



# Perpetual QUEST

"Like a deer that yearns for running streams so my soul longs for you my God."

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*This issue on :* **Mary - The Mystical Rose.**

## Mary in the Saving Mission

**"Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you."**

(Lk 1:28) said the Angel to Mary. "Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb" (Lk 1:42) is how Elizabeth greeted Mary. We say this prayer to Mary, our Mother everyday. Mary, the one chosen by God to be the Mother of his son, Jesus. The Angel further said, "You have found favour with God and you will conceive in your womb and bear a son and you shall call his name Jesus" Mary only asked how it would happen. The Angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the child to be born will be called the Holy Son of God". Mary did not hesitate nor did she have any doubts. She said to herself "My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour, for He has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden, for behold henceforth all generations will call me Blessed. He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree. He has filled the hungry with good things and the rich he has sent empty away." (LK 1:46-48, 52-53)



The village girl Mary had the faith and the vision. At the Annunciation, Mary conceived the Son of God in the physical reality of his body and blood, thus anticipating within herself what to some degree happens sacramentally in every believer who receives, under the signs of bread and wine, the Lord's body and blood. When she bore in her womb, the Word made flesh, she also became a tabernacle. She cradled the new born Jesus in her arms, the unparalleled model of love, which should inspire us every time we receive Eucharistic communion.

The Holy Eucharist established by Jesus Christ, the bread and wine becoming the body and blood of Jesus Christ is reflected earlier in the conception of Jesus in the womb of Mary. This all through the salvific mission i.e. from Christ's conception in the womb by the power of the Holy Spirit to the extreme sacrifice on the Cross, the resurrection and post-resurrection, the beginning of the Church, Mary had significant roles. Mary was a person who was totally dependent on God. She treasured all memories of Christ in her heart.

*(contd. on pg. 2)*

*Next issue :* The next issue of the Perpetual Quest will focus on 'Integration of the Eucharist with our Daily Life'. Please send in your views, opinions, jokes provoking thoughts & articles on this topic to make your magazine interesting.



## The Eucharist & Suffering - A Perspective

The Institution narrative at every mass is drawn from the four accounts in the New Testament – Mt. 26:26-29, Mk. 14:22-25, Lk. 22:19-20 and 1 Cor. 11:23-25. It goes thus: “This is my body.....this is the cup of my blood.....for the forgiveness of sins; do this in memory of me.”

Jesus desired :-

- 1) that we remember him.
- 2) to make the Eucharist a Memorial.
- 3) to everlastingly reproduce the last supper as a meal for the life of his Church through the priest who “does this”.
- 4) to everlastingly renew his redemptive offering.

By divine ingenuity, memory and actual presence coincide at every Eucharistic celebration. Jesus instituted the Eucharist and Priesthood – that’s what I was content to think.



However, reading and contemplation have of late increased for me, the significance of this redemptive offering of Jesus. Jesus today i.e., post Calvary offers himself to his father as he is today i.e., with his Mystical Body and to each one of us – if we so wish.

“Do this in memory of me” is an invitation to each one of us to “Break my body.....shed my blood.....for the forgiveness of sins”.

And so if I offer all that I am, body and blood (spirit), joys and sufferings, I take part in the redemptive offering of Jesus at every mass. My sufferings have a value – they are not in vain. I can offer my sufferings for the forgiveness of my near and dear ones in particular and humanity in general.

Praise God our Father, Jesus our redeemer and the Holy Spirit for the gift of the Eucharist to his Church.

-- A Parishioner

### *Mary in the Saving Mission (contd. from pg 1)*

At the wedding at Cana, Mary said, “Do whatever he tells you” (Jn 2:5). She had absolute faith in God and her son, Jesus. Mary seems to tell us to trust the words of her son. If he was able to turn water into wine, he could change the bread and wine into his body and blood. She was foretold about her son’s crucifixion by Simeon in the temple. She was there at the foot of the Cross along with other women and the disciples. Finally, Jesus gave her to the beloved disciple and said, “Behold you Mother” and to her “Behold your son”. Thus she became the Mother of the Church and our Mother. She was present in all the post-resurrection events and the origin of the Church. She has thus become an inseparable part of the Eucharistic Church.

Commemoration of Mary has always been a part of the Eucharistic celebration of the Church. Mary has been appearing and telling people to pray and many wonders have been taking place all over the world at different places of pilgrimages. She continues to be a part of the

living Church, which her son Jesus Christ has established on Earth.

The Rosary of Our Lady which we recite every day is a repeated source of inspiration. We pray in the litany calling her the Mother of God, Virgin of Virgins, Mother of Grace, Mother of the Church, Mother most chaste, Mother most admirable and of good counsel etc. She is the most prudent, renowned, powerful, merciful and faithful. She is the health of the sick, the refuge of sinners, the comforter of the afflicted, and the help of Christians. She is the Queen of all Saints and the Queen of Peace. We are exhorted to pray fervently to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, to ask for the grace to say the Rosary as a community, as family prayer daily and in personal prayer always.

May she lead us to Jesus as we celebrate her feast in our Parish, this year and through the years to come.

-- George Kurien



## *SCC - Is its Purpose Clear ?*

In our parish, as in many others in the Archdiocese of Bombay, the SCCs have been functioning for 10, 15 and more years. In some of them the faithful have taken up the work with much enthusiasm and commitment, and are making a success of them reminding one of the beginnings of the Church when the TWELVE worked wonders, at least by the standards that could have been prevalent 2000 years ago. But there seem to be others, even in our parish, who are hazy about their purpose, their achievements, their membership and even their need. To some extent this haziness is to be expected because many of the activities that the Church itself is undertaking today were not attempted in the ages gone by. Besides, a vast majority of "the faithful" were ignorant of many aspects of the Church which are now becoming known to many with the spread of education, with the Laity realizing its responsibility to their calling as followers of Christ and its active participation in Church activities, the involvement of many in the Church in deep, scholarly study of the Bible, Theology, Documents of Vatican II, etc.

The SCCs are meant to make Christianity come alive in every house, family, community, neighbourhood, village. This is becoming more and more difficult in today's world with the increase in population, people having to be much more busy than in the past travel and transport becoming rather exacting problems, and many having to work long hours each day to make ends meet. Yet the work of Christ has to proceed, the world in its millions has to be evangelized. For this the Laity has to know its duties

and responsibilities, in its work in the neighbourhood, in the market place, in its place of work, and its places of relaxation and social centers. The laity has to prepare itself much more in our country than in many others. The people in our country are not exactly religionless or godless, they are not satisfied with superficial Christianity.

According to some sources, the Church has had the privilege of having been established in India in the year 52 AD by one of the Apostles of Christ, St. Thomas, and very soon thereafter also by St. Bartholomew. But after 2000 years Christians in India are no more than 2.3% of the total population of India. There are countries where 50% of the people have embraced Christianity in about a century. What are the causes for this state of affairs? Is it not time for the members of the Church in India to analyse, to get to the bottom of this, to know what needs to be done, to rectify this. Perhaps one of the causes is our failure to live, to practice, to show every moment of the day, at every place that we are Christians, that we practice what we preach, propagate, believe in, and claim to be. The Church in India has much work to do. They should be used to make everyone conscious, earnestly aware, of what the problems of the Church are in each neighbourhood. They try to find a solution to them and also make the parish clergy aware of what has to be done to put many things right, first in the community itself. Are we fighting shy to make our people conscious of their mission?

-- Sarto Esteves



## *The Heart of the Matter*

The word of God says, in Deutronomy 26:1 ff.. “And it shall be.....when you come into the land which the Lord your God is giving you....as an inheritance.....and you possess it and dwell in it....v2 that you shall take some of the first of all the produce of the ground which you shall bring from your land....that the Lord your God is giving you.....and put it in a basket.....v3 and you shall go to the one who is priest in those days and say to him.....I declare today to the Lord your God...that I have come to the country....which the Lord swore to our Fathers to give us.....v4 then the priest shall take the basket out of your hand.....and set it down before the altar of the Lord your God”. Then the man recalls all the wonders the Lord has worked to deliver the people of God out of their bondage – till in v15 he says “Look down from your holy habitation from heaven and bless your people Israel.....and the land which you have given us.....just as you swore to our Fathers.....a land flowing with milk and honey....”

If you pick up the nuances of this passage, you will sense the reverential worship involved, the total dependence and deep sense of gratitude and the fulfillment of the Covenant – “You shall be my people and I will be your God”. Not for a moment are they to forget their utter dependence on Yahweh the deliverer, the One who blessed them.

Is God really interested in how much we give? Money is a very important aspect of our life. Our attitude money is connected

to our heart and to our relationship with God.

Why the detailed procedure given above? “and it shall be put in a basket. ....I declare today....” Because it has to be incorporated into worship. Then the man has to testify his gratitude. v11 says “Worship and rejoice before the Lord your God.” Again, why could not someone come over to the house and collect it? The significance is your worship. You come to the feet of your God. It has to do with your relationship with God. Only then does God want it. If there is no heart in the giving, God does not want such a gift. The Psalmist says (Ps 24:1) “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof”. Again, “The cattle on a thousand hills are mine, if I were hungry, would I not tell you.” Ps 50:10, 12. Where your treasure is your heart is. It is heart based. What place does God have in your life. In 1 Cor. 16:2, Paul tells something to the Corinthians, “ On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper”. Giving is always in proportion to what you have, what you possess. Resurrection is the first day of the week. Previously the Sabbath was the 7<sup>th</sup> day, but after the Resurrection it is observed on the 1<sup>st</sup> day. Hence we worship together, a corporate worship on the 1<sup>st</sup> day.

“That there may be food in my House” Mal 1:16, Because God gives you 100% first, he expects 10% from you in return. God has everything, but he wants us to give first with regularity because only then can he continue this blessings on our labour. He doesn’t need our tips!

*(Contd on pg. 5)*



*The Heart of the Matter* (Contd from pg. 4)

Prov 3:9 "Honour the Lord with your possession and with the first fruits of all your increase v10 So your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow with new wine.' The first and best, not just quantity but quality, because your heart is set on the first and best. The first a constant reminder of where your heart should be in your relationship with God.

2 Cor. 9:6 "He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart (Here again emphasis on the heart) not grudgingly or of necessity (attitude) for God loves a cheerful giver". We increase our faith by giving more and likewise increase both in our love and faith in the process. Prov. 11:24 "There is one who scatters yet increase more".

2 Cor. 9:8 "And God is able to make all grace abound towards you, that you always have all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work." You see God's blessing does not stop at your door. He blesses you that you may be a blessing to others. God is a debtor to none, you can never outdo God in generosity; just try it!

Mk 12:41 "Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much v42 then one poor widow came and threw in two mites. (copper coins) So he called His disciples to Him and said to them." Assuredly I say to you that this poor widow put in more than all those who had given to the treasury for they put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had, her whole livelihood."

An act of faith, immortalized by Christ, that won her a place in the Scriptures. Did God really want Abraham's son Isaac? He only wanted Abraham's undivided heart. As soon as Abraham raised his hand, mentally surrendering his claim to Isaac, and in a sense to future generations as promised, God provided the sacrifice. Jesus was to follow the same pattern later when He asked Peter "do you love me more than these?"

The things in this world are only a shadow of what God has prepared for us. They are given merely to support life, and to draw us closer to Him. God is more interested in giving us much, rather than taking from us. Exercise your faith and allow God to pour his blessing into your lap.

Read Deut. 16:16 "they shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed."

Shalom

-- Ena Carvalho

*Ed. Comment – "Read the next article so you can realize how to make your worship significant."*

*Make me, O Lord,  
nourishment for the blazing  
flame ....*

*Make me, O God,  
food for the sacred fire...*

Amen.

-- Khalil Gibran  
*At the door of the temple.*



## FAQ's on the Community Fund

The community fund has been implemented in our parish. Some of the **frequently asked questions (FAQ's)** have been highlighted below as a ready reckoner:

1. **Who should contribute?**

Every earning parishioner, even the smallest wage earner, is to contribute towards the community fund.

2. **How much should one contribute?**

The Synod document recommends an amount equivalent to 1% of the gross income. The Bible lays down 10% (tithe) and several Christian bodies - including some of our charismatic communities - are following this practice of tithing; but the Synod settled on a 1% contribution. (Of course, those who would like to be more generous are most welcome!).

3. **Is it compulsory to contribute?**

As per the Synod document the contribution is not compulsory but voluntary. No person will be forced; rather it is a 'self-obligation' flowing from a person's realization of belonging to a Community. It is expected that every parishioner contributes conscientiously

4. **How will the funds be utilized?**

The fund utilization schedule has been highlighted in previous issues of the '**Quest**'. A brief recap is presented below:

- a) 50% for medical and education of the needy in the parish
- b) 15% for Zonal / Sector activities i.e. Parents', Teachers', Children's, Senior Citizens' Day celebrations. Zonal Anniversary Mass, etc.
- c) 20% for Church maintenance and Parish related activities, e.g. sending someone for training in catechetics, liturgy, etc.
- d) 15 % for Parish Reserve Fund — for emergencies.

5. **Will the fund be audited?**

The parish will maintain a separate bank account for the funds collected. The accounts will be audited every fiscal year. The same will be presented to the parishioners & highlighted in the '**Quest**'.

6. **Why should a name be furnished? Can the contribution be anonymous?**

The contributor's name has to be mentioned. It will facilitate in maintaining proper record at the parish office of the families SCC-wise. For example, if a SCC has 50 families and only 35 have contributed, the others could be requested / reminded to give in their contribution. Hence, an anonymous amount would not be recorded.

7. **Should retired persons contribute?**

Yes, the retired are also earning an income by way of pension, interest on investments, etc. Hence, they have to contribute to this fund.

8. **What will be the accounting year for the fund?**

The fund will be accounted every financial year from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March of the following year. The fund has been implemented in our parish from May 2005. These accounts will be prepared & finalized as on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006.

9. **Will the collections at Sunday masses continue?**

The community fund is not a replacement for the collections at masses. The mass collection is a "free love offering" and one can generously contribute at the masses. One may or may not give. There is no specified amount for this "free love offering". The contributions to the other archdiocesan collections are also free i.e. Collections for Vianney Sunday, Mission Sunday, Lenten Alms, Hunger and Disease Campaign. On these occasions, one gives out of one's generosity.

(Contd on pg 7)