

Jesus The Lord Our Saviour

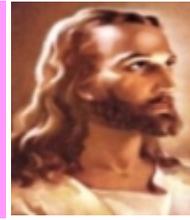
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(Not For Sale)



" LIVE BY THE SPIRIT " (Galatians 5:16)

BLESSINGS OF GOD BE YOURS...



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" Do not cast me away from your presence, and Do not take your holy spirit from me." (Psalm 51:11)

O Holy Trinity, I praise You !Father God! I adore You. Jesus my Lord, I adore You, I exalt and praise You !O Holy Spirit who guides me! I beg You falling at Your feet. Holy Spirit God of Truth, Lead me on. Speak to my heart for I stand in Your Presence holding the hands of the Blessed Virgin Mother. You who filled the entire Being of the Virgin Mother in order to conceive the Eternal Word in the womb! I fall prostrate at Your altar with the Mother's purity and humility as my weapons. I mingle my tears with that of the Mother's and pour it at Your Feet. Forgive me completely. Bind my wounds by Your great Love. Soothe my scars. Burn my selfishness and turn Your will into my desire.



O dear Spouse of the Virgin Mother, make me fully Yours just as You made Her fully Your own. Make my body, my feelings, my soul, my thinking, my wishes and my freedom completely Yours and gather me close to You. Separate me from sinful lust, from sinful situations and from worldly desires. Fill me with Your Great Love and make me wholly Yours. Lead me completely in the ways of Truth, Love and Faith. O Holy Spirit! Divine Helper ! Lead me in Your Love according to Your wish .Lead me that I may always live pleasing to You in Your presence for ever. I praise You Holy Trinity . I adore You. I thank You ! AMEN ! ALLELUIA !

Fr. V. Ignatius. S. J.

BELOVED IN CHRIST...



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" LIVE BY THE SPIRIT" (Galatians 5:16)

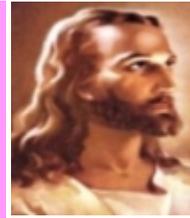


When Our Lord Jesus Christ was to go to the Father away from the eyes of the apostles, " Wait there for the promise of the Father", He said. The apostles too waited and prayed together. 'All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:4) The same Holy Spirit who filled the faithful then, also leads the faithful today who lead truthful lives. From the day of the Pentecost to this day, it is the Holy Spirit who guides the Christian faithful in an exemplary manner. When the shepherds who guide and the faithful who follow, stay faithful to their duties , are selfless , and walk under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, then joy, unity and concern for one another will spread as light every where. Thus it is that the light of faith is spreading every where to this day. But when we turn the annals of Church history, we find several situations during which selfishness has predominated and caused cyclonic and tempestuous storms –like troubles in the Church. There have been oppositions, separations and destructions.

This is not only true of public life, but also in the lives of individuals, families and in the personal lives of people, the tempest of selfishness has blown and destroyed them. For example, the 10th and the 11th centuries are called the Dark periods in Church history. Keeping power and position in front of their mind's eye, they fought as to who would occupy the prime places of importance .It was in this situation that the Catholic Church was divided into the Western Church and the Eastern Church. Similarly during the 15th and the 16th centuries, the misuse of power within the Catholic Church paved the way for the separatist groups like the Lutheran and the Church of England.

Similarly when we ponder over the happenings in families and in individual lives, selfishness would be the key reason for a major downfall. Alcoholism, prostitution, cheating between the husband and wife, , all these selfish behaviour are the reasons for destruction.

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That there is rampant misuse of power in Political social life and that they have been the root cause of several destructions are proven through several historical facts. That was why right from the very beginning St.Paul exhorts the Christians to lead lives according to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. When a person shuns the promptings of the Holy Spirit, he gives place to the desires of the flesh and selfishness and is thus destroyed. " 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." (Galatians 5:17) God calls us to holiness. Those who wish to "walk toward holiness" should learn to walk according to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Those who walk according to the promptings of the Holy spirit, " bear the fruit of the Spirit like 'love, joy , peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.'"(Galatians5:22) I wish you Joy !

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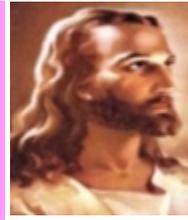
"WE SHALL BE CLEANSED IN OUR SUFFERING"

There can be none on this earth who has not undergone suffering. The very basic foundational truth of Christianity is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross. The basic tenet of Christian faith is that Christ hung on the Cross , shed His Blood and thus redeemed us.

St.Peter reveals to us that when we undergo suffering there is no need to get baffled. " Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice in so far as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. (I Peter 4:12-13)



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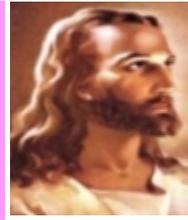


Before the time of Christ, the death on the Cross was considered by the world as a symbol of shame and as a punishment for betrayal. No other religious teaching was geared towards suffering as the gate way to attain glory. The Greeks worshipped Dionysus according to their culture. The basic principle of this worship is, "Human life is filled with suffering. Hence in order to forget that , they could eat as much as they could eat, and enjoy pleasures as much as they could enjoy. A person's life gets over with his death. Hence it is better for man not to be born on the earth. But if he is born, then the sooner he dies the better for him. So as long as he is alive he should enjoy all the comforts and luxuries of life."

In this thought of luxurious living, there is no need to root out selfishness or to seek the welfare of the other. This Dionysus culture was not only confined to Greece, but had spread its tentacle far and wide to Rome, India and China. This was the reason why the great kings and the courtiers who stood by him were enslaved to lustful passions. They then created gods and goddesses to suit their fanciful thinking. In complete opposition to the culture of Dionysus stands the culture of Jesus with His death on the Cross which teaches and proves that the glory of humankind depends on its sufferings.

" For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to those who are being saved it is the power of God." (I Corinthians 1:18) To the Jews and the Greeks the Cross is a symbol of shame. 'But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.'(I Corinthians 1:24). Jesus Christ who died on the Cross was foolishness to those who were experiencing the pleasures of the world. ' For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.' (I Corinthians 1:25) It was this thought that proved to be an impetus to bring in a revolutionary new culture amidst the New Christians. Instead of considering the Cross as a shame for human kind, they considered the Cross as the ladder and the gateway for glory and grace.

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None of the religious teachings mentioned, that the poor are the blessed, that the poor in spirit are blessed, nor is it mentioned that the pure in heart are blessed. It is not mentioned that those who suffer for the cause of righteousness are blessed.

Such a revolutionary thinking that the poor, the suffering, the pure in heart and those who are persecuted are the heirs to the Kingdom of God was started only by Jesus. (Matthew 5:3-12) Peter who learnt this teaching from Jesus , wrote these comforting Words.(I Peter 6:8) At the very beginning of His Public Ministry Jesus said, " The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.



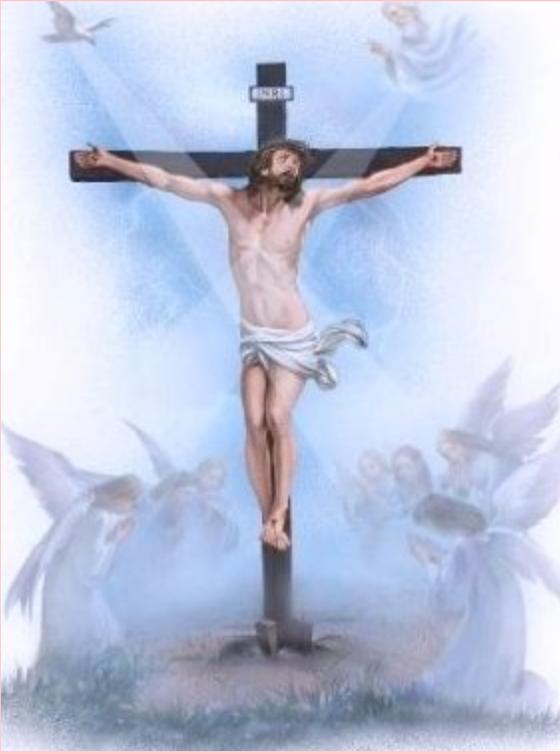
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free," and reiterated that He had come to the earth for this purpose. (Luke 4:18) Jesus met several people at the seashore, on the streets where the ordinary people walked, and in the synagogues where people gathered for prayer. He called simple people and workmen , : "Come follow me, I will make you fishers of men." They too left all their belongings and followed Him. (Matthew 4:19-20)

He did not perform any magical stunts, to give sacred ash, gold rings, nor did He order for gold ornaments to be brought. He did not establish any crafty Yoga centres, begin Trusts or build huge temples to rule, nor did He gather together a big battalion of soldiers. Instead the call of Jesus, brought forth a revolutionized humanity. "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it. What does it profit them if they gain the whole world, but lose or forfeit themselves?" (Luke 9:23-25) By this action plan, Jesus respected and made us realize that through the suffering we undergo and the death we face, we would be prepared for the eternal Life.

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When each of us thinks back we would realize that at a point in time we would have had to face a problem, a suffering, a hurdle and we would have realized that we were then walking on a new path of life after that. We realize that suffering is a continuous aspect of human life. It does not destroy us, but lifts us up. " We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed but not driven to despair; persecuted , but not forsaken; struck down , but not destroyed;" (II Corinthians 4:8-9) Such an experience of suffering is the centre of Christian life.

Jesus Christ called His disciples to keep the sufferings of the Cross in front of their eyes, and thus enter into glory. The shame of the Cross and the death on the Cross have become the hour of Glory. This is something that those with worldly eyes cannot comprehend. But He explained its inner meaning in a manner that all of us could understand. " Very truly , I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies it bears much fruit.

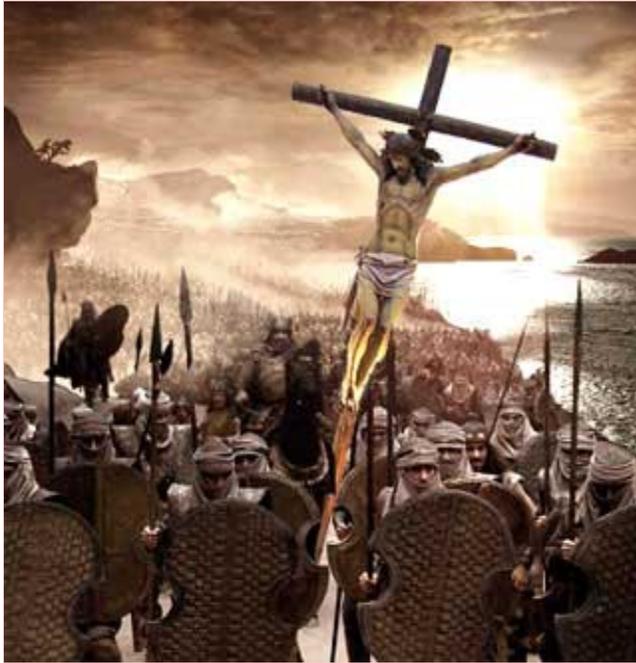
Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour ." (John 12:24-26) Several scholars have written about the manifold growth in nature and about the nature and art of man.

Whenever Socrates the Greek philosopher undertook to research any object, he followed the method of "dialogue." " Dia" means "two" and " Logos " means Word." Whenever two people speak words one to the other, one word brings forth another in order to bring out the inner meaning explicitly. Noticing that this method of dialogue was flourishing, The German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel explained a philosophy called 'Dialectics'. According to him, words from two different thinking, will not stop with two, but will stand with an addition of a third one, and he called this 'synthesis'. Combining the two that arose earlier, the third will be established with precision. Hence nothing gets destroyed. Everything gets lifted up. Just as the River Ganges finds its source from Haridwar on the Himalayas and is very small where it originates, yet in its long run , taking up all the small streams , cascades and rivers along, it then flows as a mighty river spread out in a large scale, so too do the nature of man and the multi dimensional growth of the world.

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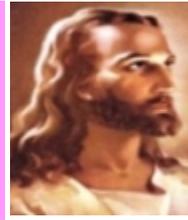
This is the thought of a great Philosopher. But more than that Jesus made us realize and revealed that the nature of man and the sufferings that it reflects shows that they belong to the Divine Glory of man.

Man does not get destroyed. He taught humankind that due to the sufferings, these sufferings themselves will cleanse him and lead him to eternal glory. Hence Jesus says, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" and thus enjoining our sufferings with those of His own, He teaches us to partake of the Eternal Life. (John 14:6) An infant who lives a hidden life in the womb of its mother, then comes out into the world into the light. Only when the child is separated from the umbilical chord can the child be able to live with its own intelligence. Thus too a man's thinking foregoes self and grows into a new and fresh thinking.

Whether in the societal growth or educational methods, we can never say that an individual person's contribution alone had led to any victory. Even as one particular government sought to implement the 'Equitable education system', yet another Government seeks to correct, modify and bring about a studies the practical side of it. To organize this, the court too gives its directive. Even to pass its judgment, a group of several people is needed.

Thus the Equitable system of Education is not what one person seeks to bring and the other wipes it out, but where several members sit together form a group and when several people's thoughts have gone in, it then flows like the huge Ganges and it then paves the way for a positive growth. There is no way for any individual to call it their own. It becomes ours. "The one word 'I' leads to mankind's downfall. "Us, Ours" leads to the rectification and modification of mankind." Jesus' death on the Cross uproots the word, 'I' and the selfishness that goes with it, and brings in the highest philosophy of the word, 'Ours' and thus gives us Redemption. When we live for 'us' then the selfishness of 'my' gets hidden and then 'we' become happy together." "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." (John 12:24) Even when in our personal lives, we give up on our selfishness and live for the common good of others, then everything else becomes magnanimous and gets lifted to lofty heights.

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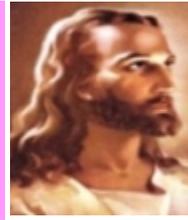
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Padre Pio was kneeling and praying everyday in front of Jesus hanging on the Cross. It was his habit to meditate on the sufferings of Jesus. One day when lost deep in meditation he looked at the disfigured Face of Jesus and asked, " My loving Jesus! Lord ! Why did You suffer so much on the Cross! I cannot understand". Jesus who hung on the Cross spoke to him saying, " It was for you." For the past few days I was meditating on the selfless sacrifice and unconditional love of Jesus. " It is better to have one person die for the people." (John 18:14)

Thus the High priest Caiaphas spoke to the Jewish leaders giving credence and weightage to Jesus' death on the Cross. True enough ! The Death on the Cross, His untellable sufferings, all occurred so that humanity might live on. It is due to this that millions and billions of people lead lives " Toward holiness" by keeping Jesus in front of their mind's eye. For the past few days, I chanced to read and meditate on the life story of "The Little Flower of the Child Jesus." It attracted me. Saint Therese , The little Flower of the Child Jesus, was born in Lisieux in France in 1873.She was the youngest of nine children. She lost her beloved mother when she was but four years old.

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She grew up in the embrace of her loving father. After obtaining special permission from the Pope she joined the cloistered Carmelites in her very fifteenth year. Four Sisters of Sainte Therese had already dedicated themselves in the same order of nuns. Two years after living as a Religious , she took her vows of the Religious and thus became a dedicated nun. The love that Sainte Therese of the Child Jesus had for Jesus flowed as a fountain Love is the summary of her holy life. Due to this deep love for Jesus She lived a hectic ten years as a Religious. Two years after joining the convent, she was struck down with tuberculosis.

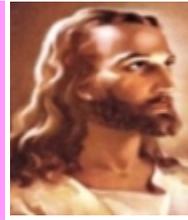
As the years went by the disease increased. Although she suffered for several years with the disease she had a ready smile to all those whom she met. When her own sister Pauline was the Superior as Sr. Agnes, she ordered Sr. Therese to write her life story. Without disobeying the orders of the Superior she wrote the history of her spiritual life under the title, " The story of a soul."

Today it stands as a rich literary piece translated into several languages of the world. Just one drop , a precious word from her life's story. "I sit in front of God and keep looking at Him. I don't stay in front of Him for my sake. I stay there for His own sake. I go there to see Him. He likes it very much, as He likes to see me."(The story of a soul) We can say that her fundamental beliefs of spirituality stemmed from the lives of three big Saints.

1. The Prophet Elijah whom we see in the Old Testament. We read about His thoughts and the Great love for God in The First Book of the Kings. " I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts;"(I Kings 19:10) He was a prophet who thus replied to the LORD Himself. He had renounced everything for the deep love for God and lived in the desert completely dependant on it. The Fire of this love burnt afresh in the heart of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus.

2. The Life of Saint Teresa of Avila who by her selfless toil, prayer and sacrifice brought forth a series of renewals and restorations in the Carmelite Order. "The way of perfection" she stressed, lay in the love for God and in the love for our neighbour.

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She taught that love, sacrifice, prayer, obedience, chaste life, silence, and deep faith and trust in God will lead one in the religious life toward holiness. Prayer, silence and sacrifice are used as instruments mainly to grow in the love of God leaving away the attachment to the world and being free from it.

3. The one who greatly attracted the heart of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus was Saint John of the Cross. His life and the Books written by him deeply attracted her. He stood hand in hand with Saint Teresa of Avila to bring about the necessary changes in the Carmelite Order. He stood firmly rooted in love and faith in and for Jesus even amidst several sufferings. He has written several spiritual books. Some of them are:

The Ascent of Mount Carmel

The way of purification

Spiritual Canticle

Living pleasure of love

She read all these books at a very young age and understood the indepth meaning of it all. Saint John of the Cross was purified by his sufferings. The one living for God should not become selfish and lost thinking only of the gifts given by God. The gifts given by God should lead one to the same God who gave the gifts. These gifts themselves should not be a hurdle to you. As even the gifts are His creations! The life and teachings of this Saint attracted Saint Therese much. He lived mainly because of the great love he had for Jesus. He bore even his tuberculosis with affection. He lived for love and died for love.

On 30th September 1897 the soul of the Little Flower of the Child Jesus found a place in the heart of Jesus. The life of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus is a witness to how one can find holiness in suffering. From the moment when Jesus sacrificed Himself for us on the Cross we have all become God's own children. It was for this moment that Jesus awaited as the moment of KAIROS. (John 2:4; John 12:23; John 17:13) It is to shine in this glory that our sufferings make us holier and spotless. The Portion we receive in Jesus is the portion we obtain in His Glory. May the great love we have for Jesus make us completely holy ! I wish you Joy.

Fr. V. Ignatius. S.J.