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Jesus Sets Me Absolutely Free!

As I sang this hymn a few days ago...it set my mind thinking. Have I really been set free from the strife and bondages that seem to engulf me? When I celebrate Christ's resurrection this Easter, do I really feel free in Christ? Can I really say that I have been set free?

As we go through this season of Lent let us take a good look at the things that hold us in bondage. Maybe it's a lack of a sense of priority that keeps us running after things of the world instead of focussing on Christ and things that really matter, maybe it's a festering relationship that we can't just seem to handle because we refuse to surrender it to Christ.

For our children, it may be the stress and pressure of studies and exams that holds them in bondage. And maybe family prayer time can help them draw their peace from the Prince of peace – Jesus, who has promised us all the peace this world cannot give.

This period has been given to us to prepare our minds and hearts to focus on the greatest news ever... that Jesus died to set me (and you!) free from sin! And keeping our eyes and mind and heart on this message will lead us to a glorious rejoicing as a liberated people when Easter Sunday dawns. And then we can sing wholeheartedly, "The Lord has truly risen!"

As we journey through this season of Lent let us remember all children for whom this is a time of testing, and let us pray that each of them may give of their best, do their best and receive the best support from us in their upcoming final exams.

Wishing each one of you and your families A Blessed Easter!

— **Maria Peres**

Official Visitation to Ang Ligaya Ng Panginnon Community, Manila

A visitation was made to Ligaya Ng Panginon (LNP-Joy of the Lord) Community, Manila, Philippines, from November 8 to 15, 2004. LNP, founded 29 years ago, is a full member Community of the Sword of the Spirit-Christ the King Association, with a membership of nearly 1700 members.

Visitations to Communities have been an established practice over the years in the SOS-CKA. They are an important and integral feature of Community life and their main purpose is to provide guidance and support to our life as members of this Community of Communities (SOS-CKA).

For six days, the Visitation Team met with leaders at all levels and had interviews with groups and individual members. We were happy to observe and experience the life of the Community by sharing the spirit of worship at their gatherings, participating in social events and enjoying the hospitality of their homes.

I am presenting here the salient points contained in the visitation report that was given by Jaime Soto, the Team Moderator, to the whole Community at their general assembly and later submitted in detail to the Senior Coordinator, Antonio Panajon, and LNP's Body of Coordinators:

Areas Of Strength

Over the years, Ligaya has developed and experienced a diversity of gifts and strengths that have made the Community secure, mature and very fruitful. Some of the strengths that have contributed to the life and progress of Ligaya may be summarized as follows:

1. Loving, caring relationships among members, marked by good fellowship.
2. Good leadership, that is able to govern well such a large Community through its organizations, sectors, districts and outreaches.
3. Peace and unity among leaders and members in general. Great respect and honour for leaders.
4. An enthusiastic spirit of evangelization, with Christ-centred programs focused on personal conversion.
5. Vibrant, reverent spirit of worship in small and large gatherings.
6. Excellent Music Ministry, using the talents of members and enthusing members to participate actively in worship.
7. A keen desire to reach out to the poor and needy
8. Strong gift of hospitality

Areas Evaluated

A number of areas, vital to progressive community life, were discussed and evaluated, following which conclusions and recommendations were submitted to the senior leadership. These areas covered: Vision and Call, Pastoral Care System, Leadership Training, Organisation and

Governance, Family and Prayer Life, Women's and Youth Issues, Evangelisation, Church Relations, Community Building, Tithing and Migration.

On behalf of the Visitation Team, Jaime Soto emphasized that it was truly a privilege and a joy to serve this remarkable Community through the visitation. He affirmed the LNP Body of Coordinators and members, past and present, for their initiatives and dedication in nurturing this Community from the time of its inception. Especially the two past Senior Coordinators, Fr. Herb Schneider and Vic Gutierrez, were paid a well-deserved tribute for their commendable spirit of service and sacrifice to the Ligaya over the years. And a hearty welcome was extended to the recently-installed Senior Coordinator, Tony Panajon, while wishing him every success in leading his Community ahead, for the greater glory of God and for the good of His people. Alleluia!

— Tony D'Souza

***The members of this Visitation Team were the following senior leaders
of Communities from various regions of SOS-CKA worldwide:***

Jaime Soto	Team Moderator	President of the Iberian-American Region (IAR) and Coordinator of Fortaleza de Dios, Honduras.
Karen Soto	Regional Woman	Fortaleza de Dios, Leader in the IAR Honduras
Tony D'Souza	Senior Coordinator	Jesus: Light of the World, Mumbai, India
Rufie D'Souza	Senior Woman	Jesus: Light of the World, Mumbai, India
Chris Birk	Coordinator	Word of Life, Ann Arbor, Michigan
Deena Birk	Regional Senior	Word of Life, Woman Leader in Ann Arbor, Michigan the North American Region.
Vic Barretto	Senior Coordinator	Ang Buhing Pulong, Philippines
Lisa Barretto	Senior Woman	Ang Buhing Pulong, Philippines
Mike Fabello	Senior Coordinator	Kahayag Sa Diyos, Philippines
Mimi Fabello	Senior Woman	Kahayag Sa Diyos, Philippines
Maristela Cammado	Woman Leader	Kahayag Sa Diyos, Philippines
John Yocum		Servants of the Word, Manila

Asian Region Conference – November 2004

The Asian Region Council Meeting was held on 17-18 November 2004 at Makati City, Manila. This is an annual meeting of the Senior Leaders of the formed Communities of the Asian Region of the SOS-CKA. Those participating at this meeting were Henry Fernandez, Acting President of the Asian Region, Steve Clark, President – SOS, Ken Noecker, Regional Coordinator, Tony Panajon, Senior Coordinator, Ligaya Ng Panginoon, Manila, Tony D'Souza, Senior Coordinator, CJLOW, Mumbai, Rene Pacana, Senior Coordinator-elect, Kahayag Sa Diyos, Cagayan de Oro, S.Philippines and John Yocum, Servants of the Word, Manila.

The Council deliberated on a wide range of topics concerning organization, administration and finance. Documents covering care of Local Communities and Men and Women in Community, Schedule of Visitations in the year ahead, Mission Development, Pastoral aspects of Community life (including follow-up on 'Call Conference' for impact and transformation), Care of Filipino Communities in N.America, the Asian Region Newsletter and appointment of Office Bearers.

Henry Fernandez was confirmed as President of the ARC for a 4-year term beginning November 2004. Henry is no stranger to India, having visited our Communities in Mumbai, Vasai and Pune more than once, to share the richness of his pastoral expertise.

The other office bearers appointed at the Conference were: Tony Panajon, Treasurer – ARC, and Lamberto (Spanky) Meer, Secretary – ARC, both for 4-year terms beginning November 2004; Ken Noecker as Head, Community Building Team – ARC, and John Yocum and Tony D'Souza as Regional Coordinators. India was designated as a sub-region of the Asian Region, in view of the expending needs of the Indian subcontinent.

The Community of Jesus: Light of the World congratulates the new Office Bearers and prays that they may be inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit in the discharge of their responsibilities.

— **CJLOW News Services**

The Community Building Or Macroschema Conference

On November 5 and 6, 2004 one hundred and sixty-eight people from eleven communities of the Sword of the Spirit gathered in Manila, Philippines for a Community Building Training Seminar. The seminar was organized by the Asian Region Community Building Team under the direction of Henry Fernandez the President of the Asian Regional Council of the Sword of the Spirit – Christ the King Association (CKA).

The main resource persons for the conference were Jaime and Karen Soto. Jaime is former Sr. coordinator of the Sword of the Spirit Community in Tegucigalpa, Honduras and now serves as President of the Ibero--Americano Region of the SOS. Karen, Jaime's wife, serves not only as mother to their four children, but also as one of the senior women leaders of the Honduran community. As her children have grown she has also been available to serve more on the community building team in the Ibero-American Region.

The Ibero-Amencano Region is that region of the Sword of the Spirit which encompasses all the Spanish and Portuguese-speaking communities. It thus includes all the communities in Central America, South America, Spain, Portugal, and the Spanish speaking communities in the United States.

The Sotos presented an overview of the missionary work of the Sword of the Spirit, primarily as it focuses on the area of community building. In doing so they introduced conference participants to the "Macroshcema," a manual developed by the Ibero-American Region, and now used throughout the SOS. The manual provides guidance to those members of the SOS who are tasked with helping form and coach newer communities toward full membership in the SOS. Jaime explained that the word "Macroschema" simply means "big outline." It is meant to function as something like an "overall plan" or "overall worksheet" in the work of community building.

The main use of the Macroschema is to provide an overview of the process of taking a community from its current condition (whatever that may be) to being a full member community in the SOS. It lays out the goals to be achieved, the means to accomplishing those goals, and some pastoral criteria to use in assessing accomplishment of the goals.

Jaime explained the motivation for developing the Macroschema. He told the story of how several years ago the number of communities in Latin America was rapidly increasing. The need to train and involve a larger number of people in the work of community building became apparent. The first step in providing the needed training was to gather the wisdom and experience that was already resident in the lives of the formed communities. The next step was to translate this into principles that could be used as guidelines, and tools that could be applied by others involved in supporting younger communities on their journey to maturity. The end product of this process was the Macroschema. This new tool helps to simplify the process of community building and helps us to work in unity throughout the Sword of the Spirit.

After each presentation by Jaime, Karen would give input on the role of women in the community building team. She explained the need for helping women in each community see the important role they hold in the overall health and strength of communities. She explained the need to establish a council of women in each of the communities being formed. She also spoke of some of the challenges that come when encountering women who do not feel they share the call of their husband as well as the challenges of working with single women in the communities.

As the Sotos spoke of their work on the opposite side of the world it became apparent to all those attending the conference that we will greatly benefit from their wisdom and experience as we also encounter the need to field more men and women in the work of community building in Asia. There is truly great advantage to being in an association of communities through which we can learn and be built up by means of shared experience and example. Through the conference it became even more obvious how associating with one another helps us grow in zeal and persistence in carrying out the mission of the SOS of being communities of disciples on mission. We also expect that many more members of the communities of the Asian Region will now feel more confident when they are called upon to take part in community building in the region.

Reflections on the Community Building Conference

From Peggy Lasa: Getting together with leaders of other communities and hearing them say there has been no one available to serve them and help them grow has made me realize that there is much work to be done and each one of us has to ask the Lord, “Would you like to send me, Lord?”, and to listen to His answer with an open heart.

Perhaps we think we wouldn’t know what to do to help build a community but the Macroschema that Jaime Soto presented is a very helpful start to encourage us to take the first step to say, “YES, Lord, send me!”

After all, when God calls us to do a work, He is faithful to provide the grace.

From Francis Iturralde: I feel affirmed that some of my own “instincts” of doing community building work are, in fact, what and how we do it in the Sword of the Spirit, as enunciated in the Macroschema.

Also, it is great to do it with other community builders from all over Asia . . . brothers and sisters I can stand shoulder-to-shoulder with in the pursuit of the mission God gave us for our time.

From Menchie Rojas: An event like this is very timely for all of us (communities) who are related in one way or the other to the SOS/CKA. It helps us to connect with one another and spells out for us very clearly where we are all at in the BIG PICTURE of things as the Macroschema.

The materials are very helpful. Jaime’s presentation is very helpful. Karen’s sharings gave not only a human face, but also a “woman’s face” in our role in the various stages and levels of membership in the SOS.

May occasions like this continue to come our way in the future!

— Ken Noecker
Regional Co-ordinator
Asian Region,
SOS-CKA

Bring My People Back to Me

The year 2004 would most probably be remembered as the year of calamities – of the disastrous flood and mudslides in Luzon, Philippines and the more devastating tsunami in South East Asia. In all these some may have asked: How can we ever make sense of such disasters? Where was God in it all? Is it all according to His purpose?

To dwell upon these questions maybe fruitless. The only way to make sense of such devastation is to do something. The answer to confusion and doubt is to take action. Secure in God's promise that He would never leave us or forsake us, our response should be to seek His will in all these events and act accordingly.

However, one question lingers. Of the seemingly countless victims, how many of them died or suffered secure in the knowledge that God loved them and has saved them? – more so, did they ever have the chance to really know Christ? We can only share our grief with those who have suffered but for the rest of humanity, especially for those who have not heard and lived the Good News, maybe God is commanding us to do our share to bring Christ into their lives – “Bring my people back to me”.

Now, more than ever, is a time for faith and hope – a time to give and a time to serve. As we move to help and respond to His call, then God is able to demonstrate His love and care through us. God is in the generosity of the giving – God is in the unity of purpose – God is in the will to restore and rebuild. If the Lord commands, “Bring my people back to me.” – then we must do our part.

For us at the Holy Trinity Community, our thrust for 2005 is to “make God's call to community and His choice of us, a permanent experience – by sharing Christ with others.” – is a fitting response to the call of the times. To help bring people back to the Lord, we need to prioritize our efforts to evangelize others. What better way to help bring God's people back to Him than to give the greatest gift, Jesus himself – not only to ourselves, to family, or community but to others as well – by sharing Christ with others.

Are we ready for it? Yes! Our years in CYA, Lingkod ng Panginoon and Holy Trinity Community have long prepared us for this. Still, we need to maintain the right heart, approach and attitude. Mother Teresa once said, “to evangelise means to have Jesus in your heart and then to take Him to the hearts of others.” We cannot give nor share what we do not have.

First, we find Jesus. We open up our hearts to give Him space. We pray for deliverance from past habitual sins that are preventing us from receiving Him and serving others. Then we know Him through prayer and scripture study – and love Him. We spend time with Him. We talk to Him in prayer. We listen to Him. We read and absorb His word. We take His message into our hearts. Finally, we bring the Jesus we know to others. We show Him to them and make Him loved. We do this through example – by planning and doing evangelistic activities not only within the family unit or community but most especially with those whom we'd like to reach out – for the people we'd like do bring back to God.

In all these we need to ask for the grace from God and trust in His ways. Not by our efforts alone would we be able to accomplish the task that He has set us to do. The best thing that we can do is have more and more of Jesus in our hearts – and in our lives, for us to have more of Him to share.

God calls: “Bring my people back to me.” May we all be given the privilege to truly say that we have responded accordingly – made His call a permanent and continuing experience – have fully lived and shared Jesus – and have brought at least one more soul back to God ready and prepared to face whatever calamity and devastation that may befall the world. AMEN.

— **Cesar L. Mozar Jr. (Sr. Co-ordinator),
Holy Trinity Community, Davao City, Phillipines**

CJLOW visits KKP

At the invitation of Luke Lobo, Sr. Coordinator of Krist Kiran Parivar, Pune, Aroon, Fr. Lancy, Agnelo, Bruno-Maria Cerejo and Philo D'Souza attended the KKP Leaders Weekend, on Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 January, 2005. The CJLOW team shared on various topics of Covenant Community Life and CJLOW's growth, since its inception in 1981.

The Leaders of KKP, after prayer and reflection, finalised KKP's Vision. They also discussed various aspects of Community Life: caring and bonding, organisational structure, cell groups, process of initiation into KKP; through 'Encounter Jesus,' weekend followed by Foundation Course I, Community weekend, Basic Foundation for married couples/Single Men/Single Women etc.

KKP has also requested CJLOW for ongoing guidance and teachers for the future schedule of teachings.

- Bruno Cerejo

Kiddies Day Out

After a really long and impatient wait the day dawned. January 23rd, a beautiful Sunday morning. The children of CJLOW assembled at St. Mary's Mazagaon and then proceeded to the B.P.T. gardens at Colaba. This garden is a quiet retreat amidst the hustle and bustle that is the concrete jungle of Mumbai.

Before entering the garden we enjoyed delicious sandwiches and a refreshing cup of tea. As we entered we could just feel the fresh air surrounding us and we felt like we had left the air and sound pollution of the city behind. The garden also has a breathtaking view of the sea. We were fascinated by the large variety of trees and shrubs and also the beautiful rockery. In the garden we had a short Praise & Worship during which we all made prayers including the little Isaac.

After a few games we left the park, singing a funny song, Aunty Clarissa taught us. Our next stop was the Hanging Gardens, Malabar Hill.

Here the boys played football while the girls had a great time on the slides. Lunch was a welcome break. After lunch we relaxed and chatted a bit. The day passed by in a flash and before we knew it, it was time to leave. Both venues were really enjoyable but it was really the joy of being together and spending some time with one another that made the day unforgettable. Special thanks to the Children's Ministry and CJLOW who made the picnic a reality. Praise and thanks to God for a safe and sound really enjoyable trip.

— Joshua Gomes

“I Thirst”

I want to share with you an incident that set me thinking; that made me question my Christianity and my faith.

I was once travelling by bus when I noticed at a junction, a street urchin digging her way in a roadside dustbin. Her hair unkempt, her body half naked and black with dirt, she was a little beggar girl starved and hungry searching for left over scraps of food. Vying with her was a well-fed cow! Just then a lady appeared with a pack of chappatis (hand bread). The poor famished girl hopefully stretched out her lean hand asking for just one. But the lady waived her aside and went to feed the cow instead. And then something strange happened! The cow refused to eat the chappatis!! The more the lady tried to feed the cow, the more it turned its head away. The hungry little beggar kept on pleading for just one chappati but her pleas were ignored. I do not know what happened after that for soon the green light came on and the bus in which I was travelling sped past.

The incident set me thinking. As I continued my journey I heard the echo of that poor little hungry beggar girl's cry for food that went unheeded. She was only a symbol of what happens in the world – the cry of so many millions of our hungry brothers and sisters goes unheeded; the thirst of so many millions goes unslaked; the nakedness of so many millions goes uncovered; the loneliness of so many millions languishing in hospitals and prisons goes unvisited.

Is it that there is not enough food to go round? Certainly not. It is just that those who have, hoard and do not want to share with those who have not. The tragedy of our world is not only that the gap between the rich and the poor is growing wider but also that the number of the poor keeps increasing. According to World Bank statistics, 1.3 billion people live beneath the threshold of absolute poverty; 840 million people suffer from hunger, 200 million of whom are children; 13 million people are condemned to death every year – that means about 36,000 every day, 1,500 every hour, 25 every minute and 1 every 3 seconds! While Bill Gates earns 120 million dollars every day, 1 billion and 300 million people are living on less than a dollar a day. Staggering and shocking figures indeed! ‘

Jesus did not condemn the rich. He himself had friends among the rich like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, who were both men of means. He rather condemned those who having everything shared nothing with those who had not. He gives us that telling parable of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31. The rich man feasted everyday while poor Lazarus fasted and hungered for scraps of food that fell from his table. The rich man was clad in rich robes while poor Lazarus was covered with rags. The rich man was a picture of health while poor Lazarus was so weak as not to be able even to ward off the dogs that came and licked his sores. What was the rich man's sin? Why did he land up in hell? The rich man's sin was that he just did not notice poor Lazarus at his gate. And even if he did, he accepted Lazarus' presence there as part of the scenario in front of his house! Having eyes, he did not see; having ears he did not hear; having hands he did not help. And we know what happened to both the rich man and poor Lazarus after death! The tables were turned!

Jesus has assured us that whatsoever we do to the least of His brothers and sisters we do unto him. Even if we give so much as a cup of water to one of his little ones in His name, we will not go unrewarded. We love Him as much or as little as we love the least of his brothers and sisters. In the evening of our life, as St. John of the Cross so beautifully put it, it is by love alone that we shall be judged. In the evening of our life too, when we must stand before the judgement throne of God He will not ask us how fat was our bank balance; or how many lines of degrees trailed our name; or how wide was the circle of our influence and social contacts. The only question, if you want to know, that He will ask us will be: "How much or how little have you loved?" And on the answer we give will depend our entire eternity! We must therefore love as many, as deeply and as often as we can. Sin is not in loving but in not loving. Never be afraid or ashamed to love for love is from God and he who loves lives in God and God lives in him.

Because some of us live in an economically poor country, we can become immunised to the poverty of others; because we see such destitution daily around, we can become inured to human misery; because we are surrounded by hunger and want, sickness and suffering, we can become insensitive to another's pain.

How easily and lightly we can dismiss the poverty and pain that others experience! We say we love the poor. How much time do we spend with them? Or is our so-called "charity" an easy way to get rid of them as quickly as possible? We profess to love the sick. How often and for how long do we visit them? We state our love for the illiterate. How much of ourselves are we prepared to invest in order to dispel the darkness of ignorance and illiteracy? Our hearts of flesh have been hardened into hearts of stone! Yet we claim to be disciples of Jesus who went about doing good. We must learn to recognise Jesus in those who do not resemble Him; to listen to those who do not speak like Him. Jesus continues to suffer in His brothers and sisters.

Pray for light and guidance. Ask the Lord to help you to recognize Him in the poor and the needy, the sick and the suffering, the aged and the addicted, the languishing and the lonely. Pray for the grace to reach out to them in love and service.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, your cry 'I thirst' haunts me. It is loud and clear for you wanted it to be heard, to echo and re-echo down the ages. But alas! It finds no echo in my heart! My heart beats, but it does not throb with love. I have become so immune to the suffering of others; so insensitive to the pain of others; so indifferent to the misery of others. Lord, it is a terrible thing to be blind; to live in a world of darkness; but it is worse still to have eyes and not see! Lord, it is a terrible thing to be deaf, to live in a world of silence; but it is worse still to have ears and not hear! Lord, it is a terrible thing to be numb; to lack sensation; but it is worse still to have sensation and not feel!

I may not do much, dear Lord. I cannot change the whole world; but let me do the little I can. Help me to recognise you in the poor and the downtrodden; in the socially backward and repelling; in the physically dirty and unattractive. Teach me to forget my convenience and comfort; to go out of my way in order to reach out to those in need; 'to give without counting the cost, to work without seeking any reward, to fight without heeding the wounds'. Let me do what you did while you walked this earth; go about doing good.

Lord Jesus, I seem to have time only for myself for my own comfort and convenience, for my own entertainment and enjoyment. When it comes to helping someone in need, I all of a sudden become 'very busy', I have not the time nor the energy. Today, Lord, let me share your thirst. Fill me with a restlessness to serve you in the poorest of the poor! Let me not seek you only in Church or in statues and holy pictures, but among the rags and tatters of human existence.

Dear Lord Jesus, Divine Physician and Healer, I need a heart transplant! Change my heart. Give me a new heart. Give me your heart, a heart throbbing with love. Help me to understand that the sign by which people will know that I am a Christian, that I am yours, is love; and that whatsoever I do to the least of my brothers and sisters, I do unto you!

— by **Fr. Alex Rebello,**
Author: 'His Last Words'

Eternal Life

Easter is that wonderful event that reminds us of the ultimate reward: eternal life

Want to live forever? You will if you follow Christ's example right to the pearly gates of heaven. But what we all sometimes forget is that this amazing dominion over death extends into every aspect of our lives, not just after our physical death but while we are alive too, summoning us to be hopeful and positive proof of His almighty power and love.

Being Catholic, you know that His death and resurrection made eternal happiness and life after death possible for each and every one of us who follows and accepts His truth. But through Christ we also have the power to rise metaphorically during life from the mire of all the temporal destruction and death that threatens to kill our souls in this world as we prepare for our eternity in the next.

This means that through Christ we can overcome everything that comes our way. And that's not just sweet sentimental talk that sounds good on Sunday morning; it's the real deal, the reality of inner peace that Christ makes possible for each and every Christian.

Easter is that wonderful event that reminds us that Jesus Christ's incredible resurrection from the dead has released us all from the grip of physical death by giving us the possibility of immortal life after death in heaven with our Creator.

But beyond the literal magnificence of this holiday, it should remind us too of the incredible symbolic significance of Christ's resurrection. By overcoming physical death, Jesus showed us all that through His example and faith in His Father, every one of us can conquer the many forms of death, beyond the physical, that threaten to darken our lives and extinguish our light as we live our lives in this world.

Whether it is the immobilizing effects of psychological and emotional trauma threatening to kill us from the inside out, or the overture of life's everyday obstacles stopping us dead in our tracks, life over all forms of death can be realized.

By accepting the pure love of our Lord and agreeing to spread that love, we will be granted the amazing power of immortal life not only after death, but during every day of our lives as well. As Christians, spreading that love is our real goal here on planet earth, and all the other goals are secondary. So if we accept the Lord's love and mission, then we are no longer slaves to our own weakness, our own pain and suffering, our errors and our sins, our experiences and our senses. We will no longer be overcome by the mayhem the world sends our way because we realize that our success does not depend on us achieving temporal bliss or riches. If we believe in the life giving and death defying power of Christ, we cannot get bogged down in despair because we don't get that great job we wanted, when we don't get that raise we hoped for, or if life deals us a few more blows than we would have liked. Remember that the Lord's prayer says "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven." The life giving power of the Lord is alive and well in this world, and we can receive and experience it every day, but we must open our heads and our hearts to it. So next time you are tempted to let despair dominate your day,

convinced you are too mired in your own mistakes or misfortune to rebound, give yourself a good slap in the soul. And remember that Christ died not just so you could overcome death after life, but so you could also defeat the death of depression that earthly demons shall tempt you to succumb to every day. Therefore, be not a sad slave to your own imperfection, your misfortune or the temporal unhappiness that all too often greets us in this world. Instead, be a joyful servant of the Lord. Happy Easter!

— Chris Benguhe
Courtsey : Messenger of St. Anthony, Australia

God's Love... Key to change

On Sunday, January 16 at the CJLOW General Assembly Fr. Errol Fernandes SJ gave us a brief overview on Romans which is one of St. Paul's masterpieces. Fr. Errol in his typical inimitable style explained to us that the letter to the Romans is a roadmap for every Christian to incorporate the life, death and resurrection of Jesus into one's journey through life.

Fr Errol began by stating that in Jesus, God has chosen Jews and Gentiles, believers and non-believers to be part of the Kingdom.

The letter to Romans can be divided into 2 parts - Chapters 1 to 11 the Theological position and Chapters 12 to 26 the Practical application. The above division is only for our better understanding but for Paul this is an integral part of Christian Living. In other words, Jesus has to be in the **inside of us** i.e. in our beliefs, the Word of God internalized so that His life will flow (**outside**) through our speech, our actions and our everyday living.

Transformation can be understood in 3 ways:

1. God loves us first (1Jn 4: 10): His unchanging, faithful Love motivates man to change. St. Paul writes in Romans 12:1 "I **urge** you, then, brothers, **remembering the mercies of God**, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice..." A striking example of this truth is the Prodigal son who ponders on the unfailing love of his father and decides to turn back to his father's home.

2. Enhancing the quality of our interpersonal relationships: How?? – Rm 12: 3-9

- a. i. Rm12: 3 - Do not pride yourself as being better than you really are.
- ii. Rm12: 4-5 - We are all parts of one body, each with a separate function...
- iii. Rm12: 6-8 - Hence gifts of each of us are different.
- iv. Rm12: 9 - No pretense in love... Hold on to the good in others...

In a word what Paul is emphasizing is that Christian spirituality is not individualistic but communitarian. We are called to be One United People with diverse gifts to be used in service for the betterment of all. Jn 21: 9-14 (Peter dragged the net to the shore full of big fish, 153 of them and the net did not break).

At this juncture Fr. Errol gave us an example of an interesting hoarding, which read thus "If you are not Number 1, you are no one". While in the world we are constantly wrestling to be No.1, but in God's kingdom, Fr. Errol went on to say, "**To be number one, BE NO ONE**". This is the challenge... it takes courage to be no one, to give others a chance, to be leaven in the dough, unnoticed.

b. Another important point is **detachment** i.e. not to look for rewards for our service. **Like the Sower, we sow** (serve / use our talents in service) **and God will make it grow** (bring fruit / transform).

c. We are all different parts of the same body. In Rms12: 6-13 Paul enumerates 7 gifts and it is pertinent to note the order in which it is given:

- i. Prophecy - According to one's faith
- ii. Service - Devoted service
- iii. Teach - Teach
- iv. Encourage - Exhort / encourage
- v. Giving - Give generously from the heart
- vi. Leadership - Lead conscientiously / diligently

viii. Works of mercy - Enjoy it, do it cheerfully

But the all encompassing gift is **Love**. Fr. Errol emphasized that **Love is:**

- i. A Gift – A privilege
- ii. A responsibility – To care and share with others (1 Cor: 13: 4-9)

In love there is no "I". Love keeps no record of right or wrong. Love must be expressed (made manifest in action).

3. Change in attitude in difficult situations

I. The following points need to be kept in mind:

a. Romans 12: 10-13 gives us the key for **change** which needs to come **from within**

b. Self or inner renewal equips us in our relationships with others. Romans 12: 14-21 gives us a clear-cut guideline in our dealing with others.

II. Further St. Paul gives us a method to deal with suffering:

- i. Do not lag in zeal.
- ii. Be ardent in spirit i.e. be optimistic, be grateful for all the blessings. We can change our perspective in life for the better or worse.
- iii. Be patient. Like the parable of the Sower and the seed (Mk 4:3-9). The seed grows secretly and the yield will depend on the soil (Mk 4: 26-39). We need to sow good seed and God will make it grow. In a nutshell, find God in all things.
- v. Jesus expects us to have faith and believe even before we have received (Mk 11: 22-25). The surest way to answered prayer and abundant health is forgiveness. Forgiveness (to let go) confuses the enemy.
- vi. Finally the theology of the Cross is best explained in the life of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane in Mk 14: 32-42. This passage beautifully describes Jesus' human agony in discerning the Father's will. ***Jesus hears the Father's voice, the loudest in the silence*** when he entreats to the Father – ***Father if it be your will let this cup pass from me, but not my will, but thine be done***. This is the ultimate of one's obedience, one's love and unwavering faith and focus on God. This is the highest expression of human love for God, which made **Jesus NUMBER 1** for all time to come.

In conclusion this stirring talk given by Fr. Errol was a fitting prelude for the year 2005 for CJLOW members i.e. self change is inevitable, if we want to live up to our call viz. To be a Light in the World!

On behalf of CJLOW, Sangeeta thanked Fr. Errol for giving us the tried and tested recipe – ***To be Number 1, BE NO ONE!!!***

— Bibiana Barretto

DISCUSSION ON ROMANS 12

As a follow up to the above talk, on 6th Feb 2005, John Fernandes led the Community General Assembly in an interesting interactive talk on Romans 12: 1-2.

Procedure of Knowing God's Will. We are to plead to people to come hear that Christ died to convince the world that He loved us. We are at God's mercy all the time. We are to present our lives as a living sacrifice, not merely an offering, but the attitude as a grateful offering – holy and acceptable.

Do not be conformed, but be transformed in your mind by renewing your mind to know the will of God for

us. Bible references Romans: 15: 30, Acts 20: 13, Col 1: 22, Rom 8: 5, 2 Cor 5: 17, Phil 2: 3

The questions that we discussed in small groups helped us to learn from each other, encouraged and challenged us to be a “No one,” as we enter the Lenten season.

— Clarissa Barrett

Prophet Moses

The Encounter Jesus meeting at Bandra on Friday, 11th February, 2005 had a treasure from the Bible unfolded to us. Yes, Francis D’Souza gave us an input on Moses. There was a parallel as it were, of Moses leading the Israelites from slavery to the promised land and we on our journey with Christ through the season of Lent culminating in our redemption by His Cross!

In his travelogue through salvation history, Francis recounted from the time of Abraham, Isaac, Esau and Jacob to the year of a severe famine, when 60 Israelites went to Egypt in search of grain – yet at the time of the Exodus, there were 600,000 Israelites in Egypt – much to the consternation of Pharaoh, that he began to ill-treat and torture them. He passed a decree for all Israel’s male children to be eliminated (Exodus 1:16) – there’s a parallel in the New Testament, Matt.2:16 – Herod kills all male children. Now the Israelites plea to God, “Please send us a Saviour”, was answered when God sent Moses. And Moses had to kill an Egyptian to enhance his desire, so to say, to liberate the Israelites, waiting for the grace of God for this chance (Exodus 3). Moses showing his weakness and not his strength, questions God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?”

God has patience with Moses even as he pleads, “Please send someone else to do it.” Here, Francis used an analogy: The Lord likewise calls us, “The harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few...” Do we focus on our negatives or the positives in our response? Perhaps, we need to focus on HIS power within us!

Francis emphasized that when commissioned for the Lord’s works, we need to:

1. Focus on God – our problems will decrease. Focus on God’s greatness – our problems become nothingness.
2. Trust God to lead you from bondage - don’t trust yourself.
3. Fear could, at times, lead us to a positive effect on our life. But fear of God will lead us to wisdom and victory, to do the right things.
4. Accept God for what He’s made of us - We’re UNIQUE in HIS sight. The role we have to play may seem insignificant, but the word entrusted to us by God is great.

Moses had to meet Pharaoh ten times to accomplish his mission and confronted Pharaoh through ten plagues. Besides leading a shattered lot of 600,000 people – he gave them the Ten Commandments relating to God. What then was his secret? Moses went up the mountain – way to communicate with God and he saw God face to face. Though beset by the Israelites all the time, he still had a heart of compassion for them. Therefore, Moses is known as the most effective intercessor and is extolled in Israel - Deut.34:10. - “But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses whom the Lord knew face to face.”

Thank you Francis for accompanying us in our quest for a better understanding of Scripture and your final exhortation – “Encounter God at the burning bush every morning and He will direct your ways in this season of Lent.”

- **Stanley Mattos**

The More Abundant Life

I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. John 10: 1-10

When a former President promised a more abundant life, most people thought it could be attained by having a steady job and a fair share of the country's wealth. Thousands, however, have found their labor frustrating and learned that money cannot buy happiness.

A pastor saw a woman crying at a bus stop and asked her if he could be of any help. "Oh," she replied, "I'm just weary and bored. My husband is a hard worker, but he doesn't earn as much as I want. So I went to work. I get up early every morning, fix breakfast for our four children, pack lunches, and take a bus to my job. Then I return home for more drudgery, a few hours of sleep, and another day just like the one before. I guess I'm just sick of this endless routine." Undoubtedly this person thought that more money could make her happy. Her experience, however, testifies to the self-defeating nature of such thinking.

A wealthy woman called recently to tell me that she was tempted to commit suicide because life had lost all meaning for her. An extravagant house, expensive clothes, beautiful automobiles, elaborate parties, and trips to fabulous resorts had not fulfilled her deepest needs.

The only real cure for such boredom and dissatisfaction is a living relationship with the Lord Jesus. When one is fully surrendered to Him, everything is different. Fellowship with God brightens the darkest day, and the knowledge that we are preparing ourselves for a glorious eternity gives us a new perspective. Christ indeed came that we might have life; and... have it more abundantly.

— H. V. C.

*Where Jesus reigns, there's joy untold;
There's wealth that's richer far than gold;
Though trials come, we rest content
Through grace divine in mercy sent.
— Anon.*

Thought: *The Christian will find satisfaction just where he found salvation.*

Hate Destroys the Hater

What is a resentment? Where does it come from?
What can we do about it?

Resentment comes from a Latin word 're-sentire' which means to feel again. A resentment is born when we re-feel an injury to our pride or any hurt. When anything exists that hurts our pride we may be angry and irritated but we are not yet resentful. The injury grows into a resentment, when we re-feel or nurse it, when we mull it over and dig around it and cultivate it. We are injured and we keep on re-feeling the injury and consequently we infect the wound – it keeps on hurting so that one hurt becomes a thousand hurts – we take it to bed with us, we get up with it – we make up speeches about what we would like to do to the

person responsible, but strange to say, the only person hurt is ourselves – the other person may have forgotten the whole affair – he may not even be aware of our hatred. *'Hate destroys the hater'* – it is not the person being hated that is being hurt, but the one who is doing the hating.

It should be noted that there is such a thing as justified anger. If you kick me in the shins I will be angry and justifiably so. However, if I am angry six months from now that is not a justified anger, it is a resentment – *'Hate destroys the hater.'*

Chronic resentment is like a cancer – it eats into our system causing emotional, spiritual and even bodily harm.

I feel very sorry for those who say, 'I will never forgive him or her'. The Lord's Prayer says: *"Forgive us our sins as we forgive the sins of others"* and there are no exceptions to that rule. I was once giving a lecture on resentment and a girl jumped up and cried out: *"Do you tell me that I have to forgive the man who raped me?"* and I said, *"Yes, you can hang on to that hatred and go to your grave hating or you can let it go and live."* Hate destroys the hater.

Our Lord tells us to forgive our enemies, do good to those who hate us, bless those who curse us, pray for those who treat us badly. We may say to ourselves, surely Our Lord does not intend us to take his words literally. Yes, he does and once again there are no exceptions.

Moreover, it is the only way that it works. Hit back and you start a war, forgive and bring peace – *Hate destroys the hater.*

Resentments come from pride. We will always have this tendency because pride will be with us until we die. However, we can achieve a certain amount of control of pride by emphasising the opposite virtue of humility. Let's not forget, the greater a guy or gal I think I am, the less it takes for someone to dispute that idea. Therefore the more humble we can be the less chance there is of becoming resentful.

The best way to eliminate vices is to introduce the opposite virtue and literally push the vice out. Resentments already contracted can be eliminated by the practice of the opposite virtue of love.

Therefore: (1) we should try to love those whom we resent, (2) we should wish them well, (3) we should speak well of them, (4) we should try and do them a good turn, (5) and one thing that never fails, we should pray for them.

Some *practical suggestions*:

a. Expect criticism. It is almost normal behaviour – it is part of life. If you expect criticism you won't be surprised when it arrives, and remember that criticism is the unconscious tribute that failure pays to success.

b. Let the other fellow get mad. You don't have to get mad. I remember one man's answer to his wife's criticism. He would simply say. 'You could be right, my dear.' End of argument!

c. Words can never hurt us unless we want them to hurt. Someone may have been talking about you for months – you get to know about it – you invite it into your mind. You allow it to hurt you. The only thing that has changed is your attitude.

d. Know yourself. Take an honest look at yourself, ask yourself, 'Who am I to say that these things should not happen to me? I have done many things of which I am now ashamed. Am I so important that I should be singled out for special treatment?'

e. If you get a kick in the pants. Know at least that you are out in front. Every kick is a boost.

f. Ask yourself: how important are these things that are bugging you? Most of them are very unimportant in the overall picture of living happily in society. I'll bet you can't even remember the thing that was bugging you a month ago!

Coping with resentments in our home life.

Humility tells us that we are not the most important person in the home relationship. Probably the baby is. Remember, the smaller the ego, the less chance of being hurt.

Coping with resentments in our social life.

Again, practice humility. I am not the most important person in the community. Be patient with others – we are living with men and women, not angels.

Coping with resentments in our spiritual life.

Resentments are responsible for about 90% of all spiritual maladies. Here are a few: drinking, drunkenness, philandering, separations, divorce, laziness – which is a resentment against work; gluttony – which is a resentment against boredom; jealousy – a resentment against a person; omission of prayers which can be a resentment against God; quitting church – sometimes a resentment against the pastor.

In our emotional life many mental ills begin with resentment. Nervousness, upsets, tensions, fears, phobias often start with resentment.

In our physical life resentments sometimes cause ulcers, tiredness, migraines, allergies, heart disease. Resentment not expressed or removed can pass into the cardiovascular system and tighten the blood vessels – continued injury to the blood vessels can result in hypotension and heart attacks. Doctor Gelfand, a heart specialist, in Philadelphia, examined 438 patients and in 46% of the cases he found there was a psychological factor – mainly resentments.

In our thought life, resentments often bring on mental illness, mental aberrations, forgetfulness. They often blot out reality – many motor car accidents are caused by persons with angry feelings because a very angry person often is not in full control of himself or what he does.

Hate leads to death. Hatred caused the death of millions of Jews.

Love leads to life. It is love that makes the world go round. Forgive us our sins as we forgive the sins of others let not the sun go down on your anger. Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you and then you will be loved (by the Heavenly Father, who makes the rain to fall on good and bad). Love is patient and kind, is never jealous, never boastful or conceited, never rude or selfish. It does not take offence and is not resentful. 1 Corinthians 13.

— John Prendergast SM

Our Ruby Anniversary Waltz

The 31st of October 1964, the Cathedral of St. Joseph, in Jamshedpur saw a couple of people from Bombay, determined to get married in far away Bihar.

And now in the year 2004, we are in Mumbai having spent forty years of a blissful married life; a span of years that saw the love we had for each other blooming in the gift of our five daughters, now adults with their own families in four continents.

Now comes the RUBY (40th) Wedding Anniversary, and since their mummy's name was Ruby, they decided to all return to India and have a 'Great Big Fat Wedding Anniversary'. So through the year there were plans and suggestions for the celebrations; would it be held in India or Canada, Hong Kong, New Zealand or in the place where it all started, Telco Town in Jamshedpur. The days sped swiftly by, and suddenly; we decided to celebrate our memorable day, with whom? We decided that the three persons that made our marriage happen, should meet in an idyllic place and devote that day to each other. We spoke to that person who made it all happen, Jesus; and He decided on the location, 'The House of Prayer' in Khandala. We then decided that this anniversary would be a weekend during which we would review the past four decades and especially what we did in our first Marriage Encounter Session in Jamshedpur in the year 1978. We had saved, for all these years all the worksheets and booklets that we had written during that Encounter and decided that now in 2004 we would re-answer all those questions that we had asked ourselves in 1978.

On the 30th of October as planned, we arrived at the House of Prayer. The evening saw us absorbed in the Marriage encounter session answering the questions we had answered 40 years ago. After writing them individually, we shared them with each other and found that whereas our views had more or less remained the same; yet there were many areas where they had changed. We felt after that exercise that we knew each other much better, and during the journey of our marriage many of our doubts and fears were answered.

We woke up to the 31st of October 2004; our Ruby Anniversary day and as planned Ruby and I went to the Chapel for our Wedding Day Ceremony. At first we felt sad wishing that our children and their families would be with us; and again wishing to be alone with Jesus; we went through the entire Wedding ceremony, by ourselves; renewing our vows, doing the readings of that day and in 'broken voices' singing those hymns that were sung on our wedding day. Then something happened! We saw our Blessed Mother Mary and St Joseph, smiling at us as if to say, "We are with you!" and in a surge of insight we felt the winds of the Spirits of our girls beckoning to us so far away, yet ever so close!

We finished the ceremony, to rush to the Khandala Catholic Church for Sunday morning Mass. The mass went on, and at the Kiss of Peace, we wished those on our right and left; then we turned around to wish those behind us; who do you think we should see but our daughter Evelyn and husband Agnel sitting directly behind us! They were there as they said later on; because they felt that we might be a bit lonely in Khandala and despite their busy schedules, left Pune at

five thirty that morning; just to represent the family. Our hearts whooped with joy and we thanked them and Jesus for seeing that this ‘miracle ‘ could happen.

A quick trip to Lonavala to arrange an Anniversary Cake, and we returned to the House of Prayer and we spent the rest of that morning and afternoon in togetherness. In the evening it was time to leave and as we wished them goodbye we took the train to Mumbai to be in time for a Dinner that was planned by some of our family and friends; and yes we partied till the wee hours of the morning amidst singing, dancing and chats with the family from around the Globe.

And yes! we danced the Anniversary waltz !!

— **Ruby & Jossie D’Silva**

An Evening To Remember

For those of you who don't know, I have just returned from visiting with family in Australia. When one visits Australia, one cannot cease to appreciate the Creator and the beauty with which He has blessed that country. And even though I spent a lot of my time taking in as much as I could of this amazing work of art, my main focus was to spend time with family as we miss them ever so much.

For me, I didn't only have immediate family to meet, but also as a member of CJLOW, had a chance to catch up with those of our members who have moved there. Coincidentally, our Senior Co-ordinator, Tony D'souza and his wife Rufie were also visiting their children in Australia at the same time and we all had an opportunity to get together one day.

Yes, on January 16, 2005 all the former members of CJLOW, who are now residents of Australia and us visitors from India, met at the home of Trevor, Tony's son to catch up on old times. Meeting for fellowship is second nature to us in CJLOW. The group that met included Tony-Rufie, the families of Trevor-Michelle, Norman-Giselle, Leslie-Sandra, Gordon-Arlene, Lenny-Maria, a few other friends from back home and myself.

We started the evening with Norman leading us in a short time of Praise and Thanks to God for bringing us all together. We had a lovely afternoon of fun, with singing, chatting and jokes galore. It was so good to hear Leslie back on the keyboard after so many years, and Norman strumming away on his guitar giving life to music. It truly was a very enjoyable day and felt so good being in the company of those we care for and otherwise don't have around us. None of us wanted to leave, but the day had to draw to a close as we all said 'goodbye & au revoir' !!

My holiday to Australia made me realize how important family is, be it our immediate family or our extended family of CJLOW. How, important it is for us to stay in touch, how we must cherish the time we spend together. It is so good to know that even though at most times we are oceans apart from each other, the bonds we have made still remain strong.

— **Vanessa Rodrigues**

Celebrating Togetherness

Jan 27, 7.00 p.m. “Get me to the church on time...” As is his motto, Agnelo was here by 6.50 pm with Jean in step.

The Celebration of 25 years of togetherness began at the altar. The intervening years between the first time at the altar at Gloria Church, Byculla and now 25 years later at St. Anne’s Church, Mazagaon. This time however it was a celebration of five-getherness, with Venetia, Patricia and Warren added in.

Fr. Bosco D’Souza, who self- admittedly played marbles with the ‘quiet’ Agnelo, as the main celebrant made the Eucharist a personal and warm celebration alongwith Fr. Lancy Pinto and Fr. Simon D’Souza (a same bencher with Agnelo in his college days at St. Xavier’s, College). Simple, meaningful hymns rendered by the CJLOW Music Ministry added to the flavour. After Communion, Warren sang from his heart; “In moments like these, we lift up our hearts in thanks to the Father of love, for 25 years that Dad and Mum shared and showered on us their love...” In the recessional hymn Agnelo and Jean publicly professed their love for each other with a sonorous and melodious rendition of “I’ll never find another You.” This was reminiscent of their singing days with the Paranjyoti Choir, where they met each other.

During the celebration that followed, the children were as eloquent in their affirmation of Agnelo and Jean, as they were spontaneous. Venetia said, “I will share some of Dad and Mum’s little secrets – qualities, we have picked up. Communication : the core of their strong relationship. Every evening, after dinner during their sharing time they catch up on each other’s day. Because of this they pick up each other’s vibes even without words. Adjustment : It’s amusing to see them fight about who will do the morning shift to fill the water. They fight about wanting to be the one who will get up, so that the other can sleep extra two days in a row. Fond memories : All of us go through ups and downs. But they chat with us about the good times – their courtship days, memories of us as babies. Love and Prayer : I left the best two qualities for the last. Their love is a strong love. Where they thank and feel not as two people, but one. All made possible through prayer. I can confidently say that God has been the third person in their marriage and an important member of our family.

Patsy recalls, “Actions speak louder than words. Dad and Mum taught us to share. From the simple act of sharing sweets we got at school for a classmate’s birthday we have learnt that there is much more joy in giving than in receiving. Our birthdays were special. Dad would take the day off and decorate the room and organize games. Mum would prepare wonderful snacks and dinner. We were made to feel very special.

Mum and Dad encouraged us to take part in competitions. Participation became a family affair! Why, Mum even took part in a singing competition recently, just to give me courage. Sharing hard, rough times has brought us closer together. Today we have become mature individuals who can make decisions and be confident. You don’t have to look far to know why...

Warren recited a poem, “When you thought I wasn’t looking,” which brought out all the little things that Jean has done... She thought we were not looking – but we could see the warm glow reflected in her heart, reflected on her face.

Agnelo and Jean, though tongue tied at the toast, from their children, were warm in their reply.

What followed of course was celebration!

Aroon Fernandes led the Prayer before meals. During the Blessing Song which followed there were literally showers of blessings! Agnelo remembered that there had been showers, 25 years ago too.

Well who needs a better summary. January 27, 11.55pm. An end of the silver era for Agenlo and Jean and on to the start of the golden era.

Sangeeta Fernandes

The Rock

Aman was sleeping at night in his cabin when suddenly his room filled with light and the Savior appeared. The Lord told the man He had work for him to do, and showed him a large rock in front of his cabin. The Lord explained that the man was to push against the rock with all his might. This the man did, day after day. For many years he toiled from sun up to sun down, his shoulders set squarely against the cold, massive surface of the unmovable rock, pushing with all his might. Each night the man returned to his cabin sore, and worn out, feeling that his whole day had been spent in vain.

Seeing that the man was showing signs of discouragement, Satan decided to enter the picture by placing thoughts into the man's mind: "You have been pushing against that rock for a long time, and it hasn't budged. Why kill yourself over this? You are never going to move it."

The man began to believe that the task was impossible and that he was a failure, and he felt discouraged and disheartened. "Why kill myself over this?" he thought. "I'll just put in my time, giving just the minimum effort and that will be good enough." And that he planned to do until one day he decided to make it a matter of prayer and take his troubled thoughts to the Lord.

"Lord", he said, "I have labored long and hard in your service, putting all my strength to do that which you have asked. Yet, after all this time, I have not even budged that rock by half a millimeter. What is wrong? Why am I failing?"

The Lord responded compassionately, "My friend, when I asked you to serve me and you accepted, I told you that your task was to push against the rock with all your strength, which you have done. Never once did I mention to you that I expected you to move it. Your task was to push. And now you come to me, with your strength spent, thinking that you have failed, but is that really so? Look at yourself. Your arms are strong and muscled, your back sinewy and brown, your hands are callused from constant pressure, and your legs have become massive and hard. Through opposition you have grown much and your abilities now surpass that which you used to have, yet you haven't moved the rock. Your calling was to be obedient and to push and to exercise your faith and trust in My wisdom. This you have done. "I, my friend, will now move the rock."

At times when we hear a word from God, we tend to use our own intellect to decipher what He wants, when actually what God wants is just simple obedience and faith in Him. By all means, exercise the faith that moves mountains, but remember, it is still God who actually moves them. As Oswald Chambers said: "God does not call us to be successful, only faithful."

— Courtesy Internet.
Sent in by **Amorette Pereira**

Spotlight

“Both Ruby and I feel that we have been truly blessed by Jesus and our fellowmen; we believe that we need to give to society more than we have received and now in the sunset years of our lives it is our ardent desire to give of our best to our country; to society and to our immediate and extended family. We place ourselves at the disposal of our Parish Priest and the Community of Jesus Light of the World, to be of service in any manner they deem fit; now we belong to the people of God and our only desire is that our spirits shine in the glory of His Holy Name.” This very aptly sums up the spirit of both Joseph (*fondly known as Jossie*) and Ruby who joined CJLOW last year.

Both Jossie and Ruby were drawn to the Community because of the ‘spirit of FAMILY’ that they saw present during the New Creation in Christ Retreat that they attended in 2003 and also during the subsequent meetings that they attended. In fact the NCCR was the first retreat that they had attended in more than thirty years.

Jossie, an engineer by profession, spent 34 years in Jamshedpur while employed with Tata Engineering. After his retirement he and Ruby returned to Mumbai to settle down. An outgoing person, Jossie loves being involved with family and Church. He also likes to write, plays the piano and is a voracious reader.

Ruby too involves herself with family and Church. She also spends time teaching under privileged children and assisting them in their studies. Her other interests include gardening, cooking and housekeeping,

As Jossie and Ruby offer themselves in service to the Church and the Community, we pray that the Lord will use them in a powerful manner to bring more into His fold.