

# KAIROS

GLOBAL

## *Fruits of a Missionary Movement*

H.E. BISHOP RAPHAEL THATTIL

ALSO ↓

*Diving  
Deep into  
Melancholic*

■ JILU CHENGAT

**CHALLENGED  
BY FAITH AND  
COMMITMENT**

■ SHOY THOMAS



## MARY, MY BELOVED MOTHER



O Mary, Virgin of expectation and Mother of hope, revive the spirit of Advent in your entire Church, so that all humanity may start out anew on the journey towards Bethlehem, from which it came, and that the Sun that dawns upon us from on high will come once again to visit us, Christ our God. Amen.

# EDITOR'S ROOM



DR. CHACKOCHAN J NJAVALLIL



*THIS, I THOUGHT WOULD TAKE HIS LIFE ON A DIFFERENT COURSE. BUT TWO YEARS AFTER HE STARTED WORKING, HE QUIT HIS JOB AND IS NOW UNDERGOING FORMATION IN A SEMINARY.*

## FERTILE SEEDBED OF VOCATIONS

**H** He was deeply involved in the youth ministry for several years and was considered a mature, efficient and dependable leader. On the academic front too, he was rather good and it came as a pleasant surprise the news of his qualifying the tough exam to become a college professor in India. But the real surprise came when I called to tell him about upcoming vacancies in some of the colleges. He shared that he was going through a process of discernment regarding a call to priesthood. Few months later, he joined a seminary that unlike others, is focussed on silence and detachment to the world – this so contrary to his prolific leadership skills, programmes and travel, etc. from his previous avatar.

God works in mysterious ways in the lives of his beloved, attracting them to be his own.

At my college, there are umpteen number of activities happening every day, and the easiest thing for a student is to skip the weekly prayer meeting. He was a post-graduate student but he always made sure never to miss the prayer meeting and would encourage several others also to be regular participants. Though he had expressed his interest to join the seminary and become a priest, I thought that the numerous distractions of campus would persuade him to give up that idea. Immediately after completing the course, he got campus-placed into a company with a reasonably good salary. This, I thought would take his life on a different course. But two years after he started working, he quit his job and is now undergoing formation in a seminary.

Long back I had a dear friend who returned from the seminary. I never asked nor do I know why he discontinued his studies there but even after, he was much involved in the youth movement and in other Church-related activities. That was a time when the prejudice against seminary-returnees was pretty severe. His younger brother also was quite involved in youth activities. After a few years I came to know that his younger brother joined a seminary. I even had the privilege of attending his ordination.

I believe that everyone who has been considerably involved in the Jesus Youth movement will have several such anecdotes to share. Over a period of time it seems that Jesus Youth has become a fertile seedbed of vocations to priesthood. Some estimate that there could be hundreds who are undergoing formation in seminaries and dozens who have completed it and serving as priests.

What exactly in Jesus Youth contributes/supports our youngsters to discover the call to priesthood? Hope that the various sharings in this issue will help us gain a deeper understanding about that.

May God continue to shower his blessings on this beautiful movement and may many more youth be able to receive and nurture their call through it.

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*I have called you by name: you are mine. Isaiah 43:1*

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# ASK



FR. BITAJU

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➤ **What purpose does hell serve? If it is punishment for sinful actions, shouldn't it be used for correctional purposes?**

First of all, it is important to know what really God wills about each one of us, especially when we fall short of God's expectations. St Peter makes it clear when he says, *The Lord is not ... wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance* (2 Peter 3:9). The Book of Wisdom further states that *God did not make death, and he does not delight in the death of the living. For he created all things that they might exist* (1:13-14). *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* further states that 'God wills that all people will be saved and become one with him.' The Eucharistic liturgy of the Church daily prays that all may seek and find God and that his mercy may draw everyone into eternal life (CCC 1037).

Now, the purpose of hell can be understood best when we come to know what hell is. Hell is the state of eternal separation from communion with God and the blessed in heaven (CCC 1033). God does not send anyone to hell. It is a choice made by each one. God gave us the freedom to choose good or evil. Thus, God necessarily allows each person to accept him or reject him.

Those who die after willfully and definitively rejecting God and his salvific grace – often by violating his Commandments in a grievous manner and then refusing repentance – place themselves in hell, the

state of eternal self-exclusion from his presence. Therefore, the souls in hell are those who die unrepentant of mortal sin by refusing the love and mercy of God until the end. Jesus described hell as 'fire' and 'darkness' where the damned will *weep and gnash their teeth* (Luke 13:28). Thus, the souls in hell suffer separation from God even as they wallow in hatred of him (CCC 1035-1036).

To die in mortal sin, that is, without repentance and seeking refuge in the merciful love of God, implies a willful choice of the person to be separated from God. And God respects our freedom and will not force us to choose him or abide by his will (CCC 1033-1034).

While a person is alive, the justice of God ensures that he experiences the pain of his wrong choices and the fruits of his right choices. This gives umpteen opportunities for a person to correct oneself. But there is an end to everything. Just as a day has to end, a journey has to end, our life also has to end. So, it is our choice to be like the wise virgins or the foolish virgins. Thus, it is clear that the purpose of hell is not correctional for the sins committed. It is a choice one makes by stubbornly choosing to remain unrepentant till the end of one's life.



YOUCAT 53

## WHAT IS HELL?

**Our faith calls 'hell' the condition of final separation from God. Anyone who sees love clearly in the face of God and, nevertheless, does not want it decides freely to have this condition instead. [1033-1036]**

Jesus, who knows what hell is like, speaks about it as the 'outer darkness' [Matthew 8:12]. Expressed in our terms, it is cold rather than hot. It is horrible to contemplate a condition of complete rigidity and hopeless isolation from everything that could bring aid, relief, joy, and consolation into one's life.

DR. KOCHURANI JOSEPH

## Prayer Intentions December

### Volunteer Not-for-Profit Organisations

We pray that volunteer non-profit organisations committed to human development find people dedicated to the common good and ceaselessly seek out new paths to international cooperation.



# Pope talk



*The vice of digital pornography weakens the soul; the Catechism of the Catholic Church describes pornography as a grave offense that injures the dignity of its participants, and perverts the intimate giving of spouses to each other.*

*Entrepreneurs are prophets to transform the economy as we are living in an era of notorious economic and social imbalances.*



**The main thing is not to let the evil one steal our hope.**

*For those who have the desire to do well, sadness is an obstacle with which the tempter tries to discourage. As soon as we feel boredom or sadness, we will never be able to complete anything.*

*Dear young people, I invite you to register for World Youth Day, in Lisbon in August 2023 in which, after a long period of separation, we will rediscover the joy of fraternal embrace between peoples and between generations.*

*The more we descend with humility, the more God raises us up; to rise towards him descend within ourselves, with an honest outlook upon our frailties and interior poverty.*

*Our life is the most precious book that is given to us, a book that unfortunately many do not read; or rather they do so too late, before dying. St Augustine, had understood the book of life by rereading his life.*

# JESUS YOUTH



**Dr Edward Edezhath**, one of the pioneers of Jesus Youth, gives us a glimpse of the growth of the movement.

## Participation begins by listening to different voices



'At this stage, gathering youth can be risky. They want only fun and play, not spirituality. But, even if we try no youth would come. And those who come will create problems.' One priest spoke up strongly and many others supported this note of caution. The group was discussing if we should have a youth convention or not. This is from one of my early memories of starting a Charismatic Renewal youth ministry in the state, which eventually became Jesus Youth.

In early May 1978, a letter came from Fr Fio from Mumbai suggesting that the newly constituted Charismatic team of Kerala, as their first step, have a large youth gathering. Later that month all senior leaders met at Thrissur to discuss the matter. As I hinted earlier, most of them were against the idea. Only three or four of us were youth and we did not even have the confidence to express our earnest wish to gather our friends. Sitting close to one another we could only pray amidst the onslaught of the 'cautious wisdom'.

Then, with his gentle beaming smile, Fr Justin raised his hand. 'Look at these lovely youth.' Pointing to our little group, he said. 'If we can have a hundred like them, how wonderful it would be.' Fr Thuruthimattom spoke

next. 'The Lord has some special plans with our youth, and he will surely use their enthusiasm.' Then someone suggested, 'Let us pray for a while.' A little time of praise and then from here and there people started giving out messages. All of them were positive assurance from the Lord, speaking of bright future and abundance of harvest. Sr Cleopatra spoke up, 'It is clear that the Lord wants us to gather youth.'

You can imagine the joy we experienced seeing the Lord's intervention and the sea change in the group. Someone suggested to form a youth team. Three of us were nominated. I was asked to go around to see if we can get at least a hundred youth for the gathering that Fr Fio proposed.

Today when I look back this was one of the numerous occasions in the history of Jesus Youth when the Holy Spirit guided the community through a synodal process.

### **PARTICIPATION IS KEY TO SYNODALITY**

The Universal Church is now reflecting on synodality. Synod is a process of 'journeying together'. The Church is to be synodal, and so the core spirit of the Church as well as every community in it is to be synodal. As we look back into

the history of Jesus Youth movement, we realise how the Spirit of God has been teaching us the dynamics of synodality.

Synodal process happens in a community setting and its outcome is a renewed sense of mission, but central to this process is a participative approach. What then is participation? It is being actively involved in or the action of taking part in something. We immediately think of participation in the life of a community or taking one's share in the daily responsibilities of a family. But most important of all, participation means people have a part in the decisions that affect their lives.

### **HARKENING TO THE 'STILL SMALL VOICE'**

In the first book of Kings, Prophet Elijah waits for the Lord but does not find him in the storm, earthquake, or fire, but only through a still small voice. This image becomes important in the synodal process. What does it signify? Faced with a challenge, problem or question a group of Christians gather seeking solutions or the Lord's guidance about it. In these meetings we often hear big ideas and strong voices, but often the way forward is revealed from unexpected quarters through 'still small voices'.

How do we reach these stirrings





**Faced with a challenge, problem or question a group of Christians gather seeking solutions or the Lord's guidance about it. In these meetings we often hear big ideas and strong voices, but often the way forward is revealed from unexpected quarters through 'still small voices'.**

of the Holy Spirit? A conversion from 'what we have always done' and our big ideas to 'His ways' is important. An important part of this search is encouraging everyone to speak out. We have to tell the rebellious ones and the quiet ones 'don't hesitate; speak what is in your heart' and slowly new paths open up.

#### **PARTICIPATION IN LIFE AND MISSION BEGINS HERE**

An attitude of 'we leaders know and will tell you and you follow us' is the big enemy of the growth of loving communities and a sense of mission. We call this attitude 'elitism' or 'clericalism'. Vatican's document on

synodality says, 'An ecclesial mentality shaped by synodal thinking joyfully welcomes and promotes the grace in virtue of which all the baptised are qualified and called to be missionary disciples . . . avoiding the temptation of an excessive clericalism which keeps them [lay people] away from decision-making' (# 104).

Group leaders having a synodal mentality realise the significance of participation of every person in the group and this leads to effective community building and formation of missionary disciples. This is the secret of missionary dynamism in Jesus Youth groups. But where is the starting point of this process? Basically, it is participative decision making and the path to this is seeking everyone's ideas and opinions and giving freedom and encouragement to express them in the group.

#### **WITH RESPECT AND LOVE**

My Jesus Youth journey began soon after my school days. Then, we had never heard of 'synodality', yet we had numerous opportunities to gather, seek the Lord's will and take decisions together. I was very well conscious at that time of my own inexperience and

the expertise those bigwigs among whom I was sitting. But that did not stop me from being impatient for change. My great blessing was that those giants around me humbly bent down to ask my opinions respectfully and listened carefully to immature ideas. This in turn helped me to grow, build close relationships and empowered me to take risks in mission. In brief this participative attitude is at the heart of the synodal process. The discernment meeting of 1978 decided to give the youth a chance. The condition was that if we could get a hundred youth to come together, we would have the programme at the end of that year. A sum of ₹ 500 was set apart for my travel around to consult youth groups. The outcome was unbelievable: during the six months that followed we could forge together a network of hundreds of young people. For the December conference, not a hundred but eight hundred youth came.

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Dr. Edward Edezhath, is a retired professor from St. Albert's College, Ernakulam. He lives with his wife Audrey in Kochi, India.

EXPERIENCE



# LESSONS FROM THE LORD'S MARK

What does a doctor do when confronted with one's own serious illnesses? **Dr Sherin John** shares lessons she learnt in faith and in being a doctor.

**T**he papillary carcinoma diagnosis changed my life and body forever. I was immediately thrown into a medical vortex. Being an MBBS student at Medical College, Trivandrum, I knew that science was behind almost everything but the journey I went through helped me realise certain life incidents are way beyond mere science. With that let me tell you what exactly happened in my life.

During my third year of MBBS, I felt a small swelling on my neck. Such a teeny-weeny one that many of the post-graduate surgeons I consulted said there could be no trace of nodules, and some even made fun of me saying it was just part of my 'third-year syndrome' and whatnot! Immediately, I dropped the plan of examining it further thinking the same. Meanwhile, I was an active member of a Jesus Youth prayer group. We were guided by so many spiritual elders who were none other than our senior doctors. One of them was blessed with the gift of prophecy.

Well, on the day I completed my house-surgery, we had a winding prayer session before leaving Medical College. Right after the prayer, the elder I mentioned above asked if I had thyroid

issues, to which I confidently said no. But then he 'prophesied' that I would have to undergo a thyroidectomy later in life.

I was perplexed at first but later on, I somehow began to feel like it was a message from the Almighty.

That elder was so particular about getting my thyroid checked. Accordingly, I consulted surgeons once again, this time with a weight in my heart though. Out of the three I consulted, one of them noticed the presence of a small nodule. Well, I consider the privilege of having these many consultations only because I myself was a doctor! Wasn't that a part of God's plan again? Otherwise I'd have definitely missed out on this tiny little bulge. Finally decided on having an USG (ultrasound). The conclusion being a 2 cm nodule. But then the pathologist at the medical college struggled pretty hard to find the nodule while carrying out my FNAC (fine needle aspiration). The conclusion that came after two long and struggling attempts of FNAC in fact was thyroiditis!

I ran straight with my FNAC report to my elder and asked him right away, 'Who on Earth will carry out a thyroidectomy for thyroiditis?!' He remained poised for a few seconds and said once again, but this time resolutely that I would undergo

thyroidectomy because only that would heal my actual ailment. I didn't want to doubt God this time. He advised me to consult the doctors at RCC (Regional Cancer Centre), Trivandrum.

Even at RCC, I was initially made fun of, as nothing significantly clinical could be found. Seeing me standing my ground, they agreed to take an FNAC after thoroughly studying my USG report. The FNAC result stated papillary carcinoma... The Lord's messenger was absolutely right. How could he be wrong... for he was sent by the Way and the Truth, the Lord Almighty! Thyroidectomy had turned out to be the only way to cure my ailment just as the man prophesied.

Well, I was absolutely at peace because this was a diagnosis made by the Almighty and I trusted it as his plan completely and that it would be the best blessing I could ever ask for! I remained hopeful regarding the journey ahead because with the Lord on my side, the whole process was going to be bearable. And I didn't doubt this at all.

And when all my friends started prepping for their PG entrance tests, I was left with no choice but to be at RCC and prepare myself for the upcoming surgery. Days weren't easy at all. But I

could experience the Lord's love the most during those days and felt as if I was being carried on the mighty shoulders of the Lord.

After three long months I came back to the hostel and began preparations for the exam with limited physical strength yet unbeatable faith. Slowly, indeed very slowly, I tried to get my life back on track. But the moment I thought I was ready to pour the necessary fuel to my God-given second chance in a more productive and hopeful manner, life threw its next surprise for which I was simply unprepared. I happened to notice a swelling that appeared, disappeared, reappeared and again disappeared, all within a few hours. I rushed to meet my surgeon, who on hearing this labelled me apprehensive and added, doctors are actually the worst patients.

There, exactly at that point, I learnt something truly important, something mentioned nowhere in any of the medical books I held close to my heart: what a doctor should not be. From his response I realised how carefully I, as a doctor, should pay attention to even the most insignificant concerns of a patient who comes with a lot of hope to me – that I should open-heartedly lend an ear to what they have to share.

Well, my body had been continually loaded with various kinds of antibiotics for about six months that I even wondered if it was actually my so-called paranoia! Things went on this way until there was a visibly large swelling. I got it tested and the report stated 'metastatic node pressing on major neck vessels'. On receiving the report I contacted RCC and they called me up for a review. This case was kept at the tumour board of RCC for a discussion. The doctors there discussed my case in front of me detailing all the prognosis without even thinking that I was a doctor by profession. I had to forcefully take those conclusions with a pinch of salt. This made me realise how prudent I had to be when I break unfavourable news to my patients

And today when my patients say we simply just love coming and meeting you because that itself takes a major share of our diseases away. Ah! Thanks to all that I have been through. Moreover, I'll

never tire of glorifying the Lord. Only he could take me through tougher paths to toughen me up and make me wiser by helping me understand what it takes to be a true healer.

Getting back to the point from which I diverted, I had to undergo a second sitting neck dissection for the pathology report which turned out to be 'suture granuloma'. It wasn't a metastatic spread but an allergy I developed to the suture material used previously. And while being bombarded with a number of hospital visits, this time for my exploratory surgery, what I finally earned was a year's loss...

I had to watch my friends get into their post-graduate courses while I had to just wait and prepare patiently a year more to join my MD course, that too as a junior to my friends. I understood how one feels left out. But then again the Lord miraculously intervened in my life – I learned that I was called to be an ophthalmologist. To be frank, it was one of the specialities I hated the most.

During my preparations which lasted almost a year, I continued praying to God not to make me an ophthalmologist! I cracked the entrance test with reasonably good rank and could actually choose any speciality I needed but I chose the one I disliked – ophthalmology! But now after a decade's practice, I consider it the best choice I made. I still look with wonder at how the Lord knew me more than I knew myself!

Looking back, I guess I somehow got acquainted with surgeries, given that I underwent a total of four surgeries under GA excluding my three Caesarean-sections: two thyroid sessions followed by a laparoscopy for endometriosis, treatment for infertility – almost six cycles with no result... and ultimately when they suggested IVF, I trusted in the Lord's time rather than taking a step to artificially create a baby. Six months later, without any treatment and with the immense power of prayer, I conceived. And since there were many more lessons the Lord wanted to teach me, I came across the news of having lost that child, exactly two months later.

My PG days after this turned hopeless and traumatic, a pain so intense that I

**I had to watch my friends get into their post-graduate courses while I had to just wait and prepare patiently a year more to join my MD course, that too as a junior to my friends. I understood how one feels left out.**

couldn't bear at all. My teachers accused me of being absent-minded without making an effort to understand, leaving me with yet another life lesson, how a teacher should not be! Trials after trials, faith tests after faith tests, after three months I conceived my first angel, Jonathan and then Jayden spontaneously; with this God, the creator had shut the mouth of those who said that I was barren... teaching me so many lessons in between.

My mother-in-law always wanted us to have a girl in addition to the boy(s) we have. But on a practical note, after Jayden, both my professional and family situations weren't that manageable and I wasn't ready for a third baby. I even had intense abdominal pain during menstruation a year prior to this. Taking into account the severity of my pain, I consulted my best friend, a leading gynaecologist and infertility consultant. She examined me and concluded that



I had severe endometriosis. Jokingly, she said that my mother-in-law better abandon her dreams of having a granddaughter, as my uterus was too weak to conceive.

About three months later during a prayer session, my elder friend told me that I would be blessed with a third child, that too a girl. I strongly objected it, keeping in mind the medical aspects; the thought that having two itself was driving me crazy!

A week later, I surprisingly came to know that I was pregnant... God has been so, so great, I thought, and thanked him.

Well in life, joy and woe are woven fine. Times of trial never ended with such joyful news.

When we went for our third month scan, the hospital put forth the possibility of our third one being a Down syndrome baby. I was 'advised' to think of the consequences and terminate the baby. But how could it be, I thought. I wept

like a child in front of the Lord. I poured out my heart before Him. I said, 'I can't handle any more adversity. If this is your plan, please touch the little one growing inside my womb and heal it completely for you are capable of it.' Please don't let this happen the other way. I kept weeping. And I kept trusting.

The next day, after doing some thorough research, we went to another hospital. The scan was repeated there and it came out normal. And today we have our precious darling, Hazel, standing as a firm answer to all of our wavering faith, proving nothing is impossible for the Almighty!

Back then I wondered why I had to undergo an unnecessary second thyroid surgery. But today I believe the second scar that looks uglier compared to the first one carries plenty of clarifications than a normal thyroidectomy scar actually would. It has become an easier way to share with people the mightiest healer I

ever know.

I'm thankful for all of my experiences. I learnt numerous difficult lessons about who I am and what I need... how incapable I am... how compassionate I, as a doctor and moreover as a human being, ought to be. I learnt about my resilience and, in turn, my limits. Above all, I learnt how to be submissive to God. The scar on my neck is not just a surgical cut, rather it's the Lord's mark, which when closely observed reads, 'you're fearfully and wonderfully made, and that you're my precious child.'

---

Dr Sherin John is an ophthalmologist. She lives with her husband and three children in Kottayam, India.

FAITH & REASON



# Fine-Tuning Argument

The Existence of God Part 3



In this third part, **Aby Jacob** explains the fine-tuning argument for the existence of God.

**T**he existence of God is foundational to constructing a systematic defense for the absolute truth. If God does not exist, making a case for the Christian faith is meaningless. In previous articles, I introduced two cosmological arguments for the existence of God as the Cause and Necessary Sufficient Reason for the existence of the universe. This article aims to present another argument known as Intelligent Design. Through these articles, my goal is to present a robust cumulative case for God's existence without appealing to Scripture. I hope this may help you develop an intellectually rigorous faith in the absolute truth.

The existence of God is foundational to building a positive case for theological truths. If God does not exist, it is a waste of time trying to defend any matters related to God. But if God exists, it matters more than any other thing in the world because our life's existence, meaning, value, purpose, and eternal destiny are dependent on him. My previous articles attempted to present several classical arguments for the existence of God. Perhaps you think, 'why am I giving more and more arguments for God?' By giving multiple arguments for God's existence, I aim to build an unshakable foundation to construct further a robust systematic defense for the truth of the Christian faith. I hope you will pay attention to all these reasons as we continue this journey of knowing the truth with greater clarity. Before I deal with this article's specific topic, I like to summarise the previously presented arguments for God's existence as follows.

We have learned that the universe did not have to exist necessarily. It could have been nothing at all. Since the universe exists instead of nothing at all, it requires a Necessary and Sufficient Reason for its existence, which must be God. Additionally, we have learned that the universe had a finite beginning which requires a Causal Agent that transcends time, space, matter, and energy. Moreover, we have seen that every complex and specified design points to an Intelligent Agent. With all these reasons and evidence that points to the Creator, I want to direct your mind to another remarkable argument for God's existence from design in the operation of the universe (fine-tuning argument).

We live in a vast universe. Every human being appreciates the beauty of nature. It is beautiful to gaze at the night sky experiencing a sense of marvel and astonishment, seeing the stars, the moon, the planets, and all other visible objects moving through the solar system. People travel worldwide to experience nature's wonders, even though most people do not know how nature functions. On the other hand, scientists who study the cosmos aim 'to unveil the inner workings of nature, the rules, and properties.'<sup>i</sup> Consequently, the results continue to give mind-blowing data of fine-tuning in the universe's operation in order for advanced life to be possible on the planet Earth as if the universe is placed on a razor edge for that possibility of life.

It is important to note that when physicists use the term 'fine-tuning', they do not mean whether a fine-tuner exists or not. 'Fine-tuning' is a metaphor

which is a technical term in physics that refers to the contrast between a wide range of possibilities and a narrow range of a particular outcome or phenomenon<sup>ii</sup> Philosopher William Lane Craig defines 'fine-tuning' as follows:

By 'fine-tuning', one means that a small deviation from the actual values of the constants and quantities in question renders the universe life-prohibiting or, alternatively, that the range of life-permitting values is extremely narrow in comparison with the range of assumable values.<sup>iii</sup>

According to the *anthropic principle*, the universe appears fine-tuned for the existence of human life. Astronomy and physics show that the emergence of humans and human civilisation requires physical constants, laws, and properties in a narrow range. This razor-edge fine-tuning applies to the entire universe and the local features of the galaxy, the solar system, and the planet earth. Many scientists have pondered this question, 'Is there life outside the planet Earth?' This question encouraged many scientists to search for extraterrestrial planets. The exoplanet research has contributed to our understanding of the nature and design of our solar system's planets. It became clearer that our solar system is incredibly fine-tuned, that advanced life is possible on Earth. It is also clear that no other planets in the solar system can support advanced life. In his book, *How to Find a Habitable Planet*, NASA's Geoscientist James Kasting points out that another habitable planet has not yet been discovered in 20 years of search. In his book, *The Creator and the Cosmos*, Astrophysicist Hugh Ross states, 'the probability for finding a planet or rock anywhere in the universe with the capacity to support long-lasting microbial physical life, independent of divine miraculous intervention, has shrunk from 10-53 to 10-144 to 10-556.'<sup>iv</sup>

All the evidence points out that humanity is the central theme of the cosmos. The more astronomers look at the data, the more apparent it becomes that many features must physically be fine-tuned with great precision to accommodate human life. A simple example is that if the Earth were closer or away from its position from the Sun,

advanced life would not be possible. Earth is located in a habitable zone (also called the Goldilocks zone). In the book, *The Privileged Planet*, Astronomer Guillermo Gonzalez and Philosopher Jay Richards present the widely recognised fine-tuning factors. Ross points out that the Earth is prepared for physical life through many finely tuned characteristics of our galaxy cluster, galaxy, star, planet, planetary partners, collider, moon, and belts of asteroids and comets.<sup>v</sup> He also lists hundreds of fine-tuning parameters.<sup>vi</sup> Every month, it is possible to see a growth in fine-tuning parameters in scientific findings. Scientific evidence in support of the anthropic principle fills several books. All research astronomers agree that the universe manifests exquisite fine-tuning for advanced life to be possible. Where does the scientific discovery of fine-tuning point us towards?

#### **Fine-Tuning Requires a Designer**

When philosophers study the information from the scientific data, a proper interpretation can conclude that there must be a 'Fine-Tuner' behind the operation of the universe because all the researches point to an Intelligent Agent. There are three options to choose from, to explain the fine-tuning features. Either fine-tuning is due to chance, necessity, or design. Chance and necessity cannot bring fine-tuning of this precision, given the finite cosmic beginning and features of the universe. The only option left is design. By understanding many spectacular examples of fine-tuning in nature, Physicist Paul Davies exclaimed, 'the impression of design is overwhelming.'<sup>vii</sup> Design points to a Designer. What can we infer about the Designer, then? After tackling several objections to fine-tuning and Designer, Philosopher Douglas Groothuis writes,

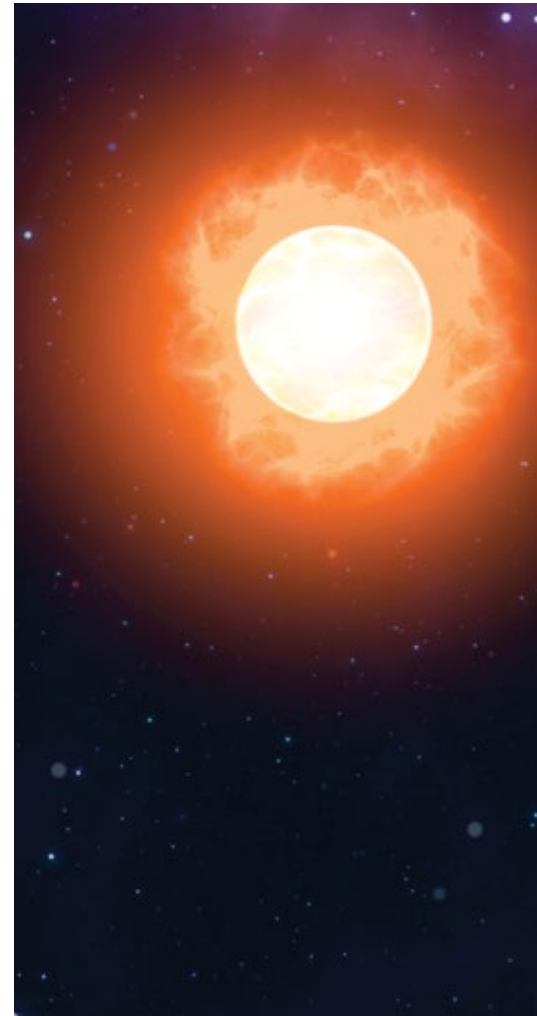
'This Designer is...singular, outside of the universe (transcendent), a personal agent (having a mind to conceive the fine-tuning and the will to bring it about), and immensely powerful (given the complexity and scope of the universe).'

<sup>viii</sup>

From different viewpoints, the best inference for the Designer is the God of the Bible.

Are There More Evidence for God?

There are wide varieties of arguments



**All the evidence points out that humanity is the central theme of the cosmos. The more astronomers look at the data, the more apparent it becomes that many features must physically be fine-tuned with great precision to accommodate human life. A simple example is that if the Earth were closer or away from its position from the Sun, advanced life would not be possible.**





for the existence of God other than a few I have demonstrated. Other arguments include the Moral Argument, the Ontological Argument, the Five Ways of St Thomas Aquinas, many forms of Teleological Arguments, etc. The reason for the theistic God comes from various converging lines of evidence. So far, with limited space and time, I have tried to lay a foundation by establishing the existence of God through sound reasoning. If you would like to explore more on this topic, many online resources are available. Also, see the materials I recommend in the different articles. Now I want to shift the gear to move forward to deal with some other challenging questions and significant topics as we continue this journey of faith and reason. May the truth pierce through your heart like a two-edged sword to transform you into a powerful witness of the light, glory, and knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in

a world filled with evil and darkness. May the truth shine and prevail in you and through you! Amen!

#### Recommended Books:

Hugh Ross, *Why The Universe Is The Way It Is*, 2008, and *The Creator and The Cosmos: How the Latest Scientific Discoveries Reveal God*, 2018.

Normal Geisler and Frank Turek, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*, 2004.

#### References

i Geraint F. Lewis and Luke A. Barnes, *A Fortunate Universe: Life in a Finely-Tuned Cosmos* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 1.

ii Lewis and Barnes, *A Fortunate Universe*, 04.

iii William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics*, 3rd ed. (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2008), 58.

iv Hugh Ross, *The Creator and the Cosmos: How the Latest Scientific Discoveries Reveal God* (Covina, CA: RTB Press, 2018), 219.

v Ross, *The Creator and the Cosmos*, 217.

vi I recommend the website ([reasons.org](http://reasons.org)), where the researchers list the growing number of fine-tuning parameters. Also, see the books by Hugh Ross, *Why the Universe Is the Way It Is* and *The Creator and the Cosmos*.

vii Paul Davies, *The Cosmic Blueprint*, (United States: New York, Simon and Schuster, 1988), 203.

viii Douglas R. Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2011), 264-65.

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**Aby Jacob** was born and raised in Kerala, India. He is currently pursuing an MA in Philosophy and a Certificate in Scientific Apologetics at Southern Evangelical Seminary (USA). He dedicates his life to defending the Christian faith and answering people's honest questions about God, life, and the world.

## UP CLOSE

# Challenged by Faith and Commitment

As his term comes to a close, the current JY International Coordinator, Shoy Thomas, in a conversation with **Anu Pinheiro**, looks back on his beginnings in Jesus Youth, his continued journey with the Lord and the various responsibilities he has held along the way.

**S**hoy Thomas in a nutshell is a pragmatic, no-nonsense, down-to-earth guy and it has been my joy to work with him in the Jesus Youth movement across the years. Taking charge as leader and team builder, I have seen how he takes the time to observe before making his opinions known rather than speaking out the first thing that comes to his mind. These and other such qualities have endeared him to the movement as it entrusted him with several responsibilities across the years. The Lord has a special plan for him and as Shoy spoke of his faith life and mission, I am convinced that there's a lot more in store.

## Something about yourself.

I am Shoy Thomas and I am married to Chinchu Maria Francis. I was born and raised in Bangalore, India and got a Jesus Youth exposure from there. My parents have recently moved to Kerala and my sister continues to live in Bangalore with her family.

My first encounter with the Jesus Youth movement was through a campus meet organised in 1999. To be honest, I was far from impressed by it and decided not to attend any more Jesus Youth programmes again. But my close friends

in Bangalore were keen on follow-up and somehow, they managed to take me back to Jesus Youth groups. In 2000, they convinced me to attend another Jesus Youth retreat. This second programme did not bring any radical change in me either, but the good thing was that through it, I made several good friends who motivated me to live a life of prayer. After that retreat, we started a prayer meeting at Christ University and I was part of a five-member team in charge of this. This brought me closer to the movement. Initially, it was the fellowship that motivated me to be regular for prayer meetings; I made it a point never to miss a meeting.

Later it became a conviction for me – of my call to the responsibility of evangelisation. I came to the realisation that God loves me and is calling me to his evangelistic mission. The small prayer meetings, sometimes on the terraces of my friends' houses, deepened my God experience and moulded the missionary in me. I remember having powerful God experiences even while playing with my friends on the street, on the football ground, and in the informal interactions in the campuses.

## Thoughts and reactions on getting chosen as the International Coordinator.

There were many big and small responsibilities entrusted to me before I became the International Coordinator. I was a part of the Christ College Core Team, Bangalore Campus Team, Karnataka Campus Team and later became its Coordinator in 2004. I was chosen as the Karnataka Council Coordinator in 2009. I was totally surprised when I got elected as the National Coordinator of Jesus Youth India in 2013. This responsibility needed me to take a full time commitment. I was initially reluctant to take up the responsibility. But I was reminded of Mathew 6:33 (*Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you*). Taking a three-year full-time commitment as National Coordinator seemed extremely unrealistic to me, but the reminder from Scripture gave me the grace to take up this responsibility. Later when I got elected as the International Coordinator in 2018, it once again convinced me that it was not one's capability but the call that empowers us. The way the Lord led me through incredible circumstances strengthened my convictions and helped me respond positively to the call of international coordinator.

## Some of the challenges along the way.

I am so grateful to recollect and testify how miraculously God led me through the Covid period – full of uncertainties and confusion. Even personal problems got amplified. Gradually I witnessed how new challenges turned into unusual blessings in ministry as well as in my personal life. Thankfully I got ample time for introspection and correction which helped me focus and work deeply on personal holiness and spirituality. It was refreshing for me. I completed my formation course on time and altogether could bring discipline and order to my life and ministry activities.

It was during the pandemic that we lost some of our legendary leaders like Fr Cheria Nereveetil, Sr Thresiamma, and a few others, which was very painful for me. Beyond the pain, it gave me strong

convictions about the importance of living a holy life on this planet before our time comes.

As the world is returning to normalcy post Covid, the Jesus Youth movement is also finding new beginnings with deeper convictions and newer styles. We have adapted to a hybrid working pattern which is adding to the grace.

### Anything you would do differently.

Nothing different I would say as it was not me but God who worked through me. All these are His plans which were perfectly executed through me. I don't think that God's plan needs a plan B and no plan could be better than God's. I praise God for his perfect plan being executed through me in my life and in the movement.

### Family's support and viewpoint.

Chinchu, my wife is the perfect gift that I have received. She was already a Jesus Youth before our marriage and I would say she is a better Jesus Youth than me in many ways. She is the coordinator of the Jesus Youth household we are part of and she is very much aware of the responsibilities and

commitments of an international coordinator. She is a silent supporter of all my activities.

During my earlier years of Jesus Youth ministering, I couldn't suitably convince my family and they were concerned about my studies and future while I spent time for Jesus Youth activities. I failed to be a witness at home. But later they noticed the positive changes in my life and personality and the good friendships acquired overwhelmed them. They were happy that I remained close to God and the Holy Catholic Church but at the same time, they had concerns regarding my personal life which were timely answered by God and I count my wedding with Chinchu as the greatest of all gifts.

### Experience of meeting people from across the world.

I passed out of college in 2005. The world has changed radically in all fields over these years. Among all the good changes around the globe, it's a bit alarming to notice that religious affiliation of youngsters has come down drastically. Youth today do not want to be associated with anything that is religious and they confine

themselves to a personal space, which I don't think is a positive sign.

The youth now centre their lives on many questions including, 'Who is God?', 'Does God exist?', 'Who am I?', 'What is the purpose of my life?' or 'How can I contribute more to society?' The radical change that happens to such a person from a strong encounter experience makes more fruits than otherwise. The encounter could be from the Church, prayer, community, Word of God, or even from friendships, acts of kindness, hospitality, creativity, art, or music, and the kind of change it makes is immense. It is pure happiness to see and witness these changes.

It's very important to have mentors to accompany them in their faith journey to live a radically challenging and joyful life, becoming strong witnesses of the Gospel. The life of Ajna George portrays this journey beautifully. It was such an inspiration to know people like Ajna. Many silent, unsung heroes like Ajna are there in all parts of the world. I was many-a-time surprised to see the strong faith and Christ-centred lives of people in developed countries, who live lives of abundance and are free to do anything they wish. Similarly, nothing stops many brave people in developing countries to seek faith irrespective of their instability or financial problems.

People from all over the world have challenged me with their faith and radical commitment to the Church and movement. I often wonder and praise God when big families make time for Church and Jesus Youth activities. I know of several young people who have stepped out of their comfort zone by resigning comfortable jobs, taking up challenging responsibilities and moving into unknown territories for the purpose of building mission.

People are different across the world, and trends have changed but the commitment they show towards the Church and the movement is beyond words.



IN FOCUS

# Fruits of a Missionary Movement



## His Excellency Bishop Raphael Thattil speaks to Kairos Global regarding the role Jesus Youth plays in promoting vocations.

### **As a person not directly a part of the movement, what is your opinion of the Jesus Youth movement and the vocations it inspires?**

I have been the ecclesiastical advisor of the Jesus Youth movement for some years now and I am very pleased and satisfied to share with you my opinion of the JY movement and its role in inspiring and promoting vocations to priesthood.

The Jesus Youth movement is described as a missionary movement at the service of the Church, the service it renders in promoting vocations to different states of life in the Church is one of the movement's key roles. But in recent years, it has been the influencing factor in promoting a lot of vocations to priesthood and religious life. I do not have the statistical data of the number of vocations, but I am sure in all the seminaries, dioceses, and religious congregations, there are ever so many youngsters who have found their vocations to priesthood and religious life through the movement. Jesus Youth, by its spiritual enrichment, makes the youngsters convinced of the need of committing themselves to the priesthood and religious life, most willingly.

### **How is Jesus Youth fulfilling its role as 'a missionary movement at the service of the Church'?**

The JY movement is definitely a missionary movement at the service of the Church, and this spiritual motto is repeatedly fulfilled to the satisfaction of everybody through promoting vocations to priesthood and religious life. There are so many formation programmes in the movement which can be called life-lab experiences. During a formation programme, participants take commitments of 1 yr, 3 yrs, etc. to be in mission, and to be involved in missionary

activities of the Church. I consider these kinds of life-lab experiences one of the reasons that youngsters get convinced of the need to become missionaries forever in the Church. And because of these life-lab experiences, they volunteer themselves to work in the missions, either in the dioceses, or in the congregations, as priests or religious. The Jesus Youth movement by its spirituality is not a movement of theories. It's a movement of experience and emotions. I do not deny the theoretical part of JY movement spirituality but it is more a movement of giving conviction and commitment through providing rich experiences in the missions. Therefore it is not a theory to say 'missionary movement at the service of the Church'. It is the praxis of the movement that it is a missionary movement at the service of the Church.

### **What role does Jesus Youth have to play in the greater picture of the Church?**

I consider the Church one for the missions. We also have the Church of maintenance, where priests are engaged in the pastoral ministry to maintain the Church. But at the same time, our role in the mission of the Church is not that insisted or emphasised. Jesus Youth, being a missionary movement has a great role to play to inspire the Church of its missionary consciousness. Recently I read a homily of the Holy Father Pope Francis. In it he emphasised that the three important commandments of Jesus are: 1. Love one another. 2. Do this in memory of me. 3. Go to the ends of the world to preach and baptise. The Holy Father calls these the commandment of love, the commandment of the Eucharist, the commandment of mission. Among these three, the commandment of mission is the most supreme and most important, and

the role of the movement in promoting vocations to mission both among the lay people, among the youngsters to commit themselves to mission work becomes the most urgent need of the Church. It is the biggest challenge and the biggest need which we expect from Jesus Youth.

### **How/Why is Jesus Youth able to influence vocations for the Church?**

Jesus Youth is a movement of experience. I personally feel it is a movement of lifestyle. This lifestyle is the spirituality of the movement. Jesus Youth inspires youth and families not by giving theories, rather by giving experiences. Sending volunteer members to the missions is one of the missionary methods of the movement, which has been taken from the Bible and the methodology of Jesus. Jesus sent his disciples to the people. He sent them in pairs and asked them to go everywhere – to the villages, meet people, speak to them and share experiences. The formation that Jesus gave was one of experiences – life-lab experiences. And JY at present is convincing the youth to commit themselves to mission by these kinds of life-lab experiences. These experiences influence youngsters to come to vocations of priesthood and religious life – a beautiful way of promoting vocations.

### **What role does a Jesus Youth-inspired vocation play in the Church and in the movement?**

JY-inspired vocations play a very vital role in the Church and in the movement. At present we have a few JY vocations. Besides that we have a lot of vocations influenced by JY in dioceses and religious congregations. These I consider vocations of premium quality. Most of these are late vocations, who come at a later age,

after their education, some of them a few years after a profession. But they come with optimum quality – quality of the conviction and quality of the commitment which makes the formation easy. It makes the seminary formation effective. And if these vocations are in the seminaries, they become catalysts to motivate other seminarians and convince them of the importance of transformation through formation. They make the formation very positive and very effective.

Vocations from Jesus Youth are a gift. They beautifully perform the ministry in the Church through their vocations. In turn, these priests and religious become catalysts to promote JY in their work field. If they are in the parishes, religious congregations, institutions of the Church, they promote by their experience and their lifestyle more vocations to the Church. It is by attraction. Their lifestyle becomes a point of attraction for youngsters.

Commonly, vocation promotion was a department of the diocesan and religious congregations. Even now, every diocese and religious congregation, a department called the Vocation Promotion Dept. (vocation bureau) exists. At present, it is my humble opinion that JY has become a vocation bureau for the whole Church. Wherever there is JY, they become a vocation promotion – not only to priesthood and religious life but to family life as well.

#### **What makes it easier for Jesus Youth to inspire youth and spread the Gospel?**

True vocation is mainly understood as priesthood and religious life, but there is an additional role which is the contribution of the JY movement. That your life in the church is a vocation. You may be a doctor, engineer, professor, factory worker, etc. Wherever you are, you are called to be a witness to Christ.

Therefore your profession is a means to profess your faith. I have seen many JY doctors going about their profession as a means to continue the healing ministry of Jesus. A lot of teachers – who are convinced that their vocation to be a teacher, a professor is a way to continue the preaching ministry, the teaching ministry of Jesus. So your vocation is a means to profess your faith – a fundamental mission of JY.

#### **How are JY vocations special and different?**

I consider JY vocations very special for two reasons. 1. Most of them come after their education and some even after getting settled into their profession. It is a mature vocation and a high level of commitment. 2. Once a JY comes to seminary or religious formation, they are very positive to the formation there compared to other vocations. Another thing is their commitment after becoming priests and religious is extraordinary. It is not the fruit of the seminary formation or religious formation alone, rather their conviction and commitment.

#### **In your opinion, what more can Jesus Youth do to encourage vocations?**

Our attempt to promote vocations is becoming, in the present climate, very difficult. And the traditional Church finds this very hard and challenging too. In this climate, the role of Jesus Youth as a missionary movement at the service of the Church is most needed. Because as Jesus said, the harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few. Therefore JY can become a movement of prayer to promote vocations – a movement of inspiration, a movement of forming conviction and commitment to become priests and religious life. The role has become most essential in the present context. ■■

**Sending volunteer members to the missions is one of the missionary methods of the movement, which has been taken from the Bible and the methodology of Jesus. Jesus sent his disciples to the people. He sent them in pairs and asked them to go everywhere – to the villages, meet people, speak to them and share experiences. The formation that Jesus gave was one of experiences – life-lab experiences.**




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H.E. Mar Raphael Thattil is the first bishop of the eparchy of Shamshabad, India. He is also the ecclesiastical advisor of the Jesus Youth movement.



# If not now, then when?

**Br Justin Philip, a seminarian shares the crucial role Jesus Youth played in his life and vocation.**

*For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure (Philippians 2:13).*

**P**raise God! My name is Br Justin Philip, a fourth year minor seminarian from St Thomas Minor Seminary, Panvel in Mumbai, India.

I come from a normal Catholic family that includes my parents and two younger siblings. My parents ensured that I was an active participant in Church right from Catechism, serving as an altar boy to church choir, youth ministry, and so on. They tried their best to pour out their faith in Jesus through regular family Rosary, attending retreats and night vigils, etc.

I did my computer engineering from Mumbai University and passed out in 2015. Soon after my degree, I started working in start-up and mid-sized companies as a software developer. During this work journey, I was more

focussed on my career, to grow financially strong and settled. My prayer life was weak, and my mind diverted to many worldly things. My priorities changed.

In the year 2019, I encountered a very spiritual group called Jesus Youth. They brought a spiritual thirst to my life with their fellowship and style of prayer. It helped to bring me more closer to God. Slowly, I became an active Jesus Youth in Mumbai, being part of the core team in different ministries – household group, music ministry, monthly fellowship programme are a few to name. Jesus Youth gave me a more open exposure and opportunities to unleash my talents and capabilities. JY initial retreats and prayer meetings ignited the fire in me to participate in daily Holy Mass, rather than being just a Sunday-goer. This fire led me to start youth prayer meetings in my own parish once a week.

Soon, the world got hit with Covid, which was tragic. In the month of April

2021, a week before Holy Week, my entire family and I got infected with Covid. By God's grace, the symptoms were mild. As I took leave from the office, I was quite free myself, it was a time to introspect on my life. It was then that the Holy Spirit laid a strong desire in me for priesthood. A question kept ringing in my heart when a number of priests passed away due to Covid, 'If it's not you, then who? If it's not now, then when?' Without giving a clue to my parents, I left my job to deep dive and understand about this desire with the right people. After I made up my mind, I finally told my parents about my decision, which was a shock indeed; but my mother was the happiest person.

In June 2021, I finally made my entry to St Thomas Minor Seminary and my journey began. Jesus Youth is always there deep in my heart, and will always be a huge part of my vocation. **IK**

# Fruits of Rich Soil

Kairos Global asked a few priests and seminarians to share about their call to priesthood and the role that the Jesus Youth movement played in shaping their vocation.



## FR DITTO DEVASSY JY

**Age: 40**

**Year of ordination: 2016**

**Current responsibility: JY priest**

### Why did you choose priesthood?

For me, priesthood is the greatest gift that I could ever receive from God. The desire to serve people without any limit or condition brings great satisfaction to my life. This call helps me to be closer to God.

### How was JY a factor in your road to priesthood?

JY brought a spiritual renewal to my life while I was working in Saudi Arabia. Prayer, sacramental life and ministries filled my heart with the love of God. The joy of being loved by God also influenced me to share it with others, especially youngsters. This made me think about becoming a priest in Jesus Youth.



## SAVVY GEORGE

**Age: 31**

**Current responsibility: Seminarian**

### Why did you choose priesthood?

Priesthood was never a dream when I was a child. I got attracted to priesthood primarily because of the person Jesus. Jesus' love was the magnetic force behind my call. The selfless service rendered by priests and the singular attention of their life attracted me. Since I got closer to the Lord through JY, I was always mesmerised by the youth accompaniment of many vibrant Jesus Youth pastors. It also influenced me to opt for priesthood so that I too could help other people in need. And also realising that priesthood is a special call from God as an answer towards the cry of his people.

### How was JY a factor in your road to priesthood?

During my sophomore year of engineering, I was introduced to Jesus Youth by my friends, and after that, I was deeply involved with the JY movement. It helped me realise my strengths and weaknesses. JY fellowship was a triggering factor that quenched my thirst for love and friendship. I could experience tremendous love in our fellowship gatherings. It slowly challenged my concept of earthly love and even existence. On my JY journey, I met a seminarian who was also an engineer and a JY, which sparked a question in me, if he could, why can't I... So I followed my heart's desire, and after full-timership I decided to be part of the Jesuit order.





### JOHNCAROL JOSE

Age: 28

Current responsibility: Seminarian

#### Why did you choose priesthood?

My deepest and intimate experience of God's mercy through the sacrament of the Eucharist held me tight to follow his path, closely considering everything else a trifle. What not than to become a bridge/ladder between the Creator and creation?

#### How was JY a factor in your road to priesthood?

JY spirituality is the fount and force of my personal spirituality. It paved the path to my deepest and intimate experience of God's love and tender mercy. Jesus Youth has been facilitating my call and commitment towards my Spouse.

*'If you have called me, I will run for you. And if you call me in a manner I can understand, then I will follow you.'*

Augustine Christi PDM



### FR ANTHONY XAVIOUR

Age: 37

Year of ordination: 2022

Current responsibility: Secretary to Archbishop of Nagpur

#### Why did you choose priesthood?

Choosing priesthood was a decision I took after undergoing a four-year discernment process. I was into some other profession, however I felt the Lord had called me to become a priest, so I resigned my job to discern the will of God. Despite the challenges and priesthood not being my first choice, I chose priesthood to follow the call of the Lord.

#### How was JY a factor in your road to priesthood?

JY was the most important factor for choosing priesthood because it was only after getting into JY fellowship that I could hear God's call to become a priest. Even my discernment was done through the help of the Jesus Youth movement and especially during my full-timership. I also discerned and came to the realisation that I had to become a priest for the Jesus Youth movement.



### CHRISTIN V JOSE

Age: 28

Current responsibility: Seminarian

#### Why did you choose priesthood?

I just wanted to dedicate my life in whole to Him, who died for me.

#### How was JY a factor in your road to priesthood?

During my B.Tech studies, JY prayer meetings and core group meetings on the campus helped me a lot whenever I went astray. The Intercession Ministry taught me to pray not only for myself but also for others.



**FR THOMAS PMI**

**Age: 36**

**Year of ordination: 2017**

**Current responsibility: Superior of Novitiate House, Mission In charge of PMI Congregation (Missionary Fathers of Incarnation)**

**Why did you choose priesthood?**

I used to tell my JY friends, 'My vocation is not mine it's yours.' I have become a priest for you. So ultimately I choose priesthood for the people and for my Christ.

**How was JY a factor in your road to priesthood?**

My elder sister and brother were members of JY in my parish so JY members would often visit our family. That was my first interaction with JY. I began to go for parish JY prayer meetings in 2002, and after my 10th standard, I became an active member. While I was studying ITC, I was a subzone service team member in Arthungal (Kerala) which comes under Cherthala zone. We use to conduct programmes for children. I found my Christ in our prayer groups and I decided to become a priest.

**FR AJAY CLEMENT ANDRE**

**Age: 46**

**Year of ordination: 2013**

**Current responsibility: Parish Priest**



**Why did you choose priesthood?**

I did not choose priesthood but had the desire to be a priest and God fulfilled my desire. Today I am a priest by the grace of God.

**How was JY a factor in your road to priesthood?**

Through Jesus Youth, I came closer to God especially through prayer life which helped me discern my vocation.

**FR ALBIN ANTO KOONAMMAVU**

**Age: 28**

**Year of ordination: 2021**

**Current responsibility: Assistant Parish Priest, Immaculate Conception Church, Dombivli, Mumbai**



**Why did you choose priesthood?**

To serve God and God's people. The priesthood of Jesus Christ is a radical life. It requires sacrifice that this world perceives as foolish. My vision was 'be available for others always.' I can surely say that this vision can be fulfilled in a true manner only through priesthood. So I chose priesthood.

**How was JY a factor in your road to priesthood?**

Prayer gatherings influenced me a lot. JY prayer gathering taught me how to pray, how to be close to God always.

**FR THOMAS PULICKAL**

**Age: 36**

**Year of ordination: 2020**

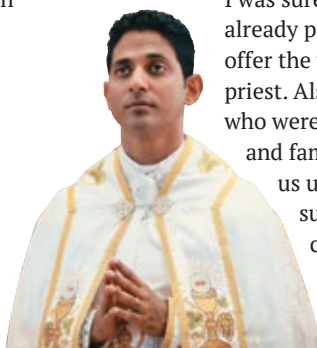
**Current responsibility: JY priest of St. Thomas Syro-Malabar Diocese, Chicago; Assistant Professor at St Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary; Assistant Pastor of Our Lady of Health Syro-Malabar parish in Coral Springs, Florida**

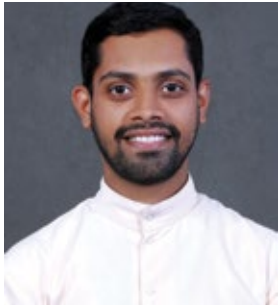
**Why did you choose priesthood?**

I was always open to priesthood because I believed, as a matter of principle that every Christian young man ought to discern this possibility. There were instances when I thought I might be called to priesthood, but I was largely convinced that my call was to the lay and married vocation. When I was 26, one day at Mass, I felt the Lord calling me to priesthood. From that moment, my vocational journey took a sudden turn.

**How was JY a factor in your road to priesthood?**

I was sure that the movement's charism, having already produced great fruit, had still much to offer the world. I desired to be part of that, as a priest. Also the gratitude I felt for those priests who were spiritual fathers to us as young people and families growing in the movement, building us up as disciples of Christ. The movement support was key in discovering the Lord's call to live as JY a priest.





## AUGUSTINE CHRISTI PDM

Age: 29

Current responsibility: Seminarian

### Why did you choose priesthood?

During my college days, I was very active in the student organisations, holding various portfolios. By God's grace I was always diligent in helping others and making myself available to be the voice of the voiceless. One of the reasons for this was the struggle I had experienced amidst poverty at home. The injustice which I saw at the workplace compelled me to strive for fair wages, and take the steps necessary to create job opportunities for those devoid of jobs commensurate with their education. To this end I had even worked at a reputed organisation. While working zealously for the said organisation, I often undertook many journeys. And in the midst of one such journey, I heard an inner voice calling me: 'Augustine, you have been running for your own interests for quite a while now. When would you run for me?' I took that voice seriously. I had read of the incident in the Holy Bible where St Paul was called in the midst of a journey and set aside for a divine mission. I gave my word to Jesus: If you have called me, I will run for you. And if you call me in a manner I can understand, then I will follow you. This is the main reason that led me on the way to priesthood.

### How was JY a factor in your road to priesthood?

The Jesus Youth Movement has often taught me that it is better done in a group than doing something alone. I am well aware of my shortcomings and it was Jesus Youth which trained me not to play myself down because of it, and gave me ample opportunities to grow. This is evident in both prayer and action. While studying in a Muslim-managed college, I, by myself, was powerless to bring Christian students together. I didn't even know how to pray for this aim. It was at this time that the fiery and spirited friends of Jesus Youth prayed, strengthened and encouraged me. The first time I recruited people for a programme was for the Jesus Youth movement. The JY youth group, which picks up the phone whenever you call, can be reached at any time, for any need and encourages you to find God's love and God's experience in everything. It has helped me tremendously to grow in the experience of Christian sharing, communion and brotherhood. I don't know how to repay the support and nourishment which God's kingdom has received from this movement. I have been very touched with the way the movement has shown me that bearing witness for the faith is a matter of pride.

## FR JOHNS GEORGE SDB

Age: 39

Year of ordination: 2022

Current responsibility: Student of Spirituality

### Why did you choose priesthood?

By his grace, when I became convinced that the Lord was calling me to become his priest, I said YES to the Salesian vocation to which he was calling me. So the sole reason is HE. When he gave me the grace to experience his immense love, the best way to make Jesus happy (2 Cor. 5:9) was to say YES to his loving call. His love compels us to love him.

### How was JY a factor in your road to priesthood?

I strongly believe that JY was one of the Lord's greatest blessings and a protection for me. I was introduced to JY as an engineering student. During that time the experience of prayer in the JY meetings pulled me back from the desire to enjoy the 'world'. How could I lead a loose life and be a JY sharing the love of Jesus? Moreover the Lord had blessed me with a good circle of friends who always helped me to remain closer to the Lord.



*I was always open to priesthood because I believed, as a matter of principle that every Christian young man ought to discern this possibility.*

Fr Thomas Pulickal



### FR LIJU AMEPARAMBIL CMF

**Age: 42**

**Year of ordination: 2019**

**Current responsibility: Zonal Vocation Promoter**

#### Why did you choose priesthood?

I deeply felt that God called me to the priesthood through this verse (Mt. 9:36-38) 'the harvest is plenty and labourers are few.' He speaks to me very personally and shows his people's need for priests 'to be sent,' and I have seen miracles in my life like Peter's experience (Lk. 5:4-11).

#### How was JY a factor in your road to priesthood?

The Jesus Youth movement helped me to realise the unconditional love of Jesus; 'how much he paid for me'; and to love him better; that God loves me very personally. My missionary spirit is refreshed and empowered and rekindled.

### FR LINSON LOUISE, SDB

**Age: 42**

**Year of ordination: 2012**

**Current responsibility:**

**Principal (Don Bosco Hr. Sec. School, Baghchung, Jorhat) & Vice Rector (Rua Home: Minor Seminary)**

#### Why did you choose priesthood?

I was inspired by the good example of some of the priests whom I met on various occasions. Through their interactions I came to know more about priesthood and how it can influence the lives of many people. I always had this thought that God was calling me for something special. After waiting and praying for inspiration and guidance I realised what it was. To become a channel of Christ's grace.

#### How was JY a factor in your road to priesthood?

I had a faith crisis while doing my graduation. Through a retreat, I was introduced to a Jesus Youth prayer group. They used to gather in our parish church for their weekly prayer meetings. I attended these prayer meetings regularly and it began to help boost my spiritual life through the Word of God and fellowship. Some of the youth leaders were really prayerful and were like family to me. I was inspired to go for the ninth batch full-timers' training (2000) and was placed in Manipur. This full-timership was a year of prayer and discernment for me with regard to my vocation. I joined the Salesians of Don Bosco in 2001 and was ordained a priest in 2012. My JY background was always and is always a strength to me in my priestly journey in very many ways.



### FR SHYJAN JOB

**Age: 45**

**Year of ordination: 2010**

**Current responsibility: Rector, Don Bosco Mission Wau, South Sudan**

#### Why did you choose priesthood?

The mission exposure during my JY Full-timers' experience made me realise the value of priesthood. I felt the deeper calling to be a 'life-timer' for the Lord and his people. I couldn't help but say YES. I believe it's a call within a call to be a JY as well as to be His priest, to be all things for all people...

#### How was JY a factor in your road to priesthood?

My JYFT experience in an interior mission station in Assam made me revisit my childhood dream of becoming a priest and the Lord nurtured my vocation through JY members and my spiritual guides. The JY lifestyle has been a pillar of strength to my vocation to ministerial priesthood.

**NOEL XAVIER****Age: 25****Current Responsibility: Seminarian****Why did you choose priesthood?**

I realised this as my vocation. I realised that God was calling me for this life. The thirst to serve the people of God and celebrate the sacraments is my greatest desire. I have now completed 7 years of formation in the CMI congregation. God has guided me throughout my life even during difficult times. In the end, God's plan is most beautiful so I decided to follow his plan for me, which is why I choose priesthood as my vocation.

**How was JY a factor in your road to priesthood?**

In the growth of my vocation, JY has contributed a major part. Before joining the seminary my relationship with God grew through JY. During my school days, various programmes and fellowship in JY helped me see how beautiful it is to walk in his ways. My personal relationship with Jesus thus grew which later helped in choosing my vocation. My parents and many JY elders still help me in my vocation.

*‘When I found Jesus, “the pearl of great value” (Mt 13:45-46), he gave the grace to sell off everything else in order to possess him.’*

Fr Bineesh John Masias Op

**FR SAGIL NADAKUNNEL CST****Age: 31****Year of ordination: 2022****Current responsibility: Assistant Parish Priest and Vice- Rector in the seminary****Why did you choose priesthood?**

In simple words I would say it was the sixth pillar of JY, ‘Option for the poor’ that took me this far as a missionary priest for Africa! I still remember the JY Jubilee motto of 2010, ‘Every Jesus Youth is a missionary.’ Jesus Youth has had a tremendous impact on the discerning of my path. Nevertheless, I believe that a person's destiny is present and hidden within him/her far before s/he explores it. Similarly, to become a priest was God's plan for me which however got revealed through my exposure to Jesus Youth and other influencing factors.

**How was JY a factor in your road to priesthood?**

During my school days, I never thought I would embark upon a journey like this. However, it was during my plus-two studies, in the context of a JY retreat that I first felt a faint desire to become a priest. After completing plus-two, I attended DTP'08 (Discipleship Training Programme). That was the turning point in my life. For me DTP was not just a formation programme but a Damascus event. During my graduation the desire got stronger like never before. By then, I was already part of the JY prayer group in the college and later became the assistant campus coordinator of Kothamangalam zone in Kerala. Then later was elected to be a member of the Kerala campus team. After my graduation despite the fear, worry, and shame I decided to follow my conscience. As a result of which I joined the seminary on 04 June 2012 and was ordained a priest on 2nd January 2022.

**FR GEORGE FELICIOUZ****Age: 50****Year of ordination: 2015****Current responsibility: Parish Priest, Mansfield Catholic Parish, Archdiocese of Melbourne****Why did you choose priesthood?**

Since I was a child, I've always wanted to be a priest. I liked to

play the Mass and my grandparents were the congregation responding. I was attracted to the Eucharist and from the age of five, would attend daily Mass as often as possible. My grandparents, parents and family were my inspiration so were my parish priests, and from my earliest memory, Fr Joseph Pannikode. The Jesuit priests of my alma mater, St Michael's Anglo-Indian Boys High School Kannur and the sisters in my parish were also an inspiration. Through the inspiration of all these people I see that Jesus was choosing me.

**How was JY a factor in your road to priesthood?**

Jesus Youth helped in strengthening the vocation I had to the priesthood from childhood. Through Jesus Youth I came into contact with like-minded people who have an undivided love for Jesus, the Word of God, sacraments, and prayer.



### FR BINEESH JOHN MASIAS OP

Age: 43

Year of ordination: 2006

Current responsibility: Director of a  
Retreat Centre

#### Why did you choose priesthood?

When I found Jesus, 'the pearl of great value' (Mt. 13:45-46), he gave the grace to sell off everything else in order to possess him.

#### How was JY a factor in your road to priesthood?

I met with Jesus and grew in bonding with him in the Jesus Youth circle.



### FR MANOJ VARGHESE

Age: 39

Year of ordination: 2022

Current responsibility: Assistant Parish  
Priest

#### Why did you choose priesthood?

I got an opportunity to know Jesus Christ through my ten-year Jesus Youth experience. And, the life of St. Francis of Assisi, who is the patron of Jesus Youth, has inspired my life to become a Capuchin friar.

### FR VINOY THOMAS PAIKKATTU, OP

Age: 44

Year of ordination: 2009

Current responsibility: Regent of Studies of the  
Province of India, Dominicans

#### Why did you choose priesthood?

Ever since I knew Jesus Christ personally, the predominant desire was to commit my life entirely to him. I looked for all options, but all of them had limitations though they were beautiful. I found priesthood as the best option to commit myself to Jesus unconditionally. It was the best discernment and decision I made in my life!

#### How was JY a factor in your road to priesthood?

I met Jesus Christ personally through the Jesus Youth movement, and that personal encounter changed the course of my life forever. As a young 17-year old, I was initiated into the pillars of the movement: prayer, sacraments, the Word of God, fellowship and evangelisation (option for the poor was a later addition). These gave me a strong foundation for the life I was to live later on. These directly or indirectly increased my love for the Church. Even after joining the seminary, I kept the pillars of the movement very firm and personal in my life. I was (and still am) very proud to call myself a 'Jesus Youth' since it helped me to discern the best decision I ever made in my life. I am grateful to the numerous brothers and sisters, elders and friends in Jesus Youth who helped me to reach the goal of priesthood through their prayer and support.



*'I once asked the Lord in prayer,  
"What do you want from my life?"  
And he showed me what he wanted  
from me and I said Yes. I did not  
choose it, I received it as a gift.'*

Fr Joe Antony

**FR BOBIN MARIA, OP****Age: 31****Year of ordination: 2022****Why did you choose priesthood?**

To be with Jesus in a special way, to love him and be drowned in his abundant mercy. To proclaim his Gospel to all those who are yet to hear or accept the Good News. The love and mercy which I have experienced from the Lord, I want to share with others. To take Jesus' precious Body and Blood to all people who want his healing touch in their body and soul.

**How was JY a factor in your road to priesthood?**

The JY movement helped me to experience and recognise God's mercy and healing in my life. JY did to me what those people who carried the paralysed man to Jesus for healing did. JY helped me to break the shell of negativity, sinfulness, pride and ego so that God's grace could flow into me. The 6 pillars of JY changed my life. Following this lifestyle helped me to love God and love my fellow brethren.

**JERIL TOM****Age: 28****Current responsibility: Seminarian****Why did you choose priesthood?**

First of all, I am pretty sure that the Lord chose me to be his servant-minister and I only responded to his call. Secondly, priesthood gives me that ideal opportunity to be intimately close to him and serve his people in an extensive manner. Unlike any other vocation, undivided love for him helps me to lovingly serve others through my thoughts, words and deeds. Serving God and his people becomes my sole food and drink. So, he gives me grace through his ministerial priesthood to lovingly serve God and people, without which, I feel my life would not have served its true purpose.

**How was JY a factor in your road to priesthood?**

JY was absolutely instrumental in giving me convictions regarding my vocation. Though I had an ardent desire to be a priest from my young age, only after a JY exposure, I became convinced of my religious priesthood. The 6 pillars are definitely a bonus, which even helps me in my religious life. The values - personal intimacy with Christ, placing others and their needs before mine, making oneself available for others despite hectic personal works, healthy fellowship, love for the Word of God and the Church, leadership skills, etc. are those which I cherish from JY and obviously these help me live my religious life as well. It is also true that I was fascinated by the life examples of many model JYs which thoroughly inspired me to this vocation.

**FR SIJO POULOSE****Age: 40****Year of ordination: 2022****Current Responsibility:  
Assistant Parish Priest****Why did you choose priesthood?**

In search of my life's aim, I realised that God's plan for me was priesthood. It is through his mercy, I could proceed and finally God made me his own.

**How was JY a factor in your road to priesthood?**

There are so many factors to tell. First, my family, my parish and my friends. Since mine is a late occasion, JY has a great role. It is through Jesus Youth, God inspired me to desire priesthood.

**FR JOE ANTONY****Age: 40****Year of ordination: 2021****Current Responsibility:  
Member of the Dominican  
convent in Antwerp. Doing  
Masters in Theology in KU  
Leuven, Belgium.****Why did you choose priesthood?**

I once asked the Lord in prayer, 'What do you want from my life?' And he showed me what he wanted from me and I said Yes. I did not choose it, I received it as a gift.

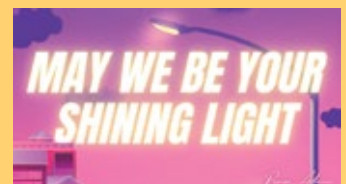
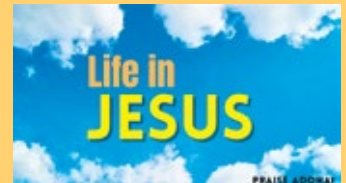
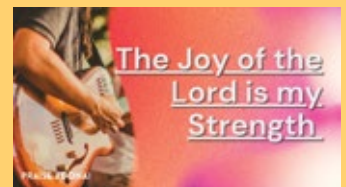
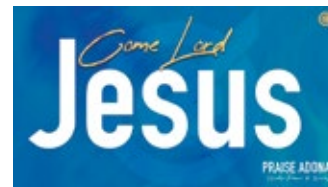
**How was JY a factor in your road to priesthood?**

JY spiritual programmes and friends supported me and motivated me to live a spiritual life, be committed to a prayer life, and to Jesus and his Church.

SPECIAL

# PRAISE ADONAI

Praise Adonai, the weekly praise and worship programme has completed 50 episodes on Kairos Studio, the YouTube channel of Kairos Media. A glance at all the 50 episodes.

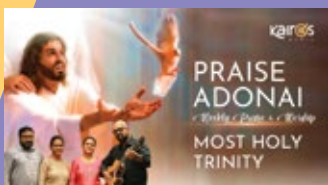
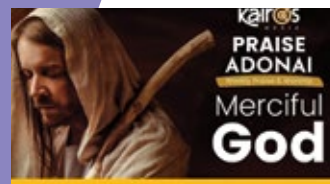
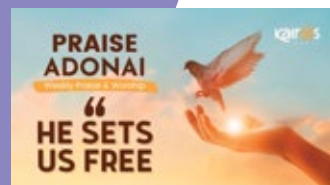
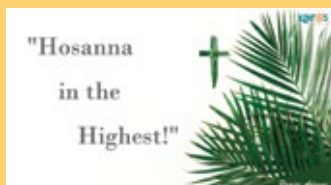
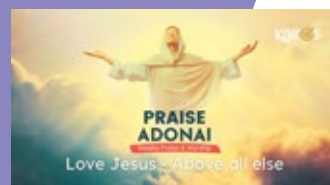
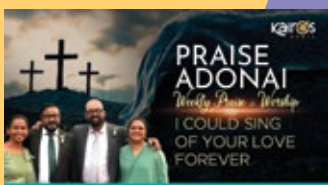
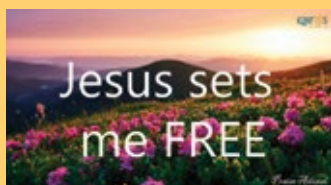




Scan QR code to view the episodes



Scan QR code for the songs.





# Called to Lead 2022

**Patrick John Padua** shares a brief account of Called to Lead 2022, the JY Australia national leaders training conference.

Picture this: 55 young, excited leaders from all over Australia, 20 senior leaders filled with wisdom and experience, and 5 days packed with sessions, music and Mass, all occurring in the picturesque venue of Holy Cross Centre, Templestowe, Melbourne. What you just pictured is ‘Called to Lead 2022’.

This national training by Jesus Youth for individuals aimed to explore the mission model of Christian discipleship and its relevance to contemporary leadership in ministry lives. This wasn’t your usual leadership training; as Jethin, our National Coordinator beautifully said,

‘You can’t train people, only the Spirit can.’ Rather, this was time for leaders to open themselves up to the Spirit and ask themselves; ‘Am I open to the Spirit’s call?’

Exceptional resources such as CC Joseph from India, Sr Rosie an MGL nun and Brian Welch, a Catholic lay street preacher, were present to help the participants understand more about themselves, their call to mission, discipleship, and stewardship. It’s hard to put into words that profound impact ‘Called to Lead’ had on the participants and myself, but one thing is clear, there

is a blazing fire within us, a blazing fire to go be missionaries, a blazing fire to say ‘Yes’ to the Spirit, a blazing fire to share the Spirit to all.

We may have met each other as strangers, but we went back home as family, that’s for certain. I will conclude with this question for thought: Where is the Spirit leading you? ■

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Currently studying double major in marketing and management, **Patrick John Padua** lives in Perth, Western Australia with his parents and sisters.

## IN MEMORIAM

# Fr Rejin Joseph Thomas Alunkal

**Karios Malayalam's designer, Shaji Joseph** recalls his fond memories of Fr Rejin Joseph Thomas Alunkal, who passed away on November 6, 2022.

It was sometime after 10.30 pm on November 6, as I was checking WhatsApp that I came across the heart-wrenching news. My dearest friend, Rejin Achan (Fr Rejin Joseph) had passed away.

It must have been in 2008 or 2009 that I first met Rejin. A friendship that began from the various gatherings of Jesus Youth later cemented at KCBC's (Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council) Pastoral Orientation Centre (POC). Rejin was a genius in advanced computer technology, using it to creatively teach Catechism. That was probably the reason why Rejin would always be found in the office of KCBC Bible Commission Secretary, Rev. Dr Fr Joshy Mayyattil.

In 2011, POC published an illustrated children's Bible prepared by the renowned children's illustrator Venki, and myself. The printing and other related matters of that book brought me in close contact with Rejin. He was an active presence in the week-long Die Augen Art Camp and Film Festival held at POC, and in Savitha Theatre, Ernakulam in connection with the Kerala Catholic Church's Bible Week conducted from May 27 to June 3, 2012. Eight international films were screened at that festival. From the selection of the films, obtaining good quality digital copies, getting the necessary screening permission, etc., Rejin's help was invaluable to me. He was also there to help organise Die Augen artists' camp, movie screening, and the related travel. I now wonder if that festival, whose general coordinator I was, would have taken place successfully had Rejin not been there. It is with gratitude that I remember my beloved Rejin, who selflessly and generously, despite not being a part of

the festival committee, gave his time and effort and stood by me.

His interaction with priests who lived lives of witness, and his constant contact with Rev Dr Joshy Mayyattil is what eventually led to Rejin's own vocation to priesthood.

Subsequent to completing his master's in engineering, he began to work as a lecturer at Cherthala (Kerala) Government Engineering College. It was around that time that having discerned, he left everything for Jesus and entered the Kochi Diocese seminary. His priestly training was at the Papal Seminary in Pune. A sense of responsibility, hard work and a God-oriented way of life were the hallmarks of Rejin. Fr Joshy himself testifies that it was Rejin's technological prowess that enabled him in the arduous administration of KCBC Bible Commission's annual Logos Quiz.

In our family prayer, we always pray for the priests and seminarians we know,



## FR REJIN JOSEPH THOMAS ALUNKAL

Fr Rejin was born on August 29, 1981 to Alunkal Joseph and Thresyamma, in Chandiroor, Kerala. He completed his primary education at Pattanakkad Public School, got his degree from Chenganoor Engineering College and Masters from CUSAT. He worked as Assistant Professor at Government Engineering College, Cherthala.

Thereafter he entered in the minor seminary at Fort Cochin and completed his priestly formation at the Papal Seminary, Pune. He was ordained a priest on January 13, 2020 and was appointed assistant parish priest at Our Lady of Hope Church, Vypeen. A year later, the Bishop of Cochin appointed him Chancellor of the Diocese. He passed away on November 6, 2022.

this especially by my children. During these spontaneous prayers when the kids would each remember and pray for the fathers and brothers by name, Rejin had a special place. Having become our family friend, he shared a deep bond with my children. Three years ago, my youngest daughter Niveditha fell in love with a non-Christian classmate, and later died in a car accident. Upon hearing this, Rejin Achan came running home and gathered all of us close to his chest and stood by us in our grief. His was a heart like Jesus – without limits or boundaries. Very rarely do we come across such people.

From the time Rejin Achan's body was brought to the Diocese House for the Requiem Mass to the last farewell, placed in an ambulance to be taken to his home in Chandiroor, it was touching to see His Excellency Bishop Dr Joseph Kariyil running about, managing it all beautifully like a father who had just lost his own son. I had taken a photo of the bishop there and shared in on Jesus Youth's groups with the caption: 'I suppose this beloved bishop must also be asking Jesus why his dear assistant and a valuable young priest of the Church was called back so soon.' Those same words were echoed at the funeral Mass at Chandiroor church during the homily by the bishop himself.

After his appointment as chancellor of Kochi Diocese, Rejin Achan came to my home twice, riding his scooter. Since my wife Shoba knew his eating habits, she prepared the meals accordingly. Rejin Achan never ate meat or fish – only simple food. When he visited us the last time, there was a huge bundle of books for the diocese on his scooter. Seeing that I told him, 'This is the first time I am seeing a chancellor of the diocese travelling on a scooter.' He immediately smiled his guileless smile and rode away on his scooter. That was a farewell. ■

Shaji Joseph Arakkal has been a graphic designer for 39 years. He lives in Ernakulam, India with his wife Shoba. They have three children, Niranjana, Nirmal and Niveditha. God called Niveditha back.

PARENTING



# DIVING DEEP INTO MELANCHOLIC

In this third part of the series on the Temperaments, **Jitu Chengat** describes the melancholic.

This month, we will reflect on another of the four temperaments, the melancholic. St John the Evangelist, with his beautiful and poetic reflections in Scripture, likely had a melancholic temperament!

Like St John's writings reveal, one of the greatest strengths of a melancholic is a deeply reflective nature. You might find them engrossed in puzzles or pondering the beauty of nature, as they truly enjoy solitary activities. You may be surprised by their sadness for Jesus on the cross or their attentiveness to the homeless on the street. Cultivating this inner richness and directing it to a personal relationship with God will develop a strong foundation for a melancholic child's life. Melancholics will likely respond well to spiritual practices such as *Lectio Divina* or contemplation, where they are encouraged to reflect more deeply. At the same time, they may struggle with practices like praying the Rosary during family prayer unless given a task to count the prayers or memorise the mysteries.

The strong-willed melancholic struggles with pride but in quite a different way than a choleric. Their stubbornness in matters may be frustrating, but upon dialogue, you may find a somewhat logical explanation. While they may appear to be lazy, deeper probing will likely find roots of perfectionism which prevent them from acting. Providing small manageable tasks, and guiding your melancholic child with affirmations and encouragement, will give them hope. When they experience failure, commend them on their perseverance and effort. Without this, they can become paralyzed by their own self-doubt and self-criticism. As such, it is important to nurture a positive outlook in a melancholic child. A simple spiritual exercise may include giving thanks for three things that happened that day. This daily reminder of joy and gratitude will be a powerful antidote to the natural discouragement and moodiness to which they are prone.

As with all temperaments, it is helpful to be creative with your parenting. Since such children may not demand attention because of their reserved natures, it is essential for a parent to provide a consistent personal time for sharing

## Temperaments of the Saints!

It always helps to look to the saints as a model of virtue. Like all of us, saints had blessings and challenges that came with their temperament. Let's look at a famous melancholic saint.

### ST EDITH STEIN

The life of St Edith Stein [Benedicta of the Cross] reveals that it is possible for a melancholic to experience the joy of heaven on earth through a perfection & purification of their temperament. She possessed strong ideals that often came in conflict with the struggling realities of the world and faith, but she found hope in the person of Christ and in her conversion to Catholicism. She struggled with depression and doubt but continued to follow Christ to the point of martyrdom. As parents, we have a beautiful privilege of redirecting our melancholic children to the hope of eternal life and their own futures as saints, on both sides of heaven!

and reflection. A melancholic child will have many thoughts but need time and space to feel comfortable to share. Like all temperaments, melancholics tend towards certain behavioral characteristics, both positive and negative, but knowledge of these natural tendencies provides strong foundations for parenting future saints!

### BE FATHERED

*When in relationship with God the Father, parenting can lead to your own inner healing. It requires self-awareness and intentionality to let the Father heal us through the gift of our child, who may be very much like ourselves! Let's see how this can play out.*

Daniel tripped over his son Nathan's building blocks. Catching himself on the couch before falling, he became irritated at all the toys lying all around and called his son's name. Excited, his son came running into the room, but stopped short when he looked at the toys.

'Dad! You broke my creation! I spent all morning making this block village. You are holding the police station in your hand!'

Daniel started to respond back when a quick flashback from his own childhood came to mind. He could see himself, about 6-years-old, wiping tears quietly from his eyes. He remembered that just a few moments before, his mom had cleaned up his room, throwing out the folded newspaper creatures that he had spent weeks carefully making. He knew there was no point sharing his sadness with her because she always told him that he was wasting his time when he should be

learning or playing outside.

Daniel was brought back to the present by his son's persistent voice. He knelt down and asked Nathan to show him all the parts of the village. Nathan spent the next 20 minutes describing what he had built, beaming with pride. Daniel gave him a big hug and told Nathan that he was so proud of him. Nathan responded that he just wanted to be like his dad who drew and made buildings.

Later that evening, as Daniel was sharing this experience with his wife, he felt God's voice in his heart. The Father whispered to Daniel that just like Daniel saw Nathan's joy, God the Father appreciated the way that Daniel saw the world, in its beauty and order. God was the one who had led Daniel to his job as an architectural engineer, where he could envision and bring to life the elaborate plans that he saw in his mind. He felt a grace to forgive his parents for not seeing his gifts and thanked God for his providence and the healing that he had received. He resolved to take note of Nathan's creations and encourage him more in the future!

*Can you relate? Are you a melancholic parent? How may God be inviting you to receive healing in your temperament so that you can more confidently and generously parent your child?* ■■

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Jilu Chengat lives in Massachusetts, USA where she lives out her missionary call as a wife and mother to three children. She enjoys writing and accompanying young people as they discern the voice of God in their lives.



# Heavenly Madness

We are called to be the light of Christ in this world engulfed in darkness.

**Anil Israel** writes about vocations.

**W**hen we hear the word 'vocation', synonymously images of priests and religious sisters sweep across our minds. As children, we thought that only the select few who ended up being part of a religious community were blessed with a vocation; that the vast majority of us simply end up submitting to the way of the world – getting married and raising families. Much later, I was happy to learn that everyone (single or married) has a distinct vocation – a unique path to holiness.

Vocation means 'calling'. It's all about recognising and then responding to the call. Sooner or later, we draw close to the realisation that we all have something to do – a purpose to fulfil – in God's great big plan for our pilgrim lives on earth. The good news is that we are all called. *I have called you by name* (Isaiah 43:1). By virtue of our baptism, we become children of God's big family – members of Church, the mystical body of Christ – and have our own special God-designed irreplaceable role to play.

Not all are called to embrace the vows of obedience, poverty and chastity



## BE PERFECT, AS YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER IS PERFECT › MATTHEW 5:48

and live a life of celibacy *for the sake of the kingdom of heaven* (Matthew 19:12). But we all share the fundamental call to love – to love God above all and to love our fellow human beings out of love for God. We are also privileged to partake in the universal call to holiness – we are all *called to be saints* (Romans 1:7). ‘All Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity’ (CCC 2013). All are called to holiness: *Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect* (Matthew 5:48).

**Not all are called to embrace the vows of obedience, poverty and chastity and live a life of celibacy for the sake of the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 19:12). But we all share the fundamental call to love – to love God above all and to love our fellow human beings out of love for God.**

We might tend to think that we are nowhere close to being worthy of such a high-esteemed call. We discard ourselves as miserable beyond hope, broken beyond repair and repulsively sinful. We need not be discouraged. We have inspiring examples before us. Even though the apostle St Peter denied Christ thrice, he was entrusted with *the keys of the kingdom of heaven* (Matthew 16:19) and shepherded the Church as the first Pope: *Feed my sheep* (John 21:17). Also, St Paul who persecuted the early Christians, after his conversion became *an apostle to the Gentiles* (Romans 11:13). St Paul too expresses his unworthiness: *I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle* (1 Corinthians 15:9).

If we see ourselves at the non-eligible end of the spectrum, then let us find encouragement in these words of sacred scripture: *God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong, God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are* (1 Corinthians 1:27-28). *For the things that are considered of great value by man are worth nothing in God’s eyes* (Luke 16:15). God does not call the qualified, he qualifies the called. It is not our ability rather our availability that matters most to him. Mother Teresa too considered herself to be just a tiny pencil in the hand of God, writing a love-letter to the world. Am I willing to abandon my life in his grip and grace?

*Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him* (1 John 2:15). We are called to live in the world, but *not of the world* (John 17:14). Am I willing to *give up childish ways* (1 Corinthians 13:11) and detach myself from the pursuit of perishable gains? Am I willing to radically reorient my life to focus on *inheritance which is imperishable* (1 Peter 1:4)?

*The harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few* (Matthew 9:37). *Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel* (1 Corinthians 9:16). We are called to be his



labourers – his teammates – his task-force. We too are invited: *you go into the vineyard too* (Matthew 20:7). *You give them something to eat* (Matthew 14:16). St Teresa of Avila vividly reminds us, ‘Christ has no body but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes with which he looks with compassion on the world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands with which he blesses all the world.’ We are called to be the visible hands and feet of Christ on earth. We are called to be his light in this world engulfed in darkness.

Am I willing to be the spark of sunshine in the lives of those around me? Am I willing to leave behind a touch of love to make a difference in someone’s life? Am I willing to be transformed by grace and set apart my life for his holy purpose? Am I willing to be crazy for God – *a fool for Christ* (1 Corinthians 4:10) – to *turn the world upside down* (Acts.17:6)? In response to the urgency of salvation of souls – may we too be stirred by heavenly madness and abandon our lives for his divine mission. *May Christ’s love compel us* (1 Corinthians 5:14) to *fulfil our ministry* (2 Timothy 4:5) on earth. Lord, help us to raise ourselves to bloom where we are planted, not for our vainglory, but for your greater glory. Amen. ■■

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Anil Israel lives in Mannheim, Germany, with his wife Sunita and their 5 children.

## FAITHOGRAPHIC

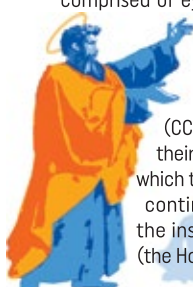
# Word of God and the Catholic Church – History and Treasure



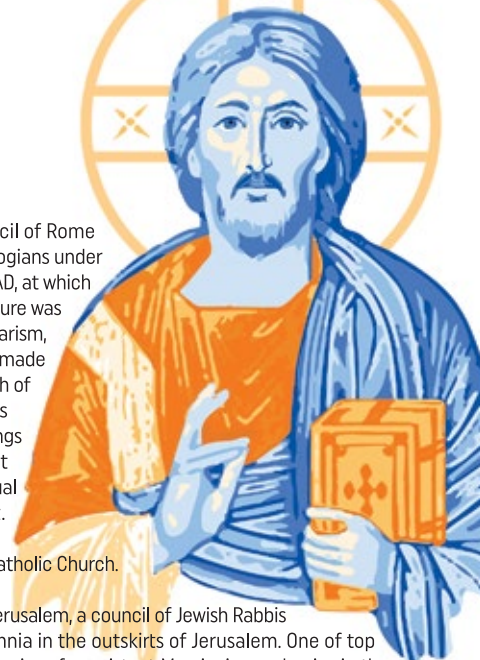
A monthly infographic by **Tena Conil**, illuminating the mysteries of our faith and values, one pixel at a time.

## TWIN FONTS OF THE SACRED DEPOSIT OF THE WORD

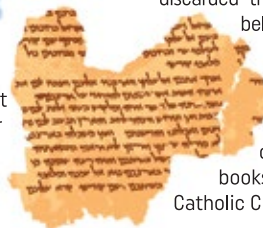
*The Word of God living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword... and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart* (Hebrews 4: 12) didn't originate as a book. It's a staggering and miraculous, millennia-long divine project comprising 73 books, authored by over 35 divinely inspired authors from over 4 millennia. Scripture developed in the Old Testament (OT) times following a three-phase pattern. First an event would occur, which over time passed into oral tradition (recounted verbally down the generations) and much later was written down as books. Jesus never left us any manuscripts and the New Testament (NT) too, comprised of eye-witness accounts, speeches and letters preached by the apostles across the world, was written down as books only centuries later. The Church therefore understands this as two inseparable wholes: 'Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture (which) make up a single sacred deposit of the Word of God' (CCC 97). What Christ entrusted to the apostles, they handed on by their preaching. This oral transmission is known as 'Sacred Tradition,' which through the unbroken lineage of papacy and priestly preaching, continues to this day. When they were later written down under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit it is known as 'Sacred Scripture' (the Holy Bible).



To address this crisis the Council of Rome – a Synod of Bishops and theologians under Pope St. Damasus I met in 382 AD, at which all the available Christian literature was submitted. By her God-given charism, it was the Catholic Church who made the divine discernment on which of these were divinely inspired as 'Canon' (rule of faith). The writings of some Church Fathers like St Irenaeus – although good spiritual reading, did not make the cut. So every Bible user submits to the teaching authority of the Catholic Church.



After the 70 AD destruction of Jerusalem, a council of Jewish Rabbis gathered at a place called Jamnia in the outskirts of Jerusalem. One of top challenges was to counter centuries of consistent Messianic prophecies in the Hebrew scripture (and their fulfilment in Christ), which gave impetus to the meteoric rise of Christianity. The current Canon of Jewish scriptural books (which discarded the books whose original Hebrew versions had not survived) is believed to have been promulgated at this council. Following the 16th century Reformation schism the Protestants also adopted this list of OT books. This is how the Protestant Bible has only 66 out of the 73 Biblical books. The discovery of Dead Sea Scrolls in 1946 (manuscripts of the Qumran community dating back to the time of Jesus; fragment shown here) which contained the discarded books in original Hebrew, vindicated the Biblical discernment of the Catholic Church.

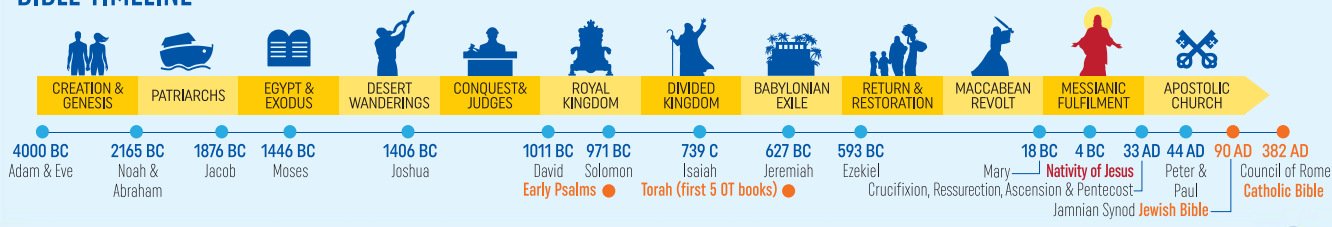


## GUARDIAN OF THE OLD, DISCERNER OF THE NEW

After the Resurrection, as Christianity – the young, new religion burst out of Palestine, rapidly spreading into the known world, demand for Christian literature soared. So along with the authentic writings, spurious authors sprang up everywhere trying to cash in on the demand (known as 'Gnostic' literature, some of these still survive).

## BIBLE TIMELINE

● Chronological Biblical Event ● Approximate period of occurrence ● Canonical promulgation of written Biblical books



A recommended reading list comprising a simplified, chronological arrangement of Biblical books (based on Jeff Cavins' Great Adventure Bible Timeline) is as follows: OT: Genesis, Job, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Ruth, Joshua, Judges, 1-Samuel, 2-Samuel, 1-Chronicles, 1-Kings, 2-Chronicles, Ecclesiastes, 2-Kings, Hosea, Amos, Jonah, Micah, Isaiah, Tobit, Joel, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Baruch, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Daniel, Judith, Lamentations, Obadiah, Ezra, Haggai, Zechariah, Nehemiah, Esther, Malachi, 1-Maccabees, Sirach, 2-Maccabees and Wisdom. The books of Psalms, Song of Songs and Proverbs have a stand-alone status (since they are not tied to historic events) and may hence be read anywhere alongside the list. NT: John, Mark, Matthew, Luke, Acts, Revelation (the content of this book too has a stand-alone status), Romans, 1-Corinthians, 2-Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, James, Colossians, 1-Peter, 1-Thessalonians, 2-Peter, 1-John, 2-Thessalonians, 1-Timothy, 2-John, 3-John, Jude, 2-Timothy, Titus, Philemon and Hebrews.

## AUTHENTIC INTERPRETER OF GOD'S WORD

'Sola Scriptura' (Latin: by scripture alone) – a heresy with no biblical basis, still held by most of our separated brethren argue that the written Word of God is the sole source of authority for Christian faith and practice. The Bible however says *The church of the living God (is) the pillar and foundation of truth.* (1 Timothy 3: 15). Scriptural theology flourished in the setting of divine Liturgy as evidenced especially in the words of the Holy Mass which celebrates the physical presence of the incarnate Word of God. As the guardian of the sacred Deposit of the Word, 'The task of interpreting the Word of God authentically has been entrusted solely to the Magisterium of the Church – that is, to the Pope and to the bishops in communion with him' (CCC 100).





## SOUNDREPLY



MOVIE

## FATHER STU

suffering, and quite rightly so. Yet, when the Son of God became man, he deemed it so necessary to embrace and become one with suffering in his life and death and urged his disciples to follow his path – the narrow path that leads to salvation – so much so that the blueprint of Christian living in Matthew 5, the Beatitudes, is primarily about embracing suffering and carrying one's daily crosses. Of course, God neither causes nor wills human suffering, but suffering is all around as long as we live in this fallen world, corrupted by sin.

*Father Stu* is a biopic written and directed by Rosalind Ross, based on the story of Father Stuart Long, who died in 2014, aged 50. Mark Wahlberg is masterful in portraying the title role of Stu – an angry, temperamental boxer who eventually becomes a priest. Stuart Long is a middle-aged amateur boxer from Montana, who is told by the doctors to stop boxing as his body cannot take it anymore. Stu has a troubled relationship with his estranged alcoholic father, Bill and though his mother is supportive, he still carries deep wounds from the death of his only brother Stephen in their childhood. Not wanting to take up any odd blue-collar job, Stu decides to travel to Hollywood to try his hand at becoming an actor.

And in Hollywood, working at a grocery store to make ends meet while he waits for his big break, he meets Carmen, a Hispanic Catholic girl, who is apparently 'as Catholic as the cross itself'. Stu couldn't care less about God, but his devotion to Carmen is resolute and

Pain and suffering is not something that humanity yearns for – quite the contrary; all our human instinct impels us to repel and reject pain and suffering, and quite rightly so. Yet, when the Son of God became man, he deemed it so necessary to embrace and become one with suffering in his life and death and urged his disciples to follow his path.

although Carmen initially rebuffs his advances, she eventually agrees to date Stu, on condition that Stu become Catholic – a proposition to which Stu readily agrees as for him, it is just a hoop to jump through to achieve his goal of marrying Carmen. And so he begins RCIA and at the following Easter Vigil Mass, Stuart Long becomes a Catholic – still mad at God for the death of Stephen his brother as well as for all the other misfortunes that has beset his life.

Shortly after his baptism, while riding on his motorbike having had a few drinks, Stu has a horrible accident and is on the verge of death – but has a profound miraculous God experience before and through the accident. Contrary to the expectations of the doctors,

There is a popular story about St Teresa of Avila, which has its many versions, and one of them goes like this; once when Teresa and her companion sisters were going on a mission trip to establish some new convents, they had to cross a river which was deep with strong currents. Being the indomitable spirit that she was, she led on crossing the river on foot, but could not because of the strong currents and lost her footing. She beseeched the Lord to help her in her quandary, to which the Lord apparently said, 'Do not complain daughter, for such is how I treat my friends.' And thence, we are told Teresa retorted – 'Ah Lord, no wonder you have so few!'

Pain and suffering is not something that humanity yearns for – quite the contrary; all our human instinct impels us to repel and reject pain and

REVIEW BY  
Joseph Anthraper

Joseph lives in Southampton, UK with Mahima, his wife and their 4 kids.

## SOUNDREPLY



he makes a full, inexplicable recovery, and this miracle sets him on a journey of religious discovery, with Stu finally deciding to become a priest.

Overcoming obstacle after obstacle with his characteristic tenacity and wit, he is eventually accepted as a seminarian for the diocese of Helena. When all is well and he finally seems to have found the purpose of his life, Stu suddenly falls ill in the seminary and is diagnosed with 'inclusion body myositis', a rare progressive muscle disorder, and his whole world comes crashing down – a knockout punch for a onetime boxer, from which it would take a double portion of grace to recover and come through!

As he becomes more and more connected and attuned to God, although physically he is going through pain and suffering as he is fighting this terminal degenerative disease, we also see grace working a deep inner healing in the person of Stuart Long – bringing healing even into his relationships, especially the relationship with his father. The father-wound that initially portrayed itself as rage and anger in his younger days, and progressed into apathy as he became older and embraced Catholicism, has now transformed into love, with neither father nor son knowing when or how – and the way the movie portrays the transitions is delightful.

Father Stu is a beautifully crafted movie – witty and humorous all along, neck-deep in fallen human nature – especially the corruption of our fatherhood, and yet portraying the redeeming nature of sanctifying grace; with the end product being a profoundly kerygmatic piece of art. ■■

# Chandeliers

## ✪ *Francimary writes to Jesus*

My Jesus! My Love!  
Here I am. Thank you for bringing me back.

I was baffled. I didn't know what to do. It was an agony. I was overwhelmed with thoughts. People ask me about my vocation. I have no answer to them. I ask it myself. I ask it to you. I'm left with no answer. I thought the crisis would cost me my life. But, no! I was mistaken. You are my mighty Father who has plans and thoughts for me. Thank you Pa!

And thanks a ton to St Rita of Cascia whom you assigned to help me in this turmoil. You brought her life to me. She went through a plethora of trials and struggles. And now I gather that it was for me too. She spoke to me from her life.

Margherita Lotti, our beloved Rita was born in 1381 in Roccaporena, Italy. Something unusual happened on the day after her baptism. The little child was surrounded by a swarm of white bees, which went in and out of her infant mouth without hurting her. Her family was surprised at it. She, at a young age requested her parents for permission to enter a nunnery and become a religious. But they made her marry at the age of twelve an immoral, short-tempered man named Paolo Mancini. He manhandled and mistreated her. He was a womaniser and had many enemies. Oh dear Jesus, how much your little pearl suffered those years! She entered holy matrimony out of compulsion. It wasn't her dream. But she prayed earnestly and ardently for her husband and won his soul. He became a better person. It took years for him to change. But then, Paolo was soon killed. Rita didn't give up on you, my Lord. She publicly pardoned his murderers.

Dear Pa, you had a different plan which none would ever dream of. So, things happened as you had scripted at



*She entered holy matrimony out of compulsion. It wasn't her dream. But she prayed earnestly and ardently for her husband and won his soul. He became a better person. It took years for him to change.*

By Jisha John

the beginning of time. Rita had to enter another vocation, something strange and uncommon. The story took a new turn. Paolo's brother Bernardo wasn't ready to forgive the murderers of his brother. He insisted Rita's sons, Giovanni Antonio and Paulo Maria join the feud. Rita tried to convince her sons but it was in vain. She prayed to you and asked you to take her sons back before they committed any mortal sin. It is quite impossible for a mother to pray so but Rita was sure of eternal life and she knew that the soul was valuable than anything worldly. Give us this wisdom, dear Jesus.

Rita's sons died after a year because of dysentery. You heard her prayer and answered her. Rita wished to become a nun. She was rejected when she asked permission to join the Monastery of St Mary Magdalene in Cascia. The authorities were sure of her good character but they hesitated because of the family feud which still continued in her husband's family – their rivalry against the Chiqui family. When Rita continued to request, she was asked to find a solution to end the feud between the Chiquis and Mancinis. And from that moment, Rita sought the intercession of her beloved saints, John the Baptist, Augustine of Hippo and Nicholas of Tolentino. This is something I have always tried. And it works! Thank you for the team of saints. They help a lot. Yes Jesus! I just read your thought. I know it. You wish me to be a saint. You wish me to be holy. Help me my dear. I can't make it without you. Oh! Let's come back to the story. Rita's prayers were answered. It was around then that the bubonic plague hit Italy. Bernardo Mancini was infected and he finally ended the feud with the Chiqui family.

There happened the moment! St Rita of Cascia entered the monastery at the age of 36. And it was a mass and heroic entry. She levitated into the cloister with

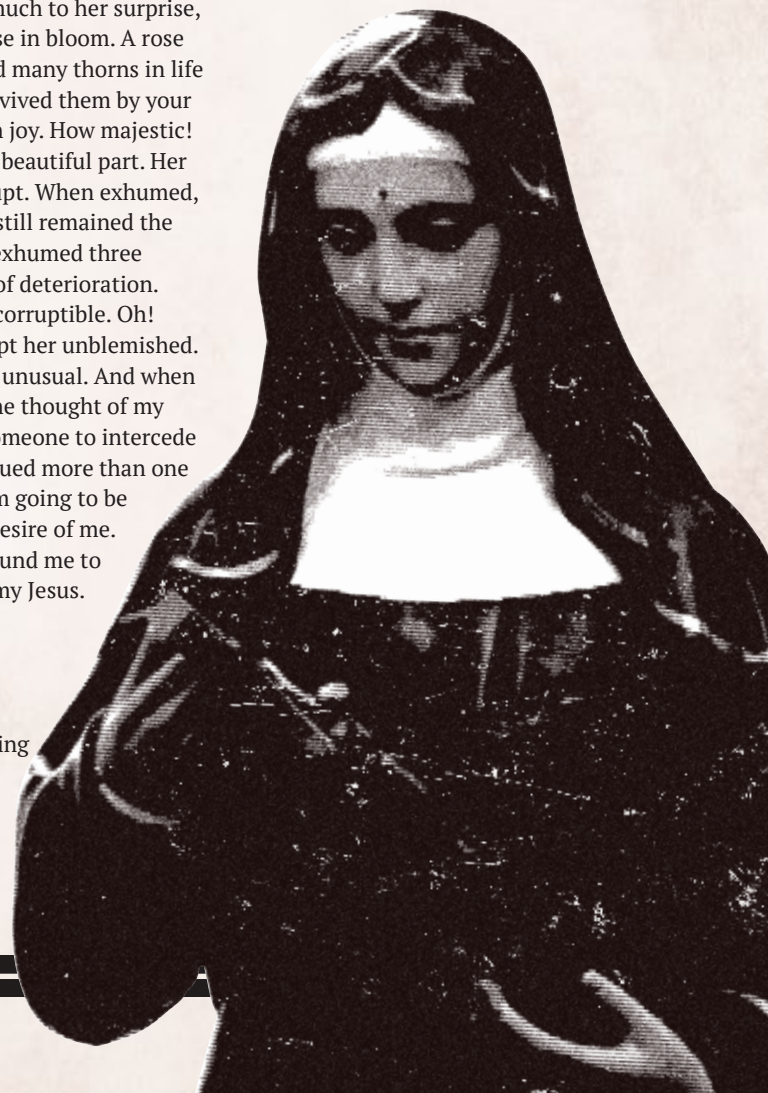
the help of her patron saints. Hats off to their assistance! And here are my kisses to the Director of the scene! You are awesome, my Lord.

Rita was very passionate about Your Passion. She implored you to make her suffer like you, our Divine Saviour. A wound appeared on her forehead as if you had allowed a thorn from your crown to pierce her. This was a deep wound and it never healed. She suffered it until her death in 1457. Rita was bedridden for months from tuberculosis. A cousin visited her and asked whether she needed something from her ancestral house. Rita wished for a rose. Her cousin didn't expect to get any roses for her as it was not the season. But much to her surprise, there was a single rose in bloom. A rose for your rose who had many thorns in life but her little soul survived them by your grace and bloomed in joy. How majestic! And here is the most beautiful part. Her body is found incorrupt. When exhumed, her forehead wound still remained the same. Her body was exhumed three times, with no signs of deterioration. She is declared an incorruptible. Oh! Goosebumps! You kept her unblemished.

Her story is really unusual. And when I'm perplexed with the thought of my vocation, here I've someone to intercede for me, one who pursued more than one vocation. Anyway, I'm going to be holy, as holy as you desire of me. I need you in and around me to achieve it, my Love, my Jesus.

Here I am,  
Your little pumpkin.  
With lots of love,  
Francimary of Forgiving  
Jesus

***She prayed to you and asked you to take her sons back before they committed any mortal sin. It is quite impossible for a mother to pray so but Rita was sure of eternal life and she knew that the soul was valuable than anything worldly. Give us this wisdom, dear Jesus.***



# NewsWatch



## Pope Francis visits Bahrain

**P**ope Francis visited Bahrain from 3-6 November and met with Muslim leaders in the Gulf-kingdom on Friday with a message that Catholics and Muslims alike are called to work to promote peace in the world.

It is vital that 'fundamental human rights are not violated but promoted,' the Pope said on Thursday at the Sakhir Royal Palace following his arrival in the Gulf Arab state, where the Shia Muslim opposition and rights groups accuse the Sunni monarchy of overseeing human rights abuses, a charge authorities deny. Religious freedom should be 'complete and not limited to freedom of worship,' he said.

The Pope was welcomed by Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

Pope Francis made history as the first Pope to visit the Kingdom of Bahrain when his flight landed at Sakhir Air Base in the city of Awali. Francis was also the first Pope to visit other Muslim-majority countries, including the United Arab Emirates in 2019 and Iraq in 2021.

During the Pope's second trip to the Arabian Peninsula, he spoke about the importance of religious freedom and the role of women in public life.

On 4th November, Pope Francis addressed the 'Bahrain Dialogue Forum: East and West for Human Coexistence' organised by the UAE-based Muslim Council of Elders, followed by a private meeting with Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayeb, grand imam of the prestigious Cairo-based Al-Azhar, Egypt's highest Sunni institution.

Friday's 'prayer for peace' was held at the cavernous Our Lady of Arabia Cathedral in Awali, which seats over 2,000 people and opened in December 2021. It was built to serve Bahrain's approximately 80,000 Catholics, mainly workers from southern Asia, including India and the Philippines.

On Saturday 5th November, Pope Francis lead Mass at Bahrain's national stadium before a crowd of nearly 30,000 people. Pope Francis also presided over a prayer meeting with Catholic clergy and others on Sunday before his return to Rome.

## SCOTLAND'S CATHOLIC CHURCH OPPOSES LOOSENING RULES ON CHANGING GENDER



**LEICESTER**, United Kingdom – Scotland's Catholic Church says it is concerned about the Scottish Government's Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill, which was debated on October 27th.

The proposed legislation would remove the current requirement for a diagnosis of gender dysphoria and reduce the requirement to have 'lived in' the 'acquired' gender from two years to three months. It also seeks to reduce the age at which someone can apply for a Gender Recognition Certificate from 18 to 16 years.

Scotland's First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, said the change in law is to make gender transitioning 'less degrading, intrusive and traumatic.'

'The Bill, which overrides biological reality, raises serious concerns about the safety, health and wellbeing of children and vulnerable people, and safe spaces for women and girls,' said a statement by the Catholic Parliamentary Office of the Scottish Bishops' Conference.

By **Ajith Jacob**, Stuttgart, Germany

## The synod document's statements about ordination of women, LGBTQ issues, and the liturgy – framework for the continental stage

**E**nlarge the space of your tent,' is the title of the 44-page working document – *instrumentum laboris* or DTC (*Documento per la Tappa Continentale*) – for the Synod on Synodality's Continental Phase, which is meant to spark dialogue and arouse feedback. At the heart of the synodal process is 'a Church capable of radical inclusion,' according to the key document released by the Vatican to guide the Synod on Synodality. 'It is not a conclusive document because the process is far from being finished,' it says.

Catholic dioceses around the world have been asked to respond to the document by highlighting what intuitions resonate and what divergences emerge with the reality of the Church in their continent.

Pope Francis has also announced his decision to extend the Synod on Synodality from October 2023 to October 2024.

Here is what the document has to say about some of the key issues:

### **Ordination of Women**

**64:** *'After careful listening, many reports ask that the Church continue its discernment in relation to a range of specific questions: the active role of women in the governing structures of Church bodies, the possibility for women with adequate training to preach in parish settings, and a female diaconate. Much greater diversity of opinion was expressed on the subject of priestly ordination for women, which some reports call for, while others consider a closed issue.'*

### **LGBTQIA+ and polygamous inclusion**

**39.** *'Among those who ask for a more meaningful dialogue and a more welcoming space we also find those who, for various reasons, feel a tension between belonging to the Church and their own loving relationships, such as: remarried divorcees, single parents, people living in a polygamous marriage, LGBTQ people, etc.'*

### **Liturgy**

**91.** *'Many reports strongly encourage the implementation of a synodal style of liturgical celebration that allows for the active participation of all the faithful in welcoming all differences, valuing all ministries, and recognizing all charisms. The synodal listening of the Churches records many issues to be addressed in this direction: from rethinking a liturgy too concentrated on the celebrant, to the modalities of active participation of the laity, to the access of women to ministerial roles.'*

### **Synodal governance**

**71.** *'The synodal journey has brought out a number of tensions ... We should not be afraid of them, but articulate them in a process of constant communal discernment, so as to harness them as a source of energy without them becoming destructive: only in this way will it be possible to continue walking together, rather than each going their own way.'*

The document can be accessed at the synod website, [www.synod.va](http://www.synod.va).

The above document is for discussions in the current 'Continental Phase'. The final, universal phase will begin with the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops at the Vatican in October 2023 and continue in October 2024.

# time out



Take a picture of the solved image and send it to [quiztime@jykairosmedia.org](mailto:quiztime@jykairosmedia.org) before 25th December 2022. The winner will be rewarded with 1 year subscription of Kairos Global

## Hidden Objects

Find 10 hidden objects in the image below



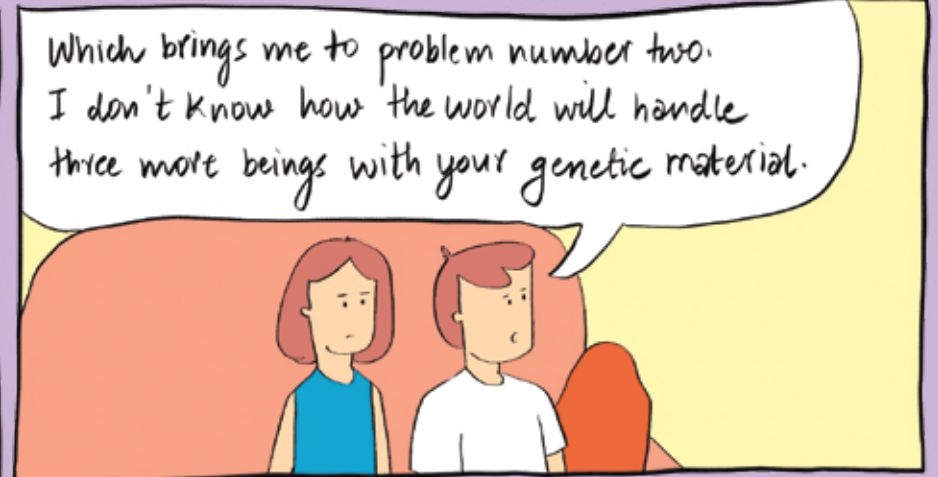
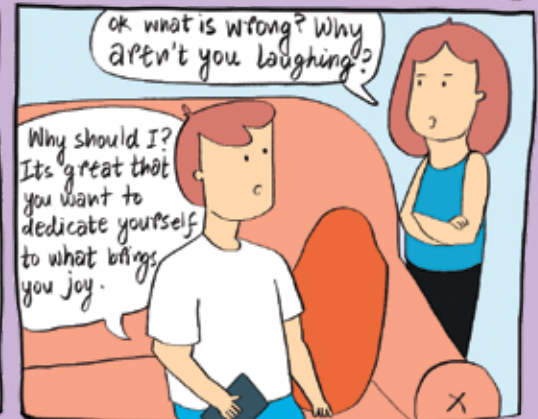
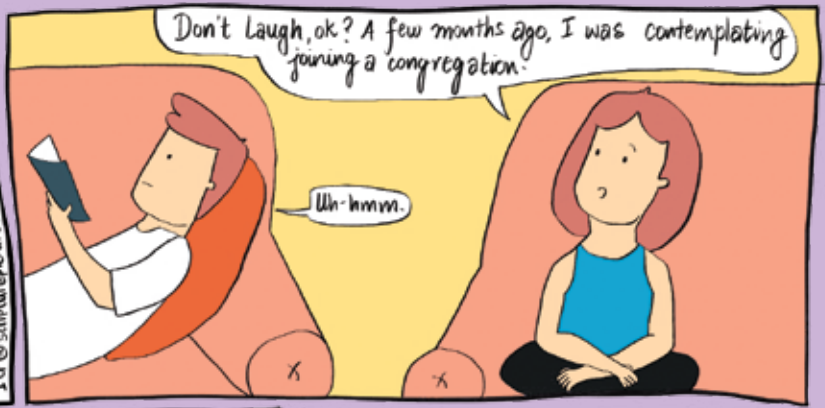
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