

JESUS

THE SOULMATE

What will separate us from the love of Christ? (Rom 8:35)



And the Word
became flesh,
and dwelt
among us
(Jn 1:14).



Contents

DECEMBER 2019 NO 5. YEAR 2

WWW.VRCTHIKA.ORG

EDITORIAL

3. A Friend Indeed

FR. STEBY KALLOORKATTU V.C.

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

5. Manger the Abode of Love

FR. JOSEPH MAROTTIPARBIL V.C.

SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS

8. Let it be for this year

FR. JOHN ERAMBIL V.C.

SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS

10. Parents, Discipline your Children

JOSEPH KALANGARA

SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS

12. Thirsting for God

NANCY MWANGI

SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS

14. Upendo wa Familia Takatifu

FR. JINU PUTHUSSERY V.C.

TESTIMONIES

16. Blessing, Healing & Conversion etc

TESTIMONIES

18. Blessing, Healing & Conversion etc

TESTIMONIES

20. Blessing, Healing & Conversion etc

LIVING FAITH

22. Trusted towards Blessing

AUGUSTINE MWENDWA

YOUTH VIBES

24. Searching for Purpose and Meaning in life

BR. PETER

WAY OF LIFE

25. Vincentian Wisdom on God's Love

THE SOULMATE JUNIOR

26. Samuel, Quiz

SAINTS AND SAGES

28. They said it

POPE SAYS

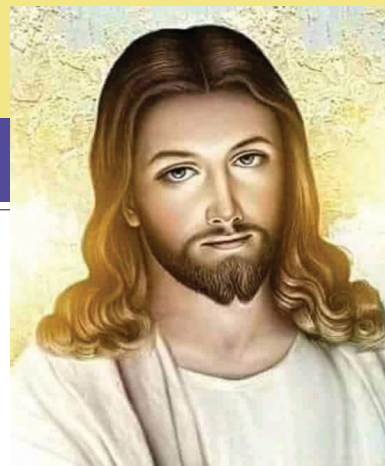
29. Christmas celebrates Fraternity

VINCENTIAN MINISTRIES

30. Programme 2019-2020

SAINT CORNER

31. St. Francis Xavier



A FRIEND INDEED

The delightful sights of Christmas fill everywhere. Decorated trees cool the eyes. Brilliant stars and bells are hung. Humming Santas dance in supermarkets, Delicious foodstuff fill the tables. Festive days are at hand. Christmas in past schooldays had a handful of cherished memories. One was to have a Christmas-friend. A kind of lot decided who to be the 'special friend' in the beginning of December. Gifts and surprises reveal the secret friend at the eve of Christmas. A prettily boxed gift with a rhyme inside of it caught the attention of the whole class. The wordings were these. "When days are too long and nights never end; remember you have a Friend. When there are many trials to bear and no one seems to really care; when all your mountains seem to erupt and you feel like giving up; When all your plans have gone away, you just can't face another day; don't give up, you have a friend, Jesus Christ." These words accompanied a beautiful statue of baby Jesus. That gift marks a beautiful fact: Jesus is becoming a friend! He was a friend to many. He is a friend to many. He can be a friend indeed!

Looking at the disciples Jesus asserts alluringly 'I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called

you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my father' (Jn 15:15). The above verse reveals the promise for all his disciples that they are in friendship with him. A way to this bountiful friendship is to know the secrets from his blissful utterings. As every friendship exchanges secrets, Jesus too murmured to his disciples all that he heard from his father. The disciples were exposed to those heavenly whisperings. In such a way that they were becoming friends to him. Those heavenly sayings never end, but continue to be heard in our ears. Listening to this friend draws us closer to him. Conversing with him joys and sorrows of our hearts leads to the his loving embrace. One of the powerful praises of forefather Abraham was that God called him 'my friend' (Is 41:8). God can be a friend indeed!

"No one has greater love than this to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you" (Jn 15:13-14). Jesus said this and brought real meaning to it by offering his own life. He commanded this for the growth of his friendship, 'love one another'. He did it! He gave himself up for his friends. In the same way, history witnessed people who sank into this divine friendship. An event in Auschwitz concentration camp melts our hearts. 'The

fugitive has not been found!' the commandant screamed. 'You will all pay for this. Ten of you will be locked in the starvation bunker without food or water until you die.' The ten were selected including Franciszek Gajowniczek. He couldn't help a cry of anguish. 'My poor wife!' he sobbed 'My poor children! What will they do?' When he uttered this cry of dismay, Maxmillian Kolbe stepped silently forward, took of his cap, and stood before the commandant and said, 'I am a Catholic priest. Let me take his place. I am old. He has a wife and children.' He took the place of the convict. After starvation for a couple of weeks, he was injected a lethal poison to death. This friend of Jesus embraced his friend Jesus by fulfilling his command to die for the other.

The Leper Priest of Molokai, Fr. Damien, likewise a friend of Jesus, sacrificed himself for the lepers of the Island. One of the sufferers said to him, "He overwhelms us with his care, and he himself builds our houses." He was becoming a real friend of Jesus.

Who is there without a story of friendship to tell? Sweet and festive memories relish the heart of celebrated friendships. Journeys, walks, jocks, sharing, games, movies and even silent presence become delightful experience in a friendship. Let us submerge ourselves into friendship with Jesus. Then, our story becomes renewed and transformed. A birthday of a friend is celebrated with surprises. The birthday of the real friend, Jesus is at hand. Let us love him with surprises and gifts. The best gift to him is to keep his command, 'love one another'. Happy Christmas. ♦

Fr. Steby Kalloorkattu V.C.





The Word of God says, “Do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord” (1Tim 1:8).

You are encouraged to send your testimonies to us for publication if you are certain by faith that a miracle (blessing, Reconciliation breakthrough, healing, conversion etc) has been granted to you by Jesus. Traditionally understood, a miracle is a supernatural sign or wonder, brought about by God, signifying His glory and the salvation of mankind.

The Church teaches, “If anyone says that all miracles are impossible, and that therefore all reports of them, even those contained in Sacred Scripture, are to be set aside as fables or myths; or that miracles can never be known with certainty, nor can the divine origin of the Christian religion be proved from them: let him be anathema” (Vatican Council I, *Dei Filius*, no.3).

Please note, “Society has a right to information based on truth, freedom, and justice. One should practice moderation and discipline in the use of the social communication media” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2512).

EVERYONE WHO
ACKNOWLEDGES
ME BEFORE OTHERS,
I ALSO WILL
ACKNOWLEDGE
BEFORE MY FATHER
IN HEAVEN
(MT 10:32).

We will try to publish as many testimonies as possible for the glory of God and to deepen the faith of the children of God.

Publishing your testimonies is done as part of the spiritual services of Vincentian Ministries. We do not demand or accept any fee to publish the testimonies.

However, we recommend to get some copies of JESUS: THE SOULMATE and distribute them because this work of evangelization will not only encourage those who already know Jesus but also engage those who have not yet recognized Jesus as saviour in their lives.

If you own a shop or business, consider putting a display of this magazine on your counter to resell to customers.

Give the magazine to your family members, church members, workmates, friends, especially people in hospitals and schools as a gift.

Send your testimonies with a recent photograph to: jesthesoulmate@gmail.com or Whatsapp to 0766929181.

RETURN TO
YOUR HOME,
AND DECLARE
HOW MUCH
GOD HAS DONE
FOR YOU
(LK 8:39).

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JESUS: THE SOULMATE

If you believe in Jesus and accept Him as your personal saviour, He will be your soul's sweet love and life's best companion.

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MANGER

The Abode of Love



Fr. Joseph Marottiparambil V.C.

The sign of the savior was described by the angel, 'Do not be afraid for see I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people. To you is born this day in the city of David a savior who is the messiah the Lord' (Lk 2:11-12). The paradox of salvation starts from the manger. Contrary to the thought that the savior would be born in the palace, he was born in the manger. The contradictions of the world on the Savior started from the manger. The savior does not have a place to be born and yet He is called the 'Word' by which all things were created (Jn1:1).

Manger: The New Paradise

Manger represents the new paradise, where all are in union with God. There all animals, grass, trees, men and women, angels and shepherds, the kings – shows that everything and

everybody would come under Christ. "For God has put all things in subjection under his feet" (1Cor 15:27). Therefore, the center of attention of the manger is none other than baby Jesus. The old paradise gave man a place of salvation which he lost. The new Adam (Baby Jesus) brings that paradise on earth in a manger. He brings unity in the world. The unity between God and Man in a manger. The Trinity is an eternal self giving love and baby Jesus is that self gift of that reality. He

Anyone who feels that he/she does not have any place to go to, a home to live in, do not worry for he/she has a place to go to, that is the Manger.

also foreshadows the unity of the cosmic future. "For there will be one flock one shepherd"(Jn. 10:16).

Manger: A Home for All

Everyone has a place in the manger. Anyone who feels that he/she does not have any place to go. A home to live in; do not worry, because he/she has a place to go to and that place is the manger where Jesus is born. In his Sacred heart everyone, the rich or poor, the sick or the healthy, the accepted or the rejected, the happy or the sad, have a place. The manger has only one door to enter but no other door to go out, meaning that the baby Jesus never wants us to be away from Him. 'Abide in me as I abide in you' (Jn. 15:4)

Manger: The Place of Humility

The manger is a place of humility. Although the word humility smells of weakness; for the manger, it speaks of strength. People around the manger are humble. Joseph a humble



guardian, Mary a humble handmaid, Shepherds bend their heads in order to enter in the manger, for bending one's head is a sign of humility. Pride does bring any happiness. Self denial started in the Manger. Norm for the world is to accept ourselves, to love ourselves and to feel good about ourselves. However the Manger shows the paradox that turning away from self and denying self-will is the origin of salvation. Baby Jesus is the icon of humility-God who humbled himself to be in the form of servant (Phil.2:7-8)- which is the road to salvation.

Manger: The Place of Hope

Anyone will love a person, who gives them hope, but the real hope of our lives lies in the manger. Jesus is the hope of all mankind. Anyone who comes to Him will not go astray, anyone who feels there is no hope in life, he/she is given hope in the manger. He is the power of hope over despair and 'hope does not disappoint us' (Rom 5:5). In deed He will never disappoint us.

Manger: The Place of Peace

The presence of baby Jesus brings peace to the world; the Manger becomes the heavenly dwelling of peace on earth. If one is willing to meet Him, the result is that he/she will receive peace. He imparts peace to the people

of good will. The heavenly songs of Angels reveal that his presence brings peace on earth. "Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth peace among those whom he favors" (Lk. 2:14).

Manger: The House of Bread

Bethlehem means the home of bread. Since bread making was the main industry of that town, it was not a coincident that Abba Father chose the town of Bethlehem for his only son to be born in. It was in the eternal plan of God that Jesus be born in that city of bread. The one who is the bread from heaven: As the scripture says; "I am the bread which comes down from heaven" (Jn 6:5), is born in the city of bread. Jesus was born in the city of bread to become the bread; Jesus was born to be the Eucharist. The Eucharist is a mystery and source and summit

Anyone who really encounters the Manger (Christ) cannot remain the same. He/she gets changed and becomes different.

of Christian life'. The above mentioned realities happen only because of one reality that lies in the manger, the baby, the savior of the world. The bread which came down from heaven lies in the manger. Let the essence of our faith, the living bread of Eucharist grow more and more.

Manger: Transforms our Life

Many great people are born to this world, but by the birth of Jesus the history is divided into two Before Christ-B.C and After Christ AD. It tells us a truth that anyone who really encounters the Manger (Christ) cannot remain the same. He gets changed and becomes different, for Christ makes your life new if you meet Him. "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation' (2Cor 5:17). Once you meet baby Jesus you are transformed.

The woman who experienced Manger

Mother Theresa of Calcutta said 'I have found the paradox that if you love until it hurts, there can be no more hurt but only love'. This reminds me of the story of a little boy who was born in a poor family in Calcutta. It was during Christmas season and everywhere there was celebration. His friends were talking about Christmas cake. He went to his mother and asked her, 'who will give us a Christmas cake?'. The mother was perplexed and confused for an answer that could satisfy the boy. Suddenly she got an answer saying, 'Jesus will give us the Christmas cake'. The little boy believed the answer of the mother. The days came near and his friends were all the more talking about the Christmas cake. The boy again went and asked his mother; 'mum would really Jesus give us the Christmas cake?' This time the mother was in trouble, only a day was remaining for the

Christmas and she did not know what to say to the boy. She tried to avoid the question of the little one but could not. At last she replied 'yes Jesus will not be late He will give us the Christmas cake'. The little boy eagerly went around the shops looking and waiting for Jesus, but eventually went back home desperately.

This time his mother kept silence whenever he asked for the Christmas cake. The eve of the Christmas reached and the boy went as usual to nearby shop. People were all shopping, buying cakes and gifts. The little boy was the unattended one. Meanwhile, a lady in a white blue line sari (an Indian dress that ladies wear) asked him why he was there. The little boy answered, 'my mum said that Jesus would give us Christmas cake' 'and He has not come yet', desperately said the boy. The lady took him to the shop and bought him the delicious cake and accompanied

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our Manger
(heart) at this
Christmas.

him home. As soon as they reached home, the boy shouted and screamed loudly to the mother saying 'mum I met Jesus-she gave me a Christmas cake'.

Christmas was the most significant feast for this great lady called St. Mother Theresa of Calcutta because her work with the poor began on Christmas day in 1948. A lady who touched many lives by imitating that real love called Jesus. She found the Baby Jesus in the poor and abandoned and life became meaningful in such reform. Pope Francis says 'Christmas is the

feast of poverty' that is a God who accepted himself assuming the nature of a slave. For him if Christmas is not about Jesus 'it's a fake Christmas'.

Let this Christmas be a different one in our life by sharing with others especially the needy and rejected around and among us. As St. Mother Theresa says, 'it's not what we give, but how much love we put in to the giving'. Let us enjoy this Christmas in sharing what we have with others, even if it's a smile. 'Let us always meet each other with a smile, for a smile is the beginning of love.' 'If you think you cannot change the world, but you can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples' (St. Mother Theresa of Calcutta). Let us welcome baby Jesus to be born in our Manger (heart) at this Christmas. "To you is born this day in the city of David a savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord" (Lk. 2:11). ♦





LET IT BE FOR THIS YEAR

By Fr. John Erambil V.C.

The parables Jesus has told remain the most beautiful mode of communication in the Bible. Every parable presents the readers with invaluable messages to be reflected upon. The 13th chapter of the gospel according to Luke speaks of such a thoughtful imagery the Lord has put forward. The parable here has been crafted with the central character of a fig tree which fails to bear fruit. There is always a chance that our attention gets concentrated completely on this unfruitful nature of the tree. Though it remains the first message of the parable, a deeper reflection would lead us to other salient realms of the word.

Though there was enough time for the tree to prove its faithfulness, it has now become totally hopeless. It is then the parable introduces another pivotal character of the gardener who pleads with the master for the longer life of the tree. He tells him: “Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it

and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down” (Lk 13:8-9). Prayer of the gardener is the element that decides the further destiny of the fig tree. Since the word does not convey that the master went forward with his decision, he might surely have made up his mind to wait little longer. Jesus, through this significant imagery, calls everyone to think of the reason behind our longer life and the extended time of being gracefully nurtured. Sometimes we may tend to think that our life has been blessed through our own merit and the personal prayers we make before the master. However, this passage of the gospel reminds us not to forget the people who plead before the

Prayer of the gardener is the element that decides the further destiny of the fig tree.

Lord not to deprive us of the blessings that we enjoy now. The gardeners like parents, relatives, religious, others who are dear to us and even the people whom we do not know, bring about this response of the master's mercy in our life. Though the present world witnesses a great rise in the number of the people who are least bothered about the presence of God, the prayers of others who are faithful to Him play a vital role in keeping their life intact.

The book of Deuteronomy presents a fabulous message in this connection through the words of Moses. The people of Israel were often unfaithful and rebellious against God. The time they are blessed with the permission to enter the promised land, Moses tells them: "Know, then, that the Lord your God is not giving you this good land to occupy because of your righteousness; for you are a stubborn people. Remember and do not forget how you provoked the Lord your God to wrath in the wilderness; you have been rebellious against the Lord from the day you came out of the land of Egypt until you came to this place" (Deut 9: 6-7). The words of Moses are very clear in reminding them of their unworthiness to receive the blessings from Yahweh. He also speaks of the reason why God has allowed them to enter the land: "I Lay prostrate before the Lord as before, forty days and forty nights; I neither ate bread nor drank water... For I was afraid that the anger that the Lord bore against you was so fierce that he would destroy you. But the Lord listened to me that time also" (Deut 9:18-19). Here Moses explicitly takes the role of the gardener whom we see in the parable of the New Testament.

The nature of the Israelites was never something that could help them have a blessing like the promised land. Therefore, the mediation and the prayers of Moses were almost similar to the words of the gardener to the owner: "Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it" (Lk 13:8).

This reflection may now link our thoughts with the life of St. Augustine. St Augustine, St Monica's son gave his mother the worst heart aches. Though Augustine excelled in his studies, his behaviour became unacceptable to his mother. The case was not only that he went into loose living with women, alcohol and addictions of all kinds, but also he got attracted towards a cult called Manichaeism. St. Monica was becoming a gardener shedding tears for her lost son. Augustine, to her greatest joy, not only embraced Christianity, but he decided to live a life of celibacy and devote himself to God's service. St Augustine, was not only a wonderful Bishop, but later became one of the greatest saints and doctors of the Catholic church. It was the culminating point of God's response to the prayers of his mother. Augustine was converted not because he

decided to take any particular step in his life, but it happened solely because of the penitential life of his mother.

The second chapter of the gospel according to Mark also narrates an event where Jesus heals a paralytic who was brought to him by some people though opening the roof above him. The passage very distinctly conveys the message that the paralytic was forgiven his sins and cured of his sickness because of the belief of the people who had brought him to Jesus. Those people were actually in the shoes of the gardener to plead for the sick person. There are so many similar examples that the Bible puts forward in this regard. It all invites us to think of the gardeners in our life and also to be aware of the fact that the blessings we enjoy in our life never spring from our merit or righteousness alone. There would be a number of people connected to our life who make the same prayer to the master: "Sir, let it be for this year, until I dig around it and put manure on it" (Lk 13:8). St. Paul says: "It depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who shows mercy" (Rom 9:16) and we may add: 'God's mercy that flows into us through others.' ♦





PARENTS, DISCIPLINE YOUR CHILDREN

By Joseph Kalangara

Sons are indeed a heritage from the Lord” (Ps 127:3). Everyone who gives a gift, normally gives gifts which will be useful for the receiver. This is precisely what God does too. God in his infinite wisdom knows the child/children to be given to parents and accordingly provides them for the fulfillment of His plan. God’s revealed plan is “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined them to be conformed to the image of his Son” (Rom 8:29). His objective is that everyone must become like Jesus Christ.

God’s word in Psalm 139:13-16 states the following “For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your

book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed.” A child is fearfully and wonderfully made. If that is the case, then why is it that some parents find their children to be a problem? The parents believe that their children are disobedient, rude, rebellious, unloving etc.

God’s word in verse 16 above states that He has seen the book that contains every day of the life of a person, even before he/she is created in the womb. God has created each person to be a member of the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12) and if a person has traits that are inconsistent with the trait of Jesus, then God will give the person a gift that will force the person to be consistent with the trait of Christ.

Let me just explain the above point. Suppose there is a mother who thinks she is holy and prayerful and is unhappy with a child who is problematic, wayward, not wanting to pray etc. Often we assume the problem is with the child, but in reality God is trying to convey to the mother

a message “For if you love those who love you, what reward you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the gentiles do the same?” (Mt 5:46-47). God is showing the mother that even though she considers herself to be holy and prayerful, she is yet to love a child that does not fit into her expectations. Therefore she has not reached the perfection that God wants her to reach (Mt 5:48). Through the gift of the problematic child, God is conveying to the mother to love the child for who he/she is and not to love them only when the child fulfills her conditions. The child therefore becomes the barometer for the mother to realize that she has to become like Jesus. This is the opportunity that God gives to the mother to exhibit the fruit of love and faithfulness. Love conquers everything and by her showering her love to her child, she can glorify God and also be the light to the child through

A child is fearfully and wonderfully made. If that is the case then why is it that some parents find their children to be a problem?.

whom the child comes to know God. It is this knowledge of God that will in the near future help the child to also become like Christ.

As parents we need to work hard at controlling our words and emotions, and think and plan ways and means to discipline and deal with our children's misbehavior that teaches them, as far as we as parents are able, the joy of living under God's goodness. Jesus asked us take up the cross (Mk 8.34). Our families are the perfect crosses that God has chosen for us to carry.

God stated "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner" (Gen 2:18). The reason why God stated that is because He himself is relationship. He is Trinity – three persons in a perfect relationship of self-giving love and service of the other. For those made in his image, then, life is ultimately found in relationships of love and trust; first with Him, and then with others. God wants

our earthly families to be places where this love and faithfulness are completed, they are still God's gracious provision by which we can model and taste the good things that Christ has won for us. The members of our families are the ones God has planted to perfect in us those areas which are not like Jesus Christ. It is this realization that will help us to understand our own weaknesses, and through it God's plan. These will change and grow as we do, but underlying them must be the constant foundation of conducting ourselves in love and faithfulness towards each other – seeking the good of the other, as they do likewise.

The word of God states, "Children, obey your parents in

the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother (this is the first commandment with a promise), so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth" (Eph 6:1-3). It is only by obeying their parents whom they can see, children can obey God whom they cannot see. God in fact wants children to see God in their parents and parents to shower the love of God on their children. The effect of the parents love and faithfulness is to prune the children of their immaturity, so that avenues for deeper, more joyful and mature relationships are opened up. God is our father and He does everything for our good to conform to the image of Jesus. There is no denying the fact that bringing up children can be at times very unnerving, but God will strengthen us according to His goodwill for this very purpose. Our struggles lead to our strength. All our pain has a purpose; our salvation. "I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil 1:6). ♦



THIRSTING FOR GOD



By Nancy Mwangi

The Psalmist says, “As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, the living God” (Ps 42:1-2). Do you sometimes feel a thirst to make a trip to heaven just to meet Jesus and be lost in His embrace and whisper to Him ‘Jesus I LOVE YOU?’ Oh! How is it possible? It cannot be. Do not be desperate, because Jesus is not so far. “Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come into you and eat with you, and you with me” (Rev 3:20). The reality is that Jesus is near us. He is indeed desperately waiting outside our hearts until we let him in. It is him who sought us first. We are not able to seek him on our own, but simply respond to his calling. In the book of Genesis we see God asks man, “Where are you?” (Gen 3:9). It is in His thirst for us that God himself instills the thirst for Him and is paradoxically still the one who satisfies that desire.

God talks to us through his word. “Those who love me will keep my word and my Father will love them and we will come to them and make our home with them” (Jn 14:23). None can enter the house when the owner inside refuses to open. The owner of the house must respond to the knock and open the door. Once Jesus comes in, he will give the joy of salvation to the host and

GOLDEN BOX

Some time ago a mother punished her 5-year-old daughter for wasting a roll of expensive gold wrapping paper. Money was tight and she became even more upset when the child used the gold paper to decorate a box to put under the Christmas tree. Nevertheless, the little girl brought the gift box to her mother the next morning and said, "This is for you, Momma."

The mother was embarrassed by her earlier over reaction, but her anger flared again when she opened the box and found it was empty. She spoke to her daughter in a harsh manner. "Don't you know, young lady, when you give someone a present there's supposed to be something inside the package?" The little daughter had tears in her eyes and said, "Oh, Momma, it's not empty! I blew kisses into it until it was full."

The mother was crushed. She fell on her knees and put her arms around her little girl, and she begged her forgiveness for her thoughtless anger. An accident took



the life of the child only a short time later, and it is told that the mother kept that gold box by her bed for all the years of her life. Whenever she was discouraged or faced difficult problems, she would open the box and take out an imaginary kiss and remember the love of the child who had put it there.

In a very real sense, each of us, as human beings, has been given a golden box filled with unconditional love and kisses from our children, family, friends and GOD. There is no more precious possession anyone could hold.

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to all those connected to that person. He will open the door of blessings to come in. This is the divine fellowship with our Lord Jesus.

Our thirst for God must be for who he is, but not for what he can do for us. Our honest desire for God will enable us consequently to seek him with all our heart, mind, and strength (2Chr.15:12). Today, there is a kind of microwave Christianity where we want everything simplified. We want service times to be short like an hour. Prayer is glanced over and

worship is designed to entertain people. There is a severe lack of desire to pursue God. Let us be encouraged to seek God as if we sought a great treasure (Pro 2:4).

When we say seek God with all your heart, mind and strength, we must imagine a mother who has lost her child in a busy mall or a in crowded gathering. Her entire heart would be engaged. She would not settle until her baby is found. She would probably seek public announcement, engage other in her search and so forth. All her energy would be concentrated in

the search. This should be so in our seeking for God. "When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart" (Jer29:13). Our search for God is through virtues such as humility, dying to self, vibrant prayer, total surrender and worship. King David was probably the greatest seeker of all-time. In his search for the divine he cried, "My heart says, 'seek his face!' Your face, Lord, do I seek" (Ps 27:8). Let us seek him all throughout our life. Let us also make a firm resolution not to sin again. We are nothing without him and yet with him we have everything. ♦

Fr. Jinu Puthussery V.C.

Kila mwaka dominika katika Oktava ya Christmas, kanisa huadhimisha sikukuu ya familia takatifu ili kumshukuru Mungu kwa ajili ya utakatifu wa familia hiyo ya Yesu, Maria na Yosefu. Ni vyema kuwa na tafakari hiyo kwamba familia ya Yosefu na Maria imewekwa wakfu na upako wa familia hiyo uliletwa na Kristo, Mwana wa Mungu. Lakini uwepo wake pekee hauifanyi familia hiyo kuwa familia takatifu, ila moyo wa Yosefu na Maria kwa kumpokea Yesu katika familia hiyo, maandalizi yote walioambiwa kufanya na changamoto zote walizopitia baada ya kuzaliwa kwa Kristo. Hivi vyote kwa pamoja ndivyo vilivyochangia kuifanya hiyo familia kuwa familia takatifu na mfano wa kuigwa. Upendo wao katika kumpokea, kumlea na kumfanyia ampendeze Mungu na binadamu, ulikuwa sababu muhimu kuifanya hiyo familia kuwa mfano wa kuigwa.

Upendo wa Kujishusha na Kujitoa Sadaka

Malaika wa Bwana aliwaasa Yosefu na Maria kukubali wito wa Mungu kwa kujinyenyekeza, ili wote pamoja waweze kusema 'ndio' kwa sauti ya Mungu. "Naye Yusufu alipoamka katika usingizi, alifanya kama malaika wa Bwana alivyomwagiza" (Mt. 1:24). Naye Maria alikubali kuitikia wito wa malaika na kusema, "Tazama, mimi ni mjakazi wa Bwana; na iwe kwangu kama ulivyosema (Lk 1:38). Wote wawili waliachana na mipango yao yote na kuitikia wito wa Mungu kwa upendo mkubwa. Ilikuwa nafasi kwao kujinyenyekeza na kuchagua kile kitu kilicho kigumu katika maisha yao. Waliyapokea mapenzi ya Mungu kwa ajili upendo wa Mungu na kwa kujenga familia yao takatifu.



Kuwa na familia ni ndoto ya watu wengi, ila masharti ya kwanza kabisa katika kujenga familia (si kwa matofali na sementi) ni moyo wa kujifanya mnyenyekevu mbele ya mwenzako. Upendo katika familia hautaonekana kwa matendo ya nje au sherehe za kifahari au katika kupeana zawadi nzito. Yesu anatumkumbusha “hakuna aliye na upendo mwingi kuliko huu wa mtu kuutoa uhai wake kwa ajili ya rafiki zake” (Yn 15:13). Hivyo, upendo unatakiwa kuonekana katika kupiga magoti mbele ya mwenzako, katika kumsifu mwenzako, katika kujifanya sadaka kwa ajili ya familia yako. Kama Baba Mtakatifu Fransico alivyoandika katika waraka wake wa Furaha ya Upendo (2016), “ukweli ni kwamba umoja katika familia utalindwa na kukamilishwa na roho ya sadaka” (no. 106). Baba Mtakatifu Fransisko anasisitiza upendo wa aina mbili katika familia: “upendo wa kiroho na upendo wa kujitoa sadaka” (no. 120). Huu upendo unaonekana kwa moyo wa msamaha na kubeba pamoja misalaba ya familia kila siku kadiri Kristo alivyoagiza. Kwa namna hii tutakuwa wafuasi wa kweli wa Kristo na hatimaye familia zetu zitafanana na familia takatifu.

Upendo wa Kiroho

Upendo wa aina ya pili Baba Mtakatifu Fransisko anaosisitiza ni upendo wa kiroho. Huu si upendo unaoongozwa na tamaa ya mwili. Familia takatifu ya Yosefu na Maria iliongozwa na kulindwa na upendo wa kiroho. Neno linaposema kwamba “hakumjua kamwe hata alipomzaa mwanawe, akamwita jina lake Yesu” (Mt. 1:25), si tu uhakika wa kutunza ubikira wa mkewe, bali Yosefu alimheshimu bikira huyo na aliweza kuishinda tamaa ya mwili kwa ajili ya



sifa kwa Mungu na kumpenda mkewe Mariamu kiroho. Mariamu vilevile, baada ya kutambua wito wake ni kumleta Mwana wa Mungu hapa duniani, alifanya juhudi zote kuishi upendo huo wa kiroho. Angalia sala ya Tobit hapo alipomchukua Sara akisema: “Na sasa, Ee Bwana, simtwai huyu ndugu yangu kwa ajili ya tamaa, bali katika kweli. Uamuru nirehemiwe, hata niwahi kuona uzee pamoja naye” (Tob 8:7). Sala hiyo iliwafanya kupata uhai wa Mungu na kuendelea na maisha yao kinyume na matarajio ya familia yao. Upendo wa kweli au wa kiroho unaelezwa na Mt. Paulo katika waraka wake akisema: “Upendo huvumilia, hufadhili; upendo hauhusudu; upendo hautakabari, haujivuni” (1Kor 13:4).

Dunia ya leo inatambua upendo katika maana tofauti. Wanafamilia wengi pia wanaongozwa na fikra potovu juu ya upendo. Upendo wa kweli au upendo wa kiroho unaeleweka vibaya katika karne yetu. Upendo daima umechukua maana ya ‘sex’ au upendo kwa mwili wa mwenzako. Upendo wa kiroho wa kujenga na ya kumheshimu mwenzako unakosekana katika familia nyingi. Upendo wa kiroho lazima utangulie upendo wa aina nyingine. Upendo wa kweli

kwanza unaleta umoja katika familia, unatuongoza katika maisha ya kiroho na kutufanya kuwa wapendwa wa Mungu. Yesu mwenyewe baada ya kujifunza kutoka familia yake takatifu kwa miaka 30, alianza mafundisho yake akisema: “Heri wenye moyo safi, maana hao watamwona Mungu” (Mt. 5:8). Hivyo, wito kwa kila mwanafamilia ni kulinda usafi huo kwa neema ya Mungu na hatimaye kuitwa familia takatifu.

Krismas ya mwaka 2019 inatualika na sisi pia tuwe na familia takatifu kwa kuishi upendo wa kiroho na wa kujitoa sadaka. Sakramenti ya ndoa ni muhimu pia ili upendo wetu upate baraka ya Mungu. Lakini baba na mama kwanza wawe na upendo huo ulivyochezwa hapo na hatimaye kuomba baraka ya Mungu kupitia sakramenti ya ndoa. Zawadi kubwa ya kumpatia mwenzako na watoto wako mwaka huu ni zawadi ya upendo wa kweli, kama Mungu mwenyewe “kwa maana jinsi hii Mungu aliupenda ulimwengu, hata akamtoa Mwanawe pekee, ili kila mtu amwaminiye asipotee, bali awe na uzima wa milele” (Yn. 3:16). Krismas ni sherehe ya upendo. Tuifurahie sherehe hiyo ya upendo katika familia zetu na kuzifanya familia zetu ziwe familia takatifu. ♦



TESTIMONIES

Mary Wangai

Offspring

I am so grateful to God, because since I started attending the retreats here at Vincentian Retreat Centre, Thika, I have seen the hand of God. I was very worried about my life because I had stayed in marriage for about 6 years without a child. I used to come and enter the Divine Mercy Chapel with a lot of tears asking God to bless me with a child. While praying I heard a voice consoling me to stop crying “your prayers have been answered and you will live to see the fruit of your womb”. The Lord answered me and now I have a baby girl. Thank you, Jesus. Praise you, Jesus.

Julia Dawood

Healing

The Pentecost Retreat was the first retreat to attend. I come from Taveta. My intention was to pray for my husband and children who gave me a lot of trouble at home. Two of my children were jobless. For five years I had severe pains on the right hand. Whenever I went for medication, I would be given Bonium drug, a painkiller which was injected on my knees.

As a result, I could not bow down. The next check-up I went, the doctors advised me to refrain from consuming salt, sugar, oil and meat. I want to give glory and honor to the Lord for He has healed me completely. Thank you, Jesus. Praise you, Jesus.

George Kajumbe

Conversion

God has delivered me from an addiction to alcohol, which I was introduced to at the age of 3 years. So, I didn't continue with my primary education. I was arrested and for about 18yrs in jail and I was approved to go home without bond or any charges. I prayed to God to deliver me from taking alcohol. I started going to the church. I also started coming to Vincentian Retreat Centre, Thika, for prayers and I don't thirsty for any kind of any drug anymore. Thank you, Jesus. Praise you, Jesus.

Esther Mutua

Offspring

My mother in law cursed me that I will never bear children. The reason being I had married her son against her will. She killed our seven children and

I was filled with sorrow and unforgiveness in my heart. When I came at Vincentian Retreat Centre, Thika for the one-day prayer service, I asked God to give me a heart of forgiveness so as to forgive her completely. One of the priests announced that “Esther, God will bless you”, then I went home and shared the blessing with my husband. We had planned to come back to Vincentian Retreat Centre, Thika, for more prayers. That was in 2009. Father requested us to solemnize our marriage which we did in that same year. On October 2010, God blessed us with a bouncing baby boy. Years later the Lord blessed us again with a girl and three boys. Glory be to God Almighty Father for His blessings for giving us a joyful life. Thank you Jesus. Praise you Jesus.

Khalima khamala

Healing

I was born a Muslim. I first started attending prayers at V.P.H. Lavington when my son got sick. He was born with a heart problem that needed medical attention. Therefore, he would go to Kenyatta hospital for check-

up. The doctors were supposed to do an operation on him. A friend of mine encouraged me to visit Vincentian Retreat Centre, Thika, so that the priest could pray for him. I decided to come for prayers before the visit to the doctor. I went to the priest with a bottle of water and explained my predicament to him. He blessed the water and I took it to my son. When we went for the clinic, I was praying for a miracle to happen and I believed the Blessed water would give him healing. After two days, we went to see the doctor and to my surprise, he told me that my son should go and study hard because he was healed completely. Thank you, Jesus. Praise you, Jesus.

Stephen Irungu
Healing

It was in February 2019 when I got sick with nerves failure. I went to Coptic Hospital where I was advised to have a head scan and later be admitted. I couldn't afford the scan so I chose to buy medicine. After a while I developed a wound on the head that damaged my left side of my

eye. This forced me to use the right eye only. According to the doctor, the nerves contributed to this problem. One day a friend told me about the Vincentian Retreat Centre, Thika. I came for counselling in July 2019 and I was given Bible verses such as Mathew 11:28 which encouraged me knowing that only God can heal me and give rest. Now I am completely healed and I give all glory to God and as the Bible says in Romans 5:5 that hope does not disappoint. Thank you, Jesus. Praise you, Jesus.

Petronilla Wamaya
Healing

I had a minor accident in 2016. I was treated but my hand remained stiff. From the doctor's explanation, the plaster was removed before the fracture got healed. As a result, I had no hope whether it would heal. During the Inner healing retreat, I had offered severall intentions including my hand. The priest announced that the Lord God is touching a person with a stiff hand. Previously I could not clap properly but miraculously during

that adoration, I clapped my hands with ease. Now, I can easily wave without any discomfort. I am completely healed. Thanks be to God. He did beyond what I expected. Thank you, Jesus. Praise you, Jesus.

Mary Wanjiku
Conversion

I was addicted to alcohol. After attending the retreat in May 2019, I made a good confession and told Jesus to deliver me from the urge of drinking alcohol. It is now two weeks and I haven't experienced the desire to take alcohol. Thank you, Jesus. Praise you, Jesus.

Esther Maina
Blessings

Am pleased to testify that there is nothing that is impossible with God. One of my brothers was an alcoholic for over 25 years. I thank God, after praying for several years he completely delivered him from alcoholism. The Lord God gave me faith to believe my brother will be delivered. I also thank the Lord God for healing my mum hypertension, a problem



“I will hear from heaven,
and will forgive their sin
and heal their land”
(2Chr 7:14).

**“I will heal them
and reveal to them
abundance of
prosperity
and security”
(Jer 33:6).**



she suffered for so many years. After attending several retreats and praying for her, now she is completely healed. Thank you, Jesus. Praise you, Jesus.

Lucy Wanjiru

Healing

I attended inner healing retreat at Vincentian Retreat Centre, Thika after a friend invited me. I have been suffering from pains in back, legs and the whole body for more than 10 years. I had gone to the hospitals because the pains but I was not healed. In January I developed a swollen leg and my whole body was itching. I changed to another hospital, I even tried herbal medicine, but nothing worked. I went for another check up in the hospital where the doctors found fluids in my chest cavity. I had High Blood Pressure attacks. I got healed when I attended the inner healing retreat. Thank you Jesus. Praise you Jesus.

Mercy Kimaru

Healing

Last year in October, my husband was very sick after sustaining serious injuries following a terrible road accident. The doctors said that had serious brain damage going by the CT scans. He also suffered broken ribs, injuring the lungs and hence, he couldn't even breath well. I prayed silently in the doctors room, "God nothing is impossible for you, please do not let him die". He was then put in the intensive care unit. The doctors said due to nature of accident they didn't know how long it would take to recover. I was very sad. I came to the Vincentian prayer house for the Saturday service with only one intention; to pray for the healing of my husband. During the holy mass, the priest who was celebrating the mass announced that someone is being healed of brain injury, broken ribs, weakness on his left side. I clearly saw that it was my husband being mentioned and I claimed the healing. Indeed my husband was

healed. He walks, talks and is back to normal. Thank you Jesus. Praise you Jesus.

Hector Bikundo

Healing

My grandson couldn't talk at the age of 28 months. Our son was worried and rang me from Australia and asked me to tell the Vincentian fathers to assist. I went to VPH and one priest gave me some scriptures from the bible and asked me to send to our children to recite and pray as they repeat the name of Jesus three times in front of the child and to use holy water. They did it for three days. Now our grandson is a chatter box, very intelligent and loving. I thank the Lord for his love. Thank you Jesus. Praise you Jesus.

Mary Kiplang'at

Healing

I got ill in 2016 and I was treated for food poisoning. After a while my condition got worse as eyes turned yellow I started vomiting and I lost appetite and my whole body started itching. I went back to my doctor. After more tests, I was referred to Kijambe Hospital. At Kijambe Hospital two scans were performed on my stomach on two separate visits. The doctors referred me for further scans at German Medical Centre where an MRI scan was performed on me. Upon taking the results to Kijambe Hospital a small tumor was visible at the pancreas and the doctors recommended that I go for an operation. After massive hospital research I was settled for Kenyatta hospital. As we were getting prepared to book for an operation date, doctors countrywide went on strike, the strike lasted for three months. After initially being unable to pray, I found strength to pray and after days of praying I went

to VPH and met a priest there whom I explained my pain. He gave me word of God to recite and placed a crucifix on my forehead and told me I will get healed. I went home, and after more prayers and reading the verses that I was given, slowly but surely I gained appetite, my eyes started to become clear. After a while I recovered fully. I went back to my first doctor for progress checkup and he was astonished at my miraculous recovery. Praise be to God. Thank you Jesus. Praise you Jesus.

Alex Mbami

Blessing

I have been suffering from asthma since I was at the age of eight years. For many years I was taken to different hospitals but never got healed. After my college education, it got so bad that I started using inhalers. I also could not get a job even after sending my CV to many organizations. My friend from college told me about VPH and I decided to come and attend a retreat to pray for a job. After making a sincere confession after many years, I felt so relieved and happy and all I wanted to pray and praise Jesus whom I felt loved me deeply. After finishing the retreat, that Friday I got a call from a very good organization, and they called me for an interview. I thank God because I got that job with very good pay. Its only later that I came to realize that even the asthma was gone! Jesus healed me completely! Thank you Jesus. Praise you Jesus.

Michael k Manthi

Reconciliation

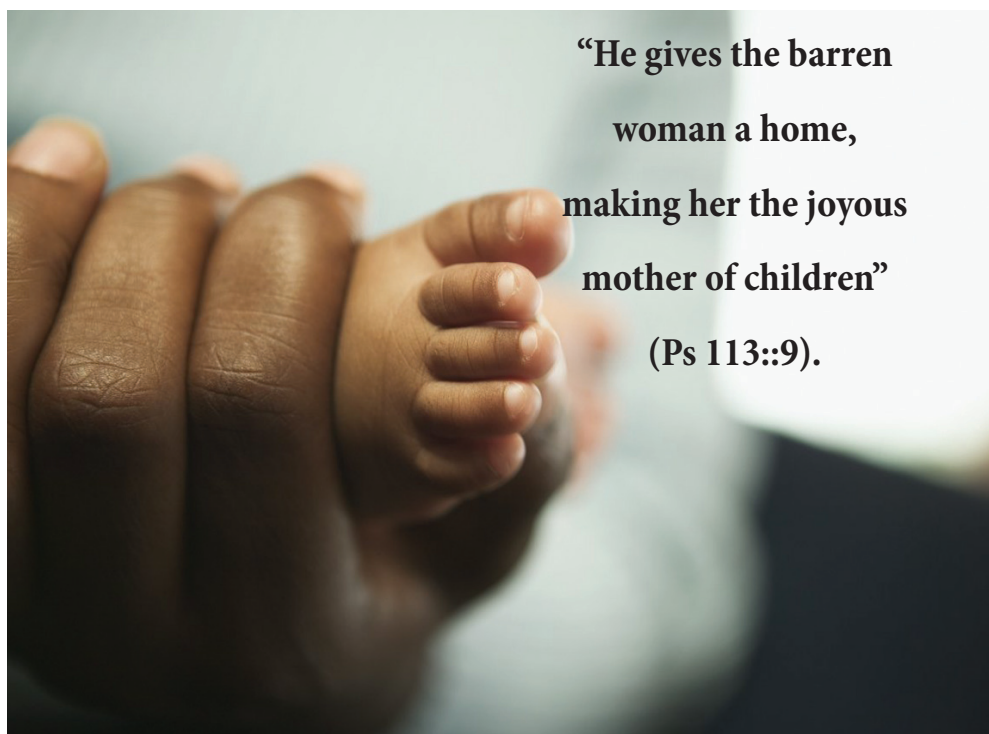
I am based at Machakos County. I had loving parents who passed on back in 1988 and 2003 respectively. Though none had a chance to be with me as I finished form 4, I managed to secure a chance at the university. However, things never worked out as per my expectations. I joined groups in the university which taught me how to use drugs such as alcohol, bhang, miraa and cigarettes. I used these drugs for a long time. At times I had to use money for basic needs e.g. food, clothing, and school fees to buy the drug of choice. Because of this problem of addictions, I could not manage to complete my education as I could not even attend classes. Jesus had mercy on me. One of my relatives was helping people with addiction and when he heard about me, he reached out and told me he wanted to take me to a rehabilitation program and paid all the expenses. He also told me about Vincentian Prayer House in Lavington and asked me if I would want to attend

a retreat. I attended the inner healing retreat in July 2019 and I found God who loved me and I welcomed him with open hands! From that moment onwards, Jesus delivered me completely! I finished the programme and now am back in school and doing very well. I also introduce many students to the prayer house. Thank you Jesus. Praise you Jesus.

Caroline Ochieng'

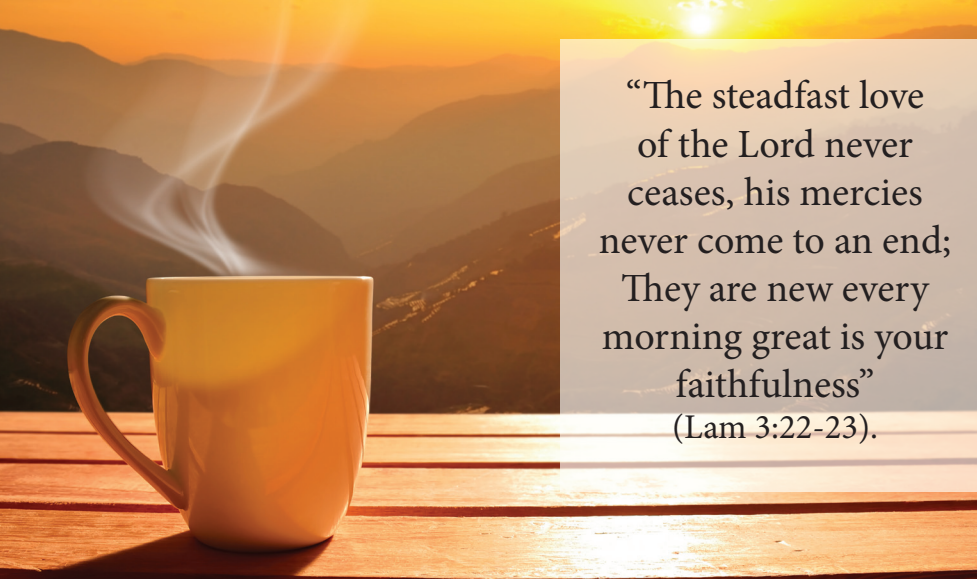
Healing

I thank God for what he has done to me today in the morning. I came to VPH for the Saturday service, but on the way coming I started experiencing terrible pain in my stomach. I was very worried as I was 2 months pregnant and had a miscarriage before. I thought of going back home, but since I was very near the prayer house, I decided to go at the grotto of Mother Mary and pray for sometime before going to the hospital. As soon as I got to the place, I found a priest and shared my worries with him. He gave me some word of God and told me to go and hold the feet



**“He gives the barren
woman a home,
making her the joyous
mother of children”**

(Ps 113::9).



“The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; They are new every morning great is your faithfulness”
(Lam 3:22-23).

of Jesus at the cross and recite the holy rosary at the grotto. My Jesus healed me and the pain was gone. I carried my pregnancy to term and later delivered a healthy baby boy! Thank you Jesus. Praise you Jesus.

Sr. Mary Wavinya

Healing

I feel healed in my heart. I have been having this pain for five years when I lost my brother doctor who loved me so much. After four years, I again lost my dad who I loved so much. These two people were my great support in my religious life. Now after both left me, I felt like even leaving of the congregation. I couldn't utter; Abba Father is loving, as I felt like he didn't love me. How could a loving Father do this to his child? I attended a retreat in May 2019 and I prayed in tears for healing and peace. I did a sincere confession and that day during adoration, Jesus gave me peace and joy in my heart. I released my dad and my brother and now am happy in the Lord. Thank you Jesus. Praise you Jesus.

Annastacia Wambua

Healing

I have suffered joint pains since 1994 especially in my knees and my back. From 2013, it got worse and I couldn't walk until I was given knee supporters and a stick. The doctor told me there is a need to replace my knee caps because after taking an

x-ray it showed that the knee caps were getting worn out. When I came here Vincentian Prayer House, Lavington in August and attended the Bible Convention, I asked God to heal my knees because he is able and I love to adore Jesus kneeling. Jesus heard my prayers and I am now able to kneel without any pains on my knees. Jesus fixed my knee caps again. Thank you Jesus. Praise you Jesus.

Esther Kirimo

Blessings

In November 2018, I attended the youth retreat at VRC Thika. I asked our lady of Guadalupe for a miracle of paying my December session school fees and if she did that I would become her ambassador. I then prayed our lady of Guadalupe novena. When we opened school in December I stayed for some days then I went to check my school portal accounts and to my surprise, my fees of December session of over 40,000 ksh had been paid. Glory to the almighty God. Thank you Jesus. Praise you Jesus.

Sr. Virginia

Forgiveness

After attending a retreat in July 2019 at VPH, I was able to forgive my parents who never took care of me and gave us to my grandparents to take care of us. My dad left us at the age of two years and I have never seen him again. No one in my family attended his burial due to hatred.

I knew my grandparents as my parents. Today I thank God I have forgiven them. I completely forgave and reconciled with my mum who is still alive and I have started loving her more. Thank you Jesus. Praise you Jesus.

Benta Achieng

Blessing

I have had a land issue for four years; I used a lot of money to and from the court as they kept on postponing the case. I had completely lost hope since I did not see any direction that this case was taking and it had now lasted four years. One of my friends advised me to go to the Vincentian Fathers in Kisumu and talk to them over the same. The priest that I found gave me the word of God to go and claim and by September I won the case. Thank you Jesus. Praise you Jesus.

Josephine Auma

Healing

I have had a wound in my hand for four years. I tried all sorts of medication and different doctors but it would not heal. It had reached a point where I could not even raise up my hand. Somebody told me about the Marian retreat and I decided to seek the Lord through our mother Mary. God has done me a miracle, the retreat has ended when I am completely healed and I can even carry up my hand. Thank you Jesus. Praise you Jesus.

Lilian Adhiambo

Conversion

I have been drinking alcohol for more than fifteen years. My children hated and abandoned me because I was embarrassing them. In the entire village, no woman had been seen drinking the way I used to. My character even blocked my children from receiving blessings because they are well educated and all

working, but they could not even understand where their money was going to. They blamed it all on me and this made me to feel very useless pushing me to drink even more. My husband also left me because of the same issues, I felt so rejected. One of my daughters had been going to the Vincentian prayer house in Kisumu to pray for me and through her prayers I got delivered and now it is one year since I took alcohol. And ever since I stopped taking alcohol, my home has improved, my children are developing and have even bought cars. My husband came back and we are very happy together. These days I am clean and presentable and so, people have begun respecting me. I really thank God because there is nothing that he cannot do. Thank you Jesus. Praise you Jesus.

Mercy Odero

Forgiveness

I had been holding a grudge against my dad who neglected us and made us suffer so much because he preferred our step siblings to us. Today when Father

preached against unforgiveness and effects of holding grudges. I realized that I have been carrying my dad for long in my heart and that is why I was suffering a lot. I decided completely to forgive my dad and that is when I received the healing of my ear and UTI immediately. Thank you Jesus. Praise you Jesus.

Belinda Mokuwa

Blessing

I could not give birth for eight years after having my first born because of the contraceptives that I was using. After attending a bible convention in December 2018, I decided not to use those contraceptives again and went for confession. Immediately after, that God blessed me and I conceived. During my pregnancy, the doctor found out that the baby was breech and he was underweight about 875 grams at eight months. I decided to go to the Vincentian prayer house Kisumu for counseling where I met a priest who told me not to worry that God was going to help me. He also gave me scriptures to go and claim and when my time came, I delivered normally on 10th of September 2019 at 3.6 kgs. Thank you Jesus. Praise you Jesus.

Pamella

Blessing

Armed thugs had broken into my car and wanted to shoot me, but when they saw the rosary hanging on my car, they decided to run away. My son had also lost his job and I encouraged him to attend the youth retreat which he did. Immediately after the youth retreat, he was called for an interview and he got the job. Thank you Jesus. Praise you Jesus.

Mildred Adongo

Blessing

My husband left me while I

was expecting, I had nothing and I could not do anything since I was almost due. I kept on crying and cursing this man each day of my life until a friend of mine took me to Vincentian prayer house Kisumu for counseling since I was in a pathetic state. I shared with the priest who advised me to forgive him and God would bless me. He also gave me verses from the bible to go and claim. The following week I was called by one white man, who offered me a job in my state of pregnancy without me going to look for the job. He also gave me a car and a lap top free of charge to assist me with my work. I am now very happy and peaceful. I have decided to convert and become a catholic because there is where the Lord rescued me. Thank you Jesus. Praise you Jesus.

Janet Anyumba

Healing

My daughter Mary Anne developed a mental problem when she was four years old. When she turned six, a lady directed me to the Vincentian prayer house Kisumu where I went and talked to a priest who gave me verses to pray for three months. Within one month I started to recognize some changes, and by now she is really okay. Constantly i remind her not to forget about God. Thank you Jesus. Praise you Jesus.

Victor Kizito

Healing

My mom had bone cancer that was eating her slowly and could not be helped in the hospitals. At the same time I also lost my job and could not assist her anymore financially. We went to Vincentian prayer house Kisumu and we were given word of God to claim. Mom is completely healed and I got a job too. Thank you Jesus. Praise you Jesus. ♦





Story of a well graduated engineer
Amidst ailment, hunger and humiliation,
Embraced the divine will,
Which willed to embrace him!

TRUSTED TOWARDS BLESSING

By Augustine Mwendwa

O taste and see that the Lord is good; happy are those who take refuge in him” (Ps 34:8). My story reveals how good I tasted and I took refuge in him. Graduated in electrical engineering, I started looking for a job desperately. A year passed while all my friends got jobs, yet I hadn’t had a single interview. On top of that, I was diagnosed with a strange liver disease where my urine was extremely yellow and gelatinous. Liver function test showed high levels of enzymes which are ordinarily caused by alcohol consumption, yet I had never taken alcohol. CT scan showed, the liver was inflamed and it became so painful that I could not stand even. All expenses of

my treatment were of borrowed money. The moment I stepped out of the hospital after the last check up, I said to myself ‘I won’t go to hospital again.’ That Saturday on 25th February, I attended

the service at Vincentian Prayer House, Lavington, which was my usual place of prayer. I believed and prayed. From that day, the pain disappeared and everything went back to normal.



Despite the good news of healing, I wasn't happy since I needed a job. More than six retreats I had attended with the intention of a job. I received several interview invites but I didn't get a job offer. In July 2017, I was locked out from the place I was living and I had nowhere to go. Luckily, that night, I called my primary school friend who offered me a place to stay as I continued looking for a job.

However, there was no food or money, just a place to sleep. He never used to cook for he ate from his place of work. Life was very tough. All my clothes and shoes were torn and worn out due to the long distance walks as I looked for a job. I had to borrow shoes from a friend who I used to outdo in academics. Mostly, I only survived on water and biscuits. I used to wash clothes for my friend so that he could have mercy on me and give me some little money which I used to pay for retreats at VRC. I had applied for over 500 jobs without any offer.

I never gave up in prayer. The Holy Rosary was my companion. I never stopped kneeling down and begging for God's mercy. I kept faith in Jesus. I lost all my campus friends since they had jobs. I was left alone. I was like a nanny to the friend I lived with. There were times I stayed without a meal, even for two days. I used to look under the chairs and bed to see if there were some coins so that I could go and buy something to eat. Every morning was a misfortune in my life. I asked myself, "What will I eat today? Where will I get something to eat? If I wear this shoe again, it might completely get torn beyond repair!"

My cousin and I were accused of stealing Kshs. 1,100 from a relative's cyber where I used



to apply jobs online and I was chased away on top of being accused of wearing the same clothes every day. It was very painful being unable to provide for myself and my family. My parents kept calling and indirectly showing how their hopes in me were dwindling, but there was nothing I could do rather than keep faith in God. I felt ashamed, humiliated and I suffered mentally in silence. I cried in prayer, spent hours in adoration chapels but there seemed no hope. Two years after completing my degree in electrical engineering with second class upper division, I was still jobless. After attending a retreat in early November 2017, I joined the Psalms Group.

I prayed Psalms for two retreats and Father allowed me to stay at Vincentian Retreat Centre. I stopped praying for a job and instead, I just started giving thanks to God for that was the only thing I thought I could do. I even got the grace to rejoice in my hopelessness and I felt I needed to suffer more.

I stayed in the ministry from 23rd December 2017 until 23rd June 2018. There comes the time of God for me. He blessed me with a well-paying and permanent job. I was provided with transport, insurance, fully paid hospital and phone expenses and I can get time to serve Him. Blessed be the Lord, whose mercy endures forever. ♦



PURPOSE in LIFE and SEARCH for MEANING

By Br. Peter

Youth is the stage in life where one is searching for meaning and purpose in life. It is a time where one's dreams and fantasies are battling with the reality of life. In a young mind thoughts are so chocking; no one seems to understand my desire to be free, to be myself, to have peace of mind, to be happy. I search for happiness in different realities of this world, but all I feel at the end of it is emptiness. I can't seem to get the happiness and freedom I wanted. Rather I feel I am falling deeper and deeper into a bottomless pit. I am an addict, can't help myself, I have become a burden and now friends have all forsaken me. I am wasted, a shame, a laughing stock in the society, a bad example. Then it hits me what I have become. Depression becomes my closest friend and stress tells me the quickest way to end this is by ending my life.

This is a common story to most of us. If not, we see it or hear about it. It's a common story with so many causes of drug abuse, suicide, prostitution, sponsors, teenage pregnancies and abortion, etc. it is alarming. Where are we heading?

Before we go down this road, let's go back to the drawing board, and see where we went wrong. First of all, are we really this bad?

Are we this miserable? Are we this hopeless? Where did we divert? Yes, I am a normal youth, having confusing times and decisions, wanting freedom to explore and to find happiness. But where is Jesus in all this? Where does Jesus fit in? Does He even understand what I am going through?

"Only where God is seen does life truly begin. Only when we meet the living God in Christ do we know what life is. We are not some casual and meaningless product of evolution. Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is necessary." says Pope emeritus Benedict XVI. In other words we are not a mistake, we are not an accident. "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you" (Jer 1:5). We are who we are because God loved us and thought about us. We are precious to him. "Because you are precious in my sight and honored, and I love you" (Is 43:4). God is love and everything He does, even creating us, is love in action. Our problem is confusing God's love with disappointing human love which punishes and rejects when we are bad. He loves us when we reject Him, when we disobey and when we're mean. He loves us when we have made a mess of our lives, and He is always ready to accept and forgive us and fill us with his joy and peace.

Deceived by crookedness of evil, many fall weak to loneliness, sexual immorality, pride, greed and to oh! so many different ways. God offers His love to all, no matter what we may have done, for once we accept His love and ask for forgiveness, and we will find as many have, the strength to overcome evil. "Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart... Return to the Lord, your God for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and relentless from punishing" (Joel 2:12-14).

The solutions for all our challenges as young people are not in drugs, money or our peer friends, but in turning to the loving Lord Jesus Christ who can truly set us free from all our bondages, addiction and miseries. "So if the son of man makes you free, you are free indeed" (Jn 8:36). Pope Emeritus continues to teach; "There is nothing more beautiful than to be surprised by the gospel, by the encounter with Christ. There is nothing more beautiful than to know Him and to speak to others of our friendship with him." Know Jesus and take him to others.

And finally, St. Vincent Pallotti quoted: "Not the goods of this world, but God; Not riches, but God; Not distinctions, but God; Not advancements, but God; God always, and in everything." ♦



VINCENTIAN WISDOM ON GOD'S LOVE

Biographical note

St. Vincent De Paul was born on March 28, 1581 at Pouy in France. He was ordained priest in 1600. In 1605 he was captured by pirates on his journey to Marseilles and spent two years in slavery in Tunis. He came back to Paris in 1608. His encounter with God in the midst of bitter experiences of life led him to a total renewal of life. He became aware of the spiritual poverty of the people and gained a firsthand knowledge of the real poverty of the people while he served as the parish priest of Chatillon. As result he started the Confraternity of Charity in 1617. Inspired by the Gospel passage, "He has anointed me to bring the good news to the poor" (Lk 4:18), he worked tirelessly for the spiritual and material nourishment of the poor by organizing works of charity and Popular Mission retreats. Through the new seminaries he started and through Tuesday Conferences and retreats he conducted, he contributed much to the training and reformation of the clergy. Vincent inspired the rich women of the noble class to come to the aid of the people suffering out of wars, diseases and poverty and organized their efforts in a systematic way. He worked for the betterment of the galley slaves while serving as their chaplain. Vincent, the Apostle of the poor, was called to his eternal reward on September 27, 1660. He was canonized in 1737. In 1885 he was declared by the Church as the heavenly patron of all charitable works. St. Vincent de Paul

is the father and heavenly patron of Vincentian Ministries.

STORY: St. Vincent shares a story after reading the book of St. Francis De Sales – 'Introduction to Devout Life'. A father has two sons. One is still young. The Father cares for him, plays with him, thinks of him always. when he does not see him, he feels deep sorrow and the thought of the child is ever in his mind. When the child returns, he goes to see him and loves him as Jacob loved Benjamin. The other is a twenty five or thirty years old, who is his own master, and also carries on the family business. It seems that this father has no tenderness for him. If there is any hard work, tills the soils, work in the field etc., this elder will have to do it. Yet, apparently the father does not show any tender love towards Him. But when the father knows the second son has a genuine need, he immediately reaches out. Not only that, the father clearly shows his love more than for the little one. He gives the elderly the best part of the property and advances him with plenty of money in business. Though he has a more tender and sensible love for the little one, he has more effective love for the elder. St. Vincent says, there are some who feel great sweetness at prayer and others who do not feel God at all.

MEDITATION: God's love is manifested in different ways. He created us in His image and likeness and bestowed us with His

Spirit. He gives us an opportunity to participate in this Divine Life through the death and resurrection of Jesus whom He send as His only begotten son. He forgives us our sins and gives us new life in the Spirit. God the Father is constantly caring for each one of us. We must tune our inner senses to experience His love in our daily lives unconditional and unfathomable. Sometimes like the elder son we may feel at times unloved and uncared for. But the Good Lord is watching over us and waiting to pour out His love into us through the Holy Spirit when we need it.

WORD OF WISDOM: How to love God? It is to love Him more than anything else, more than your father, mother, friends, relations or any creature whatsoever: It is to love Him more than oneself. If it were necessary to die for Him. It would be better to die than to withstand His glory and His pure love. – St. Vincent.

WORD FOR SOUL: "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8: 37-38). ♦

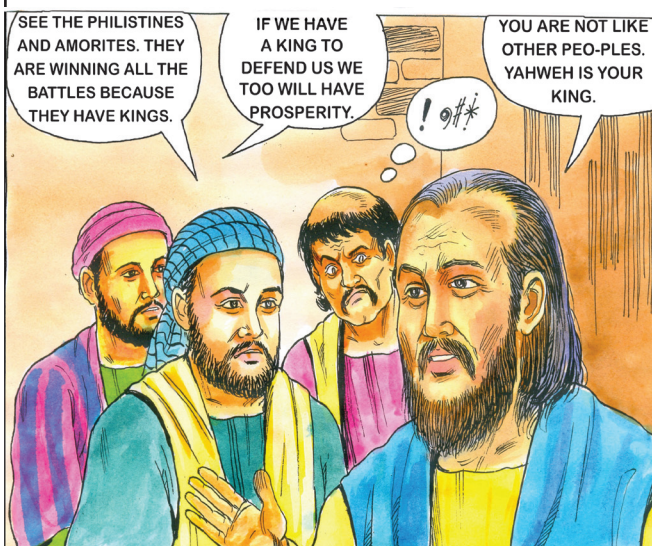
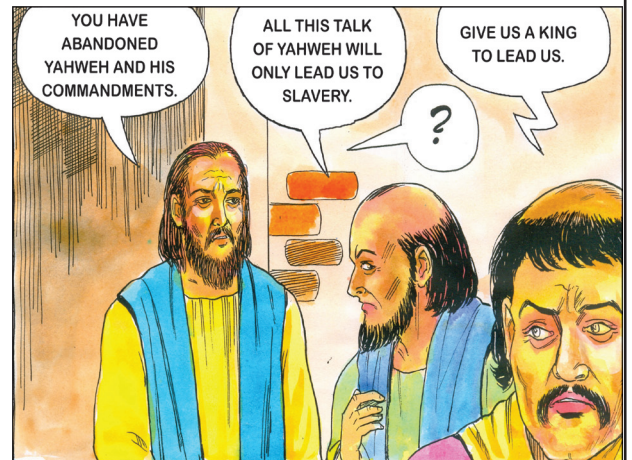
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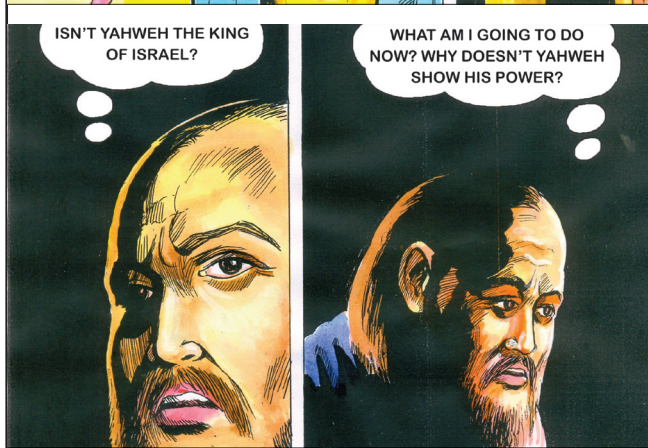
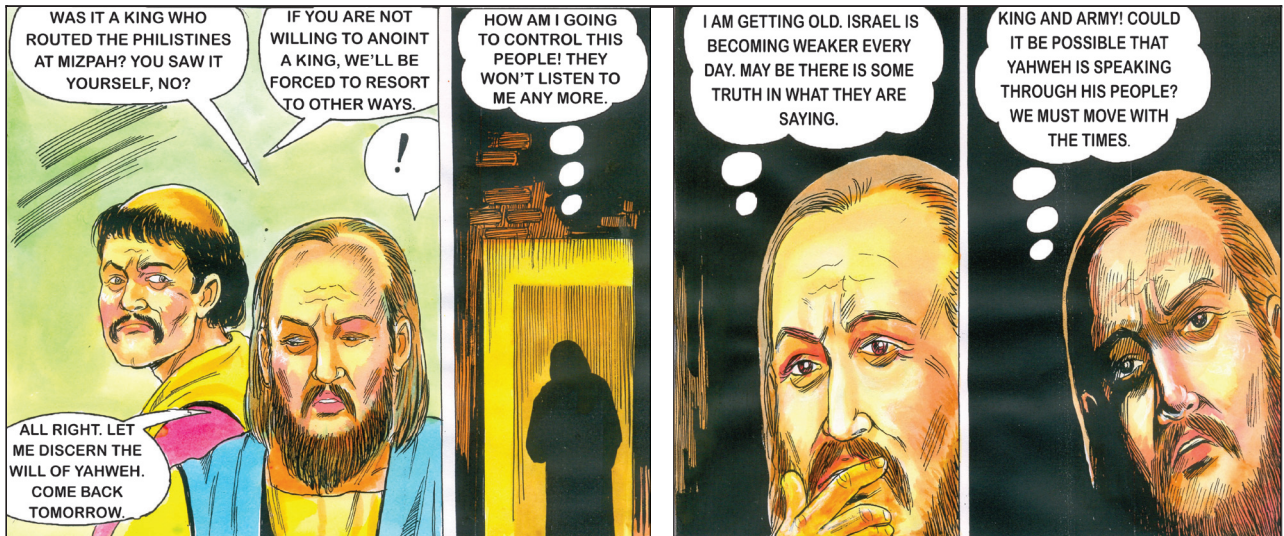
Read Magnificat: Luke 1:46- 55, spend a few minutes in recollection of God's love in your life.

The Soulmate Junior

SAMUEL

SCRIPT: REV. DR. MICHAEL KARIMATTAM





THE STORY OF SAMUEL DOESN'T END HERE. HE HAS YET TO PLAY A DECISIVE ROLE AT A CRUCIAL MOMENT IN THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL.

NEXT STORY

THE FIRST KING OF ISRAEL



CHILDREN'S QUIZ

Read the Gospel according to St. Mark and answer the following questions. 1. What did Jesus say to the leper that He cleansed? 2. What did Jesus say his house should be called? 3. Who boldly asked Pilate for the body of Jesus?? With the help of your parents send your answers through WhatsApp/SMS to Phone Number. 0766929181. From entries with the right answers a lucky winner will get an amazing prize. The answers for the last edition questions are 1. Holy Spirit 2. Angels 3. Galilee. The last time winner is Shain Mitchell Rachilo.



They said it

St. John Chrysostom

This day He who Is, is Born; and He who is becomes what He was not.

St. Ambrose of Milan

Open wide your door to the one who comes. Open your soul, throw open the depths of your heart to see the riches of simplicity, the treasures of peace, the sweetness of grace. Open your heart and run to meet the Sun of eternal light that illuminates all men.

St. Anthony of Padua

O Father, in your Truth (that is to say, in your Son, humbled, needy and homeless) you have humbled me. He was humbled in the womb of the Virgin, needy in the manger of the sheep, and homeless on the wood of the Cross. Nothing so humbles the proud sinner as the humility of Jesus Christ's humanity.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem

Teacher of children became himself a child among children, that he might instruct the unwise. The Bread of heaven came down to earth to feed the hungry.

St. Leo the Great

Dearly beloved, today our Saviour is born; let us rejoice. Sadness should have no place on the birthday of life. The fear of death has been swallowed up; life brings us joy with the promise of eternal happiness. No one is shut out from this joy; all share the same reason for rejoicing. Our Lord, victor over sin and death, finding no man free from sin, came to free us all.

St. Alphonsus Liguori

Arise, all ye nobles and peasants; Mary invites all, rich and poor, just and sinners, to enter the cave of Bethlehem, to adore and to kiss the feet of her newborn Son. Go in, then, all ye devout souls; go and see the Creator of heaven and earth on a little hay, under the form of a little Infant; but so beautiful that he sheds all around rays of light. Now that he is born and is lying on the straw, the cave is no longer horrible, but is become a paradise. Let us enter; let us not be afraid.

St. Bernard of Clairvaux

Awake, you who lie in the dust, awake and give praise. Behold, the Lord cometh with salvation. He comes with salvation, He comes with unction, He comes with glory. Jesus cannot come without salvation, Christ cannot come without unction, nor the Son of God without glory. For He Himself is salvation, He is unction, He is glory, as it is written, "A wise son is the glory of his father."

St. Peter Chrysologus

Christ's birth was not necessity, but an expression of omnipotence, a sacrament of piety for the redemption of men. He who made man without generation from pure clay made man again and was born from a pure body. The hand that assumed clay to make our flesh deigned to assume a body for your salvation. That the Creator is in his creature and God is in the flesh brings dignity to man without dishonour to him who made him. Why then, man,

are you so worthless in your own eyes and yet so precious to God?

Charles Dickens

Happy, happy Christmas, that can win us back to the delusions of our childhood days, recall to the old man the pleasures of his youth, and transport the traveler back to his own fireside and quiet home!

Pope Francis

God never gives someone a gift they are not capable of receiving. If he gives us the gift of Christmas, it is because we all have the ability to understand and receive it.

Benjamin Franklin

A good conscience is a continual Christmas.

T. S. Eliot

Moving between the legs of tables and of chairs, rising or falling, grasping at kisses and toys, advancing boldly, sudden to take alarm, retreating to the corner of arm and knee, eager to be reassured, taking pleasure in the fragrant brilliance of the Christmas tree.

St. Faustina Kowalska

The Word becomes flesh; God dwells among us, the Word of God, Mercy Incarnate. By Your descent, You have lifted us up to Your divinity. Such is the excess of Your love, the abyss of Your mercy. Heaven is amazed at the superabundance of your love. No one fears to approach You now. You are the God of mercy. You have compassion on misery.

Pope Says...

“A baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger” (Lk 2:12). In silence, let us fall to our knees and worship. What does that Child, born for us of the Virgin Mary, have to tell us? What is the universal message of Christmas? It is that God is a good Father and we are all brothers and sisters. Without the fraternity that Jesus Christ has bestowed on us, our efforts for a more just world fall short, and even our best plans and projects risk being soulless and empty. For this reason, my wish for a happy Christmas is a wish for fraternity. Fraternity among individuals of every nation and culture. Fraternity among people with different ideas, yet capable of respecting and listening to one another. Fraternity among persons of different religions. The face of God has been revealed in a human face. It did not appear in an angel, but in one man, born in a specific time and place. By his incarnation, the Son of God tells us that salvation comes through love, acceptance, respect for this poor humanity of ours, which we all share in a great variety of races, languages, and cultures.



Yet all of us are brothers and sisters in humanity! Our differences, then, are not a detriment or a danger; they are a source of richness. As when an artist is about to make a mosaic: it is better to have tiles of many colours available, rather than just a few! The experience of families teaches us this: as brothers and sisters, we are all different from each other. We do not always agree, but there is an unbreakable bond uniting us, and the love of our parents helps us to love one another. The same is true for the larger human family, but here, God is our “parent”, the foundation and strength of our fraternity.

May this Christmas help us to rediscover the bonds of fraternity linking us together as individuals and joining all peoples. A particular thought goes to our brothers and

sisters who celebrate the Birth of the Lord in difficult, if not hostile situations, especially where the Christian community is a minority, often vulnerable or not taken into account. May the Lord grant that they, and all minorities, may live in peace and see their rights recognized, especially the right to religious freedom.

May the little Child whom we contemplate today in the manger, in the cold of the night, watch over all the children of the world, and every frail, vulnerable and discarded person. May all of us receive peace and consolation from the birth of the Saviour and, in the knowledge that we are loved by the one heavenly Father, realize anew that we are brothers and sisters and come to live as such! ◆

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This copy of **JESUS: THE SOULMATE** reaches your hand at a minimum price. We would like to thank all of our many donors and supporters without whom our ministry would not be possible. In particular, **JESUS: THE SOULMATE** owes a great debt of gratitude to the following supporters who made this edition of **JESUS: THE SOULMATE** and many of our works possible. Your support is not simply a charitable contribution but also a witness and testimony to the joy of the Gospel that brings people closer to Jesus. Trust in God's promises and know that no gift will go unrewarded because, “God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7). The contributions you make will be acknowledged here by the mention of your name. (Will be continued in the next edition).

Agnes Wanyaga Konji

Leah Wangu

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INNER-HEALING RETREAT

2020 FEBRUARY 24-27
INNER-HEALING RETREAT

2020 MARCH 30-APRIL 2
LENTEN RETREAT

2020 APRIL 27-30
RETREAT FOR DEBTORS
JOBLESS & UNMARRIED

2020 MAY 25-28
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2020 JUNE 29-JULY 2
INNER-HEALING RETREAT

2020 JULY 27-30
INNER-HEALING RETREAT

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BIBLE CONVENTION

2020 SEPTEMBER 28-OCTOBER 1
SPIRITUAL GROWTH RETREAT

2020 OCTOBER 26-29
MARIAN RETREAT

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2020 JUNE 15-18
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RETREAT IN SWAHILI

2020 FEBRUARY 16-20
INNER-HEALING RETREAT

2020 MARCH 1-5
INNER-HEALING RETREAT

2020 MARCH 15-19
INNER-HEALING RETREAT

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LENTEN RETREAT

2020 APRIL 19-23
SENIOR YOUTH RETREAT (18-30Age)

2020 MAY 03-07
SPIRITUAL GROWTH RETREAT

2020 MAY 17-21
INNER HEALING RETREAT

2020 JUNE 07-11
INNER HEALING RETREAT

2020 JUNE 21-25
INNER HEALING RETREAT

2020 JULY 05-09
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Vincentian Ministries are conducted by the priests of the Sacred Heart region of the Vincentian Congregation. The Vincentian Congregation is a clerical society of the Catholic Church with the status of pontifical right. St. Vincent De Paul is the Father and Patron of the Vincentian Congregation. The congregation has taken its motto, "He has sent me to proclaim the Good News to the poor" (Luke 4:18). The two main aims of the Vincentian Congregation are: (1) Preaching the Good News to the poor, (2) Caring the poor and the afflicted. Vincentian Congregation has spread almost all over the world contributing to the Church's on going mission of proclaiming the Good News to the World so that all people may know the love, mercy and goodness of Jesus and grow ever more in Gospel values.

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

Born on 7th April 1506 to Don Juan de Jassu and Maria de Alpilcueta, Francis was second among the band of seven who took their vows as the first Jesuit on 15th August 1534. Ordained priest on 24th June 1537, he celebrated his first mass after a rigorous 40-days fast and spiritual preparation. After a while sickness put a stop to his preaching at Bologna (Italy) and while he was serving Ignatius as secretary in Rome a call came from King John III of Portugal for Jesuit missionaries to be sent to the East Indies. At only a day's notice, Francis set out with the Portuguese ambassador on the 3 months' trip across the Alpha and Spain to Lisbon. Landing in Goa on the west coast of India—the centre of Portuguese activity in the East—on 6th May 1542, Francis busied himself learning the local language, nursing and comforting the sick, preaching and teaching catechism.

From Goa, Francis went south to the Fishery Coast and spend two years among the pearl fishers, learning their language and instructing them carefully for two weeks and months before admitting them to baptism. His novel method, which ever-after met with great success, was to go through the streets chiming a little bell and when the children and their mothers came flocking, he would lead them to

a church and explain the faith with exemplary patience and affectionate zeal. "I let them enter by their own door, but I see to it that they come out by mine!" later he would revisit the missions, but meanwhile native born Priests were trained to consolidate and carry on the work further.

The year 1544 saw Francis in Ceylon; from there he went to Malacca, to the Spice Islands, to Cochin-China, and some believe that he even reached Philippines. Then, having met a fugitive from Japan, he undertook a missionary journey to that Island, landing in Kagoshima in Southern Japan on 15th August 1549. Struggling with language and in spite of bitter opposition from the Buddhist monks, his preaching accompanied by numerous miracles, Francis, a teacher by training and temperament and a preacher by choice, succeeded in drawing so many to the Faith that within a span of 40 years, the faithful in Japan numbered some 400,000!

What he had seen of Chinese civilization in Japan led Francis to plan the evangelization of the

forbidden Celestial Empire; but the Chinese pirates who had been promised a great sum to smuggle him into Canton, never came and after 3 months of fruitless wait in a windswept hut on Sancian Island of Canton, he succumbed to fever on 3rd December 1552. In 1553, his body, found incorrupt and fresh after over 2 months of burial was returned to Goa where it is venerated to the present day in the Bom Jesus Basilica. His right arm, however, severed at the elbow and carted to Rome at the express orders of the then Jesuit General Claudio Acquaviva, is enshrined there in the church of the Gesu.

St Francis Xavier was beatified in 1619 and canonized by Pope Gregory XV on 12th March 1622.

He has been named the "Apostle of the Indies" and Patron of the Propagation of the Faith and of all foreign missions.

Reflection: "Millions might be easily converted, if there were more preachers who would sincerely mind the interests of Jesus Christ, and not their own" (St Francis Xavier). ◆



Saint Corner



JESUS | **THE SOULMATE**

What will separate us from the love of Christ? (Romans 8:35)

An Evangelization Magazine
from Vincentian Ministries