellent source of comfort, of courage, of strength

for me!

In God's Word I think I have found great strength to carry on with life in peace, and experiencing a different sort of joy. This coronavirus lockdown time, I have looked back and I realise that I have gradually gained in personal confidence, knowledge, and understanding of the importance of God in my life, such that despite the loss of loved ones, I can still smile and carry on.

BE THE LIGHT

In my early catechism I was explained that as Christians we are the light of the world, so I have tried, in many small ways, to be caring towards those whom I have interacted with, I have tried to encourage, to advise, with the intention of building the character of many people I meet.

I believe that God has given me talents; it is essential therefore I must share these talents for the Church and in helping (serving) Others. I believe that in my personal and professional life, outsiders should be able to see in me a **God-first life**; let my actions try and draw people closer to God. "*Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up*". (Mt 5:16)

LIVE OUT HIS WORD

Applying the Word of God to my own Life, I have seen how HE has deepened my walk with Him (He has always led me by my hand). I think we all need to strive to make our world to be a better place to live (as expressed in that wonderful song by Michael Jackson and Others). I know I am NOT perfect. But I have made a commitment to grow in MY faith and commit to living a **God-first life** in my own quiet way.

One day at a time, the goal is always to be better than what I was yesterday.





आखिर कोरोना वायरस को किसने लाया ?

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मैं अपने बंद कमरे में बैठ कर ये सोचता हूँ,
यहाँ किस से पूछूँ इसलिए खुद से ही पूछता हूँ ।
आखिर इस COVID-19 कोरोना वायरस को किसने लाया?
पूरे विश्व में अपनी डर और दहशत का जिसने कहर है ढाया।

कहाँ गया वो बाजारों का हल्ला और गलियों का शोर?
सड़कों की गाड़ियों को चुराने वाला कौन है वह चोर?
इतना सन्नाटा क्यों, जैसे अन्धकार हो घनघोर?
अगर खिड़की से बाहर देखूँ तो विरान दिखता है चारों ओर।

पहले तो रातें भी इतनी शान्त नहीं होती थी,
मानो खुद के लिए उनको दो पल नहीं मिलती थी।
आखिर इस कोरोना को किसने लाया ?
हर शहर, नगर और गाँव-घर में इसका कहर किसने फैलाया ?

इसने मुझे लोगों से दूर रखा है,
बंद कमरे में मुझे मजबूर रखा है ।
लेकिन क्या पहले भी मेरा कमरा कभी खुलता था,
दरवाजा नहीं तो कम से कम खिड़की ही सही।

क्या मुझे फर्क पड़ता था, लोगों का आना
उनसे मिलना और फिर उनसे मिलने जाना?
या कोरोना की शिकायत बस है एक बहाना
दुनिया और लोगों से तो, मैं पहले भी था अंजाना।

अगर बंद कमरे में रहना मेरी आदत है
तो कोरोना मेरे लिए नहीं कोई आफत है ।

समाचारों में सुन रहा हूँ—गरीब, लाचार,
बेबस लोगों की कहानी,
क्या पहले भी, मैंने उनके दुःख-दर्दों को थी पहचानी?
या जरूरतमंदों की आहों को सुनना, अपनी जरूरत नहीं मानी
इससे मुझे क्या, इसमें मेरा क्या फायदा या क्या हानि?

सवाल वही, आखिर कोरोना कहाँ से आया?
जिसने मुझे साफ रहना सिखा दिया।
पहले तो पानी से भी हाथ धोना मुश्किल था,
अब साबुन और sanitizer भी ले लिया ।

‘स्वस्थ रहने के लिए स्वच्छ रहना है’
ये मेरी क्या, पूरी दुनिया का कहना है ।
अब तो घर का कूड़ा भी मूल्यवान है,
उसको भी मिल रहा सम्मान है।
उसे बड़ी हिफाजत से रखता हूँ,
क्योंकि उसका अपमान मेरा ही नुकसान है ।

अब उसको सही जगह पहुँचाना मेरा ईमान है।
पहले मुझे मालूम भी न था, कहाँ कूड़ेदान है।
सड़क किनारे, पेड़ के नीचे, मैंने न जाने कितना कचरा फेंका
यही सोच कर कि मुझे किसी ने नहीं देखा।
सोचता था, मैं न ही कोई गुनाह और नहीं कोई नाइंसाफ कर
रहा हूँ,
मैं तो बस अपना घर साफ कर रहा हूँ।

संसार और प्रकृति के बारे में तो मैंने सोचा ही नहीं,
मेरा दिमाग, अपने कमरे और घर से बाहर तो पहुँचा ही नहीं।
अब बंद कमरे में बैठ कर ये सोचता हूँ।
कोरोना से नहीं, खुद से ही ये पूछता हूँ —
कोरोना आखिर क्यों आयी ?
या मेरे करतूतों ने ही उसे लायी

खुदा को इसके लिए कोसूँ क्यों?
वजह तो है मेरी ही कुदरत से बेवफाई।
कभी खुदा के दरबार में मैंने सर नहीं झुकाई
लेकिन इस वक्त ने मुझे प्रार्थना में हाथ जोड़ना सिखाई।

युद्ध तो हमने ही छेड़ा है,
लड़ना तो पड़ेगा हमें ही ये लड़ाई ।

NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

Ms. Rebecca Anthony



“For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life”-(Jn 3:16)

Being newborn, or “born again” means that our inner spirit has been brought into a new relationship with God through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ

“I cry out to God Most High, to God who fulfills his purpose for me.”(Ps 57:2) This is the key in understanding God’s purpose for my life. I believe God has numbered our days and will fulfill every purpose He has for us.

Waking up feeling purposeless is incredibly frustrating. I look around people living passionate, engaged, meaningful lives. They have deep relationships, and a sense of direction that gets them to hop out of bed each morning with a spring in their step. We all make mistakes we cannot fix, experience losses we cannot recover, and face pains, persecution, burdens, and disappointments we cannot handle alone. And I have come to realize the good news that I don’t have to handle them alone. In a moment of weakness I may cry out thinking, ‘No one knows what it is like. No one understands’. But I have experienced on various occasions that the Son of God perfectly knows and understands my needs. He has perfect empathy and has time and again extended to me His arm of mercy.

With the current situation of the COVID-19 which is creating anxiety and worry about the future and our well-being, I have learnt to especially remember God’s promise to be with us. During this lockdown I have experienced the close connection with God. The Holy word has been my

greatest strength “**And call on me in the day of trouble: I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me**” (Ps 50:15) is very close to my heart.

When we decide to follow Christ, we have a new life. Jesus said, “there is much joy in heaven when a sinner repents”. One can imagine how the angels must have rejoiced the moment we received Jesus as our Saviour. It is because God loves us that he sees us as a person worth rejoicing over, just as the shepherd rejoices over finding one lost lamb.

I get really inspired by this song sung by 5 year old Claire Ryann Crosby “Peace in Christ”

*There is peace in Christ
when we learn of Him
Feel the love He felt for us
When He bore our sins*

*Listen to His words
Let them come alive
If we know Him as He is
There is peace in Christ*

*He give us hope
When hope is gone
He give us strength
When we can't go on
He give us shelter
In the storms of life
When there's no peace on earth
There is peace in Christ.....*

The creature meets His Creator

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The miracle at Cana where Jesus turns the water into wine is the first sign that Jesus performed. Mary becomes the mediator between the household and Jesus. The transformation takes place when the creature encounters its Creator. The miracle at the wedding at Cana has its own prominence in the gospel since it has been considered as the first miracle of Jesus.

As was the custom of the Jews, wine was considered the most important item at a wedding party and scarcity of wine would bring shame on the family. Mary noticed that they had no wine. Every good action begins from observation. One could see a thing and choose either to ignore it or to act upon it. Mary becomes a model for us in this respect. She noticed that they had no wine. She chose to intervene in their life at the apt time.

In our day-to-day life we do encounter many situations in which we could act and thus glorify the Lord. But due to our negligence, ego or ignorance we just let go of all the opportunities to do good for others. Mary said, 'Do as He tells'. Mary had trust and confidence that her son could do something for the family. She might never have expected that her son could turn the water into wine rather she had the confidence that her son would save the struggling family. Mary still repeats to us the same thing, "Do as He tells you". She does not ask us to do extra-ordinary things. She just asks us to submit

ourselves totally to His holy will because He knows what is good for us.

Jesus asked the servants to fill the six empty jars. Six is an incomplete number but the presence and the intervention of the Lord makes it perfect and complete. He does always tell us to fill our jars. Though we feel empty, useless and good for nothing at times, remember God is there waiting to fill our emptiness with his love, peace and joy. He wants to turn out our imperfection into perfection. He eagerly waits to act upon our lives. We need to ask Jesus to fill our lives with faith, hope and charity especially during these days of lockdown where we are deprived of the Sacraments and sacramentals.

Jesus prayed and water turned into wine. When the water met the Lord, it blushed and turned into wine. It's the mystery of life. Whatever is dry, deserted, fruitless and forlorn will find its meaning and fulfilment in the presence of the Lord. Every emptiness, nothingness and failures is a means for God to reveal His Glory. The painful and difficult situations of life; especially during these times of isolation, lockdown and great pandemic our life may seem to be meaningless but the miracle of water turning into wine reveals to us that every obstacle of life is the way the Lord to opens the door of grace, so that we may realize our nothingness and glorify the Lord who is the source of all blessings.



जीवन: एक उपहार

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“आदि में शब्द था, शब्द ईश्वर के साथ था और शब्द ईश्वर था। वह आदि में ईश्वर के साथ था। उसके द्वारा सब कुछ उत्पन्न हुआ और उसके बिना कुछ भी उत्पन्न नहीं हुआ” (योहन 1:1-3)।

पवित्र ग्रंथ में हम सृष्टि-रचना के बारे में पढ़ते हैं कि किस प्रकार ईश्वर ने अपने शब्द-मात्र से संसार को बनाया। आकाश, पृथ्वी और पृथ्वी पर पायी जाने वाली हरेक जीव-जंतु, पेड़-पौधों को शब्दों के द्वारा रचा। परंतु ईश्वर ने मनुष्य को अपने हाथों से गढ़ा और उसे जीवन प्रदान किया। “प्रभुने धरती की मिट्टी से मनुष्य को गढ़ा और उसके नथनों में प्राणवायु फूँक दी। इस प्रकार मनुष्य एक सजीव सत्त्व बन गया” (उत्पत्ति 2:7)। इसका अर्थ है कि अपनी बनायी हुई सब कृतियों में ईश्वर ने मनुष्य को सर्वोच्च स्थान दिया और उसके लिए प्रत्येक मनुष्य मूल्यवान है। उतना ही महत्त्वपूर्ण है मनुष्य का जीवन। ईश्वर ने मनुष्य को यूँ ही नहीं बनाया, बल्कि किसी-न-किसी उद्देश्य से बनाया। ईश्वर ने जब इस संसार की सृष्टि की तो सब कुछ सुन्दर था क्योंकि सब में जीवन था।

आज हम ऐसे युग में हैं, जहाँ मनुष्य अपने जीवन को सुन्दर बनाने का प्रयत्न कर रहा है। वह हर संभव कोशिश करता है ताकि उसका जीवन सफल हो जाए। अपने परिवार को सब सुख-सुविधाएँ प्रदान करने हेतु वह अपनी चिंता किये बिना दिन-रात परिश्रम करता है। अभिभावक अपने बच्चों की खुशी के लिए न जाने कितना कुछ खो देते हैं और इस बात का किसी को पता भी नहीं चलने देते, ताकि उनको किसी चीज की कमी न हो। आजकल के नौजवान भी किसी से कम नहीं। उन्हें भी पता है कि जीवन के दौड़ में अपनी जगह बनाने के लिए कितनी मशक्कत करनी पड़ेगी। अतः 12वीं की परीक्षा देने के तुरंत बाद, ये फॉर्म-वो फॉर्म भरने में लग जाते हैं। इस प्रतियोगिता के दौर में अपनी जगह बनाने की जद्दोजहद कभी-कभी काफी जानलेवा भी साबित हो सकती है। कई आत्महत्या की खबरें सुनाई पड़ती हैं। कई लोग असफलता के भय से परिणाम आने के पूर्व

ही गलत कदम उठा लेते हैं, कोई दबाव में आकर, तो कोई मजबूरी में।

केवल शारीरिक मृत्यु ही जीवन का अंत नहीं है, अपितु समय के साथ-साथ हम अपने आप को खोते जा रहे हैं। हमारी दिनचर्या ही ऐसी हो गई है। हमारे पास न तो अपने लिए और न ही अपने सगे-संबंधियों के लिए ही समय है, अर्थात् हमारा जीवन बिलकुल निरस हो गया है। हमारे जीवन में अब पहले जैसी उमंग और उल्लास नहीं रह गई है। परिवार का साथ और अपनों का प्यार क्या होता है, हम भूल गए हैं। यह इसलिए हुआ क्योंकि हम परस्पर मेल-मिलाप करना छोड़ चुके हैं।

कोविड-19 चीन के वुहान शहर में शुरु हुआ, प्रतिदिन वहाँ की हालत बद से बदतर होती जा रही थी। किसे पता था कि वुहान में शुरु हुई बीमारी वैश्विक महामारी का रूप ले लेगी। परिणाम स्वरूप कई देशों में संपूर्ण तालाबंदी हो गया। पूरे विश्व में मृतकों की संख्या दिन-ब-दिन बढ़ती जा रही थी। यह सुनकर सबके मन में एक तरह का आतंक छा गया। अपने प्रियजनों को खोने का डर सबको सताने लगा। तब महसूस हुआ कि जिन्दगी कितनी महत्त्वपूर्ण है। हर कोई यही दुआ करने लगा कि ईश्वर हमारे परिवार से इस बीमारी को दूर रख। किसी ने सच ही कहा है— “जब तक हमसे हमारी प्यारी चीज दूर न हो जाए, तब तक हमें उसकी अहमियत का एहसास नहीं होता।”

जीवन ईश्वर का दिया हुआ अनमोल वरदान है जिसे न तो तौला जा सकता है और न ही खरीदा जा सकता है। जो लोग अस्पताल से ठीक होकर आये हैं, उनसे बेहतर कौन बता पाएगा कि जीवन क्या है। ईश्वर ने एक ही जीवन दिया है, इसे व्यर्थ न गँवाइए—हँसिए, मुस्कराइए और हर क्षण का आनंद उठाइए। अपने परिवार और प्रियजनों के साथ वक्त बिताइए। कल किसी ने नहीं देखा इसलिए ईश्वर के दिए हुए अनमोल वरदान को अच्छे से जीयें।

हमारे जीवन का केंद्र कौन ?

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हम सभी की जिंदगी में ऐसा कोई न कोई वस्तु या व्यक्ति जरूर होता है जिसे हम अपने जीवन का केंद्र बना लेते हैं। उस व्यक्ति या वस्तु के बिना जीवन व्यतीत करना हमारे लिए कष्टदायक हो जाता है। हमारी हर खुशी और हर दुःख उसी पर निर्भर हो जाती हैं। हमें ऐसा लगता है मानो हमारी जिंदगी में यदि वह नहीं रहा, तो हमारा जीवन निर्वाह करना मुश्किल हो जाएगा। हमारे सारे कार्य, हमारी दिनचर्या बिगड़ जाएगी, और हम परेशान और दुःखी हो जायेंगे। इस प्रकार हमारे इर्द-गिर्द की बाकी चीजों या व्यक्तियों पर हमारा ध्यान ही नहीं जाता, जो हमारी खुशी का कारण बन सकते हैं।

हर किसी के जिंदगी में उसके जीवन का केंद्र कुछ न कुछ हो सकता है। जैसे कि किसी के लिए उसका मोबाइल, सोशल मीडिया या उसकी गर्लफ्रेंड या बॉयफ्रेंड। हम सभी वास्तविकता से परे अपना जीवन जी रहे हैं। हम अस्थायी खुशियों के लिए उसके पीछे छुपी स्थायी दुःख को अनदेखा कर रहे हैं। वह दुःख हमें कई बार नजर भी नहीं आता। प्रेरितचरिते-4:12 में हम पढ़ते हैं, "किसी दूसरे व्यक्ति द्वारा मुक्ति नहीं मिल सकती, क्योंकि समस्त संसार में ईसा नाम के सिवा मनुष्यों को कोई दूसरा नाम नहीं दिया गया है, जिसके द्वारा हमें मुक्ति मिल सकती है।" लेकिन हम इस तथ्य को भूल जाते हैं और शैतान द्वारा संचालित राह पर चलने लगते हैं। इस कारण से हम हमारे आपसी रिश्ते, भाई-बहन, माता-पिता और सबसे बढ़कर 'येसु' को भूल जाते हैं। हमें इन सब की याद तब आती है, जब हम किसी मुसीबत में पड़ जाते हैं।

यदि हम भौतिक वस्तुओं को त्याग येसु को अपने जीवन का केंद्र बनायेंगे, तो हमारे जीवन के हर क्षण में खुशियाँ ही खुशियाँ होंगी और येसु हमारे हर एक कार्य

को पूर्ण करने में हमारी मदद करेंगे। अगर हमारे जीवन में येसु नहीं हैं, तो हमारा जीवन एक मुरझायी पेड़ के सदृश है जिसे येसु रुपी जल की अति आवश्यकता है, ताकि वह दुबारा हरो-भरा हो सके।

हमारे मन में कई बार शंका होती है कि हम प्रार्थना तो करते हैं, लेकिन हमारे जीवन में कोई भी चमत्कार नहीं होता। प्रार्थना करने के बावजूद भी हम तरह-तरह के दुःख और परेशानियों से जूझ रहे हैं। ऐसे वक्त में भी हमें धन्यवादी हृदय से ईश्वर की उपस्थिति को पहचानने की आवश्यकता है, क्योंकि जीवन में खुशी और गम तो आते ही हैं। छोटे-मोटे दुःख भी अनिवार्य हैं, नहीं तो हमारा मानवीय स्वभाव ऐसा है कि हम खुशियों के वक्त येसु को भूल जाते हैं और केवल दुःख की घड़ी में उन्हें याद करते हैं।

जब हम येसु को अपने जीवन का केंद्र बना लेते हैं और अपने हर कार्य में उनके साथ चलते हैं, तो हमारे जीवन में कई चमत्कार होते हैं। लेकिन हमें केवल बड़े चमत्कार की आस लगी रहती है। छोटे चमत्कारों में हमारा ध्यान जाता ही नहीं। अगर हम ध्यान दें, तो पायेंगे कि हमारे जीवन के हर क्षण में चमत्कार होता है। येसु की उपस्थिति हमेशा हमारे साथ होती है। हमारी हर परेशानी और मुसीबत से निकलने के लिए येसु हमें मार्ग दिखाता है। संत योहन के सुसमाचार 8:12 में येसु कहते हैं, "संसार की ज्योति मैं ही हूँ।" येसु संसार की ज्योति है और अगर उस ज्योति की किरण हमारे जीवन में नहीं होगी, तो हमारा जीवन अंधकारमय बना रहेगा, हमारे जीवन में हीन भावना, द्वेष, झूठ, क्रोध आदि बुराईयाँ विद्यमान रहेंगी। इसलिए हमें येसु को अपने जीवन का केंद्र बनाने की जरूरत है, ताकि हमारे जीवन से यह बुराईयाँ खत्म हो जाए और हमारा जीवन प्रकाशमान हो जाये।

What is Christian Charity?

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In 1833, Frederic Ozanam, a twenty-year-old student in Paris, and some young friends of his felt inspired, together with their senior, to unite themselves in service of the poor in the most humble and discreet way and within the framework of their professional and family lives as laymen.

At the outset they felt the need to bear witness to their Christianity faith by actions rather than words. They regarded the unfortunate as their brothers and sisters, whoever they were and whatever the nature of their sufferings. In them they saw the suffering Christ. They

loved them both as men and as children of God. They recognised in them the dignity of men faced with the world and its miseries, and also their dignity as those to whom, first of all, the kingdom of God is given. In these days of the Covid – 19 and its aftermath, specially the outrage of the poorest of the poor, many have found the call of the service of one's neighbour, especially the very poor, a kind an encounter with the suffering Christ present in a poor person. During these days, people from all walks of life, along with some of our Parishioners and our Youth were able to provide food and rations to those deserving poor in the vicinity of our Parish, truly an act of Christian Charity.



Precaution is better than Cure

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“A stitch in time saves nine” is a wise saying which is referred to a hole in a cloth. This hole would certainly get bigger if not fixed in time. It means that a timely effort that will prevent more work later. It certainly means prevention is better than cure. Hence, if there is a problem then one must fix it immediately and if not fixed in time, then even more problems can arise. First of all, time is a very precious aspect of life. According to the many successful individuals time is “money”. This precious aspect of time is very limited. As we all know, there are only 24 hours in a day and also the average human life expectancy is most probably ranges from 60 to 80 years. Therefore, it certainly means that one cannot afford to waste time at all. Hence, “A stitch in time saves nine” avoids wastage of time

Secondly, another advantage of “A stitch in time saves nine” is making better decisions. It means that a person has sufficient time to try and handle a problem. Therefore a person can start to think of alternate solutions. In contrast, a person who delays problems will have a shorter period of time in making better decisions. Consequently, a person would become stressful and nervous

In the end, I would like to mention that “A stitch in time saves nine” is extremely essential to follow; it should be the code of life for everyone. Furthermore, one who follows is going to be always successful and also on the other hand one who neglects it is on the path of failure.



THE CYCLE OF LIFE

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We live in a world where change is the most perpetual concept and the most apparent change that happens around us in which we uniformly participate is the change in seasons.

These seasons are metaphors for our lives that constantly attempts to adapt to the surroundings. The hot scorching summer begins on a pleasant and happy note, but as the days pass by, it transits to dryness and leaves us in despair. Then comes rain that quenches our thirst, fills and heals the dry parts of our lives. The rain renews and rejuvenates us deeper and prepares us for the next phase. Finally, we welcome the winters towards the end of a new beginning, where we reflect on our old selves and bury the unwanted versions and memories under the layers of snow so that the past is frozen with the harsh winter winds.

During these times when we are at the peak of

hardships and crushed by pain, anger, ego, and heartbreak, our Father sends spring to flourish and nourish us. He comforts us in his time so that we may be as profuse as the good vine. He fills us with inspiration to lead our lives as an example of success and victory over the dead ends that we were being pushed towards. As we journey through these seasons, we might think that the God is punishing us, he is not listening to our prayers, and he does not care and that he is turning deaf to our needs and cry for help. We forget to realize that He is moulding and shaping us for a better tomorrow. He wants nothing but the best for us. For he is the God who rained manna in the desert, divided the Red Sea, and claimed victory over death, for we are more valuable than the birds in the sky and remember he will never forsake us.

All we have to do is trust that he will do everything well in his time.



HAVE FAITH ! GOD IS IN CONTROL!

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The outbreak of the corona pandemic has created a global crisis which has completely changed the way we live. Social distancing caused by a fear psychosis is keeping friends, relatives and even families away from each other. No one is spared. The rich, the poor, the young and the old all are living in fear of this deadly disease. Being locked up in our houses has changed our perception of life.

As adults we can understand and are bound to take all precautions for the safety of self and family. We pray to God for reprieve.

As usual it is always the little ones who are confused. If we pray why is God letting this happen in the first place? Their faiths may waver and its our duty as parents and elders to reinforce it.

Children will find it very tough to believe or trust God in such a grave and trying situation. They surely need help to deal with this situation.

HERE ARE FIVE WAYS TO HELP OUR CHILDREN TRUST AND HAVE FAITH IN GOD DURING THIS DIFFICULT TIME.

1. Remind your children that we are God's creation and He loves us more than we can think.

Read verses from the Bible that reinforces this fact. Tell them that the Bible contains God's letters to us.

2. Share the unchanging promises of God's word

Listen to an audio, show them different posts that are circulated these days with reference to the Bible.

3. Spend quality time with your children.

Now that schools are closed and children are confined to their homes make it a point to be with them and check on to see what they are doing...engage in some kind of creative activity with them.

4. Allow children to talk about the epidemic ...

Make them aware of the facts and give them a chance to express their feelings. Do not frighten them about the

consequences rather encourage them to follow guidelines to stay safe.

5. Pray purposefully.

At family Prayer time, pray for specific people, pray for those suffering, pray for the dead and pray for the doctors and health workers too.

Remind them of the song "What a friend we have in Jesus"

Talk about the linesWe should never be discouraged.... Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Finally, we all should remember that God is in control always. He takes care of everything.

READ THESE LINES FROM THE BIBLE

- "GIVE ALL YOUR WORRIES TO HIM, BECAUSE HE CARES FOR YOU" (Pet 1: 5-7)
- "I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD, I AM HOLDING YOUR RIGHT HAND. AND I TELL YOU, " DON'T BE AFRAID, I WILL HELP YOU" (Is 41:13)
- "GIVE YOUR BURDENS TO THE LORD, AND HE WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU. HE WILL NOT PERMIT THE GODLY TO SLIP AND FALL." (Ps 27:1)

RECITE THIS PRAYER DAILY

DEAR HEAVENLY FATHER,

THANK YOU FOR YOUR EVERLASTING GOODNESS. THANK YOU FOR BEING ALWAYS WITH US, HOLDING US IN THE PALM OF YOUR HAND. HELP US TO FEEL YOUR LOVING PRESENCE EVEN IN THE MIDST OF FEAR. THANK YOU FOR BEING IN CONTROL OF EVERY LITTLE DETAIL OF THE SITUATION. GIVES US CHILDREN THE STRENGTH AND COURAGE TO FIGHT AGAINST EVERY EVIL. LET YOUR WORDS OF PEACE AND CALM OVERWHELM ALL OF US.

IN JESUS' NAME , AMEN.

Corona Virus: Blessing in Disguise

Mrs. Teresa Kujur
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What a time it had come! We never expected that this day too will be seen, never thought days would come. We are on leave but can't go for holiday destination and can't enjoy it to the fullest. The weather is sizzling but can't have an ice cream. Road is empty & silent and we can't go out. The air is getting fresh and clearer but we can't enjoy it. We became so unfamiliar with the days and dates that we have to keep on putting our finger on the calendar as we are inconsistent on remembering them. We can't see anybody's smile as the mask covers the face. There was a time when we desperately waited for weekends and now weekends just don't get over.

This lockdown has made us understand the true meaning of life. This is the time when we need to introspect, think about what we need, disregarding our wants. This time can be very useful because one would be able to have a peace of mind, a good sleep and a good bonding with their family.

Everything happens for a reason and there are no accidents. The outbreak of covid-19, did have a reason too. The reason is very evident and we see it almost every day – nature. We as humans exploited nature, took it for granted and harmed the children of nature (animals, trees etc.). Had it not been corona virus we would have exploited it even more and in the end we would have been left with nothing. The nature was begging us “Save me” but we never paid any heed to it. Eventually, it found a way to save itself instinctively. These days the sky is clear and the water is pure. We witness these everyday; something, which was once seen in a blue moon.. For centuries humans have been practicing discrimination in terms of caste, gender, and religion. Corona virus has proved that all human beings are equal regardless of their caste and creed.

The current situation has shaken us, and made us understand what is actually important in our lives. It has taught us to revalue our lives. We need to see the world with a different perception. The virus did kill many, many still suffering, but we should look at the positive side, it taught us how to stay alive even without junk foods, taught us what proper hygiene is. This virus is nothing but a trial. We must thank the situation for making us appreciate the luxury we lived in. It made us realize how lost we were in the “ busy-ness”.

The virus taught human beings a vivid and profound lesson. It made us fall in love with nature again. We really should be grateful for this “enemy”. It played the role of an alarm and made us wake up from the nightmare we were living. It gave us a reminder and an empowerment. “Sometimes catching the wrong train may take us to the right destination”. We might not have a good starting to it but gradually, with time, life will take turns and bring us to where we thought would be a happy place. All we need to do is, wait and believe.

We should face this virus bravely, and should have courage for we know that God is with us. He is by our side and also in our hearts. He knows the good and the worst, all our worries and hurdles. He is our father and we are his children. He loves us. Scripture says, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”(Jn 3:16)

Be safe and let's not lose hope.

LOCKDOWN: TIME TO WALK IN FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT

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With the virus spreading many people began to spread rumors that the world is coming to an end. But the more optimists among us began to see a ray of hope in it. They saw the vision of a new world order – an opportunity to relive the moments that they longed for. The challenge was not easy as we were all asked to change our very style of living.

Where the world was battling with the deadly pandemic, I myself was stuck in a pool of emotional upheaval. Memories of my Dad began to return to me with renewed vigour. The

room in which my Dad lived for many years looked darker. His words echoed in the silence of that dark room, which numbed my heart. But a gentler voice comforted me: “Be still, and know that I am God!” (Ps 46:10).

I realized that God is now pushing me beyond my own powers. The darkness is not dark any more. Weeks of lockdown threw a fresh light into my soul. I feel spiritually renewed. It is not just God working on me, but I am working too, to bring the best out of me. “See, I am making all things new” (Rev. 21:5).



I missed the Church; I missed the Sacraments. But this situation gave me a chance to peek into my relationship with God: to know how I longed for Him; what the Sacraments meant for me. I could now connect with St. Augustine, when he said, “Our hearts are restless until it rests in you.”

As we are heading towards Pentecost, I connect myself with Mother Mary and the disciples, waiting in the upper room for ten long days, for the Power from on High. I ask for the same Power to pour down upon me and the whole world in full measure to renew our spirit that has been weakened by the Pandemic.

Home 'Churches'

Mrs. Georgina Xavier



our unfaithfulness? The Holy Spirit whispered to me: "As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live" (Eze 33:11).

Covid-19 has changed the way I look at life. When the doors to our churches are closed our homes have begun to become churches. There is a lot of worship that is happening within our homes. Members have begun to look at each other with greater respect: "You are the temple of the Holy Spirit" (1Cor 6:19). People take part in the online spiritual programmes with enthusiasm. Now the Word of God is being preached through the internet. We should all be grateful towards the Pope, the Bishops and all the priests who take great care of the faithful to keep our faith growing strong.

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23). I used to wonder, "Is God punishing us for

THIS TOO WILL PASS

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Living in this unparalleled time, when uncertainty is the mainstay, the above line brings some solace to the exhausted spirit of man.

My key takeaways of this lockdown:

Sarve Kutumbakam: the whole world is my family. Many are living up to this concept by sharing and giving generously to those less fortunate.

Realizing priorities: being grateful for the little that one has is important. Be it food, clothing or shelter and not cribbing over the unimportant.

Giving internet its due: the web has proved to be a boon keeping one and all connected. Making its productive use is in our hands especially in the current circumstances.

Finally, doctors, nurses, teachers, the government, handlers of packaging, deliverers of essentials, all these are ensuring that life continues for all. Salute to them. Narrow-mindedness only breeds hatred. Only an open mind and a large heart can overcome all evil and see the goodness in others. Then, we can make this too pass, with the help of the Lord!

LOCKED DOWN! BUT OPEN TO NEW AVENUES!

Mr. Jenson Jacob
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Oh! The Lock Down! When will it all be over? In spite of the odds, I have already begun to reap its harvest!

First of all, it meant a lot of quality interaction with my parents. Doing household works together with them was something which was never done before. Watching mummy preparing delicacies and giving her a hand and in the process learning her secret recipe was a delight.

Again, I connected with people with whom I have not interacted for more than 3-4 years. I discovered what treasure people are!

You know the best thing that has happened to me is, for the first time in Delhi I began to breathe easy. Delhi's air is a lot cleaner now. The other day I looked up to the blue sky with delight.

By the time we open up again I will have learnt a few lessons for life.

THE LOCKDOWN – NOT SO BAD AFTER ALL!

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Covid-19 pandemic has changed most lives and lifestyles. It has brought about great many changes in my life and that of my family.

I am working in Gurgaon as an assembly engineer. Both my parents are working. And my brother is doing graduation. Each one has own time schedule, which leaves us with precious little quality time to spend together. Now the lockdown has forced us to stay put inside our house 24x7. I am trying to make the best of it. In the first place, I try to involve myself as much as possible with my family. My mom taught me cooking, baking. I learnt to make Jalaibee, Muruku (South Indian

snacks) and a few other items. It is family time now.

As a family daily we gather to pray the Rosary. My brother and I have formed a two-men orchestra. At times we play Ludo. At night we watch movies on some Saints. Together with two other families we organized some amount to help feed some needy families.

But prolonged lockdown is making me lazy. I want to get back to work. I am missing the church, the Holy Mass and friends' company. Hope soon we will resume our routine with new vigour.

LOCKDOWN

Ms. Jasmitha Barretto
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Centuries ago, deadly floods threatened to strike
In pairs, humans, animals and birds alike
As inmates of Noah's Ark, for 40 days and 40 nights,
Stayed in, came out, hopefully having had no fights

It's the 21st Century; a deadly virus keeps us indoor
Outdoor freedom denied, this we all seem to abhor
Resolving to pray at home, work from home
Tis the situation, over long distances, Wuhan to Rome

Social distancing, stay home, strict government orders
"Rid unwanted things", inner voice told the hoarders
Make the best of time on hands, sort out wardrobe
Clothing the needy will bless, not the silken bathrobe

We've been leading very busy lives, fast and furious
Now streets void of humans, stray dogs are curious
Not out in the park, nor shopping or meeting friends
Some being creative, some simply twirling strands

Love amongst humans, of fresh air there's dearth
At heydays, we disregarded each other, mother earth
With no polluting emissions, skies bluer, air cleaner
Exotic birds are heard chirping, on trees now greener

Why does it always take a calamity, to do any good?
To clothe the naked, serve those who have no food?
But in this hour of crisis, goodness is
also coming to light
Some amazing people, helping the needy in their plight

I do my little bit, I also plan on
composing a song, a hymn
Cause I go not to a restaurant, nor to exercise at the gym
Not long ago we whizzed through life, as an unruly flock
Strangely now, none is looking at the calendar nor clock

A good time to read, write, draw,
paint, invent new dishes
Learn an instrument, fulfil these long overdue wishes
Restrictions on moving out for "not so necessary"
purchases
We're learning, that we can live with limited resources

At a time to be considerate towards all, our nation
Some forward graphic & non-authentic information
Doing so fuels negativity, which spreads like wild fire
Instead kindness to humanity,
should be our primal desire

Emerging from our home, the Ark,
with time to contemplate
May we unanimously agree to care for the Earth,
not desecrate
Pray this dark cloud may pass over,
showing the silver lining
Finding a humbled humanity, more caring,
creative and singing

The Redeemer



Mr. Martin Daniel
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1. Jesus born to Mary through the Holy Spirit took human flesh and became one of us.

Baptized at Jordan, tempted in the desert you defeated Satan by the word.

Jesus Lord has saved us all from our sin. Now it's for us to approach the throne of grace and find mercy.

2. Betrayed, tortured, crowned and killed on a cross, you redeemed this world.

Jesus Lord has saved us all from our sin. Now it's for us to approach the throne of grace and find mercy.

3. You're my rock and my redeemer
You poured out your spirit on us.
And you gave gifts of life to us.

We're always thankful to you for you saved us from sin.

Thank you Lord our redeemer for saving us from sin.

Jesus, Jesus is our Lord.

Let's sing together,

Jesus has saved us.

Let's sing once again,

Jesus, Jesus is our Lord.

Let's sing together,

Jesus has saved us.

We shall proclaim that,

Jesus has died for us.

Jesus, Jesus has risen.

Jesus will come again.

Everything's going to be alright!



Mr. Vijay
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Life has taken such an unexpected turn that we all can't even imagine. It is a tough time to deal with, but it's our choice to make it tough or turn the page and see the better side of it. The Coronavirus pandemic has made us cautious and alert about things in life. The things we neglected and didn't do are all falling in place. There was a time when we couldn't give time to our family, but now we are spending time with them. There were days when we just wanted to relax and watch our favourite movies on TV, now that's possible. We wanted to take out time for our hobbies and

now we can. Staying together has made us closer to God too, as many of us are praying together with our families and keeping our Christian faith alive. The pandemic has shaken us and we are locked in our homes. But, home is where all good things begin. So let's pray to God that he may be with us during this time and that we may take all the necessary precautions and follow our duties diligently during the Coronavirus pandemic.

We are all in this TOGETHER!

Fear of God

Ms. Philo Alexander

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The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge” (Pro 1:7). The Holy Bible is meant to teach us ‘the fear of the Lord!’ “And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God”. (Deut 10:12).

Dictionary describes fear as, “a distressing emotion aroused by impending danger, evil, pain, etc., whether the threat is real or imagined; the feeling or condition of being afraid.” But the ‘fear’ in the Bible generally has a positive meaning when used of God. In Hebrew the verb ‘yarn’ refers to respect or reverence when applied to God. This ‘fear’ is induced by the recognition of God’s providential care (Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning.” (Ex 20:20). Consider these words of the psalm: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments.” (Ps 111:10).

A healthy fear of God includes the fear of the consequences of disobedience. There may be times of temptation or trial when we may forget some of the better reasons for obeying God, and that is when we had better think of the consequences.

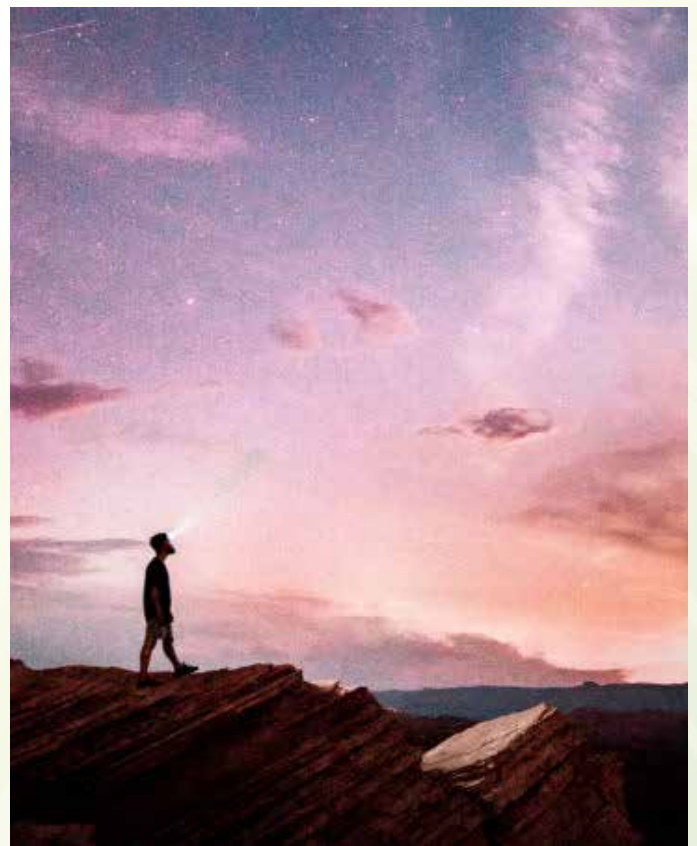
Reverence of God helps us to take Him and His beneficial laws seriously. Being in harmony with the spiritual laws that govern the universe has astounding benefits. Many of these come in this life, but the greatest benefits will be experienced in the life to come.

God’s offer of forgiveness to those who repent gives us a reason to change ourselves. It also gives us a reason to be eternally grateful and to grow in love to be more like our loving God. The reverential fear of the Lord is designed to help us grow to become more like God—to grow in love. And this growth removes any need to be terrified of God’s judgment. As the apostle John put it: “Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this

world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love” (1 Jn 4:17-18).

He rescues us from our delusions, so he may reveal the truth that sets us free. He casts us down, only to lift up again. He sits in judgment of our sin, but forgives us nevertheless. Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, but love from the Lord is its completion.

So, rather than a paralyzing terror, the positive fear of the Lord taught in the Bible is a key element in change. It helps us have a proper, humble perspective of ourselves in relation to our awesome God; it helps us in times of temptation when we need to remember the serious consequences of disobeying God; and it motivates us to become more like our loving Creator.



THE TIME HAS COME

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Scene: An ICU (the last resort) with 100% occupancy
Bed # 52: Mrs Maria, 82 yrs, history of Diabetes
Diagnosis: COVID-19

Current situation: On ventilator with fluctuating vitals struggling to maintain the Oxygen saturation. Maria without giving up on courage, fighting with herself to overcome the deadly virus and to go back to her loving husband.

Suddenly, ICU phone rings asking for emergency. A middle-aged man Johnny aged 55 is brought in. He is unable to breath due to lung congestion. Oxygen saturation is gradually falling below normal. He needs immediate intubation for ventilating the lungs to maintain the oxygen flow.

Both are suffering from acute respiratory syndrome wherein the lungs get filled up with inflammatory material blocking the oxygen to the blood stream, reducing the body's ability to take on oxygen and get rid of Carbon dioxide.

“Doctor, we are exhausted with ventilator,” says the nurse. Doctor pauses for a moment and ask his assistant to put Johnny’s bed beside Maria and prepares the table to intubate.

Nurse whispers to the Doctor, “Doctor, we do not have another ventilator. What are we going to do?”

The Doctor is silent. He shudders. He has two patients with life at threatening situation. The doctor has limited choices. He looks at the “Ventilator Deserving Chart”

Ventilator Deserving Chart

	Maria	Johnny
Age	82	55
Medical History	Diabetes for last 30 yrs.	None
Chances of recovery	Slow	Fast

The Doctor, trembling turns to Maria. He sighs! His eyes well up! He whispers into the left ear of Maria:

“Mom, I am sorry!” Maria opens her eyes and looks at her son. There is love in her eyes. Then she closes them gently. She knew that the “the time had come” for the ultimate sacrifice. Then it was just a matter of minutes. Johnny began to breathe normal. But Maria was still.

This is what happened two thousand years ago on Calvary. He knew that “the time had come”. And he gave up his life to take away our sins.

Its real....Guys...its real.

If Yahweh can give away his only begotten Son for you and me and Maria could give away her ventilator to save Johnny....Then why can't we? We can also give away everything that Our Lord has gifted us with. Why hesitate, why to take a step back, why rethink?

Let's do our part to have a meaningful life so that we are not left behind in the Kingdom of God.



खौफ

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खौफ यानी डर सृष्टि के प्रत्येक प्राणी में होता है। चाहे जीव-जन्तु हो, कीड़े-मकोड़े हो या इन्सान सभी के अंदर यह डर विद्यमान है। डर के कई कारण और प्रकार होते हैं। लेकिन खौफ या डर का केंद्र बिंदु या कहें मंजिल एक ही होता है-मृत्यु। मृत्यु ही है जो प्राणी के अंदर डर पैदा करता है।

मैं जानता हूँ, कई लोग यह कहेंगे कि हर डर का कारण मृत्यु नहीं है। कुछ डर स्वाभाविक होते हैं जो जीवन बचाने के लिए खतरे से भागने के लिए दिए जाते हैं। यह भी सत्य है। किन्तु वह स्वाभाविक खतरे का डर का कारण भी तो मृत्यु ही है और यही तो जीवन बचाता है।

संसार में डर सबसे पहले आदम से उत्पन्न हुआ। उत्पत्ति ग्रंथ अध्याय तीन में हम पढ़ते हैं कि आदम और हव्वा पाप करते हैं और छुप जाते हैं। जब ईश्वर ने आदम को पुकारा तो उसने कहा, "तेरी आवाज सुनकर मैं डर गया और छुप गया" (उत्पत्ति 3:10)। यहाँ आदम के उस डर का केंद्र भी मृत्यु था, क्योंकि ईश्वर ने कहा था कि, "यदि तुम उस भले-बुरे के ज्ञान के वृक्ष का फल खाओगे तो अवश्य मर जाओगे" (उत्पत्ति 2:17)।

डर पाप से उत्पन्न होता है तथा मृत्यु पर समाप्त होता है। जैसा कि संत पौलुस कहते हैं, "पाप का वेतन मृत्यु है" (रोमियों: 6:23)। हम डरते इसलिए हैं क्योंकि हम मृत्यु से डरते हैं और मृत्यु से इसलिए डरते हैं क्योंकि हम पापी हैं। ईश्वर की आज्ञा भंगकर हर क्षण हम पाप करते हैं। अपनी बोली से, सोच से, अपने व्यवहार से, और कर्म से हम पापी ठहराये जाते हैं।

किन्तु यह भी सत्य है कि हर डर का कारण मृत्यु नहीं होता, जैसे बदनामी का डर तथा खोने का डर। क्योंकि कोई भी व्यक्ति अपने धन-दौलत, इज्जत-शोहरत, परमप्रिय लोग और वो सभी कुछ जिन से वह अत्यंत प्रेम करता है, उसे खोना नहीं चाहता।

निर्दोष व्यक्ति को भी डर लगता है। क्योंकि हर कोई जीना चाहता है, मरना नहीं। लेकिन अफसोस की बात है कि कोई भी आत्मा के खो जाने से नहीं डरता। डर, खौफ या दहशत मनुष्य स्वयं ही उत्पन्न करता है और मृत्यु की ओर जाता है। कुछ लोग दूसरों के जीवन में खौफ पैदा करते हैं, धमकाते हैं। और वह दूसरा व्यक्ति अपने जीवन को बचाने के लिए उस से खौफ खाता है। क्योंकि मृत्यु का डर उसे आतंकित कर देता है। इसे आप स्वाभाविक डर कह सकते हैं। यहाँ डर का कारण पाप नहीं है, वरन मृत्यु है। मृत्यु का डर ही उसके जीवन की रक्षा करता है।

हम जानते हैं कि प्रभु येशु को कैसी भयानक मृत्यु दी गयी। पर मृत्यु तो पाप का दंड है और प्रभु येशु तो निर्दोष थे, तो मृत्युदंड उन्हें क्यों? बेशक, वे निर्दोष थे, पर वो मनुष्य के पाप थे, जो उन्हें इस संसार में ले आए और उन्होंने मनुष्य की मुक्ति के लिए निर्दोष होने के बावजूद मृत्युदंड को स्वीकारा। उन्होंने मृत्यु को स्वीकार कर मृत्यु पर विजय पायी और मनुष्य के मृत्यु के भय को मिटाया। अपनी मृत्यु द्वारा उन्होंने मनुष्य को बताया कि पापों से दूर रहो जिससे तुम नरक से और विनाश से बचे रहो। ईश्वर के उस कहर से बचे रहो जिसे सदोम और गोमेरा ने तथा जल प्रलय के द्वारा सृष्टि ने झेला था।

इस समय सारा विश्व कोरोना की महामारी से दहशत में है और हर कोई डरा हुआ है कि उसे कोरोना न हो जाए क्योंकि इसका होना यानी मृत्यु होना। क्योंकि इसका कोई इलाज नहीं है। यह महामारी मनुष्य के कर्मों का ही कारण है। दुःख- विपत्ति, संकट, महामारी ईश्वर की ओर से उनकी इच्छा से मनुष्य के कर्मों का दंड है। पर मनुष्य इसे मानने और समझने को तैयार नहीं है। वह लगातार ईश्वर की आज्ञाओं की अवहेलना करता जा रहा है। बल्कि यह कहता है, दुःख और सुख तो जीवन का हिस्सा है, स्वाभाविक है। बेशक, यह जीवन का हिस्सा है लेकिन यह भी

ईश्वर की इच्छा से है बल्कि, दुःख से ईश्वर की महिमा प्रकट होती है।

इस महामारी में लाखों लोगों की मृत्यु हो गई। इस का मतलब यह नहीं कि मरने वाले सभी पापी थे। मृत्यु तो स्वाभाविक है जो सब को आएगी। यह तो ईश्वर के विवेक की बात है। उसने तो सब के जीवन की गाथा पहले से ही लिख दी है। यह सब कुछ जानने के बावजूद भी मनुष्य अपने आप को सुधारने का प्रयत्न नहीं करता है। सांसारिक जीवन में इस तरह मशगूल है कि उसे ईश्वर का भी डर नहीं है।

मैं ये नहीं कहता कि डरना नहीं चाहिए, डरना चाहिए पर मृत्यु से नहीं वरन ईश्वर से और आत्मा के खो जाने के भय से। मृत्यु तो एक दिन सबको आनी है, इसके लिए हमें तैयार रहना है, अपने पापों को त्याग कर। क्योंकि "प्रभु ईश्वर यह कहता है, मैं हर एक का उसके कर्मों के अनुसार न्याय करूँगा। तुम मेरे पास लौट कर अपने सब पापों को त्याग दो। कहीं ऐसा न हो कि तुम्हारे अपराधों के कारण तुम्हारा विनाश हो जाये। अपने पुराने पापों का भार फेंक दो। एक नया हृदय और एक नया मनोभाव धारण करो। तुम क्यों मरना चाहते हो? मैं किसी भी मनुष्य की मृत्यु से प्रसन्न नहीं होता। इसलिए तुम मेरे पास लौट कर जीते रहो।" (एजेकिएल 18:30-32)।

सचमुच प्रभु हमारी मृत्यु से प्रसन्न नहीं होता। वह तो स्वयं हमारे लिए मर गए और मृत्यु पर विजय पायी। वो हमें अपने पास बुलाते हैं। पर हम पाप के, अधर्म के गर्त में फँसकर उनसे दूर भागते हैं। जब विपत्ति और महामारी आती है, तो प्रभु-प्रभु कहकर पुकारते हैं। और जब वो नहीं सुनते हैं तो हम कहते हैं कि प्रभु है ही नहीं। वह सुनता ही नहीं। लेकिन इसायस नबी कहते हैं, "प्रभु का हाथ बचाने में समर्थ है। उसका कान बहरा नहीं हैय वह सुन सकता है। किन्तु तुम्हारे अधर्म ने तुम को ईश्वर से दूर किया। तुम्हारे पापों

ने ईश्वर को तुम से विमुख कर दिया, इसलिए वह तुम्हारी नहीं सुनता।" (इसायस 59:1-2)।

मृत्यु एक कड़वा सत्य है, किंतु ईश्वर क्यों कहते हैं कि मैं तुम्हारी मृत्यु से प्रसन्न नहीं हूँ? उनका तात्पर्य शरीर की मृत्यु से नहीं किन्तु आत्मा की मृत्यु से है। आत्मा की मुक्ति ही हमारे जीवन की मुक्ति है। और वो मुक्ति प्रभु येशु के द्वारा ही मिलेगी। "जिस तरह एक ही मनुष्य के आज्ञा भंग के कारण सब पापी ठहराये गये, उसी तरह एक ही मनुष्य के आज्ञापालन के कारण सब पापमुक्त ठहराये जायेंगे" (रोमियों 5:19)। इसलिये ईश्वर ने हमें यह अवसर प्रदान किया है कि हम अपने सभी अधर्मों को त्यागकर उसकी ओर लौट चले, और अपने डर को मिटा दें। हमने पाप किया है इसलिये कष्ट तो आएँगे, किन्तु प्रभु पर भरोसा रखते हुए हमें ईमानदार बने रहना है। प्रभु कहते हैं, "तुम्हें जो कष्ट भोगना होगा, उस से मत डरो। तुम मृत्यु तक ईमानदार बने रहो और मैं तुम्हें जीवन का मुकुट प्रदान करूँगा" (प्रकाशना 2:10)।

हम प्रभु के दूसरे आगमन की बाट जोह रहे हैं, लेकिन हमें नहीं पता वह घड़ी कब आएगी। कई लोग इस समय कहते फिर रहे हैं कि संसार का अंत आ गया। ऐसी कितनी ही वीडियो इंटरनेट में मिल जाएंगी। जब—जब संसार में कोई बड़ी विपत्तियों का आतंक आता है तब ये लोग यही कहते हैं। वे तो यहाँ तक कह देते हैं कि फलां महीने की फलां तारीख को दुनिया का अंत हो जायेगा, पर होता कुछ नहीं है। ये भी तो लोगों के मन में खौफ पैदा कर रहे हैं, और लोग अपने जीवन को बचाने के प्रयास में लगे हुए हैं। चाँकि किसी को कुछ भी नहीं पता वो समय कब आएगा, इसलिए, हमें अपने आप को तैयार रखना है। क्योंकि प्रभु का कथन तो पूरा होकर ही रहेगा—"देखो, मैं शीघ्र ही आऊँगा। मेरा पुरस्कार मेरे पास है और मैं प्रत्येक मनुष्य को उसके कर्मों का प्रतिफल दूँगा। मैं आल्फा और ओमेगा हूँ" (प्रकाशना 22:12-13)।