

Vol 44, No. 2

March - April 2021

PROCLAIM

A magazine for Missionary Animation



Patris Corde
(with a father's heart)

"Go out to the whole world and PROCLAIM the GOOD NEWS to all creation" Mark 16:15



Joseph saw Jesus grow daily *"in wisdom and in years and in divine and human favour"* (Lk 2:52). As the Lord had done with Israel, so Joseph did with Jesus: he taught him to walk, taking him by the hand; he was for him like a father who raises an infant to his cheeks, **bending down to him and feeding him** (cf. Hos 11:3-4).

In Joseph, Jesus saw the tender love of God: *"As a father has compassion for his children, so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him"* (Ps 103:13).

At the end of every account in which Joseph plays a role, the Gospel tells us that he gets up, takes the child and his mother, and does what God commanded him (cf. Mt 1:24; 2:14.21). Indeed, Jesus and Mary his Mother are the most precious treasure of our faith.^[21]

(The above are excerpts from the Apostolic Letter PATRIS CORDE of the Holy Father Francis)

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James Arts Crafts

Sivakasi – 626189

☎ 9789774520

Subscription rates:

(six issues/year)

Inclusive of postal charges for Subscribers in India.

Annual: ₹ 150

3 years: ₹ 400

Annual bulk subscription

(i.e., 20 or more copies): ₹ 125

DONORS: ₹ 5000 (for 15 years)

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Contents

(with Page Number)

- **From the DIRECTOR'S DESK** _____ (2)
- **Patris Corde: Year of St Joseph** _____ (3)
- **Plenary indulgence for Year of St Joseph** _____ (6)
- **Fifteen ways to gain Indulgence** _____ (8)
- **Year of St Joseph** _____ (9)
- **Letting God dwell among us** _____ (11)
- **Parables: How to read and pray on them – 3** _____ (13)
- **SAINT OF THE MONTH**
 - St Agnes of Bohemia** _____ (16)
Feast Day: 2nd March
 - St Fidelis of Sigmaringen** _____ (17)
Feast Day: 24th April
- **STORY CORNER**
 - I believe in Easter** _____ (19)
- **News Round-Up** _____ (22)

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- **Black & White Inside (Full/Half) Page = Rs 2000/1000**



"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." - John 10:11

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

St Joseph: With a Father's Heart

The Church has experienced the love, strength and protection of St Joseph in its life and ministry. The saints tell us that with the Mother of God, Joseph enjoys a singular power of intercession. For example, Saint Teresa of Avila, in the *Book of Her Life*, writes: "I took for my advocate and lord the glorious Saint Joseph and earnestly recommended myself to him." Further she adds "...for since bearing the title of father, being the Lord's tutor, Joseph could give the Child (Jesus) command...so in heaven God does whatever he commands."



With the release of his Apostolic Letter *PATRIS CORDE* translated "*with a father's heart*" on the occasion of the 150th Anniversary of the Proclamation of St Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church by Pius IX on 8th December 1870, Pope Francis also established a Year of St Joseph beginning on 8th December 2020, aiming "to increase our love for this great saint, to encourage us to implore his intercession and to imitate his virtues and his zeal."

A father's heart expresses love by working usefully for his children. God as our Father is neither silent nor still as we know, because he is constantly executing his action plan, the purpose for each of our lives. Each day is a new beginning and as he opens out the dawn, his hope arises with the sun because he trusts in the unique qualities which he has embedded in us his children, knowing fully that they will bear fruit if correctly employed. God's sense of fulfillment is not our dead body or our end, but in the daily accomplishment that each of us can achieve with what he has allotted, gifted or destined for each of us.

From the Holy Bible we understand that St Joseph was a just and righteous man, completely conscious of God's ways, but above all, adhering in obedience to the will of God, the almighty Father. By following directions from above, he was able to complete the tasks that God had set for him during his life-time on earth. Quietly, yet most certainly, St Joseph became foster father and teacher, mentor and guide that God wanted on earth for his own Son. He expressed his steadfast love by laying a strong foundation of love for God's eternal salvific plan in the heart of Jesus, so that he could courageously become the man who will fulfill his heavenly father's requirements.

At this point, we can ask ourselves this question – Can I be inspired by St Joseph? Can I be obedient enough so as to focus on what God wants from me to fulfill the purpose to perfection during my life-time on earth? Can I be like St Joseph, becoming a father of love through the accomplishment of God's chosen plan for me and others?

I wish each of you and your loved ones a meaningful Lenten journey of self-introspection followed by a glorious celebration of the Easter Season. Let us channel our thoughts so as to re-dedicate our talents in order to make our love more fruitful through our good works, than ever before. Let us also continue to pray for our children, and reach out to our spiritually and emotionally begotten-ones also, those who we may have lost and will have to find, those who may be sick and waiting for our consoling aid and all those who may be in need of our presence, so that we can reflect our true rejoicing in the resurrection festivities.

Fr Dr Ambrose Pitchaimuthu
National Director (PMO-India)

Patris Corde: Year of St Joseph

The announcement that many people had been anxious and longing to hear for several years finally came on 8 Dec 2020 as Pope Francis declared the beginning of a Year of St Joseph.

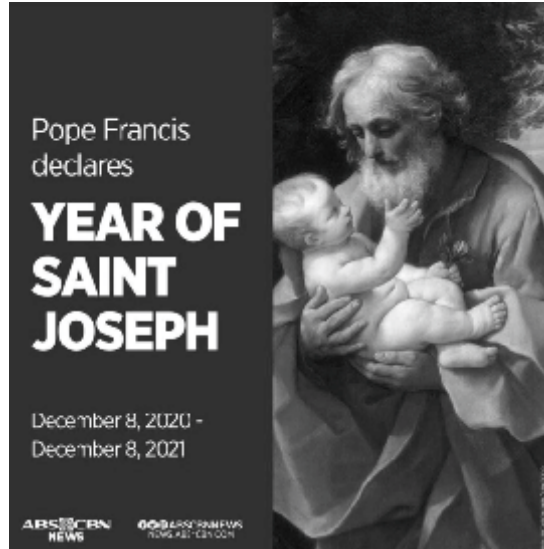
The timing was perfect, coming on the 150th anniversary of Pope Pius IX declaring --- on Dec. 8, 1870, in the decree *Quemadmodum Deus* --- St Joseph as Patron of the Catholic Church and on the feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, Joseph's spouse.

In the Apostolic Letter entitled *Patris corde* (With a Father's Heart), Pope Francis describes Saint Joseph as a beloved father, a tender and loving father, an obedient father, an accepting father; a father who is creatively courageous, a working father, a father in the shadows.

Church grants plenary indulgence for year of St Joseph

The Holy Father wrote *Patris corde* against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, which, he says, has helped us see more clearly the importance of “ordinary” people who, though far from the limelight, exercise patience and offer hope every day. In this, they resemble Saint Joseph, “the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence,” who nonetheless played “an incomparable role in the history of salvation.”

A beloved, tender, obedient father, Saint Joseph, in fact, “concretely expressed his fatherhood” by making an offering of himself in love “a love placed at the service of the Messiah who was growing to maturity in his home,” writes Pope Francis, quoting his predecessor St Paul VI.



And because of his role at “the crossroads between the Old and New Testament,” St Joseph “has always been venerated as a father by the Christian people”. In him, “Jesus saw the tender love of God,” the one that helps us accept our weakness, because “it is through” and despite “our fears, our frailties, and our weakness” that most divine designs are realized. “Only tender love will save us from the

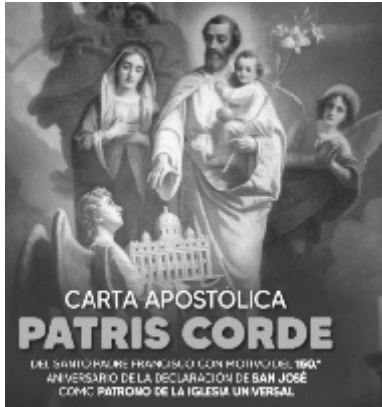
snarles of the accuser,” emphasizes the Pontiff, and it is by encountering God's mercy especially in the Sacrament of Reconciliation that we “experience His truth and tenderness,” — because “we know that God's truth does not condemn us, but instead welcomes, embraces, sustains and forgives us”.

Joseph is also a father in obedience to God: with his 'fiat' he protects Mary and Jesus and teaches his Son to “do the will of the Father.” Called by God to serve the mission of Jesus, he “cooperated... in the great mystery of Redemption,” as St John Paul II said, “and is truly a minister of salvation”.

Welcoming the will of God

At the same time, Joseph is “an accepting Father,” because he “accepted Mary unconditionally” — an important gesture even today, says Pope Francis, “in our world where psychological, verbal and physical violence towards women is so evident.” But the Bridegroom of Mary is also the one who, trusting in the Lord, accepts in his life even the events that he does not understand, “setting aside his own ideas” and reconciling himself with his own history.

Joseph's spiritual path “is not one that *explains*, but accepts” — which does not mean that he is “resigned.” Instead, he is “courageously and firmly proactive,” because with “Holy Spirit's gift of fortitude,” and full of hope, he is able “to accept life as it is, with all its contradictions, frustrations and disappointments.” In practice, through St



Joseph, it is as if God were to repeat to us: “Do not be a f r a i d ! ” because “faith gives meaning to every event, however happy or sad,” and makes us aware that “God can make flowers spring up from

stony ground.” Joseph “did not look for shortcuts but confronted reality with open eyes and accepted personal responsibility for it.” For this reason, “he encourages us to accept and welcome others as they are, without exception, and to show special concern for the weak”.

A creatively courageous father, example of love

Patris corde highlights “the creative courage” of St Joseph, which “emerges especially in the way we deal with difficulties.” “The carpenter of Nazareth,” explains the Pope, was able to turn a problem into a possibility by trusting in divine providence.” He had to deal with “the concrete problems” his Family faced, problems faced by other families in the world, and especially those of migrants.

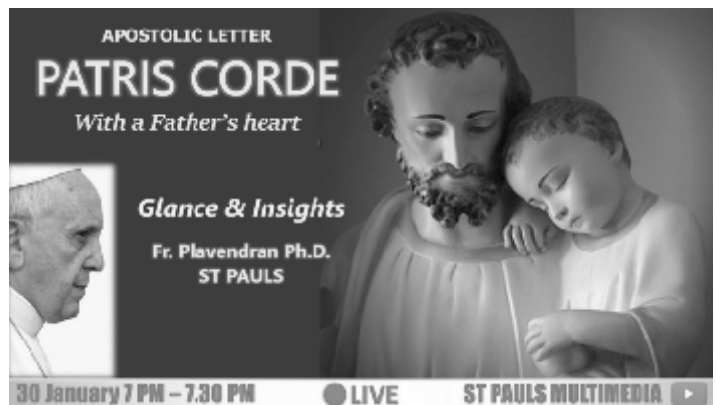
In this sense, St Joseph is “the special patron of all those forced to leave their native lands because of war, hatred, persecution and poverty.” As the guardian of Jesus and Mary, Joseph cannot “be other than the guardian of the Church,” of her motherhood, and of the Body of Christ. “Consequently, every poor,

needy, suffering or dying person, every stranger, every prisoner, every infirm person is 'the child' whom Joseph continues to protect.” From St Joseph, writes Pope Francis, “we must learn... to love the Church and the poor”.

A father who teaches the value, dignity and joy of work

“A carpenter who earned an honest living to provide for his family,” St Joseph also teaches us “the value, the dignity and the joy of what it means to eat bread that is the fruit of one's own labour.” This aspect of Joseph's character provides Pope Francis the opportunity to launch an appeal in favour of work, which has become “a burning social issue” even in countries with a certain level of well-being. “there is a renewed need to appreciate the importance of dignified work, of which St Joseph is an exemplary patron,” the Pope writes.

Work, he says, “is a means of participating in the work of salvation, an opportunity to hasten the coming of the Kingdom, to develop our talents and abilities, and to put them at the service of society and fraternal communion.” Those who work, he explains, “are cooperating with God himself, and in some way become creators of the world around us.” Pope Francis encourages everyone “to rediscover the value, the importance and the necessity of work for bringing about a new 'normal'



from which no one is excluded.” Especially in light of rising unemployment due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Pope calls everyone to “review our priorities” and to express our firm conviction that

no young person, no person at all, no family should be without work!”.

A father “in the shadows,” centred on Mary and Jesus

Taking a cue from *The Shadow of the Father* — a book by Polish writer Jan Dobraczyński — Pope Francis describes Joseph's fatherhood of Jesus as “the earthly shadow of the heavenly Father.”

“Fathers are not born, but made,” says Pope Francis. “A man does not become a father simply by bringing a child into the world, but by taking up the responsibility to care for that child.” Unfortunately, in today's society, children “often seem orphans, lacking fathers” who are able to introduce them “to life and reality.” Children, the Pope says, need fathers who will not try to dominate them, but instead raise them to be “capable of deciding for themselves, enjoying freedom and exploring new possibilities.”

This is the sense in which St Joseph is described as a “most chaste” father, which is the opposite of domineering possessiveness. Joseph, says Pope Francis, “knew how to love with extraordinary freedom. He never made himself the centre of things. He did not think of himself, but focused instead on the lives of Mary and Jesus.”

Happiness for Joseph involved a true gift of self: “In him, we never see frustration, but only trust,” writes Pope Francis. “His patient silence was the prelude to concrete expressions of trust.” Joseph stands out, therefore, as an exemplary figure for our time, in a world that “needs fathers,” and not “tyrants”; a society that “rejects those who confuse authority with authoritarianism, service with servility, discussion with oppression, charity

with a welfare mentality, power with destruction.”

True fathers, instead, “refuse to live the lives of their children for them,” and instead respect their freedom. In this sense, says Pope Francis, a father realizes that “he is most a father and an educator at the point when he becomes 'useless,' when he sees that his child has become independent and can walk the paths of life unaccompanied.” Being a father, the Pope emphasizes, “has nothing to do with possession, but is rather a 'sign' pointing to a greater fatherhood”: that of the “heavenly Father”.

A daily prayer to St Joseph... and a challenge

In his letter, Pope Francis notes how, “Every day, for over forty years, following Lauds [Morning Prayer]” he has “recited a prayer to Saint Joseph taken from a nineteenth-century French prayer book of the Congregation of the Sisters of Jesus and Mary.” This prayer, he says, expresses devotion and trust, and even poses a certain challenge to Saint Joseph,” on account of its closing words: “My beloved father, all my trust is in you. Let it not be said that I invoked you in vain, and since you can do everything with Jesus and Mary, show me that your goodness is as great as your power.”

Prayer to St Joseph

At the conclusion of his Letter, he adds another prayer to St Joseph, which he encourages all of us to pray together:

Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary. To you God entrusted his only Son; in you Mary placed her trust; with you Christ became man. Blessed Joseph, to us too, show yourself a father and guide us in the path of life. Obtain for us grace, mercy, and courage, and defend us from every evil. Amen. ♦



Plenary indulgence for Year of St Joseph



Along with the Pope's announcement of a special year dedicated to St Joseph --- starting from 8 December 2020 until 8 December 2021, on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the proclamation of St Joseph as the Patron of the Universal Church, as well as the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady --- came a decree from the Apostolic Penitentiary granting special indulgences for the duration of the special year to celebrate the anniversary and "to perpetuate the entrustment of the whole Church to the powerful patronage of the Custodian of Jesus."

During this period, the faithful will have the opportunity to commit themselves "with prayer and good works, to obtain, with the help of St Joseph, head of the heavenly Family of Nazareth, comfort and relief from the serious human and social tribulations that besiege the contemporary world today."

Devotion to St Joseph

The decree signed by Cardinal Mauro Piacenza, the Major Penitentiary of the Apostolic Penitentiary, and the Regent, Fr. Krzysztof Nykiel, notes that devotion to St Joseph has grown extensively throughout the history of the Church, "which not only attributes to him high reverence after that of the Mother of God his spouse but has also given him multiple patronages."

At the same time, the Magisterium of the Church continues to discover "old and new greatness in this treasure which is St Joseph, like

the master in the Gospel of Matthew who brings from his storeroom both the new and the old."

Therefore, the gift of indulgences granted through a decree of the Apostolic Penitentiary by mandate of the Holy Father "will be of great benefit to the perfect attainment of the appointed purpose."

Conditions for the plenary indulgence

The plenary indulgence is granted to the faithful under the usual conditions (sacramental confession, Eucharistic Communion, and prayer for the Pope's intentions) to Christians who, with a spirit detached from any sin, participate in the Year of St Joseph on these occasions and manners indicated by the Apostolic Penitentiary:

- The plenary indulgence is granted to those who will meditate for at least 30 minutes on the Lord's Prayer, or take part in a Spiritual Retreat of at least one day that includes a meditation on St. Joseph. "St Joseph, an authentic man of faith, invites us", the decree reads, "to rediscover our filial relationship with the Father, to renew fidelity to prayer, to listen and correspond with profound discernment to God's will."
- The indulgence can also be obtained by those



who, following St Joseph's example, will perform a spiritual or corporal work of mercy. St Joseph "encourages us to rediscover the value of silence, prudence and loyalty in carrying out our duties," the decree notes.

- The recitation of the Holy Rosary in families and among engaged couples is another way of obtaining indulgences, in order that “all Christian families may be stimulated to recreate the same



atmosphere of intimate communion, love and prayer that was in the Holy Family.”

- Everyone who entrusts their daily activity to the protection of St Joseph, and every faithful who invokes the intercession of St Joseph so that those seeking work can find dignifying work can also obtain the plenary indulgence. On 1 May 1955, Pope Pius XII instituted the feast of St Joseph “with the intent that the dignity of work be recognized by all, and that it inspires social life and laws, based on the fair distribution of rights and duties.”

- The plenary indulgence is also granted to the faithful who will recite the Litany to St Joseph (for the Latin tradition), or the *Akathistos* to St Joseph (for the Byzantine tradition), or any other prayer to St. Joseph proper to the other liturgical traditions, for the persecuted Church *ad intra* and *ad extra*, and for the relief of all Christians suffering all forms of persecution. Because, the decree notes, “the flight of the Holy Family to Egypt shows us that God is there where man is in danger, where man suffers, where he runs away, where he experiences rejection and abandonment.”

A universal saint

In addition to these, the Apostolic Penitentiary grants a plenary indulgence to the faithful who will recite any legitimately approved

prayer or act of piety in honor of St. Joseph, for example, “To you, O blessed Joseph” especially on “19 March, on 1 May, the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, on St Joseph's Sunday (according to the Byzantine tradition) on the 19th of each month and every Wednesday, a day dedicated to the memory of the saint according to the Latin tradition.”

The decree recalls the universality of St Joseph's patronage of the Church, noting that St. Teresa of Ávila recognized him as “a protector for all the circumstances of life”. Pope St John Paul II also said that St Joseph has “a renewed relevance for the Church of our time, in relation to the new Christian millennium.”

For the sick

Amid the ongoing Covid-19 health crisis, the gift of the plenary indulgence is also extended to the sick, the elderly, the dying and all those who for legitimate reasons are unable to leave their homes.

They too can obtain the plenary indulgences if they are detached from any sin and have the intention of fulfilling, as soon as possible, the three usual conditions and recite an act of piety in honor of St Joseph, offering to God the pains and hardships of their lives.

The role of priests

The Apostolic Penitentiary encourages priests to pastorally facilitate the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance and the administration of Holy Communion to the sick with a willing and generous spirit. ♦



Fifteen ways to gain Indulgence

Pope Francis has decreed a Year of St Joseph in which Catholics will have the opportunity to obtain a special plenary indulgence. Plenary indulgences remit all temporal punishment due to sin and must be accompanied by full detachment from sin.

Until December 2021, there are many new ways that Catholics can receive an indulgence, including entrusting their daily work to the protection of St Joseph the Worker or reciting the rosary with their families.

These acts must be accompanied by sacramental confession, Eucharistic Communion, and prayer for the pope's intentions, the usual conditions to obtain any plenary indulgence.

According to the decree issued by the Apostolic Penitentiary on 8 December 2020, there are 15 ways to receive an indulgence in the Year of St Joseph:

01. Participate in a spiritual retreat for at least one day that includes a meditation on St Joseph.
02. Pray for St Joseph's intercession for the unemployed that they might find dignifying work.
03. Recite the Litany of St Joseph for persecuted Christians. Byzantine Catholics have the option of an Akathist to St Joseph.
04. Entrust one's daily work and activity to the protection of St Joseph the Worker.
05. Follow St Joseph's example in performing a corporal work of mercy. These include feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, visiting the

imprisoned, visiting the sick, and burying the dead.

06. Perform one of the spiritual works of mercy, such as comforting the sorrowful, counseling the doubtful, instructing the ignorant, admonishing the sinner, bearing wrongs patiently, forgiving injuries, and praying for the living and the dead.

07. Pray the rosary together with one's family in order that "all Christian families may be stimulated to recreate the same atmosphere of intimate communion, love and prayer that was in the Holy Family."

08. Engaged couples can also receive an indulgence from praying the rosary together.

09. Meditate for at least 30 minutes on the Lord's

Prayer, because St Joseph "invites us to rediscover our filial relationship with the Father, to renew fidelity to prayer, to listen and correspond with profound discernment to God's will."

10. Pray an approved prayer

to St Joseph on St Joseph Sunday, the Sunday after Christmas in the Byzantine Catholic tradition.

11. Celebrate the feast of St Joseph on March 19 with an act of piety in honor of St Joseph.

12. Pray an approved prayer to St Joseph on the 19th of any month.

13. Honor Joseph with an act of piety or approved prayer on a Wednesday, the day traditionally dedicated to St Joseph.

14. Pray to St Joseph on the Feast of the Holy Family on Dec 29.

15. Celebrate the feast of St Joseph the Worker on



Year of St Joseph

What Catholics need to know

When Pope Francis on 8th December announced a Year of St Joseph, in honour of the 150th anniversary of the saint's proclamation as patron of the Universal Church, he said he was establishing the year so that “every member of the faithful, following his example, may strengthen their life of faith daily in the complete fulfilment of God's will.”

Here's what you need to know about the Year of St Joseph:

Why does the Church have years dedicated to specific topics?

The Church observes the passage of time through the liturgical calendar - which includes feasts such as Easter and Christmas, and seasons such as Lent and Advent. In addition, however, popes can set aside time for the Church to reflect more deeply on a specific aspect of Catholic teaching or belief. Past years designated by recent popes include a Year of Faith, Year of the Eucharist, and Jubilee Year of Mercy.

Why did the Pope declare a year of St Joseph?

In making his declaration, Pope Francis noted that this year marks the 150th anniversary of the saint's proclamation as patron of the Universal



Church by Pope Pius IX on Dec. 8, 1870. has heightened his desire to reflect on St Joseph, as so many people during the pandemic have made hidden sacrifices to protect others, just as St Joseph quietly protected and cared for Mary and Jesus.

“Each of us can discover in Joseph -- the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence -- an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble,” the pope wrote.

He also said he wanted to highlight St Joseph's role as a father who served his family with charity and humility, adding, “Our world today needs fathers.”

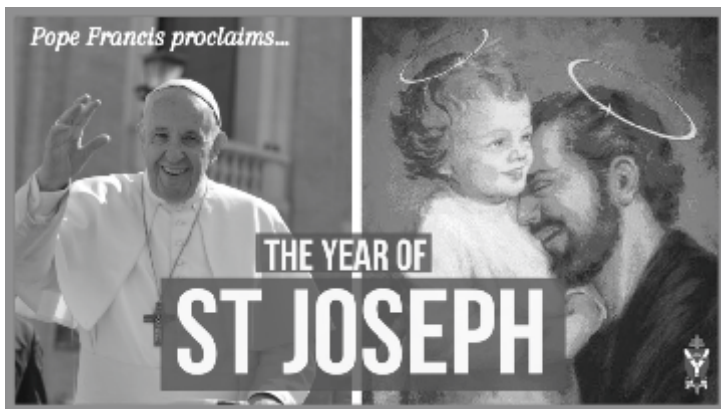
When does the Year of St Joseph begin and end?

The year begins Dec. 8, 2020, and concludes on Dec. 8, 2021.

What special graces are available during this year?

As Catholics pray and reflect on the life of St Joseph throughout the coming year, they also have opportunities to gain a plenary indulgence, or remission of all temporal punishment due to sin. An indulgence can be applied to oneself or to a soul in Purgatory.

An indulgence requires a specific act, defined by the Church, as well as sacramental confession, Eucharistic Communion, prayer for the pope's intentions, and full



Church by Pope Pius IX on Dec. 8, 1870.

Pope Francis said the corona virus pandemic

detachment from sin.

Special indulgences during the Year of St Joseph can be received through more than a dozen different prayers and actions, including praying for the unemployed, entrusting one's daily work to St Joseph, performing a corporal or spiritual work of mercy, or meditating for at least 30 minutes on the Lord's Prayer.

Why does the Church honour St Joseph?

Catholics do not worship saints, but ask for their heavenly intercession before God and seek to imitate their virtues here on earth. The Catholic Church honors St Joseph as the foster father of Jesus. He is invoked as the patron saint of the Universal Church. He is also the patron of workers, father, and a happy death.

Courtesy: *Catholic News Agency* ♦

Continued from Page 8: Fifteen ways to gain Indulgence

May 1 with an act of piety or prayer.

“All the faithful will thus have the opportunity to commit themselves, with prayers and good works, to obtain with the help of St Joseph, head of the celestial Family of Nazareth, comfort and relief from the serious human and social tribulations that today afflict the contemporary world,” the decree signed by Cardinal Mauro Piacenza said.

The elderly, the sick, and the dying who are unable to leave their homes due to the coronavirus pandemic also have special permission to receive an indulgence by “offering with trust in God the pains and discomforts” of their lives with a prayer to St Joseph, hope of the sick and patron of a happy death.

The decree noted that in this instance the person must have the intention of fulfilling, as soon as possible, the three usual conditions for an indulgence, as well as a detachment from sin.

The Apostolic Penitentiary permits any prayer to St Joseph approved by the Church, mentioning in particular the “To you, O blessed Joseph” prayer composed by Pope Leo XIII:



“To you, O blessed Joseph, do we come in our tribulation, and having implored the help of your most holy Spouse, we confidently invoke your patronage also. Through that charity which bound you to the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God and through the paternal love with which you embraced the Child Jesus, we humbly beg you graciously to regard the inheritance which Jesus Christ has purchased by his Blood, and with your power and strength to aid us in our necessities.”

“O most watchful guardian of the Holy Family, defend the chosen children of Jesus Christ; O most loving father, ward off from us every contagion of error and corrupting influence; O our most mighty protector, be kind to us and from heaven assist us in our struggle with the power of darkness.”

“As once you rescued the Child Jesus from deadly peril, so now protect God's Holy Church from the snares of the enemy and from all adversity; shield, too, each one of us by your constant protection, so that, supported by your example and your aid, we may be able to live piously, to die in holiness, and to obtain eternal happiness in heaven. Amen.” ♦

Pope's Lenten Message

Letting God dwell among us



In his message for Lent 2021, Pope Francis says that Lent is a time for believing, for welcoming God into our lives and allowing him to “make his dwelling” among us (cf. Jn 14:23). The Holy Father reminds the faithful that the Lenten practices of fasting, almsgiving and prayer make it possible for us to live lives of sincere faith, living hope and effective charity, thereby sharing in Jesus' mission of the salvation of the world.

During this season of conversion, Pope Francis invites the faithful to draw from the “living water” of hope, and receive with open hearts the love of God.

Let us renew our faith

‘At the Easter vigil, we will renew our baptismal promises and experience rebirth as new men and women by the working of the Holy Spirit,’ says Pope Francis. ‘This Lenten journey, like the entire pilgrimage of the Christian life, is even now illumined by the light of the resurrection, which inspires the thoughts, attitudes and decisions of the followers of Christ.’

Fasting, prayer and almsgiving, the Holy Father says, is what enables our conversion. The path of poverty and self-denial (fasting), concern and loving care for the poor (almsgiving), and childlike dialogue with the Father (prayer) make it possible for us to live lives of sincere faith,

living hope and effective charity.

Accept the truth and testify to it

Pope Francis says that accepting and living the truth revealed in Christ means opening our hearts to God's word, which the Church passes on from generation to generation. He emphasises that this truth is not an abstract concept for an intelligent few but a message available to all those whose hearts are ‘open to the grandeur of God, who loves us even before we are aware of it.’

Christ is this truth, the Pope writes, and fasting is a form of self-denial, which helps those who undertake it to rediscover God's gift and that because we are created in his image and likeness, we can find our fulfilment in him.

‘In embracing the experience of poverty,’ he says, ‘those who fast make themselves poor with the poor and accumulate the treasure of a love both received and shared.’ It is in this way, Pope Francis says, that we can free ourselves from all that weighs us down, including the lure of consumerism or an excess of information, ‘so as to open the doors of our hearts to the One who comes



to us, poor in all things, yet “full of grace and truth” (Jn 1:14): the Son of God our Saviour.’

Hope as “living water”

Pope Francis recalls the meeting between the Samaritan woman and Jesus at the well, and how this changed the course of the Samaritan woman's life forever. ‘The Samaritan woman at the well, whom Jesus asks for a drink, does not understand what he means when he says that he can offer her “living water” (Jn 4:10). Naturally, she thinks that he is referring to material water, but Jesus is speaking of the Holy Spirit whom he will give in abundance through the paschal mystery, bestowing a hope that does not disappoint.’

‘Hoping with him and because of him means believing that history does not end with our mistakes, our violence and injustice, or the sin that crucifies Love. It means receiving from his open heart the Father's forgiveness.’

That this season of Lent coincides with the world's ongoing battle against the corona virus is not lost on the Holy Father, who acknowledges that hope can seem lost during times of trouble and uncertainty.

Yet Lent is precisely the season of hope, he says, for it is a time when ‘we turn back to God who patiently continues to care for his creation which we have often mistreated (cf. *Laudato Si*, 32-33; 43-44). Saint Paul urges us to place our hope in reconciliation: “Be reconciled to God” (2 Cor 5:20). By receiving forgiveness in the sacrament that lies at the heart of our process of conversion, we in turn can spread forgiveness to others.’

Having received forgiveness ourselves, Pope Francis says, enables us to offer it through our

willingness to enter into attentive dialogue with others and ‘to give comfort to those experiencing sorrow and pain.’ God's forgiveness, when offered through our words and actions, also enables us to experience “an Easter of fraternity”.

‘In order to give hope to others, it is sometimes enough simply to be kind, to be “willing to set everything else aside in order to show interest, to give the gift of a smile, to speak a word of encouragement, to listen amid general indifference” (Fratelli Tutti, n.224).

Pope Francis also says that this invitation to experience Lent in hope entails growing in the realisation that, in Jesus Christ, we are witnesses of new times, in which God is “making all things new” (cf. Rev 21:1-6).

To experience Lent with love

Following in the footsteps of Christ, in concern and compassion for all, is the highest expression of our faith and hope, Pope Francis says.

‘Love is a ‘leap of the heart’, which brings us out of ourselves and create bonds of sharing and communion.’

In this time of Lent and especially during the pandemic, the faithful are encouraged to speak words of reassurance to those feeling abandoned and isolated and to help others to realise that God loves them as sons and daughters. As Pope Francis wrote in the encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, it is only love that will enable humanity to rise above this time of increased isolation and build a civilisation of love where effective paths of development are available for everyone. (n.183)



Parables: How to read and pray on them – 3

By Fr Ralph DCosta SJ

When we come to **STAGE II** of the Parable it is here that the teacher is now the Risen Lord but through his authorized teachers, the 12 or others appointed by them.

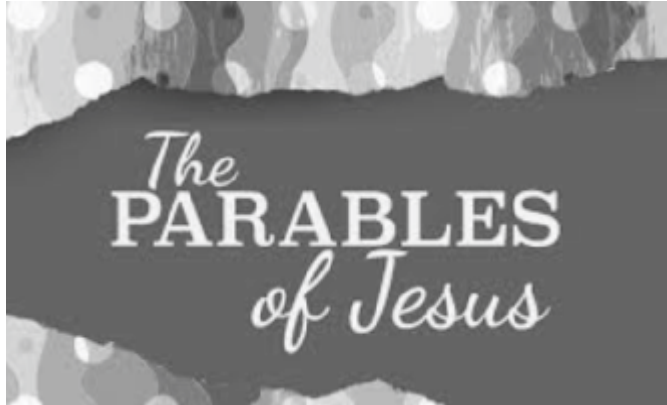
The hearers first are the members of the Jewish people but soon will

comprise also those who are the non Jews both in and outside Israel. Consequently the language would not be the local Aramaic, but would be the Greek of the Roman Empire spoken both in and outside Israel, adjusted to the needs of the hearers.

The imagery will also have to be adjusted to the needs of the hearers, but that will remain consistent with Stage I to bring out clearly the point of the comparison – namely the Kingdom of God and the message of the Parable. If these are changed it will no longer be the Parable used by Jesus as God's Revelation, but a story told by the preacher. Hence the need to refer back always to Stage I, and the duty of the preacher of Good News to bring his hearers to enter through faith into the meaning of Jesus' words so that they can live that meaning in their daily life.

This implies that we see the preaching not merely as something touching the intellect, or even a challenge to be found in a moral teaching, but rather an encounter with the person of Jesus through the power of the Spirit promised to all who listen to the word as to the Word of God offered by Jesus' appointed messengers so that they are carriers of salvation and have had a personal intimacy of communion with the Father through the Son.

We have examples of such conviction in the preaching of the Apostles recorded in the Acts of



the Apostles. And at great length in the Letters of Paul to the Churches where he preached the Good News. Paul shows us in his writings how matters of daily living the faith in changing circumstances is to be subjected to the words and actions of

Jesus, so that we remain and grow in oneness with Christ and His Body, the Church.

It is an aid to using the Word to find God present, active and communicating his presence, perfections and life to us in the changing circumstances of life in a passing world.

We can now turn to **STAGE III** of the Parable – its present

The challenge is always there. Calling us to rise above the present moment, to think out of the boxes we create to accommodate the vision and the plan of God. We, the persons and the things around us, continuously change, but it is our task to find the eternal and unchanging God and His eternal plan of steadfast love for us in our lives while here on earth, so that we clearly experience the infinity and eternity of the Divine Trinity.

This is our constant experience of the Divine Presence and Life granted us through Faith – the Kingdom of God.

Hence when Jesus makes His comparison in introducing the parable “The Kingdom of God is like...” he is setting us on that trail that takes us from the here and now on earth to the eternal and omnipresent love and life of the Godhead for which He created us and all things to praise, reverence and serve God in all creatures and in this way to share his Being and Life and attain the

fullness of meaning in our being the created recipients of Everlasting Life and Love. This is



why Jesus came in the written word of the Gospel, suffered and died for us, rose from the dead for us and will come again to take us into the fullness of His glory – the radiant sharing of Love with the Father, Son and Spirit.

The Good News Jesus came into the world to give us in His Incarnate Being, now in His commissioned Teachers is the faithful carrying out of His mission by those appointed by Him to preach the Good News to all the peoples till the end of time. All baptized into Him, who call Him Lord to the glory of the Father, become sharers with Him of this great salvific act of the Blessed Trinity.

Coming to the **Final Stage** of the narrative, it is to us as we readers of today find the text of the written Gospel.

This takes us back to the period when the Apostles having founded the Churches through their preaching had died, and the communities founded by them sought to preserve their preaching of the Good News through persons of faith, who systematically preserved in an ordered written text the memories of the apostolic preaching to preserve the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ accepted and



approved by the communities of the primitive Churches.

They would after careful consideration of the leaders and their communities approve the written text as a document of faith in the person of Jesus whose proclamation of the Good News of the Kingdom becomes a living reality for the community, and the norm of faith of the Church. Hence, they would, having accepted the original preaching of the text as apostolic and faithful to the Lord's word and His Church down the centuries, as a community bear witness to its truth and salvific efficacy by living the faith in their daily life.

This would, often in circumstances both social and religious entail, beyond the acceptance of the written text, the application of the truth of these words and teachings of Jesus in the nitty-gritty of their daily life, often in circumstances both social and religious quite different from those at the time of Jesus of Nazareth.

The change posed to the readers of the written text is to bring the understanding of it to produce in them a living growth in the intimacy of communion with Jesus in the Father through the Spirit, and share this communion with their contemporaries, so that the Gospel word becomes incarnate in them and builds up God's family here on earth, transforming persons, social structures and the whole of relationships of humans with

others and the whole of creation. This was and is the tremendous challenge that God's dwelling in his Risen Being in the Church and all creation poses to each seeker of the Truth in the Incarnate and Revealed Word of God.

Keeping in mind all that is said above we come to try to apply the basic message of this parable as given by Jesus in Stage I to our present situation and discover the word of Jesus become Truth and Life for our being

today. There is no doubt that all of us are convinced that the pandemic COVID-19 makes us look at our world anew. Established structures and an accepted way of life and mode of behaviour has been badly shaken, and we are already talking of new structures in personal life, social behaviour, religious life, ways of education, in one word, we are asking for the meaning of life today. The word of God, to be relevant to us and to our world must provide us with that meaning, since Jesus said I am the Light of the world and commanded his followers to be this light to dispel the darkness, bring about the Kingdom of God.

For this, we should

1. Identify the basic principles of our life till now, to identify what is the meaning of life for us personally.

Do we acknowledge the Fundamental Principle given us by Ignatius of Loyola in his Spiritual Exercises. “The human being is created to praise, reverence and serve God, our Lord and the way to realize the purpose of our being here and now, is

2. All the things of this earth are created to assist

us in this purpose, and so should be used only in so far as they help us to attain this goal.

3. Therefore one should use them only in so far as they help us to attain this goal. We should keep always in mind this Principle and govern our thoughts, words and deeds by it, if we are to find meaning in life.

Some of the challenges posed by today's world to us which we must face to give meaning to life are e.g. COVID-19 Pandemic, Climate Change, Relativism in every situation, Profit and Selfish advantage as the basic criterion of a philosophy of life etc. We have to see how our faith gives us the Light which gives meaning to life which we must share with others. Then this Light from Faith

shines from us and brings about the Kingdom of God. We cannot, no matter what the cost, put it under a bushel when we are in such situations where it must shine so that others can enter into the Kingdom of God. This is the challenge that this parable poses to us! ♦



Pope Francis accepted resignation of Cardinal Robert Sarah

Vatican City (CNA) --- Pope Francis on Feb 20 accepted the resignation of Cardinal Robert Sarah as prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments.

Sarah, who turned 75 in June 2020, was the most senior African prelate at the Vatican, appointed head of the liturgy department by Pope Francis in November 2014.

He had previously served as the president of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum and as secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.

The Guinean cardinal has written a trilogy of books read widely throughout the Catholic world: “God or Nothing” (2015), “The Power of Silence” (2016), and “The Day Is Now Far Spent” (2019).

Born in 1945 in French Guinea, Sarah was ordained a priest in 1969 for the Diocese of Conakry, after periods of study in Ivory Coast, Guinea, France, Senegal, Rome, and Jerusalem.

Sarah was appointed archbishop of Conakry in 1979, at the age of 34, a position he held until 2001, including during the dictatorship of Ahmed Sékou Touré.

Sarah has been praised for his resistance to Sékou Touré's Marxist dictatorship, and for maintaining the unity of the Church as an independent institution as Catholic clergy and laity were persecuted.

SAINT OF THE MONTH - I

St Agnes of Bohemia

1211 – 1282

Feast Day: 02 March

Agnes was the daughter of Queen Constance (a relative of St Elizabeth) and King Ottokar I of Bohemia. Born in the year 1211, Princess Agnes (or Anežka in Czech) was predestined by birth to live a life of luxury at one of Europe's royal courts because Agnes was a princess born into the royal family. Her father was one of the most important monarchs in Czech history, a man who was behind the rise of the

Czech state. And therefore Agnes was a sought-after bride. But she decided not to follow this secular path and joined the religious order of Poor Clares. She herself later established the religious order of Knights of the Cross with the Red Star, the only religious order to originate in Bohemia which exists to this day. As a member of the order of Poor Clares she founded a convent in Prague and became its first mother superior.”

At an early age she was sent to the monastery of Treinitz, where at the hands of the Cistercian religious she received the education that became her rank. Yet, inspired by other religious figures of her time, she dedicated her life to service and sacrifice. She was betrothed to the Duke of Silesia, who died three years later. As she grew up, she decided she wanted to enter the religious life.

After declining marriages to King Henry VII of Germany and King Henry III of England, Agnes was faced with a proposal from Frederick II, the Holy Roman Emperor. She appealed to Pope



Gregory IX for help. The pope was persuasive; Emperor Frederick was incensed at the unsuccessful issue of his matrimonial venture, but, on learning that Agnes had left him to become the spouse of Christ, he is said to have remarked: "If she had left me for a mortal man, I would have taken vengeance with the sword, but I cannot take offence because in preference to me she has chosen the King of Heaven."

Frederick magnanimously said that he could not be offended if Agnes preferred the King of Heaven to him.

After Agnes built a hospital for the poor and a residence for the friars, she financed the construction of a Poor Clares monastery in Prague. In 1236, she and seven other noble women entered this monastery. Saint Clare sent five sisters from San Damiano to join them, and wrote Agnes four letters advising her on the beauty of her vocation and her duties as abbess.

Agnes became known for prayer, obedience and mortification. Papal pressure forced her to accept her election as abbess; nevertheless, the title she preferred was “senior sister.” Her position did not prevent her from cooking for the other sisters and mending the clothes of lepers. The sisters found her kind but very strict regarding the observance of poverty; she declined her royal brother's offer to set up an endowment for the monastery.

SAINT OF THE MONTH - II

St Fidelis of Sigmaringen

1577 – 1622

Feast Day: 24 April

Fidelis' life bridged the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a time of religious conflict in Western Europe. He died at the hands of a mob while preaching in Switzerland, where he had gone to combat the Calvinist heresy.

Fidelis received the name of Mark Rey at the time of his birth, during 1577 in present-day Germany. Mark studied at the University of Freiburg, and worked for a time as a private tutor. Eventually he went back to the university and earned his law degree around 1611.

Though he had already shown signs of devotion to God and studied canon law alongside civil law, Mark opted for a secular career as an attorney. Within a year he was known as “the poor man's lawyer” because of his concern for the needy. Just as quickly, he became disgusted with the corrupt ways of his chosen field.

Leaving his legal practice behind, Mark decided to give his life directly to the service of Christ and the Church. He followed his brother who was already a Capuchin priest and received ordination as a priest, and joined the Capuchin Franciscans in Freiburg.

With his entry into the order he received the name “Fidelis,” meaning “faithful” -- after the words of Jesus Christ in the Book of Revelation, “Remain faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.” As he embraced radical poverty



and simplicity, the attorney-turned-Franciscan left his inheritance to a scholarship fund for poor seminarians, who also received his books.

Fidelis showed his love for God through prayer and fasting, while caring for his neighbours through preaching, writing, and celebration of the sacraments. He showed particular care for the poor and sick, and was especially revered for his work among Austrian soldiers who were suffering from a plague epidemic.

During 1614 a Swiss Catholic bishop had sought help from the Capuchins, to restore the faith and counteract the spread of Calvinist Protestantism. In 1621, Fidelis was sent on the mission. He brought just four items: a Bible, a prayer book, a crucifix and a copy of the Capuchin rule.

The winter of 1621-22 was a busy period of preaching, instruction and theological disputation for the Franciscan priest. He preached not only in the pulpits of Catholic churches, but also in public places, and even in the meeting-places of the Calvinists themselves. Some Swiss Protestants responded with hostility, but many others were also brought back to the Church.

Like many cases of religious persecution during this time, Fidelis' treatment at the hands of the Calvinists did not stem exclusively from doctrinal disagreement. National and cultural



tensions also contributed, with many Swiss Protestants suspecting that the Catholic mission was part of an Austrian plot against their nation.

This volatile situation boiled over on April 24, 1622, when

Fidelis' preaching provoked a riot at a church in the village of Seewis. Some Austrian soldiers were killed in the uproar, and a would-be assassin shot at the priest.

After declining an offer of help from a Protestant, Fidelis was confronted outside the church by a mob, and told to choose between his Catholic beliefs and his life. Fidelis was defiant: "The Catholic religion is the faith of all ages. I fear not death."

Fidelis was beaten and stabbed to death. His murderers cut a leg off his dead body in bitter retaliation for his many journeys. The sight of his martyrdom, however, is said to have converted one of the Protestant preachers who led the mob. A succession of attested miracles led to his canonization in 1746.

Fidelis was canonized in 1746. Fifteen years later he was recognized as a martyr. He is the Patron Saint of lawyers and the Congregation for the Evangelization of peoples.

Source: www.franciscanmedia.org; www.catholicnewsagency.com; www.mycatholic.life/saints ♦

Continued from Page 16: St Agnes of Bohemia

After a life of service, poverty and illness Agnes died in Prague at the age of 71 on March 2, 1282. She was buried in the convent church but her remains were moved in the 14th century, allegedly to be saved from floods and later Hussite attacks. All attempts to find her remains over the centuries have failed.

Despite the longstanding efforts of her compatriots, Agnes of Bohemia was not beatified until almost 600 years after her death. She was finally canonized by Pope John Paul II on November 12, 1989, just five days before the events of November 17 triggered the Velvet



Revolution leading to the fall of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia. For some people that was a confirmation of an old legend. "That is based on a 15th century prophecy ascribed to provost Papoušek of Litoměřice who said that Bohemia will not prosper until Agnes is canonized. And it is true that her canonization preceded the breaking events of November 1989. It is a question of faith whether we consider it a mere coincidence or a matter of cause and effect. But it is for sure that no one can ever take that away from Agnes."

Source: www.franciscanmedia.org; www.catholic.org; <http://english.radio.cz> ♦

I believe in Easter

The Story of Edith Burns

(This is a true story, sent in by Jerry Metzler)



The Lady's name was Edith Burns. She was a wonderful Christian who lived in San Antonio, Texas. She was the patient of a fine Christian doctor by the name of Will Phillips. Dr Phillips was a gentle doctor who saw patients as people.

His favourite patient was Edith Burns. One morning he went to his office with a heavy heart and it was because of Edith Burns. When he walked into that waiting room, there sat Edith with her big black Bible in her lap. She was earnestly talking to a young mother sitting beside her.

Dr Phillips knew why Edith was there and what she was doing.

You see, Edith Burns had a habit of introducing herself in this way: "Hello, my name is Edith Burns. Do you believe in Easter?" Then she would explain the meaning of Easter, and many times people would be saved.

Dr Phillips walked into that office and there he saw the head nurse Beverly. Beverly had first met Edith when she was taking her blood pressure. Edith began by saying, "My name is Edith Burns. Do you believe in Easter?"

Beverly said, "Why, yes I do."

Edith said, "Well, what do you believe about Easter?"

Beverly said, "Well, it's all about egg hunts, going to church, and dressing up."

Well, Edith kept pressing her about the real

meaning of Easter, and finally led her to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Dr Phillips said, "Beverly, don't call Edith into the office quite yet.

I believe there is another delivery taking place in the waiting room.

After being called back in the doctor's office, Edith sat down and when she took a look at the doctor she said, "Dr Will, why are you so sad?

Are you reading your Bible? Are you praying?"

Dr Phillips said, "Now Edith, I'm the doctor and you're the patient."

With a heavy heart he said, "Your lab report came back and it says you have cancer, and Edith, you're not going to live very long."

Edith said, "Why, Will Phillips, shame on you. Why are you so sad? Do you think God makes mistakes?

You have just told me I'm going to see my precious Lord Jesus, my husband, and my friends. You have just told me that I am going

to celebrate Easter forever, and here you are having difficulty giving me my ticket!" Dr Phillips thought to himself, "What a magnificent woman this Edith Burns is!"

Edith continued coming to Dr Phillips every day. Christmas came, and the office was closed



through January 3rd. On the day the office opened, Edith did not show up. Later that afternoon, Edith called Dr Phillips and said she would have to be moving her story to the hospital and said, "Will, I'm very near home, so would you make sure that they put women in here next to me in my room who



need to know about Easter. Well, they did just that and women began to come in and share that room with Edith.

Many women were gloriously saved. Everybody on that floor from staff to patients were so excited about Edith, that they started calling her Edith Easter; everyone except Phyllis Cross, the head nurse. She made it plain that she wanted nothing to do with Edith because she was a "religious nut".

She had been a nurse in an army hospital. She had seen it all and heard it all. She was the original G I Jane. She had been married three times, she was hard, cold, and did everything by the book.

Well, one morning the two nurses who were to attend to Edith were sick.

Edith had the flu, and Phyllis Cross had to go in and give her a shot.

When she walked in, Edith had a big smile on her face and said, "Phyllis, God loves you and I love you, and I have been praying for you."

Phyllis Cross said, "Well, you can quit praying for me, you religious nut, it won't work. I'm not interested."

Edith said, "Well, I will pray and I have asked God not to let me go home until you come into the family."

Phyllis Cross said, "Then you will never die because that will never happen." She walked out of the room.

Every day Phyllis Cross would walk into that room and Edith would say, "God loves you Phyllis and I love you, and I'm praying for you." One day Phyllis Cross said she was literally drawn to Edith's room like a magnet would draw iron. She sat down on the bed and Edith said, "I'm so glad you have come, because God told me that today is your special day."

Phyllis Cross said, "Edith, you have asked everybody here the question, 'Do you believe in Easter?' but you have never asked me."

Edith said, "Phyllis, I wanted to, many times, but God told me to wait until you asked, and now that you have asked ..."

Edith Burns took her Bible and shared with Phyllis Cross the Easter Story of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Edith said, "Phyllis, do you believe in Easter? Do you believe that Jesus Christ is alive and that He wants to live in your heart?"



Phyllis Cross said, "Oh I want to believe that with all of my heart, and I do want Jesus in my life."

Right there, Phyllis Cross prayed and invited Jesus Christ into her heart. For the first time Phyllis

Cross did not walk out of a hospital room, she was carried out on the wings of angels.

Two days later, Phyllis Cross came in and Edith said, "Do you know what day it is?"

Phyllis Cross said, "Why Edith, it's Good Friday."

Edith said, "Oh, no, for you every day is Easter. Happy Easter, Phyllis!"

Well, two days later, on Easter Sunday, Phyllis Cross came into work, did some of her duties and then went down to the flower shop and got some Easter lilies because she wanted to go up to see Edith and give her some Easter lilies and wish her a Happy Easter. When she walked into Edith's room, Edith was in bed. That big black Bible was on her lap.

Her hands were in that Bible. There was a sweet smile on her face. When Phyllis Cross went to pick up Edith's hand, she realized Edith was dead.

Her left hand was on John 14: "In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also."

Her right hand was on Revelation 21:4, "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes, there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain, for the

former things have passed away."

Phyllis Cross took one look at that dead body, and then lifted her face toward heaven, and with tears streaming down her cheeks, said, "Happy Easter, Edith - Happy Easter!"

Well, Phyllis Cross left Edith's body, walked out of the room, and over to a table where two student nurses were sitting. She said, "My name is Phyllis Cross. Do you believe in Easter?"

Source: www.2jesus.org/inspstories/easter.html ♦

Continued from Page 12: Letting God dwell among us



'A small amount, if given with love,' Pope Francis says, 'never ends, but becomes a source of

life and happiness. ... Such is the case too with our almsgiving, whether small or large, when offered with joy and simplicity.'

The Holy Father concludes by encouraging the faithful to view every moment as an opportunity for believing, hoping and loving.

'The call to experience Lent as a journey of conversion, prayer and sharing of our goods, helps us – as communities and as individuals – to revive the faith that comes from the living Christ, the hope inspired by the breath of the Holy Spirit and the love flowing from the merciful heart of the Father.'

Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne ♦

News Round-Up

Pope's visit to Iraq more likely



Baghdad, CNA: As Pope Francis' trip to Iraq becomes more likely, the Holy See Press Office released Feb. 8 the logo for the first papal trip since the beginning of the COVID pandemic.

The logo represent the map of Iraq with its historic emblems: the rivers Euphrates and Tigris –which according to an Iraqi tradition, was the original place of the Garden of Eden- and the palm tree. A white dove symbolizing peace flies with an olive branch over the Iraqi and Vatican flags, intertwined as a symbol of friendship.

Over the image, the motto of the visit, "You are all brothers and sisters", appears in Arabic, Kurdish (or Sorani), and Chaldean (or Chaldean Neo-Aramaic). Arabic is Iraq's official language, Sorani is spoken among the northern Kurdish minority, and Chaldean Neo-Aramaic is spoken by Christians in the Nineveh plains.

On Feb. 8 the Vatican announced the schedule of the pope's trip to Iraq, which will take place March 5 to 8 and will include stops in Najaf, Baghdad, Erbil, Mosul and Bakhdida. ♦

Catholic priest nominated for Nobel

Rome, CNA: A Catholic missionary priest in Madagascar, Fr Pedro Opeka, 72, is a Vincentian priest from Argentina who has worked with the poor in Madagascar for more than three decades. has been nominated for this year's Nobel Peace Prize.

He founded the Akamasoa humanitarian association in 1989 as a “solidarity movement to help the poorest of the poor” living on the site of a garbage dump. The Akamasoa association (meaning “good friend”) has provided former homeless people and families with 4,000 brick houses and has helped to educate 13,000 children and young people.

Janez Janša, the Prime Minister of Slovenia, has announced that he nominated Opeka for the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize for his dedication to “helping people living in appalling living conditions.” ♦

World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly

Rome, Zenit: Pope Francis announced on Sunday, January 31, the establishment of an international day to honour grandparents and the elderly to take place each year in July.

“The Holy Spirit ... arouses thoughts and words of wisdom in the elderly today: their voice is precious because it sings the praises of God and guards the roots of peoples. They remind us that old age is a gift and that grandparents are the link between generations, to transmit to young people an experience of life and faith,” Pope Francis said in the library of the Vatican's Apostolic Palace.

“Grandparents are often forgotten and we forget this wealth of preserving and passing on the roots. For this reason, I have decided to establish the World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly,” the pope said.

The World Day for the Grandparents and the Elderly will take place annually on the fourth Sunday

of July, close to the feast of the grandparents of Jesus, Saints Joachim and Anne.

This year it will take place on Sunday, July 25, and Pope Francis will offer a special Mass to mark the occasion, according to the Vatican Dicastery for Laity, Family, and Life. ♦

Dalit Christians protest

UCA News: Dalit Christians in Tamil Nadu held a protest march in Kumbakonam Diocese against the discrimination faced by Dalits. The protesters from eight Dalit Christian groups marched on Feb 6 to submit a memorandum to the bishop and other diocesan officials stating their demand for a Dalit bishop in the diocese.

“Bishop Antonysamy Francis of Kumbakonam will be retiring from his post as he will reach the canonical retirement age of 75 in December, so we wanted to intensify our demand for a bishop of Dalit origin in this diocese,” Kudanthai Arasan, founder and president of Viduthalai Tamil Puligal Katchi, told UCA News.

Arasan said Kumbakonam Diocese was formed on Sept 1, 1899, but even after 121 years no initiative was taken by the former three bishops and the present bishop to appoint a Dalit as bishop in any diocese in Tamil Nadu, though though 65 percent of the more than 2 million Christians are Dalits and among 135 priests in the diocese, 29 qualified priests are from a Dalit background. ♦

Church expresses grief over glacier disaster

UCA New: Pope Francis and Indian bishops have expressed grief over a massive glacier burst that killed at least 32 people in India.

The tragedy in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district on Feb 7 also left more than 170 missing as the rescue operation carried on until late on Feb. 10, media reports said.

“I express my closeness to the victims of the calamity that happened in India where part of a glacier separated itself, provoking violent flooding that devastated two power plants,” Pope Francis said in a tweet on Feb 10.

“I pray for the workers who died, for their families and for all those who were wounded.”

Cardinal Oswald Gracias of Bombay, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI), said on Feb 9 that the CBCI expresses its grief and offers its condolences to the family members of all those who have died or are missing as a result of the Uttarakhand glacier calamity. ♦

New cardinal for Karachi

UCA News: Pope Francis has accepted the resignation of Cardinal Joseph Coutts of Karachi and transferred Bishop Benny Trivas of Multan to take his place as archbishop of Pakistan's largest city.

Cardinal Coutts has headed the southern archdiocese since Jan 25, 2012. He was appointed chairperson of the Christian Study Centre, a key Christian research center, in Rawalpindi last month.

Cardinal Coutts was born on July 21, 1945, in Amristar in the Diocese of Jullundur in British India. He was ordained a priest in Lahore on Jan. 9, 1971

Bishop Trivas was born in Karachi in 1966 and ordained a priest on Dec 7, 1990. He served as vicar general of Karachi Archdiocese and was ordained bishop of Multan on Aug 15, 2015. He has also served as a professor of canon law at the National Catholic Institute of Theology in Karachi.

Karachi has a population of 20 million. According to the Catholic Church directory 2018, the seaport archdiocese has 182,000 Catholics and 16 parishes. ♦

Cardinal demands to see report on terror attacks

UCA News: Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith has asked the Sri Lankan government to provide a copy of the final report of the presidential commission that investigated the Easter 2019 terror attacks.

"If the presidential commission and the government do not give justice to the Easter attack victims, I will go to the International Court of Justice and seek justice", the outspoken prelate said on Feb. 11. "I am not satisfied with the manner in which the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has conducted investigations into the Easter attacks and the manner in which the CID has acted."

Suicide bombers affiliated to local Islamist extremist group National Thowheed Jamath targeted three churches and three luxury hotels, killing at least 279 and injuring 500 on Easter Sunday morning in 2019. The public and religious leaders blamed politicians and government officials for failing to prevent the attacks.

Former defense secretary Hemasiri Fernando and former police chief Pujitha Jayasundara were remanded in custody for failing to inform the public and prevent the attacks despite receiving warnings of a possible attack.

The final report of the presidential commission probing the attacks was handed to President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Feb 1. The six-volume report consists of 472 pages and 215 attachments. The commission was appointed by former president Maithripala Sirisena in 2019 and recorded evidence from 457 people over a period of 214 days. Sirisena and former prime minister Ranil Wickramasinghe were accused of failing to prevent the attacks despite the prior intelligence made available on the impending attacks. ♦

Bangladesh joins Vatican to tackle traffickers

UCA News: Bangladesh is to step up its fight against human trafficking after joining forces with a Vatican-based group. The inauguration program of the Talitha Kum international anti-trafficking network in Bangladesh was held at the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh Centre in Dhaka on Feb 8.

The 42 participants included Bishop Gervas Rozario, Catholic leaders and religious congregation superiors. All dioceses of Bangladesh observed the International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking on the same day.

St. Pope John Paul II had classified Josephine Bakita as a saint and declared Feb 8 as her feast day. In 2015, for the first time, the Catholic Church dedicated her birthday for international prayer and meditation for trafficked people. In 2019, Pope Francis called on world leaders to take a firm stand against the abominable and heinous act of human trafficking. ♦

Holy Father's Prayer Intentions

March 2021: Sacrament of Reconciliation

Let us pray that we may experience the sacrament of reconciliation with renewed depth, to taste the infinite mercy of God.

April 2021: Fundamental Rights

We pray for those who risk their lives while fighting for fundamental rights under dictatorships, authoritarian regimes and even in democracies in crisis.

LET US REJOICE IN
OUR RISEN LORD JESUS!

**Pontifical Mission
Organizations**

*wishes you
&
your loved
ones an enriching*

EASTER SEASON !

"Go out to the whole world and PROCLAIM the GOOD NEWS to all creation" Mark 16:15

Come! Make MISSION a MOVEMENT



Pontifical Mission Organizations

works through FOUR Mission Societies

PONTIFICAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH (POPF)

was founded in 1822 by
PAULINE MARIE
JARICOT, in Lyon



PROMOTES MISSIONARY
ENTHUSIASM &
PASTORAL CARE

PONTIFICAL SOCIETY OF SAINT PETER THE APOSTLE (POSPA)

was founded 1889 by
JEANNE BIGARD, in Caen



SERVES FORMATION OF
APOSTOLIC PERSONNEL

PONTIFICAL SOCIETY OF MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATIONS (MCA)

was founded in 1843 by
BISHOP H E CHARLES DE
FORBIN-JANSON, in Nancy



FOSTERS "CHILDREN
HELPING CHILDREN"

PONTIFICAL MISSIONARY UNION of the clergy, religious and the consecrated laity (PMU)

was founded in 1916 by BL
FR PAOLO MANNA, in Rome



ANIMATES TOWARDS
MISSIONARY DISCIPLESHIP

In 1922, Pope Pius XI proclaimed the first three Societies Pontifical.

In 1956, Pope Pius XII proclaimed the fourth one Pontifical.

Have you added activities for Pontifical Mission Societies in your 2021 planner?

ST GEORGE (Feast Day: 23rd April)

Faithful servant of God and invincible martyr, Saint George; favoured by God with the gift of faith, and inflamed with an ardent love of Christ, thou didst fight valiantly against the dragon of pride, falsehood, and deceit. Neither pain nor torture, sword nor death could part thee from the love of Christ.

I fervently implore thee for the sake of this love to help me by thy intercession to overcome the temptations that surround me, and to bear bravely the trials that oppress me, so that I may patiently carry the cross which is placed upon me; and let neither distress nor difficulties separate me from the love of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Valiant champion of the Faith, assist me in the combat against evil, that I may win the crown promised to them that persevere unto the end. Amen.



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