



In the Shadow of the Cross



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"We must not let hope abandon us.... Optimism disappoints, but hope does not."

Pope Francis

Multiple waves of the coronavirus pandemic and multiple variants of the virus are challenging and affecting humanity enormously as never before. We have seen so many scenarios since March 2020 like corona infection in huge numbers, corona testing, containment zones, safe homes, quarantine, masks, sanitizers, PPE kits, rushing of ambulances, sleepless efforts by doctors, nurses, paramedical staff, other support staff, police personnel and finally most shocking helpless deaths. Side by side, we have also seen another type of scenarios like lockdown in industrial units, a beeline of the job loser labourers with hungry children, women, and elderly family members carrying their belongings and heading towards their native villages. Now we are facing the second wave of COVID 19. We could not fight the second wave effectively. Thousands of patients have died due to the shortage of beds, oxygen and medicines. In spite of observing Covid protocol like using masks, hand sanitizers and maintaining physical distance, it has not been possible to check the spread of infection and resultant deaths. Hopefully, we are now witnessing a decline in new cases, though the number of deaths is not declining proportionately.

There is a sense of insecurity, doubt, fear, despair, worry, grief and anxiety in people's lives. As people of God, we need to turn to higher source of inspiration and solace. We need HOPE. We must not let hope abandon us. Hope, in this present situation, is also about perceiving the sufferings and disappointments as challenges and possibilities and not as defeats because "suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (Roman 5:3-5). Such hope is grounded in God's integrity and promise that, at the end of the day, good, truth and love will triumph over evil, untruth and hatred, even sickness and death. This emerging spirituality of hope is truly one that will expand new possibilities and initiate new outlooks for the future.

This issue brings us New Hope to **grow gradually closer to God** following certain simple steps and to build the **Kingdom of God** here on earth by allowing the **Lord to Step** into our devastating lives. **When God enters into our lives**, there will be a **change** in our perspective towards sufferings and disappointments. When God abides in us and we in Him, we become **holy** and represent through our words and actions Christ to others.

I thank on behalf of the Rector and the students of Otto Hopfenmuller Study House at Shillong all the contributors towards publishing of this issue. To all those who have taken the trouble to write their thoughts in this issue of the magazine, I say once again: THANK YOU!

I wish all the readers, members of the Salvatorian Family, benefactors and all the well-wishers a pleasant reading. May Our Founder, Blessed Francis Jordan continue to inspire us and plead for us in Heaven.

APPROVAL DECREE ON THE MIRACLE



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Fr. Milton Zonta SDS
Superior General

Protocol No. AVB – 127 - ENG

Rome, 19 June 2020

To all the members of the Salvatorian Family

Re: Decree on the miracle

Dear Members of the Salvatorian Family,

It is with great joy that we can announce to you the Holy Father, **Pope Francis**, on 19 June 2020 received in audience His Eminence Cardinal Angelo Becciu, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, and **authorised** the same Congregation **to promulgate the decree regarding the miracle attributed to the intercession of our Founder**, the Venerable Servant of God, Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan.

This finishes the process on the miracle and opens definitely the way towards the beatification of our beloved Founder. As soon as the date and place of the beatification ceremony will be determined by the Holy See, we will announce it.

May I invite you all to keep praying through the intercession of Fr. Francis Jordan and to prepare yourself, individually and in community, for this so meaningful and long expected religious and spiritual event that may encourage all of us to be faithful to our Salvatorian Charism.

United in prayers and with heartfelt regards,

Fr. Milton Zonta SDS
Superior General



Fr. Agustin Van Baelen SDS
General Secretary

ESSENTIALS



We have entered the Society in order to become more holy and we have been called to the formation of saints. The first thing for a true Salvatorian to procure is his own sanctification and salvation. One can accomplish these by denying his own will, mortifying his inclination and by making his will comfortable to the will of God, we recognize the will of God in superiors. Sanctification is the most important thing to become holy, so it needs to be carried out well. And since we are called to the apostolate or to the formation of saints, it doesn't mean that we are less bound to self-mortification, to spiritual life, to meditation and prayer. The purpose of our Society is self-sanctification and the sanctification of neighbor, but we cannot sanctify our neighbor unless we sanctify ourselves first. Thereupon we need to become holy, we need to become saints. For one saint can accomplish more than thousands and thousands of other. Yes; the Divine Providence has showered such graces upon a single saint and his work and has bless him so, that he can be influenced the history of entire nations. What would you think St. Francis Xavier will accomplish if he has reduced his meditation and prayer to minimum.

The next thing that need to be done is striving after perfection, which means that first thing is that we should have a desire to become holy, to become a saint that is to sanctify ourselves. Oh! How little attention is paid to this truth that we should become holy! The Divine Saviour in his great mercy has called us to

become the image of himself. Jesus our Saviour must become our divine model in striving after holiness. What greatest joy it would bring me (Founder) when you all strive after perfection. If you strive after perfection then, I might say, you may do whatever you wish. And I have no anxiety whatsoever as regards the society for she will be on the right path. Oh strive after perfection and you will be a spectacle to angles and to men. Attain perfection earnestly with all your strength. To be sure it is not an easy path; but be convince to strive after it, no matter what it may cost. You will not achieve it in a fort night, but it's a long strife and struggle combined with many slip of imperfections and sometime even venial sin. Your sorrows, humiliations, contempt, ridicules and sufferings are the things that will knit you to perfection. Don't just fantasy such problems or to be a future saint but endure everything with obedience, poverty and exact religious observance.

Do you think you will become a saint if you are careless and break all the rules? For example: not keeping silent when it is necessary. You will not. Reflect upon what you are bound to do, don't just drag yourself like a lukewarm, who does his duty well when he has the will and doesn't do it well when he has no will. Make use of every means and opportunities. Walk the path that leads you to holiness, the path that the dear Saviour walked, the way to exact religious observance, the way of a holy

religious. And by the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience you have taken a great step in this direction. Let men despise you, let them think little of you, let them ridicule you, let storms come from within and from without if they will; and even if all hell and all mankind rise up against you, say to yourself: I must become holy, no matter what the cost may be!

By the ordination of priesthood don't think that you have reached the peak of holiness. Rather you have but one more reason for striving after holiness with new strength and energy, in order that you may become a man of character who is not like a reed shaken with the wind. You must not think if you are priests, that you are no longer so strictly bound to observe the rules. It is just as priest that you should be exact. The world, which sees in you a Religious, is stricter in its judgment than you think. Forward then, and that especially now! Strive after holiness! Now that you have entered into such intimate relationship with our dear Saviour you must live more than ever as true Salvatorians.

"Become holy! Again and again cry out to yourselves: I must become holy! And if I do not strive after holiness I am in danger of perishing."

Venerable Fr Francis Jordan

Fr. Alexis SDS

Shortcut to DAILY SPIRITUAL GROWING



Most people think that growing in spiritual life is a very difficult task. But in reality, it is affordable and possible for anybody and everybody of any walks of life. Great saints of the Catholic Church have systematized the stages of spiritual growth into three from their personal spiritual experiences. They are Purgative way, Illuminative way and the Unitive way. Once you

cross the purgative way to progress towards the other two is based on your stability in prayer and the corresponding responsibility that emerges from your prayer.

In order to kick start your spiritual life you need to participate in a retreat preferably a charismatic one which will give you the sufficient and necessary impetus and motivation to propel you like

a rocket that carries an artificial satellite into an orbit in the space. For the takeoff you need to really see how much of ignition the sets of rockets used to lift the satellite from the geo-sphere. Without this decisive step you will never make any progress. One should have this decisive determination and the will to progress. You need to remain faithful to regular confession (i.e, once in two weeks/ once a month), regular Holy Eucharist and regular prayers according to your personal Christian vocation from then on. Once you have made the decision to progress in your spiritual life after having fulfilled the above three obligations, every day you need to ask three questions to yourself:

- i. with regard: to the things not under your control,**
 - ii. with regard to the things not under your control**
 - iii. and with regard to your relation with others.**
1. The first question that you need to ask yourself is: Am I growing in seeing whatever happens in my life (both good and bad) as coming from God for my good?

Take the example from the entire life of the Old Joseph of the Old Testament looking back to his life from the verse found in Gen 50:20 which says "Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today." Again we see another supporting passage in Rom 8: 28 which says "We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose." This means also accepting calmly the abrupt happenings of your life in spite of your proper and meticulous planning. The experience of Job of the Bible in the book of Job 1: 13-22 can serve as a biblical model to handle the negative experiences of everyday life. Missing a flight, getting stranded on the way while on a journey or getting sudden sickness in which, all your previous plans and programs need to be cancelled or rescheduled. In all such situations and circumstances of life both good and bad am I having the disposition of Job in saying "The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21b).

2. The second question you need to ask yourself is: am growing in seeking and doing God's will in the things that are under my control. This means do I dispose of all my personal responsibilities responsibly with commitment both at home and in the work place and during free time activities. To understand this responsibility better let us take to heart, the spirit of the gospel message from the passage of the Gospel of Luke 11: 27 where a woman spoke up, "How blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you!" 28 But Jesus answered her, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it!"
3. The third question that you need to ask yourself is: am I growing in my sacrificial love for others, whoever they are. Others would mean primarily the people with whom you live and other immediate neighbours without neglecting whoever comes on your way. To understand this sacrificial love for your neighbour, see the passage from the gospel

of Lk 10:25-37 where we have the story of the Good Samaritan and imitate his example daily. If your answer is a big "YES" to these three questions you can be sure that you are moving in the right direction of progressing in your spiritual life.

Through the stability in this practice during daily life God will lead you into where he is planning according to his will and so patiently wait for Him. For the Lord says in Rev 2: 17 "To those who win the victory I will give some of the hidden manna." The gospel of Matthew 24:13 reminds us that we need to endure to the end. Psalm 117 says that that the steadfast love and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever. Psalm 37: 4 says "Take delight in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart." May you be blessed and may the saints who walked through the way ahead of you intercede for you. Let the angels who are in the presence of God be your guards.

Fr. Joseph Kannampambil, SDS

CHANGE



“We must become the change that we want to see in the world – Mahatma Gandhi

Change is a natural part of one’s life. Nothing remains forever. We live in a world in which everything is changing. If one is not ready to change oneself, he or she cannot reach success. Everything changes when you change and nothing changes until you change. To live a different and unique life one has to undergo changes. Even the

nature Changes: Clouds don’t stand still, trees, flowers, sprout new leaves, then shed them and night follows the day and day follows the night. Life is a constant cycle, ever changing yet never changing. We are part of that life. We will be here only for particular time and we have particular roles to play in life. Within that time if we play our role fittingly, one day we will be remembered by others. We need to realize that we are as important as clouds, moon

and seasons. Everybody has many goals in life. Every day our actions take us either closer to our goals or further away from them. Our actions take us to the way in which we want to travel. All of a sudden we cannot reach our goal, only step by step we can move towards our goal. Sometimes the process of travelling towards our goal may be filled with difficulties.

In fact, these difficulties and struggles are very necessary for our life to reach our goals. Empty road does not make a skilful driver. Likewise anyone who does not face any challenges cannot achieve success. Only the struggles can mould us as strong persons. We should not allow ourselves to get hit by the difficulties. We need to grow positively in our approach towards our life. Only the dead fish goes with the stream but the fish which is alive swims against the current of the river. If we are filled with positive motivation we can move towards our goal even though failures come in our way. There is a saying “*The*

busy bee has no time for sorrow” when we involve in our actions fully with commitment, sorrows, obstacles and failures cannot strike our mind.

Failures, worries etc., are part of our life. They will be there in our life. Our glory is not in never falling but in rising every time whenever we fall. Thus we should not remain static when we face failures, rather we should get up and move towards our goal. Failures may be painful realities to face; but they are very necessary for one’s life to reach the success. If we want change ourselves from our negative activities we need to go through a very hard process. Only we can change our life and no one can do that for us. As an individual I cannot change the world, but I can change the world of an individual. If we want to change our life we need to start immediately. We may not be able to change the direction of the wind but we can always adjust our sails to reach our destinations.

Bro. Niju Josey SDS



WHEN GOD Steps in MIRACLES HAPPEN

Are we getting busier day by day planning for the days ahead? Or Are you snowed under by what step to take next in your life? Well! Some of us are very good planners. We have vacations laid out to every detail so that there are no surprises or disappointments.

Certain times we even get trapped to ourselves when odd events come unfortunately on our way. It's easy to feel stuck in the transition period of your life. Change is inevitable and can be extremely difficult and confusing if you are blindly experiencing it.

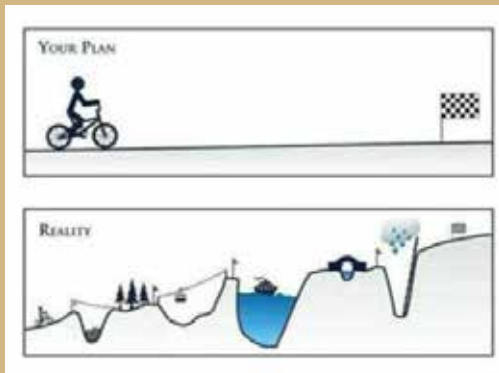
However, the pandemic occurred due to the corona virus in the end of the year 2019 has left every individual a crystal clear picture. The astrologers who predicted about the future failed, the schools and colleges which set curriculum for the academic year was stagnating, the offices, companies who worked in full pledge was closed. The persons who had insufficient time to spend with the family had to be locked behind doors in their own families for long days. Ultimately, each one of us, the people around, the country and even the world was in panic, the events set or the plans made for the future was uncertain and all that we heard for a few months in 2020 was "lockdown". What are we supposed to do when things don't always go the way we desired for ourselves or for those around us?

To be specific, we discover in the scripture, in the book of prophet ***Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future"***. Indeed it was spoken to the people in the midst of hardship and suffering who wished for an immediate rescue. But God's response is not to provide an immediate escape from the difficult situation. Rather, God promises that He has a plan to prosper them in the midst of their current situation.

Certainly Every one of us likes to have a plan. But, many times, plans don't turn out the way we expect. Things always change, new opportunities present themselves, and sometimes roadblocks get in the way. We don't always get to choose our life journey. The Lord has a plan for every single one of His children. His plan includes the good and bad of this world. Just because we become Christians doesn't mean that our lives are insulated from disappointments or tragedies. We often wonder what really went wrong, but the scripture states **"we can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps" (Proverbs 16:9)**

The Plans that we make can change on a daily basis for everyday tasks and overall for bigger goals that you have been working towards, but instead of getting frustrated about this adjustment, it is more productive to accept that God's plan may be different than yours. When these changes impact something significant, these upheavals make surrendering to God's will even harder. Maybe that you desperately wanted to attend a program but that did not offer you a place or was cancelled in due time or you didn't make the team you tried out for. You may have had one idea where life would take you, and now that isn't working out the way you expected. Life is unpredictable. So let's get energized

with a quote from the scripture which says **“Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure”. (Psalm 147:5)**



What is certain, is that no one's future plays out exactly the way they picture, and trusting in God will lead you to the life you were being for. By accepting that it is not you in control, but God and allows Him to step into your life and that becomes easier to open your heart and mind to new possibilities. It is understandably frustrating when your plans are forced to change, especially suddenly. God knows what you want your plan to be. He knows your struggles and has concern for your disappointments. But, God also has his own plan in mind for you, and even if you can't see it or immediately understand it, trust that there is a magnificent journey ahead.

It was considerably visible in the life of our Venerable Founder Francis Jordan which was wholly built on faith. He believed in the Divine Providence and in the wise and loving dominion of

God. And for that reason, he willingly and humbly accepted whatsoever the providence of God sent him. What really marked his life and made it credible to live so. To be precise let me leave in **three C's**

1. Child like faith in God: In the book Talks of Fr. Francis Mary of the Cross dated on March 03, 1899 Ven. Francis Jordan states as such ***“The Divine Saviour said to His apostles “If you do not become like children, you will not enter into the kingdom of God.” Now if the Divine Saviour already demands that a true Christian becomes like a child, this is all the more important for a religious, a Christian who wants to leave all things and to practice Christianity in its perfection. Therefore, the religious should become In fact simple, like a child, obedient like a child, open like a child, humble like a child, modest like a child, faithful like a child”.***

Ven. Francis Jordan was totally open and free of prejudice when it comes to listening to God was fully teachable and malleable and flexible. This childlike heart was like Christ like heart so he received everything that God wants him to have and to become everything God wants him to become. These qualities can easily be applied to our relationship with God too. We must trust God to care for us in all things. We must strive

to be natural and free, expressing our love without fear, not worrying if it will be accepted or rejected. When we strive to be innocent in the way we see others not giving into prejudice and bias. We automatically endeavor to be continually in awe of God and of all the new things He does in our lives.

2. Confidence in God: Ven. Francis Jordan didn't take great effort to boost his own confidence, instead he waits submitting his focus and engages his body, mind and souls in the presence of God. He reminds to his Spiritual children in the Talks of Fr. Francis Jordan February 2, 1898 ***"Trust in the Lord! Believe in Divine Providence! Ah, when in old age, you look back on some disturbing past events and compare how sadly you received them with how you later saw that God directed everything to your best advantage, ah, then you will judge things quite differently!"*** God's favor is always on his people. This is the confidence we have as Christians. We should therefore submit to God's plan, live in God's presence and be sustained through God's bounteous provisions. We see what is happening around us but do not get frightened by these events because we need to know that God is working through these events to win His children back to himself.

3. Counsel with God: In the spiritual Diary of Ven. Francis Jordan he quotes

in I/144 ***"Give yourself over totally to God; O Lord, what do you want me to do; speak, Lord, your servant is listening. - Here I am, send me as soon as possible!"*** He not only quotes it, but rather lived it; several times he withdrew himself from the crowd to be near to God not only to speak to Him, but to hear what God has to speak to him about the future. It is difficult to be silent before Him. Perhaps in our great emphasis on praising God, we have almost forgotten how to listen for His small quiet voice. We need to cultivate the silence of the soul so that He may break in upon us anytime, anywhere He so chooses. It's just as important that we recognize His voice when He does speak.

The best way is to get into a relationship with Jesus Christ as that our Venerable Francis Jordan did by developing in him an unwavering strength and to animate his life according to the plan of the creator. Rely on Him, He is in control of our lives and that He will never leave or forsake us. When we have struggles in this life, just knowing that God has a plan that is for our good can give us hope for the future. We aren't abandoned just because things are going bad. Rather, we cling to the omnipresent even more and increase our dependency on the Lord to work miracles. His plans for us are always good, even when it gets sturdy.

Sr. Celestine sds



THE KINGDOM THEME IN *EVANGELII GAUDIUM* AND *REDEMPTORIS MISSIO*

INTRODUCTION

The kingdom of God is God's reign or God's rule. The central message of Jesus is the kingdom of God. This is the Good News that Jesus preached about. In fact, He is the Kingdom Himself. The Kingdom of God is nothing but summary of what Jesus did and taught. When He says: "The time has come, the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe in the Good News" (Lk 4: 18f; Mk1: 14-15; Mt 4: 17f.) he refers to himself. Jesus preached the Kingdom through his life, death and resurrection. In other words, Kingdom of God is God's answer to the human condition. Man wants his hopes to be fulfilled, and suffering made into joy, he needs peace and justice. Man wants to be a liberated being from all disharmonies and wants to enjoy the

bliss. The faith that we have in Christ will deliver us and even protect us from socio political slavery, if we are really part of the kingdom of god and practice the kingdom values like peace, joy, justice, grace, mercy, forgiveness, conversion, unity, tolerance, harmony, sharing, love, appreciation and righteousness etc... The kingdom theme is all over the scripture. The theme Kingdom appears 144 time in the New Testament of which 122 times in the Gospels, 90 times in the mouth of Jesus himself. The word Church occurs only twice (Mt 16: 16; Mt 18: 17). The kingdom theme is also vastly found in the Missionary Documents of the Catholic Church. I would like to highlight the same in *Evangelii Gaudium* an Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis. *Evangelii Gaudium* was

written on 24th November 2013. It has five chapters and 288 paragraphs. In this Apostolic Exhortation, the word *Kingdom* is referred directly 21 times. Especially chapter IV is dedicated on the kingdom theme. Let us now see the kingdom aspect mentioned in *Evangelii Gaudium*.

1 The kingdom theme in *Evangelii Gaudium*

The first line of the chapter starts as 'To evangelize is to make the kingdom of God present in the world (176). The fourth chapter speaks on social dimension of evangelization. In this chapter Pope Francis talks about the challenges of kingdom. The following are the aspects referred directly or indirectly:

1.1 Confession of faith and commitment to society

To believe that the Son of God assumed our human flesh means that each human person has been taken up into the very heart of God. To believe that Jesus shed his blood for us removes any doubt about the boundless love which ennobles each human being. Our redemption has a social dimension because God, in Christ, redeems not only the individual person, but also the social relations existing between men (178). Accepting the first proclamation, which invites us to receive God's love and to love him in return with the very love which is his gift, brings forth in our lives and actions a primary and

fundamental response: to desire, seek and protect the good of others (178).

The way we treat others has a transcendent dimension: "The measure you give will be the measure you get" (Mt 7:2). It corresponds to the mercy which God has shown us: "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give and it will be given to you... For the measure you give will be the measure you get back" (Lk 6:36-38). What these passages make clear is the absolute priority of "going forth from ourselves towards our brothers and sisters" as one of the two great commandments which ground every moral norm and as the clearest sign for discerning spiritual growth in response to God's completely free gift. For this reason, "the service of charity is also a constituent element of the Church's mission and an indispensable expression of her very being." By her very nature the Church is missionary; she abounds in effective charity and a compassion which understands, assists and promotes (179).

1.2 Gospel is about the Kingdom of God (Lk 4:43)

It is about loving God who reigns in our world. To the extent that he reigns within us, the life of society will be a setting for universal fraternity, justice, peace and dignity. Both Christian

preaching and life, then, are meant to have an impact on society. We are seeking God's kingdom: "Seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (*Mt* 6:33). Jesus' mission is to inaugurate the kingdom of his Father; he commands his disciples to proclaim the good news that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (*Mt* 10:7) (180). The kingdom, already present and growing in our midst, engages us at every level of our being and reminds us of the principle of discernment which Pope Paul VI applied to true development: it must be directed to "all men and the whole man" (181).

1.3 Fight for Justice and Building better World

An authentic faith – which is never comfortable or completely personal – always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, to leave this earth somehow better than we found it. We love this magnificent planet on which God has put us, and we love the human family which dwells here, with all its tragedies and struggles, its hopes and aspirations, its strengths and weaknesses. The earth is our common home and all of us are brothers and sisters. If indeed "the just ordering of society and of the state is a central responsibility of politics", the Church "cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice". All Christians, their pastors included, are called to show concern for the building

of a better world (183).

1.4 The inclusion of the poor in society and Liberation

Our faith in Christ, who became poor, and was always close to the poor and the outcast, is the basis of our concern for the integral development of society's most neglected members (186).

Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society. This demands that we be docile and attentive to the cry of the poor and to come to their aid (187).

1.5 Solidarity with the Poor

"The Church, guided by the Gospel of mercy and by love for mankind, hears the cry for justice and intends to respond to it with all her might".¹⁵³ In this context we can understand Jesus' command to his disciples: "You yourselves give them something to eat!" (*Mk* 6:37): it means working to eliminate the structural causes of poverty and to promote the integral development of the poor, as well as small daily acts of solidarity in meeting the real needs which we encounter. The word "solidarity" is a little worn and at times poorly understood, but it refers to something more than a few sporadic acts of generosity. It presumes the creation of a new mindset which thinks in terms of community and the priority

of the life of all over the appropriation of goods by a few (188).

1.6 Welfare and Prosperity of the Poor

We are not simply talking about ensuring nourishment or a “dignified sustenance” for all people, but also their “general temporal welfare and prosperity”. This means education, access to health care, and above all employment, for it is through free, creative, participatory and mutually supportive labour that human beings express and enhance the dignity of their lives. A just wage enables them to have adequate access to all the other goods which are destined for our common use (192).

1.7 Being Merciful and moved by the Suffering of Others

We incarnate the duty of hearing the cry of the poor when we are deeply moved by the suffering of others. Let us listen to what God’s word teaches us about mercy, and allow that word to resound in the life of the Church. The Gospel tells us: “Blessed are the merciful, because they shall obtain mercy” (*Mt 5:7*) (193).

1.8 Religious care of the Poor

Since this Exhortation is addressed to members of the Catholic Church, I want to say, with regret, that the worst discrimination which the poor suffer is the lack of spiritual care. The great majority of the poor have a special openness to the faith; they need God

and we must not fail to offer them his friendship, his blessing, his word, the celebration of the sacraments and a journey of growth and maturity in the faith. Our preferential option for the poor must mainly translate into a privileged and preferential religious care (200).

1.9 Concern for the Vulnerable

Jesus, the evangelizer par excellence and the Gospel in person, identifies especially with the little ones (cf. *Mt 25:40*). This reminds us Christians that we are called to care for the vulnerable of the earth (209). The homeless, the addicted, refugees, indigenous peoples, the elderly who are increasingly isolated and abandoned, and many others are the vulnerable (210). Among the vulnerable for whom the Church wishes to care with particular love and concern are unborn children, the most defenceless and innocent among us. Nowadays efforts are made to deny them their human dignity and to do with them whatever one pleases, taking their lives and passing laws preventing anyone from standing in the way of this. Frequently, as a way of ridiculing the Church’s effort to defend their lives, attempts are made to present her position as ideological, obscurantist and conservative. Yet this defence of unborn life is closely linked to the defence of each and every other human right (213).

1.10 Kingdom of God as Common Good and Peace in the Society

Peace in society cannot be understood as pacification or the mere absence of violence resulting from the domination of one part of society over others (218). To establish the common good and peace the Pope suggests four solutions: 1. Time is greater than space (222) 2. Unity prevails over conflict (226) 3. Realities are more important than ideas (231) 4. The whole is greater than the part (234).

1.11 Social dialogue as a contribution to peace

The Church proclaims “the Gospel of peace” (*Eph* 6:15) and she wishes to cooperate with all national and international authorities in safeguarding this immense universal good. By preaching Jesus Christ, who is himself peace (cf. *Eph* 2:14), the new evangelization calls on every baptized person to be a peacemaker and a credible witness to a reconciled life (239).

1.12 Dialogue between faith, reason and science

Dialogue between science and faith also belongs to the work of evangelization at the service of peace (242).

1.13 Ecumenical dialogue

Commitment to ecumenism responds to the prayer of the Lord Jesus that “they may all be one” (*Jn* 17:21). The credibility of the Christian message

would be much greater if Christians could overcome their divisions and the Church could realize “the fullness of catholicity proper to her in those of her children who, though joined to her by baptism, are yet separated from full communion with her”.¹⁹² We must never forget that we are pilgrims journeying alongside one another (244). In this perspective, ecumenism can be seen as a contribution to the unity of the human family (245).

1.14 Interreligious dialogue

An attitude of openness in truth and in love must characterize the dialogue with the followers of non-Christian religions, in spite of various obstacles and difficulties, especially forms of fundamentalism on both sides. Interreligious dialogue is a necessary condition for peace in the world, and so it is a duty for Christians as well as other religious communities. This dialogue is in first place a conversation about human existence or simply, as the bishops of India have put it, a matter of “being open to them, sharing their joys and sorrows”. In this way we learn to accept others and their different ways of living, thinking and speaking. We can then join one another in taking up the duty of serving justice and peace, which should become a basic principle of all our exchanges. A dialogue which seeks social peace and justice is in itself, beyond all merely practical considerations, an ethical

commitment which brings about a new social situation (250).

1.15 Other references are:

- * Kingdom of God as Joy and ever new, a joy which is shared i.e. The Gospel (2 & 3)
- * The theme Rejoice is all over the Scripture (5).
- * Goodness as kingdom (9). Goodness always tends to spread.
- * Eternal Newness as kingdom (11) Christ is the Eternal Gospel.
- * The parish is not an outdated institution. It is a community of communities (28).
- * Church is not a museum piece or something which is the property of a select (95).
- * The entire people of God Proclaims (111).
- * A people for everyone (112).
- * A people of many faces (115).

2 The kingdom theme in *Redemptoris Missio*

Redemptoris Missio is one of the encyclicals of Pope John Paul II published on 7th December 1990. The encyclical has 8 chapters with 92 paragraphs. In this encyclical, the word Kingdom appears 88 times. The second chapter directly deals with the kingdom theme.

2.1 Kingdom of God as Salvation (RM 12)

Salvation which was revealed in Old Testament is being fulfilled in New Testament in the person of Jesus.

2.2 Christ makes the kingdom present (RM 13)

Since the "Good News" is Christ, there is an identity between the message and the messenger, between saying, doing and being. His power, the secret of the effectiveness of his actions, lies in his total identification with the message he announces; he proclaims the "Good News" not just by what he says or does, but by what he is.

2.3 Kingdom comes through faith and conversion (RM 13)

Jesus' encounters with Gentiles make it clear that entry into the kingdom comes through faith and conversion (Mk 1:15), and not merely by reason of ethnic background.

* Kingdom specified as: Love, repentance, belief and doing the will of God (RM 13).

2.4 Characteristics of Kingdom of God

- Words and deed of Jesus is the kingdom of God. He is the kingdom of God (RM 14).

- Kingdom of God is meant for all especially for the marginalized.

- Kingdom of God brings liberation

from spiritual and physical dimensions.

- It is the transformation of relationship through forgiveness, acceptance, service, love and communion (RM15).
- Kingdom of God is the manifestation and the realization of God's plan of salvation in all its fullness.
- Kingdom is totally concerned with bearing witness to and serving. It is a "Church for others" just as Christ is the "man for others." (RM 17)
- Kingdom of God is fostering the dialogue between peoples, cultures and religions and promoting peace, justice, freedom, brotherhood, etc..
- The kingdom cannot be detached either from Christ or from the Church (RM 18)
 - Christ, Church and the Kingdom are same. They cannot be separated.
 - The Church is effectively and concretely at the Service of the Kingdom (RM 20).
 - The Church, then, serves the kingdom by establishing communities and founding new particular churches, and by guiding them to mature faith and charity in openness toward others, in service to individuals and society, and in understanding and esteem for human institutions.
- The Church contributes to mankind's pilgrimage of conversion to God's

plan through her witness and through such activities as dialogue, human promotion, commitment to justice and peace, education and the care of the sick, and aid to the poor and to children (RM 20).

Conclusion

The Kingdom theme is explicitly present in both the documents. Both the documents *Evangelii Gaudium* and *Redemptoris Missio* emphasize that the kingdom of God, Christ and the Church are inseparable. Gospel is about Christ and Christ is the kingdom. They insist on peace, harmony and justice. Importance is given to the poor, vulnerable and neglected. Being merciful and having dialogue between the churches, religions and cultures are stressed. The kingdom of God is not a private property but for all here and now and in the next. The kingdom priorities of the documents are nothing but the liberation of poor socially, economically and spiritually. And the other priority is concern for the vulnerable. All these emphasis and priorities can be achieved through the peace, joy, harmony and justice only when we have the Gospel – the Christ with us and share him with much joy through our words and deeds as Jesus did.

Fr. Stephen Raj SDS

LIFE

By Mother Teresa

LIFE IS AN OPPORTUNITY,
BENEFIT FROM IT

LIFE IS BEAUTY, **ADMIRE IT.**

LIFE IS A DREAM, **REALIZE IT.**

LIFE IS A CHALLENGE, **MEET IT.**

LIFE IS A DUTY, **COMPLETE IT.**

LIFE IS A GAME, **PLAY IT.**

LIFE IS A PROMISE, **FULFILL IT.**

LIFE IS SORROW, **OVERCOME IT.**

LIFE IS A SONG, **SING IT.**

LIFE IS A STRUGGLE, **ACCEPT IT.**

LIFE IS A TRAGEDY, **CONFRONT IT.**

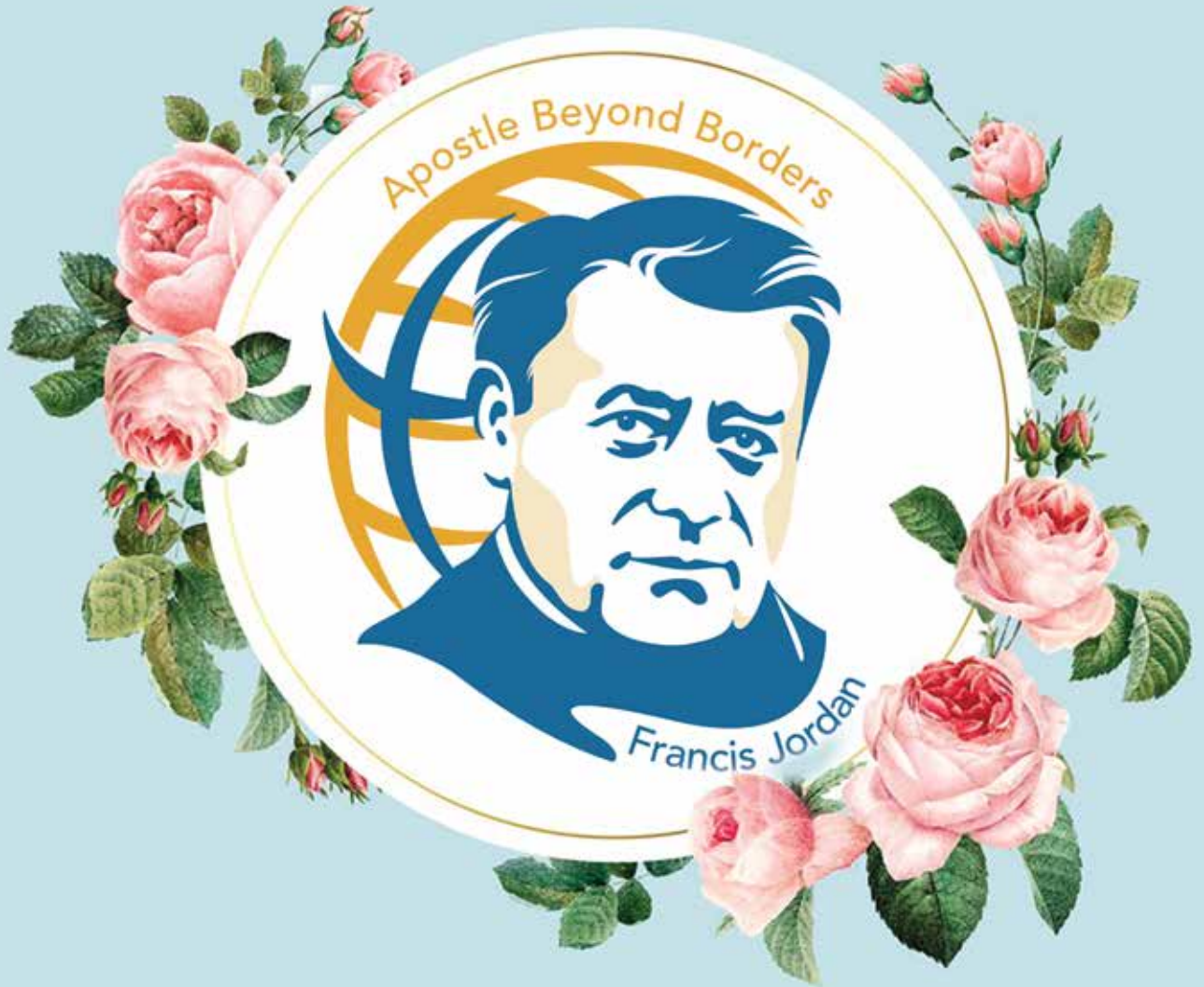
LIFE IS AN ADVENTURE, **DARE IT.**

LIFE IS LUCK, **MAKE IT.**

LIFE IS TOO PRECIOUS,

DO NOT DESTROY IT.

LIFE IS LIFE, **FIGHT FOR IT.**



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