

Disciples India



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World Day of Prayer FOR THE CARE OF CREATION

Each year, the first day of September is celebrated as the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation. On this day we are called to renew our faith in the God of creation and join in prayer and work for the care of our common home – Mother Earth. We rejoice that our creator God chose this earth as his home when he decided to become a human - the Word “became flesh and lived among us” (Jn 1:14)

This world is a sacred space where God dwelt. Here “everything is interconnected, and that genuine care for our own lives and our relationships with nature is inseparable from fraternity, justice, and faithfulness to others” (Laudato Si’ 70)

Mary lived in its fulness the above reality by creating a sacred dwelling for God in her person and connected each of us with her son Jesus. September 8, as we celebrate with joy the birth of Mary our Mother, we the Sister Disciples who bear the name of Mary are also called to do the same. Are we ready to take up the challenge?



Mary, the perfect Woman

Mary, you shine in the heights of all women,
Mary, the perfect model of a loving motherhood,
Mary, you conceived the uncreated wisdom of God,
Mary, you molded him for his Father’s will.
Mary, a silent ponderer of God’s word,
Mary, a perfect choice to be His mother.
Mary, the queen of heaven and of the earth,
Mary, the help of the needy and the hopeless.
Mary, we bow to thee, your unmatched glory,
Mary, we rejoice and ponder your Glorious Birth.



Sr. M. Muriel Yesudass



AWARD OF DOCTORAL DEGREE (Ph.D.)



We congratulate Sr M. Saly Joseph for successfully defending her thesis titled *“The relevance of Public Relations in Bringing Peace and Harmony Among Major Religions of Southern States – An Analytical Study”* on August 26, 2022 in the department of Journalism and Mass Communication at Jnana Bharati Campus, Bangalore University.

In her thesis she explained on the importance of inter-religious programs in this current scenario and the need for every religion to come together and study on the realities of each Religion. She explained in depth about the Five Major Religions namely, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism

and Jainism.

On this auspicious occasion Provincial Superior Sr M. Celine Cunha, along with her Councilors, Sr M. Shyla Kolery the Superior of the community and a few other members were present at the venue along with her research supervisor Prof. Dr Jagadeesh Prakash, other faculty members of the department, research scholars and post-graduate students. The study was well appreciated by all present.



We wish Sr M. Saly Joseph all the Best for her future endeavors.

Dear sisters from Kohima & Guwahati, thank you very much for your contribution to this issue of Disciples India. For the next issue Mumbai Clergy home & Goa communities are invited to contribute. The others are always welcome.



A Joyful Surrender

I am happy to share my thoughts on the Joyful surrender of Mary our Mother. Her total “Yes” brought forth the Redeemer of the world. She emptied herself totally and thus created an empty space and silent zone for God in her life. She is the hearer and doer of God’s word. As we rejoice in her Birth, we recall her joyful surrender in the different stages of her life.

Mary the little girl of Nazareth in her prime age was unique, innocent, gentle, bubbling with life, and had a heart full of song and joy. God plucked this beautiful flower and placed it in His palm and gently asked her “will you be the mother of my son?” At the annunciation, Mary was in deep confusion and anxiety. How would the people accept her? What would be the reaction of Joseph? Her fiat can be understood as a courageous positive response.

Her future was a carrying out of the consequence of such a calling in her response to God.

We see Mary at the birth of Jesus faced with many difficulties like traveling from Nazareth to Bethlehem at the last stage of her bringing forth her son, no place in the inn, later flight to Egypt, mental anxiety caused by the murder of holy innocents under Herod... But she was courageous, mature, and showed physically strong with good power of endurance. In spite of all these challenges, Mary said, “Yes”.

Being poor, Mary experienced the hard realities of daily life. She had no unblemished lamb to complete the temple ritual, she offered two turtle doves at the presentation of Jesus in the Temple. How painful it must be, the prophecy of Simeon and Anna, that a sword would pierce her heart. It is only a strong, loving, and mature woman who could accept having a sword to pierce her heart and go through life with it. And to this Mary said, “Yes”.

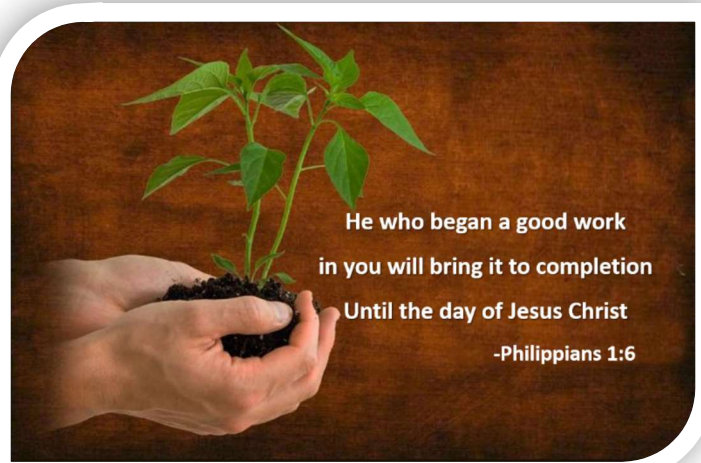
Mary was completely at the disposal of others. Since her son was inviting all kinds of people like the publicans, tax collectors, sinners, and prostitute-she was also open to all of them. At the wedding of Cana, Mary is actively present with Jesus and His disciples. In her solicitude for others, realizing the embarrassment of the bridegroom and his family, she launches Jesus on the road towards manifestation as a new spiritual leader. The answer of Jesus sounded like rejection “woman what is it for you, my time has not yet come.” Still, Mary said, “Yes”.

Mary’s freedom, flexibility, and availability are clearly seen at the moment of Jesus’ supreme sacrifice. She stood at the foot of the cross not as a woman who is lost and crushed with suffering but as a woman of strength and perseverance, supporting her Son at the crucial moment of his suffering. She had the courage to face the shame and injury and Mary said, “Yes”.

In order to be a perfect disciple, one has to lose one’s identity and become one with God. For this, we need to allow ourselves to be molded and shaped by God.

Almighty Father, we praise and thank you that in Jesus, you have given us the grace of joyful surrender and acceptance of your will like Mary our Mother. May we who profess to pattern our lives to that of Mary our Model and example learn to accept whatever happens in our day-to-day life and learn to say “Yes” to your Will.

Sr.Diana Munis



JESUS' CARE FOR VOCATION

In our Indian Province, on the first Thursdays of the month, we the Sister Disciple pray especially for priests and for the increase of religious vocations. Here, I am sharing a few thoughts regarding Vocations that came to my mind in my moments of prayer before the Eucharistic Lord.

I would like to compare our vocation with some of the common symbols that we encounter in our everyday life such as Candles, Flowers, and Boats.

The symbol, a Candle:

Is my vocation like a candle burning before God for humanity? Then what happens when the wind blows? It goes off, so is my zeal for my vocation. As long as there is no wind, I try to keep burning before God for humanity but when little wind blows, the flame of my enthusiasm goes off. In order to keep the candle burning, someone needs to put a globe and protect it from the wind blowing it off. Yes indeed, a candle is a beautiful symbol of our vocation. Nevertheless, the winds of attraction and distraction of the present world are too strong because of which zeal for our vocation can grow dim or be completely put off. The globe symbolizes the timely help or the community which sustains our vocations.

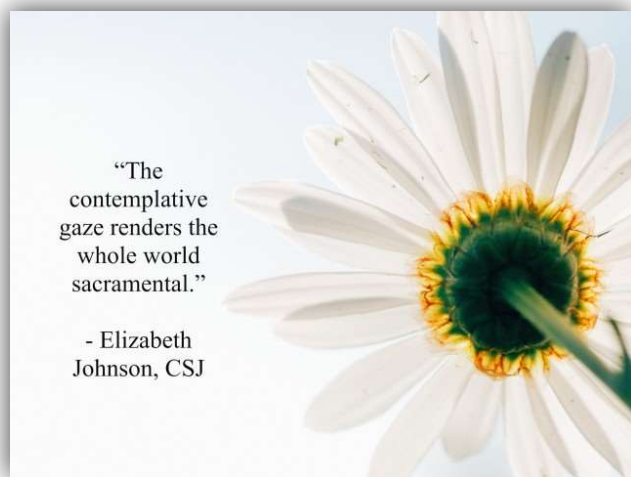
The candle of our religious life needs the support of the community in order to burn brightly until the end. In other words, the young in formation need the support of the community in order to grow in the love of God. It is not only the young in formation but every religious needs the support of each other in order to keep burning before God for humanity. Remember, if the candle goes off, we are also responsible because we are keepers of our sisters and brothers. As Scripture says, "Do to others as you would have them do to you." (Matthew - 7:12)

The symbol of the flower:

Reflecting on the flower, my heart just rejoices, for such is God's creation, unique in its nature and indescribably beautiful. Though flowers are beautiful, they do not last long and fade away soon. Some flowers need more care and some do not. Indeed, it is beautiful to reflect upon a flower comparing it with our vocation. Our call to consecrated life is rich in beauty and unique with its own blessings and challenges. If we want the flowers to bloom healthy and last till nature permits, we need to take care and do what is necessary. Similarly, we also need to take care of our vocation. We need to provide what is necessary in order to remain faithful until the end of our life. However, we need the care of the community because as the flowers cannot be pruned on their own, we also need the community for the healthy growth of our vocation.

The symbol, a Boat:

Being a fisherman's daughter Boat might be the best symbol to compare with my vocation. I always love to see a boat on a calm sea. If a boat floats in the middle of the sea where little wind blows and the waves dash on it, then the boat begins to wobble but if there is a strong wind and the tide is very rough, the boat will not be able to stand alone, it has to anchor it firmly otherwise the boat will start to sink. The owner of the boat needs to take all the measures to prevent the boat from sinking. Sometimes they need the help from other boatmen. Yes, each one of us floats like a boat on the sea. In order to avoid sinking during the storm, we need the help of each other and the young in formation need the help like the elders too. Our vocation is to grow together. Our vocation is to help each other to become saints.





Indeed, it is so wonderful that our vocation is cared for, loved, nourished, and given good support through the spirituality of our Congregation, guidance from the mistress and the community, through various classes, retreats, and seminars. I always wondered why the life of the consecrated persons is so challenging, and I always used to blame others saying that religious life is a challenge because of the community living. Now, I realize that community life is a challenge of course it is also a great support. But this challenge becomes sweet when we love it. Remember only one thing in life: all consecrated men and women are called to be saints and then live as we want.

St. Teresa the Great said, "The more I meditate on heaven, the more I dislike this world." Therefore, let us also make our heavenly glory our aspiration and our goal. As we celebrate the Birth of our Blessed Mother may we who bear her name learn to follow her example.

Sr. M. Eshwarya Luji

Mother of Love

On September 8, we celebrate the birthday of Mary our Mother, a Mother most Wonderful, Precious, Admirable and above all Lovable. She is a gift from God the father of us all.

You and I can change, things in the world can change but the mother who is queen of heaven and earth will never change. She is full of grace and adorned with virtues. She keeps all her children close to her heart, holding us with tender love and affection.

The thousands of devotes who flock to Mary and come to believe in her power of intercession specially the non-Christians continue to inspire and strengthen my faith. Every person who places his/her trust in her finds their solace and comfort.

We thank God for giving us such a wonderful mother. We also thank God for each sister of our congregation who bear the name Mary and pray that we remain blessed and protected in our walk with Mary following the footsteps of our Divine Master.



Sr M. Prafulla Kolandai Swamy

**"Let us run to Mary, and, as her little children,
cast ourselves into her arms with a perfect confidence."
- Saint Francis de Sales**

**"If you ever feel distressed during your Day - Call upon Our Lady - just say this "Simple
prayer: 'Mary Mother of Jesus, please be a Mother to me now.' I must admit - this prayer
has never failed me."
- Saint Mother Teresa of Kolkata**

THE AMAZING SYMBOLISM of 40 in the Bible TESTING, TRIALS AND TRIUMPH



The number 40 is a significant number and it's a milestone in one's life. As I complete the 40 years of my grace-filled religious life, I fondly recollect the shared memories, laughter, fun & joy, the places of my Mission, the persons with whom I interacted, the liturgies celebrated, and the workings of God which accompanied me through all these years. If God has bestowed me with a special calling, it is not out of my merit, but purely out of his grace. Did I ever merit being who I am and where I have reached today? For such marvels the Lord has done in my life I am eternally grateful to Him.

The story my life is not very different from that of the story of the people of Israel namely, the constant falling and rising. Looking at the number 40 in the Bible is fascinating. It is mentioned 146 times in scripture. The symbolism of 40 in the Bible generally is a period of testing, trial, and then, finally, triumph. Through hardships lasting 40 days or years, we endure becoming more spiritually aware of our need for God.

When God saw the increasing sins of man, he was aggrieved. God flooded the earth for 40 days and nights. The whole of sinful generation was washed away and a faith-filled family of Noah was saved to raise their thanksgiving worship to the God who saves.

During Moses' life, he lived forty years in Egypt and forty years in the desert before God selected him to lead his people out of slavery. Journeying from the abundance to austerity, he learned God's ways of shepherding the people. The Israelites wandered in the Desert for 40 years before entering the promised Land showing that sometimes patience is necessary to fully reveal God's divine will. Moses was on Mount Sinai for 40 days and nights to receive God's laws. Laws help us to direct our lives.

The prophet Jonah powerfully warned ancient Nineveh, for forty days, that its destruction would come because of its many sins. The people of Nineveh humbled themselves repented and turned to God.

Elijah went 40 days and 40 nights with the strength of the food that God provided him. This walk, to Mount Horeb without food or water helped Elijah to explore his Faith. Fasting leads to deeper discoveries.

The three great and well-known Hebrew kings, Saul, David, and Solomon, each ruled for 40 years. 40 years is considered a generation in the Bible. As I complete one generation to enter the next generation the challenge is to lead a new way of life.

Jesus was tempted by the devil many times during the 40 days he fasted just before he began his ministry. Fasting is a powerful tool used for battling a major sin or temptation. He also appeared to his disciples and others for 40 days after his resurrection from the dead to assure them of his constant presence with them.

In our day-to-day life, God still tests us on a daily basis, even though we may not realize it. Although it can be hard to understand at first, one must realize that we are being tested for our own good. The trials and tribulations that God puts us through each day help us to seek God and strengthen our faith in him. What is important is for us to ride the punches and grow from these hardships both spiritually and in our faith. What good is a faith that has not been tested? While testing me the Divine Master taught me the deeper realities of life and the value of true freedom.

Sr M. Regina Sebastian