



“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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CRUX OF THE LIFE IN THE SPIRIT SEMINAR

More than 100+ people were blessed to attend the Life in the Spirit seminar conducted from Wednesday 9th October to Thursday 16th October 2019 at the basement hall of the new catechism building of our parish. We are glad to share the essence of the sharings.

DAY 1 : INTRODUCTION : by *Harry Rasquinha*

Life in the Spirit Seminar commonly known as LSS is an Instrument in the Catholic Church to lead the faithful to a deeper experience of God’s presence in their life by the power of the Holy Spirit. It encourages us to establish or restore an intimate relationship with God so that we continue to grow in the image of Christ our Lord. It builds on the sacrament of

Baptism and Confirmation and fosters growth in Christian life by renewing the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it focuses on the personal conversion or recommitment of our life to the Lord. It serves as a spur for personal Pentecost for each Christian because it facilitates the fuller release of the Holy Spirit through what is called the Baptism in the Holy Spirit or the Infilling of the Holy Spirit.

The talks on basic Gospel message will show what the Lord is willing to do for all who come to Him. This is nothing but fanning the spark into flame as told by Paul in 2 Tim 1:6. It is like lighting the candle that is within us. We obtain the benefit from the candle only if it is lit. When we seek the Lord more than anything, the Holy Spirit makes us new creation - "Behold, I make all things new" –Rev 21:5, and "so if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!"-2 Cor 5:17.

Let us pray – "Mighty Holy Spirit, I pray to you to breathe into me wisdom and understanding so that I understand your Word and allow myself to be transformed by that Life-giving Word, Amen".

DAY 2 : GOD'S LOVE : by Revathi Torres

See what manner of love God has for us that we should be called the children of God, and that is what we are. 1 John 3:1

WHY DOES THE WORLD SEEK LOVE?.... because we are ...

- Created by Love (God our creator)
- Created with Love (We are fearfully & wonderfully made)
- Created for Love (we long and seek for appreciation /love)
- Created to Love (God commands us to love one another)

GOD'S LOVE MUST BE THE BASIS OF ALL HUMAN LOVE

God's love is best described as Agape Love = Love that goes beyond self: outgoing, forgiving, patient, understanding, unconditional etc (1 Cor13)

GOD'S LOVE IS BEYOND OUR COMPREHENSION:

Romans 8:35 & 37 . Vs 35 - who will separate us from the love of Christ?

Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Vs. 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

GOD WATCHES OVER YOU... like a loving Dad.

He doesn't watch us as to punish us but lovingly watching over his sons and daughters like a caring father.

DO YOU WANT TO EXPERIENCE THE LOVE OF GOD?

The need to be known is intimacy, Intimacy means being fully at home. Home is not a place. it is where I am fully known, loved and received just as I am where I am free to be fully myself without putting acts of approval. Only trusted love can give you such intimacy. Intimacy means being at home we ache for home... God is calling us home to where we belong because we feel empty as we are not at home. God desires our friendship, Friends share hearts.

To Know God is to Know Love – Knowing is experiencing God this is what we can do:

- Empty yourself of all that is not of God: simply means we should surrender totally to God our creator (manufacturer/repairer) have child-like faith admit your desire and need. Be at the receiving end.
- Inviting Jesus into our lives: Revelation 3:20
- Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me.
- Opening our lives to the Holy Spirit: Romans 5:5 and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.
- Seeing others in the eyes of God : an experience of God's love is imperative to enable us to love others.

DAY 3: SIN AND ITS CONSEQUENCES : *by Vernon Fernandes*

What is Sin ?

Sin, as defined in the original translations of the Bible means, "to miss the mark". "To miss the mark with relation to the great and mighty plan that the God has in store for you".

King David would say – “My sin is always before me”, he could say that because he lived in the presence of the Lord and was aware of the sin in his life. God called him a man after his own heart.

The word of God in (Romans 3:23) says “since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” we need the forgiveness of God.

“Perhaps the greatest sin in the world today is that men have begun to lose the sense of sin.” Pope Pius XII.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church CCC 1871-1872 ***“Sin is an utterance, a deed, or a desire contrary to the eternal law. It is an offense against God. It rises up against God in a disobedience contrary to the obedience of Christ. Sin is an act contrary to reason. It wounds man’s nature and injures human solidarity”***

Concupiscence (CCC 1264) - is understood as an effect of original sin that remains after baptism. The waters of baptism cleanse us of original sin itself, but concupiscence remains as a lingering effect. The Catechism teaches that *certain temporal consequences of sin remain in the baptized, such as suffering, illness, death ... as well as an inclination to sin that Tradition calls concupiscence.* Hence, we will always be vulnerable and prone to attacks from the evil one in the area of sin.

What does sin do to man?

- *“Sin ruptures our relationship with God and also with other members of the Body of Christ” CCC 1440*
- *It affects man’s relationship with God - after the fall, man is afraid of God and hides (Genesis 3:10).*
- *It affects man’s relationship with himself: after the fall, man felt ashamed with his nakedness (Genesis 3:10)*
- *It affects man’s relationship with others - before the fall, man endearingly called woman “flesh of my flesh and bone of my bones” (Genesis 2:23) which is a Hebrew way of saying that she is my partner and destined to be part of me forever. After the fall, he refers to her as “the woman” (Genesis 3:12).*
- *It affects man’s relationship with the world and the whole universe (Genesis 3:17).*

Seven Deadly Sins

Pride : (CCC. 1931) - An excessive love of self or the desire to be better or more important than others. “Respect for the human person proceeds by way of respect for the principle that ‘everyone should look upon his neighbour (without exception) as “another self,” above all bearing in mind his life and the means necessary for living it with dignity.”

You get in competition with God, in every proud person there are three persons (I / Me/ Myself).

Makes you Defensive, Luke 18:10-14 – Parable of the Pharisee – we become full of ourselves and look down upon others, we become self-righteous. We think that all our material blessings are because of our hard work and determination. The Lord can ask us what is it that you have that has not been given to you.

Our hearts are hardened, and we have an inability to forgive and say “I’m sorry”, we see that the lines for Confession are always smaller than the line to receive Communion. So in a sense we are adding to our sinfulness by receiving the Holy Communion in an unworthy way.

Envy: (CCC. 2553) - Sadness or desire for the possessions, happiness, talents or abilities of another. “Envy can lead to the worst crimes. ‘Through the devil’s envy death entered the world’”

Envy is the daughter of Pride and is the cause for many lives being destroyed. An envious person lives a life on (IF ONLY.....) basis which is a cause of always having a feeling of inadequacy in their lives.

- *Proverbs – 14:30 – A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.*
- *Life of Dichotomy (It will make you happy at the sadness of others and sad at the happiness of others.)*
- *Root of envy is a dissatisfied heart, living a life of comparison.*
- *Rom 12:15 – Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep.*

Anger: (CCC. 2302) - Uncontrolled feelings of hatred or rage. “Anger is a desire for revenge ... The Lord says, ‘Everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment’”

- *Col 3:8 But now you must get rid of all such things - anger, wrath, malice, slander and abusive language from your mouth.*
- *Most of our anger is a display of hurt pride*
- *Selfish anger had awful effects (Eph 4:26 – In your anger do not sin - When is anger sinful? - Destruction of Public Property*
- *Selfish anger quickly leads to other sins*
- *St Thomas Aquinas – Anger is Passion for Revenge, that goes beyond the control of Reason*

Gluttony: (CCC. 2290) - Overconsumption, usually of food or drink. “The virtue of temperance disposes us to avoid every kind of excess: the abuse of food, alcohol, tobacco or medicine”

- *I’m a Foodie – we justify ourselves and say that we love food and its Gods gift because he has given us our taste buds.*
- *Health risks – the fallout of indulging in overeating and over consumption of food*
- *Gluttony is not just over-eating (20% of the worlds rich consume 80% of the worlds resources)*
- *Phil – 3:19 Their end is destruction, their god is the belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.*

Greed: (CCC. 1849) - The desire for and love of possessions. “Sin ... it is a failure in genuine love for God and neighbour caused by a perverse attachment to certain goods”

- *Insensitivity – We become inward- looking persons and self-driven*
- *Scandal – Amassing wealth and riches beyond our known sources of income and mostly through illegal and unscrupulous ways.*
- *Love God, use money – however a greedy person will love money and use God*
- *Remembering eternity – circle of life – we tend to get caught up in the rat race of life, amassing temporal things and miss out on the true purpose of what God actually wants from each one of us.*

Lust: (CCC. 2541) - An intense desire, usually for sexual pleasure, but also for money, power or fame. “The God of promises always warned man against seduction by what from the beginning has seemed ‘good for food...a delight to the eyes ... to be desired to make one wise”

- *Job 31:1 – I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl.*
- *Mathew 5:27-28 You have heard that it is said, “do not commit adultery”, but I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*
- *Just harmless fun? – Story of David and his fall from grace in the eyes of the Almighty of God.*

The bite of pornography which is destroying the fabric of life and society, as pornography cannot be a private sin, the consequences of this sin is far reaching and like a wild fire that will destroy all that comes in its way (individuals, families and the society at large).

Laziness: (CCC 2094) - Physical laziness, also disinterest in spiritual matters or neglecting spiritual growth. “Acedia or spiritual sloth goes so far as to refuse the joy that comes from God and to be repelled by divine goodness.”

- Use time wisely – We all have a fixed amount of time each day and the way we use matters the most. If we use our time in worldly pursuits we will be disappointed.
- Spiritual laziness – we must not let our guard down in our spiritual walk as the word says in 1 Peter 5:8 be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, walks around as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

We read in the gospel of St Matthew 12:43-45 (return of the unclean spirit...) how our lives can become worse than before if we are not watchful on the conduct of our lives.

Every Sin has an Antidote:

Humility cures Pride, Kindness cures Envy, Abstinence cures Gluttony, Chastity cures Lust, Patience cures Anger, Generosity cures Greed, Carefulness cures Laziness.

We must at all times with the Grace of the Lord strive to replace the 7 sinful vices with 7 Godly virtues.

DAY 4. : JESUS THE ONLY SAVIOR & SALVATION OF HUMANITY. *By Louis Ryan*

Romans 3:23-All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. All of us are in need of Salvation. I am sure all of us have received the gift of Salvation. But if we look at biblical implied definition it is being delivered from the deadly clutches of satan and eternal effects of sin. Then why do we still struggle with sin?, why do we still get addicted?. For that we need to look at three phases of Salvation.

They are:

1. **Justification** – *When you are born again- In first phase of salvation we are delivered from the penalty of sin through Jesus' death on the cross.*
2. **Sanctification** – *Delivered from the power of sin- process which is lifelong, that is why St. Paul in Phil 2:12 says continue working out your salvation with fear and trembling.*
3. **Glorification** – *Delivered from the presence of sin, after death.*

In the beginning God and man walked hand in hand with each other. Man sinned and this resulted in separation from God. God wanted to restore this relationship. He sought to do this by sending people (Judges, Prophets) to caution and warn them. But when their responses were weak and half-hearted it was beyond themselves to come out of the bondage/slavery of sin. God sent Jesus. This is what Jesus did, he took upon himself all our sins/sickness/infirmities and made us righteous before God.

Satan's desperate attempts to stop Jesus from dying on the Cross.

- *Herod tried killing Jesus (Mt 2:16)*
- *Temptation in the desert (Mt 4:6)*
- *Rejection by the Scribes and Pharisees (Mt 11:19)*
- *Peter rebuking Jesus*
- *Soldiers telling Jesus who is on the cross - come down (Mt 27:40)*

Satan even today tries to prevent people from hearing the Good News and accepting Jesus as their Saviour and Lord. How? By:

- *Taking away the word of God from their hearts that they may not believe and be saved (Lk 8:12)*
- *False Ideologies – All gods are one. John 14:6- I am the way, the truth*

and the life, no one comes to Father except through me” – The fullness of the Truth is in Christ.

- *Watering down the Gospel- New age movement.*
- *Tempting us and influencing our lives – Since all are doing and hence I too did it.*
- *Persecution of Christians.*

The importance of Salvation- it concerns our eternity?

- *1Tim 2:4- “It is Father’s desire that all men must be saved and come to the knowledge of truth”*
- *John 3:17- “ God sent Jesus not to condemn us, but that the world be saved through him”*
- *Acts 4:12- There is Salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved”.*
- *Eph 2:8- “by grace you are saved through faith, ... it is a free gift of God”*

When does Salvation begin?: It is when we experience God’s love in a tangible way through repentance, may be at a retreat/LSS/outreach.

The A, B & C of Salvation-

- A- ***Acknowledge** that God loves me, that I am a sinner and need a Savior.*
- B- ***Believe** that Jesus died on the cross for the forgiveness of sin any by repenting of my sins they are forgiven*
- C- ***Confess** with my lips that Jesus is Lord and that God raised him from the dead.*

The Authentic signs of Accepting Jesus as Savior and Lord!

- *I begin to share it with others, e.g.,- Samaritan woman.- John 4:7-42)*
- *A deep desire to belong to the Church that Jesus established*
- *Desire for holiness and reading the word of God.*

Conclusion – The Salvation Package

Jesus came to save us not only from sin but from everything that makes life difficult. This includes:

- *Problems in life – Psalm 50:15*
- *Sickness- is not from God!*

- *Fear of Death- Heb 2:14*
- *Infirmities – Lk 13:6-9- Jesus set people free*
- *Addictions & Compulsive habits, fear, loneliness etc.*

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, whosoever believes in Him, should not perish, but must have life everlasting. Jesus is the only Saviour of Humanity, let's surrender our lives to Him and experience Salvation.

DAY 5 : REPENTANCE by *Harry Rasquinha*

The Holy Bible distinguishes between **ungodly sorrow** which results in death and **Godly sorrow** which leads to salvation – 2 Cor 7:10. King Saul and Judas were regretful (ungodly or worldly sorrow) for their sins but their focus was not on God but on their own self. On the other hand King David and apostle Peter were sorry for their sins and their focus was on the God of mercy. God accepted their repentance and led them to a new and changed life.

The main ingredients of true repentance are : Conviction of sin, Turning away from sin and self, Resolution to change by the grace of God and looking to God for forgiveness and salvation which He alone can give. The Parable of the Prodigal son- Lk 15:1-24 teaches us these things. Therefore, true repentance is not only a change in mind but also change in action fully depending on the grace of the Lord.

Article 1431 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church puts it like this :

– Interior repentance is a radical reorientation of our whole life, a return, a conversion to God with all our heart, an end of sin, a turning away from evil, with repugnance toward the evil actions we have committed. At the same time it entails the desire and resolution to change one's life, with hope in God's mercy and trust in the help of his grace.

Call to repentance **runs through the Bible** from the 1st book to the last book like a **“ red light ”**. Salvation is not just ONCE but EVERYDAY. Hence, we need repentance to remove all blocks from our lives so that the Lord's grace can flow to us and work in us each day of our life.

What to repent for : We need to repent for (1) our own sins as Peter says – Acts 2:38, (2) sins of our family – Job 1:5 and (3) the sins of our community-tribe-nation-church – Neh 1:6, Dan 9:5. Through repentance God wants to bring about in us steady decrease of sin, eventually getting rid of sin so that we (His children) become holy as He is Holy - Pet 1:16.

Need: We need repentance (1) for salvation (initial conversion) (2) for freedom from any particular sin and (3) as a way of life (for on-going growth in Christian life), to have the image of Christ in us more and more clear- 2 Cor 3:18.

As Catholics we are blessed with the wonderful Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) which we need to benefit from. The thoughts like “I have no sin” -1Jn 1:8 (feeling like the elder brother in the parable of the prodigal son), “My sin is too grave to be forgiven”-Mt 27:3-5, may tempt us to put off confession. Let us be wise to avoid all these blocks and avail of this wonderful Sacrament which also is helpful to bring about healing. Let us repent like David as he prayed in Ps 51 and like the prodigal son. An examination of conscience in the light of the Ten Commandments before going to bed each night will help us in our Christian growth. With renewed faith let us declare the Word of God :

“ if we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. “ 1Jn 1:9

DAY 6 BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPOIRIT or THE INFILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT by Felix Menezes

*Pope John 23rd prayed during 2nd Vatican council in 1962 in this way - :
“Lord give us a Pentecost again and let there be miracles and wonders happening again in our days too”. We no longer live in time of promise but live in time of fulfilment of the promise made by God the Father through His Son Jesus.*

In the **Holy Bible** we see some of the symbols of **the presence of the Holy Spirit** as: Water –John 19:34 Wind - Acts 2:2 Fire – Acts 2:3 Dove – Mathew 3:16 Oil – Samuel 13:16.

In the Gospel of John 14:27 Holy Spirit has been described as

PARAKLETOS (in Greek language). The English word is “Paraclete” which means: Comforter, Helper, Advocate, Guide, Counsellor, Intercessor. That means the presence, power and person of the Holy Spirit comes to our aid as per our requirements and situations. Holy Spirit is multifunctional.

Theologians say that the Holy Spirit is here with us only for an interim period. Time between Ascension and the second coming (Parousia). As we are all aware, Catholic Church was founded on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon 120 people in the upper room who were waiting with much prayers for the anointing.

Among many examples and situations in the Holy Bible, there are three important times in Salvation History where we see the presence of the Holy Spirit:

- *Birth of the World (creation) - Genesis 1: 2*
- *Birth of Jesus - Luke 1: 35*
- *Birth of the Catholic Church - Acts 2: 1-4*

Therefore, as we are in the period of fulfillment of God’s promise, we are called to live a life in all its fullness by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Below specified are some of the ways that we can experience the Power of the Holy Spirit in our lives:

- *Seek God’s Kingdom (Righteousness, Peace & Joy) Mathew 6: 33*
- *Becoming Christ’s Own - Phil 3: 12*
- *Thirst for the presence, power & person of the Holy Spirit -Rev21: 6*
- *Acknowledge that the Holy Spirit is freely given John 7: 37-39*
- *Sincerely desire and Ask for the Holy Spirit - Luke 11: 13*
- *Know that God will give us in Abundance – Eph 3: 20*
- *Sacraments - especially Eucharist are the means of the reception of the Holy Spirit because Jesus himself instituted the Sacraments in order that we receive the grace.*
- *Family/ Community prayer - Mathew 18: 18-20. As promised by Lord Jesus, will experience the power of the Holy Spirit during family prayers and community prayers as we are often more than two. Holy Spirit is both power and person of God.*

Why do we pray for fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit or His presence during any family/ community prayers since we already received Him at the time of our Baptism and confirmed at Confirmation?

As we read in the Holy Bible 1 Cor 3 :16 we are all known as 'temple of the Holy Spirit' and the Spirit of God dwells within us. Some of the reasons why we are required to pray for fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit:

- *Because of our sinful life. Ps 51: 10-12.*
- *Lust and worldly desires and attachment to worldly things.*
- *We quench the Holy Spirit - 1 Thes 5: 19*

How do we know whether God's Spirit is reigning in our life or any other spirit? One way is to check our desires, thoughts, plans, decisions, priorities and then we will see to ourselves whether God is in our life or whether the world is in our life and to what extent or level?. This can be gauged by our priorities of day to day life, thoughts, desires, prayers and love of God or things of the world. Also we can judge by our worldly desires or hunger and thirst for souls to come to Christ as to where we stand in our priorities for God and world.

Gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit

- *Sanctification gifts - Isaiah 11: 2.*
- *Wisdom and Understanding, Counsel and might, Knowledge and fear of the Lord.*
- *Manifestation Gifts - 1 Cor 12: 8-11 : Wisdom, Knowledge, Faith, Healing, miracles, Prophecy, Discernment, Tongues, Interpretation of Tongues.*
- *Our lives are known by the fruit that we bear : Fruit of the Holy Spirit - Gal 5:22-23 Love, Joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*

Holy Spirit's role is a continuation of the work of Jesus. Holy Spirit is given to us in order to continue and complete the mission of Jesus. We are all, who are baptized and renewed are called to continue the work and mission of Jesus on this earth. In Acts of the Apostles 11: 24, we read

that Stephen was known as a good person not because he did good, but because he was full of the Holy Spirit and Faith. For each one of us to be good, the basic criteria is to be filled with the Holy Spirit and Faith and then, we will be equipped for every good work to serve God and His people.

What is the Work of the Holy Spirit.

- Help us in prayer Rm 8: 26-27.
- Helps the humanity who is in desperate need. John 16:7-8 and 1 Cor 12: 3
- Glorify Jesus - John 16: 13-15.

We are convinced that the Holy Spirit glorified Jesus, convicts us of sin, guides us into truth, enlightens our mind to understand spiritual truths, and sends us out to be witnesses of the gospel.

Fruitfulness or effects of Baptism in the Holy Spirit or infilling of the Holy Spirit

- Deep desire for intimacy with God through prayers, sacraments and Eucharist.
- Speaking in Tongues (gift of Tongues)
- An overpowering desire to proclaim Jesus
- A love for the Word of God and His Church
- The manifestation of the Spiritual gifts and Charisms.
- A dramatic or gradual transformation of life and growth in the image and likeness of Christ.
- Desire for community prayer, fellowship and witnessing.

Come Holy Spirit fall afresh on us, fill us with your power and satisfy our needs. Only you can make us whole, give us strength and make us grow. Come Holy Spirit and fall afresh on us every moment of our lives.

DAY 7. SPIRITUAL GROWTH by Ann Pinto

Colossians 2:7 says, therefore, just as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him, established in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. It is the Lord's will for us to be rooted in 'HIM'. John 15 : 5 says, "I am the vine

you are the branches, those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing”. In order to grow and bear fruit we have to abide in JESUS.

The Key to spiritual growth is obedience to the voice of the Holy Spirit

So, I say “walk by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh”. *Galatians 5:16*

The function of a bicycle wheel is to be able to move forward and help its rider get to his/her desired destination. Every cycle wheel has spokes, if even one of the spokes are broken, the cycle will not be able to function and be of any use. We too have to see that our spiritual wheels are not broken so that we grow spiritually and win many souls for CHRIST –

We call these the Growth Spokes

So what are the Growth Spokes that will ensure that we grow in the LORD and bear much fruit?

First Growth Spoke is Personal Prayer

Our daily Prayer time with the LORD is the Source and the Foundation of the Spiritual nourishment we need – it’s our connection to supernatural grace and power. We need to Choose a time, Choose a place and Call upon the Holy Spirit who will teach us how to pray in the will of the Father. It can be summed up in this acronym :-

FACTS – Keep your PACT with the Lord daily

- Praise,
- Adore (Worship),
- Contrition, (Repentance),
- Thanksgiving
- Supplication

Second Growth Spoke is The WORD OF GOD

“I have hidden your Word in my heart that I may not sin against you”. (Psalm 119 :11) The WORD OF GOD will keep us from sinning.

The Word of God is also called the Sword of the Spirit – a weapon against Fear. “Your Word is a Lamp unto my feet and a Light unto my path” (it saves us from the lies or deception of our enemy the devil)

It renews the mind, heals and comforts – It has the solution to every problem (Promises of the Bible) The Bible is our Life Manual.

Third Growth Spoke is the Sacraments

The benefits of receiving Holy Communion are immeasurable. We receive much healing of body, mind and spirit when the Eucharist is received in a worthy manner (1 Corinthians 11:23-30).

St Augustine says: “In this life man cannot be without sins, even though they may be small. But don’t take lightly those things of which we speak. Small things accumulate to make something big. Many drops make a river, many grains a mountain. So what are we to do? First of all confess.

Fourth Growth Spoke : Ongoing Repentance and Ongoing Forgiveness

Discipline – St. Peter in his first letter (5:8) exhorts us: “Discipline yourselves, keep alert” Important parts of this discipline are self denial and submission to authority (the Church and all other authority in your life).

Fifth Growth Spoke is Witnessing

Witnessing -Do the loving thing - First in our homes, then in our workplace and then in our parish and community . Sharing our resources – money, possessions, our time and talents. Reaching out - People must see Jesus in me !

Sixth Growth Spoke : Fellowship

We are to build each other up in love and unity. God has not called us in isolation but as members of a community.

We are the body of Christ and we must glorify Jesus – the Head of the Body (Mathew 19:20). The prayer group is a school for personal and family renewal and growth. It is a place of nourishment for the spiritually impoverished.

The obedient Christian has Christ at the centre of his life. He grows using the growth spokes of Daily PERSONAL PRAYER, SACRAMENTS, WORD OF GOD, WITNESSING, FELLOWSHIP, ON-GOING REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS !

DAY 8. EVANGELIZATION by *Carmen Fernandes*

Evangelization means zealous proclamation of the Gospel in order to bring others to Christ and the Church. In the words of Pope Paul the VI –

Evangelization means to bring the good news into all the strata of society. In the Gospel of St Matthew 28: 18-20 we read that - Before his ascension Jesus's message to his disciples was "go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always to the close of the age".

Jesus gives a command to go forth and reassures us that He is with us. Evangelization is proclamation plus discipleship, we have to walk with the people and help them to come to faith, trust and belief in the Saviour. We have to help a new believer to build a relationship with Jesus.

What is the Lord's Desire

- *His desire is that everyone is saved*
- *That everyone benefits from His passion death and resurrection*
- *Everyone enjoys an abundant and eternal life*

For evangelization to be effective, it must be through our words and backed by our deeds – good witness. A tree is known by its fruits, a good tree will produce good fruit and vice versa

Benefits of Evangelization

- *Our own faith is stirred up and becomes alive, it fans the flame of love for the Lord in our own heart.*
- *Our convictions grow and become strong*
- *People are uplifted when they hear testimonies, it helps them to believe and trust in a loving God.*

Obstacles to Evangelization

- ***Ignorance about our mission** -many of us are unaware of Jesus' call to go forth, and make disciples*
- ***Limited knowledge and a feeling of inadequacy** – sometimes we are afraid we may not be able to answer questions put to us, the best thing would be to share our personal experience with Jesus. At times we have an image about a person and hesitate to approach them thinking that they seem happy, problem-free and do not need any assistance in managing their life situations.*

- **False philosophies** - like “all roads lead to God, we are good persons” etc.. these false ideas prevent us from sharing the good news.
- **Not knowing Jesus** - we have to build a personal relationship with Jesus by involving Him in our everyday life, then we will be able to share Him with others with confidence.
- **Being a counter witness** – My actions must be in line with my preaching, as actions speak louder than words.
- **Materialistic life style** – instead of spending our free time in the malls, let us use our time to reach out to families going through trials. This will also help us to give the right values to our children, that people are more important than things.
- **Connected yet disconnected** – we live in a culture of technology and are wired to our gadgets, which makes us disconnected to the people around us.
- **Persecution** – today we are faced with the reality of persecution from radical groups, people having a secular world view etc... we are afraid of being mocked, rejected, we are afraid of bodily harm to us or our family members. What will be our response to persecution, will I say an outright ‘no’ to the Lord or will I ask for grace in such situations like the early Christians.

Stephen was stoned to death but was able to forgive his enemies which led to Paul’s conversion. When the apostles were flogged, they were glad to suffer for the name of Jesus. Due to intense persecution, when the disciples were scattered, they went from place to place, preaching the good news and as a result the church grew. When they were ordered not to teach in the name of Jesus, they prayed to the Lord that they would preach with fearlessness.

Let us ask the Lord for the same zeal and courage which the early Christians had in the face of persecution.

How to Evangelize

- *Have a burden for people – let us ask the Lord for a heart which truly cries for the lost, and pray for the people we want to evangelize.*
- *Pray for boldness*
- *Build relationship with people*
- *Share from your own life*
- *Be a good witness*

As Jesus has commanded every disciple, let's ask for grace and strength to go forth and bring everyone to the knowledge of Christ and help them to make Jesus as their Saviour and Lord some day.

As we conclude the Life in the Spirit Seminar, it only paves the way for us to act on what we heard and meditated upon in these 8 days. Let's sincerely make every effort to pray without ceasing, read and mediate on the Word of God in order to put it into practice, grow in faith, begin to witness and testify who Jesus is to me and what has He done and is doing in my day to day life. Let us be a living Gospel or Good News to everyone around. Let's faithfully make every effort to live authentic life in the Spirit every day.

Only by His love and grace... A Testimony

My topic for the LSS was God's Love and one sister asked me if I chose the topic and I said I was given the topic. She felt that with so many trials in my life how could I say God loves me?

It's very simple - God's love has to be experienced and not just understood. I have experienced God's love in the midst of my trails. If it were not for my trails I wouldn't have known God. He has taken me through many situations triumphantly.

I just know that He has taught me to learn to see blessings in my trails. I would always be attracted to testimonies where people could praise and bless the Lord in their problems, just like Job.

Saints are my inspirations- they ask for suffering in order to be one with the Lord. So when suffering comes my way, I should not grumble but believe it is a privilege to bear it for my Lord. When we accept it He gives the grace to go through it.

I believe this is how he prepares me and makes me continuously depend on Him with a thorn in my flesh. It would seem like a punishment or burden if it were not for his grace, mercy and love. All praise to God for his mercy

and grace that has seen me through every trail so far, and, I believe He will never forsake me because he loves me more than I can imagine.

- *Revathi Torres*

Seek ye first the Kingdom of God...- A Testimony

We were blessed to benefit from the Life in the Spirit Seminar. Though I've had knowledge from my previous retreats and talks, this was yet another eye-opener. I was upset with some worrying situation on one day but the Word of God given at that moment was Mt 6:33 seek first the kingdom of God and everything shall be added unto you. That just took away my worry and so much comfort was brought to me at that moment.

I had a calling to join the music ministry and I was putting it off, but God in his own way knows how to use us. He gave me an opportunity on one of the days of Life in the Spirit Seminar to play the keyboard, and at that time I prayed and discerned that this was my calling.

Some of my payments were stuck at work and only by the power of prayers my pay was released which was nothing else but a real miracle. I give all glory and honour to our Lord Jesus Christ.

- *Pearl D'souza*

His faithfulness reaches to the heavens...A Testimony

The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him (Ps 28:7)

In September 2017, my old company which was on the downslide asked me to look for a job. I started looking out for a job desperately and the good Lord provided me with an opening in spite of the recession.

As my old company was not able to clear my dues, I was given a memorandum of understanding and was asked to work for the new company retaining the old visa. Meanwhile, I was trying hard to collect my dues and an NOC that was needed for changing the visa. As there was no

positive response and my visa was going to expire, I was forced to try the legal way. Finally, in court I agreed for a settlement, for an NOC in lieu of my dues. The Lord was so merciful that on the date of the hearing, though the lawyer of the old company did not come, the court passed the verdict. I was given the NOC from the legal office of the old company. But to obtain the new visa, the old visa had to be cancelled. Since the company had closed down by this time, I didn't know what to do, and even the legal office was not able to help me on this.

I was desperately praying to God to help me. One evening, as I was taking my daily walk, I bumped into a colleague of mine from the old company whom I had not met for 2 years. When I told him my predicament, he shared with me the information about the PRO of the old company who had the authority to cancel the visa. I contacted this PRO and he took me to the manpower office and I got the labour card cancelled. He then asked me to book my flight ticket which I did promptly. He was to meet me at the airport on the day of travel to cancel my visa at immigration. However, that day he didn't turn up at the airport. I was standing in the queue at the check-in all tense. Here again, the Lord provided an angel in the form of an airline staff, who assisted me up to the immigration counter and spoke to the immigration officials in Arabic. We managed to speak to this PRO over the phone and somehow he was able to convince the authorities and I exited the country.

After I exited the country, this PRO had to cancel the visa in the computer system within a week but now it was more than a month of daily vigorous follow up. My anxiety grew, as the PRO was not answering my calls or responding to my messages. God was very merciful to me. One of our brothers from the Prayer group volunteered to follow up with the PRO. It was only God's faithfulness and the continuous prayers of the intercessory group, family, friends and my cell members that finally got this PRO to cancel my visa in the system. He cancelled it on October 20th Sunday and my new company applied for my visa. I got my new visa the next day afternoon. All glory to God. Nothing is impossible with Him. It was only the grace of God and your prayers that sustained me in these trying times. Often my faith level would be an all-time low, and there were many times I felt God had abandoned me. But, even in the midst of this, I

would cling on to every scripture that gave me hope. During this time I was also able to spend time with the family and see the difficulties they face in their own daily struggles without me. Through this experience, we also learned as a family, to cling on to God and His Word.

One more thing also worth mentioning was that during these past two years, God has taken care of me on the road, even though I was driving a red number plate car to far off areas like Sohar, Nizwa and Haima, without any issues, nor did I meet even with a minor accident during this time. Praise the Lord.

I am immensely grateful to God for his mercy and I am thankful to all who prayed for me.

-Levito Coelho

LSS.. ..An amazing experience A Testimony

Attending the LSS was an exciting experience for me though I attended for the first time. Every day was a blessed time as I was experiencing the Lord's presence in a powerful way. I was being nourished by the Word of God and enriched by the talks given each day. All the speakers were empowered by the Holy Spirit.

I thank God for giving me this chance to attend the LSS. I also thank the organizers for arranging such a wonderful event.

Anonymous

Prayer of St. Gertrude for souls in Purgatory

Eternal Father, I offer Thee the Most Precious Blood of Thy Divine Son, Jesus, in union with the Masses offered throughout the world today, for all the holy souls in purgatory, for sinners everywhere, for sinners in the universal church, those in my own home and within my family. Amen.

QUIZ CORNER - Quiz on LSS

Tick (✓) the right answer

Read the crux of LSS and take the quiz:

1. There are phases to our salvation.
a. two b. three c. five
2. Envy is the..... of Pride and is the cause for many lives being destroyed.
a. Mother b. son c. daughter
3. “Behold, I make all things new” : Which day this verse was referred ?
a. First b. fifth c. second
4. God’s love is best described as : a) Pragma b. Agape c. Philia
5. Sin our relationship with God and also with other members of the Body of Christ” CCC 1440
a. ruptures b. disrupts c. breaks
6. How many times Satan desperately attempted to stop Jesus from dying on the Cross : a. three b. five c. four
7. True repentance is not only a change in but also change in action fully depending on the grace of the Lord.
a. heart b. mind c. attitude
8. “ If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. “ this verse is from :
a. 1 Jn 1:9 b. Jn: 1:9 c: 1 Jn 1:19
9. Which Pope prayed for a new Pentecost during 2nd Vatican council in 1962 : a. John Paul II b. Pope Paul VI c. Pope John 23rd
10. Our lives are known by the that we bear
a. talents b. gifts c. fruit

11. The Key to spiritual growth is to the voice of the Holy Spirit
a. submission b. humility c. obedience
12. Which Growth Spoke of the wheel speaks about 1 Peter 5:8
“Discipline yourselves, keep alert” : a. fourth b. first c. second
13. An experience of God’s love isto enable us to love others.
a. important b. imperative c. essential
14. For to be effective, it must be through our words and backed
by our deeds a. LSS b. evangelization c. Baptism in the H.S.
15. One of the obstacles for evangelization is about our mission
a. inexperience b. complacency c. ignorance
16. The antidote for Greed is :
a. Patience b. Chastity c. Generosity
17. There areimportant times in Salvation History where we see
the presence of the Holy Spirit: a. two b. three c. four

ANSWERS FOR THE QUIZ ON ACTS Ch. 11 to 20

- 1) a. Antioch 2) c. Barnabas 3) a. Unleavened Bread 4) c. Cyprus 5) b. Sergius Paulus 6) c. Antioch in Pisidia 7) b. a door of faith 8) b. to abstain from eating animals that was sacrificed. 9) c. Aquila and Priscilla 10) a. Asia. 11) b. Silus. 12) b. The Day of Pentecost.

Hearty congratulations to Brenda Netto, Susana Pinto, Juliana Alfonso for the correct answers. We also appreciate Juliet D'Souza, Jessie Fernandes and Ethel Fernandes 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.***