

# **WHY TURN TO JESUS!**

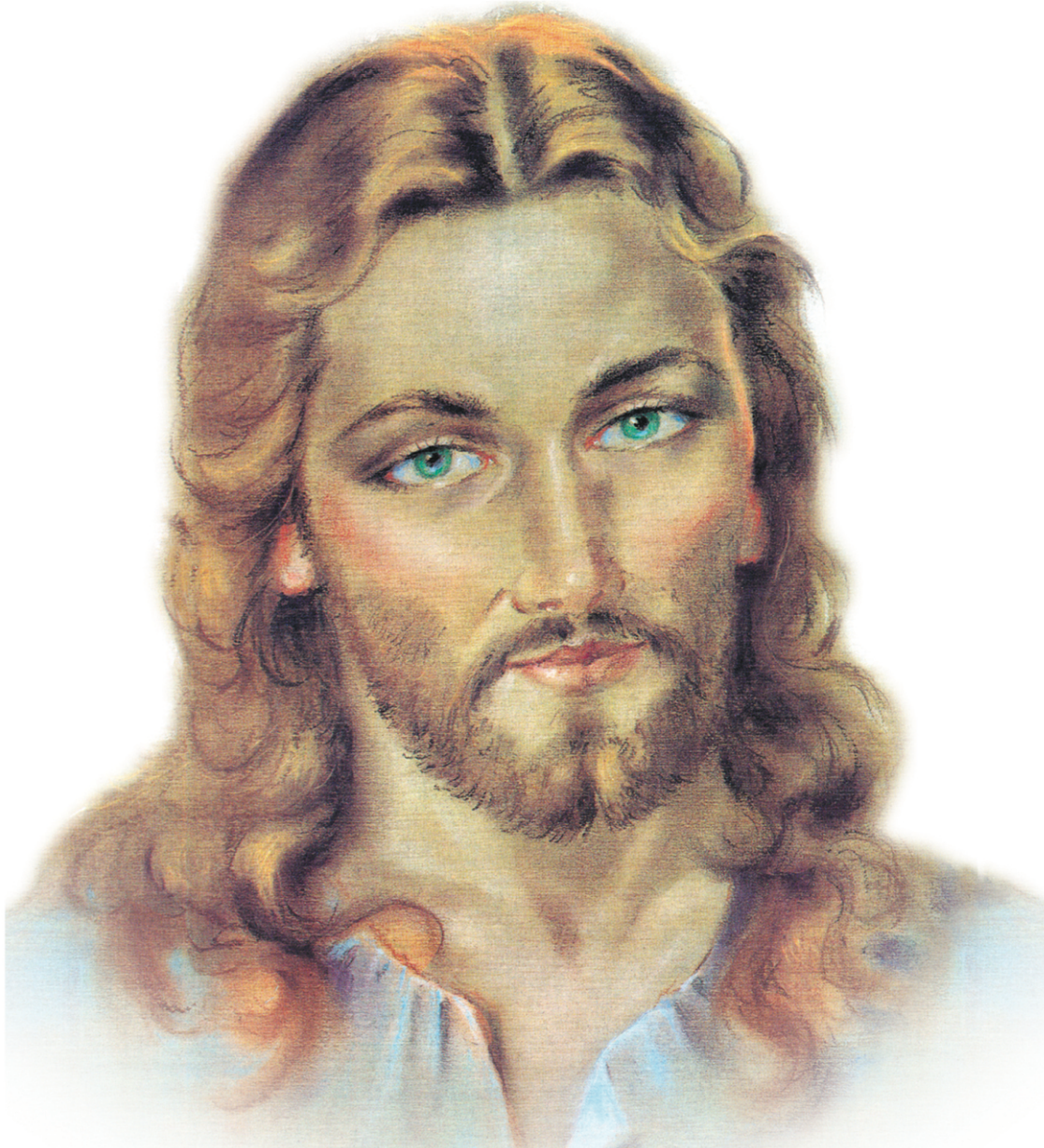


**AN INVITATION TO INNER-HEALING!**

**Fr. Antony Parankimalil VC**



***Why turn to Jesus! Because He is the only one who says, “I will not reject anyone who comes to me.” (John 6:37) “...and I will be with you always...” (Matt. 28:20). In Him alone, we have all the answers, we read, “No one can say, what is this or why is that? - for at the appointed time all such questions will be answered” (Sirach 39:17). All those who turn to Him will get answers for their different questions. Would you kindly accept His invitation to receive inner healing and turn souls to Jesus for His greater glory.***



***Why did I turn to my Jesus! Because I acknowledge Him as my 'All in All': The protector, provider and the Master of my Priestly vocation, the guide, counsellor and teacher of my evangelization to the people of God. "He must increase, but I must decrease." (John 3:30). When I turned to my Jesus, He gave me all the answers to all my questions. My Jesus, I humbly pray that everyone who read this book may know you, love you, serve you as your true disciple and be with you eternally.***

# WHY TURN TO JESUS!\*

**An Invitation to Inner-healing!**

*Jesus came to pay a debt He did not owe  
Because we owe a debt we cannot pay*

**BY:  
FR. ANTONY PARANKIMALIL VC**



*\*NB: This book is not a question but an answer, we pray and hope that if you read to the end, you will get the answer ...*

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*I sincerely feel indebted in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to acknowledge the different sources which provided me with credible ideas and information. These are journals, books, internet and other sources. Let anything or anyone who has contributed to this book go unnoticed in the sight of God for the salvation of souls and for the greater glory of God, "I am the Lord, that is my name; my glory I give to no other nor my praise to idols" (Is.42:8) May God bless and reward you (Ruth 2:12 | Wis. 7:7).*

# DEDICATION

TO

## OUR LADY QUEEN OF AFRICA

WHO BROUGHT ME TO THE LAND OF AFRICA

### TO MY DEAR PARENTS

*MR. P.T. DEVASSY PARANKIMALIL*

*MRS. THRESIAKUTTY DEVASSY PARANKIMALIL*

The best parents God gave me to put His love in me, as they celebrated 60th Anniversary of their marriage on 28th December, 2014

### TO THE PEOPLE OF KENYA

FOR ACCEPTING VINCENTIAN MINISTRY FROM THEIR HEARTS

.....

I humbly pray, "Almighty God, Father of all mankind touch the hearts of everyone who takes this book, and let everyone who reads this book immediately decide to turn completely to Jesus as the first and last recourse in their life. Let them feel unlimited love for your Son Jesus and surrender their lives totally at His feet. Holy Spirit move inside the hearts of all those who go through this book. Mother Mary please stand beside the readers of this book. I make this prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord." Amen.

.....

# FOREWORD

## *Why Turn to Jesus! Turn to Him straight away!*

*“I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate”* (Rom 7.15). It is not only the cry of St.Paul, it is the cry of every human being. Sometimes we struggle to understand our own actions and deeds. I do not want to get angry with anyone but I get angry with everyone I meet; I want to be a man of prayer but when I stand in prayer I become the victim of lots of distractions and dissipated thoughts; I have an ardent longing to love everyone including my enemies but when I meet them I am filled with hatred and rage; I hate to be a drunkard and spoil my body which is the temple of the Holy Spirit but when I find alcohol I just become its slave; I am not willing to live under the spirit of fear and anxiety but I am living with a lot of fear and anxiety; I hate to tell lies but when I open my mouth I tell many lies; I do not want to defile my body with sexual sins but I am just living according to the passions and feelings of my flesh; I do not want to judge others but I am very fast at judging other people and thinking that I am the only righteous one. Yes *“For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate”*. St.Paul continues, *‘wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death’?* (Rom 7.24). The crystal clear answer of St.Paul is *‘Turn to Jesus’* (Rom 7.25).

*‘Why Turn to Jesus! An Invitation to Inner healing’* is a book urging every reader to turn to Jesus to be healed from the agonizing wounds of our inner self and be made guiltless by His holy wounds. *‘Why Turn to Jesus!’* is a genuine attempt of spiritual and practical approach to conquer our wounded selves through focusing on Jesus Christ. *Turn to Jesus* is the outcome of the real love and concern of the author towards the people whom he serves. The content of this book is the sum total of pastoral and spiritual experiences of the author in his day to day encounter with people who have been suffering from the heavy burden of inner wounds and bitter memories of their past. Fr.Antony is a renowned preacher in various countries of Africa, USA, Asia and Europe. I would like to appreciate Fr.Antony for his great work of *‘Why Turn to Jesus!’* because he actualizes it in his busy schedule in his genuine love and commitment to God and His people. This book invites us to make *a turn to Jesus* to be healed from all our past excruciating memories and inner wounds of our lives. After a great winning circulation of his first book



***“You are not rejected”***, Fr. Antony is presenting another amazing book ***“Why turn to Jesus!”*** The title of the book ***“Why turn to Jesus! An invitation to innerhealing”*** arouses many questions in a readers’ mind and it will force one to turn from his problems and wounds and ***turn to Jesus***, who is the answer to your life’s questions. When you go through **this book it will arouse an awareness about your inner self and help you to surrender at the feet of Jesus Christ, the only Savior of the World who knows you in and out.**

The author has encountered people who have been attempting many things in their lives to get out of their inner wounds. They have been involved in gambling, smoking, taking drugs, drinking, sex etc., in order to get out from their depression and stress. Such bad habits have led them to become prisoners of depression, disappointment and guilt. In fact, if you are a wounded human being no consoling words can heal your inner self, no doctors can heal your inner wounds, no momentary pleasures of this world can heal your inner wounds of rejection, loneliness, lust, depression, fear, anxiety, doubts, inferiority complex, superiority complex, sorrows etc. *There is someone who has been waiting for you, his name is **Jesus the wounded healer who heals all your wounds and carries all your burdens and invites you to turn to Him and gaze at His holy wounds.*** In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus invites us *“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest”* (Matthew 11.28). I assure you that as you read this book seriously ***you will never be the same again.***

### ***Why Turn to Jesus?***

Because according to the Bible we have thousands of reasons ***to turn to Him.*** Such as;

*Because Jesus carried our grief and sorrows (Is 53.3)*

*Jesus sanctifies your entire body, Spirit and soul. (1 Thes 5.23)*

*He heals the brokenhearted, and binds up our wounds. (Ps 147.3)*

*Cast all your anxieties upon him for he cares for you (1Peter 5.7)*

*Jesus makes free the oppressed (Lk 4.18)*

*If you confess your faults, you will be healed (James 5.16)*

*Jesus died for our sins (Rom 5.8)*

*He heals all those who are oppressed by the devil (Acts 10.38)*

*He restores my soul (Ps 23.3)*

*With prayerful wishes,*

***Rev. Fr. Biju Valliparambil VC***

***REGIONAL SUPERIOR,***

***Vincentian Fathers, Sacred Heart Region - East Africa.***

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## WORD OF APPRECIATION

There are many spiritual, physical and social challenges facing human beings in the World today. This has been brought about by complex developmental stages of human beings from conception to adulthood. In everyday life we are faced with trials, sufferings, negative attitude which cause problems of living with oneself and others. These problems include, anger, discouragement, fear, low esteem, lust, unforgiveness etc. All these aspects create inner wounds. We all suffer from inner wounds which affect us spiritually and physically. Unless we *turn to Jesus* who is our Saviour and healer of mankind we cannot get any spiritual solution to our problems. *Why turn to Jesus! 'An invitation to inner healing'* elaborates different kinds of inner wounds which human beings carry.

The content in this book will help you to understand yourself better and give you an opportunity to *turn to Jesus* who is the healer of all our inner wounds because He is full of love and compassion. In this book Rev. Fr. Antony VC reminds us that **Jesus is the only Saviour**. He uses personal experiences and references from scriptures to explain how inner wounds can affect human beings, and solutions are only found in scriptures which help us to *turn to Jesus* who is our Saviour.

As you read this book you will realize that it is our sinful nature that brings about wounds in a person. Some of these wounds are a health hazards and affect human personality in a negative way. That is why we are encouraged to *turn to Jesus* the Son of God, who has power to heal our inner wounds. This book teaches us to: forgive, have self esteem, self awareness, cope with emotions, give a sense of living with God, oneself and with others. It also helps us to love and to pray for our enemies, in order to get healed of our wounds.

*Sr. Dr. Angelica FSGS.*

*Asst. Director, Department of Curriculum Development, Kenya*

# INTRODUCTION

*Why Turn to Jesus, an Invitation to Inner healing* is a humble attempt to turn the broken hurtled to the healing power of Jesus. This book begins with the chapter, *'The Holy Spirit turns us to Jesus'*, to show that "...no one can say 'Jesus is Lord', except through the Holy Spirit (1Cor.12:3). It is the Holy Spirit who reveals Jesus to us. Therefore, no one can turn to Jesus without the Holy Spirit. We learn first, the nature, power and influence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. He will show us how to receive Inner-healing as we turn to Jesus, the wounded healer. As we go through the examples of Wounding and Healing derived from the Scriptural examples we are taught to understand that we are not the only ones who go through these struggles, as we read, "*Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering*" (1 Pt. 5:9). These examples are given quoting different stages of our lives, to learn from those who have failed completely, those who got defeated but did not give up, those who fell but later rose up, those who started a new life through the power of God.



*It is only through the help of the Holy Spirit that we can identify inner wounds and it is only by turning towards Jesus, the wounded healer that we can receive total healing of our body, mind and soul.*

*"These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come"* (1Cor.10:11). It is also very important to identify our inner-wounds in order to receive proper healing from the Lord. We know that those with headache cannot be healed if they take medicine for stomach pain. Most of the time people treat the symptom and not the root cause. It is only through the help of the Holy Spirit that we can identify those wounds and it is only by **turning towards Jesus**, the wounded healer that we can receive healing. The living examples given in the *special frames within the text* reveal the symptoms and the roots. I have heard many times people asking, "Why has God punished me? Why has Jesus forgotten me? Why are people rejecting me?" We should know that God never punishes anyone; if He wants to punish us why did he carry our cross (cf. Is.53,4-5) and die for our sins? (cf. 2Cor.5:21). It is not God, but it is our sin that is punishing us, "*your iniquities have turned*

*these away, and your sins have deprived you of good” (Jer.5:25). All those who **turn to Jesus**, receive a new life (cf. Is.43:18-19). It is also important to know the dangers of inner-wounds, like, Anger, Low Self-Esteem, Discouragement, Grief and Peer pressure. Though they look harmless; these wounds can paralyse our lives. We have become unapproachable, unlovable and unacceptable before many. Many fail in their battle because they do not know the fight is not against human beings but against the Elemental spirits (cf. Eph.6:10-17). We cannot defeat the Elemental spirits with physical or worldly strategies; we need, Jesus, God became man, to help us out of these evil spirits. *“Indeed, we live as human beings, but we do not wage war according to human standards; for the weapons of our warfare are not merely human, but they have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy every argument and every proud obstacle raised against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to obey Christ”* (2Cor.10:3-5). Behind Witchcraft, Alcoholism, Smoking, Drug Abuse in the land of Africa there are evil spirits working, that is why people cannot easily escape. *“Their deeds do not permit them to return to their God. For the spirit of whoredom is within them, and they do not know the Lord”* (Hos.5:4). That is why the same people who hate these habits are the same ones addicted to these habits. They try different methods to get out of it, including taking medicine, seeking professional counselling, staying in the rehabilitation centres, visiting witch doctors etc. But the outcome is worse, *“those who choose another god multiply their sorrows”* (Ps.16:4). This book is a humble attempt to reveal to the people of God, especially in the land of Africa, that the only way to perfect healing is to **Turn to JESUS, Jesus and Jesus Alone**, because he is the **Only Saviour**.*

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### **Special Note From The Author:**

This book has intentionally used stories and testimonies through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (adapted from personal experiences and other sources) with an aim of illustrating real life experiences of inner healing and the practical outcome of turning to Jesus! Though they are not necessarily connected to the context where they occur, I pray and hope that each story will apply in a unique way to someone who read this book. The illustrations depicted in the special columns are independent to the text. You can therefore choose to either read it separately or along with the text. Finally, I kindly request you to focus on the message in this book and overlook the mistakes but please help us to improve it for the next edition. Be blessed and protected as you read on.

# CHAPTER ONE

---

## THE HOLY SPIRIT TURNS US TO JESUS

*The Holy Spirit is the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is adored and glorified with the Father and the Son.*



**The forerunner of Jesus, John the Baptist who made people to TURN TO JESUS, (cf. Lk.3, 1-21) received the Holy Spirit while in the womb of his mother. The Holy Spirit gives strength to the weak, courage to the fearful, grace to the prayerful, wisdom to the seekers, knowledge to the teachers and anointing to all the believers. It is he who turns us to Jesus, and “... no one can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:3).**

## WHY TURN TO JESUS!

The Holy Spirit spoke through the prophets. If we clearly listen to the voice of the Prophets their inspirations came through the Holy Spirit. Actually it was the Holy Spirit who led Israel through, “she guided them along a marvelous way, and became a shelter to them by day, and a starry flame through the night. She brought them over the Red Sea, and led them through deep waters (Wis. 10:17-18).

To all those who ask of the Father, He pours out His Spirit without measure. *“I perceived that I would not possess wisdom unless God gave it to me and it was a mark of insight to know whose gift she was so I appealed to the Lord and implored him, and with my whole heart I said,”* (Wis.8:21) *“Who has learned your counsel, unless you have given wisdom and sent your Holy Spirit from on high?”* (Wis.9:17). There are people who just want money and wealth, but they don’t know that Holy Spirit is the greatest wealth one can ever have in their life. *“If riches are a desirable possession in life, what is richer than wisdom, the active cause of all things?”* (Wis.8:5).

- Do you need to understand what is taught in the class?
- Do you need to discern what is right and wrong?
- Do you want to be a leader?
- Do you want to get out of debts?
- Do you want to be healed?
- Do you want to be beautiful?
- Do you want to regain your eyesight?

***There is only one answer, receive the Holy Spirit!***

*“Therefore I prayed, and understanding was given to me; I called on God, and the Spirit of wisdom came to me. I preferred her to scepters and thrones, and I accounted wealth as nothing in comparison with her. Neither did I liken to her any priceless gem, because all gold is but a little sand in her sight, and silver will be accounted as clay before her. I loved her more than health and beauty, and I chose to have her rather than light, because her radiance never ceases. All good things came to me along with her, and in her hands uncounted wealth”* (Wis.7:7-11). Today people try so many different things to find peace and joy: some try to find joy in eating, and as they eat more and more they become more and more, hungry, angry and empty. There are people who try immoral sex but the end result is hatred and depression. As we read the story of Amnon and Tamar, lust turned to hatred. (2 Samuel 16:13-14). Some try drinking and they became addicted and enslaved. Some try friends and they pull them down to the pit. *“Your*

*trusted friends have seduced you and have overcome you; Now that your feet are stuck in the mud, they desert you”* (Jeremiah 38:22). Some try sports and entertainments and they feel inadequate, disqualified and even rejected. They always want to win but they cannot reach anywhere. It is only through the Holy Spirit we receive the self actualization in our lives.

## WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Holy Trinity. The Holy Spirit is not just a wind, or fire, or dove or just a form of power, but a person who speaks, thinks and acts. The Acts of the Apostles is, actually, the Acts of the Holy Spirit as manifested in the ministry of the apostles of Jesus Christ. He is not mute but can speak, guide and lead his people. It is the Holy Spirit who we find at the beginning of Creation who brought forth order and life (Genesis 1:2). The Holy Spirit gives meaning and purpose to the uneducated, the orphans, the poor, the lonely, the afflicted, and the rejected. People do not understand the importance of the Holy Spirit as they still prefer material things to the Holy Spirit. Nothing in this world can give anyone inner peace and joy other than the Holy Spirit whom the Father is willing to give to us if we ask Him (Luke 11:13). The more involved in the affairs of the world the more they get frustrated, as *“the whole world is under the power of the evil one”* (1 John 5:19).



### A MAN AND HIS CHILD

*This man did not believe in the Church, saying, “I need to work hard to make my own living; church is for lazy people. He even used to abuse those who went to church and those who prayed. One day his four-year-old boy started crying putting his finger in the ear as if something had gone inside. He took the boy to hospital but the doctors could not find anything. Yet the child would cry throughout, even during the night. The wife told him, “You don’t believe in God and you believe in the power of the people and the doctors. Now you see, even the doctors have failed and our child is suffering! Please, can you turn to Jesus for healing?” So, they came for counselling to know what they needed to do to stop the son from crying so much. He could not even sleep at night. Then we got this scripture, **“No one who conceals transgressions will prosper, but one who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy”** (Proverbs 28:13). We told him to attend a retreat and to make a sincere confession, which he did. He even decided to change his way of life. At*



## WHY TURN TO JESUS!

that very moment the son who was back home stopped crying as a black thing fell out of his ear. It was a small seed that had entered his ear while he was playing (Psalms 32:3-5). This teaches us that the confession of a parent can heal his children and family, since the confession of our sins has unlimited power that allows the Holy Spirit to enter and give a pure and clean heart. The Holy Spirit can reveal the hidden reasons of our sufferings and give us a new life.



## THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE SOURCE OF NEW LIFE

*'For there is hope for a tree, if it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and that its shoots will not cease. Though its root grows old in the earth, and its stump dies in the ground, yet at the scent of water it will bud and put forth branches like a young plant.*

- Job 14:7-9

Holy Spirit gives hope to the hopeless as the above scripture says. Even if your life is cut off, when you turn to the Holy Spirit, who is the source of life giving water, you will receive a new life. The way to receive peace is to receive the Holy Spirit, who is the permanent helper promised by the Father and the Son. He is the love that descended from the Father and the Son. In one of our inner healing retreats, on the last day I noticed that the people were still tired and frustrated even after being to the Sacrament of Confession and even counselling. I was confused about what to tell them. Then I turned to the Holy Scriptures and found this passage which says, "the hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all round them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, 'Mortal, can these bones live?' I answered, 'O Lord God, you know.' Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord' (Ezekiel 37:1-6). I felt this is the exact situation that the people seated there in the retreat were in. They needed a new breath to receive a new life. I found this breath to be the Holy Spirit who brought life into the world, when the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters (Genesis 1:2).

**It is the Holy Spirit who gives new life, new meaning, and new purpose into broken and disorderly lives (John 7:37 & John 6:63).**

*Then he said to me, 'Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel.' They say, "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely." Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act, says the Lord' (Ezekiel 37:11-14).*

The retreatants were just as dry and as hopeless as those described here. So the LORD promised to send His Holy Spirit to lift them up. It is the Holy Spirit that gives faith, hope and love (cf. Romans 5:5). People think they suffer for lack of a job, money, or a partner, but they don't know that the biggest suffering is absence of the Holy Spirit.

### **DO YOU NEED ANOTHER JOB OR THE HOLY SPIRIT?**

One girl came to me saying she was jobless for so many years and was suffering because of that. She wanted special prayers to overcome this situation. We told her to read daily, Isaiah 45:2-3 together with the Memorare nine times a day for one month. As soon as she started this prayer she got a good job and she came and reported back saying how happy she was with this job. Three weeks later, she came back and said, "Father don't forget me I need more and special prayers." I told her, "Now let me pray for those who are jobless, at least now you are fine with a job." "No father actually now, life is more difficult than before. Since I got that job, my colleagues oppress me and I have a lot of stress. Imagine, I could sleep well when I had no job, but now, I am sleepless because of the issues at the work place. Please help me to get any other job apart from this one. I may go mad if I continue in this place." I prayed and got this word for her, ***"so I say to you, Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask***

## WHY TURN TO JESUS!

*him*” (Luke 11:9-13). I explained to her that what she needed was the Holy Spirit and not another job. Because, the scripture says, ***“If riches are a desirable possession in life, what is richer than wisdom, the active cause of all things?”*** (Wis.8:5).

Having a job without the Holy Spirit is full of stress and frustration. Wisdom, Knowledge, Understanding, Fear of God (purposefully avoiding evil), Fortitude, Piety, Counsel are the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. People cannot understand one another if the Holy Spirit is absent. It is only the Holy Spirit who knows everything because *“... the Spirit of the Lord has filled the world, and that which holds all things together knows what is said.”* (Wisdom 1:7). We explained to her the difference between a human father and the Heavenly Father. When you ask your earthly father for bread he will give bread; if you ask for money he will give money, but our heavenly Father is different. When you ask Abba Father, for food, he will give you the Holy Spirit. If you ask for a job he will again recommend you to receive the Holy Spirit. If you are desperate to get a life partner he will inspire you to accept the Holy Spirit as your permanent helper and partner. It is written, *“how much the Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him”* (Luke 11:13). According to this Scripture, Abba Father, in His wisdom, provides for His children not just the bread but the source of bread, not just the drinking water, but the living water to those who ask Him. That means, for God our Father when the child is asking for bread, cannot just the bread but instead He gives the living bread (cf. John 6:48) and to those who ask for water, He cannot just give the water but the Holy Spirit, who is the only permanent solution.

The only gift that we need is Holy Spirit because *“when the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf”* (John 15:26). Once we have received the Holy Spirit we enjoy the fruits of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). There is no law that is against the fruits of the Holy Spirit. We advised this girl to pray daily to receive the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon her, upon her company, office, office staff and family members. Where the Spirit of God is, there is freedom. She agreed to this. Later on she brought most of her co-workers to the retreats and there was a great transformation in the company. It became a daily practice to begin their day with prayer to the Holy Spirit who lived and moved among them (cf. Acts 17:28).



### AN AUSTRALIAN STORY

There was a couple who had lived in Australia for more than sixteen years. Both of them were very hard-working and had good jobs, but they were not able to buy a house for themselves. They kept on renting one house after another.

Whenever they got some money either the father or mother or children would get sick, or have an accident, and therefore they were not able to save anything to buy a house. While praying for them we got this scripture, **“If you refrain from trampling the Sabbath, from pursuing your own interests on my holy day; if you call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, serving your own interests, or pursuing your own affairs; then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of your ancestor Jacob, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken”** (Isaiah 58,13-14). When we asked, we came to know they used to miss even Sunday Mass to work on weekends so that they could earn more. This had made them to lack sacramental protection and prosperity. They were trying to buy and build for themselves without Sacramental Protection despite the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaching that to miss Sunday Mass is a mortal sin. **“Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord guards the city, the guard keeps watch in vain. It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives sleep to his beloved** (Psalms 127:1-2). Those who open their lives to the Holy Spirit remove their hidden blocks.



### KING SAUL AND KING DAVID

These were the most influential kings in the history of Israel. Both of them were anointed by the Holy Spirit to become kings in Israel. They both committed grave sins of polygamy, idolatry, adultery and murder. Saul is known to have continued in sin without repentance, until the Holy Spirit left him. *“Now, the spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, ...”* (1 Samuel 16:14). Living in the absence of the Holy Spirit is the same as dangerously inviting the roaring lion (1 Peter 5: 8). King David was different because when he realized his sin and knew of the fall of Saul, he prayed to God, saying, *“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your Holy Spirit from me”* (Psalms 51:10-11). I believe King David prayed, O

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Lord, as I have committed many sins. So, I beg you that as a punishment you should remove from me this kingship with its power and authority but, please don't take away your Holy Spirit who made me what I am. This shows that he valued the presence of the Holy Spirit more than the kingship. King Solomon, the son of David learnt from his father and prayed,

*I preferred her to scepters and thrones, and I accounted wealth as nothing in comparison with her. Neither did I liken to her any priceless gem, because all gold is but a little sand in her sight, and silver will be accounted as clay before her. All good things came to me along with her, and in her hands uncounted wealth - Wis.7:7-11*

King David acknowledged that his kingship came along with the anointing of the Holy Spirit. So, he was regarded as the king who was unto the heart of the Lord because of his great reverence to the Holy Spirit. It is this Spirit who inspired him to compose the psalms, which are prayers for all seasons. We should promise God to renounce everything evil to keep the presence of the Holy Spirit inside us. Let him have the freedom to operate in us and through us. We may pray, **“Holy Spirit I need you more than anyone else and anything else. I need you more than a job, money and material things. The breakthrough I need is to get you in my heart.”**

We should pray to the Holy Spirit before making big decisions, such as getting married, securing a job, writing an exam, or going for an interview; *“because, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you”* (John 14:26).

## DO YOU THIRST?

The Samaritan woman at the well, who appears in the Gospel of St. John chapter four, thought she would be happy being with different men. So she moved from one husband to another, but the more she tried the more she became empty and thirsty. Jesus came her way and told her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, *“Give me a drink”*, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water’ (John 4:7-10). Again, “on the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink.”

*“Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water*

*will flow from within them.”* By this he meant the Spirit whom those who believed in him were later to receive (John 7:37-38). Jesus is telling her, if you drink from the fountain of living waters, that is, from Jesus, you will never again wander to quench the thirst. *“For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable”* (Romans 11:29). *“Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price”* (Isaiah 55:1). By ‘come to the waters’ he means ‘come to the Holy Spirit’. Wine and milk are also symbols of the Holy Spirit that remind us how he can deliver us from all types of inordinate passions and desires. He promises the presence of the Holy Spirit to deliver generations from the thirst of worldly desires saying, *“for I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground. I will pour my spirit upon your descendants, and my blessing on your offspring”* (Isaiah 44:3). The prayer “Come, Holy Spirit and fill the hearts of your faithful”, is a meaningful prayer to get rid of empty entertainments and wrong friendships. The Eucharistic Lord is full of the Holy Spirit, and you should turn to Him so that He may give you the Holy Spirit to quench all your thirst.



#### **TURN TO JESUS WITH GRATITUDE**

*“I don’t know why God has forgotten my daughter of thirty seven years because her marriage is not taking place. I don’t know what penance I can do for my daughter,”* lamented one mother. We started to pray and received Psalm 136. The title of this psalm is *“God’s work in the history of Israel”*. The psalmist exults the glory of the Lord and responds with, *“for His steadfast love endures forever”*. The scripture teaches us to praise the Lord since his steadfast love endures forever. We asked this mother whether she remembered any incident as God’s historical intervention in her personal life. She said that her life itself was a miracle of the Lord. She got married at thirty six years when people around her had told her that she could never get a husband and that even if she was to get one, she would never be blessed with children. But, God gave her a good husband and three children, and this daughter of thirty seven years is her first born. She said, *“Actually I have to thank the Lord for everything.”* We asked, *“Have you ever thanked the Lord for your marriage and the children He has blessed you with?”* She said she was not sure because it happened years back. We told her to offer three thanksgiving Masses for her marriage having taken place. When she thanked the good Lord, within one month, her daughter got married. It is very important always to remember the help of God in your past life.



### **DO YOU FEEL POOR, HUNGRY AND UNEDUCATED?**

*“Come, everyone who thirsts, and you that have no money. Come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food” (Isaiah 55:1-2). “Open your mouth wide, I shall feed you” (Psalms 81:10).* These are invitations to all those who are poor and condemn their situations for their sufferings. The apostles were poor and uneducated (1 Corinthians 1:18), but the Holy Spirit made them wise and rich. King David was a shepherd, and the Holy Spirit anointed him to be a King.

An uneducated Hindu lady attended a retreat and received the Holy Spirit. She did not know to read or write, but the Holy Spirit gave her the powerful gift of healing. One day, a priest wanted to know how she prayed since she was uneducated. She said that whenever she saw a sick person, since she does not know how to pray, she places herself in their place and cries until the LORD Jesus listens. She knew that Jesus is so good and he hears when she cries. Her crying was her prayer. This apparently insignificant, uneducated woman has now become a very significant personality in bringing people to Jesus, who says, “Draw near to me, you who are uneducated, and lodge in the house of instruction. Why do you say you are lacking in these things, and why do you endure such great thirst? I opened my mouth and said, acquire wisdom for yourselves without money. Put your neck under her yoke, and let your souls receive instruction (Sirach 51:23-26).



### **ARE YOU TIRED?**

***“Do not stray, or else you may fall” (Sirach 2:7).*** A priest, after conducting a special retreat for the school, had a terrible accident. He was so afraid and thought it may be because he did not have the permission of the Lord to lead the retreat. He sat down in prayer to discern the will of God and to repent for anything that he had done wrong. He opened the Bible to Jeremiah 12:5, *“if you have raced with foot-runners and they have wearied you, how will you compete with horses? And if in a safe land you fall down, how will you fare in the thickets of the Jordan?”* After reading he got this interpretation: *“Are you ready for the battle when the battle is not small? Be prepared for big battles and more crosses. Are you going to withdraw and stop going for outreach retreats?”* Every Powerful ministry is a threat to

the devil. So, he reacts and attacks the ministries. He is the first one to be provoked when souls are saved from his grip. The Lord inspired the priest to read from Sirach 2:1-2, **“My child, when you come to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for testing.”** It is when we open our heart to the Holy Spirit, that we get the true meaning of our crisis.



## DO YOU NEED PROTECTION FROM SIN AND BAD HABITS?

A boy complained of often falling back into the same sin. He said he felt indifferent when sitting for prayer. Filthy thoughts would dominate his mind and he would feel loneliness. We told him to pray with great desire daily, to be filled with the Holy Spirit, for at least half an hour. *“Come, to me, you who desire me, and eat your fill of my fruits. For the memory of me is sweeter than honey, and the possession of me sweeter than the honeycomb. Those who eat of me will hunger for more and those who drink of me will thirst for more. Whoever obeys me will not be put to shame, and those who work with me will not sin”* (Sirach 24:19-22). *“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption. Through which we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’”* (Romans 8:14-15). Those who are dominated by the Holy Spirit overcome bad habits (cf. Haggai 2:5b).



### BAD SMELL

The parents brought their daughter who was in Form Three and she had a problem of having a bad smell coming out of her body. The parents had tried many treatments, and even took her to a skin specialist, and had the blood tested for any bacteria that may be causing the smell, but to no avail. Having gone through the feeling of desperation she had attempted suicide. They realized that it was only Jesus who could set her free because all types of medicines and consultations had failed. While praying for her, we received, **“examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgement against themselves. For this reason many of you are weak and ill, and some have died”** (1 Corinthians 11:28-30). Immediately as we read she fell down screaming and became unconscious. We brought Holy Water, poured it on her and made her sit up. The hidden sin of lesbianism was soon revealed. She was learning in a convent school and lived



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in the girls' hostel where she used to practice lesbianism. She served as an altar server by helping in the convent for daily Mass despite committing this sin. She even used to receive Holy Communion, and this eventually made her to be sick, just as when Judas received the body and the blood of Jesus, Satan entered into Him and he walked out into the darkness. We convinced her of the gravity of the sin and that it is not God but her sin which punished her. Jeremiah says, your wickedness will punish you, and your apostasies will convict you. Know and see that it is evil and bitter for you to forsake the Lord your God. The fear of me is not in you, says the Lord God of hosts (Jeremiah 2:19). She came to know that it was a grave sin, and she knelt down in repentance and cried. Immediately, the bad smell disappeared and she received healing. It is the Holy Spirit who revealed the truth, led her to repentance and healing.



### THE HOLY SPIRIT SPEAKS

When we were planning to start the prayer service in our Retreat Centre in Thika, it was challenging to place a signboard on the road to inform people about the land and the prayer. To put the board we first needed to pay the Municipal Council and get approval, but there was no guarantee that the board would remain because there were many thieves around that land. During a prayer to the Holy Spirit, He inspired us to use the storage container which was not in use, as a sign board, and place it on the roadside of the Centre. Since it is a container bearing the name and details of our Retreat Centre nobody would want to steal it, yet it would attract all to reach there. This container has eventually grown into VRC Thika. That single word from the mouth of the Holy Spirit was a multiple answer to many problems. There is no puzzle that cannot be solved by the Holy Spirit. We must listen to the Holy Spirit. We read how the Holy Spirit inspired the governor to rebuild the temple of God (Haggai 1:12-15). *“See that you do not refuse the one who is speaking”* (Hebrews 12:25). While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, *“Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them”* (Acts 13:2). Peter said, *“The Holy Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us”* (Acts 11:12).



### DESPERATELY SEEKING DIVORCE

*“Father I am tired of this man; my husband is a drunkard unbeliever, and there is no day that I have peace. Please help me to get a divorce.”* Through prayer we found this: ***“The man who digs a pit falls into it, whoever sets a snare will be caught***

by it. On anyone who does evil, evil will recoil, without his knowing where it comes from" (Sirach 27:26-27). Again, "as you have done, it shall be done to you; your deeds shall return on your own head" (Obadiah 1:15). "Is your husband Catholic?" I asked her. "No father, now, that is the problem, he is non-Christian," she replied. "Why did you opt to marry him?" I enquired. "We were good friends," she answered. Then I asked her, "Did your parents warn you that he was not a Christian?" "Yes," she replied.

I further asked her, "Did the priest warn you?" "Yes." She said she was very active in the church when she fell in love with this non-Christian boy. The parents had opposed the relationship, so she went to get the support of the parish priest. The Priest did not approve of the relationship either, and told her, "It will be a big cross, which you may not be able to carry." But she replied, "Father if Jesus could carry a cross I can also carry my boy-friend, because I love him." The priest then told her what the scripture says: "**Do not give your glory to another or your advantages to an alien people**" (Baruch 4:3). The glory of a Catholic is that Jesus Christ is in us, and the advantages of Catholics are the seven Sacraments. Never leave it in order to marry a non-Christian (Daniel 2:43, Sirach 26:19, Tobit 4:12, Wisdom 11:16, Isaiah 42:8). She insisted that she would carry the cross. A few years later, she wanted to get a separation and divorce. However, we told her that now there is no divorce; instead, you have to pray for his conversion and salvation. This is because for all you know, you might save your husband. And for all you know, your husband might save you, his wife (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:16). Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we told her to pray and recite the "Apostles Creed" ten times daily on behalf of her husband so that he may turn to Jesus, the only Saviour. Some months later this man attended a retreat and started studying Catechism.



## THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES YOU A NEW HEART

If you find that your husband is hard-hearted, or your boss is lustful towards you, or you feel people are unclean, or their nature is becoming rough and tough, they are indirectly requesting you to pray for them to receive the Holy Spirit. "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances" (Ezekiel 36:25-27). It is only the influence of the Holy Spirit which can bring lasting change in a person.



### HOW CAN I BUILD A RETREAT CENTRE?

A missionary priest wanted to know how to start a retreat centre in the country he was sent to, because this country had a lot of rules and regulations. He said, "Father there is full freedom to commit any sin. And they create all types of rules and regulations so that no good will take place. No evangelization for the salvation of the people. I am tired! I don't know, maybe it is because I have been here now for more than four years and so far nothing has happened." The scripture we got as a message for this priest was, **"for everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up"** (Ecclesiastes 3:1-3). We also got this explanation: "You are now, sent there not to build a centre but to build up prayers and intercessions. If you are sent to sow, try not to reap. If you are sent to plant, try not to harvest. The specific purpose of the Lord is that you have to pray hard so that after many years God will send others to start harvesting. Nobody can plant and harvest at the same time. We need people to prepare the ground and to plant. Many are impatient because they only want to harvest and are lazy to plant. Missionaries are sent to plant in one place and to harvest in another place. The just God gives anyone who plants an opportunity to harvest. **"I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour"** (John 4:38). **"For God is not unjust; he will not overlook your work and the love that you showed for his sake"** (Hebrews 6:10). Those who ask the Holy Spirit, will never fail to receive special answers for their specific questions.



### THE HOLY SPIRIT REVEALS ABBA FATHER

*"For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. If, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him"* (Romans 8:14-17). The Holy Spirit is a companion for all orphans, who reveals to them the caring love of Abba Father. The Holy Spirit supports those who are suffering. All scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit, *"I thought how I would set you among my children, and give you a pleasant land, the most beautiful heritage of all the nations. And I thought you would call me, My Father, and would not turn from following me"* (Jeremiah 3:19).

## THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPS US IN OUR WEAKNESSES!

*“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words”* (Romans 8:26). We call The Holy Spirit power, because he gives power to the powerless. He inspires the prayerful. Note that the apostles had locked themselves inside the room out of fear. But when they received the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost they were filled with courage and strength. They could even sing psalms inside the prison. They faced kings, governors and officials witnessing to Jesus as the only Saviour. The apostles built up the church not by might, nor by power, but by the Holy Spirit, my spirit (Zechariah 4:6).



### **MEDICALLY FIT, YET WITHOUT CHILDREN**

We met this couple who were married for fourteen years but were without a child. In the medical results, everything was shown to be normal yet all their efforts were fruitless. When time came for prayers we received a scripture, **“my child, support your father in his old age, and do not grieve him during his life. Even if his mind should fail, show him sympathy. Do not despise him in your health and strength; for kindness to a father will not be forgotten but will serve as reparation for your sins. On your own day of ordeal God will remember you: like frost in sunshine, your sins will melt away. Whoever deserts a father is no better than a blasphemer, and whoever distresses a mother is accursed of the Lord”** (Sirach 3:12-16). This woman was ashamed to care for her mentally sick father. She even ran away from Kerala in India to Bahrain so as to escape her duty as a daughter to her sick father. Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, she was asked to repent and pray for the departed soul of her late father by offering nine Holy Masses. Eventually she got pregnant and now is a mother of three children.



## **DON'T DO ANYTHING UNTIL THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES UPON YOU WITH POWER**

Many people fail in their ministry and apostolate because they do not thirst for the Holy Spirit and his gifts. Jesus said, *“I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high”* (Luke 24:49). The power symbolizes the Holy Spirit, without whom we cannot do anything. Authority does not give authenticity to operate in any ministry. Power from above is more important than authority

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from below (cf. Acts 1:8). A teacher needs the help of Holy Spirit, the Teacher. An advocate needs the help of Holy Spirit, the Advocate. A leader needs the help of Holy Spirit, the Leader. A director needs the help of Holy Spirit, the Director. A priest needs the help of Holy Spirit, the Helper. A counsellor needs the help of Holy Spirit, the Counsellor. Any work or ministry can be perfectly done only with the different gifts and charisms of the Holy Spirit. *“All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses”* (1 Corinthians 12:11).

### THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS NO PARTIALITY

Anyone who welcomes the Holy Spirit, be they non-Christian or gentile or slave, receives Holy Spirit who is impartial and ready to come into their lives. *“While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the Word. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles”* (Acts 10:44-45).

*The Samaritan woman said to him, ‘How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?’ Since Jews did not share things in common with the Samaritans. Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, “Give me a drink”, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water* - John 4:9-10

*“Then afterwards I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female slaves, in those days, I will pour out my spirit”* (Joel 2:28-29). Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, is so humble. He filled the gentiles, blessed the Samaritan woman and anointed even slaves. Thus, anyone who thirsts for, receives the Holy Spirit. St. Philip was told by the Holy Spirit to go to the chariot of the Ethiopian Eunuch who was reading a passage from the scripture in the book of prophet Isaiah, 53:7-8. The Eunuch confessed to him that he could not understand the scriptures unless somebody guided him. When Philip started to explain to him about the scriptures, he was filled with the Holy Spirit and he requested to be baptized right away. Immediately after the Eunuch was baptized, the Spirit of the Lord snatched him away (cf. Acts 9:26-40). St. Peter was sent to Caesarea to baptize Cornelius, a gentile Centurian who was an upright, generous in alms-giving, prayerful and God-fearing man. (cf. Acts 10: 10 -16). Peter himself commented, *“I truly understand that God shows no partiality”* (Acts 10:34).

## DO NOT GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT

Holy Spirit is the spirit of gentleness, simplicity and humility. He comes into a humble, meek and contrite heart. *“Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption”* (Ephesians 4:30). We are appointed by the Holy Spirit to *“keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God”* (Acts 20:28). *“It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit; therefore he became their enemy; he himself fought against them”* (Isaiah 63:9-10). When Ananias and Sapphira lied, they grieved the Holy Spirit and they both died; *“... Then Peter said to her, ‘How is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? ...’* (Acts 5:1-11)



### FINANCIAL CRISIS AND ABORTION

*I never thought abortion and financial crisis have a connection until we met a couple who had jobs but a heavy bank loan and many other debts. They said all their salary went into paying off those loans and debts. Sometimes they felt like committing suicide because of the burden they felt throughout their life. It is in prayer that we saw a vision of four small children who seemed to have been born on the same day, with the same form, with tears coming out of their eyes. We asked, “How many children do you have?” They replied, “Only one”. We told them about the vision of the four small babies with the same shape. They admitted having committed four abortions because they said they were lacking finances. They did not have enough money to bring up all of these children. They forgot that those children were gifts of the Lord and it is He who gives life and provides for that life to be sustained. It is with new life that God opens his heaven with full treasure and pours it out unto his people. So those who say ‘no’ to a new child also say ‘no’ to the finances provided by God. **“Sons are indeed a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward”** (Psalms 127:3). Also, **“Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: I am the Lord your God, who teaches you for your own good, who leads you in the way you should go. O that you had paid attention to my commandments! Then your prosperity would have been like a river, and your success like the waves of the sea; your offspring would have been like the sand, and your descendants like its grains; their name would never be cut off or destroyed from before me”** (Isaiah 48:17-19). God the Holy Spirit helped them to repent and to renew their lives.*



## ARE YOU AN ALCOHOLIC?

*“Those who live in the flesh cannot please God”* (Romans 8:7-8), since they cannot receive the Holy Spirit. The drunkards cannot receive the Holy Spirit because the spirit of this world and Holy Spirit cannot live together. *“Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit.”* (Ephesians 5:18) It is said that John the Baptist, who became great in the sight of many, never drank wine or strong drink. *Even before his birth he was filled with the Holy Spirit* (Luke 1:15).

## HOLY SPIRIT DOES NOT NATURALLY FLOW UNTO YOU

The apostles were with Jesus, who lived and moved and had his being in the Holy Spirit for three years. But they did not receive the Holy Spirit (John 7:38-39), until they specifically spent fifty days of fasting and prayer in the upper-room to receive the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is very gentle and sensitive, until he is invited with love Holy Spirit cannot come into our lives. It is written, *“how much the Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him”* (Luke 11:13). *“Therefore I prayed, and understanding was given to me; I called on God, and the Spirit of wisdom came to me. I preferred her to scepters and thrones, and I accounted wealth as nothing in comparison with her. Neither did I liken to her any priceless gem, because all gold is but a little sand in her sight, and silver will be accounted as clay before her. I loved her more than health and beauty, and I chose to have her rather than light, because her radiance never ceases. All good things came to me along with her, and in her hands uncounted wealth”* (Wis.7:7-11).



**Holy Spirit is very gentle and sensitive,  
until he is invited with love Holy Spirit  
cannot come into our lives**

It is not what we want but what we ask for, that we receive. Thirsting fervently for the Holy Spirit is very important to receive him. *“I perceived that I would not possess wisdom unless God gave it to me and it was a mark of insight to know whose gift she was so I appealed to the Lord and implored him, and with my whole heart I said ...* (Wis.8:21)

## CONDITIONS TO RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. Repentance of all Sins (Mark 1:15)

2. Renouncing sin and Satan (James 4:7-8)
3. Listening to the Word of God (Acts 10:44)
4. Confessing and accepting Jesus as the only personal Saviour (Romans 10:9)
5. Thirsting fervently for the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 2:2 & John 7:37)

Peter said to them, *“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”* (Acts 2:38). *“Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation”* (1 Peter 2:2). *“While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word”* (Acts 10:44). *“All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability”* (Acts 2:4).

Let us pray:

***“Abba Father let me live and move and have my being in the Holy Spirit”***



#### **THE STORY OF A HOSPITAL**

The Sisters requested us to visit and pray for their hospital as it was running at a very big loss, with no patients, and no money to pay the salary of the workers. Basically, the Missionary Sisters were struggling to make ends meet. As we prayed and blessed the hospital to remove all the blocks, we got this scripture **“if you hold back from rescuing those taken away to death, those who go staggering to the slaughter; if you say, ‘Look, we did not know this’— does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who keeps watch over your soul know it? And will he not repay all according to their deeds?”** (Proverbs 24:11-12). We asked them if abortions take place in this hospital. The sisters said that since it was a catholic hospital, they never did it. The doctor sister said, *“We don’t know whether anybody does it here, but it is our strict policy that we even dismiss those who support it in this hospital.”* She assured us that the hospital was clean with regards to cases of abortions. While in prayer with the scripture, we felt strongly that abortion brought forth all the blocks because it is the shedding of innocent blood. We left the hospital after the prayers. But, three days later, the sister called with shocking news, saying, *“Father, I am truly sorry, there are many nurses and even some doctors who do practice it in the hospital without the knowledge of the sisters. Sometimes they even recommend them to their private clinics and do it secretly. They always do it in our absence, and do not enter it into the records of the hospital but they do the abortions to make more money.”* Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we advised the sisters to find the priest and ask him to celebrate 33 Holy Masses for all the departed souls representing



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33 years of the earthly life of Jesus. After two months, they got a special funding to improve their medical facilities. The number of patients increased and the hospital compound became serene. It is unfortunate that many don't know that abortion is a grave sin that brings forth hidden blocks.



## MOTHER MARY, THE SPOUSE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



**Here is my Son Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world! Please turn to Him to receive His unconditional love and healing touch!**

The answer to the confusing question of Mother Mary given by the archangel Gabriel was *“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God (Lk.1:35)*. Since then we never find Mother Mary, at any point, doubting, fainting or arguing. She was so composed in the middle of deep pain. She was pierced with the sword of seven sorrows but she was totally unshakable. The strength came from her spouse, the Holy Spirit. She was found with all the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Gal.5,21-22). She was a woman of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control. To know how Holy Spirit can transform a person, Mother Mary is the best example.

It is Mother Mary who led the apostles, who were scattered with fear after the death of Jesus, to the Upper Room (Acts.1:14) to receive the Holy Spirit. The great feast of Pentecost occurred in the presence of Mother Mary, that is why she is called the mother of the Church. The Only Church instituted by Jesus and the Only Key Jesus handed over to St. Peter is that of the Catholic Church. One door can have only one Master Key, and Mother Mary helped them to open that door with Pentecost. The Catholic Church is a property of the Holy Spirit, *Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son (Acts.20:28)*. Where the Holy Spirit is Mother Mary has undeniable accessibility to the presence

as she is the spouse. We read, *“It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins; these follow the Lamb wherever he goes”* (Rev.14:4). Mother Mary could follow Jesus unto his death, because she was always with the Holy Spirit. Mother Mary could love Jesus unconditionally until the end because of the Holy Spirit.

## HOLY SPIRIT AND HOLY ROSARY

Holy Rosary is a powerful biblical prayer that gives the infilling of the Holy Spirit as we read in the gospel (Lk.1:33-34) that St. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit as she greeted Mother Mary. The forerunner of Jesus, John the Baptist who made people to **“Turn to Jesus”**. (Lk.3, 1-21) received the Holy Spirit through her presence as a fulfillment of the prophesy to his Father Zachariah (Lk.1,15). Actually the contents of the Holy Rosary are the revelations of the Holy Spirit. Meditation and devotion to the Holy Rosary invites the presence of the Holy Spirit. Because the Holy Rosary is the Word of God (Lk.1,28; Lk.1,33; Lk.1,34) *“The Word I have spoken to you are spirit and life”* (Jn.6,63) and meditation of the life of Jesus with Mother Mary from Incarnation to Resurrection. The mysteries of the Rosary (Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful and Glorious) reveal the whole life of Jesus. All those who truly want to turn to Jesus let them take their Rosaries and start praying that this mother will take them to Jesus. “Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit” was practically fulfilled in the life of Mother Mary as she became the spouse of the Holy Spirit, so she is not just a statue but a tabernacle of the Holy Spirit. We honour her because Holy Spirit permanently dwells in her.

We pray, ***“Holy Spirit come and overshadow me as you overshadowed Mother Mary and she conceived Jesus Our Savior (Lk.1,35). Take complete control of my life and lead me.”***

## ACCOMPANY US O HOLY SPIRIT

It is the Holy Spirit who reveals to us the root causes of our inner wounds. It is he who leads us to the wounded healer, to receive inner healing. He helps us to turn to Jesus and to become his true disciples to bear fruits that last for his kingdom (cf. John 15:16). In the following chapters, we ask the accompaniment of the Holy Spirit for the same. *Come Holy Spirit and fill the hearts of all those who read this book!*

# CHAPTER TWO

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## EXAMPLES OF INNER WOUNDS AND HEALING

*There are some evil things which our ancestors did that can cause inner wounds which include: involvement in witchcraft, occult practices, devil worship, superstitious beliefs and practices; involvement in sexual impurities such as adultery, fornication, sexual abuse etc.*



**Is your heart overburdened with sin, stress and other forms of anxieties and pains? Do you feel that your heart is terribly wounded and in bondage? Turn to JESUS; “He heals the broken hearted, and binds up their wounds” (Psalm 147:3). It is written, a broken and contrite heart He will not despise (cf. Psalm 51:17).**

This chapter, examples of inner wounds and healing will help us to know the various stages of our lives by which we inherit different types of wounds. Through the examples of the lives of Samson, Saul, Eli and Judas, we will analyse how people develop inner wounds.

## ANCESTRY

The effects of the sins of previous generations can be visited upon the present generation, just as much as our sins today can make an impact on future generations (cf. Genesis 4:23-24). We must understand that original sin is not ancestral sin. Original sin is inherited as part of our very nature (cf. Psalm 51:5 & Ephesians 2:3), and also its negative effects like death, sickness, moral weakness (cf. Romans 5:12-17 & 1 Corinthians 15:21-22). Ancestral sin is not itself inherited, but its effects very often are, and include numerous physical / genetic diseases, trauma, emotional problems such as depression and anxiety, spiritual problems eg. drug addictions, sexual abuse, rape, abortion, incest, loveless marriages, resentment, hatred, murder, suicide, etc.

Consider the example given of King Solomon when he disobeyed God and took to worshipping many gods (cf. 1 Kings 11:11-12). The kingdom was torn from him and given to his servant (Jeroboam), not in the king's days, but in the days of Rehoboam (his son). When you commit a mortal sin, have you considered that the fault can even negatively influence your child or your grandchild? Remember how prophet Nathan's indictment to King David informs the king that his descendants are to forever suffer pursuit from their enemies due to the king's despising the LORD (cf. 2 Samuel 12:9-10). What is worse, King David's son died for the king's adultery with Bathsheba after his guilt was removed (cf. 2 Samuel 12:13-14). The Lord Jesus talks about the blood of the prophets killed in previous generations being brought to bear on the current generation in Jerusalem (cf. Matthew 23:29-36 & Luke 11:47-51).



***All sin has negative effects; for this reason there is the resultant consequences in the form of suffering, illness, inclinations towards sinful habits, addictions, ignorance, suicide, etc.***

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Therefore personal sin is not inherited, but all sin has negative effects; for this reason there is the resultant consequences in the form of suffering, illness, inclinations towards sinful habits, addictions, ignorance, suicide, etc. These are spiritual disorders that often are ‘inherited’ inasmuch as there are physical disorders that are likewise ‘inherited’.

However, Christians should not blame their circumstances to things attributed to their ancestors. St. Peter teaches that as a Christian you must realize that you were ransomed from your futile conduct, handed on to you by your ancestors, with the precious blood of Christ (cf. 1 Peter 1:18-19). Prophet Isaiah says that your ancestors sold you for nothing, but without money (gold or silver) you have been redeemed (cf. Isaiah 52:3); this through the blood of the spotless lamb, the Lord Jesus Himself (Isaiah 53:7). The same one of whom St. John the Baptist testifies that it is He who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29); and St. Paul says you are justified freely by His grace, through the redemption in Christ Jesus. For it was Him, whom God set forth as an expiation, so that through faith, by His blood, you are proven righteous because the sins which were previously committed (by your ancestors) are forgiven you! Despite the hostility of your ancestors to God, you have been purchased at a very high price (1 Corinthians 6:20); now you must glorify God in your body by completely ***turning to Jesus!*** Since the LORD Jesus Christ, by His death and resurrection, already paid the price of the useless way of life that your ancestors lived, all you have to do now is to accept Him as your Saviour and claim His precious Blood into your family tree (ancestry). You ask why? St. Paul says it is because now there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1). There is no evil where Jesus is, because where there is light there cannot be darkness. Once you receive Him and believe in His Name, He gives you power to become a child of God (John 1:12). It is up to you, whether you choose to be a child of Jesus (our Saviour), or you remain a child of your ancestors with all the effects of their wrong-doings.



***In fact the LORD sends out His angels to roam the streets of Jerusalem (here representing your ancestry), to see if they can find even one person who acts justly, so that God may pardon your ancestry.***

The gospels of Matthew and Luke give account of the genealogy of Jesus, depicting a family tree that has all manner of sinners including adulterous women. God is so merciful, that the birth of Jesus cleanses this lineage and the family tree henceforth becomes holy. Once you invite Jesus into your family tree He cleanses the entire generation. In fact the LORD sends out His angels to roam the streets of Jerusalem (here representing your ancestry), to look about and observe; to search through her squares, and to see if they can find even one person who acts justly and seeks the truth, so that God may pardon Jerusalem:

*Search its squares and see if you can find one person who acts justly and seeks truth so that I may pardon Jerusalem* - Jeremiah 5:1

The LORD says this person shall rebuild the ancient ruins, and raise up the former wastes; this person shall restore the ruined desolate cities, which resulted from devastations of many generations (Isaiah 61:4). Are you that person whom the Lord is searching for, to stand in the gap for a generation? The following incident will shed some light into this inspiration.



### **FAMILY TREE**

A teacher came to get some advice to travel to India for eye surgery as he found his eyesight was deteriorating day by day. The doctors suggested an immediate operation to solve the problem. He was advised to get the operation done in India as it was the cheapest and reliable. He asked me to give the details of the hospitals in Mumbai as I was there before coming to Nairobi. As a priest I told him, before showing you any hospital in India I have to show you Jesus who heals unconditionally. He said that Jesus can also heal through doctors. He was a very learned school principal; **“The Lord created medicines out of the earth, and the sensible will not despise them”** (Sir.38, 4). It seemed that he had more faith in doctors than in Jesus. I asked him permission to pray and he agreed. As we started to pray, I asked him if there was anybody else in his family with eye problem. He agreed that it was a big problem since his grandparents and his two children are all wearing thick glasses. “Now” I told him, “It is high time to turn to Jesus, because doctors cannot heal this perennial problem which comes all the way through the family tree. You need the good Lord to intervene in this entire issue.” I explained, we don’t know what has gone wrong, but Jesus knows. 1Pt.1,18-19 says, **“you know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver**

**or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish.” I told him, in this pain and sickness, the Lord was looking for an instrument “to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour, and to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion. They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations” (Isaiah 61:2-4). Many families suffer because when they face a problem they try to solve it by themselves temporarily, without thinking about others who are suffering in the family. I requested him to celebrate nine Holy Masses for the entire family tree, for the living and the dead. Immediately after that he was completely healed and now he does not need to wear spectacles.**



## PARENTAGE

There are three types of relationships that make for a family with integrity. There is a spiritual relationship where the spirit of the husband and that of the wife become one as they pray together. There is an emotional (heart-to-heart) relationship where the heart of the husband and that of the wife become one when they share together. And there is a physical relationship where the body of the husband and that of the wife become one flesh (cf. Matt. 19:4-6). The fruit of the body relationship is a child or children as it happens when they stay together. Nowadays people look only for body relationships in the many man-woman and boy-girl relationships, with the other two components (emotional and spiritual) being absent. These relationships have resulted in making single motherhood to be the norm in society. Many reasons are given as to why this is happening. We know that worldly love is selfish and conditional.

It is true that there is no perfect marriage and there are no perfect families; for every marriage will inevitably hit some ‘potholes’ in the road, and even an occasional open ‘manhole’. Whereas human love may be construed to be blind, marriage is a real eye-opener. It is unrealistic to believe that you can live with another human being (who, by-the-way, grew up in a very different environment from the one you know), for any length of time without having relationship challenges. Unfortunately, this world taught women to be intolerant towards their seemingly useless husbands. They forget St. Paul’s

teaching that we ought to be kind, tender-hearted and forgiving (Ephesians 4:32). There are women who think that if they are employed, rich and self-sufficient, they should not stay with an idle, broke, drunken and unemployed husband. They do not realize that in being so focused on their selfish desires, they become blinded to the fact that every child has a right to have a father. Depriving a child of its father is a crime against generations. There are many cases of divorce and separation in families, notwithstanding the fact that God firmly denounces divorce (Malachi 2:16), and even the LORD Jesus says that the reason divorce comes to be is the hard-heartedness of the people (Matthew 19:8). It does not matter what the spousal weakness is, because we are all sinners (Romans 3:23), and we must all forgive, not seven times but seventy-seven times (Matthew 18:22).

**Divorce is a sin of hate that is deeply rooted in self-righteousness and an unwillingness to forgive, and is enveloped in hypocrisy. The problem is that many of us are misled because we do not know the scriptures or the power of God (Matthew 22:29); God's power can save your marriage, if only you will trust God and not quit.** God has never, and never will, quit on you (Hebrews 13:5), so why do you quit on His plan for you? Don't you believe that He knows well the plans He has in mind for you - plans that are for your welfare and not for woe, so as to give you a future of hope (Jeremiah 29:11)? Once you are married, it becomes your duty to bring your spouse to the complete love of God. St. Paul aptly puts it by implying that you never know whether it is you who will save your husband or wife (1 Corinthians 7:16). Don't you know that God does not want any one to be lost? Some people want to divorce so that they can marry someone else. Well, the grass may look greener on the other side of the fence, but maybe you should water yours more or plant more grass on your lawn so that it looks green on your side! You cannot just leave one spouse for another; you simply create more problems. Furthermore it is never the LORD's plan for you to keep looking for a better father/mother for your children; He already gave them one. You may argue that you need to move on with your own life, but surely, would you do it at the cost of leaving behind your child's life? A bird is created to fly using two wings spread out to maintain a perfect balance in the air. If one wing is damaged, the bird simply cannot fly. It may move on the ground, but it will most certainly not fly. **Husband and wife are the wings of the marriage. If one wing is damaged or missing, the marriage becomes paralyzed.** It cannot soar to the heights it is meant to reach, let alone reach its destination in God's plan.



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Unfortunately, there are many unions that result in children being left with a single parent. Perhaps because the man was there to gratify his bodily desires and soon disappeared on learning of the pregnancy; sometimes these children are born out of wedlock; sometimes the child is born to a mother who is still in school or college; sometimes the children are born where there is no love between its parents; sometimes the children are born out of lustful unions. Whatever the circumstances, the children grow up lacking parental love. They may grow up rebellious to the parents and may become society's misfits. We should not be surprised if this happens because as the book of Wisdom tells us, it does not matter what we do; the children of adulterers cannot come to maturity, but will remain without issue. They are offspring of an unlawful bed who will eventually disappear. Even if they live long they will be held of no account, since their old age will be without honour. If they do die young, they will have no hope and no consolation on the Day of Judgment (Wisdom 3:16-19).

Oftentimes we do not think about the multiple losses that a child in a single-parent-situation suffers. Apart from the loss of an ideal nuclear family unit, they also lose the parent who they once knew (or did not know), as the parent changes to accommodate their new life situation. Some children suffer not only changing relationships with their parents, but also abandonment. This abandonment can be a loss that is much greater than bereavement, since it carries with it both the hope of reconciliation and the fear of not being worthy-enough for that reconciliation to happen. Some quickly become burdened with the physical and economic responsibilities of helping to support that single parent, so that they lose their childhood before time. Many go on to lose their self-esteem as they struggle with the thought that it must have been their fault and it is therefore their consequent obligation to right all that which the grownups so ably ruined. It gets worse when they are overwhelmed by a sense of failure from their obviously deranged schemes that seldom succeed since they are based on a false premise anyway.

However, it is never too late. You can defeat this. Simply do not quit on your marriage! Try and try, again and again. Remember to discipline yourself, and to keep alert; for your adversary is really the devil, who is like a roaring lion that prowls around, looking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8). The devil may have influential power in this world, but he remains an imitator. He is like a roaring lion, but the real roaring Lion is the LORD Jesus Christ - the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, who has conquered all (Revelation

5:5). In one way or another, whether you did it knowingly or unknowingly, you invited the devil into your family tree. When he came, he did what his cunning self knows best how to do – lie, steal, kill and destroy. Now you have a chance to invite the LORD Jesus, who stands at the door of your heart and earnestly knocks (Revelation 3:20). If you let Him in, He will come to give you life so that you may have it even more abundantly (John 10:10).

## AT CONCEPTION

There are only two ways by which babies are naturally conceived – either out of love or out of lust. The desires (love and lust) and the mental attitudes (fear, hatred, sorrow, drunkenness, etc) that parents have at the time of conception greatly affect the nature of the child to be born. A lot of emotional interplays take place in this moment – physical, emotional and spiritual states of both parents influence the wellbeing of the baby conceived. This is because what is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit (John 3:6). It is important that children be born not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man's decision but be born of God (John 1:13). If the parents are to show sincere love to the child, they have to have had a genuine mutual desire and agreement to having children. God is Love (1 John 4:8, 16), and children born in love are children of God. Children of God are those who are born not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man; but are born of the Spirit. Therefore, any child who is born of God is a godly child, and will have the nature of God. The nature of God is the fruit of the Holy Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). In order to be united in spirit, the parents must invite God in their union; for God is the God of the impossible. Since true genuine love comes from God, one ought first to be filled with God's love so that they can pass it on to their offspring. Even before the act of procreation is performed, both of you future parents should kneel down together and pray, imploring the LORD God to have mercy and safety granted to you (Tobit 6:18). If she/he were set apart for you before the world was made, there is no need to worry for you would be taking this spouse of yours not out of lust but with sincerity of heart. In so doing, God would grant that you may find mercy and that you may grow old together and concieve children with God's love (Tobit 8:4-7).

Looking back at Tobias and Sarah, notice how they were rightfully and lawfully married according to the tradition of the time (Tobit 7:9-13). This

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means that the prayer you make will only be effective when as a couple you are properly united and properly married in the church. There should be no physical sexual relationship whatsoever taking place before marriage. Many have overlooked the importance of having a church wedding, but in the process they lose out on the power, strength and support from God to face the day-to-day challenges of married life. Marriage is a sacrament, an outward sign of an inward grace. A sacrament is a channel through which the grace of God flows to those who partake of the sacrament. Any relationship outside marriage locks out God and His graces. The children who are born out of love are those who are conceived in a union of marriage, within the Sacrament of Matrimony.

It is true that most of the time, these desires and mental attitudes are beyond the control of the parents. This is why it is of utmost importance that the future parents ought to be united in spirit through constant prayer; for it is only God who can change what is negative in us, to be positive.

A mother came to ask for prayers because she and her three children had spent many nights without taking a single meal and were facing multitudes of other problems. She was jobless and was unable to pay the rent nor pay the school fees for the children let alone taking care of their basic needs. She had no husband and none of the different men who fathered her three children was willing to take responsibility for them. This is not surprising, since even the psalmist says that some will fall sick from their wicked ways and be afflicted because of their sins (Psalms 107:17). Imagine, she was a strong catholic, who was well aware of the Church's teaching about sexual relationships; but she still went ahead to break God's commandments. The consequences of her actions had affected both herself and the children. When asked why she kept on getting into new relationships, she answered that she was hoping each new relationship would be better. How could she seriously call herself a faithful catholic who knows the will of God (God's commandments) and having been instructed in it (Catechism, Baptism, Holy Communion, Confirmation, Matrimony, etc) be living like this? How could she possibly claim to be able to discern what is important for her children or even to be a confident guide to them? St. Paul tells us that if we want to teach others, we must not fail to teach ourselves first; if we preach against stealing, we do not steal; if we forbid adultery, we should not commit adultery; if we detest idols, we cannot rob the temples to steal the idols; and if we boast of the law, we shall not dishonour God by breaking the law (Romans 2: 17-23).

***The children born in the following situations can experience serious inner wounds. They include:***

- *Children born out of wedlock*
- *Children of single mothers*
- *Children born out of hatred and / drunkenness (forced sex)*
- *Children born as a result of rape or incest*
- *Children born out of prostitution*
- *Children born while the mother is still in school or in college out of wedlock*
- *Children born of different men but of the same mother*
- *Children born in fornication or adultery*
- *Children born in polygamous families*

St Paul warns that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God, since the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, occasions of envy, drinking bouts, orgies, and the like (Galatians 5:19-21).

Despite these circumstances that seem negative, we hope and trust in a merciful God who is good all the time. We find in the Bible examples of children who were born from what seems like humanly negative circumstances: in St. John the Baptist (Luke 1:5-17), in Prophet Samuel (1 Samuel 1:20-28), and in the LORD Jesus Himself (Luke 1:26-31); but God used these seemingly unfortunate babies to do mighty deeds (cf. Luke 7:28, 1 Samuel 3:19-21 & Luke 1:32-33). Imagine what He can do for you and with you, if only you allow yourself to be used by Him! Listen to Him and hear Him call your name, just as He already did before you were born (Isaiah 49:1b); and remember you were chosen by Him before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4a)!



***The secret sinful acts of the father can negatively influence the life of a child.***

The following incident can reveal, how the secret sinful acts of the father can negatively influence the life of a child.



### A HYPERACTIVE BOY

It was in Dar es Salaam that this couple came with their hyperactive mentally and physically challenged six-year-old boy. The wife started to cry while talking, saying, "Father I have only one child, but the Lord punished me with all these problems, I don't know what to do, I am not getting another child and this child, doctors say, cannot be healed." As I prayed for her, we got this inspiration that, **"an ungodly father will be blamed by his children for the reproach he has brought on them"** (Sirach 41: 7). The husband used to work in a remote place where he used to employ young girls, whom he forced to commit many abortions. His sins in the remote place made his own son to be born mentally and physically challenged. **"For children begotten of unlawful bed witness, when put on trial, to their parents' wickedness"** (Wisdom 4:6). **"Children of adulterers will not reach maturity, the offspring of an unlawful bed will disappear. Even if they live long, they will count for nothing"** (Wisdom 3:16). I told the parents, to repent, read and repeat, **"Do not rejoice over me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall rise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me"** (Malachi 7:8), ten times daily for one month. Later they were able to find a special school for the education of their son.



## INTRAUTERINE

Inner wounds can be caused while the baby is in the mother's womb. One mother brought her daughter for prayers, saying she could not understand why her daughter felt so much shame and always withdrew from people. This girl was afraid to speak in public. It turned out that she got pregnant while still studying at the University. She was so ashamed of her condition, that she tried to hide this pregnancy by wearing baggy clothes and she even changed her walking style. Unfortunately, she had passed this shame to her unborn child, who grew up feeling ashamed of herself.

There is another story of a man who grew up with morbid anger towards both his parents. It happened that when his mother became pregnant, both parents felt they were not ready to start a family and decided to have an abortion. Fortunately, their plan failed and he was born. Unfortunately, the baby was born with the knowledge that his parents neither wanted him nor loved him; and so he had uncontrollable anger towards them.

### AN EXAMPLE FROM THE LIFE OF MOSES

Let us consider what we can learn from the biblical example of Moses (Exodus 1:16-22). Moses was conceived at a time when the king of Egypt had ordered the Hebrew midwives to look on the birth stool and ensure that the Hebrew boys were killed, but the girls could live. Since the midwives feared God, they did not do as the king of Egypt had ordered them, but they let the boys live. God thus dealt well with the midwives and built up families for them, and the Hebrew people multiplied and grew very numerous. When Moses' mother discovered she was pregnant she hid her pregnancy for fear that the Egyptians would kill the baby if he were male. She also had all kinds of feelings including anxiety; tension, worry, and unnecessary stress because of the Pharaoh's order to kill. We must recall that although Moses was born a fine child, he had remained hidden for three months until his mother could hide him no more (Exodus 2:2-3). To make matters worse, his mother's rescue plan involved a papyrus basket that was daubed with bitumen and pitch. Can you imagine what trauma baby Moses experienced when he remained in the dark and smelly basket; probably feeling all alone, rejected and separated from his mother and not being able to be breast-fed by her? No wonder Pharaoh's daughter could not help but be moved with pity for this crying Hebrew baby boy (Exodus 2:6). Unfortunately for Moses, he had developed fear and a host of other inner wounds. We see this when Moses objected to God's call, supposing that the people may not believe or listen to him and would even assist him in speaking and teach him what he was to say, Moses' self-doubt made him to remain so fearful that he even dared to suggest that God should send someone else. Moses was so fearful that he even cited his inability to be eloquent both in the past and even despite being in the presence of God, instead referring to himself as being slow of speech and tongue. In the process of arguing back and forth with God, he forced God to involve Aaron in what God had previously intended to be only for Moses (Exodus 4:1-17).

Moses also had anger issues. Moses was adopted by the Pharaoh's daughter; but while he was still in need of breastfeeding, she could not keep him herself. Pharaoh's daughter acknowledged the importance of breastfeeding; perhaps knowing that through breastfeeding a child feels loved and cared for by the mother. She did the next best thing and asked a Hebrew woman to nurse him for her and she would pay her wages for doing it (Exodus 2:9). But this was, in fact, his actual mother, and she must have told him so from early on. Moses had no say in being the son of Pharaoh's

daughter, but as he grew up he often went out to his kinsmen and was witness to their forced labour. On one of these occasions, a fully grown-up Moses manifested anger when he saw an Egyptian striking a Hebrew. Thinking that there was no one seeing him, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand (Exodus 2:11-12). Anger led Moses to be a murderer and he ran away.

It is possible that Moses suffered a lot while yet a child that he even developed certain inner wounds, some of which were negative and led him to sin. We cannot fail to see, that God had loved Moses right from conception and had kept him safe from the hands of the killers in Egypt. God did not allow the Egyptians to kill him even after Pharaoh's daughter had clearly indicated that Moses was a Hebrew baby. He lived comfortably in Pharaoh's palace and freely moved in and out as an adult without hindrance. We see how God searched for Moses out there in Midian, even though Moses was married to an Ethiopian woman (Numbers 12:1) when there was a strong objection in Israel to such marriages. Clearly, God did not consider Moses' fault as hindrance to the call to which He was commissioning Moses; neither does He see hindrances in our weaknesses (inner wounds). God can and will turn the same weaknesses into our good and make us a worthy instrument of His love to the world, if we will let Him. He told Moses to take off his sandals (i.e. that which separates us from experiencing God must be removed – which for Moses was morbid fear), to surrender completely to God's Will. He asks the same of us today, so that He can do in us great things as He did in Moses.

### **Positive feelings from the womb of a mother**

So far we have focused much on negative emotions, and have not said anything about positive feelings. It is important to note that the good in the parents is also passed on to the children. In one such example is a four-year-old boy who can very skilfully play the violin though he definitely has had no formal training. Anyone watching and listening to this young talent is left dumbfounded and in awe. His mother was not a musician, but his father used to play the violin for the boy while the boy was in his mother's womb. This father was so consistent with playing the violin right next to the bulge of the mother throughout the pregnancy, that his son developed an ear for music and particularly violin music which he took to the heights. St. Elizabeth experienced the Holy Spirit as soon as she heard Mary's greeting, and passed it on to her unborn baby (St. John the Baptist). In response to this presence of the Holy Spirit, baby John could not help but leap for joy (Luke 1:44); after all,

he was to be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb (Luke 1:14). John was thus born, filled with the spirit and power of Elijah as the messenger sent before Yahweh (Malachi 3:1-2); for he was cast in the role of the Old Testament fiery reformer (the prophet Elijah), who was sent before the great and terrible day of the Lord to come (Malachi 3:24).



### SPIRIT OF SUICIDE

***“He has fathomed both the abyss and the human heart and seen into their devious ways; for the Most High knows all there is to know and sees the signs of the times. He declares what is past and what will be, and reveals the trend of hidden things. Not a thought escapes him, not a single word is hidden from him” (Sirach 42:18-20). “Father, my daughter always speaks about suicide. She feels like not living, she feels, rejected and meaninglessness. I don’t know how I can help her to get out of this strange feeling in her heart. I took her for counselling and advised her; for a short time she is fine but later on she repeats and tries the same.” As I prayed I asked the mother, “what happened while the child was in the womb?” “That is a terrible story”, the mother said, “the day I told my boyfriend that I am pregnant he rejected me. He threatened to kill me and told me, “go commit suicide if you are pregnant, I have nothing to do with you”. He completely disowned my life and the life of the child I was carrying. At that moment I thought, why live? I was afraid to face my parents in this situation, so I thought of committing suicide. I took a rope, climbed on a tree and hanged myself, but as I hanged, the branch broke off and I fell down, breaking my legs. A good Samaritan took me to hospital and encouraged me to live. Since then I never thought of suicide. I gave birth and I took good care of my daughter.” I asked her, “This child was in your womb when you were trying to commit suicide?” “Yes father”. She replied. “Then ask for forgiveness of the Lord, and pray for Divine Mercy to heal you and your child, so that the Lord may deliver you”, I advised her. The feelings of the mother affect the unborn child. “For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed” (Psalms 139:13-16). “Yet it was you who took me from the womb; you kept me safe on my mother’s breast. On you I was cast from my birth, and since my mother bore me you have been my God” (Psalms 22:9-10). Through prayers the girl was delivered from the feelings of rejection and also from the spirit of suicide.***





## AT BIRTH

We have seen how a mother's emotions will affect her unborn child. Similarly, a father's emotions also impact the unborn child, since he also is involved in the act of conception.

In one retreat there was a young woman, who gave a testimony of how she had a vision during the inner healing session. In the vision, she saw a man entering a room in which there was a baby lying in its cot. As soon as the man saw the baby, he started crying. This vision did not at first make sense to her, but she acknowledged that she always felt distant towards her father, was uneasy being around him and did not feel love towards him. It turned out that although her parents desired to have a son, they had had three daughters before her. They had, however, decided to try once more for a boy..., and she was conceived. At birth, much to the disappointment of the man the anticipated baby boy was instead, a baby girl. Whereas this man cried because of the birth of the baby girl to express his disappointment. That is why the baby girl had from the very beginning of her life felt rejection from her father. During the inner healing service, the merciful God who wants to heal us from all iniquities, revealed to her the cause of her failed relationship with her father. She received healing from this separation and her relationship with her father improved.

Let us see the events surrounding the birth of St. John the Baptist. His father Zechariah had been struck dumb for having doubted God's message that was delivered by the angel of the LORD (Luke 1:20). After John was born, Zechariah regained his speech only after he wrote the baby's name on the tablet; for we read that immediately his mouth was opened, his tongue freed, and he spoke, blessing God. But fear came upon all the neighbours, who went about discussing these matters throughout the hill country of Judea. All who heard these things took them to heart, wondering what this child would be like; for surely they could perceive that the hand of the Lord was with him (Luke 1:63-66). The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the desert until the day of his manifestation to Israel (Luke 1:80). At the opportune time, John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the desert of Judea and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (Matthew 3:1-3 & Luke 3:3-4); because he was the voice of one crying out in the desert, that all should prepare the way of the Lord and make straight his paths. This role of John the Baptist was spoken of years before

by his very own father, Zechariah, who was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied the same (Luke 1:67, 76-77).

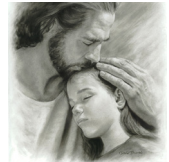
The first reaction of parents to the new born baby is very crucial for the future of the child. A gesture of love from the parents to the new born child gives confidence to the child. The only means of communication that is accepted by the child is that of a loving physical touch.



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### I DON'T WANT TO MARRY

*This girl who is a banker, 34 years old, does not want to get married. She says, "I don't have any feeling for men, and even if I get married it will be a failure as I have contempt for men." The mother tried her best to convince her and sent her for counselling with a trained counsellor. She even took her to a psychiatrist to know why she was undecided about her life. At last they decided to turn to Jesus, and came for a retreat. When I opened the scripture for her I found: "**For you are our father, though Abraham does not know us and Israel does not acknowledge us; you, O Lord, are our father; our Redeemer from of old is your name**" (Isaiah 63:16). I asked about her relationship with her father. She said everything is normal. But as I continued to pray I found that she was born in a family of four girls and one boy. She was the fourth born girl and the youngest one was the boy. The age difference was just one year. What we learned was that she was rejected as she was the fourth girl, the parents had hoped for a boy. She was indirectly rejected as she was not the expected guest into their family of three girls. This rejection developed in her as self-hatred and she felt that to be loved by others you have to be born as a boy not as a girl. The spirit of hatred entered into her at the very moment of her birth. She was not even properly breast-fed by the mother who bore a son shortly afterwards. I explained to her, God is a mother who can restore to us the love and care we were deprived of in our early childhood. God can feed us with motherly love, "**that you may nurse and be satisfied from her consoling breast; that you may drink deeply with delight from her glorious bosom. For thus says the Lord: I will extend prosperity to her like a river, and the wealth of the nations like an overflowing stream; and you shall nurse and be carried on her arm, and dandled on her knees. As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem**" (Isaiah 66:11-13). Now, this banker is married and settled in a good family with four children.*



## INFANCY AND CHILDHOOD

During infancy and childhood, one continues to need special care and love from the parents just as much as they did when they were infants. The children will also benefit from constant prayer of the parents, who should also involve the children in practicing a prayerful life. This period is crucial because it is the time during which the basic fundamental principles of life are ingrained in the mind of the child, who should not at any moment be made to feel unwanted, rejected or sidelined.

There is a special bond that develops between mother and baby during breastfeeding making the child feel loved and accepted. When a child is denied breastfeeding, it feels unwanted and unloved. Breast milk is medically proven to promote healthy growth of a child as the milk contains very essential nutrients that encourage healthy growth and development of the infant. Breast milk also contains antibodies that help prevent some infant diseases. But human beings also need bodily love and affection, for this is the nature of man. If for any reason we are denied these very essential human needs, we develop inordinate desires for them.

There is a case of a girl, who developed self-hatred because her mother's love was curtailed by the birth of her younger sibling. She therefore could neither love another, nor allow herself to be loved by others. (Lamentations 4:1-4). He describes it as gold that has lost its lustre, and the noble metal that has changed, while jewels (i.e. the children who are abandoned, starving, and even killed) lie scattered at the corner of every street. He decries precious children who are treated like clay jugs that are smashed and cannot be repaired. He compares a mother who fails to breastfeed her child to an ostrich in the desert, known to abandon her young. As a result, the poor infant's tongue cleaves to the roof of its mouth in thirst, and children beg for bread (read breast milk) but no one gives them even a little.

An example is seen of Hannah, the mother of Prophet Samuel. She named him Samuel because she asked the LORD for him (1 Samuel 1:20). The next time her husband Elkanah went up with the rest of his household to offer the customary sacrifice to the LORD and to fulfil his vows, Hannah did not go but instead opted to stay and take care of the baby until he was weaned. Only then would she be comfortable to take him to appear before the LORD and leave him there forever. The beauty of this decision was that even her husband Elkanah was in agreement with her, and so she remained at home and nursed her son until she had weaned him (1 Samuel 1: 21-28).

So, Hannah made this sacrifice with the first-fruit of her womb (her firstborn son), and offered him as a Nazarite for all time (cf. Numbers 6:2 & 1 Samuel 1:11). Samuel was thus trained to love and honour God right from early childhood, and so grew up to be ‘God-fearing’ (1 Samuel 2:26). The same can also be said of the Child Jesus, who advanced in wisdom and in years and in favour before God and man (Luke 2:40 & 52).

***An unhealthy marital relationship can definitely affect the children if:***

- *the parents are constantly fighting and arguing*
- *they are separated for sometime*
- *the parents never care for one another*
- *they raise issues as to who will bring up the children*
- *one partner walks out of the marriage*
- *the parents are unfaithful to one another*
- *the parents file a court case for divorce*
- *they refuse to pay school fees*
- *the issue of ‘who is the father’ comes up*
- *the father or the mother or both disown the child*
- *there are fights or quarrels with in-laws and relatives*

*(cf. 1Cor:7:14-16)*

Issues in marriage directly influence the children at a tender age. **When the children are not able to discern what is right and wrong, whatever their parents do as husband and wife dictates their future.**

The only language a small child can understand is the language of love, but if the parents show hatred to one another, the children grow up with that seed of hatred. If the husband and wife always use the language of threats, the children will grow up in fear. If the parents always speak about separation, the children will grow up with deep feelings of insecurity. Actually, most inner-wounds are transferred to children through unhealthy marriages.

## **IN MARRIAGE**

Sometimes life’s hurts can come to us when we are fully adult and even in dedicated life in marriage. As Scripture says, as in marriage the two shall become one, even their natures can affect each other. When a generous woman gets married to a man who is miserly she can also eventually be

miserly and vice versa. The influence comes with familiarity. We can see they even develop the same bad habit of the partner. One day the husband brought a woman addicted to drinking. While talking we came to know that she started drinking after marriage. The husband only taught her to drink for fun during parties. Later, even in the absence of the husband she continued drinking, and got addicted. She became more drunk than the husband! While talking she said, she does not understand how she became a drunkard as in her family no one drinks. **Marriage is such a great bond, through which no one can easily escape the influence of the other.**

If a girl has an unhealthy relationship with her mother or father, she will continue the same after her marriage. As marriage is just the continuation of life, unless one gets healed, one will continue to hurt. When a girl is hurt by the mother, she can substitute her with the mother-in-law and continue to mistreat her. **A troubled relationship of the mother with the in-laws can also affect the unborn babies.**

I met a boy, who hates all his relatives for no reason. Eventually, we came to know that this hatred was sown in him while he was in the womb of his mother. The mother had deep hatred towards all the in-laws and relatives as they made a false accusation against her.

This family came for counselling, as the wife refused to go with her husband into the new place of his appointment. She was strictly opposed to the transfer, even though it was a better option, with higher salary. We came to know from the wife that the husband never cares for her. She is even taken to the hospital by the neighbours, for the husband's concern is only his job and money. She understood, if she goes with him into a new place, she will be totally isolated, with no one to care for her. She was unable to leave her caring neighbours. She suffered rejection and felt insecure throughout her life since she got married.

### **AN EXAMPLE FROM THE LIFE OF SAMSON**

Hebrews 11 is a special chapter because the Old Testament heroes who adorn it have inspired our hearts. Of the characters, Abraham, Joseph, and Moses, there is really not a wonder at their inclusion; Rahab, Jephthah, and Samson, on the other hand, were such flawed people that one is forced to probe deeper into their record in an attempt to understand why they warrant the tribute given them. Let us examine the character of Samson, one of

Israel's judges. The book of Judges, 13, introduces us to the circumstances surrounding the birth of Samson. Samson was born to Manoah, whose wife was barren; this followed the announcement by the angel of God, which not only foretold the birth but also the mission of the child and his lifestyle. The reason for this instruction was that the boy was destined to be a Nazarite for God, right from the womb. It was he, who would begin to save Israel from the power of the Philistines (Judges 13:5). We see that his father was so concerned about this mission that he seeks to know exactly how this child was to be brought up (Judges 13:12). We are told that the woman bore a son and named him Samson; when the boy grew up the LORD blessed him, for the spirit of the LORD did come upon him (Judges 13:24-25). So we would expect his life to shine as an example of fidelity to God, what with the circumstances of his birth along with the training he received as a boy.

How sad that this did not come to pass, even though he appeared to have wholeheartedly accepted his role as one set apart to be a deliverer of the Lord's people from their pagan enemies. It seems that young Samson was aware that his was a special dedication to the LORD, and therefore he could do whatever pleased him. He became infatuated by some philistine woman that he simply looked at and ordered his parents to get her for him as a wife. He even had the audacity to retort that the father ought to get her for him because she was the one he wanted (Judges 14:1-3). It did not matter to him that this was going against Israelite principle. Unfortunately for Samson, from this moment onwards he led a lustful life that saw him fraternizing with a prostitute (Judges 16:1); that had him fall head-over-heels for the treacherous Delilah, even though he could discern her designing intentions right from the very start.

In his youth, Samson practically subordinated spiritual interests to the flesh. He did not live up to his training and dedication as a Nazarite, notwithstanding the efforts of his parents; in fact he no longer found it necessary to tell his parents what he did (Judges 14:6 and 9). At some point, he scooped out honey from a lion's carcass into his hands and ate it as he went along. His weakness towards the women who came into his life revealed itself in his inability to keep secrets; yet the success in his conflict with the Philistines depended largely on this. On two occasions the women he loved betrayed him to the Philistines (Judges 14:17 and 16:17), each time evoking him to great anger (Judges 14:19b and 16:28, 30). What we know for sure is that despite all the weaknesses that marred Samson, he remained

## WHY TURN TO JESUS!

true to his call; he did not hesitate to engage the enemy as a lone warrior. He never led an army, but his victories were achieved with only the LORD as his partner. He showed us an element of trusting faith when he called upon God for strength and sustenance,

*You have granted this victory by the hand of your servant - Judges 15:18*

and God allowed him to judge Israel for twenty years in the days of the Philistines (Judges 15:20 and 31). Even in his final prayer, he called upon the LORD and died a truly heroic death in faith; he thus killed more Philistines than those he had killed during his lifetime (Judges 16:30). Note that in this unfortunate single short prayer, Samson made reference to himself five times. What really happened to Samson? The life of young Samson was simply a mirror-image of the religious practice during his time because in those days everyone did what was right in their own sight (Judges 21:25). What is ironic indeed is that after all of these disobedient acts where Samson did what he thought was right in his own eyes, God allowed Samson's enemies to pluck out those very eyes.



***Samson's weaknesses were sins of the flesh, but the LORD who is a merciful God always responded to this judge when he called out for help.***

Samson's weaknesses were sins of the flesh, but the LORD who is a merciful God always responded to this judge when he called out for help. This means that Samson must have been sincere in his devotion, even though he was tragically weak in character. He was often profane, giving in to the urges of the flesh; but he was contrite at times as well. We can, however, conclude that he most certainly was effective in the commencement of Israel's overthrow of the godless Philistines, maybe not as effectively as he might have been if he had been as spiritually strong as he was physically. This is yet another wonderful example of how Almighty God can work his divine plan using even the most tarnished of characters to accomplish His purposes because God is a God who never forgets his covenant even when we commit sin, even when we forget it, he keeps his covenant (cf. Ezekiel 16:60).

## AN EXAMPLE FROM THE LIFE OF KING SAUL

There are people whose lives can be summed up in the adage, “It is not how you start; it is how you finish!” These are people who start out very well, grow into respectable individuals by means of their various successes, but subsequently ruin what could have been an exemplary way of life. The question many ask is usually, how could such a life have spiralled out of control? To understand how things become so mixed-up in a person’s life, we must know something about the person. Scripture gives the example of King Saul: how we ought to conduct ourselves when we are entrusted with a particular task. Saul had the honour of being Israel’s first king, at a time when Moses’ prophesy of Israel’s desire for a king was fulfilled (Deuteronomy 17:14-15).

Saul was anointed in accordance with the wishes of the people, by an unhappy Prophet Samuel, with instruction from an equally unhappy God (1 Samuel 8:6-7). The people wanted a big strong man, an all-powerful leader who would make all the decisions so that they could sit back and throw off the heavy burden of responsibility (1 Samuel 8:20). This king was destined to have real power and tremendous responsibility, without lording it over the people; hence the warning given by Prophet Samuel (1 Samuel 8:10-18). The first meeting between Saul and Samuel happened because Saul was seeking a seer to tell him where his father’s donkeys were. In this meeting, Saul showed a demeanour of a modest and humble individual (1 Samuel 9:21); subsequently, Samuel anointed him ruler over the people of Israel (1 Samuel 10:1).

At this anointing, Samuel foretold some signs that did come to pass (1 Samuel 10:9-13), but amongst the signs was that Saul would become a changed man (1 Samuel 10:6). Why is this significant? When Saul’s uncle asked about Saul’s whereabouts, Saul remained silent about the kingship bestowed to him by Samuel (1 Samuel 10:16). Whether this behaviour was a sign of humility or modesty, it replayed itself when Samuel gathered the nation to announce Saul as the chosen king; Saul was nowhere to be found, for he was hiding among the baggage (1 Samuel 10:20-22). Saul was earlier on informed by God’s prophet that he was Israel’s chosen king; he had no business arguing or rejecting the offer or even hiding from it, even if he had no desire for honour or power. True leadership requires the leader to take the initiative and distinguish between honour due him and the honour due his position; otherwise it would forever ruin his standing among the people.



### WHAT DESTROYED KING SAUL?

In the following section, we will see what led Saul, who was specially anointed and appointed by God Himself, destroyed his life. It will help us to guard ourselves from falling in those traps.

#### 1. Self Pity

When he finally took his place among the people, Saul stood head and shoulders above all the people; physically, morally and ethically (1 Samuel 10:23-24). He was an exemplary person, and he had started out well. When he left the inauguration to go home to Gibeah, he was accompanied by warriors whose hearts the LORD had touched. However, there were some worthless people who despised him and brought him no tribute (1 Samuel 10:26-27). In the name of humility or modesty, the king remained silent in the face of this mockery. Why? Saul was wounded! This flaw in Saul's leadership would forever plague the Israelites and would become glaringly apparent throughout Saul's brief and largely tragic two-year reign. About one month later, Saul rose to the occasion and accepted the kingship; he rallied the Israelites, who came out in large numbers to fight and defeat the Ammonites. Saul thus demonstrated his ability to command Israel's army and defend the land, and his kingship was ratified at Gilgal (1 Samuel 11:14-15). He established his authority as king and solidified his leadership although he still acted in humility and modesty while handling those who had previously despised him (1 Samuel 11:12-13). He had finally won the popularity conquest with the people, but he would henceforth seek to please the people... at all cost!

#### 2. Human Pleasing

Saul's seemingly innate humility was once again put to the test when the people were faced with a Philistine attack. As the Philistines also assembled for battle, Saul's soldiers realized their army was hard-pressed, so they hid themselves in caves, thickets, rocks, caverns, and cisterns (1 Samuel 13:5-6). With all his army trembling in fear behind him, Saul waited seven days until the appointed time set for Samuel to come and offer the sacrifice to the LORD; but Samuel did not come, and the army deserted Saul. To save face, Saul made the fatal mistake of sacrificing the burnt offering himself (1 Samuel 13:9); he even offered a most pathetic excuse as explanation for his act of disobedience (1 Samuel 13:11-12). But Saul's fate was forever sealed; for Samuel reproved him for his disobedience and informed him that this act had effectively ended his kingship. In fact the Lord had sought out a man

after God's own heart to appoint as ruler over His people because Saul did not observe what the LORD commanded him (1 Samuel 13:11-12). From now henceforth, all of Saul's blunders would be as a result of him wanting to please the people, to look good in their eyes. *"For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ"* (Galatians 1:10).

### **3. Peer Pressure**

One may be mistaken to think that having been thus informed, Saul would want to make amends with the LORD given that an Israelite victory depended on God (cf. 1 Samuel 14:6, 10, 12-23). No, Saul only thought of how he would save face with the people; he pushed on with arrangements to stand against the Philistines' military power and superior technology (1 Samuel 13:15-22). Saul's flaws only continued to be exposed each day, what with the oath that he laid upon the Israelite army effectively causing the people to sin against the LORD (1 Samuel 13:24-35). Saul was so audacious that he even suggested to the people that their sin would easily be wiped away by him (Saul) building an altar and slaughtering animals upon it! Why? It was once again so as to gain favour with the people. Worse still, he thought going for more Philistine blood was a good idea even though his subjects thought otherwise (1 Samuel 14: 36).

### **4. Self Justification**

The worst bit in this unfortunate incident was that Saul tried to justify the disobedience by saying the spoil was meant to be offered to God as sacrifice; Saul was thus rejected by God (1 Samuel 15: 10-23, 26).

If you are wondering whether Saul ever recognized the source of all his blunders, the answer is, "yes, he did." He admitted to Samuel that he feared the people and had obeyed them in place of the LORD's word (1 Samuel 15: 24). Did he ask for help? Yes, from Samuel and not from God (1 Samuel 15: 25)! However, God who is merciful did not depose Saul on the spot. Even the ensuing struggle between David and Saul, would be all about popularity with the people and the likelihood of David being favoured for kingship (1 Samuel 18:8-9, 11-12, 15-16, 30). In his woundedness, it never occurred to Saul that kingship was the LORD's domain and not the people's; he therefore wasted much of his career chasing after David (1 Samuel 18:29). In fact, the final years of King Saul's life brought a general decline in his service to the nation and in his personal fortunes. He spent much time, energy and expense trying to kill David rather than consolidating the gains of his earlier victories. In the end, it is this obsession with David that enabled the Philistines to crush Saul's troops,

and kill all of his sons including Jonathan. Even further disobedience by way of divination only served to remind Saul that the Lord's plan for David would march onward (1 Samuel 28:17-19), and that no sorcery could thwart it. In the end, Saul's promising life ended on a final note of shame (1 Samuel 31:4-10). King Saul teaches us that, human influence will lead us to self justification that can only take us away from God's purpose in our lives and his annoiting for the future.

### **AN EXAMPLE FROM THE LIFE OF ELI**

#### **THE WEAKNESSES AND FAILURES OF ELI**

In the following section, we will see what led Eli, who was specially anointed and appointed by God Himself, failed in his special call. It will help us to protect ourselves from these weaknesses and failures.

#### **Failure to Rule His Own Household**

The Bible has records of how people lived, so that by endurance and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope (Romans 15:4). This is important because even when we have apparently run the good race, things can go awry. Consider Eli, the high priest and judge in Israel (1 Samuel 2: 12+). This was the highest and most responsible of positions among the people of God. He was a man divinely chosen for the sacred duties of the priesthood, and set over the land as the highest judicial authority. He was God's man, therefore he was meant to be a good example, for he wielded a great influence over the tribes of Israel. For a man appointed to govern the people, he failed to rule his own household because he was an indulgent father. He loved peace and ease so much that he did not exercise his authority to correct the evil habits and passions of his own children. Instead of challenging or punishing them, he submitted to their will and allowed them to do as they pleased. He regarded the education of his sons as a matter of little consequence, despite it being one of the most important of his responsibilities. One cannot even argue on his behalf and claim he had been left in darkness as to the duty of restraining and governing the children that God had so generously given into his care (1 Samuel 2: 22-24). He simply shrank from this duty, because he feared it involved crossing the will of his sons, and would make it necessary to punish and deny these that he loved too much (1 Samuel 2: 25). He did not weigh the consequences that would follow his course, and indulged his children in whatever they desired. He thus neglected the work of fitting them for the service of God and the duties of life (1 Samuel 2:12-17).

### **Failure to Correct His Children**

Earlier on we see that God had singled out Abraham (as he has singled out all fathers) so that the LORD may put into effect the promises he made about him. He (the father) was to direct his children and his household in the future to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just (Genesis 18:19). **Eli did a great job in raising Samuel to fear God, yet he allowed his own children to control him, thereby becoming subject to them.** The course of his sons was marked in corruption and evil, for they had neither proper appreciation of the character of God nor of the sacredness of His law. They turned God's service into a common thing. Despite growing up accustomed to the reverence of the sanctuary and its service, they lost all sense of its holiness and significance. The worst part was that their father had not corrected their want of reverence for his authority, nor had he put a stop to their disrespect for the solemn services of the sanctuary.

### **He Permitted His Children to do an Unholy Service to God**

Eventually in manhood, they were full of the deadly fruits of scepticism and rebellion. They were absolutely unfit for the office, but that did not stop Eli from placing them as priests in the sanctuary to minister before God. They did not realize the solemnity of this symbolic service, but thought only of how they could make it a means of self-indulgence even if it meant using violence to obtain it (1 Samuel 2:16). This irreverence on the part of the priests would soon rob the service of its holy and solemn significance, and the people came to practically abhor the offering of the Lord (1 Samuel 2:17). The tabernacle of God was continuously polluted by their presence. People were filled with indignation at the corrupt course of their so-called priests and ceased to go up to the appointed place of worship. The service which God had specifically ordained was despised and neglected because of the association with the sins of wicked men, while those whose hearts were inclined to evil were deeply emboldened in sin. This resulted in continued ungodliness, depravity, and even idolatry.

Eli greatly erred in permitting his sons to minister in holy office. He excused their course one way or another and became blinded to their sins, such that they went so far as to reach a point where he could no longer hide his eyes from their crimes. When the people complained of these violent deeds, it so grieved and distressed the high priest that he could no longer remain silent. But he had brought up his sons to think of no one but themselves, and now they cared for no one else. They saw the grief of their

father, but their hardened hearts remained untouched (1 Samuel 2: 25b). His mild admonitions did not impress them; neither would they change their evil course despite being warned of the consequences of their sins. Eli feared to deal justly with his wicked sons, for they would have been rejected from the priestly office and then punished with death. He sustained them in the most sacred positions of trust because he dreaded to bring public disgrace and condemnation upon them. The corruption he permitted them to mingle with the holy service of God inflicted an injury upon the cause of truth, which no number of years could efface. Therefore, when the judge of Israel neglected his work, God had to take the matter in hand and the fate of Eli's house was sealed (1 Samuel 2:30).

### **He Loved His Children More Than God**

Eli was wounded by the blind affection he held for his children! He was more anxious to shield their reputation than to glorify God; more desirous to please them than to please the Lord and keep His service from every appearance of evil. He should have first attempted to restrain their evil by mild measures; and if these failed, he should have subdued the wrong by severe means. **By not reproving sin and executing justice upon the sinners, he could not be depended upon to keep Israel pure. He was no longer the influencer, he was the influenced.** He must have been engaging in, or at least approving of, their practice of indulgence by eating of this meat himself; for he was old and heavy (1 Samuel 4:18). Whatever the case, Eli and his sons were found to be wholly unworthy of the exalted position of priests in God's service; God could not accomplish the good that He had meant to do through them, simply because they failed to do their part.

Eli was fatally wounded by his tolerance of his sons' wickedness. He could not dare to make intercession on their behalf; he knew he could not shield them from the wrath of a holy God. How could he, when his own family had all but cast contempt upon the means that Heaven itself had provided for man's redemption, and had put God to open shame? (cf. Hebrews 6:6). Eli teaches us that failure to correct and form children at the proper time will cause parents in their old age, feelings of rejection, rebellion and disobedience from their children, lack of respect and many other wounds.

We are going to learn how the power of repentance can lead us to inner healing. In the following example of Judas, we are trying to imagine if he had repented the good Lord who does not want even a wicked person to perish would have saved his soul.

## IMAGINE, IF JUDAS REPENTED AND TURNED TO JESUS

We must stress that inner wounds can be resolved through repentance. One of the Lord's apostles, namely Judas Iscariot, makes for a study. He was the only apostle from Judaea, while the rest were from Galilee. He earned himself a few infamous titles, including that of traitor (Luke 6: 16); he betrayed the Lord (Matthew 10:4 and Mark 3:19); the son of destruction (John 17:12); he who turned away to go to his own place (Acts 1:25). Why would one who was chosen by the LORD Jesus, end up with a predictive designation suggestive of eternal destruction? The answer lies in the events that followed the selection of the twelve. According to St. Mark, after Jesus selected the twelve they went into a house but the crowd again gathered making it impossible for them even to eat (Mark 3:20). His relatives set out to seize him because they thought He was out of his mind; and the scribes who had come from Jerusalem said He was possessed by Beelzebul (Mark 3: 21-22). But what did Judas experience as soon as Jesus selected him? That this was appointment into a unique circle of apostles; that some of Jesus' relatives disbelieved Him and thought He was out of His mind, but Judas knew that Jesus had extraordinary charisma that attracted large crowds which came flocking wherever He went. Judas saw potential political power, influence, and wealth; he definitely wanted in on this action because being connected with Jesus seemed like a fast track to success.

He did get his place among the twelve, as the one who kept the money bag he was the one who knew best how the money needed to sustain the Lord's ministry was handled (John 13:29). But Judas was of flawed character. He pretended to care so much for the poor by citing Mary Magdalene's display of love, gratitude, and worship of the LORD as wastage; secondly, he was a thief pilfering funds from the Lord's money box. He was a hard-hearted man, full of avarice, who only wanted to feather his own nest irrespective of other less fortunate people suffering around him (John 12:3-6). Judas followed Jesus not because his inner man had converted to Him, but because he hoped for personal gain by their relationship. From the very beginning, Judas was not in tandem with Jesus for he rejected the LORD's message on more than one occasion. Jesus even predicted several times that He would be betrayed, so this act of Judas really should not have shocked any who had eyes to see and ears to hear (Psalm 41:10 and John 13:18).

It appears that something happened at the anointing of Jesus at Bethany, because this event is followed by Judas contacting the religious leaders to make

## WHY TURN TO JESUS!

a deal (Matthew 26:14-16). Judas was stung by the LORD's rebuke and became increasingly disenchanted because Jesus' messianic prospects seemed to be dimming; he therefore opted to cut his losses. However, we see that Jesus did not blame Judas for the betrayal (John 6:70). We see that the devil did possess Judas twice in the same week (Luke 22:3 and John 13:27); it seems that Judas was open to satan possessing him when and how satan wanted to, because he was already an induced man (John 13:2). When Jesus was condemned to death, Judas deeply regretted his action and was remorseful; he admitted to having betrayed innocent blood and he even returned the thirty pieces of silver he had been paid (Matthew 22:3-4). The sad bit is that he made this confession and restitution to the wrong people (his fellow culprits!), who refused to hear him out; Judas despaired and went and hanged himself (Matthew 27:5). If Judas had turned to Jesus, the Merciful Master, he too would have been saved (Mt.18:14). If Jesus saved the thief hanging at his right, at the last moment, what about Judas? How could one who was daily exposed to the Truth not embrace it, use it, and obey it? It is as though the more he heard, the more he rejected, and the more his heart hardened. His conscience became so hardened, that he could no longer feel the critique of the Word (the LORD Jesus Himself!), or the conviction of the Holy Spirit. His inner self gradually hardened to the point of becoming a convenient habitation for the devil. Judas moved from love of money, to jealousy, to resentment, to betrayal, to despair and to suicide; he thus lost the opportunity for eternal reward to the glory of God. Yet God could have delivered Judas from this treachery and self-defeat, ***if only he had REPENTED***; for the same God raised up David from sure defeat to victory in the civil war with his treacherous son, Absalom, because David confessed his sin, repented, and his heart was still inclined to serve the LORD. Similarly, the LORD brought Jonah back from the depths of the Mediterranean Sea to minister to Nineveh because in the belly of the great fish, Jonah repented! St. Paul says we must not grow tired of doing good, for in due time we reap our harvest if only we do not give up (Galatians 6:9). It is God's business to take care of the likes of Judas; our business is to be faithful for as long as He gives us breath and energy to serve.



***God could have delivered Judas from this treachery and self-defeat, if only he had REPENTED***

# CHAPTER THREE

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## IDENTIFYING INNER WOUNDS

*A physical wound is known by the manner in which it is manifested. A wounded mind is also known by its manifestations, such as evil thoughts, bitter words, regret, unforgiveness, anger, loneliness, suspicion, resentment, hatred, distrust etc.*



***Inner wounds develop through the words, action or inaction of others or of self. If a physical wound is left untreated, it may lead to separation of the body from the soul (death). Likewise, inner wounds if not healed can cause physical, spiritual and emotional bondages.***



Inner wounds cause infirmity (cf. Proverbs 15:13); and may lead one to commit offenses (cf. Psalms 37:1 and 73:13). These wounds can be hooks for demonic spirits to claim legal ownership of a life. For example, if someone is wounded in disappointment, the spirit of vengeance may become attached to one's mind, which will be on the look-out to seek revenge in all things.

### **Word of God helps us to identify our inner wounds**

We know that reading brings understanding. Even Daniel “perceived in the books” (cf. Daniel 9:2), since wisdom is the principal thing to search for (Proverbs 4:7). Most Christian literature is written through inspiration, although clearly most is done by aspiration. Whether by inspiration or by aspiration, literature proves that whatever we go through, others have gone through the same situations and have come out triumphant (1 Corinthians 10:13). Knowing this helps to bring healing through the revelation that we will be healed if we forgive those who hurt us, if we are patient in our tribulations and if we encourage others who are in similar situations. This revelation comes through the Word of God, which is the work of the Holy Spirit to heal inner wounds by revealing what is hidden. We must judge situations using the Word of God, since it has total authority on spiritual matters.

The Letter to the Hebrews says the Word of God is indeed living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword that easily penetrates even between the soul and the spirit, the joints and the marrow; and is able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart (Hebrews 4:12). St. John warns us that since many false prophets have gone out into the world, we must not trust every spirit but we are to test the spirits to see whether they belong to God (1 John 4:1). **A General cannot put wounded soldiers in the forefront of a battle.** There is a crucial need to raise formidable end-time disciples because the battle is not for the wounded-hearted. Inner wounds must be healed if the work is to triumph. **When the inner wound is healed, the spirit is restored to God and the physical body is in good health** (cf. 3 John 1:2). Despite this, God's people still perish for lack of knowledge because they reject knowledge by not reading the Bible and spiritual books, which can help us to identify our inner wounds and give us proper directions to receive inner healing.



### WHY DOES HE DELAY MY MARRIAGE?

*“Father, I am 36 years old, I don’t know why the Lord delays my marriage as I don’t find any breakthrough in finding a God-fearing man to marry me.” We asked her, “Did you forgive everybody?” She said, “I had a boyfriend whom I trusted so much and believed to marry me, we were in courtship for more than 6 years, then all of a sudden he told me he is not interested in me anymore and he went on to marry a friend of mine. Since then I never forgave him from my heart; there was a time I even paid his university fees and helped him out; I could never think that he could cheat me like this, I still have not forgiven him!” We told her, “then you see, it is not the Lord who delayed your marriage but it is you who delayed your forgiveness; **“I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses”** (Mark 11:24-25). Also, **“the Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance”** (2 Peter 3:9), for he says, **‘At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you.’ See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation!** (2 Corinthians 6:2). Forgiveness is the key that opens the door of heaven.*



### MANIFESTATIONS OF INNER WOUNDS

It is the will and purpose of God for us, that just as He created us good (given that all the works of the Lord are very good - Sirach 39:16), so are we to be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:23). We are told in the Book of Wisdom that He created all things that they might exist... (cf. Wisdom 1:14). The psalmist sings praises to God for having been fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalms 139:14). And the book of Sirach tells us that all his works are desirable and sparkling to see (Sirach 42:22). Since He created us good, His desire is that we remain pure and undefiled until the end of our time here on earth. God is pure and holy; so, if we are to enjoy life with Him in heaven after our life here on earth, we too should strive to be pure and holy like Him.

However, we know that this desire that God has for us does not always come to be because of many influences. It could be the nature of the environment we grow up in, the environment we are in, or even the experiences we go

through as we journey through life. So we find ourselves with positive as well as negative and improper behaviours that we cannot claim just happen. Usually there is something deep within the mind, brain, memory and/or heart that triggers them. They are triggered by certain situations or circumstances, so that the behaviour becomes manifest. Whatever goes on within then becomes portrayed outwardly, in the mannerisms that are exhibited such as in talking, in relating with others, in the way things are, the way we talk, the way we relate to others and the way we do things in general. Think of the husband who vents his frustrations on his poor wife, who then leads a miserable, mistreated life. Or a man who wallows in self-pity and ends up heavily drunk. How about the mother who has the art of getting angry with her children, or an uncle who sexually abuses a young niece left in his care, or the teenager who has no respect for elders and often insults her mother? Or even a student who remains angry at a teacher whom she believes is responsible for an exam he/she failed or a man who abuses an old man who fired him from a job many years ago. And the 60-year-old widow who says she never forgave her mother for being drunk all the time while she was growing up. She, who left home at the age of 18 and never went back even though she heard the mother had quit drinking. These are some signs of inner-wounds.

### **How do you know you are affected by Inner Wounds?**

- ***Feelings of Uneasiness and Heaviness:*** If there is often a sense of uneasiness and hurt-feeling that comes up every now and then.
- ***Irritability:*** If you are irritable even when nothing is going wrong.
- ***Lack of tolerance:*** If you have very high intolerable expectations and demands of others.
- ***Uncontrollable Feelings:*** If you feel angry, hatred, and/or resentment for even the slightest offences.
- ***Oversensitive about past events:*** If you are very sensitive on past issues, or you become very angry about past incidents, or you lash out unnecessarily.
- ***Refuse to forgive:*** If you refuse to forgive others, and you keep grudges even when nothing wrong has been done to you.
- ***Refuse to feel loved:*** If you are surrounded by people who love you, but you can't feel nor receive that love.
- ***Sudden Outbursts of anger:*** If you have inner-wounds you will easily lash out or have sudden outbursts of anger, hate, resentment, etc. You may even lash out at people who love you, and have done you no harm.
- ***Angry towards God:*** If you accuse God for your failures, troubles and hardships, and if you have hatred towards God.

- ***Self-hatred:*** If anyone thinks they deserved what happened to them because of who they are or because of something they must have done.
- ***Easily frustrated:*** If you are easily frustrated by small inconveniences and responsibilities of daily life.
- ***Escapism:*** If you have the tendency to escape or suppress reality by overeating, drinking, smoking, listening to dirty music or watching pornography. When a person indulges in escapism, he opens the door to spirits of addiction, which make the bondages impossible to break.
- ***Wounding others:*** If you have a habit of using sharp words towards others; you are holding on to much pain.
- ***Retaliation urges:*** Due to self-hatred, anger, unforgiveness and unhealed inner-wounds, it becomes easy to take revenge on those who you think offend.
- ***Irresponsible behaviour:*** If you don't feel good about yourself, you will try to destroy yourself and those around you. You will be very careless in your lifestyle.
- ***Irrational expectations of others:*** Somebody who has been wounded may set very high expectations from others. They feel that others ought to maintain unrealistic standards, and are intolerable of any mistakes made. Inability to put up with others' shortfalls.
- ***Perfectionism:*** A person who has an emotional wound may also be performance-driven. Perhaps they feel that no matter what they did, they could never please a parent or authority figure, and later on in life, that rejection causes the person to be a high-performer to the point where they are never satisfied with their own efforts.
- ***Feelings of hopelessness:*** In hopeless situations, the love of God is blocked out of your life. Thus it is difficult to see why He would love or care for you, and you become an easy target for feelings of hopelessness.
- ***Living in a Dream:*** When you suffer from an emotional wound, it creates a sense of void in your life which sends you in search of meaning, purpose or happiness. This could be in the form of college degrees, careers, or financial success rather than appreciating the person who God made you to be.
- ***Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder:*** Often involves emotional wounds that were never fully healed. This is especially true with people who have bondages to self-hatred, self-resentment, self-unforgiveness, etc.
- ***Hostility towards God, self, and others:*** Because of bound-up emotions, a person is hostile towards God, other people or even themselves. This could be in the form of bitterness against God for not preventing something from happening to you, bitterness against somebody who you think may have wronged or harmed you emotionally, or bitterness against yourself for failures that you have fallen into yourself.

### **The wound of unfulfilled desires**

This wound causes great dangers in our life. It commonly occurs among the youth, where, for example, you find them:

- Buying unnecessary things because others have them.
- Being so passionate about mobile phones.
- Not being satisfied with any material thing that they have.
- Being troubled by the wounds of unfulfilled desires.

This is one reason many youths fall into, and as quickly, out of love, without getting into marriage. They do not realize that these love break-ups cause the great wound of unfulfilled desires. Subsequently, they cannot be satisfied in any relationship. They end up lacking trust in others because their capacity to love becomes corrupted. There are people who have the habit of changing houses or even changing jobs every so often. They are always unsettled, their reason being that they are not happy. This is because they have this wound of unfulfilled desires in their hearts. The sad thing is that these people cannot, and will not, settle, unless they receive healing from the LORD. They can become a menace to society and do harm to their souls. We must pray that the LORD God heals us from the wound of unfulfilled desires; Those things which trouble us every now and then. Those many desires that we have had in our life that have yet to be met. We must come to trust in Jesus that He may wash us in His precious Blood.

There are also inner wounds that lead to sin. In the book of Sirach we read that *“reason is the beginning of every work and counsel precedes every undertaking”* (Sirach 37:16). **If your mind is preoccupied with filthy thoughts, you risk getting into mortal sin.** As St. James teaches, when a desire is conceived in the heart, it gives birth to sin; and then when that sin is fully grown, it gives birth to death (James 1:15).

The Letter to the Hebrews implores us to see to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God and that no root of bitterness springs up to cause trouble and through it many become defiled (Hebrews 12:15). The writer is speaking about hatred and what it can do to society. Likewise, a stubborn mind will be afflicted at the end and whoever loves danger will perish by it. Many a time the stubborn mind is burdened by troubles and the sinner heaps one sin upon another (Sirach 3:26-27).

Others remain unrepentant thinking that no one has power over them, and

claiming that nothing happened to them in their sinfulness. They forget that the LORD is capable, and sure to punish them for it, were it not for his being slow to anger (Sirach 5:3 - 4). Some are reckless or careless in their speech. Others are slow and negligent in their duties. Some are like lions in their homes and others live only to find fault in others, particularly those who are subordinate to them. All these lead them to sinfulness (cf. Sirach 4:29-30). There are also some bad habits which are a result of inner wounds, including drinking, smoking, drug abuse, masturbation, nail biting, excessive gum-chewing, over-eating, always wearing headphones, unnecessary self-medicating, picking at your skin, etc. Some have unfulfilled desires such as living with a wrong partner, staying in a wrong job, studying an unsuitable course, undiagnosable sicknesses and unrelenting poverty. Yet St. Paul teaches that we should rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances because this is what the LORD God wills for you in Christ Jesus (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

***NB: For further manifestations of inner wounds, please kindly go to page 240 and also refer to the book, 'You are not rejected' by Fr. Antony Parankimalil VC, page 128. Also, please note that these behaviors are not limited to inner wounds only, they can also be manifestation of other causes.***

**Here are some questions that may help you to discern the type of inner wounds that afflict you:**

- *Were you greatly embarrassed when you were a child or young adult?*
- *Do you have unreasonable fears?*
- *Do you often find your reaction to something said or done is out of proportion to whatever the stimulus was?*
- *Do you have a recurring memory of a past hurt?*
- *Does it still trouble you to think about a past incident?*
- *Are there people you feel you cannot forgive?*
- *Do you have trouble asking someone else to forgive you?*
- *Do you have overwhelming feelings of guilt?*
- *Do you find it nearly impossible to admit making a mistake?*
- *Do you usually look for someone else to blame for what goes wrong in your life?*
- *Do you have an almost continuous feeling of anger?*
- *Are you usually critical in your remarks or thoughts about others?*
- *Do you suffer physical or mental exhaustion from wrestling with inner*

*problems?*

- *Were you an adult before you ever felt loved by another person?*
- *Do you often compare yourself with others and end up feeling inadequate and discouraged?*
- *Do you have a constant need for physical affection?*
- *Do you have a strong desire to be touched or not touched at all?*
- *Do you have a deep sense of insecurity?*
- *Do you feel unloved or disapproved of?*
- *Is it hard for you to believe that God loves you and approves you?*
- *Do you find it difficult to give and receive love?*

If you have answered “yes” to any of these questions, it is time to be honest with yourself and seek healing. Think about someone who walks into a doctor’s clinic but is not clear whether the problem is a headache, a stomachache, a runny nose, or an ingrown toenail. How would this person expect the doctor to give adequate medication? This is also what happens with cases of inner wounds. When people are seeking for inner healing, they know that there is a problem. However, they are reluctant to look into the past to figure out the source or the beginning of this wound. If you want to receive healing for an emotional wound, you must first be honest with yourself about what happened.

The point here is that you must be specific, and you should go as far back as you possibly can into that incident. If you can figure out how and when the wound began, and who is responsible, you will have taken the first step towards receiving healing for that inner wound:

### **1. What did they do to you?**

Here make a list of everything that was done to you, and identify those which you still hold against the offender. These would include things which you still hold onto in your heart or things that you do NOT seem to ever forget, or people and events that weigh heavily upon your heart. It is prudent that you do not try to cover up the mistakes and say that it was alright. Rather, face them! It is good if you can write it as a letter to Jesus and read it out personally before the Blessed Sacrament.

### **2. What things have you done, that you deeply regret?**

Now make a list of things that you still regret doing. You need to be honest about feelings of self-hate, unforgiveness to self. Then, try to figure out why

you hate yourself. Invite Jesus into that particular incident and surrender it unto his feet.

### **3. Is there anything in your past that you feel excessively embarrassed about or ashamed of?**

This is a common cause for self-hate. This is a good time to make a list of those things that you are yet to forgive yourself for. This will help you to effectively forgive and release any secretly held hate that you harbour within your heart.

The point to note is the importance of getting right down to the roots, and lay out the specific reasons why there are unhealed wounds. Spiritual infections, just like natural infections, will grow worse when left to fester in the dark. Therefore, the issues must be brought to light, so that they no longer fester, but receive the healing light of Christ into the affected areas of the mind and emotions. Failure to be open and honest in bringing these issues out into the light will hinder the healing power of the Holy Spirit from ministering and bringing about healing in your mind and emotions in those wounds. *“I, I am He who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins”* (Is. 43:25).



#### **NO MARRIAGE FOR HIS CHILDREN**

A chairman was asking a question regarding his daughters who were not getting suitable life partners. He said, his life is all about serving God. He prays, crying out unto the Lord daily, never fails to attend Sunday Mass. *“Father, I don’t know why God is deaf to my prayers.”* As we know he is a practicing Catholic and no visible malice was found in him, we truly prayed for him and we got a Word of God regarding His personal life from Malachi 2:13-16, ***“and this you do as well: You cover the Lord’s altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favour at your hand. You ask, ‘Why does he not?’ Because the Lord was a witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. Did not one God make her? Both flesh and spirit are his. And what does the one God desire? Godly offspring. So look to yourselves, and do not let anyone be faithless to the wife of his youth. For I hate divorce, says the Lord, the God of Israel, and covering one’s garment with violence, says the Lord of hosts. So take heed to yourselves and do not be faithless”***. We asked



him, "Did you have a wife when you were young and had children with her?" he said "Yes". "Why did you leave her?" we inquired. Because we were in school, I thought it was just a mistake of our younger days. **"I hate divorce, says the Lord again, "have you not read that the one who made them at the beginning "made them male and female", and said, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh?" So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate"** (Matthew 19:4-6). He had completely neglected and forgotten about his wife of his youth and the child. We told him, when you become a father to all your children and pray for their welfare, the Lord is going to remove the blocks for your daughters. Ours is a just God, Proverbs 21:3 says, **"to do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice"**.



### **Keys to inner healing:**

#### **1. Believe that God is not angry with you.**

*Feelings of guilt and shame should be settled*, including the thought that God is somehow disappointed or angry with you. A physical wound must first be cleansed from germs if it is to heal properly. In dealing with spiritual or emotional wounds, carrying around extra baggage such as guilt, shame or fear, makes the healing process more difficult. One of the foundations to receive inner healing is to get oneself to know that God loves, forgives, and accepts you as you are. Knowing that God is not angry or disappointed in you creates a free atmosphere where you can easily cast your burdens unto the LORD Jesus, and trust Him to take care of them. Carrying the burden of shame hinders the inner healing process because it mentally separates you from the healing work of Jesus. If you want to freely receive healing for your damaged emotions, you need to settle it in your mind that God is not angry with you. Then you stand by God's Word that your sins are forgiven and washed by the Blood of Christ (Is.43:18-25).

#### **2. Believe that God is ready to turn to you**

*Another key to receiving inner healing depends on your perception of God* and what He thinks about you and your need for healing (Heb.13:5b; Rom.8:30-32; Ex.15:26; Jn.14:1). You must realize that God is always ready to turn towards you to heal and deliver you from all your problems! You should not blame God for your problems because such an act only serves to put up a

spiritual wall that hinders His healing power from flowing into your mind and emotions. You must understand that the Holy Spirit does not control your free will. It is important that your free will allows Him to do His work. You must accept that God is always for you, and He is never against you. He only desires to heal and restore you to wholeness, more than you yourself do. Take courage and expose those wounds to the Light, that they may be healed. If you leave them in the dark, they can never be healed. It is like putting a bandage on an infected physical wound, and expecting it to dry and heal; it obviously will get worse. You must expose, wash, disinfect and embalm it to start the healing process. Likewise, you must cast your cares upon Him who cares for you (cf. 1 Peter 5:7). Realize that Christ has already taken your pain on the cross, and is only waiting for you to turn it over to Him. He waits to heal your wounds. As Prophet Isaiah says, He has surely borne our infirmities and carried our diseases much as we have accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. He was wounded for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities, for upon Him was the punishment that made us whole. And it is by his bruises that we are most certainly healed (cf. Isaiah 53:4-5). The LORD Jesus shed His blood while carrying our grief, pains and afflictions so that we do not have to do it for ourselves.

### ***3. A grateful heart leads to forgiveness***

*We should turn to Jesus* with a thankful heart and praise and worship him for He has already healed us by His wounds (1Pt.2:24; Ex.23:25). Therefore, *being thankful for Jesus' carrying our sorrows* lead us to forgiveness. If you choose to carry your own sorrows, it is because either you don't really realize or believe that He carried them for you, or you have not taken the time to think about and understand what it is that Jesus did for you. If you seriously consider what the LORD Jesus Christ did for you, it is impossible to be unthankful for such a gift that He has so lovingly and freely purchased for you! When you are thankful, you become eager to take advantage of what the LORD has lovingly done for you. Imagine the LORD Jesus standing there beside you with tears in His eyes, feeling the hurt and suffering that you are going through. You ask, "Why"? It is because He CARES for you! It is true that Jesus wept for love of Lazarus (cf. John 11:35-36), and He weeps for love of you.

Developing a thankful attitude is very important to receiving inner healing (cf. 1Thes.5:18; Phil.4:19). This is because thankfulness leads to trustfulness. If you are thankful for what God has given you, you will find it easy to trust

Him in all areas of your life. Being thankful is also a big key to overcoming rejection issues because when you see all that Christ has done for you, it becomes impossible to feel rejected by your heavenly Father. St. Paul demands that you let the peace of Christ control your hearts and be thankful (Colossians 3:15), lest you suffer the consequences of being unthankful. Or that you become vain in your reasoning and your senseless minds are darkened (cf. Romans 1:21b). **Learn that an unthankful heart is prone to unforgiving, unloving, resentment, and all sorts of hateful feelings against others.** This is poison to your emotional health and ability to receive the healing that God wants to bring to your wounds and hurts. **Those who are unforgiving and judgmental towards others have forgotten what God has done for them.** Anybody who is truly thankful for how God has treated them would most certainly treat others in the same way that God treated them. Rev Fr. Leo Clifford prayed “*Lord, you gave me so many things, give me one more thing: a grateful heart.*”

#### ***4. Put your trust in God and turn to Him***

If you are wondering just how you can start, ***begin by being thankful for the little things which God created for you.*** Little things such as birds singing in the trees; the whistling sound of the wind on your face; the trees rustling in the wind; the smile of your little son or daughter. These were all made for us! Rarely can one be thankful and yet unforgiving at the same time. When you come to realize what Christ has done for us, and are thankful for this expensive gift that has been purchased with the precious blood of the LORD Jesus, then you will naturally, easily and willingly forgive those who wrong you. This is contagious love that will flow through you and onto others around you. You cannot honestly look at what Christ has done for you, and not overflow with thankfulness in your heart. If you know you are struggling with unforgiveness, just become thankful for your many blessings and you will soon experience a breakthrough. The truth is, unforgiveness and unthankfulness are closely related, but when you put your trust in God and turn to Him, you will be freed.

#### ***5. Turn to the Word of God thus to His promises***

A tremendous amount of peace and healing can take place when you read the Word of God and claim the promises in it. On the other hand, fear keeps a person holding onto what needs to be released to the LORD Jesus. Satan constantly uses fear as a tool for afflicting humans. This is why we must come to know the true, good and loving nature of God towards His children. **When you know**

**that God is a good God who has your best interest in mind, it paves the way to your being able to trust Him in all the concerns of your life.** You must know that you can trust God with all your needs, for He understands them and He desires to help you. Satan works to cause fear, rejection and discouragement but Jesus came to so that we may have life! (Jn.10:10). When you turn to Jesus believing everything he revealed through the Word of God, satan will turn away from you. (cf. James 4:7-8 and Psalm 119:105)

### ***7. Stop listening to the voice of the devil***

*Stop listening to the voice of the devil* because he is always a liar (cf. John 8:44). If you have a background or root of rejection, you need to know that God loves you dearly and has your best interest in mind. Rest assured that satan and evil spirits are always eager to make people feel that God is angry with them. This puts a person on edge and makes him afraid of God. It causes him to feel discouraged in his relationships with God, and to give up on spending time with Him or drawing near to Him. It's no wonder that satan would want you think that God is angry or disappointed in you. However, if you have had to struggle with such a notion that God is angry with you, try to imagine that God sees you, knows where you have been, and yet still looks favourably on you. Feel this loosen up the tension in your whole body as you begin to see things the way that God wants you to see them. Once you have imagined it, turn to God's Word and learn how He really looks upon you with favour and in hope. He is always calling us back to repentance, so that He can restore our relationships with Him. Our imaginations can be really powerful when we use it for God's glory instead of satan's wiles.

*We need to turn to Jesus in a Spirit of total surrender.* Once you have surrendered to the Lord, do not continue to think about how badly you were wronged, because by doing so, you cause emotional wounds to fester. Whereas you are encouraged to face what was done to you head-on, in all honesty, and without denying it, once you give the pains and hurts to the LORD, you should totally leave all to Him. You must make a decision to dwell no more on past events since this only reinforces the reasons why we feel hurt or angry.

**Jesus is bigger than all our problems. He carried the whole world on his shoulders, he will carry your small problem too (1Pt.2:24). He calmed the storms that threatened the disciples in the deep sea, He will calm the storms of your life too: Turn to Him.**

You must always remember that the devil and his evil spirits work diligently to aggravate your wounds to keep them from healing. This is done by keeping you reminded of how badly you were wronged or what was done to you. The devil seeks to remind you constantly why you are angry or hateful towards that person who has wronged you, and why you ought to remain so. Demons will do the same when trying to develop bondages of fear in a person. They seek to remind the person why they are fearful. It is therefore vital that you ***stop listening to the voice of the devil***, because his goal is to aggravate the wounds and make them fester into an even deeper affliction. The desire for hatred over healing can be quite tempting.

A wounded person will often choose to retain feelings of hate and resentment rather than choose to be healed of the wound and see God make everything right. The key is to decide whether you really want to be healed, or you would rather hold on to feelings of hate and resentment against others. Some people would rather see them suffer and be punished for the wrongs. Would you rather you were yourself healed and let off the hook for the mistakes that you have made in life? Remember how the LORD Jesus made it clear that if we want to be forgiven and let off the hook for our failures, we must in turn let others off the hook, and instead give them what we want God to give us - His mercy and forgiveness.

### ***8. Take up the responsibility of your failures***

*Stop blaming the person who wronged you* because it is not what they did to you or what they are doing to you that is keeping you in bondage. It is your own reaction to what was done to you which holds you in a spiritual prison. It is your own anger, hate, resentment, and unforgiveness which will keep you behind those spiritual bars. One of the reasons we have a hard time to forgive is that we would otherwise have no one else to blame for our problems!

It is important that we take responsibility for our failures, and give up all those things which do not give honour to the Lord. Whereas we are not responsible for what is done to us, we remain responsible for what we choose and how we react. Until we recognize our own failures and take responsibility for what we have allowed to take root in our minds and lives, it remains as a blockage to our emotional healing. Blaming others only hinders the healing power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. It must be dealt with before healing can freely flow into our minds and emotions.

When a person is raped, it is not the rape which causes spiritual bondage; it is rather the way the person reacts, be it with hate or resentment that comes afterwards. This is what gives satan a stronghold. You may ask many “what if” questions that only hold you in bondage and keep you spiritually tormented. What is it to you that the person who has wronged you continues doing it to others and has no repentance in their heart?

Satan’s best-kept secret is to prevent a soul from healing by causing the person to feel guilty. This feeling that God will not forgive or be merciful is a sure roadblock to the inner healing process. It causes a person to keep a distance from the very one who desires to heal them (the LORD Jesus). **You cannot distance yourself from God and at the same time receive healing for your emotions.** You must draw near to Him as a key to receiving healing. It is He who gives us a sound clear mind of love and power. As St. Paul explains, God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control (2 Timothy 1:7).

We need to turn to Jesus totally. The LORD Jesus Himself asks all those who are heavy laden with emotional and/or mental baggage to come to Him that He may give them rest (cf. Matthew 11:28-29). But satan knows how to prevent this by making people think that God is angry with them. This is really based on our perceived relationship with God. If you do not perceive yourself as being right with God, you end up with all manner of spiritual problems that prevent the inner healing process.

### ***9. Give total authority to the Holy Spirit over your life***

We need to break down the walls that prohibit the healing power and light of the Holy Spirit from reaching the depths of the wounds to bring healing. The Holy Spirit is very eager and ready to heal our wounded emotions, but He is also gentle and will not control our free will. He honours our free will so much. He cannot, and will not, force us to go to heaven. Only our free will can choose to take down those emotional walls or to hold them in place. But what exactly are these walls? They are our own reactions to what has been done to us. When we react in anger, bitterness or resentment, we choose to give a place in our heart to the devil. We put up walls around our wounds that prohibit entry of the healing light of Christ from reaching them. That is why it is important to take responsibility for our reactions to what is done to us. We simply do not allow walls to come up and prevent us from the healing action of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit also revealed that we need to be transparent with Him about our needs and our fears. The healing power of the Holy Spirit requires to pass through a transparent medium in order to be fruitful. *“If you want my healing light to heal your damaged emotions, you must be transparent with me... for light requires to pass through transparency.”*

### ***10. Decide to forgive yourself unconditionally***

You have to first forgive yourself and come to love yourself as Christ loves you, in order to see yourself as God sees you. To Him, you are cleansed, washed with the precious Blood, and with your past failures actually far removed from your account. If you then continue to beat yourself up as though you have as yet not been forgiven, you are, in effect, denying the work that the LORD Jesus Christ has already done for you on the cross, *“You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish.”* (1 Peter 1:18-19). Many of those who have emotional wounds are in bondage to guilt and condemnation. Therefore to come to the realization that their sins are forgiven is perhaps the single most powerful key to their healing from their emotional wounds. The Word of God also heals, as we see in Psalms 107:20 *“He sent out his word and healed them, and delivered them from destruction,”* and cleanses us from our sins;

*You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you  
- John 15:3*

### ***11. Share your struggles with your spiritual father***

Another helpful course is to find somebody to talk with about your problem, someone who will love you and pray for you. There is tremendous healing power in bringing something out into the open and sharing it with a spiritual father who will pray for you. The Bible advises us to confess our faults to one another and pray that we may be healed, since the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much (cf. James 5:16). This, I believe, applies as well to our wounds and weaknesses. Remember, when Jesus was in the garden of Gethsemane, in His agony Abba Father sent Him an angel. Ask the Father, He will send an angel to help you. (cf. Psalm 103:20) It can be a spiritual father too.

## **12. Be merciful to those who hurt you**

If you want to receive mercy in your situation, you need to be merciful to those who have wronged or hurt you. The LORD Jesus tells us that the merciful are blessed, for they shall obtain mercy (Matthew 5:7). You must ask yourself if you sincerely want to receive mercy in your situation and whether you have been merciful in your heart towards others. Could it be that the very reason you are not receiving mercy is because you are not being merciful? Mercy and forgiveness begin in a person's heart, otherwise the heavenly Father is forced to do likewise unto you, if you from your heart fail to forgive one of your brother's trespasses (cf. Matthew 18:35).



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***If we are wounded at any time or in any field, we have a tendency to also wound others.***

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Finger pointing or blaming others is an outward manifestation of the root of bitterness. Also referred to as resentment, it goes hand-in-hand with refusing to accept personal responsibility for something. It is easy to blame the person who commits a wrong and perhaps even to blame God for allowing bad things to happen, while we overlook the hate, resentment, and unforgiveness building up within. It is the LORD's command, not requirement or option, that we love one another as He loved us (John 15:12). When we allow resentment and unforgiveness to reign in our hearts, we disobey this commandment which Jesus gave us, and allow hatred instead to fill our hearts. It is no surprise then that satan and his evil spirits should take advantage of such negative emotions.

*Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil.*  
- Ephesians 4:26-27

You must also seek deliverance from any spirits that may have become rooted through the wound. Demons may gain entry by way of trauma or abuse, and become entrenched. They must be cast out if complete healing and restoration is to take place. Emotional wounds promote a tendency to unforgiveness. This can then open up a person to evil spirits such as anger,



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hate, rage, resentment, negative criticism, being judgmental, or even murder! It is important that such spirits be removed, since they can work diligently to aggravate the wounds and prevent healing.

### **13. Open your heart to Jesus, the light of the world**

The LORD Jesus declared that He is the light of the world and those who live in the light will never walk in darkness. **It is very important that we invite the light of Jesus to shine in the dark areas of our inner wounds.** He can heal us today because He is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8). He knows everything (Psalms 139), since He is the Alpha and the Omega, who was, who is, who is to come (Revelation 1:8). If you invite Him into every area of your painful memories, He will set you free. You must open your heart before the Creator if you are to receive inner healing. There is an African proverb that says, *“When it is time to bathe, don’t hide your belly button.”* (you must remove all your clothes so that the whole body can be thoroughly clean) **Open your heart to Jesus, turn to Him and he will heal you.** He said, *“I am the Lord who healeth you”* (Exodus 15:26).



#### **A LADY WITH CANCER IN THE LAST STAGE**

**“As you have done, it shall be done to you; your deeds shall return on your own head”** (Obadiah.1, 15). This lady invited us to visit an old, single and sick Woman who had cancer in the last stage. The lady said, *“Father she is a widow and has no children.”* As I visited her and prayed for her, I saw a vision of another lady standing beside her, crying. I asked her if there was anyone whom she had caused lot of pain. Then, in tears this old lady said, *I am truly sorry, because I got married to the husband of my best friend. I saw her crying but I refused to listen to her cry as the man loved me more than her. They were already married in the church, but I started to stay with him when he chased away my friend. The scripture says, “Give no one reason to curse you; for if in bitterness of soul some should curse you, their Creator will hear their prayer”* (Sirach 4:5-6). **“If you close your ear to the cry of the poor, you will cry out and not be heard”** (Proverbs 21:13). Proverbs 22:22-23 says, **“do not rob the poor because they are poor, or crush the afflicted at the gate; for the Lord pleads their cause and despoils of life those who despoil them.”** Never break a family that is already in existence.



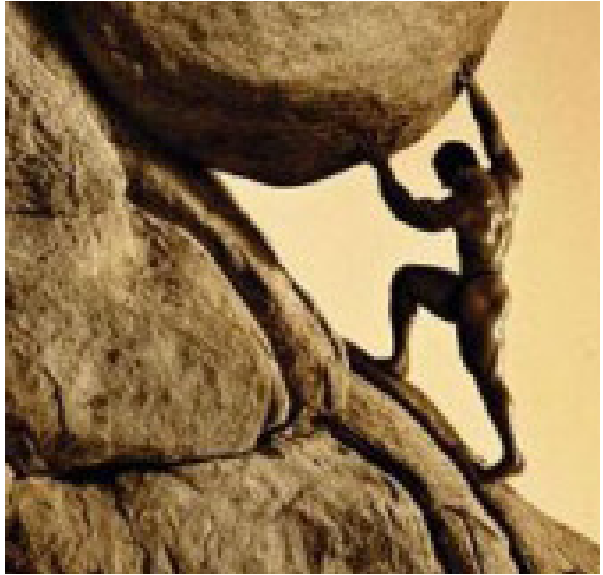
# CHAPTER FOUR

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## DANGERS OF INNER WOUNDS

*In what ways does your behaviour reveal what is in you? There are many examples of outward behaviour that are caused by inner wounds.*

*They do not just happen; usually there is something deep within us that triggers them.*



**A wounded soul tends to see things through the wounds and not as they really are. Inner wounds adapt a person's behaviour and redefine the personality. They pervert the mind and shatter beliefs. They destroy relationships, causing loss of trust and disinterest in other people.**

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Inner wounds can endanger even our physical body. Think of the proverb that says, “*What the mouth does not or cannot speak out, the body expresses it in its own way.*” So we find that:

- Resentment, refusal to forgive, guilt feelings, doubt, fear and anxiety can affect the head, eyes, ears, and sinuses
- Hostility, negativity, holding back, feelings of being rejected can affect the nose, mouth, throat, shoulders and upper back
- Envy, despair, lack of acceptance, discouragement, fear, anger, enmity, sense of being inferior and vengefulness can affect the heart, chest, lungs, blood pressure, and cause heart-related irregularities
- Sorrows, suppressed fears, sadness, and suppressed unforgiveness can affect the stomach, intestines, lower back
- Feelings of anxiety, insecurity, instability or incompetence can affect the legs, knees, hands and feet
- Allergies, breathing disorders, diabetes can affect inter-personal relationships, especially in marriages.

In spirituality, we speak of inner wounds and their suffocative consequences. If we are wounded at any time or in any field, we have a tendency to also wound others. It is prudent that we heal our own person from the wounds of the heart if we are to have spiritual growth and happiness in living together. It is a human weakness not to learn from past incidences. For example, a subject who is wounded by a superior does not learn that the experience is painful, and on becoming a superior goes ahead to hurt other subjects. It is natural for the one who is wounded to know the pain. This one should therefore avoid causing the same pain to others.

We become so corrupt by our sinful habits and sinful indulgences, that we allow the devil to take away from us every desire and care for acting rightly. Just as a chronic disease so corrupts what is sound and healthy in the body that it becomes by degrees incurable, so it is with spiritual diseases. What is impossible to man is possible to God, for God Himself sanctifies us, heals us and restores in us what is lost (1 Thessalonians 1:23). Only Jesus can make clean our defiled inner being, and there is nothing in us that is so negative that Jesus cannot turn it around to be positive; *so, let us turn to Jesus.*



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*Only Jesus can make clean our defiled inner being,  
and there is nothing in us that is so negative that Jesus  
cannot turn it around to be positive;  
So, let us turn to Jesus.*

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### THE STORY OF A POLICE OFFICER

*It was in a pilgrim centre, I met this Police Officer who joined me in the prayer of the Stations of the Cross, and as we completed the prayers he said he is not able to get a life partner. The one he had for years, at the last minute rejected him and got married to another man. He was since then very bitter and was now 40 years old. He told me, "all are worried at home but I don't know why I am not getting anyone to marry me. Please pray for me Father". When we prayed, the Holy Spirit revealed a name called "Sarah". I asked him who Sarah is. He told me that was his Aunt who took care of him from the time he was little. As his mother had many children and burdens, and the aunt was not married and had no children, she was very happy to take care of him. This Aunt took full responsibility and took good care of him, gave him the best education and loved him dearly. But one day they had a quarrel when she refused to give him permission to go for a night party. He slapped the Aunt on the face and walked out. The Aunt was so hurt and cursed him saying you will one day feel my pain. The pain of being not married and having no children. Now, years later, he is going through the same pain. I saw the tears were flowing from his eyes saying, "Father since then I never visited her, I even refused to attend her funeral. I am sorry." The scripture says, **"give no one reason to curse you; for if in bitterness of soul some should curse you, their Creator will hear their prayer"** (Sir.4,5-6). Ex.22,22-23 says, **"you shall not abuse any widow or orphan. If you do abuse them, when they cry out to me, I will surely heed their cry."** Again, **"if you close your ear to the cry of the poor, you will cry out and not be heard"** (Pro.21,13). Pro.22, 22-23 says, **"do not rob the poor because they are poor, or crush the afflicted at the gate; for the Lord pleads their cause and despoils of life those who despoil them."** I advised him to pray for her soul and offer three Holy Masses for her salvation as forgiveness and thanksgiving. Within one month his marriage took place.*



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*In the following section, we will explain some of the dangers of inner wounds: Anger, Low Self Esteem, Discouragement, Grief and Peer pressure.*

## ANGER



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***Anger is interpreted as having been offended, wronged, or denied and a tendency to react through retaliation. It is characterized by aggression towards someone or something you feel has deliberately done you wrong. It comes in varying severity ranging from a mild irritation to an intense fury. It is usually accompanied by a physiological arousal to respond verbally or physically, and ends with the tongue working faster than the mind. It is the response when one is confronted with frustration, unhappiness or hurt feelings; when plans don't turn out as desired; or when some expectation is not met, thereby resulting in shouting, yelling, scolding, striking, coldness or silence. Those who turn to Jesus who is meek and humble of heart will be filled with peace beyond human understanding. (cf. Philippians 4:7)***

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### I CANNOT FORGIVE MY FATHER

**“I thought you would call me, My Father”** (Jer.3,19). When we sat down for counselling, we prayed and opened the Bible. We found Is.43,18-19, **“do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”** “I can never forget what he did to me and cannot forgive my father”, she screamed as she listened to this passage. According to her story her own father sexually abused her several times. She fell into a trauma and depression, went ahead with many boyfriends and carried out many abortions. She said, “there is no word like forgiveness in my dictionary”. She told us, “I could never think that my father could do this to me”. We prayed for her and told her to forgive her Father from the heart, and we opened the Bible for her to read from Jer.3,19, **“I thought how I would set you among my children, and give you a pleasant land, the most beautiful heritage of all the nations. And I thought you would call me, My Father, and would not turn from following me”**. After reading this Word, she started to manifest as if she were possessed with hatred. We started to pray in a loud voice calling out the Holy Name of Jesus and eventually she fell from the chair crying to Jesus, “please don’t come near to me. I forgive him, go away.” We realised she was seeing a vision. As she got up we asked her what happened. With a trembling voice she said she saw the vision of Jesus, coming down with his wounded broken body from the cross, he could not even walk properly as his body was fully wounded. With broken knees Jesus knelt in front of her holding her feet saying “my daughter, whatever you feel like doing against your father do it against me, if you feel like spitting on his face, here I am, spit on me. If you want to slap him, slap me; if you want to beat him, beat me; if you want to kill him, kill me, but please my daughter, I beg you, please forgive your father.” She felt the smell of the blood from the body of Jesus and cried, “go away Jesus, I forgive him, don’t come near to me.” She found it is Jesus who really suffers when she keeps bitterness and unforgiveness. She then started to bless her father. She was completely delivered from the bondage of hatred towards her father as she saw the vision of Jesus.



Anger is an inner wound that is only one letter short of danger, because it is an intense feeling; it can be described as a hot displeasure, hostility, irritation or exasperation. It strikes most fiercely when things seem to be out of control. It affects your heart, making it beat faster; your mind, making it

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race faster; your body, making it want to explode or, worse, making you punch a hole in the wall! It is a negative reaction that does more harm than good; it wastes your energy, it can hurt your health, it spoils your relationships, and it can cause you to miss out on opportunities because it acts against your best interests.

You can choose not to let what people say and do affect your mood. You can maintain an inner attitude of emotional and mental detachment, and refuse to allow every minor event to play with your feelings and evoke anger in you. You can learn from the disastrous ending of Cain and Abel's lives; two brothers who brought offerings to God, only for God to accept one and reject the other because of jealousy and anger. God even told this angry and dejected man what he needed to do in order to be accepted (Genesis 4: 5-7), failure to which sin was lying in wait at the door, and whose urge for him would destroy him. But Cain did not listen, and the first murder was committed because he allowed his feelings and emotions to enslave him.



*You can maintain an inner attitude of emotional and mental detachment, and refuse to allow every minor event to play with your feelings and evoke anger in you.*

The reason for anger and the way it is expressed, determine whether it is a healthy emotion or not. There is a saying, **“anybody can become angry, and that is easy; but to be angry with the right person, and to the right degree, and at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way – that is not within everybody’s power and is not easy.”** Why? Because anger is a killer instinct in human beings, that saps the real potential of the affected person to live a healthy mental and physical life. It takes away peace from life and brings poor self-esteem in individuals. It is an emotion that is more likely to harm than to have a positive effect in one’s life.

Consider this: There is a little boy known to have a bad temper. His father gives him a bag of nails and tells him that every time he loses his temper he should hammer a nail in the back fence. By the end of the first day the boy has driven 37 nails into the fence; but gradually this dwindles as he discovers it is easier to hold his temper than to drive those nails into the fence. Finally

the day comes, when the boy does not lose his temper at all. He tells his father about it, and the father suggests to the boy that he should now pull out one nail for each day that he is able to hold his temper. Several days pass, and the boy is finally able to tell his father that all the nails are out of the fence. The father takes his son by the hand and leads him back to the fence, and says, "My son, you have done well; but look at the holes in the fence, it will never be the same. When you say things in anger, they leave a scar just like the holes left by the nails. The same happens when you put a knife in a man and then draw it out; no matter how many times you say you are sorry, the wound is still there." **The way to get healed of any wound permanently is to turn to Jesus, the wounded healer. He can not only heal you but also give you the power to heal others.**

*Anger also impacts on one's health:* heightened anger will physically affect the ability to be rational. Anger triggers an increase in the heart rate: blood pressure, body temperature and breathing rate also increase. Uncontrolled or unresolved anger can lead to heart attack, stroke, high blood pressure, insomnia, headache, palpitations, restlessness, sleeplessness, digestion problems, abdominal pains, skin problems, hair loss, anxiety attacks, and depressive disorders. Can you control anger? Yes, you can also manage it. St. Paul teaches that you can become angry, but you should not let that anger lead you to sin; and you must not stay angry all day, because that leaves room for the devil to control you (Ephesians 4: 26-27). You can get angry at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people so that you work for justice, equality and peace. However, be careful that you do not overreact and lose control. You must see to it that no one is deprived of the grace of God; that no bitter root springs up and causes trouble, through which many may become defiled (Hebrews 12:15).

### **How do you know you have anger-management issues?**

Well, when you shout at others; when you curse often; when you have no regard for other people's things; when you destroy other people's property for no reason; when you are stubborn; when you talk ill of others; when you are always quarrelling; when you are frequently involved in fights; when you have trouble with the authorities (the law); when you frequently feel that you have to hold in your anger; when you lose your temper while driving and become reckless; when you think that perhaps you do need help; ...these are some of the signs that show you have anger-management issues. This is an inner wound which needs inner healing.



## How To Overcome Anger?

### *Read, Repeat and Meditate*

1. *“Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger”* (Eph.4:26). Always remember this principle and practice it for your own good and the good of others.
2. *“Do not say, ‘I will do to others as they have done to me; I will pay them back for what they have done’* (Pro.24:29). It is unchristian to take revenge because *“Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord”* (Romans 8:19). We pray for them.
3. *“Do not say, ‘I will repay evil’; wait for the LORD, and he will help you”* (Pro.20:22). Never repay evil with evil but with good.
4. *“If your enemies are hungry, give them bread to eat; and if they are thirsty, give them water to drink; for you will heap coals of fire on their heads, and the LORD will reward you”* (Pro.25:21-22 and 2kgs.6:21-23). We pray for those who hurt us and we bless them.
5. We read that *“all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose”* (Rom.8:28). All things means, even evil things done by others God can turn it for our good if we wholeheartedly turn unto Him as we see the life of Joseph of the Old Testament, he said, *“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”* (Gen.50:20). Claim this Word of God, and make this as a promise for yourself.
6. *“Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses”* (Mk.11:25). This is a condition for any prayer to be answered; you need to get rid of all anger and unforgiveness.
7. *“Does anyone harbor anger against another, and expect healing from the Lord?”* (Sir.28:3). O Lord, help me to renounce all anger so that I may receive total healing in my body, mind and soul.
8. *“Remember the commandments, and do not be angry with your neighbor; remember the covenant of the Most High, and overlook faults”* (Sir.28:7). O Lord help me to end enmity and to overlook the faults of others.
9. *“He will not show partiality to the poor; but he will listen to the prayer of one who is wronged. He will not ignore the supplication of the orphan, or the widow when she pours out her complaint. Do not the tears of the widow run down her cheek as she cries out against the one who causes them to fall?”* (Sir.35:16-19). O Lord, let me never cause anger in anyone for anger is bad counsel. Have mercy on me O Lord.



**“I NEVER THOUGHT HE HAS TEARS IN HIS EYES”**

During the retreat the organizer approached us and told Father, “I am tired as my family is affected as we help others to return to God”. The lady said, “my husband is totally unfaithful, he pretends before all, that he is a prayerful man, but as a wife I feel oppressed”. This lady, a gifted woman, silently suffered for many years from the husband who was very rich and influential. He used to employ young girls and sexually misuse them. She told us that she thought of either silently withdrawing from the relationship or even committing suicide for the humiliations she was undergoing. We could not say anything to her as we know she is genuine. We only asked her to pray daily and the good Lord will reveal himself to her. Early one morning she came to us saying, “I got a Word of God, as a flash light, from Jn.13,14, **“if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.”** But, I really don’t get the meaning.” We told her, the meaning is simple, that the Lord wants you to wash the feet of your husband. “Is it me or my husband who should wash the feet?” she asked. “See, I have never hurt or offended him.” She insisted we pray and speak reasonably. We told her, Jesus never offended Judas or betrayed him and reasonably speaking it must be Judas who should wash the feet of Jesus, but we see Jesus kneeling before Judas and washing his feet. We told her to continue reading the following scripture and she found, **“I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you”** (Jn.13,15).

We told her, “now that you are a prayer group leader and a teacher who guides many, you have to be more humble, like your Master.” She agreed and she called the husband to the prayer room and she humbled herself, apologizing to the husband for failing to be a loving and caring wife. Immediately the husband lifted her up and he himself knelt in front of her and begged her to forgive him for all his unfaithfulness and promised to be converted. She saw tears in his eyes. She reported to us: “never in my life, I found my husband crying, and I never thought he has tears in his eyes.” She added, “my small act of humility has changed him.” We read, **“all of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble”** (1Pt.5,5-6).



## LOW SELF-ESTEEM



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***Low self-esteem is harbouring a low opinion about oneself, treating oneself contemptuously, or having a poor self-image. It is when one is filled with doubts and criticisms about one's abilities. It therefore influences the whole of one's life, with unremitting devastation on day-to-day activities; it affects ones thoughts and beliefs about the world; it affects all their relationships; it influences their achievements which are far less than their potential; it lowers their quality of life... etc. The scripture says, "Do not therefore abandon that confidence of yours, it brings a great reward." (Hebrews 10:35).***

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### WHAT IS MY NAME?

*"I am called a criminal by my community superior and the Principal in charge of the School", this sister said, with a broken heart. She had already decided to leave the community, saying "how can I stay in a community that does not approve of my hard work?"*

When she shared her pain with another sister she advised her to attend a retreat in our centre. She explained that she was in a school, in charge of the class eight students. She was very strict and sometimes rude to children, urging them to perform well in class. She also achieved her end as her class always performed well. One day she beat a mischievous boy who fell unconscious due to the severe beating. The issue became very big as the Principal accused her of the criminal act of beating the children. The Principal went on to say that she is to be handed over to the Police. Anyway she was transferred to the Provincial House immediately for discipline. "Father please tell me, did the Lord ever call me to follow him? If he called me what is the purpose of my religious vocation?" During prayer for her I got a scripture verse, **"the Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in"** (Is.58,11-12). I told her, 'imagine the Lord is telling you that He will continue to guide you and He calls you as a Rebuilder, Repairer and Restorer'. She then asked "If the Lord called me as a rebuilder and repairer why do my sisters not understand this?" Then I asked her about her family and she explained that she was born in a pagan family where her father remains a traditional believer and her mother is a protestant; she is the first-born and her three siblings never go to any church. Then I was surprised to hear that she was taken by the religious sisters in her neighbourhood, who taught her catechism, baptized her and admitted her to join her congregation. She continued "Father I am the only Catholic and religious in my entire family tree." Listening to her story we told her, that is why the Lord is calling you as a rebuilder. You are the first born for the good Lord in that pagan family to get this family back to God. So, who wants to chase you away from the religious life is not the Principal Sister, but the Devil. He is an accuser, liar and deceiver. He knows if you continue in the congregation you will set free the entire family tree from the grip of the devil. **"I sought for anyone among them who would repair the wall and stand in the breach before me on behalf of the land, so that I would not destroy it"** (Ezekiel 22:30). Again, **"run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, look around and take note! Search its squares and see if you can find one person who acts justly and seeks truth-so that I may pardon Jerusalem"** (Jeremiah 5:1). I requested her to kindly go back, continue in the religious life and consecrate herself unto him.



## WHY TURN TO JESUS!

There are many people who suffer from low self-esteem, yet they do not know it. They feel that they are not good enough. They say negative things about themselves, such as “I’m no good; I’m a complete failure; I am utterly depressed and can’t see things getting any better; I don’t deserve to be happy; I fail at everything I do; I wish I hadn’t been born; my mother always said I was a hopeless person and she was right; I would be better off dead; I’m a born loser; other people can do things but I just can’t, I am useless; I’m too ugly for anyone to care about; I was hopeless at school because I am really stupid; people always reject me; I have wasted my life.... etc. This manifests in harmful, unfortunate behaviour that cause untold turmoil and misery.

Low self-esteem is associated with poor school achievement, truancy, crime, violence, alcohol and drug abuse, teenage pregnancy and suicide, succumbing to peer pressure, etc. Practically, it is a vicious trap, which involves your sending a negative message to people, who react by treating you accordingly. You effectively instruct them not to hold you in esteem, to ignore you, to forget you, to interrupt you, to walk over you; when they do these things, you are confirmed in your low self-esteem.

### **What causes Low Self-esteem?**

*The causes of low self-esteem are many, and the following factors contribute:*

#### **1. Poor self-image**

People who perceive themselves to have an unattractive body, perhaps they are too heavy or too thin; or their complexion is ‘bad’; or their teeth are crooked, etc. Everybody has some physical traits that we would like to alter if possible. The good news is that whereas physical characteristics may make an initial impression upon others, they are quickly subordinated to personality qualities. One who is thought to be quite attractive physically can turn out to be in a disposition that no one wants to be around them. Yet, another who is deemed rather plain is noted to have lots of friends because intelligent people are attracted to the charm, wit, compassion, or overall spiritual depth of that person.

#### **2. Negative childhood**

A child who is repeatedly criticized or treated unfairly; is not allowed to think or act independently; is denied love and attention; is compared unfavourably with others; is humiliated repeatedly in front of others or made to feel

worthless and unwanted, is likely to develop low self-esteem while growing up, and suffer from feelings of inadequacy. Children who feel their parents or peers were unfair to them or prejudiced against them or that their families were somehow ill-disposed towards them also develop a similar attitude as they grow up.

### **3. Tragic Circumstances**

Some people who experienced some tragic circumstances in their past tend to have low self-esteem, like those who come to know they were conceived out of wedlock or as the result of rape, and so come to harbour self-disgust. Many children suffer from low self-esteem because they blame themselves for the loathsome deeds of their parents. Some constantly reproach themselves for the tragic events.

### **4. Physical or emotional abuse**

A person who persistently and viciously berates a child or a companion ravages the esteem of the victim so much that the person's worth drops to almost zero. An uncaring husband may tell his wife how ugly, fat, stupid, or lazy she is. This good "beating" with words is just as devastating as physical brutality. Constant, harsh criticism also wounds a child's sense of personal pride, as does sexual abuse. However, victims of abuse must learn that they can get past these horrible experiences and find true happiness in living.

### **5. Unhealthy comparisons**

Many people suffer some form of inadequacy, feeling inferior about their lives, their looks, their skills or abilities. Why? Because they spend too much time comparing themselves with others. Every teenage girl feels that she must rate at least a 10 or else she will not be acceptable to her classmates. Every teenage boy feels that he must be a combination of physique, looks and brains all rolled into one. The unfortunate fact is that our minds will keep comparing our personalities and achievements with those of others.

### **6. Personal sin**

Sin is one entity that scars terribly. Even for one who loves God deeply and who strives for spiritual maturity, a moment of weakness causes him/her to fall into some dreadful form of wickedness. Such a transgression comes with a crushing blow that may have lasting effects that so debilitate the person that he/she has a very difficult time regaining a sense of Christian dignity. The situation is made far worse if other people come to know of it. Think of King

David's agony after his tragic moral lapse with Bathsheba – he was a victim of sin's power. There was no relief to his troubled spirit either day or night, and his body wasted away for as long as he remained silent. However, the moment he acknowledged his sin and allowed God to take away his pain, he was able to regain his sense of joy and purpose (Psalm 32:3-5).



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*They rarely make decisions, and when they do it is mostly to protect themselves or to please others, so that they become even more miserable.*

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### What are the consequences of Low Self-esteem?

Low self-esteem shows itself in a variety of ways including low self-expectation; avoiding to take risks; fear of failure and fear of rejection; seeking the approval of others; giving more weight to the opinion of others than their own; lack of true leadership qualities; becoming defensive; self-doubt and inferiority complex; undue anxiety and stress; unhappy and unequal relationships; reacting emotionally rather than rationally in difficult and challenging situations; hesitating to express oneself honestly in the company of others; rarely live in the present; inability to say 'no' to others. Such individuals lead mediocre and unhappy lives because their actions are marred by fear and anxiety; thus they miss many opportunities to successfully and satisfactorily deal with their life situations. They rarely make decisions, and when they do it is mostly to protect themselves or to please others, so that they become even more miserable. The end result is an individual who is known to always have 'issues'. In his book, "*As a Man Thinketh*", James Allen argues that a man is exactly what he thinks. That what he thinks not only embraces the whole of his being, but is so comprehensive as to reach out to every condition and circumstance of his life. Therefore, his character is basically the complete sum of all his thoughts.

#### 1. Substance Abuse

Self-depreciation drives many to immerse their woes in alcohol, hard drugs or certain herbs. Drugs are very deceptive, for they promise much but deliver little or nothing besides carnage. It is a self-perceived lack of worth and a void of purpose for human existence that causes many to resort to drug abuse. But St. Peter says we must be sober and vigilant at all times lest we be

devoured by the devil (1 Peter 5:8); and prophet Isaiah spells doom for the one who is hooked on drinking (Isaiah 5:11).

## 2. Sexual perversions

Modern society has been robbed of reasonable mental health by a myriad of problems. One phenomenon that stands out is that of accelerated sexual promiscuity amongst young people, who seem to be growing up without a sense of personal value. Many of these children are casualties of broken homes, but some have been neglected and feel quite worthless. Others suffer because their parents are materialistic and spend long hours working (even at multiple jobs in order to have more “things”), that they do not have the time to give loving care to their desperate children (and spouses). Many are thus starving for affection; hence they unreservedly give in to anyone who offers them some form of love and understanding. Lack of personal esteem is a leading cause of sexual immorality; sexual compromise frequently produces further humiliation, and this becomes a vicious cycle.



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***Lack of personal esteem is a leading cause of sexual immorality; sexual compromise frequently produces further humiliation, and this becomes a vicious cycle.***

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## 3. A critical spirit

A conceited or critical demeanour is a direct result of a damaged self-view. People with a diminutive self-image try to artificially elevate themselves above others; or they may attempt to cut down their associates. They may exaggerate or lie about their accomplishments by constantly boasting about their abilities while they tear down others in what is more of character assassination than anything else (James 4:11). What they do not know, is that an emotionally-healthy person has no need to feed his ego at the expense of others because he knows it is God who works in him both to desire and to work for his good purpose (Philippians 2:13).

## 4. Materialism

If you feel you want to have an abundance of nice things in order to overcome feelings of insecurity, you have a poor self-image. It is not wrong for a



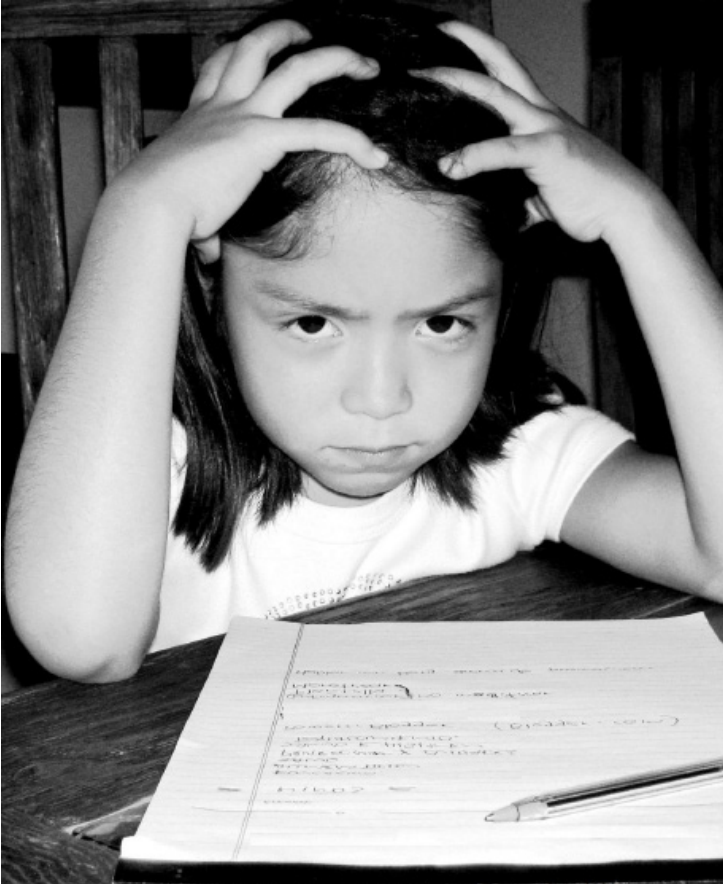
hard-working individual to enjoy the goodies that come with a quality life as a good steward of the diverse blessings of God. But, the accumulation of material things will not provide the sense of genuine well-being that we each long for. There is a big difference between feeling good about oneself, and feeling good about one's possessions. Many a philanthropist will agree that material prosperity does not make life meaningful, as do the hunger for love and real meaning. The LORD Jesus did warn us to *"take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one's life does not consist of possessions"* (Luke 12:15).

### **How To Overcome Low Self Esteem?**

#### ***Read, Repeat and Meditate***

1. *"I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you"* (Jn.14:18). Repeat this Word of God and be confident as a beloved child of God
2. *"For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the LORD, who has compassion on you"* (Is.54:10). Repeat this Word of God you will get rid of Low self Esteem.
3. *"Thus says the LORD: If the heavens above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth below can be explored, then I will reject all the offspring of Israel because of all they have done, says the LORD"* (Jer.31:37). This Word of God reminds you that He will in no way reject you. Be esteemed, for your God is King and He loves you.
4. *"Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he the child I delight in? As often as I speak against him, I still remember him. Therefore I am deeply moved for him; I will surely have mercy on him, says the LORD"* (Jer.31:20). See, He is so moved with love for you, be esteemed in Jesus name.
5. *"It is he who remembered us in our low estate, for his steadfast love endures forever"* (Ps.136:23). There is none like Him, who remembers you when all others forget you.
6. *"He sustained him in a desert land, in a howling wilderness waste; he shielded him, cared for him, guarded him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirs up its nest, and hovers over its young; as it spreads its wings, takes them up, and bears them aloft on its pinions"* (Deut.32:10-11). In the low moments of your life in your desert experience watch carefully you will find Him as a pillar of cloud moving ahead of you.

## DISCOURAGEMENT



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***“Discouragement is dissatisfaction with the past, distaste for the present, and distrust of the future. It is ingratitude for the blessings of yesterday, indifference to the opportunities of today, and insecurity regarding strength for tomorrow. It is unawareness of the presence of beauty, unconcern for the needs of our fellow man, and unbelief in the promises of old. It is impatience with time, immaturity of thought, and impoliteness to God.” (William A. Ward). Turn to Jesus, He will lift you up. We read, “...when I was low, he saved me” (Psalm 116:6)***

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## WHY TURN TO JESUS!

Literally speaking, discouragement is the act of discouraging; the condition of being discouraged; or something that discourages. It is also the feeling of despair in the face of obstacles; or the state of distraught and loss of sense of enthusiasm, drive or courage; or the expression of opposition and disapproval.

No matter how we define it, discouragement casts a dark cloud over all our lives and no one is exempt from it. At some point in life, everyone comes to experience it in one way or another. It come whenever we feel that our opportunity for success is gone, and we begin to see ourselves as less than we really are. It can easily lead to depression if left unattended to. It happens in all areas of life: to that employee who puts in his best to ensure his department achieves success, only to get a damaging response instead of a good appraisal from his superior; to that woman whose marriage dreams end when her husband is unfaithful to her; to that couple which suffers their second miscarriage while trying to create a family; to that new believer who repeatedly fails to overcome his old habits and vices so that he stagnates in spiritual growth and becomes unstable in his faith; to that student who fails to overcome difficulties in school and ends up living in poverty and unemployment. These people will deal with their discouragement, but differently. Some may become so discouraged and so distressed that they may even attempt to take their own lives.

How does the Bible describe discouragement? It says discouragement means to neutralize, make you of no effect, or stop you in your tracks (as that which happened to the people of Israel when they came to the edge of the promised land and they were stopped in their tracks from going in – Numbers 32:9). It also says it means to be cut down as in harvesting, to be short or to have your hand shortened, or to be unable to accomplish a given task (as that which was prophesied to St. Peter by the LORD Jesus Himself, that the devil had made a demand to sift all of the disciples like wheat, *Simon, Simon, listen! satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail you; and you when ones you have turned back, strengthen your brothers* - Luke 22:31-32

*I say to you, have no dread or fear of them, the Lord your God who goes before you is the one who will fight for you, just as he did for you in Egypt before your very eyes*  
- Deuteronomy 1: 29-30

## How do you know you are gripped by discouragement?

When your mind and soul is so full of worry that you are unable to sleep; when you cannot sit still, are absent-minded and weariness sets in; when you are complacent with unacceptable circumstances; when you lose interest in food even though you might not have eaten for long hours or you obviously lack energy to do anything; when you constantly have negative thoughts; when you are perennially sad; when you are pessimistic; when you feel hopeless, worthless and helpless; when you are unable to make any decision.

## What are some causes of discouragement?

### 1. Frustration

Reflect on what the people of Judah said during the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, that the work was so slowed down by the extent of the rubble that they would never be able to rebuild the wall;

*Hear O our God for we are despised, turn their taunt back on their own heads and give them over as a plunder in a land of captivity - Nehemiah 4:4*

The people were discouraged; but was the rubble really too much or were the labourers simply fatigued? Perhaps they had set unrealistic goals and the task was not being performed as quickly as originally planned. Maybe they were afraid of what their enemies might have done to them (Nehemiah 4:3 & 5); or maybe they were trying to do too much, and getting upset for not being able to do it all at once! What is your frustration and where is it coming from? **Basically, lack of trust in God is the root cause of frustration. Those who turn to Jesus receive inner peace.**

### 2. Helplessness

Sometimes you may watch something happen and you feel totally helpless; but there are people who believe they have no control over their own situation, and that whatever they do is futile. Such people will stay passive in the face of an unpleasant, harmful, or damaging situation, even when they actually do have the ability to improve the circumstances. In this state, the person's vitality and zest are gone; they are listless and discouraged; they believe that nothing they do ever matters. They have lost the struggle and have learned to become helpless; they become passive and complacent even though they could take action to help themselves. Whereas we may not be able to stop all the bad things from happening in this world, surely we can work on those things that are within our grasp.

### 3. Lack of focus

When you find yourself forgetting or being consistently late to appointments; missing deadlines; being easily distracted; procrastinating on paying bills, returning phone calls or doing housework; having unclear goals; lacking in organization and being surrounded in messiness, you are heading towards disappointment. You will soon be discouraged from continuing with whatever it is you are doing, unless you focus! Bring your world and your needs into sharper resolution, so that you can see more clearly where you want to go and how to get there. *“Let your eyes look directly forward and your gaze be straight before you”* (Proverbs 4:25).

#### How To Overcome Discouragement?

##### **Read, Repeat and Meditate**

1. *“O that you had paid attention to my commandments! Then your prosperity would have been like a river, and your success like the waves of the sea”* (Is.48:18). It is in Obedience to His Commandments that we get rid of discouragement and achieve true success in our lives.
2. *“I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go”* (Josh.1:9). Speak loudly to yourself, ‘I will never be discouraged because the Lord is with me wherever I go.’
3. Those who hold on to the Lord, *“are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper”* (Ps.1:3). My Lord help me to stay beside you to receive your promised prosperity.
4. *“They will fight against you; but they shall not prevail against you, for I am with you, says the LORD, to deliver you”* (Jer.1:19). Remember this Word of God and you will get rid of discouragement.
5. *“Those who love me, I will deliver; I will protect those who know my name. When they call to me, I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble, I will rescue them and honour them”* (Ps.91:14-15). Please don’t be discouraged He loves you and He is promising to deliver you and rescue you from all your troubles. Turn to Him quickly and He in turn will quickly take you in and put a new robe on you. (cf. Luke 15:22)
6. *“In righteousness you shall be established; you shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near you”* (Is.54:14). Claim this truth of the Word of God, and you shall be set free indeed (cf. John 8:32).

7. “For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear; but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ (Rom.8:15). Always remember the Holy Spirit you have received is the Spirit of encouragement and where the Spirit of God is, there is freedom (2 Cor. 3:17). Turn to Him he will never fail you.



### HE FOUND JESUS IN THE PRISON

When we had a retreat at the Kamiti Prison, Kenya we encountered a prisoner who came to help us to celebrate the Mass. He was very happy and active to help us in arranging the altar, reading etc. We thought he may be a catechist and while talking came to know he is condemned to death. We enquired why he is inside the prison inspite of his gentle nature. He said that he was a thief and used to steal from people. He was involved with many violent robberies, but the cause that made him to be arrested is something interesting. He went with his friends for a robbery fully drunk. His friends went in to steal, keeping him outside to watch for police or people and give alarm. As he was fully drunk he fell asleep and when his friends came out after the robbery they went away without calling him. When the police came, they saw him outside that lonely house and were suspicious. They arrested him, as his ‘friends’ had also killed two people in that house. He said, crying, even though I am innocent in this crime, today I believe that it is God who brought me here. Because it is since I reached here, I learnt Catechism, received baptism and found Jesus as my personal Saviour. Scripture says, **“He sustained him in a desert land, in a howling wilderness waste; he shielded him, cared for him, guarded him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirs up its nest, and hovers over its young; as it spreads its wings, takes them up, and bears them aloft on its pinions, the Lord alone guided him; no foreign god was with him (Deuteronomy 32:10-12).** According to him, this desert experience inside the prison enabled him to find himself with his good Lord. “Today I am happy because it is in this prison that I found my Living God”, he said. I truly realized that I deserved a bigger punishment for the many crimes I have committed in the past. We told him, **“He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities” (Psalms 103:10).**



## GRIEF



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**Grief is intense sorrow, especially that caused by someone's death. It may also mean an instance or a cause of intense sorrow. It is a natural response to loss of an intense kind. It is the emotional suffering that you feel when something or someone you love is taken away. It may result from a relationship breakup; the death of a pet; the loss of health; the loss of a cherished dream; loss of a job; serious illness of a loved one; loss of financial stability; loss of a friendship; a miscarriage; loss of safety after a trauma, ... etc. Turn to Jesus, He will wipe away every tear from your eyes (cf. Isaiah 25:8 and Revelation 21:4).**

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**NO ONE TAKES CARE OF MY FATHER: THE STORY OF A RELIGIOUS SISTER**

*It was her pain, that none of her siblings took responsibility for her aged, sick father. She had already lost her mother. Now, no one wanted to stay with the Father or help him go to the hospital, yet they threatened and pressed him to divide the property every day. The religious missionary sister was so sad to see the suffering of the Father. When I prayed, what the Lord revealed is a scripture from Proverbs 20:20, **“if you curse father or mother, your lamp will go out in utter darkness.”** So, I asked, is there any incident in relation with her grandfather and her father? She remembered that, when she was little, the grandfather was dividing the family land and properties, when her father took a spade in his hand and chased the Grandfather all around the land for not giving him more land and property. It caused the Grandfather to be so afraid, that he fell sick for many months, which eventually led to his death. It was now, the Book of Wisdom that spoke to us, **“to teach them that the agent of sin is the agent of punishment”** (Wis.11,16). Now, she understood that his own sin is what punished her father to be rejected and threatened by his own children (Jer.2,19). I explained to the sister and told her to tell the father to offer nine Holy Masses for the departed soul of the late grandfather. Eventually the children all attended a retreat and were reconciled with their father.*



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The more significant the loss, the more intense will the grief be. However, subtle losses can also lead to grief, such as after moving away from home; graduating from college; changing jobs; selling a family home, or retiring from a career one loved. The point is that loss is very painful; one may experience all kinds of difficult and surprising emotions such as shock, anger, and guilt. One may feel that the sadness will never let up, but godly sorrow produces a repentance that leads to salvation and has no regret, whereas worldly grief produces death (2 Corinthians 7:10). These feelings can be frightening and overwhelming, but they are normal reactions to loss; if you accept them as part of the grieving process and allow yourself to feel what you feel, you will begin to heal from it.

You must grieve in a healthy way that helps you to cope with the pain; there is no right or wrong way to grieve. People grieve differently because



grieving is a personal and highly individual experience. How one grieves depends on many factors, including one's personality and coping style, one's life experience, one's faith, and the nature of the loss. It takes time to grieve because grieving is a process; healing will happen only gradually, and it cannot be forced or hurried. It cannot be scheduled into a timetable; some people start to feel better in weeks, others take months, others take years. If you suffer grief, remember to be patient with yourself and allow the process to unfold naturally.

### **Many times we have misconceptions about grief:**

- *We may try to ignore it in the hope that it will go away sooner, but it doesn't; it only makes us feel worse.*
- *We may try to 'be strong', perhaps because we believe that crying is a sign of weakness; so we put on a brave face in the name of trying to protect our family and/or friends, not knowing that showing our true feelings can help them and us.*
- *We may think that if we do not cry then we are not sorry about the loss, but crying is not the only response to sadness – there are other ways to express our sorrow. We may not cry, and yet we feel the pain just as deeply as the one who does cry.*
- *We may think that grief should last about a year, but there is really no right or wrong timeframe for grieving; it differs from person to person.*

These misconceptions can lead us to excessive grief. It occurs when the mourning process is derailed and grief symptoms intensify. When we are in this state we may have extreme focus on the loss and reminders of the loved one; all have intense longing and / or pining for the deceased; all have problems accepting the death; all become numb or detached; we are preoccupied with our sorrow; we are embittered about our loss; we have inability to enjoy life; we experience depression or deep sadness; we have trouble carrying out normal routines; we withdraw from social activities; we feel that life holds no meaning or purpose; we are irritable or agitated, and we lack trust in others. The only solution is to turn to Jesus, who went through all these agonies (Hebrews 4:15-16).



**MARRIAGE OF HIS SISTERS WAS NOT TAKING PLACE.**

**“Anyone who does evil, evil will recoil, without his knowing where it comes from” (Sir. 27, 27).** I heard from a counselor the story of a young boy who attended the retreat for his elder sisters’ marriage to take place. He already had a girl friend but he was not able to marry her as his sisters were staying home without getting married. So, he came for the retreat so that the blocks could be removed. During prayer he got a scripture from Wis.11,16, **“to teach them that the agent of sin is the agent of punishment.”** He was asked about his job and he said he works as a cable operator. He connects different channels to different houses. He was asked if there is any evil related to his job. Then he said he used to collect some extra money to connect filthy channels to different homes for the youngsters. Now, the Lord told him to repent of sowing the sin of immorality that broke many youngsters and families. The scripture teaches, **“the man who digs a pit falls into it, whoever sets a snare will be caught by it. On anyone who does evil, evil will recoil, without his knowing where it comes from” (Sir.27,26-27).** As he repented, the marriage of his sisters miraculously took place.



**How do you react to grief?**

Many go through several emotional phases that vary with each individual. The description used here is based on phases which were initially described as the stages of grief, but there are people who resolve their grief without going through any of these stages. If you are one of those who go through these stages of grief, it is unlikely that you will experience them in a neat, sequential order as given below.

**1. Shock and Disbelief**

This is the initial reaction to hearing news of a loss or death. It can be hard to accept what happened, so you may feel numb, you may have trouble believing that it really happened, or you may even deny the truth. Somehow, the gravity of the situation does not register. You may disbelieve the information and try to disregard the surrounding facts. You may also try to prove that the bearer of the news is not a reliable source of information. You may keep expecting the person to show up, much as you do know he or she is gone.

### 2. Denial

In most cases, this is the next stage and it lasts for a short period of time. However, some people can endure it over a longer period of time. If there is denial of the situation, the person may refuse to accept, or will be unable to accept, the reality of the situation.

### 3. Bargaining

Most of us start bargaining on hearing of a loss; the general sentiment is that we want to turn back the clock, reverse the loss, or bargain with God. This happens when we start making comments like, “It should have been me”; “Take me instead”; “Make this not happen!”

### 4. Guilt

This will usually overlap bargaining. The obvious reaction is to blame oneself, but the underlying emotion has undertones of reconciling with the loss. You may regret or feel guilty about things that you did or did not say or do. You may feel guilty about certain feelings that come to you, like feeling relief when the person died after a long, difficult illness. Perhaps you may even feel guilty for not doing something that could have prevented the death, even though you know there was nothing more you could have done.

### 5. Anger

Even if the loss was nobody’s fault, you may feel angry and resentful, with yourself, with God, with the doctors, or even with the person who died perhaps because you feel he/she abandoned you. You feel the need to blame someone for the injustice that was apparently done to you, so you outwardly express the turmoil within.

### 6. Depression

This tends to be a frequent occurrence during the entire grieving process that may keep recurring at every stage. You may begin to get empty feelings, and withdraw from life; you may be left in a fog of intense sadness, perhaps wondering if there is any point in going on (alone or otherwise). It is important for you to understand that this depression is not a sign of mental illness that needs you to start taking psychotropic drugs; it is but the natural response to a great loss.



*The truth is that we can never prepare ourselves for grief, because doing so would amount to denying ourselves the joy of living.*

## 7. Acceptance

The good news is that reality will eventually set in; you finally come to realize that things cannot be reversed. Inadvertently, acceptance and hope will move into the thought process; these pave way for reconciliation and an attempt to move on with life. This coming-out of the grieving process is basically a realization that certain things in life happen despite our best efforts to avoid them. The truth is that we can never prepare ourselves for grief, because doing so would amount to denying ourselves the joy of living. We can only accept loss as one of life's challenges which must be met with a positive mental attitude. ***Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you with Peace:*** You must know what triggers your grief and plan how to deal with it. Anything which reawakens memories and feelings such as anniversaries, holidays, and milestones, can strike you emotionally. When that time comes, you should have no anxiety at all; know that the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your heart and mind (Philippians 4:7). It should however get better with time; therefore if you think it is getting worse you must seek spiritual help since it may become complicated. Remember to bring everything in prayer and petition, and with thanksgiving make your requests known to God (Philippians 4:6).



***We must emphasize that nothing is out of control for our God, all those who turn to him, he can turn their grief into joy as he did during His earthly life.***

We must emphasize that nothing is out of control for our God, all those who turn to him, he can turn their grief into joy as he did during His earthly life. In due course, healing diminishes the pain of a loss. Thoughts and memories of a loved one are deeply interwoven in the person's mind; they define the person's history and colour his/her view of the world. To miss a deceased loved one may be an ongoing part of your life, but it should not interrupt your life. If it does, it means you are suffering from complicated grief and it will dominate you and your life; you must seek to heal from it, eg. through spiritual counselling.

## How To Overcome Grief?

### *Read, Repeat and Meditate*

1. *“Do not give yourself over to sorrow, and do not distress yourself deliberately. A joyful heart is life itself, and rejoicing lengthens one’s life span. Indulge yourself and take comfort, and remove sorrow far from you, for sorrow has destroyed many, and no advantage ever comes from it”* (Sir.31:21-23). Surrender the cause of your sorrow to Jesus and rejoice in His consolation.
2. *“But we do not want you to be uninformed, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died”* (1Thes.4:13-14). Listen and see death is not the end of everything but a new beginning for a new life with Christ.
3. *“For grief may result in death, and a sorrowful heart saps one’s strength. When a person is taken away, sorrow is over; but the life of the poor weighs down the heart. Do not give your heart to grief; drive it away, and remember your own end”* (Sir.38:18-20). Follow this Word of God to overcome grief.
4. *“Mourning for the dead lasts seven days...”* (Sir.22:12). Shedding tears for long will cause complicated grief. Turn to Jesus, as quickly as the tragedy happens and be freed from undue grief.
5. *“Do not weep for him who is dead, nor bemoan him; weep rather for him who goes away, for he shall return no more to see his native land”* (Jer.22:10)
6. *“...for their souls were pleasing to the Lord, therefore he took them quickly from the midst of wickedness”* (Wis. 4:14). The Lord knows well why He called someone back to Him. Praise and thank the Lord, saying Lord you know better than me.
7. Always remember that, *“We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s”* (Rom.14:7-8).
8. *“Jesus said to her; ‘Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?’* (Jn.20:15). Lord, help me to believe that You are not in the tomb but risen and alive, help me to stop weeping.

## PEER PRESSURE



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*Do you have friends who dress in a certain way, comb their hair in a particular style, and have certain ideas about music and movies? Maybe you do not share these opinions or adopt these fashions, but you feel that you should. Be careful, you are under “peer pressure” and you may soon begin to think that if you are to “fit in” you will have to adopt similar values, beliefs, and goals or participate in the same activities as your friends. Peer pressure is bad because we are all unique, created for different, specific purposes. It can make a student to skip school, get drunk or smoke cigarettes or take drugs; it can lead one to do things that they know are wrong, dangerous, or risky. Turn to Jesus straight away you will never be misguided. He has a good plan for your future! (cf. Jeremiah 29:11)*

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Peer pressure can affect people of all ages: that 4-year-old who begs for a toy because all her friends in baby-school have it; the adult who buys a luxury car because everyone in the neighbourhood has it; the parents who take their children to a particular school because all their friends' children go there, etc.



### **I HAVE NOT MARRIED AND I HAVE NO CHILDREN**

*Father, please help me to know, is it a curse that I am already 39 years old, not married and having no children? My colleagues tell me that it is a curse not to have a child. They are advising me, even if I don't get a husband, at least to have a child before death to continue my life line. She was so confused and broken saying, "I never had a boyfriend as I was praying for a God-fearing man to marry me and never did I find him. I never had a relationship with anyone. Now, I feel oppressed as friends tell me that my life is a failure as I could not so far find a husband or a child in my life". As she was talking, the Lord revealed a scripture from Wisdom 3:13 that directly talked to her life: **"Blessed the barren woman if she be blameless, and has not known an unlawful bed, for she will have fruit at the visitation of souls. Again, "Sing, O barren one who did not bear; burst into song and shout, you who have not been in labour! For the children of the desolate woman will be more than the children of her that is married, says the Lord"** (Isaiah 54:1). To be single and holy is also a divine vocation. When many are ready to lead a single holy life generations will be purified and families will be protected.*



Let us not compare our lives with others or imitate the style of others. We are all special, specific and unique creation of our God. *"Why is one day more important than another, when all the daylight in the year is from the sun? By the Lord's wisdom they were distinguished, and he appointed the different seasons and festivals"* (Sir.33:7-8). *"Like clay in the hand of the potter, to be moulded as he pleases, so all are in the hand of their Maker, to be given whatever he decides"* (Sir.33:13).

***You are more likely to be heavily influenced by your peers and less likely to make decisions for yourself if you: -***

- have low self-esteem
- are experiencing problems in your family
- come from a family where there is little support or poor communication
- strongly identify with only one ethnic group
- feel distant from school and community activities, or
- are afraid of not belonging or fitting in.

***Therefore, you will be pressurized to comply, conform, fall in line, do likewise, submit and accept blindly. You will definitely succumb to it if you:***

- are insecure
- desire to fit in
- are looking for status
- think you need the excitement
- fear losing friends
- want to be noticed or envied
- are looking to assert autonomy
- want to find your identity
- are looking for support or approval or
- want to excel at something.

It is better that you resist negative pressure because you will like yourself better, you will be in control of your life and you will gain others' respect for being a principled person. If, unfortunately, you do submit to negative pressure, you will feel bad about yourself and you will lose the good will of others. You are likely to create tension between you and your parents (or spouse or family or community), and you can ruin your health or even your future. You can simply walk away from them and never look back, but you must learn strategies that help to resist it.

### **How To Overcome Peer Pressure?**

#### ***Read, Repeat and Meditate***

1. *“See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands...” (Is.49:16) “Take courage, O Jerusalem, for the one who named you will comfort you” (Bar.4:30). Always remember that He knows your name! You have a special identity before God.*
2. *“For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life” (Eph.2:10). He has prepared a specific duty for you to do. See, you are useful before God.*
3. *“If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose” (1Cor.12:17-18). Believe always that you are of great value in His eyes. Your absence creates a great vacuum. You are complimentary to one another.*
4. *“Why is one day more important than another, when all the daylight*



## WHY TURN TO JESUS!

- in the year is from the sun? In the fullness of his knowledge the Lord distinguished them and appointed their different ways. Like clay in the hand of the potter, to be moulded as he pleases... ” (Sir.35:5-13). He has created you different from the other. You are never equal to anyone else; you are unique. Don’t compare yourself with others. Don’t copy or imitate what others do: be yourself! God loves you just the way you are.*
5. *“In a large house there are utensils not only of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for special use, some for ordinary. All who cleanse themselves of the things I have mentioned will become special utensils, dedicated and useful to the owner of the house, ready for every good work” (2Tim.2:20-21). If you feel you are not as useful as your peers, turn to Jesus, and cleanse yourself in His precious Blood, He will make you a significant instrument in his Hand.*
  6. *“On that day there shall be inscribed on the bells of the horses, ‘Holy to the LORD.’ And the cooking-pots in the house of the LORD shall be as holy as the bowls in front of the altar” (Zech.14:20). Just imagine if the cooking pots can become holy by staying in the house of the Lord; What about you who is created in His own image and likeness (cf. Gen. 1:26), turn unto Him, He will also make you holy. Please don’t waste your time by trying to become like others. There can never be another YOU.*
  7. *“...be content with what you have; for he has said, ‘I will never leave you or forsake you” (Heb.13:5). Jesus wants you to be content, the way you are.*
  8. *“Because you did not serve the LORD your God joyfully and with gladness of heart for the abundance of everything, therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger and thirst, in nakedness and lack of everything...” (Deut.28:47-48). Many are indifferent in their lives looking at the fortunes of others, because they are not happy the way they are. Remember the Lord wants you to serve him with joy the way you are. Your voice, your presence, your shape is something very special for your Creator.*
  9. *“...he has made nothing incomplete. Each supplements the virtues of the other...” (Sir.42:24-25). He wants you to supplement the virtues of others, not to copy or imitate but work in harmony with others.*
  10. *“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children” (Eph.5:1) Always remember, there is no one worthy to be imitated in your life other than Jesus. Turn to Him, He will give you the identity you are looking for.*
  11. *“Then once more you shall see the difference between the righteous*

*and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him” (Malachi 3:18). What makes you unique and successful is in standing out in serving the living God.*



### QUALIFIED BUT NO JOB

*This man has been jobless for six years. Though he is well qualified and goes for different interviews, some even in international firms, no new job was forthcoming.*

*He came for the retreat to know why God has forgotten him, in spite of being very active in the church. While praying for him we got a scripture from Prov 19,26, that is, **“those who do violence to their father and chase away their mother are children who cause shame and bring reproach.”** As we got this scripture we asked him whether he ever mistreated his father. He said, “Father I could not even remember his face as I lost him when I was two years old, so, I don’t think that I have ever hurt him.” Then we asked, “Have you ever chased away your mother?” He said, “That may be true, because I heard that my wife, when I was abroad, put my mother in an outhouse and refused to give her food or take her to the hospital. I was helpless, because my wife once threatened me saying that my mother is never happy with her. I found they were like north pole and south pole, so I gave my wife the freedom to do what she wanted”. We explained to him Sir. 7,27-28, **“with all your heart honour your father, never forget the birth-pangs of your mother. Remember that you owe your birth to them; how can you repay them for what they have done for you?”** It is your mother who brought you up, educated you, even though she became a widow in her younger days, she never again got married, to take good care of you. How can you permit your wife to mistreat your mother who became a widow in her tender age? Remember it was because of your mother, the Lord blessed you with a job, with a wife and with a family. When you tried to withdraw mercy from your mother, the good Lord withdrew the job from you, because the job God granted you was to provide for your mother also. When you stopped helping her you lost the job. Ask forgiveness from her and you will again be blessed.*

*We read warning scripture to all those who mistreat their parents: **“If you curse father or mother, your lamp will go out in utter darkness”** (Pro.20,20). Even if you are pressurised by your beloved ones, never act unjustly to anyone.*



## CHAPTER FIVE

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# INNER WOUNDS IN AFRICA



*In Africa many people are very wounded. They suffer from rejection, lust, anger, low self esteem, fear, grief, discouragement and the list is endless. But, there is hope in Jesus! He is a God full of mercy and compassion. He came not for the righteous but for sinners, the sick and not those who are well ... He is able to heal all these numerable wounds not only in Africa but the whole world, those who turn to Him receive His unconditional love and healing touch. (cf. Exodus 15:26)*

## REJECTION



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***Rejection can be defined as the sense of being “unwanted.” It is when we desire people to love us, and yet we believe that they do not or cannot love us at all. You want to be part of a group, but you feel excluded. Sometimes rejection is so wounding and painful that the mind refuses to focus on it. Nevertheless, you know something is there even though it is deeper than the mind, deeper than the reason, deeper than the memory. It is in your spirit. The only way to get out of rejection is to turn to Jesus who will never ever reject anyone. (cf. John 6:37)***

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## WHY TURN TO JESUS!

The book of Proverbs describes rejection by saying; *“A glad heart makes a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of heart the spirit is broken”* (Proverbs 15:13). It is therefore very true when the Bible says that; *“The human spirit will endure sickness; but a broken spirit, who can bear?”* (Proverbs 18:14). An energetic spirit helps a person through great difficulties, but a crushed spirit has a crippling effect in all areas of life. The Lord Jesus Christ came that we might have Life: Abundant, Active, and Eternal Life.

In Matthew 9:36, we see how Jesus was moved by compassion: But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, like sheep having no shepherd. He felt a lot of pity for them as they must have been very weary, harried, frustrated, burdened down and lost without anyone to look after them! He is a very compassionate and loving Father who has unconditional love for us all! Jesus sees you, just as He saw the multitudes. In 2 Maccabees 6:12 we read, *“Now I urge those who read this book not to be depressed by such calamities, but to recognize that these punishments were designed not to destroy but to discipline our people.”* King David called out to Abba Father in Psalm 25:16, *“Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted.”*



### DAUGHTER OR HOUSE-GIRL?

It was during one of our retreats that a girl, very small in stature, stood up to give her testimony of what the Lord had done for her in the retreat. *“When you look at me,”* she began, *“I may seem to you like a twelve-year-old girl, but actually I am thirty four years old,”* much to everyone’s surprise! She then narrated her story. When her mother was in the university, she got pregnant with her. Not being able to study and take care of a baby, and her father having refused to take responsibility for both her and her mother, her mother took her to her grandmother to raise her. To her grandmother, she was just burden and her grandmother kept on telling her to return to her mother. When her mother finished university, she tried to get someone to marry her, who would take care of her and her daughter. All the while this girl was growing up. One man did come along and agreed to marry her mother, having been convinced by her mother that she, the mother did not have any children. Her mother then brought her to stay with her as her house-girl, strictly warning her not to reveal her identity as her daughter. The couple had children together. Being her mother’s house-girl, this young girl would cook, clean, wash clothes of her younger step brothers and sisters, mother and step father. She would wake up early in the morning

to prepare them for school and sadly watch them go, wondering if she herself would ever get the chance to go to school. Worse still, her step father began to sexually abuse her and when this young girl went to her mother to complain, her mother told her, "Keep quiet! He is my husband, let me never hear you raise any complaint against him and if you are not satisfied, pack your bags and go elsewhere! It is because of you that my life is like this." This was the suffering she went through, many times she would go to sleep without food either because the other family members would finish whatever she had prepared or she was too tired to eat. When she did get a chance to eat, it was only left-overs. All these feelings of rejection, unwantedness and bitterness welled up inside her and retarded her growth. Later on she found the courage to leave her mother's house, but suffered a lot outside in the real world until the Lord in His own gracious way brought her for that retreat. "I really hated myself. I tried to commit suicide on three different occasions, tried to run away from home many times but was not successful. I had a lot of unforgiveness towards my mother, I hated her so much too for neglecting me and treating me the way she did all those years, never giving me the love I so much needed. But in this retreat, I now know that Jesus is my real father and mother who loves me just as I am and who will never forsake me. When I finally got the chance to run away from home, I did and I never looked back. But now I will go back to my mother and ask for forgiveness, thanks to this newly found love. This love will be my guide henceforth", she concluded. The love of God totally transformed this girl.



It is very important, especially here in Africa, that we begin the culture of promoting good and holy families, where the husband cares for his wife and the wife cares for her husband, and both husband and wife equally love and care for their children. It is only through good and holy families that we will get godly offspring, who later on become holy men and women, consecrated to the service of God. Without holy and healthy families where will our future priests and nuns come from?



### **THE STORY OF A NUN**

During the retreat for the priests and the religious, a Sister came to ask a question regarding her vocation. She was maybe more than 65 years old, and wanted to know whether the Lord really called her, or if she was running away from her own home due to self-rejection. Confirming her through Scripture that says, "The tree is known by its fruits", the Good Lord affirmed that He had

## WHY TURN TO JESUS!

indeed called her, and that was why she could live all those years committed in the religious order. She thought she still lacked self-confidence. The sister then lifted up the left hand side of her religious Habit (garment) showing her severely burned left hand. She said her entire left side, even part of her head had no hair because she was burnt. According to her, she was born like that as her mother tried to have an abortion by taking some lotion. Later, as she joined the convent and became a nun she said nothing is visible outside, but now it is my heart and inside, that is burning day by day. "I feel rejected, even though the good Lord called and consecrated me." She just wanted to know, whether she was really called by God, or if she was running away, fearing that she will never get someone to marry her with a disfigured body. She also asked, 'did the Lord really love me and call me? If so, why did he allow all these things to happen?' The answer the good Lord gave was from John 15:18-19. **"If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you. If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. Because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world therefore the world hates you."** Because you were born for God and not for your parents they did not love you. Again, vocation starts before you were born, **'before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations'** (Jeremiah 1:5).



The Sisters of Mother Teresa care for the poor, abandoned and destitute. They once brought a teenage boy for a retreat. This boy was brought to one of their homes when he was very small; his mother had abandoned him in the streets. This boy grew up normally under the sisters' care. Suddenly the Sisters noticed a radical change in his behaviour. He was behaving in an immature manner, way below his age, which got the Sisters worried. So they brought him to attend a retreat. During prayer, we got Wisdom 3:16-18, *'But children of adulterers will not come to maturity, and the offspring of an unlawful union will perish. Even if they live long they will be held of no account. And finally their old age will be without honour. If they die young, they will have no hope and no consolation on the day of Judgment. For the end of an unrighteous generation is grievous.'* What this boy was lacking was nothing but parental love. The child was mentally disturbed since he did not get the love of a father and mother.

A child needs the love and care of both the father and mother. If a father abandons and neglects his wife and children, not only do the mother and

children suffer, but he too, sooner or later, bears the burden. The parents' disposition at the time of conception is very important. Previously we outlined the situations in which a child could be born out of lust. If a woman is raped and she happens to conceive, deep within her she may develop feelings of fear, anger, unforgiveness, and hatred towards herself, towards all men in general or even towards the baby she is carrying to the point of even wanting to get rid of the child. If a woman has a relationship with a man who abandons her when he finds out that she is pregnant with his child, she too will develop certain negative feelings. Now these feelings very much influence the child in the womb. Romans 11:16, "If the part of the dough offered as first fruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; and if the root is holy, then the branches also are holy."



#### **ACCEPT THAT YOU CARRY A CHILD**

*A mother brought her young daughter for prayers saying she could not understand why her daughter felt a lot of shame, and withdrew from people. She was also afraid to speak in public. When the mother was studying in the university she got pregnant. She tried very much to hide her pregnancy by wearing dresses that concealed the pregnancy and she developed a funny walking style. This shame that she felt passed on to her daughter. Lk. 1:44-45, **"For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy."** Likewise the same nature of the parents falls on the children; **"With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord"** (Lk. 1:17-28). The mother was requested to pray for the daughter and eventually she was set free.*



#### ***You are accepted***

If the mother is fearful, this fear will pass on to her children. During a retreat, at the time of giving testimonies, a young woman came forward to give her testimony. She said that during the inner healing session, she saw a vision. In the vision, she saw a man entering a room. In the room there happened to be a baby cot in which lay a baby. On seeing the baby, the man began crying.



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This woman's father had wanted a baby boy, but each time his wife got pregnant, she gave birth to a baby girl. They tried three times, unsuccessfully. So they both thought that they would try one more time, this time hoping that it would be a baby boy. However, like the previous pregnancies it happened to be a baby girl, much to the father's disappointment. This woman happened to be that fourth-born girl-child of her parents. So from the very beginning she unknowingly suffered rejection from her father. Even if as a child she never saw or heard her father express his disappointment, she felt very distant towards him, uneasy and not feeling any paternal love for him. She did not know, neither could she explain, why she felt like this towards her very own father! No one ever wants to feel like this, especially towards their parents.

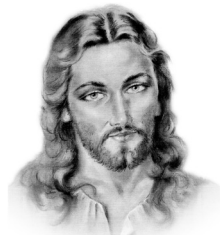
This baby was the woman and the man crying was her father. It was during the inner healing service that the Lord revealed to her what really had happened. As she concluded her testimony she said, "Today, I thank the Lord for having created me a woman and I no longer feel distant towards my father." Not only does the way the mother feel affect the child, the father's feelings too, as illustrated in the above example, will have a big impact on the child in the womb as he is also involved in the miracle of conception.



*It is important in Africa that we begin the culture of creating good and holy families, where the husband cares for his wife and the wife cares for her husband, and both love and care for their children.*

### *Prayer as a family makes a difference*

It is only God who can effectively change whatever is negative in us, to be positive. Even if the feelings and nature of the parents fall on the children, not all is negative; the good in the parents is also passed on to children.



### *Acceptance from parents*

Whether a child is born out of love or lust, this child has to be loved and taken care of by both parents even when not expected. Termination of the pregnancy (or abortion) should never be an option. Even the mere thought of abortion should **NOT** be entertained.

A 19-year-old boy rented a house because he never dared to stay with his dad. This boy's father once, on taking too much alcohol, and getting very drunk, had a physical relationship with a woman he was not married to. The woman conceived. On finding out that the woman was pregnant he advised her to abort the child. She did not abort. Later on the child was born. The baby born was this nineteen-year-old boy. This boy's paternal grandfather then advised his son (the boy's father) to get married to the same woman with whom he had the child, but he rejected and refused his father's advice, and went his way leaving the woman and his child. Later, he stayed with her because of pressure but he despised the child. Now, this boy is afraid to stay with his dad as he felt he might kill him. The same feeling that was transferred when he was in the womb of his mother.

On one occasion this boy, later grown up, in anguish told his mother, 'I will kill my dad'. He actually was unconsciously repeating what his father had earlier on advised his mother to do when he found out that she was pregnant with him: 'abort the child'.

If someone came up to you and offered you his house, to stay there free of charge without paying any rent, would you take up the offer? Supposing you did. Four months later, you come to find out that someone was brutally murdered in that same house. Would you continue staying in that house even if you were staying there free of charge? Probably not. If asked why not, you would admit that you are afraid to. No one builds a house in the middle of the cemetery and lives there. The same is the case of a mother who deliberately aborts. Her womb becomes like a cemetery because abortion is murder.



*Even if the feelings and nature of the parents fall on the children, not all is negative; the good in the parents is also passed on to the children.*



### AN ANGRY BOY

John had a lot of anger towards his parents, yet to outsiders he was very good, he had no problem with them. When John's mother was pregnant with him, both his mother and father were not ready for him; both of them wanted to abort the child. However, by the grace of God this plan failed and the baby was born. The baby was John. John, however, grew up hating his parents so much, because he felt both mum and dad did not want him, did not love him. Hence he had an uncontrollable anger towards them.



“How the gold has grown dim, how the pure gold is changed! The sacred stones lie scattered at the head of every street. The precious children of Zion, worth their weight in fine gold- how they are reckoned as earthen pots, the work of a potter's hands! Even the jackals offer the breast and nurse their young, but my people has become cruel, like the ostriches in the wilderness. The tongue of the infant sticks to the roof of its mouth for thirst; the children beg for food, but no one gives them anything” (Lamentations 4:1-4). The peculiarity of an ostrich is that it does not have mammary glands; therefore cannot breastfeed. But, God is like a mother who can restore the love we lost, *“as a Mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem”* (Isaiah 66:13).

Offering a child to God through sacraments is crucial to getting divine protection on one's life. “Hannah said to her husband, *“As soon as the child is weaned, I will bring him, that he may appear in the presence of the LORD, and remain there forever; I will offer him as a Nazirite for all time”* (1Samuel 1:22). Hannah, mother of Samuel, cared for her child very much and offered him to God to spend the rest of his life with God. She made this sacrifice with the first fruit of her womb, her first-born son. If from childhood a child is trained to love and honour God, the child grows up to be ‘God-fearing’.

In 2 Timothy 1:5, Paul writes to Timothy: *‘I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Loise and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you.’* He continues to say, 2 Timothy 3:15-16, *‘how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.’*

## AN INVITATION TO INNER HEALING

*Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favour with the LORD and with the people*  
- 1 Sam. 2:26

Again we read,

*Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour.*  
- Luke 2:52

When I was small, I did not understand the discipline of my parents as many times we too do not understand the value of what we go through. Today very many parents are reluctant to discipline their children, they are reluctant to teach them to love God, they are reluctant to make them pray, they are reluctant take them to Holy Mass, they are reluctant to insist on them not going to clubs and other immoral places, they are reluctant to insist and encourage them to behave morally in the manner of dress and not to blindly follow fashion, the friends they keep, etc.

When Simon of Cyrene was asked to help Jesus carry his cross, he did not want to. He did not understand why he had to help a criminal carry his cross; he did not understand the value of what he was being asked to do. The soldiers, therefore had to force him to carry the cross of Jesus. Now if Simon was again given the same chance he would willingly carry it. See now the role Simon of Cyrene played in the course of our salvation! Parents too have to insist on disciplining their children, for their own sake and for the sake of the future lives of their children, whatever the cost. This discipline has to be given with love and out of love and the children have to be made to understand that it is out of love that they are being disciplined. Even if the children fail to understand, let the parents continue to carry out the discipline in a loving way. Later on the children, like Simon of Cyrene will come to understand the value of that discipline. If not disciplined out of love, the children feel unloved and unwanted.

### ***Lack of parental love***

Lack of parental love can lead children to go away from their parents; they will develop bad habits and become violent. Take for example Ali Agca, the man who tried to assassinate St. John Paul II. As a child Ali suffered a lot of rejection from his parents.

## WHY TURN TO JESUS!

A boy was once brought for prayers. He had the habit of befriending young girls and even women, misusing them sexually one after another; when he is through with one, he moves to another. He did this only because, as a child, he did not get any motherly love. Apart from this, parents should never sideline or ignore their children, each child should be given special, equal attention, and love. Failure to this, can lead the child to develop self-rejection.

In a retreat centre, many men and women volunteer their services for the glory of God. Among these was a man who did his work very responsibly, sincerely and with a lot of commitment, but would never allow anyone to help him. He preferred to do all the work on his own. This angered the other team members and they went to report to the director of the centre that a person with such a proud attitude should not be allowed to serve the Lord. When we prayed we came to realize that what this man was crying out for was love. He was the ninth born in a family of thirteen. No one gave him a chance to air his views or express his opinions. When decisions were being made, he was always told, ‘keep quiet, you do not know anything!’ When he did get the chance to speak, he was ignored. This led him to develop ‘self-rejection’. When he took over all his work what he was indirectly telling the people was, “I am good at what I do and I can work well. Why can you not recognize and accept me also?” the rejection he faced caused him in turn to reject himself. Self-rejection at other times causes those undergoing it to withdraw from duties and responsibilities.

No amount of food, alcohol, drugs, sleep or any kind of indulgence will take away the pain, hurt, or wounds which came upon you by lack of parental love. This wound is hidden away in our inner being and not unless and until we treat it, it will haunt us and cause us damage. The earlier we discover it and treat it, the better it will be for us. Attending a retreat is one of the ways we get to discover and treat at the same time, wounds, some of which we never even knew existed in us. Take some time off and attend a retreat and see what God has to speak directly to you.



### **I WAS BORN ACCIDENTALLY**

*I came across a twenty-seven-year-old young man who was addicted to drugs and was a big worry to his parents. His mother, out of concern for her son, brought him to attend a retreat. She brought him to us so we could especially pray for him. She told*

us that as a young boy, he was very good and gave his parents no problem at all. Suddenly he began to take drugs. She did not know how the problem began. He too was remorseful and expressed his desire to want to stop this bad habit. As we were praying, the Lord took him back to his early childhood where he remembered an incident. When he was seven years old, while playing, he accidentally knocked over his mother's valuable flower vase. It fell and broke. His mother, on finding out, got very angry and in her anger told him, "anyway you were also born accidental!" These words broke his heart. Years later, talking about this incident, he still made him cry. Choking with tears as he told his story, he suddenly burst out crying, unable to hold himself back any longer. Such was the pain that he had in his heart all these years. After this incident, he went around with this thought ringing in his mind, 'I am unwanted, I am unwanted. If I am not wanted by my own parents, why should I live?' he felt so rejected. It was then that he began to take drugs to keep away these bad feelings and thoughts. We then advised his parents to ask him for forgiveness. This they did and the boy was set free. **"You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free"** (John 8:32).



Rejection is not limited to early childhood years; throughout our lives we continue to face rejection. Teenagers too have their own share of rejections.

In a retreat centre where I was working, we had a group of intercessors praying for the needs of the centre and the world in general. In the group was a boy. Being in charge of the intercessors, from time to time, I would go and pray with them. Everytime I did so or when just passing by the intercession chapel, I would hear this boy pray for one particular girl only. Whenever he prayed, his prayer was for and about this girl. I called him one day and asked why he always prayed for this girl only. Tearfully, he said this girl had cheated him and broken his heart. He gave her money and she ran away from him with the money. I asked him whether at any one time he had misused anyone. He said before he met this girl, he had befriended other girls seven in number. Out of all these he found none suitable for him. Then, he met this girl whom he liked and found as his perfect match. Unfortunately she did not feel the same way he felt for her. I told him, "All those seven girls you misused and rejected are crying, and their cry is reaching out to their Master in heaven. You cannot hurt and break people's hearts and think all will be fine with you. We read:

## WHY TURN TO JESUS!

*As you have done, it shall be done to you; your deeds shall return on your own head.*  
- Obadiah :15

Again we read,

*Be sure your sin will find you out.*  
- Numbers 32:23

We assured him, “Once you repent and forgive, Jesus will turn towards you with compassion.” Therefore those who suffer rejection should never lose hope, because we have a God who loves us and will never reject us.

### ***AN ANGEL WITH A MOSQUITO NET***

Once united to the special unique love of God, we will never feel the pain of rejection. A man lay very sick in the hospital’s intensive care unit, feeling very alone and abandoned by God. As I was praying I saw in a vision an angel coming and dropping a mosquito net over him. The meaning we got was that, the good Lord loves him so much that He does not permit even a mosquito to bite him. This mosquito net represented the special love God has for each and every one of us.

To be united to this special love, we have to be ‘grafted’ to God, so that His love may fill us and take charge of our lives. Usually when we graft a plant, what happens is that a branch of that plant that is not producing fruit is cut off and joined to the branch of another plant that is producing good fruit. **The same with divine grafting: those born out of prostitution, drunkenness, hatred etc, should be joined to the love of God through constant prayer and regular and constant reception of the Sacraments.**

*But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in their place to share the rich root of the olive tree.*

- Romans 11:17

Romans 11:24, “*For if you have been cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these natural branches be grafted back into their own olive tree*”. We all need to be grafted to Jesus Christ who is the source of all love. Once we are united to Christ Jesus, our old sinful nature dies and we take on His nature (cf. Galatians 5:22-23). “*All of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed*

*into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18). Deuteronomy. 32:10, “He sustained him in a desert land, in a howling wilderness waste; he shielded him, cared for him, guarded him as the apple of his eye.” Constantly reading the Word of God and repeating the above bible verses will help us overcome the negative in us because once united in God’s love, no longer will we be slave to the evil passions, desires and sinful habits – Romans 8:1, “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”*

### ***Who are the friends of your child?***

What our children are doing, where they are, who they are with should be a constant point of concern to all parents. A couple brought their son to special prayers. The parents of the boy, both of whom were teachers, complained that their son had suddenly lost interest in his studies. He would no longer go to church, would lock his room and forever stay in there and liked to stay alone. What really happened is that his parents used to send him for tuition, not knowing that his tuition master was showing him pornographic films and pictures and even sexually abusing him. As a result whenever he took a book to read, all he saw were filthy images of the pictures and films his tuition master showed him. Whatever his tuition master showed him filled his thoughts and unconsciously kept on replaying in his mind impairing his thoughts and level of concentration. We then told him to make a good and sincere confession. Pornography is a sin. Lack of parental care and love can lead children to sexual perversions, but once we repent of this sin, God sets us free and restores us once again. *Hebrews 10:17, ‘I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.’ Romans 8:1, “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” Isaiah 43:25, “I, I am He who blots out your transgressions for my own sake and I will not remember your sins.”*



### **A VERY CRUEL STEPMOTHER**

*It was when conducting a retreat in Uganda, during the inner healing session, the Lord gave the message that He was healing a girl who had marks on her legs. One young girl in the crowd, on hearing this, stood up screaming. She came running forward towards the altar saying she was the one. It happened that her stepmother would constantly beat her in punishment for the mistakes she did even very trivial ones and she would not stop until the girl began bleeding. She had several marks on her legs to prove this. As a result, the girl developed complications in her legs.*



Many a time, this young girl asked herself where her real mother was, and why she did not have a mother like all the other children. She wondered if Jesus really cared for her. The reason she screamed was that she could not imagine if Jesus knew her predicament, or if He knew the cruel way her stepmother was treating her. Yet she was filled with amazement at His knowledge of her pain and suffering.

This realization in addition to the following scripture verses healed her. Isaiah 49:15-16, **'Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. Psalms 27:10, 'If my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up'. Isaiah 46:3-4, 'listen to me, o house of Jacob, all the remnant of the house of Israel, who have been borne by me from your birth, carried from the womb; even to your old age I am he, even when you turn gray I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save.'**



### ***Childhood sexual abuse***

If a child is sexually abused this greatly affects him and his future. No child or human being should ever suffer sexual abuse. For children it is so severe that sometimes those who unfortunately suffer this misfortune are affected for life. One common trend that is clear among almost all those who practice fornication, masturbation, watch pornography or other immoral activities, is that all these people have a history of sexual misuse in own childhood. A fifty year old woman kept on having filthy thoughts even during holy mass, she could not concentrate and these immoral thoughts kept on disturbing her. This is because when she was thirteen years old, her old uncle continually sexually abused her. For a long time she hid this truth but was very resentful and bitter towards her uncle, she even prayed against him despite him being long dead. We asked her to forgive her uncle who abused her. When she forgave him by the grace of God, she was set free. Her unforgiveness despite her being the victim here, was a block to his eternal salvation. Similarly children brought up by those who are not their real biological parents, should be given extra special care and love.

As we grow into adulthood, we come across people or situations that rub us the wrong way. If we put too much emphasis on these people or events, we develop inner wounds.



### **MOTHER MARY CONSOLED A WOMAN IN SOUTH SUDAN**

*It was during a retreat in South Sudan: an old woman who had been grieving over the loss of her son who apparently had gone to the war but had disappeared without any trace. He was not reported dead nor was he among the casualties. This brought her a lot of sorrow. She could not pray nor forgive*

*God for the disappearance of her son. In the retreat, she saw a vision of Mother Mary. In the vision, Mother Mary was asking her, 'Can you offer your son as I offered my son?' It was then that she was delivered from sorrow. 2 Corinthians 7:10, **"For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but worldly grief produces death."***



Sorrow is of two kinds - godly sorrow and worldly sorrow. Sorrow can make a person sick, sorrow can lead to death, sorrow can lead to fear, failure in exams, business, and into debts. Cheating can also lead to sorrow. Those who turn to Jesus will overcome sorrow as He said, I will wipe away every tear from their eyes. (cf. Revelation 21:4)



### **I WILL NOT REJECT ANYONE WHO COMES TO ME**

*A girl, even though she was sure was going to pass her final exams, did not perform as she expected, and she eventually did failed. As a result she fell into a bout of depression. She became very sorrowful, stopped eating, and could not sleep properly. All the time she was thinking what the family, relatives and neighbours would say. She thought she had let her family members down and that they all hated her. She thought that God also hated her. One day she saw a picture of Jesus with the inscription, 'I will not reject anyone who comes to me' – John 6:37. From these words, she got strength and resolved to re-sit the exam. She began to study again, hard and diligently. She re-sat the exam and this time passed with flying colours. Today she is one of the most renowned tuition teachers who not only tutors those children who have not performed as expected in their exams but also gives them hope and encouragement not to give up. Psalms 119:71: "It is good for me that I was humbled, so that I might learn your statutes." While giving her testimony, she said, "The Word of God healed and changed me." Jeremiah 31:16, "Thus says the LORD: Keep your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears; for there is a reward for your work." Revelation 1:4, "I will wipe every tear from their eyes."*



## How To Overcome Rejection?

### *Read, Repeat and Meditate*

1. *“Can a woman forget her nursing-child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you”* (Is.49:15). Turn to Jesus, who loves you more than a mother.
2. *“See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands...”* (Is.49:16). Look at the palm of Jesus, you will be surprised to see your name there.
3. *“As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem”* (Is.66:13). Turn to Him, He will comfort you like a mother. Repeat this word of God several times a day.
4. *“For you are our father, though Abraham does not know us, and Israel does not acknowledge us; you, O LORD, are our father; our Redeemer from of old is your name”* (Is.63:16). Are you rejected by your own father, turn to Him, and call him FATHER, He is ready to acknowledge you as His own child.
5. *“If my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will take me up”* (Ps.27:10). Are you rejected by your own mother, father and others, turn to Jesus, He is a compassionate Father.
6. *“As a father has compassion for his children, so the LORD has compassion for those who fear him”* (Ps.103:13). Turn to Him, he will fill you with His unconditional love and heal your wounded heart.
7. *“...For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name, I surname you, though you do not know me”* (Is.45:4). You are not rejected, turn to Him, He knows your name, even your surname.
8. *“Listen to me, O house of Jacob, all the remnant of the house of Israel, who have been borne by me from your birth, carried from the womb; even to your old age I am he, even when you turn grey I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save”* (Is.46:3-4) Turn to Him, there is none who carried you like Him and he will never ever reject nor forsake you.
9. *“... anyone who comes to me I will never drive away”* (Jn.6:37). No one has ever said like this, it is only Jesus, don't delay turn to Him straightaway you will feel accepted by Him.
10. *“Thus says the LORD: If the heavens above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth below can be explored, then I will reject all the offspring of Israel because of all they have done, says the LORD”* (JER.31:37). Repeat this promise several times

11. *“For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, provided it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by God’s word and by prayer”* (1Tim.4:4-5). Remember, Jesus cannot reject anyone for whatever may be the cause. Put your trust in Him and you will be set free from the feelings of rejection.
12. *“...Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you... Because you are precious in my sight, and honoured, and I love you...”* (Is.43:1-4). Remember, Jesus, came to pay a debt He did not owe because we owe a debt we cannot pay.



**JUDGING IS THE MOST COMMITTED SIN**

**“Before judgment comes, examine yourself; and at the time of scrutiny you will find forgiveness.”** (Sirach 18:20).

As the retreat was going on I told the retreatants to close their eyes, clap their hands and sing together and louder with the choir to praise and worship the Lord. I saw a particular man doing the exact opposite of what I instructed. I got annoyed and repeated the instruction again in a louder voice, “Let everyone who has eyes close them, those who have hands clap them and those with a mouth and tongue use it to glorify the Lord.” Then, this particular man again not doing anything I said; instead of clapping he folded his hands, instead of closing the eyes he started to observe all others around. I felt very disturbed, and remembered what my spiritual Father told me, “when you preach and people are not listening it is either you have not made a good confession or people are in mortal sin.” I told the choir members to continue singing and I decided to go and make a personal confession. As I was walking out a man came running to me saying, please father talk to a man I have brought. I tried to avoid him. Then he said, ‘father, he is a special case, please see him one minute’. He then brought the distracted man to me saying, ‘father please lay your hands on him and pray as he is deaf and dumb’. I was so stunned. It was because he was deaf he was looking at others to see what they were doing. Since he could not sing, he was just folding the hands and following what others were doing. Looking at him externally, he has no problem, he is a very strong man with everything seemingly working (Sirach 19:13). I learned the importance to **turn to Jesus** before judging anyone as He inspired me to read, **“He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor”** (Isaiah 11:3-4).



## LUST



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*Lust is obsessive, excessive desire of a sexual nature. Lust is inordinate love of the pleasure of the flesh. The lustful lose sight of spiritual things, and focus solely on pleasing the self. God calls us to a selfless faith marked by holy living. Lust often leads to unwholesome actions to fulfill one's desires with no regard to the consequences. Those who turn to Jesus, He will help them to crucify their flesh with its passions. (cf. Galatians 5:24)*

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One of the dominating spirits in the soil of Africa is the spirit of lust: a majority are born out of wedlock and broken families. It can lead one to adultery, rape, paedophilia, incest etc. Lust has as its focus to please oneself sexually. **Lust often leads to unwholesome actions to fulfill one's desires with no regard for the consequences.** Lust is about possession and greed. The Christian faith is about selflessness and is marked by holy living hence the goal of each person who has put his/her faith in Jesus Christ is to become more and more like Him each day. **God calls us to a selfless faith marked by holy living.** This means putting off the old way of life of which sin was in control, and conforming one's thoughts and actions to the standard put forth in Scripture.

The Bible makes a very strong statement regarding holiness in 1 Thessalonians 4:7-8, "*God has called us to be holy, not to live impure lives. Anyone who refuses to live by these rules is not disobeying human rules but is rejecting God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.*" In Africa, because of the different tribes and cultures, the devil cunningly interferes when it comes to holiness and families. He attacks and manipulates so many through this spirit of lust. In many cultures, they have their own traditional rituals which are performed during a wedding ceremony and sadly enough, the majority do not see the need to go to church to have their marriage blessed by God. So many families are broken because of lack of God's presence in their marriage. So many are tied up by this evil spirit through the many 'come we stay' marriages, polygamous unions etc.

***Let us see the various means that the devil uses as an entry point of lust:***

- It can be through certain ways of giving wrong sex education, the spread of the use of contraceptives, mass media with a hidden pornographic agenda.
- Condoms are distributed free of charge, "To promoting safe sex."
- Magazines, TV, radio, advertisements, movies, are using sex as a means of marketing products.
- Through Porn pictures and videos accessible on the internet.

Lust causes the separation of spouses, followed by divorce. No one is exempted from the attacks of the spirit of lust, but those who turn to Jesus, He is able to deliver them. (cf. Matt. 9:23)

***A Daughter is all out to destroy her Mother***

A mother once brought her daughter to me to pray for her. The mother complained that her daughter never listened to her, was rude and destructive.

This girl used to destroy her mother's items by cutting them into pieces eg. her clothes, slippers etc. She never listened to her mother and would always answer back when reprimanded. However, to her father, she was a good daughter, she never gave him any trouble. Similarly to outsiders she had no problem and was outgoing to them. Her mother was a teacher by profession. When her mother got married, she did not want to get pregnant immediately, she wanted to postpone getting pregnant for three years because of her career. However three months into her marriage, she got pregnant much to her disappointment. She hated herself, and even more the child she was carrying. Many times she thought of terminating the pregnancy and at one time she took drugs to kill the child but the drugs did not work. Her husband, on the other hand, tried to encourage her, telling her they both needed the child. By the grace of God she gave birth to a bouncy baby girl. The baby happened to be this young girl. Right from the moment of her conception, the feeling of not being wanted, the seed of hatred and rejection, had already been planted in her. As she grew up, she felt unloved; hence her strange behaviour. "My mother hates me", these were the words that constantly rang in her mind, heart and whole being. This young girl's whole mind was negative towards her mother and this affected their relationship. Because the child was born out of lust, she developed hatred.

### How were you born?

We mentioned that naturally, a child is born only out of two ways - **LOVE** or **LUST**. All children should be born out of LOVE. If parents fail to give a child the love it deserves when the child is age one, two, three or four and the child grows up without this love, later on, on realizing their mistake, the parents can never turn back to give the child the love they should have given the child then. This love is lost. **It is only JESUS CHRIST who can give back this lost love.** From the above example, we see how what the mother felt was directly passed on to her daughter. Parents therefore, have to have a genuine mutual desire and agreement to have children and prepare themselves to shower all their love on these children. Even if the child comes unexpectedly, they should remember that this child is a gift from God. Psalms 127:3, '*Sons are indeed a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward,*' and should therefore put their feelings aside and do everything in their power to love the child right from the time they find out that they are going to be parents. There is no situation that God cannot turn around for our own good, if we just work along with His plan. God is the God of the impossible.

True genuine love comes from God. Therefore, parents have to pray for God's love to fill them first and so be in a position to pass this love on to their off-spring. A boy praying for a life partner apart from praying for himself, should pray for **his future wife-to-be** and a girl praying for a life partner, apart from praying for herself, should also pray for **her future husband-to-be**; that is to say, anyone seeking a life partner ought to pray to God not only that He blesses them with that God-appointed-spouse, but also **pray for** their spouse-to-be even if they have not yet met. In this way they ask God to prepare not only themselves but also the child they are waiting for, in faith. ***Prayer therefore should precede everything.***

Before the act of procreation is performed, both husband and wife should kneel down together and pray, like Tobias and Sarah did – *“Now when you are about to go to bed with her, both of you must first stand up and pray, imploring the Lord of heaven that mercy and safety may be granted to you. Do not be afraid, for she was set apart for you before the world was made.”* (Tobit 6:18)

*When the parents had gone out and shut the door of the room, Tobias got out of bed and said to Sarah, “Sister, get up and let us pray and implore our Lord that he grant us mercy and safety.” So she got up, and they began to pray and implore that they might be kept safe. Tobias began by saying, “Blessed are you, O God of our ancestors, and blessed is your name in all generations forever. Let the heavens and the whole creation bless you forever. You made Adam, and for him you made his wife Eve as a helper and support. From the two of them the human race has sprung. You said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; let us make a helper for him like himself.’ I now am taking this kinswoman of mine, not because of lust, but with sincerity. Grant that she and I may find mercy and that we may grow old together.* - Tobit. 8:4-7

Prayerful parents give birth to God fearing children. Borrowing examples from the Bible, John the Baptist: Luke 1:5-6, *‘In the days of King Herod of Judah, there was a priest named Zechariah who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord’.* Again in Luke 1:13, *But the angel said to him, ‘Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John.’* Jesus himself says in Luke 7:28, *“I tell you, among those born of women no*



## WHY TURN TO JESUS!

*one is greater than John; yet the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.” We also read about the birth of Samuel; 1 Samuel 1:20-21, “In due time Hannah conceived and bore a son. She named him Samuel, for she said, ‘I have asked him of the LORD.’*

The prayer that Tobias and Sarah recited is a very beautiful prayer indeed, one that every parent-to-be should arm themselves with for their own sake and for the sake of their future offspring. Even if both Tobias and Sarah had fear in their hearts about what would happen, the prayer they prayed drove away the fear and in the end all went well. The desires (love and lust) and the mental attitudes (fear, hatred, sorrow, drunkenness and so on) that parents have at the time of conception greatly affect the nature of the child that will be born. That is why it is of great importance that the future parents ought to be united in spirit through constant prayer. It is only God who can change what is negative in us to be positive. Children should always be born first in the heart, which is to say in the spirit (cf. John 1:13). If a child is not born out of LOVE, then the child will be born out of LUST, that is to say born of the flesh. John 3:6, ‘what is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit’. Galatians 5:19-20, ‘now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions.’

Another thing to note is that Tobias and Sarah were rightfully and lawfully married according to the tradition of the time, which means that the prayer will be effective when the couple are properly united, properly married in the church. ***No physical sexual relationship whatsoever should take place before marriage.*** By marriage in this case we mean a proper ***Church Wedding***. Not the ceremonials attached to the wedding, but the liturgy associated with it. Many overlook the importance of having a church wedding. When one gets married in Church, they get the power, strength and support from God to face the day to day challenges of married life. Marriage is a sacrament, an outward sign of an inward grace. Sacraments are channels through which the grace of God flows to those who partake of the sacrament. Any relationship outside marriage locks God and His grace out. Jesus was not a fisherman; He was a carpenter’s son. He had no knowledge of fishing. After his resurrection, his disciples for a moment went back to their former professions. One night Simon Peter and his companions were fishing, but the whole night were unable to catch anything. It was when Jesus appeared just before daybreak, that they were able to catch a lot of fish. Simon Peter and

his disciples were expert fishermen, but could not catch anything until Jesus appeared. This shows the power of the presence of Jesus.

That is why God and the Church do not favour any physical relationship between a man and woman, a boy and a girl, a girl and a married man, a married man with a woman not his lawful wife. That is to say, fornication, adultery and any other relationship outside the marriage union. The consequences of such unlawful unions are serious. The problem is that these consequences are not immediately seen, but manifest much later on in the fruit (the offspring), of that union. God's love for us is so great. He leaves nothing to chance, so that none of us should be lost in any way.



### **I HATE MY HUSBAND**

*"I hate my husband", said the wife after a special retreat. "I don't know the reason, and I have never told him the same". What she was telling us is that, she has no problem with any other man except her husband. She said "I have no feelings for him, instead I feel irritated when he touches me". She continued, "I know as a wife I have to love and care for my husband, and I know, "the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does" (1 Corinthians 7:4), but my heart is not for him." They were married for more than 16 years. She continued, "I do doubt whether he is faithful and straightforward." Through prayer we got a scripture verse from Hebrews 13:4, "let marriage be held in honour by all, and let the marriage bed be kept undefiled; for God will judge fornicators and adulterers." Now, we came to know that before marriage she was involved in fornication and adultery and had fun with many boyfriends, but she never made a confession before the Sacrament of marriage. She entered into the marriage bed with the spirit of lust and fornication. It is that spirit in her that made her to hate her husband.*

*2 Samuel 13 speaks of the tragic story of lust. **Amnon fell sick to get Tamar forcefully when she disagreed to this sin. But the sin of lust grabbed him so much that "he would not listen to her. and being stronger than she was, he forced her and lay with her. Then Amnon was seized with a very great loathing for her. Indeed, his loathing was even greater than the lust he had felt for her. Amnon said to her, 'Get out!' (2 Samuel 13:14-15). Lust turned into hatred. The spirit of fornication removes love from the heart. Many marriages are broken and not working due to the impure relationships before marriage or outside of marriage. The real outcome of Lust is hatred.***



It is also important to note that those who commit fornication will always be suspicious of their life partner. Psalms 107:17 teaches that *'Some were sick through their sinful ways and because of their iniquities endured affliction.'* Lack of trust or suspicion can be a great cause of inner wounds. Those who commit this sin should repent and ask for the Lord's forgiveness. Once they repent, their sin will be forgiven and they will be set free. In Hebrews 10:17-18 *'I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.'* Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.



### AS THE FATHER AS THE SON

***"A godless father will be blamed by his children for the reproach he has brought on them"*** (Sirach 41:7). It was a very sad story. I heard from another priest that a twelve-year-old boy raped and killed his six-year-old sister and dumped the body in the septic tank. When the parents came home they could not find the girl. The boy who was always very rude and violent in nature refused to say anything. The police found the body in the septic tank and later, with evidence, charged the twelve-year-old boy, who later admitted the crime. As the boy was a minor they sent him for psychological counseling, but that did not bring forth any change in his violent behaviour. It was when the boy was brought for a retreat that the priests were inspired to call the parents to speak. When they came, the priest invited the mother alone and asked what happened during the time of the pregnancy. She explained a very violent and painful story that she had met with an accident after the marriage and broke her spine. Her whole body was in plaster and the doctors advised complete bed rest. It was on such a night the husband came fully drunk and raped her. This boy was conceived in that rape. The same nature of the father got into him. The book of Wisdom teaches, ***"The offspring of the godless come to nothing, however prolific, sprung from a bastard stock, they will never strike deep roots, never put down firm foundations. They may branch out for a time, but, on unsteady foundations, they will be rocked by the wind and uprooted by the force of the storm; their branches, yet unformed, will be snapped off, their fruit be useless, too unripe to eat, fit for nothing. For children begotten of unlawful bed, witness, when put on trial, to their parents' wickedness"*** (Wisdom 4:3-6). ***"Children of adulterers will not reach maturity, the offspring of an unlawful bed will disappear. Even if they live long, they will count for nothing"*** (Wisdom 3:16). The parents were asked to pray together daily the chaplet of Divine Mercy three times for three months, and they later reported a transformation in the behaviour of the boy.



## Responsible Sexual Behaviour

A young girl had come to get God's blessings for her forthcoming marriage. We blessed her. Not very long thereafter, she came back again, this time with a very long, sad, face. It happened that her fiancé had broken off the engagement and was no longer interested in marrying her because he had asked her to have a physical sexual relationship with him but she refused. I told her, "If your fiancé really loves you and not your body, then he will wait". I gave her some Word of God to read for one month then go and talk with her fiancé. She did as instructed and after one month, by the power of the Word of God, her fiancé agreed to talk to her and as she explained herself, he understood her refusal. Not very long afterwards she came back very happy this time with a wedding card inviting us for her wedding celebration. Fornication, adultery or any relationship outside marriage is a grave sin before God. ***When you do what is right, God will protect you and turn everything for your good.***



***Many a time, because our desires are unfulfilled or because life has not taken the turn we expected, or just because we are suffering too much, we take it as an excuse to sin.***

Many a time, because our desires are unfulfilled or because life has not taken the turn we expected it to, or just because we are suffering too much, we take it as an excuse to sin. 'I have been waiting and praying for a life partner, he is nowhere to be seen. I am not getting any younger. All my friends are married and have three, four children and here I am, still unmarried!'; 'I have a well-paying job, I can take good care of myself and my children, why do I need a husband?'; 'All my friends are moving out with married men who take good care of them providing for all their needs, and I am here, stagnant'; 'all my friends have boyfriends/girlfriends with whom they go to the clubs every Friday, all drinking and have a good time, while I am sitting bored at my parents home'; 'all my friends are on contraceptives and have had many 'safe' physical relationships' ... and so on are the excuses we give.

## SINGLE MOTHERS

Lust can break the life of a young girl eg. by getting a child out of wedlock and this can eventually lead her to be a single mother. If a woman is abandoned by the man who has fathered her children, she suffers rejection and this rejection is passed on to the children. The children bear the biggest share of this suffering because in the first place, they are innocent. Then they grow up feeling unloved, unwanted and uncared for and this leads them to fall into different kinds of sin as explained earlier (cf. Galatians 5:19-20). A single mother, no matter how efficient she may think she is can never give her children the love of a father. It is God's plan that all children be brought up by mother and father, unless of course the Lord calls to Himself one of the parents. This is the reason why, when Saint Joseph who was engaged to the mother of Jesus, Blessed Virgin Mary, found out that she was pregnant with child, and secretly thought of quietly breaking off the engagement, God sent His angel in a dream to tell him that it was by the action of the Holy Spirit that Mary was pregnant. He should not break off the arrangement but go ahead and marry her and take care of both her and the child Jesus. If God saw the importance of a father figure in the life of his only son Jesus, then those men who abandon their children and those women who choose to bring up children on their own do a great injustice to their children by denying them fatherly love. Both parents are very important in the lives of their children because they impart unique individual traits to their children. For example, a child filled with his father's love is self-confident and courageous, while a child filled with his mother's love is compassionate, loving and merciful.



***A single mother no matter how efficient she may think she is, can never give her children the love of a father.***

A young girl about twenty years old came to see me for prayers as she was jobless. She had a child but could not take care of his needs. 'If only I could just get a job, it would solve all my problems', she said. I asked her where the father of her child was, she said she separated from him. When asked why, she said that she was once working in a company. Her manager, a

fifty five year old man, was very good, kind and caring to her. Having grown up without a father, she saw a father figure in him. The two became friends and before she knew it, she was expecting his child. “I do not know how I was blinded; I was always searching for fatherly-love and here was this man showering me with the fatherly love I never had, but later I realized he could only give me husband-love”. Love that is not given by a father or mother in a child’s early years can never be substituted by the parents themselves or by any other person when the child is all grown up.

A single mother is like a bird trying to fly with one wing; it cannot! It needs both wings to fly. Once separated from the father of the children, she cannot just go on to marry anyone else. A mother having two children and separated from the father of the children came to seek my permission to marry again. I told her, she can re-marry, but only to the father of the children. In many cases I have come across the cases where a single mother has only girls and she marries another man other than the father of the girl-child, the stepfather almost always sexually abuses the girl-child.

**It is a serious sin for a woman to deliberately choose to be a single mother (single mothers by choice) as many educated and well-off women are opting to be in our society today.** They argue that they do not need a man who will inconvenience their life since they need their ‘freedom’ to enjoy life... hence leading an immoral life! It is ungodly and does a lot of injustice to their children who need the love and care of their biological father. God, in his own wisdom and according to his design for marriage made Mother Mary subject to Joseph as a wife so that both she and her Son Jesus Christ would get protection and support of a husband and a father respectively. However, there are cases that are exceptional which the society must understand and accommodate. E.g. Single mothers, who get pregnant when they are defiled, through incest, those who are raped or forcefully married off by their parents against their wish for selfish reason: that is to get wealth out of dowry payments. Though these are very unfortunate occurrences, they should know that life is a gift from God (Psalm 127:3) and abortion is a mortal sin, therefore they should keep the pregnancy and take care of the child. These ones can decide either to marry or remarry in the church for the sake of their children or to lead a single holy life for the service of God (1 Cor. 7:38-40) as St. Paul advises young widows.

## POLYGAMY AND SICKNESS

Lust can lead people to fall a prey to polygamy, which breaks families and affects the innocent children.

This girl had a lot of suffering since birth. She took medicine but her situation became worse. She was fed-up of medicine and realized that medicine cannot heal her, but only Jesus. So she turned to Jesus. She came for a retreat. She said, “more than physical sickness there is no peace, no love, in our family; we don’t even greet one another. We live under the same roof with fear and hatred.” As we opened the Bible we found this passage,

*This is the story of the family of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers; he was a helper to the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father’s wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he had made him a long robe with sleeves. But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him.*  
- Genesis 37:2-6

“*They hated him even more because of his dreams and his words*” (Genesis 37: 8). We asked her, “Is there anyone involved with polygamy?” She said her mother is a second wife. The man comes once in a while and spends his time with their mother, they never experienced the love of a father. The mother always lived in fear. Now, the children also find it very hard to forgive or love one another. Polygamy brings forth hatred, jealousy, competition, fear, fights for property, rejection, bitterness and sickness, court cases etc. (cf. Genesis 26:34-35, Genesis 29:30-31 & Genesis 30:1-2). “*Some were sick through their sinful ways, and because of their iniquities endured affliction*” (Psalms 107:17). We told this girl to bring her mother for the retreat. She attended and she decided to get rid of that relationship and rectify her life in the parish. The daughter was instantly healed when her mother departed from a sinful and polygamous relationship.

### **Chastity delivers us from lust**

Chastity is the opposite of lust. Many people do not understand the power of chastity. Chastity makes one who is consecrated to be an exclusive private property of God, and hence an important dwelling place of God. It also gives a special meaning and purpose to one’s life. The following story explains the power of chastity.



### A ZAMBIAN STORY

We visited an orphanage with many HIV-affected orphan children from very small up to nine years old. There were around ninety of them. The religious nuns take good care of them.

The sisters wanted us to pray for them when we went there for a retreat for the All Sisterhood Association of Zambia. While praying for the children, I just asked a small boy, "Where is your mother?" The boy held my hand and took me all the way to the religious sister in-charge of that orphanage. Holding on to her legs the boy started to call her Mama, Mama. I truly shed joyful tears in my heart as this sister lifted this small boy and embraced him. We see, **"Sing, O barren one who did not bear; burst into song and shout, you who have not been in labour! For the children of the desolate woman will be more than the children of her that is married, says the Lord"** (Isaiah 54:1). This is the meaning I found when Jesus said you will get hundredfold in this life. Religious life is a life that gives life to the lifeless, hope to the hopeless. It gives identity to the orphans, dignity to the rejected. It is becoming another Christ to the broken world. **"To all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God"** (Jn.1.12-13).



**Prayerful parents give birth to  
God-fearing children.**

### How To Overcome Lust?

#### **Read, Repeat and Meditate**

1. *"And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires"* (Gal.5:24). Remember that even those who belong to Jesus has sexual temptations, they are called to sacrifice it.
2. *"I appeal to you therefore, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God..."* (Rom.12:1-2). We have to consciously reject the temptations of this world, in order to overcome lust. Mother Mary kept chastity by the power of the Holy Spirit who gives the fruit of self control.
3. *"Those who are in the flesh cannot please God"* (Rom.8:8). Those in the flesh cannot please God, so purposefully control every feeling of sexual lust.



## WHY TURN TO JESUS!

4. *“It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins; these follow the Lamb wherever he goes”* (Rev.14:4). Those who keep away from the deeds of lust will get a unique privilege to follow Jesus wherever He goes.
5. *“Create in me a clean heart, O God...”* (Ps.51:10). Those struggling with lust, repeat this Word of God repeatedly several times a day. You will be delivered.
6. *“Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart to revere your name”* (Ps.86:11). Kindly make this prayer to love Jesus with an undivided heart.
7. *“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer”* (Ps.19:14). Make this a daily prayer in your life.
8. *“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting”* (Ps.139:23-24). Repeat this Word of God daily.



### LANG'ATA WOMEN'S PRISON, NAIROBI

It was a strong message from the Holy Spirit that a particular lady is healed of Paralytic attack on her left hand during our retreat in the Langata Women's Prison. Even though I announced many times nobody could raise their hands or acknowledge it until we noticed that many women were looking at a particular prisoner with a similar problem. As I approached her to see if she is healed, I found her struggling to lift her hands. I decided to help her but as we tried to help her we found a very big tattoo on her hand. The tattoo was that of a skull with bones, which symbolizes the spirit of Death. I remembered the meaning of that tattoo, that is “I belong to you”. So, when she was trying to lift her hands the spirit in the tattoo was blocking her from getting healed. Because when someone puts a tattoo of something one indirectly gives freedom to the meaning of that tattoo. That is why Scripture says, **“You shall not make any gashes in your flesh for the dead or tattoo any marks upon you: I am the Lord”** (Leviticus.19,28). Again, **“do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body”** (1Cor.6,19-20). We have no authority to do anything in our body because we are not our own, we are bought by His precious Blood.



## FEAR



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*Fear is another very common inner wound that affects so many people. Many of us have fear of one thing or another. Fear is not from the Lord but from the evil one, 1 John 4:18-19 says, “in love there is no room for fear, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear implies punishment and no one who is afraid had ever come to perfection in love.”*

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### ALL THE WAY FROM MOMBASA

*This mother came all the way from Mombasa to Vincentian Prayer House, because her only son threatened to kill her as he started to stay with a Muslim lady who was older than him. He dropped out of the university, started full-time drinking, smoking and taking drugs. The mother said, "Father I ran away for fear of my life. I am a single mother, I don't have anyone to help me or where I can stay, I lost my parents. My only hope was this boy but now he is trying to take my life." I asked her, "Do you believe in Jesus?" She said "Yes Father". "Do you believe that Jesus can deliver your son?" we asked her, "I doubt, because he is no longer a Catholic; he even changed his religion!" she replied. **"Don't you know that, 'if you believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household' (Acts.16, 31)?** I asked. Even if your child is in a terrible bondage the Lord can set him free. I told her. **"Can the prey be taken from the mighty, or the captives of a tyrant be rescued? But thus says the Lord: Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken, and the prey of the tyrant be rescued; for I will contend with those who contend with you, and I will save your children"** (Isaiah 49:24-25). I encouraged her and told her, even if your son is only known to do evil, God can still change him. **"Can Ethiopians change their skin or leopards their spots? Then also you can do good who are accustomed to doing evil"** (Jeremiah 13:23). "What do I have to do for my Son?" Pray daily ten times "I believe in God", that is, the Apostles' Creed for your son. He will return to the faith and get converted because we believe in the Lord who is Almighty and who hears our cries. She agreed and left. After one month we had a testimony at the Vincentian Prayer House by a young boy regarding his conversion. He started to say to the public: "I was a drunkard and a drug addict. I threatened to kill my mother. But, the prayers of my mother brought me here. And I have experienced the love of my God and want to say sorry to my mother. I now return to the Catholic faith promising that never again shall I touch any drinks or cigarettes. I am going to leave that woman. I need to start a new life. Please, I request you to pray for me." This was such a moving testimony as the mother came forward running to embrace her son in front of the congregation to express her joy.*



There are those who fear crowds, they can never stand up in front of a crowd of people to say anything, despite being very capable of doing so.

A young boy came for a retreat. In class he was not able to answer questions. Whenever the teacher would ask him to answer any question, he would begin sweating uncontrollably, on his hands and all over his body. This is because when he was a young boy, his father came home drunk. This boy happened to be in the company of his friends. In his drunken state, his father shouted at him in front of his friends, in such a way that shamed and embarrassed him so much. This incident led him to be crippled with fear. During the inner healing service of the retreat, this boy got an inspiration to read the Word of God and he read the following:

*Now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour. I give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you. Because you are precious in my sight and honoured, and I love you, I give people in return for you nations in exchange for your life. - Isaiah 43:1-4*

It is this Word of God that strengthened and healed him.

Some of our fears start during our childhood. For example, if one fell from a tree or from a high place when small, he or she may develop a ***fear of heights***. They may fear climbing trees or tall buildings or even looking down from heights. ***Also there are those who have fear of insects, animals such as dogs, cats, snakes and other eerie looking reptiles since early childhood.*** These fears may even follow them in their adulthood.

A young boy's mother one evening prepared tea and poured out a cup for her son. That evening the lights had gone out so it was dark. The small boy groped his way in the dark to the kitchen to take the tea. An insect had fallen accidentally into his cup, but it being dark he did not see it. He took the cup and raised it to his mouth. Because of the sudden movement of the tea in the cup, the insect jumped from the cup right into his face. This gave the little boy such a shock; he fell unconscious on the floor and even developed fever. Later he grew up, became a man, at forty five years of age, he still has a deep fear of insects.

### ***Fear not: You are greater than all living things!***

God has appointed guardian angels for all so that we don't fear. According to Scripture it is the other living creatures that should fear the man. *"The fear and dread of you shall rest on every animal of the earth, and on every bird of the air, on everything that creeps on the ground, and on all the fish of the sea; into your hand they are delivered"* (Genesis 9:2). So if anybody is afraid of any living being it is not the plan of God. The creator has never let us be afraid, as, *"it is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed"* (Deuteronomy 31:8). *"He put the fear of them in all living beings, and gave them dominion over beasts and birds"* (Sirach 17:4).

### ***Fear not, there are angels appointed to support you***

Scriptures remind us never to fear death. Raphael answered, "I will go with him; so do not fear. We shall leave in good health and return to you in good health, because the way is safe" (Tobit 5:16). "The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them" (Psalms 34:7). "Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war rise up against me, yet I will be confident" (Psalms 27:3).

### ***Fear God, and not men***

The following Scriptures will reveal to us that we should never fear any human being, even the sorcerers (cf. Psalm 118:6-8 and Psalm 21:11):

*"Then I will draw near to you for judgment; I will be swift to bear witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts"* (Malachi 3:5). *"They shall turn in dread to the LORD our God, and they shall stand in fear of you"* (Micah 7:17). *"Listen to me, you who know righteousness, you people who have my teaching in your hearts; do not fear the reproach of others, and do not be dismayed when they revile you"* (Isaiah 51:7). *"In righteousness you shall be established; you shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near you"* (Isaiah 54:14). *"The fear of men lays a snare but those who fear God lack no good thing"* (Proverbs 29:25).

### ***Fear not, for He is with you***

The name of our God is Emmanuel and he is always with us. "Do not fear,

for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand” (Isaiah 41:10). “For I, the LORD your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, “Do not fear, I will help you” (Isaiah 41:13). ”Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine” (Isaiah 43:1). “Do not fear, for I am with you (Isaiah 43:5 & Isaiah 44:2).

### ***Fear not the past mistakes***

Our God, not only forgives but also forgets all our mistakes. “Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed; do not be discouraged, for you will not suffer disgrace; for you will forget the shame of your youth, and the disgrace of your widowhood you will remember no more” (Isaiah 54:4). “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love” (1 John 4:18).

### **Fear not to suffer, hope to have life in abundance**

“Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Beware, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison so that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have affliction. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life” (Revelation 2:10). “But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated” (1 Peter 3:14). The fear of man brings a snare, but he who trusts in the LORD is safe (Proverbs 29:25).

Some people go through so much suffering and trials and they think that it is better to die than to continue living like that. St. Paul said, “*I am hard pressed between the two; my desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you*” (Philippians 1:23-25). ‘*For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.*’ (Jeremiah 29:11). Whatever we may be going through, we need to live out His plan and His purpose. The LORD says, “*Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me, I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also*” (John 14:1-4). Therefore, until that time when Christ Himself comes for us as He promised, we have to live absolutely for Him.

### ***Fear not, not even death***

“Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live’ (John 11:25). “Through the devil’s envy death entered the world and those who belong to his company experience it” (Wisdom 2:24). “Do not fear death’s decree for you; remember those who went before you and those who will come after” (Sirach 41:3). “Do not fear, or be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it? You are my witnesses! Is there any god besides me? There is no other rock; I know not one (Isaiah 44:8). Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, “Do not fear, only believe” (Mark 5:36). “Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28). Again, “so have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known (Matthew 10:26). “The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God and no torment will ever touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died and their departure was thought to be a disaster, their going from us to be their destruction; but they are at peace. For though in the sight of others they were punished, their hope is full of immortality” (Wisdom 3:1-4).

### ***Fear not the occult practices***

*“See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you” (Luke 10:17-19). Witchcraft, superstitions, horoscopes, astrology, fortune-telling and other occult practices create fear in people, as the devil is the source of all these practices.*

A certain man always feared that he was going to die. This is because he went to visit a palmist who told him that he was going to die at the age of fifty five. Since the day he heard about his death, fear entered into him. He became very anxious, disturbed and oppressed.

**The following bible verses together with the ones used above will help all those in fear of these occult practices to overcome them:**

*“Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, no divination against Israel” (Numbers 23:23). “You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish” (1 Peter 1:18-19). The Lord assures that “the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (1 John 4:4). Those who put their trust in the Lord will overcome fear, “take me out of the net that is hidden*

*for me, for you are my refuge” (Psalms 31:4). “I sought the LORD, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears” (Psalms 34:4). “Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand. Yes, all who are incensed against you, shall be ashamed and disgraced; those who strive against you shall be as nothing and shall perish. You shall seek those who contend with you, but you shall not find them; those who war against you shall be as nothing at all. For I, the LORD your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, ‘Do not fear, I will help you” (Isaiah 41:10-13). ‘There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus’ (Romans 8:1), “For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline” (2 Timothy 1:7).*

### ***Secret Sins and Fear***



***When she saw the four month dummy foetus and all its features, she was reminded of her baby whom she had killed and she was filled with a lot of fear.***

Sometimes ***secret sins*** can also create ***fear***.

It was during one of our outreach retreats that I took a walk round the church where the retreat was being held. I noticed a girl standing outside the church while the session was ongoing. I then asked her, ‘Why are you standing outside the church? Do you fear?’ ‘No’, she replied. She then narrated to me. When she was in college, she carried out an abortion. She forgot the incident and then went on with life as if nothing had happened. Once she went and visited a big medical college. In one of the laboratories was displayed dummy fetuses at different stages of growth; one month, four months, six months until nine months. She had aborted her baby at four months. When she saw the four month dummy foetus and all its features, she was reminded of her baby whom she had killed and she was filled with a lot of fear. ‘Was the baby I killed looking like that? Am I the one who really ended his life? Surely Jesus will punish me.’ These were the thoughts that constantly rang in her mind and that was why she feared entering church. In Isaiah 48:22 we read that ‘There is no peace’, says the LORD, ‘for the



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wicked'. When we commit sin, our conscience is not at peace. Even when we think we have forgotten, for as long as we do not repent and confess of our sin, our mind does not forget. We told her, "Jesus died on your behalf too. He bore the guilt of your sin" (cf. Isaiah 53:1-12). I asked her to read daily Isaiah 53 three times daily for one month, and she was completely delivered of guilt feelings and fear.

Wisdom 17:2-11 teaches,

*For when lawless people supposed that they held the holy nation in their power, they themselves lay as captives of darkness and prisoners of long night, shut in under their roofs, exiles from eternal providence. For thinking that in their secret sins they were unobserved behind a dark curtain of forgetfulness, they were scattered, terribly alarmed and appalled by specters. For not even the inner chamber that held them protected them from fear, but terrifying sounds rang out around them, and dismal phantoms with gloomy faces appeared. And no power of fire was able to give light, nor did the brilliant flames of the stars avail to illumine that hateful night. Nothing was shining through to them except a dreadful, self-kindled fire, and in terror they deemed the things which they saw to be worse than that unseen appearance. The delusions of their magic art lay humbled, and their boasted wisdom was scornfully rebuked. For those who promised to drive off the fears and disorders of a sick soul were sick themselves with ridiculous fear. For even if nothing disturbing frightened them, yet, scared by the passing of beasts and the hissing of snakes, they perished in trembling fear, refusing to look even at the air, though it nowhere could be avoided. For wickedness is a cowardly thing, condemned by its own testimony; distressed by conscience, it has always exaggerated the difficulties.*

The reason for this is that

*for sudden and unexpected fear overwhelmed them* - Wisdom 17:15

### ***Do not watch Horror Films, they creat fear***

Parents should be very careful on what their children watch on television. Some children who watch horror films develop fear of darkness and gets night mares. They never want to be left alone. Others do not want to sleep with the light off and are very much afraid of dark places. Some will even be afraid to leave their wardrobe doors open when going to bed. Even when reading bedtime stories to the children or just telling them any story, those

telling the story should be very careful on the kind or nature of story they are narrating. Ghost stories instill a lot of fear in children, for instance, the fear of darkness, which can even flow into their adulthood. If parents, guardians, feel they need to give the children stories, let them take stories from the greatest book that was and will ever be, 'THE HOLY BIBLE'.

### ***A BOY BITTEN BY A DOG***

A small boy accidentally stepped on the tail of a dog and the dog in turn bit him. This made him very fearful of dogs and this fear followed him into adulthood. Now even as a man he was very fearful of dogs. He was asked to repeat Psalms 34:4 daily ten times for one month and he was completely set free from this fear.



### **FEAR OF SNAKES**

***"In righteousness you shall be established; you shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near you. If anyone stirs up strife, it is not from me; whoever stirs up strife with you shall fall because of you. No weapon that is fashioned against you shall prosper, and you shall confute every tongue that rises against you in judgement. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord and their vindication from me, says the Lord"*** (Isaiah 54:14-15 & 17).

*In a testimony, a religious sister said the Lord revealed to her the cause of her fears. She had fear of snakes and fear of almost everything. One day, she was visiting her brother tending the sheep in the forest. The brother insisted that she should sometimes take care of the sheep as he wanted to sleep for some time. She disagreed saying it is not her duty. He warned her saying "I will teach you a lesson." He went a little far, then came back and threw a snake at her body. She screamed and fell unconscious and was admitted in hospital for few days. She refused to open her eyes as she thought she was already bitten by that snake and she is dead. But that was a dead snake her brother had already killed, and kept it to frighten her. With that incident fear entered into her and she could start trembling at the sight of small insects, reptiles etc. During that retreat, she got a scripture from Isaiah 41:10-13, "do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand. Yes, all who are incensed against you shall be ashamed and disgraced; those who strive against you shall be as nothing and*

**shall perish. You shall seek those who contend with you, but you shall not find them; those who war against you shall be as nothing at all. For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, ‘Do not fear, I will help you’.** That made her to get out of this fear. During the retreat she received the love of God that made her completely free of fear. **“There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love” (1 Jn.4,18).**



### Excessive Fear Causes Undue Anxiety!

Anxiety is the *fear of the future*. There are people who fear things that can never happen.

A story goes like this. A man was standing on one side of the riverbank. On the other side of the riverbank was a dog. The dog was chained to a tree. While standing on his side of the river, he kept on crying loudly for no reason. A passerby came there seeing him crying he asked him, “Why do you cry?” He said, “I was imagining if the river dried up and the dog’s chain broke the dog would then come right up to me and bite me!” We can find through this story how undue anxiety operates in people’s mind.

The Scripture says, *“Anxiety brings on old age too soon” (Sirach 30:24).*

*Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? - Matthew 6:25*

*“Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7), because He says; “I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope” (Jeremiah 29:11).*

If we are not healed from fear, we do not do the good we are supposed to do and even when we see something or someone doing wrong, we do not correct them for fear of being hated, sidelined or even losing our status in the society, just because we spoke up. Fear also leads us to develop the habit of lying because we fear to tell the truth, we fear to be punished. So we lie to escape punishment.

## How To Overcome Fear?

### ***Read, Repeat and Meditate***

1. *“Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand”* (Is.41:10). Fear not, He has held your right hand.
2. *“For I, the LORD your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, ‘Do not fear, I will help you’”* (Is.41:13). Repeat this Word of God, it will increase your confidence in the Lord.
3. *“...do not fear the reproach of others, and do not be dismayed when they revile you”* (Is.51:7). What your God says is what is important. Turn to Him and listen directly from His mouth.
4. *“No weapon that is fashioned against you shall prosper, and you shall confute every tongue that rises against you in judgement ...”* (Is.54:17). Repeat this Word of God, and receive His assurance of your protection.
5. *“The fear of others lays a snare, but one who trusts in the LORD is secure”* (Pro.29:25). Turn away from people and turn towards Jesus, you will get rid of undue fear.
6. *“If they plan evil against you, if they devise mischief, they will not succeed”* (Ps.21:11). Repeat this Word of God and you will feel the spirit of Fear will depart from you forever.
7. *“I sought the LORD, and he answered me, and delivered me from all my fears”* (Ps.34:4). Turn to Him, He can deliver you from all fears.
8. *“Little children, you are from God, and have conquered them; for the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world”* (1Jn.4:4). Turn to Jesus, who is right inside your heart for in Him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28).
9. *“There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love”* (1Jn.4:18). Repeat this Scripture daily, you will be transformed by His love.
10. *“See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you”* (Lk.10:19). Turn to Jesus, and claim the power He has given unto you.

# CHAPTER SIX

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## ELEMENTAL SPIRITS IN AFRICA

*Africa makes for an interesting study concerning the spiritual world because of some cultural practices that many times involve occult practices. Most inner-wounds in Africa are therefore as a result of influences both spiritual and of an occult nature arising from certain traditional rituals and beliefs in association with various sins.*



**What many of the people have failed to understand is that the devil, who is our only enemy and the source of all elemental spirits, has devised ways in which he destroys and imprisons God's children. As St. John warns us, a thief comes only to steal, destroy and kill (John 10:10a). This is exactly what satan does when he enslaves the people of God, "but the Son of God was revealed for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil." (1 John 3:8)**

Africa is made up of people of different tribes and each tribe has its own traditions and culture. We cannot therefore speak of a single African culture. You can find in one country, people who have diverse practices for the same ceremonies. Marriage ceremonies differ from tribe to tribe, as do circumcision ceremonies and some even have naming ceremonies.



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***You can find in one country, people  
who have diverse practices for the same  
ceremonies.***

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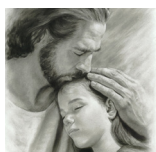
The reason for this is that the traditional elders are still held in high esteem in a number of African tribes. Satan has devised ways in which to use these various practices to destroy God's children. His mode of operation has earned him various names, including accuser (Revelation 12:10), adversary (Zechariah 3:1), Antichrist (1 John 2:18, 1 John 2:22 & 1 John 4:3), author of all sin (1 John 3:8), angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14), awful monster (Revelation 13:1), Beelzebul (Mark 3:22 & Luke 11:15), chief of the demons (Matthew 12:24), deceiver (2 John 1:7 & Revelation 20:10), demon (James 2:19b & Revelation 16:14), destroyer (Psalm 78:49), devil (Matthew 4:11 & Matthew 12:22a), devourer (Malachi 3:11), dragon (Revelation 12:7 & Revelation 13:1-8), enemy (1 Peter 5:8), enemy of righteousness (Acts 13:10), evil one (1 John 5:19), evil spirit (1 Samuel 16:14), fallen angel (Isaiah 14:12), father of all lies (John 8:44), father of contention (Proverbs 13:10), founder of murder (1 John 3:12), liar (John 8:44), Lucifer (Ezekiel 28:13-14), mammon (Matthew 6:24 & Luke 16:13), murderer (1 John 3:15), old serpent (Revelation 12:9), prince of darkness (Revelation 9:11), prince of devils (Revelation 9:11), prince of this world (Ephesians 6:12), Slanderer (Proverbs 20:19 & 1 Peter 2:1), son of perdition (2 Thessalonians 2:3), Son of the Morning (Isaiah 14:12), Spoiler, Tempter (Matthew 4:1 & 10), wicked one..... These are names as well as characteristics of satan, and ways by which he leads us away from God's Love. There are elemental spirits that control a particular territory in the world. When we fail to identify the ruling spirit, we are unlikely to triumph over the spiritual battles that we engage in. Thus, many a time we fail in the battle against the evil one because we do not know the spirit against which we fight. Think about when a person does not

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take appropriate medication for a particular sickness. They may suffer side effects from the drug or the situation could become worse. Similarly, being in Africa means we must understand the wiles of the devil in this part of the world or else suffer the consequences of remaining in bondage.

The devil gains entry by way of a person's own inordinate desires, also referred to as concupiscence, which sooner or later leads the person to sin. The LORD Jesus says that anyone who commits sin becomes a slave of that sin (John 8:34). St. Paul's letters speaks of enslavement to the "elemental powers (spirits) of the world" (Galatians 4:3 & 9, Colossians 2:8 & 20). What (or should we say 'who') exactly are these elemental spirits? The term 'elements' may refer to any of the four substances that were formerly believed to comprise the physical universe, that is, earth, air, fire, and water. It may also refer to elementary forms of religion, more likely giving a sense of celestial beings that were thought in pagan circles to control the world. You are probably wondering why we are even giving this topic consideration here. According to St. Paul, the elemental spirits "enslaved" both the Jews under the Law and the Gentile Galatians under paganism.

He also argues that the idols of the Gentiles are representations of demons, which are really just fallen angels. This line of thought is evident when he tells the Galatians that the time when they did not know God, they became slaves to things that by nature are not gods (Galatians 4:8). In other words the Gentile Galatians were formerly serving beings that by nature were really demonic idols. You would thus expect that they no doubt associated the heavenly bodies with spiritual beings, and thus they wrongly bowed down to, worshipped, and swore allegiance to the heavenly host (cf. Deuteronomy 4:19; 17:3; Job 31:2-28). The same can be said about all the things in which the people of Africa place their trust, apart from the living God revealed in the LORD Jesus Christ. These things become their gods, and they in turn become their slaves. Everything that teaches humanity to trust in human philosophies and traditions is of demonic origin, and will enslave mankind to these 'gods'. As God's elect, we are expressly forbidden to follow such practices, and are instead invited to a face-to-face encounter with the LORD Jesus Christ.



***Satan has devised ways in which to use various elemental spirits to destroy God's children.***

## EFFECTS OF THE ELEMENTAL SPIRITS

We now consider some of the known effects of the elemental spirits on contemporary living today. As an example we look at Self-Deception, which involves telling oneself things that are not true, such as when we listen to God's words but think we do not have to do it (James 1:22 & James 4:17). Also when we claim we are without sin (1 John 1:8). And when we think that we are something when we are not (Galatians 6:3), or when we believe that we will not reap what we sow (Galatians 6:7). Sometimes we consider ourselves wise and sophisticated in this age, the 21st Century (1 Corinthians 3:18-19). Also how about believing that the unrighteous will reach heaven (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:9)? Or when we think we can associate with bad company and yet not be corrupted (1 Corinthians 15:33). These are all deceptions of the evil one.

But, we learn from St. Paul that we must not allow anyone to delude (us) with plausible arguments (Colossians 2:4). He adds: you must see to it that no one should take you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the traditions of men or according to the elemental spirits of the world. In the event that any takes you captive, it must be only according to the LORD Jesus Christ (Colossians 2:8). Why? Because the LORD Jesus Christ is far superior to all angels (cf. Hebrews 1:4). When you as a person come to Christ, your knowledge of God is directly through Christ and you can say "Abba" not through angels, elements, or men, but directly to God as a son to a father (Galatians 4:6-7). It is not true faith that is mediated through angels or through men. For St. Paul, if you attempt to know God in any other way that is not through faith in the LORD Jesus Christ, you are essentially enslaved to the elemental spirits. He goes even further to demonstrate the superiority of Christ over these elemental spirits by stating that in Christ all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form (Colossians 2:9), and He is the head over all rule and authority (Colossians 2:15). Christians cannot and should not worship the elemental spirits when they have the One who created and controls these elemental spirits!

Many people in Africa focus on that which is seen instead of focusing on Christ who is unseen. They, with the best of intentions, focus on counting their many (or few) blessings instead of thanking the One who has blessed them. They look at the earthly blessing as more valuable than the love that the Creator and Redeemer has for us. They are so consumed with the apparent



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superiority of the elemental spirits of the world instead of being consummated in the baptism that they receive in the mighty name of the LORD Jesus. They do not realize that having been buried with him in baptism, they have also been raised with him through faith in the power of God who raised Him from the dead (cf. Colossians 2:12). Life should no longer be about the ritual, but about the meaning behind the ritual. That in Christ, all sin is cut away and new life is given (cf. Colossians 2:13-14). That all who were dead should now be alive. That all who owed God an enormous debt have been ransomed by the LORD Jesus Christ, who has disarmed the rulers and authorities, and has triumphed (Colossians 2:15) over all that ever separated us from the love of God. **Yet many in Africa today remain enslaved to a system of rituals and traditions that bind them ever so tightly to the effects of the elemental spirits by insisting on continuing in these practices.** They want to do Christianity, but they are not being Christian. They hope that in Christianity, grace might increase, yet they want to continue in sin. All too often, they find themselves so caught up in things that are only a mere shadow of what is as yet to come (Colossians 2:17). **They claim to have died with Christ to the elemental powers of the world, yet they continue to submit to regulations and practices of olden times when they had no knowledge of Christ.**



*Yet many in Africa today remain enslaved in a system of rituals and traditions that bind them ever so tightly to the effects of the elemental spirits by insisting on continuing in these practices*

Some live with the attitude of excessiveness, in the sense that for them all past traditions and practices remain lawful for them. Yet they can clearly see that not all these things edify or profit them in any way. There are those who have discovered new freedoms in which they over-indulge, and there are those who keep themselves shackled up in their traditions and cultural practices. It is clear that we must learn to put first things first and get our priorities right. Knowing Christ and becoming like Christ must be the singular goal for every Christian. Everything else must be considered loss, rubbish, when compared to the surpassing value of knowing the LORD Jesus Christ (cf. Philippians 3:8). In the following examples we will consider some of these elemental spirits.

## WITCHCRAFT



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*The main problem in Africa in general is that many people even Christians do not understand, recognize or fully appreciate the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the cross as being a satisfactory and perfect atonement for all our sins. Thus many people seek traditional rituals many of which are demonic, to overcome problems, sicknesses and bondages in their lives as well as to ensure success and prosperity in their undertakings. However, those who turn to Him with repentance will be delivered by His precious blood. (cf. 1 John 1:7).*

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### PAPUA NEW GUINEA INCIDENT

It was during the retreat in Papua New Guinea, when this gentleman was explaining how even the missionaries forgot that land as evangelization reached that country very late. While talking, he said that many still believe in witchcraft as they think material blessings can come only through traditional beliefs and rituals. The country is filled with natural resources and the land is very fertile but the people are very poor. They are deceived by the devil who promises everything but provides nothing. His doubt was, 'can anyone be rich depending on Jesus, who himself was very poor?' We explained to him, **“for you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9).** Again, **“do not wonder at the works of a sinner, but trust in the Lord and keep at your job; for it is easy in the sight of the Lord to make the poor rich suddenly in an instant” (Sirach 11:21).** To become rich is to follow the advice of Tobit to Tobias, **“do not be afraid, my son, because we have become poor. You have great wealth if you fear God and flee from every sin and do what is good in the sight of the Lord your God” (Tobit 4:21).** We explained to him that fear of God is the hatred of evil and keeping the commandments of the Lord, will lead a man to be rich.



An assault of witchcraft leaves someone disoriented and confused. The soul under attack cannot connect with his spiritual vision. His motivation is either gone or lacking. Satan wants to cloud your vision and, thus steal your destiny in God. *“No one shall be found among you who makes a son or daughter pass through fire, or who practices divination, or is a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer...”* (Deuteronomy 18:10). There are many wrong rituals in which people become involved in the various phases of life. Some are disguised as something so good, hiding the real nature. For example we see evil rituals connected to the following ceremonies:

### Marriage

In many tribes, there are different rituals that are considered as traditional customs which are normally carried out during dowry payments and negotiations. Polygamous relationships are also considered to be a norm in many cultures. It is clearly stated that God's design for marriage is for one man, one woman as in the case of Adam and Eve. Therefore any other type of marriage is not from God. *Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. (Genesis 2:24).* Jesus stresses that, *“what God has joined together, let no one separate.”*

(mark 10:9), and that is why in the wedding of Cana, through the intercession of Mother Mary, he blesses them with the best ‘wine’ that is the best love of the Holy Spirit (John 10:1-12).

### **Childbirth**

At conception, in some traditional beliefs a boy-child is considered more important than the girl-child. This results in the girls being discriminated against. In other cultures twins or multiple births and disabled children are considered a bad omen. Barrenness and impotence are also not acceptable. Note that all children are gifts from God (Psalm 127:3). Therefore parents are not supposed to reject any child irrespective of their sex or biological nature. “*So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.*” (Genesis 1:27). Jesus told the disciples, “*Let the little children come to me*” (Matthew 18:14).

### **Initiation**

During circumcision of the boy-child some customs involve demonic rituals and others induce evil practices during the initiation stages. 1 John 3:8, “*The Son of God was revealed for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.*” The Word of God is very clear in Revelation 12:11, “*But they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they did not cling to life even in the face of death.*”

### **Poverty and prosperity**

Many African cultures depend on God only for spiritual nourishment but they don’t truly believe that God is able to provide them with material wealth and prosperity. Hence, they turn to witchcraft and sorcery to seek material wealth and prosperity. The bible warns that the love of money is the root cause of all evils (1 Timothy 6:10). *For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains. If you turn to Jesus you will get all the riches for he says; “ But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33).*

### **Death and burial**

In some customs, spouses are forced to lie with the dead corpse of their partner before burial can take place. In other cultures shaving of the head of all the relatives is a must. There are also different rituals that are done

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during memorials of spouses, children and relatives, suicidal and murder cases which lead to the invitation of the devil into the homes. *“We have been ransomed from the futile ways of our ancestors, not by perishable things like silver or gold but by the precious blood of Jesus Christ like that of a lamb without blemish or defect”* (1 Peter 1:18-19).

### **Wife inheritance / remarriage**

In some cultures when a brother dies and leaves behind his wife, the other brother is compelled by custom to remarry her, irrespective of whether he already has another wife or not. The Word of God prohibits this in Exodus 22:22 saying, *“You shall not abuse any widow or orphan.”*

### **Political campaigns**

Many political leaders and those aiming to become leaders visit witchdoctors and sooth-sayers to satisfy their craving for power. **All authority comes from God** (Romans 13:1-7, 1 Corinthians 2:5 and 1 Corinthians 15:24).

**NB:** In his teachings, Jesus warns that people should not abandon the commandments of God to follow their own traditions and practices (Mark 7:8). He stresses that we are all one in Christ. *“There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus”* (Galatians 3:28). We all belong to one culture of Christ and His language is **LOVE!** *“Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another”* (John 13:34). Therefore **let us turn to Jesus.**

### ***Other occasions where these rituals are involved include:***

- Planting and harvest seasons
- Various sicknesses and treatment of exorcism
- Job-finding, promotion, salary increment
- New property e.g. cars, homesteads
- Weaning of children to certain foods e.g. fish, chicken, etc
- Handling of inheritance, passing of rites for the witchdoctor
- Creating elders, chiefs
- Rain or draught seasons
- Welcome or farewell parties

The main problem is that many of these rituals are a cover-up for devil worship, sorcery, divination of many sorts as rejected in the Bible (cf. Leviticus 19:26-27 & 31, Deuteronomy 18:9 & 13). They also appease the spirit of the dead and family ancestors.

***These rituals involve:***

- Alcohol and substance abuse e.g. tobacco and marijuana
- Animal sacrifice – cattle, goat, chicken, etc
- Sexual misconduct (cf. Leviticus 18)
- Adultery with witchdoctor, orgies (cf. Leviticus 19)
- Incest with family members, promiscuity (cf. Leviticus 20)
- Fornication with outsiders, slaves, prostitution (cf. Leviticus 19:29)
- Bestiality and homosexuality and sexual acts with dead bodies *“Whoever lies with an animal shall be put to death.”* (Ex. 22:19)
- Invoking demonic spirit and ancestral bondages (cf. Leviticus 19:29)
- Cursing of generation, family trees, land and other properties.  
*Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, no divination against Israel; now it shall be said of Jacob and Israel, “See what God has done!” He crouched, he lay down like a lion, and like a lioness; who will rouse him up? Blessed is everyone who blesses you, and cursed is everyone who curses you. (Numbers 23:23 & 24:9)*
- Renouncing the Christian faith (cf. Hebrews 10:26-39, Hebrews 12:16-17 & Ezekiel 18:24)

Herbal concoctions – soups, lotion bathing and applying, powders rubbed in body cuts, food.

We see in the book of Wisdom 16:12, *“For neither herb nor poultice cured them, but it was your word, O Lord, that heals all people.”*

- Idol worship and wearing of charms.  
In the book of Leviticus 26: 1-2, the Lord God says, *“You shall make for yourselves no idols and erect no carved images or pillars, and you shall not place figured stones in your land, to worship at them; for I am the Lord your God. You shall keep my sabbaths and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord.”* And St. Paul plainly cautions, *“No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons”* (1 Corinthians 10:20).
- Human and especially child sacrifices and blood exchange.  
*“For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you for making atonement for your lives on the altar; for, as life, it is the blood that makes atonement. Therefore I have said to the people of Israel: No person among you shall eat blood, nor shall any alien who resides among you eat blood.”*(Leviticus 17:11-12)

- Dedication to satan and certain legions of demons.  
Our Heavenly father clearly spoke these words: *“I am the Lord your*

## WHY TURN TO JESUS!

*God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me...*” (Exodus 20:1-5). He further warns, *“But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, the murderers, the fornicators, the sorcerers, the idolaters, and all liars, their place will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulphur, which is the second death”* (Revelation 21:8).

- Violence and bodily harm e.g. through caning;  
*“Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy that person. For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple.”* (1 Corinthians 3:16-17).

We also find special or designated places, people, tools and instructions for these rituals and ceremonies.

### ***Places where these rituals are conducted include:***

- Forests, Trees, Caves and rocks
- Rooms in homes, mirrors, floors, ceilings, roofs, cupboards, corners of the houses etc.
- Rivers, lakes and oceans
- Graveyards (demoniac), Hills and mountains

### ***People who often fall victim of these rituals include:***

- Children - the first or the last born or the one named after a witchdoctor
- Disabled children with multiple deformities
- Dancers, singers, musicians, wrestlers, dramatists etc.
- Weird character e.g. night walkers/runners

### ***Tools or instruments that are commonly used to perform the rituals are:***

- Filthy songs, Dances, Drum-beats, Kayambas (shakers), Broken glasses in baskets, Bull fighting in fresh graves, Cockerel fights, Strings, belts and beads, Headgear (pets) , Animal skin and costumes, Bird feathers, Bones, Special clay and oil, Animal teeth

### ***Animals used***

- Reptiles eg. snakes, crocodiles, Birds eg. chicken, sheep, Monkeys etc.

### **Dances**

- Erotic, stamping, clapping, vigorous, ecstatic, naked and night time dances

### **How do people get involved and affected?**

- People may unknowingly personally get involved by participating at ceremonies as child / adult.
- Financially, one can get affected by funding ceremonies even in one's absence.

In the book of Leviticus 20:6, *“If any turn to mediums and wizards, prostituting themselves to them, I will set my face against them, and will cut them off from the people.”*

- Satan can also use his evil spirits to cast spells on unsuspecting or unchristian people, who will thereafter become affected by these spells because they lack God's protection.
- By cohabiting with affected people (soul ties) (cf. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18).
- Through living in certain geographic places where the people are ungodly and living evil lives. In Isaiah 52:11, *“Depart, depart, go out from there! Touch no unclean thing; go out from the midst of it, purify yourselves, you who carry the vessels of the Lord.”*
- Not seeking sacramental protection by not inviting the Triune God to come and have his place in our lives. He gives us a sweet promise telling us, *“I will place my dwelling in your midst, and I shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and you shall be my people”* (Leviticus 26:11-12). If we are not living sacramental lives, we bind him in a way that he is not able to help us and here the devil can easily attack us.
- Through media, storybooks, music, films, ornaments, cosmetics, foods etc. *“I will study the way that is blameless. When shall I attain it? I will walk with integrity of heart within my house. I will not set before my eyes anything that is base. I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not cling to me”* (Psalms 101: 2b-3).
- Tattoos, incisions or any other type of body markings can also be a loop for the evil one to attack us. *“You shall not make any gashes in your flesh for the dead or tattoo any marks upon you: I am the Lord”* (Leviticus 19:28).



## How can someone overcome the spirit of witchcraft?

- By having faith in Christ Jesus, proclaiming that Jesus is Lord and profession of faith in him.  
*“All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name”* (Acts 10:43).
- Through baptism and living a sacramental life.  
 Peter said to them, *‘Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit’* (Acts 2:38).
- Renunciation of the devil and rituals partaken,  
*“... turn back, turn back from your evil ways...”* (Ezk 33:11)
- Deliverance in special prayers such as healing of the family tree.  
*Jesus answered them, ‘Very truly, I tell you, and everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed* (John 8:31-36).
- By attending the Holy Mass, participating fully and with faith with special intentions and also finding time to sit before Jesus in the Holy Eucharist in Eucharistic Adoration (cf. John 6).
- Praising and worshipping the living and true God.  
*“Through him, then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God”* (Hebrews 13:15-16).
- Through reciting the Rosary, Divine Mercy, use of Holy water and blessed salt . *“Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, here is your son.’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Here is your mother.’ And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home”* (John 19:25-27)
- Scapular and sacred images and other sacramentals.  
*“The God of peace will shortly crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you”* (Romans 16:20).
- Prayers without ceasing, fasting and holding vigils.  
*“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you”* (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

- Spiritual warfare with the armour of God (cf. Ephesians 6:2 & 1 Corinthians 10:3-5).
- Infilling of the Holy Spirit and invoking the Blood of Jesus;  
*Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law.* (Galatians 5:16-20).
- Reading the scripture on a regular basis,  
*“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him”* (Colossians 3:16-17).
- Family prayer, retreats, doing the work of evangelization etc.  
*“... one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all”* (Ephesians 4:5-6 & cf. Mark 16:15-20).



#### A LADY WITH A FULLY COVERED FACE

It was after a retreat that people queued to get a special prayer from the priest. This lady came covering her full body including her face, to receive special prayers. I requested her to kindly remove the cloth from her face so that I may place the crucifix on her forehead to pray. When I insisted she removed the cloth but I was shocked to see a totally disfigured face with a terrible skin problem. I asked her, “Have you ever visited a witchdoctor?” “Yes” she replied. “Why?” I inquired. “I was sick with some allergies,” she answered. Then I asked her, “What did he do?” She said, “He told me he has some special powder for the healing of this type of allergies and he insisted he himself has to apply it to the body and after applying he forced me to sleep with him.” “It is since then you became terribly sick?” I asked her. “Yes, Father”. I read to her from Psalms 16:4, **“those who choose another god multiply their sorrows,”** and, the thief, the devil who comes in the form of a witch doctor comes only to steal and kill and destroy (John 10:10). I asked her to deeply repent and pray daily three times the chaplet of the Divine Mercy for one month. Later, she came to testify the miraculous healing of her skin disease.



## Turn to Jesus and be protected from witchcraft

God the Almighty is the Creator and Master of the entire universe. Satan is only the master of illusion and deception. He deals in hallucination and deceit. Any limited powers over nature he may possess are entirely circumscribed by God! Occult practices such as witchcraft can never affect us in any way as the Word of God says, *'Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, no divination against Israel, now it shall be said of Jacob and Israel, "see what God has done!"'* (Numbers 23:23). When we turn to God as our all in all and give ourselves to him, we completely belong to him and He Himself dwells in us. Therefore, satan can never have any power over us.

*Little children, you are from God, and have conquered them; for the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.*

*- 1 John 4:4*

In addition, Jesus has given us power and authority over the evil one and he assures us that nothing whatsoever can harm us (cf. 1 John 4:4). And, *"See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you"* (Luke 10:18). He even openly says, *"Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father"* (John 14:12). This clearly reassures us that we really are in Christ hence we share his glory and power. Jesus fully paid our ransom hence we should not put off even for a day the urge to come to him.

*Do not delay to turn back to the Lord, and do not postpone it from day to day; for suddenly the wrath of the Lord will come upon you, and at the time of punishment you will perish.*

*- Sirach 5:7*

If we are in Him and He in us, then we need only watch as He fights all our battles with the evil one. *"Thus says the Lord to you: "Do not fear or be dismayed at this great multitude; for the battle is not yours but God's"* (2 Chronicles 20:15). Here, God Almighty is referring to the many evil spirits which are trying by all means to fight every child of God. He promises to fight for us and He will never abandon us. *"I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you"* (John 14:18). We also hear the same wonderful promise in Matthew 28:20 where Jesus says, *"And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

## CURSES

A curse is a solemn utterance intended to invoke a supernatural power to inflict harm or punishment on someone or something. It can also be an offensive word or phrase used to express anger or annoyance.

### **Cursing is unchristian**

When we have said yes to Jesus and have acknowledged Him as our all in all, we become transformed from the old self to a new self in his Spirit. The word of God is very clear that cursing should never come from a Christian's mouth. Jesus specifically taught that what comes out of a man's mouth is evidence of what is in his heart. He understood that our words reflect what is inside our hearts. Jesus says, *"The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good, and the evil person out of evil treasure produces evil; for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks"* (Luke 6:45). St. Paul is also very clear adding, *"Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers"* (Ephesians 4:29). If we declare his love in our lives and in our hearts, then we should set an example to the rest of the world that we are indeed different from the world. When an old friend sees the new Christian in you, they should see the fruit of the Spirit working in you. This should also reflect in your words to friends, family and anyone else you come in contact with.

St. James through the power of the Holy Spirit is inspired to enlighten us about the power of the tongue and why it is sinful to curse when he says, *"With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh"* (James 3:9-12). These things ought not to be this way. He had first described it saying, *"... the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell"* (James 3:6). And St. Peter says, *"For He who would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit"* (1 Peter 3:10).

## WHY TURN TO JESUS!

As Christians, we are expected to rest on the promises of God by *“cleansing ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God”* (2 Corinthians 7:1). Cursing is contradictory to resting on God’s promises for it is a failure to follow the Lord’s greatest commandments - to love God and to love people (Matthew 22:37-40). When we curse an individual, we do not love people and when we curse God, we do not love Him. Proverbs 21:23 *“Those who guard their mouths and their tongues keep themselves from calamity.”*

### ***Be careful!***

*“For they will be made holy who observe holy things in holiness, and those who have been taught them will find a defense”* (Wisdom 6:10).

One day a woman came for prayers because she was in crisis. She came and told me, “Father, please pray for me as I have the problem of bleeding.” She said that she used to pray for people as her friends had advised her that she had the gift of praying for the sick. It was then that she came to know that her lady friend was admitted in Kenyatta hospital because of bleeding. She immediately went and started to pray for her. Only then she came to know that she had the same problem that her friend was suffering from. When we started to pray for her I asked her if she was married and she said she was. I then asked her whether the marriage was blessed in church and she said, “Father, we are not married in church.” It is then that the Lord revealed to her that as she was living in sin, she created the loophole for satan to attack her.

In Acts 19:11-17, we read, *“God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that when the handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were brought to the sick, their diseases left them, and the evil spirits came out of them. Then some itinerant Jewish exorcists tried to use the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, ‘I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims.’ Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. But the evil spirit said to them in reply, ‘Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?’ Then the man with the evil spirit leapt on them, mastered them all, and so overpowered them that they fled out of the house naked and wounded.”* We cannot pray over others and get protection when we live in sin. Anyone who is holy can pray over others, and satan can never touch them.



### **MANY YEARS IN THE SAME JOB, NO PROMOTION**

*“Many years in the same company same job, same position and no promotion”, this was the lament from her as she came for spiritual consultation. During prayer, opening the Bible, I got the scripture, “whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing. Ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you. But ask in faith, never doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind; for the doubter, being double-minded and unstable in every way, must not expect to receive anything from the Lord (James 1:2-8). Now, I asked, “Have you ever left your catholic faith?” “For more than eleven years when I was young and studying in Germany, I joined the ‘Hare Krishna’ movement. Later for sometime practiced Islam, Hinduism and eventually became an atheist,” she said. I further asked her, “Is there anything else done against God?” “I also used to write journals and articles for different atheist magazines with reasons not to believe in God,” she said. Later she had sicknesses, sudden death of her family members, financial losses, and nobody came to help, not even her atheist friends. She fell into depression and sorrow. She then met a Catholic priest, made a good confession and returned to the faith. Now, her problem was that she tried everything to get the promotion but was rejected. She found herself more qualified and educated than those in authority and many were promoted from behind her. She tried all means and all types of influences but nothing bore fruit. Her friend told her that it is only Jesus who could help her. “Father now I turn to Jesus to rescue me, as very few years remain for my retirement and I need to retire in a higher position.” We told her to read and repeat daily fifty times, Psalms 94:17-18, “If the Lord had not been my help, my soul would soon have lived in the land of silence. When I thought, ‘My foot is slipping’, your steadfast love, O Lord, held me up.” We have nothing to demand but only to thank because there is none “who has given a gift to him, to receive a gift in return” (Romans 11:35). One month later, her senior manager resigned to move to another company and she was given instant promotion to that senior position.*



### **Can curses affect us?**

The Bible tells us that *“like a fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow, an undeserved curse does not come to rest”* (Proverbs 26:2b). This means that

foolish curses have no effect. God does not allow His children to be cursed. God is sovereign. No one has the power to curse one whom God has decided to bless. God is the only One able to pronounce judgment. Curses in the Bible are always described negatively. *“No one shall be found among you who makes a son or daughter pass through fire, or who practices divination, or is a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer, or one who casts spells, or who consults ghosts or spirits, or who seeks oracles from the dead.”* (Deuteronomy 18:10-11). Micah 5:12 says that God will destroy witchcraft and those who cast spells. Revelation 18:21-24 describes spells as part of the deception that will be used by the antichrist and his “great city of Babylon,” though the end-times deception will be so great that even the elect would be deceived if God will not protect us (Matthew 24:24). God will utterly destroy Satan, the antichrist, and all who follow them (Revelation chapters 19-20).

The Christian has been born again as a new person in Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17), and we are in the constant presence of the Holy Spirit who lives within us and under whose protection we exist (Romans 8:11). We do not need to worry about anyone casting any sort of pagan spell on us. Voodoo, witchcraft, hexes, and curses have no power over us because they come from Satan, and we know that *“the one who is in you [Christ] is greater than the one [Satan] who is in the world”* (1 John 4:4). God has overcome him, and we have been freed to worship God without fear (John 8:36). Our constant reminder should be, *“The Lord is my light and my salvation - whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life - of whom shall I be afraid?”* (Psalm 27:1).

### ***Do not curse others!***

Sirach 10:6 says, *“Do not get angry with your neighbour for every injury, and do not resort to acts of insolence.”* The LORD Jesus says, *“but I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire”* (Matthew 5:22). These are serious words. Anytime you look at your fellow brother/sister in Christ and ***call them a “fool”***, you are in liability to the *fires of hell*. Instead of  ***cursing others*** for hurting us, we ought to instead  ***bless them***. *“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them”* (Romans 12:14). St. Luke says we should *“Bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you* (Luke 6:28). As Christians, we should never act on emotion. On the other hand, we must not let other people curse us by doing injustice to them. We are warned in Sirach 4:5, not to avert our eye from the needy and not to give anyone a reason to

curse us. ***What can cause people to curse you?*** We learn from Sirach 4:1-4, how someone can get a curse, so as we try our best not to give the evil one a chance to attack us through others cursing us: *“My child, do not cheat the poor of their living, and do not keep needy eyes waiting. Do not grieve the hungry, or anger one in need. Do not add to the troubles of the desperate, or delay giving to the needy. Do not reject a suppliant in distress, or turn your face away from the poor.”*

### ***Do not curse Priests!***

Hebrews 5:4 speaks regarding priests, *“And one does not presume to take this honour, but takes it only when called by God, just as Aaron was.”* We should thus be on guard so as not to fall into the sin of cursing a servant of God. The Psalmist warns, *“Do not touch my anointed ones; do my prophets no harm”* (Psalms 105:15). It is therefore a grievous sin for a person to curse a priest. God affirms the authority he invests on them when he says, *“I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed”* (Genesis 12:3). We must understand the seriousness of this sin and never allow ourselves to be used by the evil one to do this.



### **UNABLE TO SELL THE LAND**

***“Although these nations that you are about to dispossess do give heed to soothsayers and diviners, as for you, the Lord your God does not permit you to do so”*** (Deuteronomy 18:14). The parish priest requested us to visit a particular family during one popular mission retreat, as they had several problems. When we got there, we found that they had financial issues and that their three daughters were not able to continue studies. They tried to sell their land but no one came to buy the land. Some came and offered less than the quoted price. Years passed and the father took a loan to educate the children thinking once he sells the land he can repay the loan. But the land was not sold and the bank tried to take over his house. In their agony we prayed and we got, ***“when you come into the land that the Lord your God is giving you, you must not learn to imitate the abhorrent practices of those nations. No one shall be found among you who makes a son or daughter pass through fire, or who practices divination, or is a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer, or one who casts spells, or who consults ghosts or spirits, or who seeks oracles from the dead. For whoever does these things is abhorrent to the Lord; it is because of such abhorrent practices that the Lord your God is driving them out before you. You must remain completely loyal to the Lord your God. Although these nations that you are about to dispossess do give heed to***



**soothsayers and diviners, as for you, the Lord your God does not permit you to do so”** (Deuteronomy 18:9-14). We found witchcraft was done in that land. He agreed saying that he was afraid of his neighbours who were practicing it. One pastor had visited this home and told him the land was under spells and he needed to do some cleansing. So, he had called a ‘diviner’ to cleanse and protect the land. In effect, this had made the land a dwelling place of the devil, who comes to steal, kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. (John 10:10). Witchcraft and divination mean inviting the devil into the land, blocking all prosperity. After listening to the scripture and the interpretations, the whole family was crying. We received from Zechariah 3:9, that **“I will remove the guilt of this land in a single day.”** We advised them to praise and worship the Lord while walking in the land in this difficulty (Acts 16: 24-31), and to offer nine Holy Masses for that land. They were to praise and worship the Lord even at night. After one month a family who had already sold their land and fixed the marriage of their son came and bought that land at a very high price.



### **FAILURE IN THE SAME SUBJECT MANY TIMES**

Deuteronomy 23:21-23; *“If you make a vow to the Lord your God, do not postpone fulfilling it; for the Lord your God will surely require it of you, and you would incur guilt. But if you refrain from vowing, you will not incur guilt. Whatever your lips utter you must diligently perform, just as you have freely vowed to the Lord your God with your own mouth.”* It was during a retreat in Lusaka, Zambia, that the Holy Spirit inspired us to tell about a boy who failed in the same subject three times, as he failed to pass his exam for medicine. The Lord told him to remember the promise he had given to the Lord. Then he remembered that as he continuously got lower grades and as he was an altar boy, during the Holy Mass, he promised that if he gets B+ for his Form Four exams, he will become a priest. The miracle was that he got exactly B+ for his form four. But he forgot that promise and he joined the university to become a doctor, but continuously failed in the exams as a reminder of his promise. Proverbs 1:23 says, *“give heed to my reproof; I will pour out my thoughts to you; I will make my words known to you.”* Because you should *“let nothing prevent your discharging a vow in good time, and do not wait till death to set matters right. Prepare yourself before making a vow, and do not be like someone who tempts the Lord”* (Sirach 18:22-23). Again *“if he swears a false oath, he will not be treated as innocent, for his house will be filled with calamities (Sirach 23:11).* He decided to make a complete U-turn to Jesus, and joined the seminary to become a priest.



## DRUG ABUSE



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***Drugs, when abused are powerful agents of harm. They are bound within the molecules of a chemical substance taken into the body, thus they have the potential of changing the body's functions and of altering the body's automatic safeguards and controls. But when used without medical guidance, they may cripple, kill or produce a most debilitating physical and psychological dependence on the drug. Most people tend to abuse drugs due to their calming, anaesthetizing, stimulating or hallucinating properties. Those who turn to Jesus with faith, He will set them free indeed (John 8:36).***

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## WHY TURN TO JESUS!

Drug abuse, is a patterned use of a drug in which the user consumes the substance in amounts or with methods which are harmful to themselves or others, and is a form of substance-related disorder. It refers to the harmful use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs. Psychoactive substance use can lead to dependence syndrome that develop after repeated substance use and that typically include a strong desire to take the drug, difficulties in controlling its use, persisting in its use despite harmful consequences.

Generally speaking, drug abuse is a serious public health problem that affects almost every community and family in some way. Drug abuse also plays a role in many major social problems, such as drugged driving, violence, stress, and child abuse. Drug abuse can lead to homelessness, crime, and missed work or problems with keeping a job. It harms unborn babies and destroys families. Turn to Jesus, he will quench your thirst for drugs.

### DRUG ADDICTION

Addiction involves such a compelling craving that the addict becomes a virtual slave to the habit. A person can become an addict in various ways. Many begin using drugs to obtain relief from pain or fatigue. But they soon feel miserable when the desirable effect of one dose wears off. They are then driven to take another. Before they realize it, they have developed an overwhelming desire for the drug. The intensity and frequency of the desire develops so quickly that in many cases addiction comes as a tragic surprise. Addicts become so desperate for their regular doses that they resort to various crimes in order to obtain money for purchasing more drugs. “Habit, if not resisted, soon becomes a necessity” (St. Augustine).

#### Reasons for Drug Addiction?

##### *Easy access*

Drugs are simply just available. They are accessible. They come in different forms. They are available in both pharmacies and on the streets.

##### *Just for ‘kicks’*

For many adolescents, experimenting with drugs may take place simply out of curiosity, a sense of daring and opportunity. The youth are characteristically curious, and thus far more inclined to take risks. They may do it partly because

they want to prove their boldness and their sense of adventure. Also because they do not initially believe that anything disastrous could happen to them.

***Peer group influences***

The need to be accepted by a group of peers who are already involved with drugs is an important factor that makes young people want to try using drugs.

One 18 year-old girl openly said, “I was trapped by my friends in the awful clutches of drugs. I used drugs to hide my feelings and overcome my sorrows. For 7 years I was scared. I had no security. I sacrificed my values, my morality, my religion, my parents, and everyone dear to me. There is nothing left in me that is human. I just want to die.”

***Rebellion against parents***

Many youngsters who have unloving, neglectful, overly permissive or in contrast, authoritarian and hostile parents take to drugs as a form of rebellion.

***Escape from the pressures of life***

Drugs are seen by some youngsters as a means of escape from the tension and the pressures of life or from boredom. The social structure which is deficient and unsatisfactory drives them to seek artificial paradises in the various forms of drugs. The many shortcomings in the structures of society, including unemployment, lack of housing, social injustices, political opportunism and international instability inevitably cause a loss of confidence and depression which may sometimes lead to frightfully negative experiences.

***Alienation and lack of motivation***

Drug abuse may be a reflection of alienation. It is a profound rejection of the values of society that some young people perceive as increasingly impersonal, often cruel, and lacking in concern for the individual. This alienation from society makes the young person to renounce the reward of organized society. They then turn inwards to the self-preoccupied world of mind-altering drugs, in order to find or not find a fuller meaning in life. There are young and old people alike who turn to the harmful experience of drug abuse as they lack clear and convincing motivation to life. They lack reference points, have no values, are convinced that nothing has meaning and life is not worth living. Some are driven to seek desperate means of escape in drugs following the tragic and distressed feeling of being wanderers in a strange land.

### ***Emotional disturbances***

The dependence on drugs also reflects varying emotional disturbances with an inability to cope with the demands of living or to find a meaningful personal identity. Many an addict will complain of feeling parental rejection or indifference, lack of acceptance by peers, emotionally isolated, and generally low self-esteem. Many addicts claim they do not know of any other way to cope with anxiety, boredom, depression, fear of failure or lack of purpose.

### **How to know that someone is an addict**

#### ***One should suspect addiction when there is / are:***

- Loss of interest in everything and a spirit of laziness
- A loss of appetite and unexplained weight loss
- Reddening of the eyes with unclear vision
- Nausea or vomiting and body pain
- Drowsiness or sleeplessness, lethargy and passivity
- Signs of acute anxiety, depression and profuse sweating
- The possession of needles, syringes and strange packets at home
- Mood swings and temper tantrums
- Emotional detachment and aloofness
- Impaired memory
- Tendency to be in solitude and spend longer hours in the toilet
- Disappearance of articles, money from home ....

*The human spirit will endure sickness; but a broken spirit - who can bear?*  
- Proverbs 18:14

#### ***How to help the addicted***

You cannot get someone out of the habit of drug abuse unless you correct them frequently at the expense of your own hurt. *“Whoever rebukes the wicked gets hurt”* (Proverbs 9:7). St. Peter says,

*When you try to correct others, do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame.* - 1 Peter 3:16

The best way to get out of this habit is to praise and worship the Lord. *“You shall worship the LORD your God, and I will bless your bread and your water; and I will take sickness away from among you”* (Exodus 23:25). Drugs that adversely affect the nervous system and those which cause physical and psychological dependence are very dangerous. Hence the best advice to anybody is not to start taking drugs. Young people can save themselves from drug abuse and consequent addiction if they give proper orientation to their entire life. Their lives must be given new and deeper meaning by making a commitment to new and true ideals. Pleasure, prosperity and comfort are not values which can fill the human heart. Man needs higher ideals to live and work for. The modern world is itself in great need of friendship, understanding and love. Young people must learn to deal with their personal problems with the help of responsible, caring spiritual fathers to forge genuine prayer life. Then they will realize that life is a lot more fun without drugs.

### ***Have a relationship with God***

Someone wanting to help an addict must first of all establish a relationship with God who cares for the welfare of an individual (Matthew 18:14).

### ***Hope in God***

Never condemn or look down on an addict. Understand that the drug addict first turned to drugs because he lost all hope. You must be willing and able to reinstate that hope in his life. Encourage him to dream realistically, to aim for achievable goals, and to see the brighter side of life. Be patient if at first the addict rejects all your efforts to convey positive thoughts (Isaiah 40:30-31).

### ***Adopt the Compassionate face of God***

Get to know the person you are trying to help, especially if he has grown up with some false notions and irrational beliefs. When you counsel, do not suggest any magic solutions because there are none (Matthew 11:28-29).

### ***Conversion comes from God***

The person you are trying to help must desire to change. That desire must come from within. You must be willing to make a commitment to stand by them in their effort to change (Hosea 6:1-3).

### ***The Power of Prayer***

We know that prayer has worked miracles which the human mind cannot

## WHY TURN TO JESUS!

perceive nor comprehend. There is power in prayer, therefore encourage the addict to pray and believe that God can change his life (Mark 11:24).

### ***Receiving God's Love***

You cannot do anything for anyone if you don't love that person. You must see the addict as a person created by God and a fellow human being. It will get tough at times, but you must continue to show them unconditional love.

## **How To Overcome Drug Abuse?**

### ***Read, Repeat and Meditate***

1. *"Take courage, my children, cry to God, and he will deliver you from the power and hand of the enemy"* (Bar.4:21). Lord, I believe that you can deliver me from Drug Abuse. Help me that I may turn to you Jesus.
2. *"Can the prey be taken from the mighty, or the captives of a tyrant be rescued? But thus says the LORD: Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken, and the prey of the tyrant be rescued; for I will contend with those who contend with you, and I will save your children"* (Is.49:24-25). My Jesus, I believe that you can rescue me from this terrible bondage of Drug Abuse, Help me Jesus to believe in and claim your mighty power in my life.
3. *"Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress"* (Ps.107:19). Lord, I believe that you can rescue me from this distress of abusing drugs and become your true disciple.
4. *"Can Ethiopians change their skin or leopards their spots? Then also you can do good who are accustomed to do evil"* (Jer.13:23). Lord, I believe in your power that you can set my life free, even though I am accustomed to abuse drugs in my life.
5. If you feel that you are too much into drug addiction and cannot escape, remember this scripture; *"... some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in their place to share the rich root of the olive tree ..."* (Rom.11:17-18). Lord, this is my prayer, graft me into your Body, and fill me with your Holy Spirit, May I produce the fruits of the Holy Spirit.
6. *"See, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is anything too hard for me?"* (Jer.32:27). *"Ah Lord GOD! It is you who made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you"* (Jer.32:17). I beg you O Lord, deliver me from this

bondage of Drug Abuse. For though it is such a big burden for me, for you my Jesus, it is such a small thing because you are *El-Shadai*; *One who is more than enough*.

**O Lord my God, deliver me, "... and help me whom am alone and have no helper but you, O Lord" (Esther 14:14) so that I may declare your praises forever as your true witness**



### SO CLOSE YET VERY FAR

One day, during personal prayer, seeking for the inspiration of God, I found Jesus appeared, standing in front, in a vision. I became very happy and decided to touch his feet to give him great respect and worship. I begged Jesus to stay there as I came near his feet, as I am unworthy to touch his feet. I started to walk towards Jesus and found the distance is so great, so I started to run telling Jesus, please don't disappear until I reach you. I saw him standing at the same place where he appeared but I found that the more I tried, I was not reaching anywhere near. I found myself miles and miles away and the more I tried I was in a great distance. A voice told me from within that I cannot reach Him because he is so holy. It is my own weaknesses that made this gulf. So, if I don't run daily to purify myself I cannot reach him because, **"we have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth"** (Isaiah 64:6). But at the same time, he understands our struggle to reach him. In Hebrews 4:15-16 we read, **"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."** Let us always remember that it is not Him, but it is we who are keeping a distance because of our own complexes.





## ALCOHOLISM



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*Drinking gives temporary pleasure to the body but it causes serious damage to the soul. We should know that our soul is more important than the body. St. Paul teaches us that, “If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit” (Galatians 6:8). The only way to get rid of the spirit of alcoholism is to turn to Jesus, who is capable of lifting you up from this deep pit of destruction. He will satisfy your thirst with life giving water. (cf. John 7:37)*

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Though there are many types of drugs which are abused all over the world, in the following sections, we will discuss about alcoholism and smoking as these are the commonly abused substances and destroy many lives.

There are people who justify the bad habit of drinking eg. in Africa, people say that their culture permits drinking. A baptized Christian, wherever he is, must adopt the Christian Culture based on the Word of God and Catholic Tradition.

*“I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live”* (Deuteronomy 30:19). “But instead there was joy and festivity, killing oxen and slaughtering sheep, eating meat and drinking wine. ‘Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.’ The Lord of hosts has revealed himself in my ears: Surely this iniquity will not be forgiven you until you die, says the Lord God of hosts” (Isaiah 22:13-14).

### ***Drinking is a sin!***

Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, we have no right to destroy its sanctity. “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? (1 Corinthians 6:19). We are not our own, instead we are bought with a price, that is the blood of Jesus. *“For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body”* (1 Corinthians 6:20). We cannot use our body the way we want.

*I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God - what is good and acceptable and perfect. - Romans 12:1-2*

We are just a piece of clay in His hand, *“O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand”* (Isaiah 64:8). *“Like clay in the hand of the potter, to be moulded as he pleases, so all are in the hand of their Maker, to be given whatever he decides”* (Sirach 33:13). Those who drink alcohol seriously disrespect the holy presence of the Lord. *“Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy that person.*

*For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple*" (1 Corinthians 3:16-17). nowadays, every alcohol bottle has a warning "alcohol is harmful to health"; that means those who use it knowingly commit sin.

### ***Drinking is a tragedy!***

Those who are addicted to drinking will become the laughing stock of many (Proverbs 23:29-35). Many say drinking little is good and healthy but Scripture says, "*A drunkard will not become rich; one who despises small things will fail little by little*" (Sirach 19:1). St. Paul says, "*it is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that makes your brother or sister stumble.*" (Romans 14:21). "*Do not try to prove your strength by wine-drinking, for wine has destroyed many*" (Sirach 31:25). "*They struck me, you will say, but I was not hurt; they beat me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake? I will seek another drink*" (Proverbs 23:35). "*Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise*" (Proverbs 20:1). Drinking leads to idolatry. "*They drank the wine and praised the gods of gold and silver; bronze, iron, wood, and stone*" (Daniel 5:4).

### ***The Source of Wisdom is the Fear of God!***

Fear of God is the hatred of evil and definitely in this case, avoiding the temptation of drinking alcohol (*Jeremiah 35:5-8*).

### ***Drinking leads to sexual sins!***

*"Alas for you who make your neighbours drink, pouring out your wrath until they are drunk, in order to gaze on their nakedness!"* (Habakkuk 2:15). Alcohol seduces a person. "*Ah, you who are heroes in drinking wine and valiant at mixing drink, woe to those who mix it*" (Isaiah 5:22). It leads to lustful sexual sins. "When their drinking is ended, they indulge in sexual orgies; they love lewdness more than their glory (Hosea 4:18).

### ***Drinking is an act of the Flesh!***

*"Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God"* (Galatians 5:19-21). "*For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law - indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God*" (Romans 8:7-8). "*Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with*

*the Spirit*” (Romans 5:18). **“For all that is in the world - the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, the pride in riches - comes not from the Father but from the world”** (1 John 2:16). Again, *“thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers—none of these will inherit the kingdom of God”* (1 Corinthians 6:10). *“For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live* (Romans 8:13). Finally St. Peter says, *“Like obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires that you formerly had in ignorance. Instead, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct”* (1 Peter 1:14-15).

### ***Drinking will destroy us!***

*“Do not try to prove your strength by wine-drinking, for wine has destroyed many”* (Sirach 31:25). *“Like an archer who wounds everybody is one who hires a passing fool or drunkard”* (Proverbs 26:10). It is a specific command to all priests to *“Drink no wine or strong drink, neither you nor your sons, when you enter the tent of meeting, that you may not die; it is a statute for ever throughout your generations”* (Leviticus 10:9). According to prophet Isaiah, those who are addicted to the habit of drinking will be destroyed:

*Ah, you who rise early in the morning in pursuit of strong drink, who linger in the evening to be inflamed by wine, whose feasts consist of lyre and harp, tambourine and flute and wine, but who do not regard the deeds of the Lord, or see the work of his hands!*  
- Isaiah 5:11-12

### ***Will you die if you drink a little?***

St. Paul reiterates that all those who want to follow Jesus have to crucify the desires of the flesh. *“Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires”* (Galatians 5:24). There are various Bible scriptures that urge us to *“flee from sin as from a snake; for if you approach sin, it will bite you. Its teeth are lion’s teeth, and can destroy human lives”* (Sirach 21:1). What is important is to listen to the voice of the Lord (Proverbs 16:20) and follow his instructions. *“Do not follow your inclination and strength in pursuing the desires of your heart”* (Sirach 5:2). Drinking will lead to spiritual death.

### ***When you stop drinking, you are returning to God***

*“Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity. Take words with you and return to the Lord; say to him, ‘Take away all our guilt; accept that which is good, and we will offer the fruit of*

*our lips*” (Hosea 14:1-2). The Lord who brought Jonah out of the belly, is able to deliver those who are in the habit of drinking heavily. *“As my life was ebbing away, I remembered the Lord; and my prayer came to you, into your holy temple”* (Jonah 2:7). The Lord who brought Israel out of the land of slavery, can set free those who are into the slavery of drinking. *“I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be their slaves no more; I have broken the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect”* (Leviticus 26:13). *“Thus says the Lord: If you turn back, I will take you back, and you shall stand before me”* (Jeremiah 15:19). And, *“Out of them shall come thanksgiving, and the sound of merry-makers. I will make them many, and they shall not be few; I will make them honoured, and they shall not be disdained. Their children shall be as of old, their congregation shall be established before me; and I will punish all who oppress them”* (Jeremiah 30:19-20). When someone stop drinking, they are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper. *“The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the Lord, and the neediest people shall exult in the Holy One of Israel”* (Isaiah 29:19).

### ***Stop making Justifications***

Many justify the bad habit of drinking by arguing that majority of people do it but, the law warns, *“You shall not follow a majority in wrongdoing; you shall not side with the majority so as to pervert justice”* (Exodus 23:1-2). Let us follow the instruction *“to keep the commandment without spot or blame until the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (1 Timothy 6:14). Again St. Paul warns that *“wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers—none of these will inherit the kingdom of God. And this is what some of you used to be”* (1 Corinthians 6:9-17). If you know your weakness, never justify it. *“Do not look at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly. At the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like an adder. Your eyes will see strange things, and your mind utter perverse things”* (Proverbs 23:31-34). People say I drink only if someone buys it for me. If someone gives you poison for free, will you drink it? Imagine that you feel very thirsty and you are going to die. You request for something to drink, and the person sitting next to you says, *“If you need something to drink, can I give you some poison we bought to spray onto the vegetables.”* You know that even if you are going to die, you will never drink that poison. Consider alcohol as nothing other

than poison, that destroys families, children, money, health, work, ethics and social relationships.

Alcoholism is a chronic disease associated with the excessive and habitual use of alcohol. The disease, if left unattended, worsens and can kill the sufferer. Alcoholism is marked by physical dependency on alcohol and can cause disorders in many organs of the body, including the liver, stomach, intestines, and brain. It is also associated with abnormal heart rhythms, with certain cancers, and, because of loss of appetite, with poor nutrition. It has killed more people, wrecked more lives, broken up more families and wasted more money than any drugs. It is readily available and easily abused.

### Why do People Drink?

Many factors may lead to alcohol dependence. These include genetic factors, family environment, ongoing stress, grief, loneliness, depression and boredom.

- **Media and society Influence:** It all starts with the influence of the media and society. If you ask people why they consume alcohol or take drugs, they will give you a host of reasons. They say, “to celebrate”, “to have fun”, “to forget problems”, “to relax”, “to experiment”, “to impress”, “to be fashionable”, “to mingle”, “for business purposes”, etc. These slogans are commonly influenced by media adverts and they have a negative impact on us and they promote sexual immorality, drug abuse, mode of dressing (culture of nudity)
- **Due to peer pressure:** *Do not be deceived, ‘bad company ruins good morals.’* (1 Corinthians 15:33).
- **To enjoy the effects:** It may be quite reasonable to assume that people drink not because they like to drink, but because they like the effects of alcohol.
- **To drown ones problems:** There are also people who resort to liquor to stifle their conscience. It is not infrequent to find self-respecting and law abiding individuals who under the influence of liquor easily consent to evil conduct. This is pointed out as the reason for the higher incidence of ventral disease among those who use liquor than among those who abstain.
- **Ignorance** is another cause that drags a youth to this grave disease. Many believe that alcohol is a stimulant, i.e., it makes you work/act faster. But medically speaking, alcohol is a depressant, i.e., it slows you down and depresses the working of the brain. Very often the wrong information received from companions is taken to be the truth, and by the time the victim realizes his mistake he will already be in the clutches of the disease.

## **The Spirit of Alcoholism needs Deliverance**

*Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple - 1 Corinthians 3:16-17*

***The following are examples of how one destroys body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit through drinking. Alcohol abuse damages the vital organs of the body:***

**THE LIVER** – noticeable liver inflammation, puffiness of the face, general swelling but especially in the ankles, enlarged abdomen due to fluid collection, sleeplessness.

**THE HEART** – enlargement of the heart, palpitations, shortness of breath, excessive night sweating, increased pulse-rate and blood-pressure.

**THE LUNGS** – respiratory diseases, chronic bronchitis and pneumonia.

**THE CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM** – disconnected, confused thinking and speaking, increasing loss of memory.

**THE STOMACH** – increase in acid production resulting in acute gastritis, blood-vomiting, loss of appetite and weight, anaemia.

**THE BRAIN** – brain cells destroyed, brain structure changed: eg. post-mortem on the brain of the dead alcoholics show a somewhat shrunken brain, blood-flow to brain diminished, blackout, i.e., inability to remember what happened during a drinking session.

Drunkenness also leads to poverty, fights and indecent behaviour. Alcoholism disrupts not only the life of the alcoholic but also the lives of their family members and has grave social consequences.

## **How to be delivered from the Spirit of Alcoholism**

***It starts with turning to Jesus***, the only Saviour, by admitting you have a problem with alcohol. You don't have to wait until you hit rock bottom; you can make a change at this very moment that you read this book (2 Corinthians 6:2). Believe that, *"If the Son of God makes you free, you will be free indeed"* (John 8:36).

***Then receive His grace and you will be able to:***

- Get rid of temptations. Remove all alcohol, other drinking reminders from your home and office.
- Let friends, family members, and co-workers know that you are trying to stop drinking. If they drink, ask them to support your recovery by not

doing so in front of you.

- Make it clear that drinking will not be allowed in your home and that you may not be able to attend events where alcohol is being served.
- Avoid bad influences. Distance yourself from people who don't support your efforts to stop drinking or respect the limits you've set. This may mean giving up certain friends and social connections.
- Learn from the past. Reflect on previous attempts to stop drinking. What worked? What didn't? What can you do differently this time to avoid pitfalls?

*The night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armour of light; let us live honourably as in the day, not in revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy.*  
- Romans 13:12-13

Our fight is never against any emotion, or human oppression but against the evil spirits. So, we have to put on the whole armour of God (Ephesians 6:11-16) if we are to resist the spirit of alcoholism.



#### **DAUGHTERS NOT GETTING MARRIED**

**“Give no one reason to curse you; for if in bitterness of soul some should curse you, their Creator will hear their prayer”** (Sir.4, 5-6). This mother wanted to tell the story of her family of seven children: five girls and two boys. First five are girls and yet none of them get married, the first one is already thirty nine years, and the second one is thirty seven. “Why has God forgotten my daughters?” This charismatic prayer group leader wanted to know the will of God. Through prayer I asked her about her husband and we came to know her husband was married before to another lady with five children and was now an old man. He had disowned that wife and the children and got married to this woman. This woman knew the story but she found the man was very rich. She ignored the fact that he was already married and got into this relationship. Now, she refused to help the first five children of her husband, only praying for her own seven children. She knowingly broke the first family of her husband. Ex.22, 22-23 says, **“you shall not abuse any widow or orphan. If you do abuse them, when they cry out to me, I will surely heed their cry.”** Pro.22, 22-23 says, **“do not crush the afflicted at the gate; for the Lord pleads their cause and despoils of life those who despoil them.”** When she repented and decided to repair the relationship with the children of the first wife of her husband, the Lord intervened in the lives of her daughters.





## SMOKING



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*Smoking is such a strong habit that needs not only healing but also deliverance. It is only by turning to the LORD Jesus, who fills all the emptiness of our hearts, that one can be set free. The decision to quit smoking should be reinforced by a line of thinking that emphasizes the greater advantages of quitting as compared to the temporary satisfaction of smoking. We need to know that smoking is an elemental spirit and it is only the Son of God who can set free anyone from this spirit of destruction. Those who turn to Jesus receive deliverance and healing. (cf. Psalm 41:4)*

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Those who smoke, smoke out the presence of God in the body, which is His dwelling place. When we chase away our Creator it creates a big tragedy in our lives. Many health experts found that smoking has serious health consequences: Foul breath, incessant cough and depleting pockets are some of the signs of smokers. Those who smoke not only harm themselves but it turns even innocent people into passive smokers.

### ***Risk of Smoking***

It endangers God's plan of welfare in our lives. We have no authority to destroy the life that we cannot restore. Anyone with a smoking habit has an increased risk for lung, cervical, and other types of cancer; respiratory diseases such as emphysema, asthma, and chronic bronchitis; for cardiovascular diseases such as heart attack, high blood pressure, stroke, and arteriosclerosis (narrowing and hardening of the arteries). The risk of stroke is especially high in women smokers who take birth control pills. Smoking causes infertility, making it harder to conceive, and can interfere with the growth of the fetus during pregnancy.

### **Are those who live with active smokers at risk?**

Are you giving a bad example by disturbing others through your smoking? Passive smoking is also known as involuntary, indirect or second-hand smoking. It takes place when we inhale someone else's cigarette smoke. Many lung-cancer deaths are among non-smokers who live with active smokers. A non-smoker who spends one hour indoors with smokers, faces the same health hazard as if he smokes three cigarettes. In a poorly ventilated room or office, such as when windows are kept closed, the risk is much higher. Passive smoking comes after direct smoking and alcohol as the third leading cause of death. Matthew 18:6 says, *"If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it will be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea."*

### ***Smoking leads to death!***

We should gently give help and assistance to those who are weak, with our prayers and with love. We are to take care not to be as much tempted (Galatians 6:1). Parents are called to help and support their children by instructing them in the way of the Lord. *"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord"* (Ephesians 6:4), and with gentleness lead them to the correct path. *"But those who are noble*

*plan noble things, and by noble things they stand” (Isaiah 32:8). It is important to remember that what may seem right to a person may lead that person to his/her death. “There is a way that seems right to a person, but its end is the way to death” (Proverbs 14:12). See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the Lord your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments (Deuteronomy 30:15-16). Its only through receiving his unconditional love and his healing touch one can be set free.*

### ***Smoking literally leads to hell!***

The Bible tells us that we should never be misguided by anyone who tells us how “our way is good,” and then stand aside to see what happens to us (Sirach 37:9). Many get destroyed because of lack of knowledge. They fall into this trap of the evil one because they simply do not understand the seriousness of this sin and the harm it will cause. We see in Isaiah 44:20 that the smokers practically feeds on ashes as their deluded mind has led them astray. And they cannot save themselves or think of the thing in their right hand as a fraud. They are unable to get out of this fire which consumes them. “*See, they are like stubble, the fire consumes them; they cannot deliver themselves from the power of the flame. No coal for warming oneself is this no fire to sit before” (Isaiah 47:14). Eventually they suffer severe pain. “When anguish comes, they will seek peace, but there shall be none” (Ezekiel 7:25). And they sadly lose their lives and perish, yet “knowing that it will cost him his life” (Proverbs 7:23).*

When a person truly receives Jesus Christ as Saviour, the Holy Spirit of God enters the human spirit and makes him into a new creature. 1 Corinthians 6:19 states that the body of the believer is a temple of the very Holy Spirit of God. Our willing covenant with God to receive eternal life through Jesus Christ puts us in a place of responsibility. As genuine Christians we are held responsible by God, for the care and use of our physical body. Therefore, when we behave or perform irresponsibly and defile our bodies, we open ourselves to physical destruction. “*If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple you are” (1 Corinthians 3:17).*

### **How to overcome smoking?**

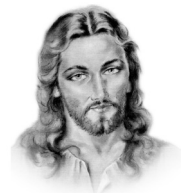
Smoking is such a strong habit that needs it not only healing but also

deliverance. *It is only by turning to the LORD Jesus* who fills all the emptiness of the heart that one can be set free. The decision to quit should be reinforced by a line of thinking that emphasizes the greater advantages of quitting as compared to the temporary satisfaction of smoking. The ex-smokers may notice that they can think more clearly, that they sleep much better, they cough much less and that they are more keenly aware of the taste of food and the fragrance of flowers. They also save the money that was previously wasted on smoking. Those who smoke have to stay away from social situations that tempt or prompt them to smoke.

### **What does the Bible say about smoking?**

***God who is a loving father, does not want any of his children to die. So, He warns against the spirit of smoking:***

- “Thus says the Lord God: Clap your hands and stamp your foot, and say, Alas for all the vile abominations of the house of Israel! For they shall fall by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence. Those far off shall die of pestilence; those nearby shall fall by the sword; and any who are left and are spared shall die of famine. Thus I will spend my fury upon them” (Ezekiel 6:11-12). Smoking is nothing but an abomination.
- “Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food,” and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body (1 Corinthians 6:13). Smoking destroys our body which is the temple of the Holy Spirit.
- “For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body” (1 Corinthians 6:20). Smoking humiliates the indwelling presence of God.
- “Only the person who sins shall die. A child shall not suffer for the iniquity of a parent, nor a parent suffer for the iniquity of a child; the righteousness of the righteous shall be his own, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be his own” (Ezekiel 18:20). Smoking is a wicked act.
- “All of you are kindlers of fire, lighters of firebrands. Walk in the flame of your fire, and among the brands that you have kindled! This is what you shall have from my hand: you shall lie down in torment” (Isaiah 50:11-12). Smoking carries its own dangers.



# CHAPTER SEVEN

## HOW TO RECEIVE INNER HEALING

*Inner healing is an ongoing process of giving the ownership of your life into the hands of God. The rewards are not always immediate but are beautiful gifts if one is patient. Since many of the problems resulting from inner wounds have remained buried in us since childhood, healing demands a deeper look into our past.*



**Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say a word and my SOUL shall be HEALED! (cf. Matt. 8:8)**

Any negative message received during childhood becomes a negative inner voice that persists in adulthood. This inner voice imprisons by reminding a person of the intrusive messages received in childhood. The childhood wounds reopen and isolate the person from others and even from the self. The person may pick behaviours that in many ways have harmful effects to others and to the self. The person may remain hidden behind a mask that has been created over the course of time. The person may feel ashamed and unworthy, and may become self-centred and addicted to negative habits. What we do not realize is how strong and influential the inner voice is, and how much emotional and spiritual damage it can do.

### *The distorted feelings that call for inner healing:*

- You may feel you carry the burden of the entire world on your shoulders and are powerless to let go of it
- You do not trust any process which you lack control over
- You feel overwhelmingly ashamed when you make a mistake and identify yourself with the mistake
- You terrify the people around you, or you suppress, ignore or shelve your anger
- In social settings you feel superior or inferior to others
- You give away your power to others by letting them determine how you feel about yourself
- You want help but are not able to take the first step, neither can you explain why.

Let us consider a situation where one has problems with intimacy. The view you have of what intimacy is all about stems from your childhood definition of intimacy. If you associated intimacy with fear and pain, then you are likely to avoid intimacy in adult life. Another situation is what we think of ourselves when we make a mistake. **If you grew up knowing that mistakes are an opportunity for growth, then you learn from them. If, however, your childhood mistakes were met with severe consequences, you may identify yourself as part of the mistake.** If you were never allowed to sometimes fail in your undertakings, you may become a perfectionist who considers failure as part of personal or individual failure. Inner healing frees from the bondage of childhood wounds.

## THE ESSENTIALS OF INNER HEALING

### *Awareness*

You need to become aware of that which is broken inside in order to know what should be fixed. You must review the early messages, write them down and discuss the findings with someone who understands inner wounds and their effects on relationships. Indicate who, how, where, when and why of each situation. Attending the inner healing retreats, spiritual counselling, daily examination of conscience will help us to get this awareness.

### *Action*

Then begin to take positive action by recognizing your role in each situation. This will help to block out the negative voice within. Begin to act in a more positive manner. This will correct the distorted view that has been previously imprinted on your mind. Perceptions and dynamics also change, and bring more peace into your life. This may also be a time when it becomes difficult to accept direction from a spiritual father as you may look for all manner of excuses, justifying why you should not do it. You will have to put in a lot of work before you can accept fresh ways of looking at things, both physical and spiritual.

### *Maintenance*

You will benefit from participation in a prayer group which encourages you to maintain the positive actions you are taking. It is consistency in the positive actions that bring a stop to the persistent destructive inner voice. This is where the support of others becomes key. You cannot do it on your own. The prayer group also serves as a support force .

### *Speak a Word of Healing, In Faith*

You know that the LORD Jesus gave you authority to heal and be healed, therefore speak to the part of your body that needs a healing and command it to *BE HEALED IN JESUS' NAME!* The LORD Jesus did exactly that when He ordered the man who had been ill for thirty-eight years to rise, take up his mat and walk (John 5:1-9); St. Peter told the crippled beggar that he had neither silver nor gold to give, but that what he did have was the order for him to rise and walk in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazorean (Acts 3:6). Therefore confess that which is rightfully yours in Christ Jesus; it will uplift you spiritually and help to make you more available to receive all the good things that God has made available to you (including healing)! You

## AN INVITATION TO INNER HEALING

must know God's love if you are to experience His Fullness in your life (Ephesians 3:17-19). Speak a blessing (healing) out loud to yourself that it may truly sink deep within you. You could say, for example:

- *"I praise you LORD, because I am wonderfully and fearfully made"* (Psalms 139:14).
- *"Your love for me is revealed to me through Jesus Christ your Son, who came into the world so that I have life through Him"* (1 John 4:9).
- *"I thank you LORD for the big party you have thrown for me"* (Luke 15:10).
- *"I am a new creation in Christ Jesus; the old things have passed away and the new things have come"* (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- *"Behold, what love (healing) the Father has bestowed on me, that I am called His child"* (1 John 3:1).
- *"I am healed, for there is no condemnation awaiting me"* (Romans 8:1).
- *"I am healed because my sins are not only forgiven, but God Himself does not remember them"* (Isaiah 43:25).
- *"I am healed, not because I was sinless and perfect, but because God loved me first"* (Romans 5:8).
- *"I am healed because nothing can separate me from the love of God in Christ Jesus, my LORD and my God"* (Romans 8:38-39).
- *"I am healed because I have been given power and authority over all demons; I can cure all diseases by the authority of the LORD Jesus bestowed to me"* (Luke 9:1).
- *"I am healed because my works are the works of Jesus Christ, in whom I believe"* (John 14:12)
- *"I am healed because I am no longer a slave, but a child and an heir, through God"* (Galatians 4:7).

In this way, shall you claim healing; open your heart, your soul, your mind and your body, and receive it.



**Speak out a blessing (healing) loud to yourself that it may truly sink deep within you.**



### **PRAYER IS THE MOST IMPORTANT TOOL FOR INNER HEALING.**

We can describe inner healing as the act of allowing the transforming power of God to get into past memories. Since Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever, He is able on your behalf, to go back into the past and heal all remaining wounds and affect your current situation for all eternity. Inner healing is known to come after forgiveness. Sometimes you may forgive someone for a wrong done, yet pain and deep hurt still affect you when you recall the memory of the hurt. Even after you have repented and been forgiven for your mistakes, memories of how much pain you caused another may still torment you. You must receive inner healing if you are to stop feeling this way. These feelings are some of those things that block the flow of grace from the Holy Spirit, and prevent you from living the much-desired abundant life.

Your prayer can be spontaneous or it may be structured; assume whatever posture that is most comfortable for you (sitting, kneeling or standing), where you can best forget yourself, relax and concentrate on the presence of God. You must turn your heart and mind to God (the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit) in the sign of the Cross; it is only through the love of Holy Trinity that anything will truly happen. Be sure to welcome the presence of the Triune God and praise Him, then turn to the petition itself. Try to be specific in your prayer, and as clear as you can possibly be about what you are asking God to heal.

Your specific request will enliven your own faith, as you see in your imagination what you are praying for. If you believe that God answers your prayers always (cf. 1 John 5:14-15), you will naturally have a heartfelt desire to thank Him. Therefore, thank Him even during the prayer; have the attitude of St. Paul, and do not worry. Ask God for everything you need with prayer, petition and thanksgiving (Philippians 4:6).



*You must turn your heart and mind to God (the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit) in the sign of the Cross; it is only through the love of Holy Trinity that anything will truly happen.*

***Some healing prayers include:***

- The Holy Mass
- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
- The Holy Rosary
- The Way of the Cross
- Rosary of Liberation
- Rosary of Praise
- Rosary of the Unborn
- Rosary/Chaplet of the Sacred Heart
- Chaplet of Divine Mercy
- Chaplet of Holy Souls
- Chaplet of the Five Wounds
- Chaplet of the Seven Sorrows
- Chaplet of Tears
- Holy Trinity Prayer
- Prayers of Protection
- Litany of Abba Father
- Litany of the Most Precious Blood
- Litany of the Most Holy Name of Jesus
- Litany of the Holy Spirit
- Litany of Humility
- Litany of Reparation
- Litany of Praise

***NB: All these prayers are available in the Prayer Book “Christ is All” published from Vincentian Prayer House, Nairobi.***

This list is not conclusive. There are many more prayers available to bring us healing. The point is that you must pray and keep praying for yourself and for others. Do not rush to finish the prayers; No, pray meditatively, pray slowly and internalize your prayer. By your prayers, you will bring healing to you, your family, your family tree (ancestry), your community, your country, the whole world, the whole creation. By your prayers you can also become a healer.

***In Scripture***

You must remember that God’s Word is medicine for your spirit, soul and body; the way that you experience its power is by speaking it out loud, praying it to God, meditating on it, and believing it. When you speak His Word over your life, it releases His power into your life. Get a Catholic Bible

and make good use of it. Believe what the Word of God says more than what you think or how you feel. Keep speaking His Word over your circumstances and have confidence that in His own good time He who began a good work in you will continue to complete it (Philippians 1:6). There are scripture verses that will apply to the need you are facing; take time to read them, meditate on them, pray them, and memorize those verses that encourage you to trust God for the healing you need. You could write them down and carry them with you, so that you can have them on hand wherever you are and whenever you need them.

### ***Some healing scripture verses include:***

*Exodus 15:26, Exodus 23:25-26, Deuteronomy 7:15, Psalms 91:9-10, Psalms 103:1-5, Psalms 107:19-20, Proverbs 4:20-23, Isaiah 41:10, Isaiah 53:4-5, Isaiah 55:9-11, Isaiah 58:6-11, Jeremiah 30:17, Malachi 3:6, Malachi 3:20-21, Matthew 7:7-11, Matthew 8:16-17, Matthew 9:35, Matthew 15:30-31, Mark 11:22-24, Mark 16:17-18, Luke 4:17-19, Luke 9:1-2, Luke 10:8-9, Luke 13:16, Acts 4:29-30, Acts 5:15-16, Acts 10:38, Galatians 3:13, James 5:13-16, 1 John 5:14-15, and 3 John 2.*

If you have a spiritual director, you may ask for the relevant scriptures for your situation or search for the scriptures you need from the Bible. See that you make them your confession, and be amazed at how God's Word will give you more of the abundant life you can have in Christ Jesus.

## **With inner healing comes the ability to receive deliverance in different areas, including:**

### **1. Deliverance from wrong beliefs and relationships**

St. Paul teaches that we should not be led astray by keeping bad company which corrupts good morals (1 Corinthians 15:33). He adds that as you received the LORD Jesus Christ, you are to walk in Him, be rooted in Him, be built upon Him and be established in the faith in the manner in which you were taught, that is, abounding in thanksgiving (Colossians 2:6-8). He charged St. Timothy to be persistent in proclaiming the Word, whether it be convenient or not. He was to convince, reprimand, and encourage through all patience and teaching. And he warned that a time would come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine but will stop listening to the truth and will be diverted to myths, preferring instead to follow their own desires and insatiable curiosities from accumulating teachers to suit their own desires (2 Timothy

4:1-4). When we look at contemporary arguments on some practices, this seems to have already come true with materialism. People want to enjoy the gift of sexual life while at the same time excluding the responsibilities that are tied to having sexual intercourse, such as bringing forth children. So, they choose to murder tiny, little, weak, and innocent babies right in the safety of the mother's womb on the argument of free choice in the name of abortion. Innerhealing gives us deliverance from these wrong beliefs.

## **2. Deliverance from sins and weaknesses**

As Isaiah explains, wounded young men may faint and grow weary, and youths may stagger and fall in their wounds; yet they that hope in the LORD renew their strength, and soar on eagles' wings. Once healed, they run and do not grow weary. They walk and do not grow faint (cf. Isaiah 40:30-31). Inner healing gives us new life. Even the psalmist calls upon his soul and his very being to bless the LORD and bless his Holy Name, and not forget the LORD's gifts. He says the LORD pardons all our sins and heals all our ills. He redeems our life from the pit and crowns with mercy and compassion. He fills our days with good things so that our youth is renewed like the eagle's (cf. Psalms 103:1-5).

## **3. Deliverance from feelings of rejection, abandonment and hurt**

With inner healing the promises of redemption and restoration are fulfilled. Prophet Isaiah says the LORD who created you and formed you has redeemed you by calling you by name and making you His. Therefore, when you pass through waters, He will be with you. Through rivers, you shall not be swept away. When you walk through fire, you shall neither be burned nor be consumed by the flames. The LORD God, the Holy One of Israel, is your saviour. He gives people in ransom for you and makes exchanges of nations for your life (cf. Isaiah 43: 1-4). As the author of Lamentations says inner wounds are like gold that has lost its luster, or the noble metal that has changed. The precious things in life lie unattended and with all their worth in gold being treated like clay in the hands of any potter! He likens the wounded person's cruelty to the ostrich in the wilderness who abandons her children (cf. Lamentations 4:1-4).



*The precious things in life lie unattended and with all their worth in gold being treated like clay in the hands of any potter!*

## WHY TURN TO JESUS!

Yet the LORD who has mercy on you says no matter how much the hills are shaken or the mountains fall away, His love shall never fall away from you nor His covenant of peace be shaken (cf. Isaiah 54:10). We may thus say with much confidence, that;

*The Lord is my helper, and I will not be afraid. There is nothing anyone can do to me.*  
- Hebrews 13:6

He has loved you with age-old love, and has kept His mercy toward you (Jeremiah 31:3). He considers you as His favoured child in whom He delights. Even when He threatens, He must still remember you and must show you compassion because His heart stirs for you (Jeremiah 31:20). He has promised to establish you in justice and keep you far from oppression. He tells you not to fear destruction, for it cannot come near you (cf. Isaiah 54:14-17). He says you should not fear, since He is with you. He is your God, you ought not to be anxious. He is there to strengthen you, and help you. To uphold you with His victorious right hand, so that all who vent their anger against you are put to shame and disgrace. And any who offer resistance shall be as nothing and perish (cf. Isaiah 41:10-13). You must always remember that even if your father and mother forsake you, the LORD will take you in (Psalms 27:10). In the same way a mother cannot forget her infant or be without tenderness for the child of her womb, the LORD God will never forget you. He has engraved you upon the palms of His hands and your walls are ever before Him (cf. Isaiah 49:15-16).

### **4. Deliverance from the desire for Human Approval**

The idea that you must have love or approval from all the significant people in your life is really irrational behavior. Whereas you may demand love from a limited number of people, you cannot usually win the approval of all of them. Some people have little ability to love anyone because of their own limitations. Others will for reasons way beyond your control disapprove of you. Still others will despise you forever because of some ridiculous prejudice they have against you. If you are centered toward needing to be loved, you must also worry about how much and how long you will be approved. You wonder if others really care enough. And if they do, whether they will continue to care tomorrow and the year after.

As St. Paul states, if you are forever seeking favor with human beings or seeking to please people, you cannot be a slave of Christ (Galatians 1:10)

and Isaiah 2:22). Yet we know that those who favour His just cause shout for joy and are glad to exalt the LORD who delights in the peace of His loyal servant (Psalms 35:27). We must trust that the Father who has given us to Him is greater than all, and no one can take us out of the Father's hand (c.f. John.10:29-30). So, even when it seems as though there are briars or thorns and you sit among scorpions, you are not to fear people or their words or be terrified by their looks. You must seek always the favour of the LORD (c.f. Ezekiel 2:6-8).

### **5. Deliverance from the desire to be rich**

It is rather unfortunate that modern society conditions us from an early age to want things that we really don't need. People are often manipulated into buying products that are rumoured will make them more attractive, happier, respected. Adults see some apparently good-looking couples driving superb designer cars and they think, "if only I could buy such a car, I would be more attractive." Even small children will watch other children on TV play with newer and better toys, and automatically want to have the same toys. Many have thus made life choices to fulfil an implanted image of what they think they ought to be. Many will work in unfulfilling jobs just so as to pay for products they think they must own. It is even worse when they go into debt and spend a life time trying to pay it off.

This then becomes a vicious cycle that keeps them feeling inadequate because they don't make enough money. They buy stuff that they don't need just to compete with people who they don't even know. They go into debt and end up working all the hours that God so faithfully provides trying to pay off the increasing debt. In short, they think consumption equals well-being. Many do not understand that the desire to become obscenely rich is actually a form of mental illness. Worse still, it is a spiritual bondage. St. Paul writes that those who want to be rich are falling into temptation and into a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge them into ruin and destruction.

He goes on to explain that the love of money is the root of all evils, and some people in their desire for it have strayed from the faith and have pierced themselves with many pains (1Timothy 6:9-10). In his instruction Tobit teaches Tobias that he should not fear how they have lived in poverty, since Tobias would have great wealth if he fears God, avoids all sin, and does what is good before the Lord God (Tobit 4:21). The book of Sirach warns us

## WHY TURN TO JESUS!

not to marvel at the works of a sinner, but to trust in the LORD and wait for his light. He argues that it is easy in the eyes of the LORD suddenly and in an instant to make the poor rich (Sirach 11:21). This is good advice, which the LORD Jesus reinforces saying,

*Do not let your hearts be troubled; but have faith in God and also in me  
- John 14:1*

### TURN TO JESUS TO RECEIVE INNER-HEALING

Jesus is the most powerful healer for all mankind. He is the centre of inner-healing. It is only one who has been wounded who can understand our pain (cf. Hebrews 4:15-16). Christian experience involves the death of our old selves and the rising to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4). This new life is characterized by thoughts about Him who saved us, and not thoughts about the dead flesh that has been crucified with Christ. We are called to abide in Him (John 15:5), so that He transforms our hearts and heals us. However, the focus must be on the Lord, and not on ourselves.

#### ***These include:***

- the sovereignty of God
- the high-priestly intercession of Christ
- the promise of the Holy Spirit, and
- the hope of eternal glory.

It is important to understand these great truths by centering our thoughts on them and rehearsing them in our minds so as to enable us to reason in all of life's trials from an angle of truth. This will make our faith strong and vital. Spiritual defeat happens when we reason from our feelings rather than what we know about God. Yet we must always work through emotions since we are created as emotional beings. If we try to "shut down" that part of our "self" in an effort to avoid reliving painful moments, we quickly become like a volcano that is just about ready to erupt.

The Lord God who created us knows this emotional pain that is a part of life. If we are to experience true inner healing, we must be honest with our "self" about what we feel. Then we go seeking for answers from God about those things. God speaks to us in His Word, through which He will give us the answers that we seek. No matter what the issue is, whether there is a

concrete question in our mind or it is just a negative feeling, the answer is that we read the Word of God because His Word is His Voice, and His Voice has powerful, creative, healing power. The Letter to the Hebrews reminds us that we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, and as such we are to throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, in order to run with perseverance the race that has been marked out for us. We must fix our eyes on Jesus, who is the author and perfecter of our faith, and who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorned its shame, and now sits at the right hand of the throne of God (cf. Hebrews 12:1-2).

The LORD Jesus shed His blood so that we could receive healing of spirit, soul and body. The primary cause of many inner wounds are broken relationships. God is Love, and God desired to have a love relationship with the one He looks at as the “apple of His eye”. This is you and I. It is the shedding of His precious Blood that bought back our wellbeing, our healing and our total restoration of spirit, soul and body. So, *let us turn to Jesus*, to receive inner healing.

### **What was God’s purpose in providing this healing?**

St. Peter writes about the mystery of the salvation of a person’s soul, which the Old Testament prophets had wondered about; that the goal of our faith is the salvation of our soul. It is about this salvation that the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be ours searched and investigated (cf. 1 Peter 1:9-10). The salvation of the soul means the well-being, healing and total restoration of the human mind, will and emotions. St. John prays that we may prosper in all things and be in health, just as our soul prospers (3 John 1:2). This is to say that when our soul prospers and is healed, all the other areas of our life begin to line up with godly prosperity. God prefers to bless from the inside out, even as St. Paul teaches that God’s power will work in us (c.f. Ephesians 3:20).



*The salvation of the soul means the well-being ... the healing of and total restoration of the human mind, will and emotions.*





### I AM HIV POSITIVE

*This lady, brought by a friend, introduced herself, "I am HIV positive. I have no hope to live on as I am always sick and lost all my weight, can you please show me a place to take care of my two daughters?" I told her the Word of God from Jeremiah 32:27, "see, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is anything too hard for me?" "He can heal you. Do you believe that?" I asked her. She said, "I do believe, but I am just asking you to take care of my daughters because I am a single mother and they don't have a father." "How long is it since you last made your confession?" we asked her. She replied, "I don't remember." "Why?" I asked her, "I don't believe that even God can forgive me." She continued, "I was cheated and infected by my best friend and he disappeared. I was so broken and in retaliation I too infected more than nine different men with HIV. I was so bitter to myself and to others," she said. I told her that God forgives even the sins one has committed knowingly. The prodigal son rejected the love of his Father but the Father did not reject him. The adulterous woman was accused by all, but Jesus protected her. Peter knowingly denied him three times yet Jesus forgave him. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). He is the same today, and He wants to forgive you and heal you forever. Just pray to him saying, "For your name's sake, O Lord, pardon my guilt, for it is great" (Psalms 25:11). He said, "I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against me, and I will forgive all the guilt of their sin and rebellion against me" (Jeremiah 33:8). "I, I am He who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins" (Isaiah 43:25). Through prayer and a good confession, eventually the good Lord led her to a new life.*



## FORGIVENESS BRINGS INNER HEALING

It is generally agreed that healing of the soul requires different varied approaches. One key factor is forgiveness. Many people misunderstand what real forgiveness is. It is not the excusing of a sin, abuse or offense. Real forgiveness is when you agree with God, by way of His divine Word. Agreeing to this truth sets you on the path to freedom and healing. But forgiveness is multi-pronged. The first thing is to realize that God always forgives our daily and momentary wrongs so long as we acknowledge that we have sinned. St. John teaches that if we acknowledge our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from every wrongdoing (1 John 1:9). But we must make that confession with our own mouths. The next thing that we must

do is to forgive others. If you are to receive forgiveness for your sins, you need first to forgive others because forgiving others allows you to overcome feelings of anger, bitterness, or revenge (cf. Matthew 6:14-15 & Matthew 18:21-35). **Forgiveness heals spiritual wounds and brings the peace and love that only God can give.** Remember the LORD commands us to forgive everyone. He says you are to love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who spitefully use you and persecute you (Matthew 5:44). Lastly, you must forgive yourself. This can be a daunting task especially when your former sins come to mind. You should not choose to dwell upon them with the resultant feelings of guilt, but you should choose to fill your mind with thoughts of the awesome God who always forgives you, and you then thank and praise Him for it (cf. Philippians 4:8). If by remembering your sins you are reminded of the extent of God's forgiveness, it becomes easier for you to forgive others (Matthew 7:1-5, 1 Timothy 1:15).

### **Why Should We Try To Heal Life's Hurts?**

We should try to heal life's hurts because when we continue carrying them we continue to hurt. If we were to suffer a gunshot wound or a dog bite, we would immediately seek for help and healing. Likewise, when our emotions are wounded we must seek help and healing of those emotions. Should we fail to do so, we could cause damage to our spiritual, emotional and even physical well-being. **What is interesting is that we have the power to lighten the burdens we carry, and yet we can also choose to keep a grudge and continue to bear the burden.** There are medical conditions that are precipitated by feeding the wounds of emotional hurts. These include heart disease, cancer, digestive problems, high blood pressure and even mental breakdown. Studies have shown that the human mind and the immune system are closely related. Persons who hold onto evil, hurtful memories of experiences in life hamper the body's ability to fight infection and disease. Likewise, our spiritual lives are affected when we allow past hurts to be a part of who we are now. We tend to stay away from people who have hurt us, even though these may be the people who could love us or those who need our love. **When hurts are not healed, it becomes difficult to see Christ in those around us and to be Christ for those around us.** When relationships are overshadowed with memories of past hurts we block relationships with others, and we block Christ who wants to relate to us through others. If we are looking for restoration, we must first be reconciled. If we are seeking reconciliation, we must forgive. This is what God does for us when we ourselves forgive. Forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoration! It is through the reception of the sacraments, the real presence of God enters inside our hearts. The following incident will reveal the power of the sacrament of marriage.



### MARRYING IN THE CHURCH

Many issues made her to come to Vincentian Prayer House, such as: Her husband had no job. She had only one child of six years She had fibroids in the uterus and was asked by the doctor to go for an operation. Being fully broke, she attended a prayer service, and then a retreat, and she came for counselling. She wanted the Lord to intervene in her issues and help her be healed to get another child and her husband to get a good job. As I prayed for her surrendering all her issues, I saw a vision of Jesus standing beside her, being bound as if he stands before Pontius Pilate. I explained to her the vision saying that she herself has made Jesus to be to be so. I came to know, she is not married in the church that made Jesus to be helpless in her life. She explained that her husband is not a Catholic but a Seventh Day Adventist. We explained to her that the real issue is not her sickness or joblessness but she is blocking Jesus in her life as she leads an adulterous life. Jesus is a gentle God, standing at the door knocking (Rev.3,20). But because He is gentle we are not serious. "Can we let a president of the country stand at the Door of our house, hours and hours?" See, Jesus is the King of Kings and he is waiting and waiting at the door of all unmarried couples as we read, **"I was ready to be sought out by those who did not ask, to be found by those who did not seek me. I said, 'Here I am, here I am', to a nation that did not call on my name. I held out my hands all day long to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices"** (Is.65,1-2). No one is so gentle and patient like Jesus. Actually when we marry in the church, Psalms 1:3 says, **"they are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper."** Again Psalms 92:12-15 says, **"the righteous flourish like the palm tree, and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of the Lord; they flourish in the courts of our God. In old age they still produce fruit; they are always green and full of sap."** It is when you marry in the church that Jesus gets inside your life and miracles take place. She was given to pray "Isaiah 45:2-3 with Memorare", nine times daily, to pray for the husband and to invite him to the Prayer House. He came and attended a retreat and experienced God's love. He then started to learn Catholic Catechism, was baptized and got married in the Church. Since then, miracles followed one after the other. He got a permanent job, the wife got healed and was blessed with a new baby whom they named Bakhita. Many people try to get a child, a job, a healing but without completely turning towards Jesus. They forget that, **"unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain"** (Psalms 127:1). Receiving the sacraments especially the sacrament of marriage is very crucial for blessings.



## GUIDELINES FOR INNER HEALING

### 1. Admit that we are hurt.

Everyday hurts are crosses that we pick up, we face and we ought to embrace. If we deny our hurt feelings, we give them an opening to have control over us and our behaviour. The LORD Jesus urges us to daily pick up our crosses and follow him. We must take a realistic look at what we get when we hold on to the hurts. Some people maintain a false “poor me” point of view. Others wear a protective shield that warns, “Don’t touch, fragile!” Some use it as a means of escaping the risk of ever having to love again. Some cannot let go because they fear that letting go of the anger and bitterness that they have held on to for so long would leave them as empty shells. Some use life’s hurts as defences that keep them alive. Yet Wisdom demands that we let go of hurts in order to fill the void with that which is life-giving and sustaining. It is what sustained Jesus Christ when the people He loved turned away; when those He trusted betrayed Him, and when He hung all alone on the cross.



*Some people maintain a false “poor me” point of view. Others wear a protective shield that warns, “Don’t touch, fragile!” Some use it as a means of escaping the risk of ever having to love again.*

### 2. Know that we are loved.

It is important that we become aware of how much we are loved. When we let the light of realization of being loved shine through the darkness of our hurts, we begin to let go of the hurts. We read in scripture that even the hairs of our head are all counted and we are of more value than many sparrows, which not even one of them will fall to the ground without the will of the Father (cf. Matthew 10:29-31). This word encourages us to have confidence that God keeps us in his care. He who shields us, cares for us and guards us like the apple of His eye (cf. Deuteronomy 32:10b). He will lift us on eagles’ wings and bring us to Himself (cf. Exodus 19:4b). It is in love that the LORD God offers us His only begotten son, Jesus, in order to be united with us. Coming into awareness of this allows new tissue to form around our life’s wounds. God’s love manifests in many ways that need awareness: Like the life-giving beauty and events in our lives, like in the love that others have for us. We must open the eyes of our heart to become aware of God’s love to

be able to experience the rebirth that awaits us in inner healing.

### **3. Don't automatically blame yourself for the things you suffer**

One thing that we can learn from the suffering LORD, is that pain, suffering and death precede resurrection and freedom from pain. We know that He was mocked, scourged and spat upon through no fault of his own, yet He bore it all in silence. However, to the temple guard who struck Him for answering the high priest with facts, Jesus confronts him for this injustice asking, *“If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong; but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?”* (John 18:23). Likewise you cannot simply assume a passive victim role, get depressed and even become suicidal because of an emotional hurt. Share everything with Jesus one-on-one, you will start hearing his voice (cf. Isaiah 30:20-21).

### **4. Share your story of hurt**

**The best person to share your life's hurt story is the one who has experienced the pain of being hurt.** This is the person who has a healing power, who, having been wounded, has become a wounded healer. Instead of bottling it up, it is best to tell your story to this **“wounded healer”** and allow yourself to be comforted. The one person who perfectly fits in the shoe of the wounded healer is the LORD Jesus, present in the Eucharist. In the Sacrament of Confession, you should share your hurt feelings since it is a means by which you will receive both forgiveness and deliverance. It is in confessing to a priest, with repentance, about our past failures to forgive the offenders, and expressing the desire for reconciliation that we will find healing. This applies even with those who may have since died and are not physically available to reconcile with. Through this Sacrament, we experience God's loving grace of forgiveness that enables us to forgive those who have hurt us. It gives us understanding so that we also see the offender's pain. It brings us the freedom to finally release the hurt that has enslaved us. When we go for confession and speak of our hurts there, we open the way for God to do the healing. It is important that we have a spiritual father with whom we can share openly and let go of our inner wounds.

### **5. Turn to Jesus for healing**

The gospels reveal the LORD Jesus to be the greatest healer of all time. He carried out His earthly ministry by healing people over and over again. Those who were physically, spiritually, mentally and emotionally wounded would go to him for his healing touch, word, glance, or prayer. His question always

is, “What do you want me to do for you (Mark 10:51)? I do not know what you will say, but I can hear Him answer, “Of course, I want to” (Matthew 8:2-3). Why? Because Jesus wants to heal us. We have only to ask. Since He came that we might have life and have it in abundance, we are assured that He desires our healing.

My way of doing it is that I first share with him how I feel – my hurt, my feelings of revenge, my aches, how awful it is to carry the pain alone. The LORD Jesus does not judge nor scold. He listens with compassion and empathy. He seems to share in the hurt and to be angry at the sin with me. Then I go back to the experience of the hurt with the LORD Jesus at my side. I relive the terror, the fright, the confusion, the pain, the panic in His presence. I ask him to be with me as I experience the angry words, the aching heart, and the dull stare of the hurt again. I practically walk through the agony with the LORD Jesus. Then I stop and listen to what He has to say to me. I think about His own response to abuse and suffering. He may speak to me through scripture or in the quiet of my heart. If you and I are open to His word, knowing and believing that he is the great healer, Jesus will tell us what we need to know or to do in order to be healed. He may want to bring us to be aware of our own sinfulness before He can bring us to healing. Just keep in mind that we are precious in His eyes and He loves us so much and wants us to be healed (cf. Isaiah 43:1-4). In order to receive healing we have to receive the sacraments. The following incident narrates the power of the sacrament of confession.



### **I DON'T BELIEVE IN PRIESTS**

*“I cannot leave this retreat centre without getting answers to my problems. I am suffering for more than twenty years now,” said this man. He continued, “I am jobless, no school fees for children, debts, sicknesses, so on and so on... Why is God not merciful to me? Why has he turned away his face from me?” “How long since you made your last confession?” “I don’t believe in priests”. “Why?” “They are not God.” “Of course they are not God; they are just servants of God.” “Father, one day when I went for confession the priest came out of the confessional looking at me saying he is very busy so to make the confession short. I was hurt and I walked out immediately. Since then I have never been to confession.” “How can a priest, who is supposed to be inside the confessional, come out of it and insult a penitent?” “Do you pray for priests?” I asked, “Why? I don’t pray; they are supposed to pray*

## WHY TURN TO JESUS!

for me!" I explained to him, "Even during Mass the Priests beg the people to pray for them that their sacrifices may be acceptable to God." I then apologized to him on behalf of that priest and told him to forgive him and to pray for all the confessors every time when he goes for confession. I humbly told him to go for a sincere confession. Immediately after the confession, he brought his cell phone with an SMS from his former colleague who had started a new company and wanted him to be the manager of that company. The Lord immediately opened the door as he opened his heart to the Lord through the Sacrament of Confession! As we read in Isaiah 22:22: **"I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David; he shall open, and no one shall shut; he shall shut, and no one shall open."** Many don't realize that God's mercy flows to us through the Sacraments. Actually the Sacrament of Confession is the perfect expression of His mercy. Those who do not go for confession say no to His mercy (Isaiah 30:18). Actually, Jesus told St. Paul, as he admitted his weakness, **"my grace is sufficient for you"** (2 Corinthians 12:9). This can be interpreted as my sacrament of confession is sufficient for you.



### 6. Be patient and persistent

There are some incidents that we read about where the people who were healed had to be patient and persistent. Consider the persistent Canaanite woman who wanted healing for her tormented daughter (Matthew 15:21-28). How about the blind man of Bethsaida, who waited patiently for the blindness to be healed slowly (Mark 8:22-26). How about St. Peter's endurance when he had to answer three times to the same question posed to him by Jesus (John 21:15-17). There are times when the LORD will ask you to take an active role, perhaps more responsibility for your own healing. Consider the case of the man born blind, who had to go and wash in the pool of Siloam before he could see (John 9:7).

### 7. Love your enemies and bless them

Did you know that the LORD will vindicate you if you heap live coals on your enemies' heads by showing them love? (Proverbs 25:22) It is never easy to let go of deep-seated feelings or grudges. However, it is good to recall that love is often a decision more than a feeling. You can therefore make a decision that transcends your feelings and trust that in time your feelings will fall in line. Is it possible to love someone who has hurt you? Suppose you actually behave as if you love the person, you might someday come to

discover that you do love them. This alone will put you well on your way to being healed. So, in the light of the LORD's instruction in the Sermon on the Mount to bless our enemies and pray for them, you overcome evil with good (Romans 12:21). As the LORD Jesus points out, just as God sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous and the sun to shine on the evil and the good, so should we also do (Matthew 5:45). Praying for those who hurt you helps you to practice the kind of prayer which lets go of everything and simply go very quietly to the centre of your being where God is. In this healing prayer you become aware of your oneness with God. That is why it is called blessing prayer. As you put aside all hurts, concerns, anxieties, fears, joys, plans, thoughts and feelings, you get into intimate union with God and God's healing presence at the core of your being. This is why when we take time to be with the Eucharistic Lord in the Blessed Sacrament our hurts are healed.

### **8. Praise, thank and worship the Lord in your sufferings**

In order to receive inner healing, we have to learn to praise and worship the Lord in all our pains, sufferings and humiliations. The Scripture says in Sirach 2:4, *“Accept whatever befalls you, and in times of humiliation, be patient.”* It is important to be grateful to God for every painful hurts we experience in our lives as we read, *“Consider the generations of old and see: has anyone trusted in the Lord and been disappointed? Or has anyone persevered in the fear of the Lord and been forsaken? Or has anyone called upon him and been neglected? For the Lord is compassionate and merciful; he forgives sins and saves in time of distress”* (Sirach 2:11). Therefore, we have all the reason to praise His holy name in our distress. We understand that our good Lord can feel every pain in our heart, He is waiting for an appropriate time to heal us completely. What we need is to *“Ascribe majesty to his name and give thanks to him with praise, with songs on your lips, and with harps; this is what you shall say in thanksgiving: ‘All the works of the Lord are very good, and whatever he commands will be done at the appointed time. No one can say, ‘What is this?’ or ‘Why is that?’—for at the appointed time all such questions will be answered.”* (Sirach 39:15-17) Those who worship the Lord in their sufferings, receive miraculous effects. *“You shall worship the Lord your God, and I will bless your bread and your water; and I will take sickness away from among you. No one shall miscarry or be barren in your land; I will fulfil the number of your days.”* (Exodus 23:25)



## HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT YOU ARE HEALED?

Perfect inner healing comes from God's Love. You may measure how much healing you have received by looking at how much you are able to love those who hurt you. St. Paul teaches that love is patient and kind. Love is neither jealous, nor pompous, nor inflated. It is not rude, and it does not seek its own interests. It is not quick-tempered, nor does it brood over injury. It does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

A person who has been healed is not impatient, unkind, rude or resentful. Also, when you are able to show gratitude for the experience that hurt you, you know that you are healed. This is gratitude for the growth, the greater capacity to love and understand, and the ability to empathize with others. It is not being grateful for the actual event, but for the positive outcomes that happen following the tragic event. It is these positive outcomes that help a person to grow mentally, physically and emotionally. When you can think of the hurt with feelings of gratitude, with peace and even with joy rather than with feelings of anger and pain, you know you are healed. When you can forgive your offender as completely and unconditionally as God forgives you, then you will no longer experience the past hurts as painful times but as moments of growth. When you study the life of Jesus, you see that God always brings good out of evil. You must understand that the LORD God waits and wants to bring good out of your life hurts (cf. Romans 8:28).

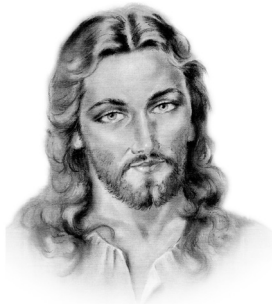
Remember, your God is waiting for an opportunity to intervene in your life. If you only sit in front of Him and listening to His voice. See the following incident.



### AN INNER-HEALING STORY

*"When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. The more I called them, the more they went from me. It was I who taught Ephraim to walk, I took them up in my arms; but they did not know that I healed them. I led them with cords of human kindness, with bands of love. I was to them like those who lift infants to their cheeks. I bent down to them and fed them"* (Hosea 11:1-4).

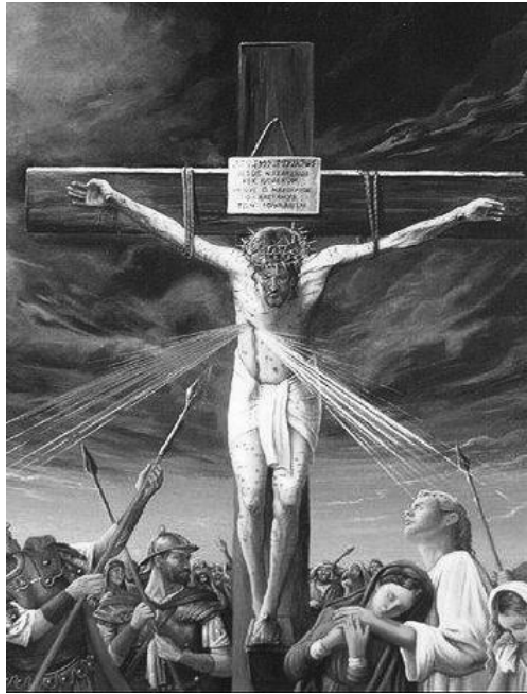
She was asked to go through a personal inner-healing therapy as she had a nature of “touch me not”; she was very sensitive, too emotional and felt like crying for small comments against her. She felt ashamed of herself because she was more than fifty years old with the emotional nature of a little girl. She sat in the presence of the Lord, and the good Lord showed her a vision. In the vision she saw a small tiny new born girl being rejected and abandoned by all, rolling and crying in mud and dirt with all the filth and bad smell. She thought no one can approach this child until some water is poured out on the child to be clean. While thinking like this she immediately saw the vision of Jesus walking towards her with a pure white garment which she found herself saying to Jesus, don't go to that child now, until I clean her otherwise you will get dirty. But, Jesus went ahead and lifted the small baby and embraced the baby close to his pure white garment. Seeing this she turned away with contempt. Then she heard a gentle voice from Jesus, “This small baby girl is none other than you”. “I carry you the way you are, not after cleaning but with all the dirt I am ready to lift you in my arms and keep you close to my heart.” When she opened the Bible in tears, she found, **“thus says the Lord God to Jerusalem: Your origin and your birth were in the land of the Canaanites; your father was an Amorite, and your mother a Hittite. As for your birth, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water to cleanse you, nor rubbed with salt, nor wrapped in cloths. No eye pitied you, to do any of these things for you out of compassion for you; but you were thrown out in the open field, for you were abhorred on the day you were born. I passed by you, and saw you flailing about in your blood. As you lay in your blood, I said to you, Live!”** (Ezekiel 16:3-6). She felt love, joy and peace enveloping her.



# CHAPTER EIGHT

## JESUS IS THE ONLY SAVIOUR

*Prophet Isaiah speaks very plainly and in full prophesy of one who was to suffer and then enter into His glory (cf. Isaiah 53). Even though we hear it or read it so many times, few discern or even acknowledge the divine Power which goes with this Word.*



“...He was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed.” (Isaiah 53:5).



### ***MY STORY OF A BICYCLE***

Back in my home, my father bought a bicycle after a long struggle to raise the money for it. One day, I secretly tried to learn to ride it as I knew my father could not permit me to use it for learning as this was the only means of transportation for him. One day I took it without the permission of my father. I was still learning how to ride a bicycle. In my struggle to ride it properly I was on a steep part of the road. I was frightened and forgot completely how to stop it. In this confusion I lost control and met with a terrible accident as the bicycle hit a culvert but Jesus protected me, as I flew off in the air and fell exactly on a heap of sand used for the reconstruction of the road. The bicycle was completely damaged. As I got up without any injury, I became very sad seeing the shape of the bicycle. I was trembling in fear, thinking it was better to lose my life instead of damaging my father's bicycle. I cried to Jesus, lamenting why he protected me leaving the bicycle to be damaged as I knew how much my father needed it. Thinking about the reaction of my father I thought it was better not to return to my home in this situation. I always thought my father loved his bicycle more than he loved me and that is why he never let me even ride it once. He only gave me permission to wash and clean it but never to use it. The more I thought of the reaction of my father, the more I became sad. Now, my biggest worry was how to face my father. I had no money to pay him back so as to get a new bicycle because it was damaged beyond repair. I was broken because I had incurred a big debt which I could not repay. Anyway with all the fear I tried a lot to do some repair and I found it is impossible so I kept it aside and I started to walk very slowly back home. My neighbour who saw me on the road reported to my father and I saw my father coming towards me, running. I knelt down, closed my eyes and cried, telling him to do whatever he wants, even to beat me as much as I destroyed his bicycle. Regardless of all this, my father just lifted me and did not even ask about the bicycle, instead he asked, "Are you safe? my son, do not worry, let us thank the Lord because you are safe. I was afraid that you were injured my son, that bicycle is a small thing; God will provide another one for us. Let us forget about the old one." I truly felt very relieved and so much surprised to see my father's love. I realized that I was very wrong in judging my father. I felt true love and great respect for my father because I realized that to my father I was more precious than his bicycle.



## WHY TURN TO JESUS!

King David experienced in a great way the deep love of God the Father when he received God's mercy and forgiveness after he repented with tears his grievous sins of adultery and murder. He explains that God's love is as high as the heavens tower over the earth and as a father shows compassion for his son. As far as the East is far from the West, so he removes our transgression from us (cf. Psalm 103:11-12). This is an illustration of how deep the Father's love is even today when we turn to Jesus who is the visible presence of the Father amongst us. *"Whoever has seen me has seen the Father"* (John 14:9).

The story of the prodigal son is yet another good example of how a father loves unconditionally, irrespective of the mistakes the children make. We see how this son demands his inheritance from his father, when the father was still alive. Normally, a father gives the inheritance and his blessings to his children when he is old and when on his death bed (cf. Genesis 49:1-29). But this son could not even wait for such a time but wanted it there and then. The father, though he must have been upset, yielded to the demand of the son out of his love for him. However, this same son after going to a far off land squandering all his wealth with prostitutes and having been reduced to a point of eating with pigs, comes to his senses and returns to his father. He was not even sure that his father would take him back again as his son, and he was ready to be his servant. To his amazement, when his father saw him from afar, he ran towards him and embraced him with a kiss, not even scolding him or accusing him! Instead, he asks for the best robe, a ring and sandals for him and called for a big feast to celebrate his return for he said, *"For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!"* (Luke 15:24). How great is this love! A love which has no boundaries and which counts no wrongs!

*Love is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*  
- 1 Corinthians 13:5-7

We can only get love after completely **turning to Jesus!** Now, let us turn to Jesus, who is often misunderstood by his own people. They think, Jesus does not value them, He punishes them, He takes revenge, etc. Actually, Jesus only knows how to love; if he wants to punish us, why did he hang on the cross for us? He is greater than any human father. I truly felt very indebted to my father

who forgave me unconditionally, and how much more I should be indebted to him. I judged my father but later realized how caring he is. What Jesus did is the same (Romans 4:7-8). He considered us blameless even when we were sinners (2 Cor. 5:21). Satan tries to deceive us that we have no value before God, he even goes ahead to confuse us that the created things are more valuable than us. But Jesus proves to us that our value is in God, our creator (Isa. 66:5). He is the potter and we are the clay (Gen. 1:26). Satan deceives us that we get freedom only if we commit sin and that's why there is murder, abortion, accusations, divorce, etc. But true freedom comes by letting God take complete control of our lives by totally **turning to Jesus!**



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***Have you missed your Father's love? Turn to Jesus to receive the unconditional and compassionate love of the Father. It is He who is the Way to the Father.***

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Have you missed your Father's love? Turn to Jesus to receive the unconditional and compassionate love of the Father. It is he who is the Way to the Father (cf. John 6:44).

Heaven has declared that Jesus is the only way to salvation; *"There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12), and there is no salvation outside the church because the church is the body of Christ. St John writes about the coming of the antichrist, which signifies the last hour. These are those who have gone away from the teaching that acknowledges Jesus as Saviour (cf. 1 John 2:18-19). These are the many deceivers who do not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh (cf. 1 John 1:7). The low condition He submitted to and His appearance in the world were not agreeable to the ideas the Jews had formed of the coming Messiah.

They expected Him to come in pomp and power, but instead he grew up as a plant would - silently and unnoticed. He had nothing of the glory which one might have expected to see in him. His whole life was not only humble as to outward condition, but also sorrowful. Yet, He was made sin for us and

## WHY TURN TO JESUS!

He underwent the sentence sin had exposed us to.

Theirs were carnal hearts that did not see anything in the Lord Jesus to cause them to desire an interest in him. No wonder then that He was despised by His people and rejected for His doctrine and authority, both in days past and in current times!

In the times Jesus dwelt amongst us, He asked of His disciples, who they said He was. We find a convinced Peter, who declared, “*You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.*” But in the Gospels, the LORD Jesus is presented as a gentle, meek and humble person who has only one mission on earth, to save mankind from the clutches of sin and satan and to reconcile us back to God, our Heavenly Father. He is the blessed one, who came into the world for no other purpose than to suffer. Thus He left His glory in heaven and became one of us, in order that He may set us free.

It was young St. Agnes of Rome, the Patron Saint of purity, who said, “Christ has made my soul beautiful with the jewels of grace and virtue. I belong to Him Whom the Angels serve.” Many of us speak about virtue, but are not aware we are speaking of Christ. Similarly, when we speak about wisdom, we are speaking of Christ; when we speak about justice, we are speaking of Christ; and when we speak about peace, we are speaking of Christ. Even when we speak about truth and life and redemption, we are speaking of Christ. It is then understandable that St. Paul should say, in Colossians 3:11, “*Christ is all and in all.*” He is the only one who can never give up on us when the world has rejected us and when we are discouraged and thinking that all is lost. He is the Father that some of us are looking for. St. John articulates this well in stating:

*See what love the Father has given us that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.*

- 1 John 3:1

Whereas it is true that we may not know him well, He on the other hand knows everything about us. King David had firsthand knowledge of this when he wrote,

## AN INVITATION TO INNER HEALING

*O LORD, you have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away. You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways*

*- Psalm 139:1-3*

He knows even the smallest details of our lives as reported in the Gospel of St. Matthew:

*Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground unperceived by your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.*

*- Matthew 10:29-31*

St. Thomas Aquinas commented, *“If, then, you are looking for the way by which you should go, take Christ, because He Himself is the way”*. And Pope St. Gregory the Great urges us that the only true riches are those that make us rich in virtue. Therefore, if you want to be rich, beloved, love true riches. If you aspire to the heights of real honour, strive to reach the kingdom of Heaven. If you value rank and renown, hasten to be enrolled in the heavenly court of the Angels. Let us therefore throw ourselves into the ocean of His goodness, where every failing will be cancelled and anxiety turned into love - by always turning to Him in our daily life!

God in His goodness loves us deeply and waits patiently for us to come back to Him. First, God knows those who will trust Him, and has determined ahead of time that the moment you trust Him, He will save you. He eagerly watches your heart! In John 6:44 Jesus said, *“No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day.”* We can now see how God loves us with an everlasting love. He gave us whom He loved most to be slayed by the creatures whom He created as a sacrifice to redeem them. Jesus said, *“For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day”* (John 6:38-39). What kind of love Jesus has for you and me, that He gave up all the heavenly glory with its entire splendour



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and majesty to come to a world which he knew very well would reject him, humiliate him and even crucify him! St. Paul describes Jesus as:

*The one who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death - even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*  
- Philippians 2:6-11

Jesus says, “*For I have not spoken on my own, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment about what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I speak, therefore, I speak just as the Father has told me*” (John 12:49-50).

## JESUS, THE SON OF GOD



***It was out of love for mankind that Abba Father sent us His only begotten Son, to be offered as a living sacrifice so that we may have eternal life.***

It was out of love for mankind that Abba Father sent us His only begotten Son, to be offered as a living sacrifice so that we may have eternal life. As St. John declares, ‘...*God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life* (John 3:16). In the Annunciation, Angel Gabriel speaks of Jesus as being truly the Son of God when he says to Mary,

*...He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David.* - Luke 1:32

During His baptism in the Jordan, we are told the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven,

*You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.* - Luke 3:22

The LORD Jesus had this to explain about His Father: *“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him”* (Matthew 11:27). He shows us that He is coming from Heaven, from God, whom He calls ‘Father’. Recall Jesus’ incredulous response to St. Philip when he asks Him to show them the Father, saying,

*Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me?*  
- John 14:9-10

Thus, in Jesus, His eternal Son, the revealer becomes also the revealed for us. In turn, the revealed Son becomes the revealer of the Father amongst mankind. In this way does the Holy Bible speak of Jesus as God manifested in the flesh. Listen to Him when He says, *“trust in God; trust also in me,”* (John 14:1). In inviting His hearers to trust in Him, Jesus is not subtly deflecting trust away from God. No! Rather, He is simply affirming that God, forever Most High, is revealing His presence through Jesus. Jesus is not the Son of God because of His mighty works and wonderful words. On the contrary, He does His mighty works and speaks His wonderful words because He is the Son of God. At the Transfiguration, the Voice from the cloud confirms Him saying, *“This is my chosen Son; listen to him.”* At Lazarus’ death, Martha in spite of her loss declares she is a believer by stating, *“Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world”* (John 11:27).

## THE INCARNATION: GOD BECAME MAN



***“Incarnation” is a word that means  
“the act of being made flesh”***

## WHY TURN TO JESUS!

“Incarnation” is a word that means “the act of being made flesh” (John 1:14). In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve lost their God-given authority to Satan. So, the LORD God came up with a salvation plan that required Jesus to be as human as we are. In order for the plan to come to pass, He had to be both human and divine. He was to be man in every aspect except sin. Therefore He had human needs such as sleep (Luke 8:23), food (Matthew 4:2; 21:18), and physical protection (Matthew 2:13-15; John 10:39). He expressed emotions such as joy (John 15:11), sorrow (Matthew 26:37), and anger (Mark 3:5). He perspired (Luke 22:43-44) and He bled (John 19:34). He referred to Himself as a man (John 8:40), and after His resurrection His humanity was still recognized (Acts 2:22).

Yet this was not the purpose for which He became flesh. The Son of God came in the flesh in order to be the Saviour of mankind. According to St. Paul, He first had to be born **“under the law”** (Galatians 4:4), since we all failed to fulfil God’s Law. So, Christ came in the flesh, and under the Law, in order to fulfil the Law on our behalf (Matthew 5:17; Galatians 4:5). Then, it was necessary for Him to shed His blood for the forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 9:22). The letter to the Hebrews indicates this as God’s plan for the Incarnation by stating, *“For this reason, when he came into the world, he said: ‘Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me’* (Hebrews 10:5). This means that without the Incarnation, Christ could not really die, and the cross would have been meaningless. In essence, the LORD God did an incredible work in sending His only begotten Son into the world and providing us with a salvation that we really do not deserve. It is by the fact that ‘the Word became flesh,’ that we are now redeemed with the very ‘precious blood of Christ’ as of a spotless unblemished lamb (1 Peter 1:19). If we put aside this truth, the purpose for the Incarnation will not be realized.

### He came to Reveal God to Men

*Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse. - Rom.1:20*

Scripture records indicate that in the past, God revealed Himself through His works, evident in His world (Psalm 19:1-6) and His Word (Psalm 19:7-

14). The writer of Hebrews says that it is in the coming of Christ that God was revealed in the person of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-3a). St. John argues that although the law was given through Moses, grace and truth were realized through the LORD Jesus Christ. As such there is no man who has seen God at any time. But the only begotten Son, God, who is at the Father's side, is the one who has revealed Him (John 1:17-18). It is thus arguable that anyone who has seen Him, has seen the Father (John 14:9). This revealing of God to men is also characterized by the revealing of men for what they are in God's sight. St. John beautifully illustrates this stating that what came to be through Him was life, and this life was the light of men. A light that shines in the darkness, and remains incomprehensible to darkness (John 1:4-5). This true light which comes into the world to enlighten every man. This Light was in the world, the world that was made through Him, and yet the world did not know Him (John 1:9-10).

There is no argument that God had in the past revealed His standard of righteousness in precept and in principle. However, it was only in Christ Jesus that this standard was revealed in person. No surprise then that the *“measure of a man”* must be the measure of Christ (cf. Ephesians 4:13). The LORD Himself variously made claim to be the very one whom the apostles represented as the incarnate Son of God. *“Because I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me”* (John 6:38). *“That for your sake he became poor although he was rich ( John 1:1), so that by his poverty you might become rich”* (2 Corinthians 8:9). That *“though he was in the form of God, yet He emptied himself, taking the form of a slave”* (Philippians 2:6-7). With the coming of the fullness of time, God sent Him to ransom those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children of God (cf. Galatians 4:4-5). Therefore if we refuse to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as God incarnate, we in effect reject all of God's divine revelation. The prophets taught that all shall be taught by God (cf. John 6:45, Isaiah 54:13; Jeremiah 31:33-34).

### **He Came To Redeem Fallen Man**

The principle purpose of the Incarnation was to save men from their sins. The gospel writers agree on this, saying,

*For the son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.*

*- Luke 19:10*

And “*I did not come to call the righteous but sinners*” (Matthew 9:13). “*For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many*” (Mark 10:45). St. Paul did not hesitate to acknowledge ‘Christ Jesus’ coming into the world to save sinners’ as a trustworthy statement that is deserving of full acceptance (1 Timothy 1:15). He explains that if it is that death has reigned through the transgression by the one man (Adam), then it follows that life should reign in those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness through the One Jesus Christ, by whom there results justification of life to all men (cf. Romans 5:17-18).

### **He Came So That Man Should Reign Over Creation**

God created man in his own image and after his very likeness so that man should have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the tame animals, all the wild animals, and all the creatures that crawl on the earth (Genesis 1:26). We can confidently say that all was well until that moment when Adam and Eve, as well as all mankind and creation fell. And chaos resulted since all of creation was judged on account of man’s sin. However, God in His merciful love determined to purge this curse from all creation and restore it back to its lost glory (cf. Romans 8:20-22). In that time God promised that His people would be a “kingdom of priests”, to reign with Him in a reign that was to be established when the Messiah comes to the earth (Exodus 19:6, 1 Peter 2:5-9, Revelation 1:6 & Revelation 5:10). Man is destined to subdue earth and to rule over it, and this established Kingdom will have no end (Luke 1:33, Luke 1:49-54 & 68-75). So it is that the second person of the Blessed Trinity, who is truly God was to also be man in order to fulfill God’s purposes and His promises to humanity.

### **He Will Come Again To Judge The Living And The Dead**

At present, the Son is seated on the right hand of the Father, awaiting the Father’s word to return to the earth for judgment (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:20-28 & Revelation 5). Our salvation, which was accomplished by the death of Christ on the cross is to be fully realized in His second coming. In the meantime, as the testimony borne at the proper time, there is one God and also one mediator between God and the human race, who is Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself as ransom for all (1 Timothy 2:5-6). We learn from St. John that in this present time the LORD Jesus is our advocate with the Father (1 John 2:1). This High Priest role is of special relevance to us because He has come to the earth as man, who is a compassionate and understanding advocate and

source of strength and encouragement (Hebrews 2:17-18). We have a High Priest who can sympathize with our weaknesses, since He has been tempted in all things as we are, yet been found without sin. We must therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:14-16). For these reasons we cannot deny the Incarnation; we must believe it if we are to accept it.

## JESUS SAVES



***It is therefore only through Jesus Christ that we can be saved. There is no other name which can save us.***

In the Acts of the Apostles, it is stated that,

*There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.* - Acts 4:12

It is therefore only through Jesus Christ that we can be saved. There is no other name which can save us. Paul and Silas in Acts 16:30-31 tell the jailer to just accept Jesus and believe in Him and he and his household will be saved.

*Then he brought them outside and said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' They answered, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.'* - Acts 16:30-31

St. Paul insists that Jesus only wants us to accept him as Lord over our lives and he will gladly give us eternal life.

*Because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved.* - Romans 10:9-10

## WHO NEEDS SALVATION?

Sin, is the only thing that separates us from the love of God. It breaks the bond between the Creator and the creature. Romans 6:20 tells us, “*When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.*” God did not give up on us because of our sinfulness and does not want to condemn us. However, we must admit that “*...the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*” (Romans 6:23). The LORD God is ready to do everything it takes to win us back to Himself. Therefore, He promises us eternal life freely if we would but receive Jesus as our Lord and Saviour, for “*God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us*” (Romans 5:8).

This wonderful promise was made in Isaiah 65:1-2,

*I was ready to be sought out by those who did not ask, to be found by those who did not seek me. I said, ‘Here I am, here I am’, to a nation that did not call on my name. I held out my hands all day long to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices...*

He wished that all mankind would be saved from eternal damnation. He wanted salvation even for the very people who were stubborn and disobedient. This same promise is again given in Revelation 22:17, where the LORD tells St. John to put down this wonderful salvation promise in the Bible,



***He wanted salvation even for the very people who were stubborn and disobedient.***

*The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’ And let everyone who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let everyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift ...”*  
- Revelation 22:17

The words that stand out here are ‘who wishes’, who may “take the water of life freely”. This means that nobody is left out.



***Jesus, the Son of the Most High God did not come to save only Israel, the chosen race. He came to save all mankind***

Jesus, the Son of the Most High God did not come to save only Israel, the chosen race. He came to save all mankind as attested to by Simeon saying, “...my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.” He was to pay for the wages of all who would accept Him and call on his name. Similarly, the words of the angel assure us, “Do not be afraid; for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people” (Luke 2:10). This helps us to see rather clearly that he intended to redeem all people. He came so that mankind might turn from evil ways and accept him. “*ndeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him*” (John 3:17).

The LORD Jesus is compassionate and full of mercy. He came and still comes to save even those who hate him, who humiliate him and who do not even believe that he is the Son of God. He even forgave those who crucified him! In the last moments of the thief who was crucified with Him, the LORD Jesus reached out to him and gave eternal life to the sincere repentant thief on account of his last minute acknowledgement of his sinfulness. How wonderful it must have been for that thief to hear these words, “*Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise*” (Luke 23:43). Jesus even forgave those who crucified him, and prayed for their forgiveness saying, “*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing...*” (Luke 23:34).

What lesson do we learn from Saul in the New Testament? He was a devout young man who was highly educated but who caused a lot of harm to the Christians. He was determined to destroy those who believed in Jesus after He ascended to heaven. He hated Christians and hence would have them arrested and brought to public trial and execution. In Acts 8:1 we clearly see that Paul was present as Stephen, the first Christian martyr, was stoned to death. “*And Saul approved of their killing him...*” After Stephen was



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martyred, Saul went door to door in Jerusalem finding people who believed that Jesus is the Messiah; *“Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison”* (Acts 8:3). In his own words, Paul says *“I was violently persecuting the church of God and was trying to destroy it”* (Galatians 1:13). But something very intriguing happened to Saul as he travelled to Damascus in search of Christians. According to Saul, God appeared to him in an astonishing way:

*While I was on my way and approaching Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone about me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” I answered, “Who are you, Lord?” Then he said to me, “I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting.” Now those who were with me saw the light but did not hear the voice of the one who was speaking to me. I asked, “What am I to do, Lord?” The Lord said to me, “Get up and go to Damascus; there you will be told everything that has been assigned to you to do.” Since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, those who were with me took my hand and led me to Damascus. - Acts 22:6-11*

We see here that this same Jesus whom Saul was persecuting actually had great plans for this bright young man. The LORD spoke favourably of Saul, encouraging Ananias to *“Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel...”* (Acts 9:15). This account of Paul’s conversion is a clear indicator that the LORD Jesus can and will save whoever, whenever, and however He wills to save. It is not dependent on what we have done or failed to do. He loves, He hopes, and He waits. Yet this amazing story repeats itself in everyday life as seemingly sinful, broken people are impressively converted by God’s saving grace in Jesus Christ. Sometimes it is difficult to believe that God would allow into heaven religious extremists who murder innocent people just as Saul did. The human mind might see or think of such people as unworthy of redemption because their crimes are just too great. Others feel they are unworthy to receive God’s salvation on account of their own sins. But St. Paul’s story is an eye-opener for us today. To the human eye, Saul did not deserve any chance; but to our most loving God, he most certainly was worthy of a second chance. The point is that God will do anything and everything to save even a single soul, because all people matter to God, *“For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord God. Turn, then, and live”* (Ez.18:32).



### JOSEPH TOUCHED BY GOD

Joseph came to VPH-Nairobi on recommendation by a friend, who told him about the programmes offered at this house of prayer. At that time, Joseph had no job, no school fees to further his studies and was without hope. After attending a retreat, he decided to come every day to adore Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Joseph felt that more than anything, more than his joblessness, more than his hopelessness, he needed Jesus. In order to get to the prayer house, he used to walk for about an hour because he could not afford to pay bus fare. Sometimes he stayed without taking any food because he had no money to buy it. Even when everything seemed to dull his life, he would faithfully ask the priests for a Word of God and trusted that the LORD Jesus would help him. In due time we built a grotto for the Most Holy Mother, our Blessed Virgin Mary, and Joseph decided he would come daily to clean the grotto. With a lot of humility, he cleaned the Grotto while singing songs in honour of the Mother of God and he would ask her to intercede for him. He would speak to our Blessed Mother like a child, telling her about his need to go to college and to get a job. For some months he continued to come to the prayer house to adore Jesus in the Holy Sacrament and would later clean the Grotto. One day he approached me and shared about his pain of being rejected; of how people call him the fool who is always shouting and cleaning the Grotto. The LORD God revealed His plan for Joseph through this Word, **“But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well”** (Matthew 6:33).

One day, a man came to the prayer house for adoration and found Joseph there going about his usual activities. He directly asked, “Do you wish to go to college?” Joseph told him how this had always been his dream. The man told him to make a decision on what he wanted to study, to look for a college and let him know how much it would cost. All of Joseph’s fee was thus paid by this stranger. When he completed the studies, he started to look for a job. The first organization to present him with a job opportunity did not have the department for which Joseph was trained. However, much to his surprise they created one for him and made him the manager of the unit. A year later, the LORD Jesus blessed Joseph with a God-fearing life partner. They wedded in church and are now living a sacramental life as husband and wife.



## WHAT DID JESUS DO TO SAVE US?

### 1. He took all our sins!

In the first letter of St. John, we hear the voice of a loving father explaining how the LORD Jesus takes our sins. He lovingly says, “*My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world*” (1 John 2: 1-2). We are indeed poor weak sinners who are so lost, so cold, so blinded and so dead in our sins, that if God were to let us be, we would all go straight to hell. There would be no conscience to bother us, and we would most certainly have no fear of death. We would not see the danger of delay, and we would not want to come to Jesus. As Isaiah so prophetically put it, we go astray like sheep, all following our own way; but, the LORD lays upon Him the guilt of us all (cf. Isaiah 53:6). Since our beloved Father in Heaven wants every sinner to be His beloved child, He draws all people to Jesus. Those who do not resist God’s call in the wooing of the most Holy Spirit, He gives to the LORD Jesus. Despite being always aware of all our faults, He waits patiently for us to ask for pardon, His sole desire being that we have eternal life, no matter the pain nor the cost.

There are times when you find that even when you want to do good you fail. It is foolish and terrible to go on with no sorrow for our sins, with no concern for our poor souls. Do you feel that you are unworthy and sinful before God? Do you sometimes feel that you need the forgiveness that only Jesus can give? This is a positive feeling because it is a sign of the presence of God’s Spirit in you. If you truly and sincerely want to come to the LORD Jesus Christ, it is God Himself who has put that desire in your heart. If you feel guilty for your sins, it is God who has put that consciousness of your need and your guilt in your heart in order to bring you to Jesus. If the Holy Spirit is dealing with you, striving with you, warning and convicting you, that is the LORD God drawing you to Jesus Christ. He has offered you to Jesus Christ, and if you do come, you will not be rejected. As Isaiah already stated, “*He was wounded for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities. That upon Him was the punishment that made us whole, and it is by His bruises that we are healed*” (Isaiah 53:5). When speaking to Nicodemus, who thought it safe to come to the LORD Jesus under the cover of night, Jesus told him that just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so would the Son of Man be lifted up so that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life (cf. John 3:14-15).

## 2. He carried our pain and sorrow!

The prophets, and in particular Prophet Isaiah, spoke of the Messiah as the Man of Sorrows because much as we thought of Him as stricken, struck down by God and afflicted, it was our pain that He bore, and our sufferings that He endured (cf. Isaiah 53:4). He is the only one who can truly relate to our grief and our soreness because He has been there. During the Agony in the Garden, He was so grieved and agitated even unto death that He wanted His disciples to remain and stay awake with Him (Matthew 26:37-38).

## 3. He was wounded in order to heal us!

Isaiah said He would be pierced for our sins and crushed for our iniquity. That He would bear the punishment that makes us whole because by His wounds we would be healed (cf. Isaiah 53:5). It is by his wounds that we have been healed, and he speaks of Him as having Himself borne our sins in his body on the cross, so that having been freed from sins, we might live for righteousness (cf. 1 Peter 2:24).



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### THE RETREAT IN CHINA

*When we got an invitation to go and preach in China we sat before the Lord, to know whether to go there or not. It was Rev. Fr. Michael Payyappilly VC, who received a vision regarding the mission journey to China, in which he could see a very small ant in a very big desert. Searching its meaning and interpretation we found Proverbs 6:6-9, "Go to the ant, you lazybones; consider its ways, and be wise. Without having any chief or officer or ruler, it prepares its food in summer, and gathers its sustenance in harvest. How long will you lie there, O lazybones? When will you rise from your sleep?"*

*The Lord revealed that even though the impact is very small, work hard for the Lord. We are God's Servants inspired to work hard without looking at the outcome. Because the Word of God says, "**Proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favourable or unfavourable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching. For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths**" (2 Timothy 4:2-4). We are called to be faithful, not only successful. When the Lord is sending*

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someone to the mission land may be it is our 'presence', that protects that nation; **"seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare"** (Jeremiah 29:7). For the sake of Joseph, God protected the people of Israel from famine. Sometimes the good Lord wants missionaries to stay in a mission land even when they don't know the language or culture. Our small efforts will bring great harvest in the future. The small mission work of St. Thomas in AD. 52, in Kerala, India, brought forth the huge tree of the present Syro-Malabar Church.



## IN WHICH AREAS DOES JESUS BRING SALVATION?

### 1. Salvation from Sin and satan

We hear of Jesus saving his people from their sins when the angel of the LORD appeared to St. Joseph telling him, *"She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins"* (Matthew 1:21). And John the Baptist referred to Jesus as *"the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"* (John 1:29). St. John's letter talks of him as *"the expiation for our sins, and not for our sins only but for the sins of the whole world"* (1 John 2:2).



### **A MAN WITH THE PROBLEM OF SHAKY LEGS**

A man had a problem of shaky legs whenever he saw young children. He went to all the best hospitals but he did not get any cure for this ailment. It is then that he decided to turn to Jesus by attending a retreat. When we were praying with this man, Jesus revealed a scripture in Psalms 32:5, **"then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord', and you forgave the guilt of my sin"**. The Lord was revealing that when we hide our sins our bodies become weak. We asked him if he goes for regular confession, and he said he did. But when we were still praying he broke into tears and told us that one day when arguing with his wife, their child was sleeping down on the floor and he stepped on their child and the child died. He never confessed this sin. It is after he confessed this sin that he immediately received his healing.



## AN INVITATION TO INNER HEALING

In his Letter to the Romans, St. Paul assures us that there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, since the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set us free from the law of sin and of death. According to him, God has done what the law that was weakened by the flesh, could not do, by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh. In order to deal with sin, He condemned sin in the flesh so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (cf. Romans 8:1-4). God's declaration that we are forgiven and righteous in Christ must thus encourage us to transformation into loving, sacrificial, Christ-exalting people. Jesus has already conquered death to set us free from sin. Peter's first sermon urges all to repent, to let everyone be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins so that all receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 2:38). A promise that is made to each one and to each one's children and to all who are far off, and to as many as the LORD God chooses to call. The fact is that we have no reason to delay getting baptized, for our sins to be washed away by simply calling on his Name (cf. Acts 22:16). We ought to know that to come to Jesus means to call upon Him to come into our sinfulness and set us free, for it is written that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved (cf. Romans 10:13). If you, in your heart, ask for mercy and ask for forgiveness, you have come to Jesus already. We must understand that repentance and faith go together, and both are very important in assisting us. Yet it remains true for some people that:

*He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him.*  
- John 1:11

Even the LORD Jesus Himself decried those who search the scriptures thinking they have eternal life through them, yet they refuse to come to Him to have Life (cf. John 5:20). Yet all who come to Him are received with so much delight and are unconditionally forgiven. He promises us that:

*I will not reject anyone who comes to me.* - John 6:37

With Him there are no delays, neither does He object to anyone who cries out to Him for help. In fact, it is said that if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin (cf. 1 John 1:7).



### THE MENTALLY CHALLENGED BOY

It was at the Bulawayo airport, the Parents brought their son who was mentally disturbed, for prayers. They did not know what was wrong with their only son, they were very sad due to many things: One: They had only one child, Two: The child could not even go to school due to his condition and Three: No doctor could help them in any way. While praying I got a Scripture; **“a godless father will be blamed by his children for the reproach he has brought on them”** (Sirach 41:7). **“The offspring of the godless come to nothing, however prolific, sprung from a bastard stock, they will never strike deep roots, never put down firm foundations. They may branch out for a time, but, on unsteady foundations, they will be rocked by the wind and uprooted by the force of the storm; their branches, yet unformed, will be snapped off, their fruit be useless, too unripe to eat, fit for nothing. For children begotten of unlawful bed, witness, when put on trial, to their parents’ wickedness”** (Wisdom 4:3-6). Again, I read in Wisdom 3:16; **“the children of adulterers will not reach maturity, the offspring of an unlawful bed will disappear. Even if they live long, they will count for nothing.”** With these scriptures, I came to know that this man had several extra-marital relationships in his remote work place. He had never taken his wife to the place of his work, where he employed many young girls and used to sexually abuse them, causing abortions. Actually his secret sins came unto his child, as we read **“the wages of sin is death”** (Romans 6:23).



Many do not believe the wiles of satan. However, by the many anxieties and worries that plague this life, satan constantly seeks to dull man’s heart and make a dwelling there for himself. He loves darkness and the ways of darkness. He always operates in the dark because he knows that if he is discovered he is surely beaten. It is St. Angela Merici (†1540) who said *the devil will only run upon a man to seize him with his claws when he sees the man on the ground, having fallen already by his very own will*. It is variously stressed in the Bible that sin is associated with the devil. As St. John reiterates, *everyone who commits sin is a child of the devil* because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. However, the good news is that the Son of God was revealed for this very purpose to destroy the works of the devil (cf. 1 John 3:8). He went to Calvary and was crucified to redeem man from the power of satan. Because of sin, man was enslaved

by satan; but on the cross the Lord Jesus paid for all our sins. By this, He ended all of satan's acclaimed rights over mankind. Now man has freewill to choose whom to serve. Those who choose the LORD Jesus Christ are delivered from the power of Satan since the LORD God *"has delivered us from the power of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of His dear Son"* (Colossians 1:13). And they share in this fullness in Him, who is the head of every principality and power (cf. Colossians 2:10). By taking our very nature upon himself, the LORD Jesus made certain that it was through death that He destroyed the one who has the power of death (i.e. the devil), so that He frees those who through fear of death had been subject to slavery all their lives (cf. Hebrews 2:14-15). In essence satan and his evil spirits were stripped of all their authority by Jesus who conquered death and ascended into Heaven being victorious over all the powers of darkness. St Paul speaks of Him as having *"disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it"* (Colossians 2:15). Therefore, God the Father has *"raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus"* (Ephesians 2:6). Satan's tricks were well known to the saints. St. John Bosco disparages how many young people satan steals from God, sometimes even forever, by the same old trick called 'shame'. He says the devil uses *"this usual snare with which to catch people by filling them with shame when they are about to confess their sins. When he pushes them to commit sins, he removes all shame, as if there were nothing wrong with it. But when they are going to confession, he returns that shame magnified and tries to convince them that the priest will be shocked by their sins and will no longer think well of them. In this way the devil tries to drive souls to the brink of eternal damnation."* On his part, St. Thomas More warns that another weapon the devil employs is immodesty, or to say it more frankly, impurity. We must therefore be on guard because satan will tempt us with bad books, bad thoughts, or foul conversations of a companion. He advises that when such a fellow approaches you, be sure to identify him as a minister of satan. And those wretches who indulge in foul conversation are to think of themselves as ministers of satan since they help him to ruin souls!



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***We must therefore be on guard because satan will tempt us with bad books, bad thoughts, or foul conversations of a companion.***

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### I AM ALWAYS SICK

*It is in Kenya that I met this priest, who told me, "I am a priest, ordained in 2004, but since my ordination, for 5 years I was very healthy, no sickness, but now, last five years, I have constant headache and attacked by many tropical sicknesses." He tried special doctors trained for tropical diseases, but nothing could help the priest to be fully fit. He came for prayers to know the will of God. In the prayer the Lord showed a vision of a big Excavator without a driver that carried this priest in its arm and it extended further and further even over the oceans and seas and gently dropped this priest in another continent. Immediately I got Ephesians 2:10, **"for we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life."** I felt may be the priest is not in a place he should be and not doing what the Lord wanted. I asked him whether he was supposed to get a transfer. He said, "Father it was five years back when my major superior requested me to go to Spain to be a formator but I refused because I did not like to leave my home country where I have my own parents and relatives. I also did not like to be a formator so I insisted to stay on in my native place where my congregation has a community." Almost every weekend he visited his family and thought it was very good. The Lord told him, **"strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well"** (Matthew 6:33). The day he decided to accept the transfer his health improved.*



## 2. Salvation from Bondages

Many people do not know that fornication makes a person a slave of another person. Fornication blocks marriage as it inherits the blocks and bondages of the partner because they are no longer two but one. Some people are faced with bondages out of ignorance, strongholds or deception. Everyone has been deceived in one way or another. However, demon bondage is recognized in obsession, possession, oppression or rebellion towards God. In his letter to the Ephesians, St. Paul makes it clear that there are demons or evil spirits in the world that interfere in people's lives (cf. Ephesians 6:11-19). There are evil forces or powers which influence and control the minds of individuals. They may bring sicknesses and cause

undesirable behaviours, inability to function normally and even suicidal tendencies. Consequently such people can become a danger to themselves as well as to others. The good news is that God has given us His solution to this problem. We know from scripture reading that Jesus came to free those under demon bondage because everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved - spiritually, physically and mentally (cf. Romans 10:13). The LORD Jesus spoke of the Spirit of the Lord being upon Him. And of Him being anointed to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, to bring recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord (cf. Luke 4:18-19). This very prophecy concerning the Messiah was fulfilled in the LORD Jesus Christ, and the authority contained therein has been passed on to everyone who believes in Christ (cf. Mark 16:17). Jesus declared himself the Light of the world and whoever follows Him will never walk in darkness but will instead have the light of life (cf. John 8:12).



### NO LONGER TWO BUT ONE

*Jeremiah 17:5-6 says, “Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals and make mere flesh their strength, whose hearts turn away from the Lord ...”* There was a girl, who used to cry and scream as if something was moving in her body. This usually happened when there was a prayer service. There would otherwise be no problem until she participated in any kind of prayer. She would feel a force coming from within, disturbing and trying to get out of her with violence, and causing her to feel pain all over the body. While praying for her we got a scripture from Sirach 12:13-15, **“who feels sorry for a snake-charmer bitten by a snake, or for those who take risks with savage animals?” Just so for one who consorts with a sinner, and becomes an accomplice in his sins. He will stay with you for a while, but if you once give way he will press his advantage.** “Are you married?” I asked her. She said “No.” I again asked “Do you have any children?” She said “one.” “How can you have a child without marriage?” I inquired “It was a mistake, the boyfriend cheated on me, we only stayed together for six months.” Her life was unveiled exactly as the Word of God revealed. She said now she does not know anything about the father of her child. She fought with her own mother and went to stay with this boyfriend. She noticed that he gets angry, and sometimes even violent when she speaks of God or going to church. One day he even tried to kill her by squeezing her neck. The same day she ran

away from this man. But by then she had already become pregnant. Listening to her story I told her to pray daily, **“take me out of the net that is hidden for me, for you are my refuge”** (Ps.31:4), fifty times a day for one month. After two weeks of this prayer she came back with shocking news saying, her boyfriend was a devil worshipper. When she had a physical sexual relationship with this man she was possessed by the devil as scripture clearly speaks in 1Cor.6:15-17, **“do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said, ‘The two shall be one flesh.’**



### 3. Salvation from Fear of Death

We know that sin destroyed life and sin destroyed all creation. But we have hope of redemption because Jesus came to make correction of this vice so that as Christ became our righteousness, we become God’s righteousness (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:30 & 2 Corinthians 5:14). We also know that Christ promises eternal life by the fact that He is the Bread of Life who comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die; and the bread that He gives is flesh for the life of the world (cf. John 6:51). In the course of His earthly mission, the LORD Jesus did miracles that gave life to those presumed dead by a mere order, such as, *“Talithakoum – little girl... arise!”* (Mark 5:41) and *“Young man ...arise!”* (Luke 7:14). At the raising of Lazarus, Jesus assertively says that He is the resurrection and the life, and those who believe will live even if they were to die (cf. John 11:25). By His glorious resurrection, Jesus conquered and defeated death for us. This resurrection was witnessed by many (cf. Acts 2:32, Acts 13:30-31, Matthew 28:9, Mark 16:9-20, John 20:1-31, 1 Corinthians 15:5-8, amongst other incidences). He proved he was victorious and triumphant over death because the grave could not hold him. And we know that this same Jesus is alive now and forevermore and He can never die again (cf. Romans 6:9 and Revelation 1:18)!



#### SIN AND SICKNESS

**“For just as you were disposed to go astray from God, return with tenfold zeal to seek him. For the one who brought these calamities upon you will bring you everlasting joy with your salvation”** (Baruch 4:28-29). This lady came so broken, saying her husband is in the ICU (Intensive Care Unit) for many weeks and the doctors

could not find the cause of the sickness. The husband is seriously sick due to mysterious reasons. The woman was a prayer group leader and a saintly person. She said, "Father I do pray daily without fail for my husband, and I don't understand how the good Lord can punish my husband. Is it because I pray so much the Lord is giving me more and more crosses? It is too much. I don't think my husband deserves such an intense suffering as I can see tears coming from his eyes." Now, listening to her explanations, I opened the Bible and received a revelation from the book of Revelation. **"... I am throwing into great distress, unless they repent of her doings"** (Revelation 2:21-22). I realized through this scripture that even though he was a prayerful man outside, he was leading a double life of having many women out of wedlock. Now, actually because of the prayer of the wife, God was giving him an opportunity to get out of all those sinful relations to save his soul. Miraculously, as I got this scripture we urged him to make a good confession which helped him to get quick recovery. We read, **"My child, when you are ill, do not delay, but pray to the Lord, and he will heal you. Give up your faults and direct your hands rightly, and cleanse your heart from all sin"** (Sirach 38:9-10).



#### 4. Jesus Helps Us In Our Physical Sicknesses

Jesus' Ministry while on earth entailed bringing good news to the oppressed, curing the sick and casting out demons. Thus we find large numbers of people from the towns gathered in the vicinity of Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those disturbed by unclean spirits, and they were all cured (Acts 5:16). We read in the Gospel of Matthew 8:16; *"when it was evening, they brought him many who were possessed by demons, and he drove out the spirits by a word and cured all the sick."*



#### JESUS GAVE MY DAUGHTER A NEW SPINE

A mother of two came to give a testimony after she experienced the healing touch of Jesus in her child. She said, "I have two daughters. They developed a spinal deformity which was getting worse every day." She said, "After seeking treatment here in Kenya to no avail, we managed to get a doctor in India who told us that surgery had to be done. In December 2010, we managed to go to India with my two daughters for this operation. My elder daughter was to be the first one to go to theatre. The procedure lasted for 12 hours and was still to continue the next day

*for another 6 hours. This first operation was successful but before she could go on with the next one the good Lord took her home. I had to come back to Kenya to lay her to rest, so the younger one was given a spinal corrective jacket to be using in the meantime. She was to later on go back to India for the operation. It was during this challenging time that a good friend of mine told me about the Vincentian Prayer House and I remember so clearly what she said. "Go to Vincentian Prayer House and ask the Lord to give your daughter another spine. If cars made by men have spare-parts, what about our Creator? Why can't He give us if we ask in faith?" And so in the month of March, I started to regularly attend the Saturday prayer services. One of the Priests at the Prayer House gave me some Bible verses to read daily for three months. After I finished reading the Bible Verses, I attended an inner healing retreat in June. On the second day of the retreat, during the healing service when Adoration of the Holy Eucharist was taking place, the priest announced that the Lord was giving a new spine to a young child who is suffering very much. I immediately claimed healing for my daughter and my whole body was burning as though on fire. I knew there and then that she was being healed. The healing started and the following day she was even able to accompany me to Vincentian Retreat Center, Thika. I gave testimony of this and the whole congregation knelt before the Lord thanking Him for this wonderful gift of a new spine! My daughter no longer uses the corrective jacket and every day the spine is being straightened. My Jesus is able and with Him everything is possible."*



### **5. Jesus Helps Us Materially And Financially**

The Gospels tell us of moments when Jesus demonstrates how very compassionate He is and how He very easily meets our most pressing needs. One such incident is described by St John, in which the disciples find themselves having to feed a multitude of people with only two fish and five loaves of bread (cf. John 6:1-12). Many times we are faced with a similar problem, and we react in much the same way thinking how there is not enough money, not enough food, not enough ability to take care of the problem. But in Jesus we have a redeemer who promises to meet all our needs, and who will satisfy us beyond our imagination. He confidently urges us to call upon Him in the day of trouble so that He delivers us, and we in turn honor Him (cf. Psalms 50:15). In Cana of Galilee, through the intervention of Mother Mary, Jesus performed the first miracle that changed water into wine (cf. John 2:10-11). This was His way of revealing God's glory, and his

disciples believed in him. He is capable of handling every need, and He is eager to carry the burden. No wonder St. Paul speaks of *“the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich”* (2 Corinthians 8:9).



**THE LORD GAVE HER 20,000 WHEN SHE ASKED FOR 3,000**

“I have three problems”, said this woman. “One, I am a single mother of three children, rejected by their father and with no helper. Two, I have three children and they have no food and school fees. Three, “I am jobless and chased away from my house because of rent. I just need 3,000/- to solve this issue immediately as I cannot go to the streets with these small kids.” “Do you believe in Jesus?” I asked her. “That is why I am here in this Church.” She replied. “Do you believe that Jesus can provide for you more than what you ask for?” I asked her. She replied, “I do believe” Then, I said, “Pray from today Ps.2:8, **‘ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession’**, daily, fifty times for one month. He will give you a permanent solution.” I continued “It is not the will of God that I give you 3,000/- when God wants to give you more than that. See, 3,000/- is only a temporary solution. Just talk to the land lady to give you one more month as you seriously pray” (cf. Mark 11:24 & John 14:14). She went to pray and came back with a miraculous story after three weeks, saying that as she was praying kneeling down, lifting her hands, her friend who had collected from her 20,000/- and later refused to pay back and denied that she collected any money from her, brought the money back! The woman said, pray for me because I am sleepless for the last three weeks as a man with a white robe kept on coming in my dream telling me to return the money. I explained to her that the white robed man was an angel sent by God as we read, **“bless the Lord, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, obedient to his spoken word”** (Psalms 103:20). There are angels appointed by God to bring answers to our prayers. She continued, “Father not only that, the parish priest called me saying the Parish has received a special educational fund from a German Foundation for the education of poor children, and the Parish Council have noticed that it is my children who deserve it and they agreed to sponsor them. **“The promises of the Lord are promises that are pure, silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times.”** (Psalms 12:6). The solutions we get when we turn to Jesus are not temporary but permanent.



## WHY TURN TO JESUS? WHAT HAPPENS IF WE TURN TO JESUS?

*“Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins maybe wiped out.”* (Acts 3:19). This was the message of the first preaching of the apostles. The ultimate solution in our lives is to turn to Jesus in all our crisis. It is important to know who Jesus is, and what happens when we turn to Him. Right now we will see who He is and what He does for us.

***He is the Good Shepherd:*** Those who follow him never lose their way but receive great protection (Jn.10:10).

***He is the Name above all names:*** Those who turn to him get a new dignified identity.

***He is called Emmanuel, God with us:*** Those who turn to Him feel His accompaniment always, even after death, no one else can come with you the way Jesus does: ***just the way you are!***

***He is the King of Kings:*** Those who turn to Him never feel rejected but feel respected. Though He was a king, He washed the feet of Judas, who betrayed Him.

***He is the Lamb of God:*** Those who turn to Him, realize that He became a scapegoat for them, and he took their place (cf. Is. 53:7-8). When he was tortured he did not react because he was paying the cost of our sins.

***He is the Way, the Truth and the Life*** (Jn.14:6): Those who turn to Him, get the way where there is no way, get the revelation of the Truth, receives Life in abundance (cf. Jn.10:10).

***He is the Prince of Peace:*** All those who turn to him receive peace, because He is our peace (cf. Eph.2:14)

***He is the Light of the World:*** All those who turn to Him never walk in ignorance or darkness (cf. Jn.8:12)

***He is the Living Word; the Word made Flesh:*** All those who turn to him receive *healing and cleansing* through the Word of GOD (cf.Jn.15:3)

***He is Our Redeemer:*** All those who turn to him are delivered from the sinful effects of the ancestors (cf.1Pt.1:18-19)

***He is the Messiah:*** All those who turn to Jesus receive a special anointing to do special things on their earthly life.

***He is the Bread of Life:*** All those who turn to Him will never hunger nor thirst because He provides for them.

***He is the Living Water:*** He quenches all types of thirst (physical, spiritual or emotional) to those who turn to Him by sending His Holy Spirit.

***He is the True Vine:*** He disciplines, enables to produce fruits, helps to be useful in our lives as we turn to Him whole heartedly.

***He is our Justification:*** He justifies those who turn to Him, by taking up the responsibility upon himself for all our mistakes.

***He is the Door:*** Those who turn to him he gives the key to open the door to heaven (cf. Is.22:22; Mt.16:16-18).

***He is the Great High Priest:*** He sympathises with our weaknesses and helps us to get out of them (Heb.4:15-16).

***He is the Cornerstone:*** Those who turn to him, receive a new dignity in their lives. Remember He made the fishermen, fishers of men.

***He is the Great I Am: He was, He is and He is to Come, the perfect controller of everything, Whom else can we turn to? It is only unto Him, the Lord Jesus.***

## EPILOGUE

### ***CAN YOU BE AN INSTRUMENT OF TURNING PEOPLE TO JESUS?***

This Book ***“Why Turn to Jesus: An Invitation to Inner healing!***, leads us to receiving Inner-healing through the mercy of God that was shown through the blood of Jesus on the cross. As an epilogue of this book we will see how you can become an instrument of Inner healing by implementing the Fourteen Stations of the Cross to those who are suffering from various inner wounds.

#### ***1. Can you Console those who feel Condemned!***

Jesus was unjustly condemned, he was rejected by His own people whom he loved, healed, delivered and saved. Judas, who betrayed Him, said, “I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.” Pilate, who sentenced Him, said, “I am innocent of the blood of this just person,” and threw the guilt upon the Jews. The Centurion who saw Him crucified said, “Indeed this was a just man.” Have you found people carrying the inner wound of being condemned unjustly by all, Kindly tell them you have never ever condemned like Jesus, ***turn to Him*** he will release you from the pain of condemnation. (Rom.8:1).

#### ***2. Can you Console those who carry the Cross of someone else!***

Jesus was a scapegoat who carried the sins of others. He was unjustly forced to carry the cross. He accepted the cross, knowing fully the shame and the agony of the same. But it was you who was in his mind. It was your cross He carried without complaining. It was our sins that cost Him this humiliation. When you find people complaining about carrying the shame of a mentally sick father, drunkard husband, abusing neighbour, can you kindly tell them to hold on ***turn to Jesus*** and learn from Him who was meek and humble of heart. Remind those feel overburdened that they were once carried by Jesus in His shoulders (Is.54,7-8)

#### ***3. Can you Console those falling down!***

Jesus, fell face down. Tell those who have fallen that, even if you have fallen into a terrible sin of shame, remember before you fell, your Master had already fallen. Before you were cheated He was cheated, before you were betrayed He was betrayed, before you were denied by your loved ones, He was denied. ***Turn to Him*** there is no one who understands you better. (Heb.12:4)

#### ***4. Can you Turn people towards Mother Mary, in their agony!***

For a mother to see her Son in agony, it pierced her heart. Though she was helpless to help Him, Mother Mary shared the pain of Jesus by her presence.



She supported her Son by sharing in His anguish. She stood beside Him in love and constant prayer, never yielding to hatred for those who are turning away from Jesus. The wounds from family members are terrible and very painful. Can you please tell those afflicted by those wounds to meditate the life of Mother Mary. She brought the Infant Jesus into the Temple, She fled with Him to Egypt, she took Him up to Jerusalem when He was twelve years old. He lived with her at Nazareth for thirty years. She was with Him at the marriage-feast. Even when He left her for his preaching ministry, she hovered about Him. She followed Him along the Way of the cross. Imagine this same mother is accompanying you wherever you go like a caring mother. Tell those who feel their parents do not love them, their father/mother rejected them, to **Turn to Jesus**, who at the foot of the cross gave Mother Mary to Apostle John who loved Jesus. (Jn.19:27).

### ***5. Can you be a Simon to Others!***

Pride and self-righteousness blocks us from receiving inner healing. Many of us are wounded and continue in the same wounded condition since we refuse to console the broken people around us. If we open our eyes wide and observe keenly we will see that people around us carry heavy crosses than us. It is only when we get out of ourselves and look around us that we receive healing from the inner wounds of rejection, selfishness, self-pity etc. To get healing, you need to be a wounded healer for others. Simon was never the same since he helped Jesus to carry the cross. You too, will never be the same when you help others to carry their burdens. Let us not just **turn to Jesus** alone but also help many others to **turn to Jesus** to receive inner healing (Jn.14:18)

### ***6. Can you be a Veronica to Others!***

Veronica represents a unique style of inner-healing. She was very kind, gentle, courageous to console Jesus who was threatened and abandoned by all. Nobody wanted to be associated with Jesus during that time, Veronica was bold enough to be associated with the most rejected one. Can you be one like imitate her by standing out of the crowd! She invites public contempt and thereby obtains the only approval; the permanent imprint of the face of Jesus on her cloth which she used to wipe the face of Jesus. Remember the same act of Jesus, when everybody was against the adulterous woman Jesus stood by her. We need to imitate the same goodness to bring the healing of Jesus to many. Many of us are wounded because, we refuse to help others in their pain (Jn.4:18)

### ***7. Can you lift those who have fallen again!***

There are people who feel exhausted, thinking no one can help them, feeling

the misery of loneliness. Those people are always overcome by the weight of evil, revengeful feelings, guilt and sorrow. The more they fall the more they feel helpless. Can you **turn them to Jesus**, encouraging them with the story of Jesus. He knows that we are weak, but his strength empowers those who accept their weaknesses. (cf. 2 Cor. 12:8) Can we encourage our brothers and sisters to turn to Jesus and accept Him as their personal Saviour. Can we tell our fallen brothers the story of Jesus lifting Peter from the water? (cf. Matt. 14:31 and Is.40:30-31)

**8. Can you weep with those who weep!**

Can you be an instrument of telling People the truth that the root of all inner wounds starts with the broken relationship with God and people. The women did not realize that their own guilt and that of their children burdened the cross of Jesus. It is the sin that kills Jesus. We weep because we are so attached to this world. Jesus tells us to weep for those who lose eternal life by separating themselves from Him. The women weep profusely but they do not assist Jesus at all. Can we ask those crying around us to depart from all their sins and **Turn to Jesus**.

**9. Can you lift those who fall down again after several warnings!**

Jesus fell down for the third time to the dust again. When many people fall, to get up from that fall they look to this world for comfort and consolation instead of turning to Jesus. Can we kindly tell them that the only one who can lift us up without humiliating us is Jesus alone and that they should not feel so desperate due to their weaknesses, we do have a High priest who is able to help us (Heb.4:14-15). Jesus, taught us to forgive not just seven times but seventy seven times. Let us turn to Jesus, for inner- healing, because He loves you the way you are. (Is.43:1-4)Jesus is never tired of the vulnerable people of God. He is never tired of even those who continuously fall away from Him and reject Him.

**10. Can you support the victims of poverty and public Humiliations!**

There are those who carry the shame of being raped, striped down in public, humiliated and beaten up. Can we humbly remind them to turn to Jesus who was publicly striped of their garments, can we help them so that they may get out of their shame. Can we be a healing presence to the poor? JESUS gave up everything of this world. He exercised the most perfect poverty. When He left the Holy House of Nazareth, and went out to preach, He had nowhere to lay His head. He lived on the poorest food, and on what was given to Him by those who loved and served Him. And therefore He chose a death in which not even His clothes were left on Him. Can we encourage the poor to turn to Jesus, with all their shame, reproach, contempt, and mockery. They will

receive unconditional healing from their Master (2Cor.8:9)

### ***11. Can you console those who suffer from bondages and Elemental Spirits!***

There are people suffering from loneliness, anxiety, despair, hatred, lust, greed and incessant lies. The more they try the more they fall back into the same sin. Tell them they have someone to whom they can turn up to. Remember JESUS was pierced through each hand and each foot with a sharp nail conquering all these sins. Those who **turn to Jesus** receive the power to overcome these habits. Can you tell those who say that their wounds are beyond repair, to meditate on the sufferings of Jesus on the cross; His eyes are dimmed with blood, and are closed by the swollen lids and livid brows which the blows of His executioners have caused. His mouth is filled with vinegar and gall. His head is crowned with the sharp thorns. His heart is pierced with a spear. Thus, all His senses are mortified and crucified, that He may make atonement for our sins and heal every kind of inner wounds. Let us **turn to Him** because he alone can break all our bondages and give us authority over the elemental Spirits.

### ***12. Can you console those who have witnessed death in their family!***

The mother of Jesus, was at the foot of the cross as her Son died for our salvation. He cried, I thirst, to a people whom he fed, healed and defended but instead they gave him gall. To be rejected by the same people whom He loved and served; to be denied and betrayed by His own disciples, to be humiliated by his own High priests, to be brutally accused by his own tribe, caused Jesus all the wounds that have ever happened to anyone else in this world. To whom can we turn the broken people to: To Him alone who has practically overcome all these through His sufferings.

### ***13. Can you console those broken down and grieving!***

The mutilated body of Jesus was taken down from the cross and given to His Mother. She wipes away the signs of the evil inflicted upon it with her love. Mother Mary embraced the body of her Son who was accused of irreverence, of presumption, criminality and all sorts of false accusations, and protects it with maternal care. Can we inspire people to learn from this mother who accepted the will of the Father through the suffering of her only Son. To be consoled, you need to turn to Mother Mary, who will directly **turn you to Jesus**, to set your eyes on Him to receive healing from the most painful incidents of your life (Heb.12:2)

### ***14. Can you Console those who feel distanced***

Many of us live with different inner wounds as they keep Jesus in a tomb far away from their lives. It is only in Him we find life (cf. John 10:10). It is in Him we live and move and have our being (cf. Acts 17:28). By keeping

Jesus away from our lives we give ourselves to death. We seal our hearts against Him and make a tomb for ourselves. Can we gently turn those who slowly and stubbornly turn away from our Lord Jesus. Remember many are ignorant of Jesus, Many have not heard about Him, Many do not know what really He did for us, Many does not Know the power of Jesus. Can we keep on repeating the goodness and greatness of Our Lord Jesus to all those who are wounded and wounding others in our: families, neighbourhood, church, ministry, community and to all humanity.

***The Risen Lord!***

Let us proclaim to the broken world that Jesus is risen, He is present within us, He lives in the Holy Eucharist in all the tabernacles of the world. He is in glory on the right hand of the Father, and he will come again to judge the living and the dead. All those who turn to Him receive total healing and life in fullness. *“But for you who revere my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall.”* (Malachi 4:2).

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***Tell those with deep inner wounds to turn to Jesus. Tell them to believe that the more men scorn them, the more Jesus honours them. The more they are insulted, the higher Jesus will exalt them. The more they are forgotten by people, the more Jesus will keep them in His mind. The more they feel abandoned, the closer Jesus will bring them to Himself.***

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***I sincerely thank the Lord Jesus, for enabling me to write this book. I bend very low and bow before God the Holy Spirit for giving this book its form, order and identity. I do thank all those who helped me in making this book a reality. I also thank all those who read even a small part of this book. Let everyone be blessed, be healed and be delivered through this humble instrument of evangelization for inner healing to the whole humanity. I give all glory, honour, worship to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen.***

***With Priestly blessing upon you,  
be always blessed and protected in Jesus' name!***



## ADDITIONAL MANIFESTATIONS OF INNER WOUNDS

We have already seen different manifestations of inner wounds in Chapters Two, Three and Four. In this part, we have listed certain additional manifestations of inner wounds with an intention to show that we are all wounded in one way or another and we need to *turn to Jesus*; the wounded healer. If you happen to identify yourself with any of these following wounds, that means you are wounded and need healing hence you need to *turn to Jesus immediately!*

### **OTHER BEHAVIOURS THAT SUGGEST DIFFERENT INNER WOUNDS INCLUDE:**

- Introvert | Stubbornness | Hatred and indifference to everything
- Unable to take any personal decision | Always spitting
- Self hatred | Fear | Anxiety | Involving oneself in everything without thinking
- Feelings of insecurity | Desire for luxurious things | No faith in anyone
- Always criticizing | Always speaking secretly / revealing secrets
- Disrespect to others- disagreeing with others | Loneliness
- Fear of superiors or those in authority | Unable to talk looking directly at the face | Feeling sorrow when one sees blood | Always fearful of death
- No concentration | Scratching the body when talking | Low self-esteem
- Thinking, if only I could do everything | Always justifying – thinking, I cannot do wrong | Over detailed | Getting annoyed for minor things
- Unable or finding it difficult to smile | Pessimism - always expecting things to turn out badly | Seeing sex in everything
- Uncontrollable lust | Unable to visit others in their house | Always sighing
- Always feeling hot or cold in the body | Hatred of sex in marriage/ inordinate desire of sex | Not taking up any responsibility
- Not spending money even for necessary things | Hate loud noise | Allergic to different sounds | Unable to sleep or use new toilets | Always seeing horrible dreams | Waking up at night frightened
- Blind imitation | Believes the first person who reports anything | I will not eat due to stubbornness | Refusing to forgive | Always humming
- Repeating the same thing over and over again | Making hurtful jokes
- Negative critical attitude to everything | Always sorrowful / mournful
- Failure to accept God's forgiveness – continuous confession of the same sins
- Unable to forgive oneself - Always remembering old sins
- Jealousy on the progress of others | Always having a sad facial expression
- Always eating - desire to eat and eat, even when the stomach has had enough

## AN INVITATION TO INNER HEALING

- Seeing satan everywhere and in everything | Perfectionism
- Suicidal tendency - repeating 'I will die' (or I am going to kill myself)
- Always making funny noises | Feeling joy in letting others do menial tasks
- Beginning many things and never completing anything | Continuously lying
- Afraid of falling sick or being sick | Uncivilized behaviour | Ignorant | Sketchiness
- Exaggerating small sickness as huge, for example if suffering from a small headache the person believes that he may be having a tumor | Fear of falling when walking
- Unable to love oneself and one's body | "It is only me that knows, I am talented"
- Unknowingly committing masturbation | Love of dark colours | Lies / deceitful
- Unreliability/non-dependability | Failure to see one's mistakes | Rude behaviour | Lack of understanding | Lack of remorse
- Having weak or no excuse ignorance | No desire to improve in the relationship | No or low contribution in the relationship
- Changing moods | Lack of punctuality | Too critical | Being over blissful
- Embarrassing behavior (to self and others) | Loud/intolerable | Irresponsible | intolerant | Being over attached to Mother or Father
- Uncertainties/inconsistencies | Impaired judgment | Jealousy plotting | Immoral | Calumny - talking ill of others | Excessive guilt feelings
- Inability to discern right from wrong | Inability to take a joke gracefully
- Selfishness feeling to be Valuable than others | Initiative lacking | Racism/ Tribalism/ Ethnicity
- Excessive nationalism | Lack of manners | Lack of respect | Lack of etiquette
- No sense of urgency | No gratification | Not picking up the phone all day
- Acting aloof | Playing games | Unexplainable behaviour | Inferiority complex | Destroying things when drunk or when angry | Torturing one's body
- Crying easily even over small things | Stubbornness | Suspicious of everyone
- Critical of others | Getting angry easily | Excessive sexual desires | Inactivity
- Excessive shame | Lack of concentration in studies | Always arguing | Eating too fast | Approval-seeking | Being spoiled by parents
- Always insisting on one's own way | Excessive / nonstop talking | Over-eating
- Fear of public speaking | Fear of losing friends | Suppressed feelings
- Disappointments and hopelessness | Addiction to drinking or smoking
- Always yawning/feeling sleepy | People who physically or sexually abuse others
- Inferiority / Superiority complex | Hating all forms of authority | Not believing in anyone

## WHY TURN TO JESUS!

- Rebelliousness | Changing plans at the last second or without enough notice
- Constantly mentioning and/or complaining about ex-boyfriend
- Whining/complaining/gossiping (excessively)
- Always seeking attention by wearing, for example, high heels, coloured fashionable clothes etc | Always exposing body parts through immodest, fashion-like dressing.
- Contributing to about half of the conversational threads.
- Love of loneliness, you find such people alone, even when in a big community
- A life of indifference i.e. not attached to anyone or anything
- Singing in the bathroom | Cracking vulgar jokes and laughing in a loud voice
- Some people don't laugh or smile even at the funniest joke
- Always looking in the mirror - over concerned about how they look
- Unable to cry, (not because one is unable to express the emotions, but because they want to but are prevented) | Day-dreaming | Fear of exams
- Tension over small things exhibited by biting nails, shaking the body when talking, etc
- Feeling fearful or falls unconscious when one sees blood
- Always hiding behind doors or where one cannot be seen in order to hear what others are talking about-'Eavesdropping' | Dislike of men, women, police, priests, doctors etc
- Unable to excrete (only if they involve themselves in reading, smoking, drinking tea/coffee) | No joy in any entertainments | Superiority complex (i.e. thinking I am great yet nobody respects me) | Always asking others to do even personal things
- Always unintentionally speaking or using abusive words
- Excessive fear to visit houses where mysterious death took place
- Shows no emotions, even if someone dies or suffers | Meddling in everything and doing nothing
- Never happy with any food yet won't do anything about it
- Pretend not to have heard, even when they have heard
- Disorderly life- always scattering things everywhere
- Over pious - making very long prayers, thinking that is the way to holiness
- Fear of facing others be it women, men, children etc
- Destroying the property of others, even public property

***Note: These behaviours are not limited to inner wounds only, they may be manifestations of other causes.***

**Fr. Antony Parankimalil VC**, is a Catholic Priest, belongs to the Vincentian Congregation founded in 1904 in Kerala, India. He was ordained a priest in 28th December, 2004. He did his priestly ministry in the Tabor Divine Retreat Ashram, in Mumbai, India upto 2007. He served as the Rector of the Vincentian Theology Students studying in Hekima College in Nairobi for 5 years. At present he is the Director of the Vincentian Retreat Centre, Thika and Vincentian Prayer House, Nairobi. He is an International Preacher who travelled over twenty countries in the world. He is also the author of the book, ***YOU ARE NOT REJECTED***, which has been translated into many languages eg. French, Dutch, Kiswahili etc. Many are getting converted, and are returning to the Lord Jesus and to the Catholic faith after reading this book.

***'Why Turn to Jesus! An Invitation to Inner healing'*** is a book urging every reader to turn to Jesus to be healed from the agonizing wounds of inner self and be made guiltless by His holy wounds. ***'Why Turn to Jesus!'*** is a genuine attempt of spiritual and practical approach to conquer our wounded selves through focusing on Jesus Christ. ***"Why turn to Jesus!"*** is the outcome of the real love and concern of Rev. Fr. Antony VC (the author of the book 'You Are Not Rejected') towards the people whom he serves.

**Rev. Fr. Biju Valliparambil VC**  
**REGIONAL SUPERIOR, (Vincentian Fathers, Sacred Heart Region - East Africa)**

The book ***"Why Turn to Jesus!"*** invites us all to find practical solutions in Jesus, the only Saviour. It is my sincere hope that after reading this book, you will ***turn to Jesus straight away!***

**Dr. Pamela Mandela Idenya (M.D, Mmed (ENT), MPH)**

