



“They are trees planted by streams of water; they bear fruit; their leaves do not wither; in all that they do they prosper.” Ps 1:3

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The Theme for 2019: “GROW IN HOLINESS”

Heb:12:14

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We are more than Conquerors, we are Victorious in Jesus Christ

Most of us have this common misconception that living a Christian life is an automatic pass from the adversities of this world as most of us may quote this scripture.(John 10:10) *“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly”* Even though the Lord wants us to have abundant life, the fact remains that adversity is part of living in a fallen, imperfect world. God's Word warns us to expect tribulation while on earth (John 16:33). *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”* The question is, how do we respond to it, How do we claim our abundant life in Christ in the midst of trials and tribulations?

As weak humans we have a tendency to look for a way of escape when adversity comes. (*Proverbs 24:10*) *If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength being small, We even plead with the Lord-* "take away our problem and set us free". Jesus too made such a prayer at Gethsemane yet he didn't let it stop him from doing the will of His father The Lord makes it clear that withdrawing from adversity is not the answer. Instead of self-pity, despairing, feeling overwhelmed or sinking in hopelessness, we can bounce back and be victorious.

The Lord calls believers to be 'more than conquerors'. Who is a conqueror? A conqueror is one who is grounded in God's Word; victorious over the enemy; presses through opposition; looks at problems as opportunities; does not quit; is persistent, depends on the Lord. God's Word tells us that life is a battle (*1 Samuel 17:47*) "*...and that all this assembly may know that the Lord does not save by sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's*" (*II Chronicles 20:15*). He said: "*....This is what the LORD says to you: 'Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's.'*" so let us be rest assured that the Lord has already won our battles. We are 'more than conquerors' even while we are in the midst of a challenge.

The key to living an abundant victorious life is claiming this scripture (***Romans 8:31-39***) as a promise of victory over our problems 'through Him'. We have the assurance that whatever situation comes our way, we can overcome through Christ. We live with this sure confidence that God loves us no matter what and He will never leave us nor forsake us (*Matthew 28:20, Hebrews 13:5, Joshua 1:5*). When we experience this kind of relationship with Christ, we do not fear disasters, bad news or things that may come up unexpectedly. As we learn to rely on His strength, we can live from strength to strength instead of weakness to weakness. (*Matthew 5:3*) "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*" When we are broken and weak we are strong in Christ for he is our strength and joy. He is that Good shepherd who reaches out to the one lost, broken and weak.

When Jesus died on the cross, sin was crucified. Jesus has overcome death

and sin through his resurrection, our life and victory is guaranteed (*John 1:12*) “*But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God.*” As children of God, we are more than conquerors through His grace who loves us through difficulties, trials and distresses. We are prince and princesses of the Most High God. We are heirs of His kingdom. As we emerge victorious through the battle, we too with the Lord are able to overcome and become stronger than before it. When we believe, trust and give thanks to God for all He provides, we experience a victory that is overwhelming, incredible and awesome.

The life of abundance comes from the awareness that we live by a power greater than ourselves (*I John 4:4*). *Little children, you are from God, and have conquered them; for the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.* By the power of the Holy Spirit, we are not controlled by our circumstance or situation. We are not fed, led or defeated, by our circumstance but rather we create new circumstances. Because we are a spirit connected to the Holy Spirit, we have within us a sense of power to overcome all limits (*Ephesians 3:16*) *I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit.* What a great relief when we understand that circumstances and emotions no longer control us, instead, we choose every thought and attitude and make it obedient to God's Word (*II Corinthians 10:5*).

When you think about your past, what events do you remember? Are you a slave to your past by playing the same memories over and over in your mind? Do you feel bound by something bad you have done or what someone has done to you? Do you tend to think that because you have been like 'that' in the past, you can never be anything else? You don't even try to move forward? This kind of thinking is false and destructive. The people in the Old Testament had what they called memory stones; (*one of the biblical examples to understand a memorial stone.in Genesis 28: 10-22, when Jacob set a pillar in Bethel to commemorate a powerful vision of God that he experienced while sleeping there*) These memorial stones served the purpose of recalling all the victorious things God did in their lives. It is important to remind ourselves to focus on our victories, may we too build memorial stones recalling our past victories.

We all have had setbacks, and if we meditate on them, it drains us of valuable energy; it steals our confidence and joy. If we dwell on past failures and disappointments, they become more real than the promises of God. Dwelling on past sin creates a block to God's power, freedom and peace. The more we focus on the things of the old, the more powerful they become, overshadowing the 'new thing', and so the cycle continues to accelerate and demands a repeat performance. But, when we focus on our victories, it builds strength and confidence. Hence let us not magnify our problems rather magnify the Lord. It feeds our faith and gives us a reason to praise and glorify God.

We need to be filled with the Holy Spirit in order to Overcome Adversity and live a victorious life over sin?"

When the Bible speaks of us being “filled with the Holy Spirit,” the meaning is that our whole character – our mind, will, and affections – is to be animated and governed by God’s Spirit rather than by the sinful nature.

So if you want your **mind** “filled with the Spirit,” read, study, meditate, believe and obey God's Word, to learn to think biblically, since the Bible is God’s Word given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. God's Word will prosper us. To prosper is having an inner peace that allows us to respond to life situations with a faith that works by love (*Galatians 5:6*). The Holy Spirit is our inner peace, drawing more of Him to us. The Holy Spirit is the total provision of our abundance. We need to put on the mind of Christ and ask ourselves what would Jesus do in our situation?

If you want your **heart** to be filled with the Spirit, then you should worship God, you should gather with God’s people in church and be submissive to the work of God in you by his Spirit and through his Word. Prayer is the best gateway to God. His graces and mercies flow into our life when we make prayer a priority. Develop an intimate time of personal prayer with the Lord to guide and lead you.

If you want your **will** to become spiritual, you need to bring your choices to God in prayer. Seek and discern his will in your life, always giving him first priority. Let us learn from Jesus who even when things were tough

"Our old history ends with the cross; our new history begins with our resurrection."

said “ let it be done to me according to your will.” The moment we stop waiting for perfect circumstances and begin to release thankfulness for the present, God's abundance opens up the doors of heaven. God's Will is to give thanks for all things; this is our true power (*I Thessalonians 5:18*).

What we are talking about is a spiritual and Christian lifestyle, Paul summarizes in *Galatians 5:16* “So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.” In this sense, we certainly want to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and should pray that God will pour down his Spirit. It means calling out to God with a heart dependent on his grace. Call upon the name of Jesus. His name is the all inclusive name of God (*Acts 4:12*). There is no human need to which God's name does not answer. Jesus Christ's name was given to us to speak His provision and sufficiency into our lives. God truly is in control. He knows what He is doing and He will have the final glorious victory over all things.

-Core Team member

12 tricks anti-Christ will use to destroy Christians as laid out by Ven. Fulton J. Sheen contd.. from last issue

Sheen urged his hearers to take concrete action against the evils of the day by tapping into the spiritual resources given by God for battle.

As Christians we must realize that a moment of crisis is not a time of despair, but of opportunity. We were born in crisis, in defeat – the Crucifixion. Once we recognize we are under Divine Wrath, we become eligible for Divine Mercy. The very disciplines of God create hope. The thief on the right came to God by a crucifixion.

What Catholics must do to survive the evil day:

- Catholics ought to stir up their faith, hang a crucifix in their homes to remind them that they have a cross to carry.
- Gather the family together every night to recite the rosary.
- Go to daily Mass.
- Make the Holy Hour daily, in the presence of our Eucharistic Lord, particularly in parishes where pastors are conscious of the world's

need, and therefore conducts services of reparation.

- Those who have the faith had better keep in the state of grace and those who have neither had better begin to find out what they mean, for in the coming age there will be only one way to stop your trembling knees, and that will be to get down on them and pray.
- Pray to St. Michael, [saying to him]: O Michael, Prince of the Morning, who conquered Lucifer who would make himself a god. When the world once cracked because of a sneer in heaven, you rose up and dragged down from the seven heavens the Pride that would look down on the Most High. [So now marshal the world and purge of rot and riot. Rule through the world till all the world would be quiet. Only establish when the world is broken what is unbroken, is the Word.]
- Pray to Our Lady, saying to her: It was to you as the Woman that was given the power to crush the head of the serpent who lied to men that they would be like unto gods. May you who did find Christ when He was lost for three days, find Him again, for our world has lost Him. Give to the senile incontinence of our verbiage the Word. And, as you did form the Word [made flesh] in your womb, form Him in our hearts. Lady of the Blue of Heaven, in these dark days light our lamps. Give back to us the light of the world, that a light may shine, even in these days of darkness.

Source :lifesitenews

My perspective of Lent

The season of Lent has mega importance for us, Christians. It marks the time for the celebration of Easter that is paving a beautiful way for it, through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus. It is a period of forty days commencing on Ash Wednesday and ends up on Holy Saturday.



It is a period of fasting, repentance, reflecting on our daily lives, trying to transform ourselves letting go of all that is stacked up within, making us unholy and thereby withdrawing ourselves from God. God so loved the world that He sent His only son into this world, to die for us. According to Romans 4 :6: 5 - 6 since we have become one with him, in dying as he did,

"Easter was when Hope in person surprised the whole world by coming forward from the future into the present."

in the same way we shall be one with him, by being raised to life, as he was. And we know that our old being has been put to death, with Christ on his cross, in order that the power of the sinful self might be destroyed, so that we no longer be the slaves of sin.

So, then let's renew our minds, our hearts not allowing Jesus's sacrifice to go in vain accepting Him as our Lord of Lords, Our Saviour, Our Master, our Prince of Peace. Let's nail on the Holy cross of Jesus, all our weaknesses, all those areas in our life, that keeps us away from establishing, a right relationship with God. Yes, "We hail thee Our Saviour and Lord. Thy cross ever be adored."

-by Sheryl Carvalho

Peace Be with you A Testimony

The Weapons of our Warfare are Mighty to the pulling down of Strongholds!!!!

I have always been a lover of music and as a young girl I learned to play the piano. My parents often encouraged me to take part in competitions, the good side of this was when I won I was very happy; I usually got the first or second place. But the down side was that a subtle fear crept in whenever I had to face an audience. This fear lingered on and like a bad seed, it grew with me creeping into my adult years as well and in time I stopped playing the piano altogether for several years. It was only when I made Jesus my Lord and Savior many years later that I realized that I had to get rid of this crippling fear because I read in His Word that **"God has not given to us a spirit of fear but of power, love and sound mind"** (2 Timothy 1:7) and then again I read - **I can do all things with Jesus who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:13)**

The Lord is so gentle and so He started giving me opportunities to address these fears...the first opportunity came when I volunteered to play for a small prayer group of 50 people on a 4 octave keyboard..... I remember how I used to keep repeating the Bible verses and then step out in faith to play. The second opportunity I got was as a teacher in St. Joseph's Convent, I would play for the school concerts, often with trembling hands. They say the best way to conquer one's fears is "by doing it, afraid" and

"The story of Easter is the story of God's wonderful window of divine surprise."

then the fear ceases to bind one. Yes in those initial years the Lord healed a lot of my inner wounds related to this area. I enjoyed the freedom I experienced in Jesus and I was so grateful to the Lord for this new-found freedom. He never let me down, He was always with me and He took me from strength to strength.

In 2006 I came to Muscat. I was eager to serve the Lord in the Music Ministry but having a small child of 2 and half years I was not able to commit to it. My second baby was born just a few years later and with that my schedule became even busier. So because of circumstances my chances for playing for the Lord in church or at a prayer meeting was reduced to zero. Years went by and I hardly ever played in public... You see I have a husband who is an excellent musician so that became my biggest excuse for not playing. Little did I realize that years were passing by and it was as if I had given up playing altogether.

I joined the music ministry last April, I was thrilled to be a part of it, I would enjoy singing but I would always be hesitant to play the keys. I would often make all kinds of excuses and I realized that because of the long break from playing, I had kind of lost my confidence to play in public.

One thing I never stopped doing though, was praising and worshipping the Lord in my daily prayer time with the keyboard... I so loved doing this and I enjoyed this time with just the Lord and me. I could be myself and I do believe that the Lord was readying me for what was to come...!

This year for the Maundy Thursday service the MIPC choir was given the charge. There was no other pianist available as Ryan had to conduct the choir... It was a unanimous decision that I should accompany the choir on the piano. Initially I was happy, but as the practices went by... I realized that this was more than what I had envisaged as some of the hymns were tricky with complicated chords. There were intros that had to be played for almost 15 hymns and such little time!! Not to mention the huge crowd that would attend the service.

As the day approached all I could do was trust God!!! During the practices I would often make mistakes and this would make it even more difficult to trust the Lord! The only thing that kept me going was my daily prayer time

and meditating on God's Word. It's true that the Word of God is the only offensive weapon in the armour of God and as I spoke it over my circumstance the devil had to flee. The day came and I was quite nervous, I went into my room shut the door and cried out to the Lord. It is the humble who are able to cast their burden onto the Lord, the proud of heart find it difficult to depend on the Lord. I realized how much pride I had but the Lord was so merciful, in worship I read these words from the Bible **"Peace Be with you"** **John 20:19**. This one verse put all my fears to rest. The Lord told me go in my peace and glorify me in your playing and singing. I did just that and the outcome was a miracle!! The choir sang beautifully and everything went smoothly. I really enjoyed playing that evening. The Lord put such a peace and joy in my heart, my fear just vanished as I played. The devil is a liar. We must never listen to the voice of Fear. For **"Those who put their hope in the Lord will never be put to shame"**. **Psalm 25:3**

-Ann Pinto

Pondering over Easter Vigil Service

An Easter Vigil, also called the Paschal Vigil or the Great Vigil of Easter, is the most beautiful liturgy in the Roman Catholic Church. The Easter Vigil takes place after sundown on the night before Easter (i.e., Holy Saturday). The Easter Vigil is the high point of the Easter triduum celebrating the passion and resurrection of Jesus. With a rich display of symbols, rites and readings, the church in worship expresses her faith in the mystery that brings her into being. Although celebrated on Holy Saturday evening, the Easter vigil liturgy that marks the beginning of Easter. We are awaiting our master's return with our lamps full and burning, so that he will find us awake and seat us at his table (Lke12:35).

The vigil is divided into four parts:

1. Service of Light (Light conquers darkness):

The atmosphere in the church is different, the holy water fonts are drained, all the lights are out, the tabernacle is empty. The service begins outside the church. A new fire is lit and blessed.

"If Easter says anything to us today, it says this: You can put truth in a grave but it won't stay there."

A Paschal Candle is prepared with these words while the priest marks the candle:

Christ yesterday and today (*vertical arm of the cross*) the Beginning and the End (*horizontal arm of the cross*) the Alpha (*alpha above the cross*) and the Omega (*omega below the cross*) All time belongs to him (*numeral 2 in upper left corner of cross*) and all the ages (*numeral 1 in upper right corner of cross*) To him be glory and power (*numeral 9 in lower left corner*) through every age and forever. Amen (*numeral 0 in lower right corner*) Then the priest inserts five grains of incense into the candle in the form of a cross, meanwhile saying: 1. By his holy 2. and glorious wounds, 3. may Christ the Lord 4. guard us 5. and protect us. Amen.

The priest lights the candle from the new fire, saying: May the light of Christ, rising in glory, dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds. The candle is carried with loving reverence and lyrically praised in word and song, is a sign of Christ, "**the light of the world,**" and celebrates the victory of light over darkness that humanity has ever longed for. Everyone lights their candle from the Easter candle. This follows the glorious Easter song of the Catholic Church: the *Exsultet* (Easter proclamation). This magnificent hymn, which is remarkable for its lyric beauty and profound symbolism, announces the dignity and meaning of the mystery of Easter; it tells of man's sin, of God's mercy, and of the great love of the Redeemer for mankind, admonishing us in turn to thank the Trinity for all the graces that have been lavished upon us.

2. Liturgy of the Word (God's love endures forever)

During the Easter vigil, nine readings are provided: seven Old Testament and two New Testament. Not all are required to be read due to time constraints, but at least three Old Testament readings must be read. These readings help us meditate on the wonderful works of God for his people since the beginning of time and ends with the story of Jesus' resurrection. The Gloria is sung before the reading of the Epistle of the Romans, and the Alleluia is sung before the Gospel.

3) Liturgy of Baptism

During the liturgy of Baptism the water is blessed, new members are brought into the Church through baptism, part of the liturgy includes the Litany of the Saints. There are also those who were baptized, but haven't received the other sacraments of initiation. The catechumens and these faithful are confirmed and will later receive the Holy Eucharist. Afterwards the faithful are blessed with water and all renew their baptismal promises.

4) Liturgy of Eucharist

The Eucharistic celebration then continues with the special prayers inserted during the Eucharistic Prayer. The whole church is called to join at the sacrificial table that Christ prepared for us through his death and resurrection. The Mass ends with a solemn blessing and the faithful are sent forth to bear the fruits of the Eucharist to the world with these words: The Mass is ended, go in peace, alleluia, alleluia. And the response is: Thanks be to God, alleluia, alleluia.

- *Compiled*

QUIZ CORNER - QUIZ ON HEBREWS Ch. 6to 13

Tick (✓) the right answer

Refer the Catholic New Revised Standard Version Bible

1. According to ch. 6 what is a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul?
a. faith b. hope c. love d. peace
2. Ch:8 : For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins _____
a. no further b. always c. for ever d. no more
3. According to ch. 9 how often did the high priest go into the Holy of Holies?
a. every Sabbath b. at the Passover c. once a year d. every year of jubilee
4. According ch. 9 without what there is no forgiveness of sins?
a. faith b. repentance c. shedding of blood e. hope
5. According to ch 10 what is a fearful thing?
a. To die without God b. To go to the lake of fire c. To neglect so great salvation d. To quit believing e. To fall into the hands of the living God

6. Ch. 10: Do not therefore abandon that _____ of yours, it brings a great reward
 - a. Beliefs
 - b. Confidence
 - c. Doctrines
 - d. Traditions
7. According to ch. 10 how shall the righteous live?
 - a. by charity
 - b. by faith
 - c. by grace
 - d. by hope
8. Ch. 11: Now faith is the _____ of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.
 - a. belief
 - b. hope
 - c. theory
 - d. assurance
9. Ch 11: And without faith it is _____ to please God
 - a. a struggle
 - b. difficult
 - c. hard
 - d. impossible
10. Ch: 12 : For the Lord _____ those whom He loves
 - a. Blesses
 - b. disciplines
 - c. Leads
 - d. Rewards
11. According ch. 12 what should we pursue with everyone without which no one will see the Lord?
 - a. Peace and Holiness
 - b. faith
 - c. Wisdom
 - d. love
12. Ch. 13: What should be held in honour by all?
 - a. Charity
 - b. Faithfulness
 - c. Marriage
 - d. Honesty

ANSWERS FOR THE QUIZ ON HEBREWS Ch. 1 to 4

1) Heb 12:14 2) c. not known 3) b. enemies 4) c. Sufferings 5) a. brothers and sisters 6) a. Moses 7) a. Abraham 8) a. evil and unbelieving heart 9) c. a Sabbath rest 10) b. Glory and honour 11) a. two-edged sword 12. b. with boldness

Hearty congratulations to Jessie Fernandes, Reuben Cardoz and Susana Pinto for the correct answers. We also appreciate Juliet D'Souza, Perpetual Fernandes, Yohan Yesudas and Aaron Menezes for participating.



***MIPC Prayer Meeting: Every Thursday at 8:00 pm in the Parish Hall.
General Intercessory Meeting: First Monday of every month at 8:00 pm.***