

**MISSIONARY FAMILIES OF CHRIST INDIA NEWSLETTER**  
**(FORMERLY KNOWN AS COUPLES FOR CHRIST INDIA)**



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# MESSAGE FOR THE NEW YEAR

As we enter the year 2022, and with the pandemic and its effects taking on different shapes and forms, the "new normal" is yet to be seen. However, our Lord, the same yesterday, today and forever remains the central figure and goal of our history.

The new year provides the opportunity for us to turn a new page and give thanks for the blessings of the past year, despite the challenges, adversities and uncertainties that we continue to endure. With our mission to evangelize and defend life, we can certainly see that with the Churches closed and the regular impact of parish activities limited, the awareness and experience of Catholic life is taking an even harder hit than when the need was to be counter culture. Community members, regular Catholics and those outside the boundaries of the Church are experiencing this silence, on the part of Catholic life in various ways. In some parishes, First Holy Communion and Confirmations are being postponed, catechism classes have moved online or are temporarily cancelled, the inability to go for Mass leaves the faithful without the opportunity to hear the teaching of the Church expounded. It is in this environment that the very basic work of catechising the faithful becomes critical. Living the faith becomes difficult if it is not grounded in unchanging Truth.

As we set out into this new year, let us take it upon ourselves to be renewed in our faith, to make an effort to study the Catechism, to teach our children and be challenged to put its principles into practice to be able to navigate through these uncertain times.

As always, our refuge remains the Blessed Virgin Mary who not only pondered every significant

event in her heart, but she also guided the disciples to draw close to the heart of Jesus without being afraid. If not for her maternal strength and courage, we her children would not be able to remain steadfast in pursuing the heart of her Son! I pray that the power contained in the simple prayers of the Rosary be your help as you strive to live out the faith!

**I will go peaceably and firmly to the Catholic Church: for if Faith is so important to our salvation, I will seek it where true Faith first began, seek it among those who received it from God Himself.  
--St. Elizabeth Ann Seton**



**COUNTRY SERVANT - JIMMY XAVIER**



### LIVING THE FAITH

The tragic truth in our Church today is that many Catholics are lapsed in their faith. Even Pope Francis says that 99 of the 100 sheep are lost. Why is this the case?

Many lay Catholics do not understand the faith. They may have been born and raised as Catholics, they may have had some catechism in school, but they have not grown to a fuller and deeper appreciation of what it means to be Catholic, or for that matter, what it means to be a Christian. Thus they are easily taken by a world that is in the darkness of sin and evil, they are quick to fall to the allures of their fallen flesh, and they are susceptible to the lies of the devil.

Further, a surprising situation is that even Catholics who have gone through renewal programs (such as the Life in the Spirit Seminar) and have started to live renewed lives in Christ, are themselves not knowledgeable about the Catholic faith. They have become Christian but not necessarily fully Catholic. They have been evangelized but remain uncatechized.

But is not the important thing to know Christ and to live Christ? Yes, conversion, repentance and turning to faith in Jesus are basic. But Jesus also established the Church in order to carry on with his work. We are not called to be Christians apart from others. We are called to be part of the body of Christ on earth, which is the Church. The Church is our family, our protection, our support structure, our refuge, the instrument of sacramental grace, and the base for mission in the world.

And there is only one Church that Jesus established, founded on Peter. This is the Catholic Church, with the

Pope as the Vicar of Christ. Jesus is the only Savior, and the Catholic Church is the essential means by which people can attain to this salvation.

Aside from the reality that the Catholic Church is the only church that Jesus founded, we find in her the fullness of the Christian faith, which is so crucial for the world, especially in these times of darkness and confusion. Only we give the Blessed Virgin Mary the honor and veneration that she truly deserves. She is not only the Mother of God, she is co-Redemptrix, deeply engaged in the spiritual war that the Church herself is engaged in. We give honor and recognition to the saints, whose lives we are called to imitate, and on whom we call on for help and intercession. We have the sacraments, the channels of grace by which we are able to live truly Christian lives, in righteousness and holiness.

So all these are to say that it is of crucial importance for Catholics to know the faith, so that they can fully live it. Catholics are called to be holy as God is holy, we are called to engage in spiritual war against a powerful foe, we are called to be light to the world. All these we can do if we know the fullness of our calling, and if we rely on the body that Jesus left us in order to be of help to us.

A final word. It is of crucial importance for the shepherds over the flock to teach the fullness not just of the gospel but of the Catholic faith. They must not fall into modernism. They must guide the sheep and not mislead them.

**SERVANT GENERAL - FRANK PADILLA**



**The world needs Christians who know how to demonstrate the beauty of the Gospel by the way we live.**

**POPE FRANCIS**

# LIVE THE FAITH

I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by [this] joy, while pointing out new paths for the Church's journey in years to come.

Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*

In 1981, the Live Christ Share Christ (LCSC) programme was started with the express mission to encourage members to go forth and make disciples of the nations. In parishes, communities and families, the light of Christ was spread, by the families who took on the challenge. As the times evolved, so did the mission. In line with the Church's clarion call to new evangelisation, the Live Christ, Share Christ (LCSC) programme launched its fifth pillar - Live the Faith (LtF).

The objective is to help modern Catholics cut through the sea of misinformation and propaganda with the sword of truth. Honest, practical answers to questions of faith and providing everyday Catholics with a deeper and richer foundation of why we believe what we believe, so that armed with knowledge and powered by joy, we will all be effective ambassadors for Christ. Live the Faith will focus on Catechesis - teaching the faith and Apologetics - defending the faith and will comprise a series of specific teachings around important articles of the Catholic faith.



How can couples and young men and women stay catholic in an increasingly secular world? Can Catholics balance their faith with the demands of modern life? Enter the Live the Faith Forum - a series of talks to help people understand the catholic faith and to grow in it by embracing a Catholic lifestyle. Everytime we say the 'I Believe', do we really know what we're professing? That's where the Know The Faith Series comes in, with 6 sessions that will explain the 12 articles of the creed. Most Cradle Catholics, have received a rich legacy of

faith from our families, and the Defend the Faith apologetics series, will explain the historical and theological reasons on critical Catholic issues, so that armed with this information, we'll be able to understand for ourselves and defend our faith and principles. The 6 sessions will cover topics like:

- Defending the Faith: Our One True Church
- The Saints: Heavenly Friends
- Mama Mia: Knowing our Mother Mary
- The Sacraments: Connecting our Souls to Christ and His Church
- The Eucharist: Our Food for the Journey
- The Bible: God's Love Letter to Us

Helping breathe a new life into how we understand and live out our sacraments, the Celebrate the Faith programme offers catechesis on specific sacraments.

- For the Eucharist - Blessed By the Eucharist a First Holy Communion Prep programme for Kids (along with their parents).
- For Confirmation - Activate the Power - a confirmation prep programme for teens.
- For Matrimony - Engaged Couples Retreat - a marriage prep programme (accredited by the Church).

As Catholics, we are called to go out into the world and



be fishers of men, and as we increasingly begin to cast our nets across the internet, the Live The Faith programme will also aim at amplifying the Catholic Social Mediaverse, through collaborations and partnerships with Catholic voices across the globe with Media Involvement through: Shows and Podcasts, Partnering with Catholic Social Media Influencers etc.

**Roxanna Pinto**  
South Bangalore

# LIT 2021

The National Singles Conference 2021 was conducted virtually on the 28th and 29th of August. The conference witnessed a great deal of enthusiasm and excitement from everyone attending. The theme chosen this year was Acts 13:47 "Sent to shine." The constant reels, competitions and quizzes via the Instagram handle got everyone actively participating in some way or the other.

To begin with, Our Emcees, Ingrid De Noronha and Silverio Fernandes extended a warm and hearty welcome to all of us present. We viewers were immediately virtually transported to a ship and were welcomed on board. On the first day, we had Christ Avenue as our music ministry and Conroy Mendes led us into praise and worship on Day 1.



For our first session, we had Chris Crasta from MFC Mangalore, who spoke about the DARK areas that block Christ's light in our lives.

They are:  
Dual Lives,  
All about me,  
Rebellion and  
Keeping the truth away.

After explaining each of these areas in detail, Chris invited each and every one of us to look into each of the DARK areas of our lives. Towards the end, Chris invited us to shed light on the dark areas of our lives. The session ended with a short time of adoration. After this, we then got to visit the "Lit Lounge"- an interactive session amongst singles who share their

experience with us and how they practice the sessions in their individual lives. The first session was between Elricia Mascarenhas and Michelle Serrao. Once the session ended, Our Emcees conducted a few games for us. Day 1 ended with some virtual games which saw the chat box exploding with responses and announcements for the next day.

The second day began with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Fr. Noel Menezes, celebrated the mass for us. After this, a few games were held by the emcees. Mattias Menezes, from MFC Porvorim led us all into a beautiful praise and worship



session. Our first session for the day was conducted by Diana Vincent, from MFC Bangalore, who spoke about our mission, now that we have identified the dark areas in our lives and have encountered the light.

Diana spoke about the cycle of evangelization which consists of 5 steps, namely:

Witness,  
Proclamation,  
Discipleship,  
Community and  
Mission.

Diana spoke at length on the first two steps. She said that in order to become effective witnesses, we must strive to overcome the dark areas of our lives. She spoke about some concrete ways on how we could become witnesses namely, Living as life

of integrity, Interested in others, Growing in Humility, Heed God's Teachings and Tune in God. Some practical ways as well were suggested to proclaim the gospel such as: Wearing clothing and jewelry that advertises our faith, share community testimonies, post scripture verses on our social media handles among others. Weinschel Baretto, shared his testimony on how he became a witness. Once the second session ended, we had a "Lit Lounge" session. Christabelle Lobo from MFC Porvorim and Valucio Rodrigues from MFC Margao were invited to share their experiences and views with us for this session.

The afternoon session began with some fun games and at 3 pm, the Divine Mercy Rosary was recited with representatives from various chapters taking charge for each decade. Everyone actively participated in the rosary. After the rosary, Jared led us into praise and worship.

This was then followed by Brandon Miranda speaking on the remaining 3 aspects of Evangelization. Brandon, spoke about Discipleship Community and Mission.



He spoke about the various opportunities we get in our lives to be disciplined by those in authority and how we must avail these. He spoke about the areas where the

community leads us on this path of discipleship-households and the community at large. He spoke about ways in which we can use our talents, time and treasure to help the community and our parishes. Brandon spoke about Mission where he

invited each one of us to move out of our comfort zone and participate in these whenever the opportunity presents itself. Brandon cited the example of St. Paul who underwent all these stages in order to become a true disciple and encouraged each one of us to follow his example along this journey of becoming a true disciple. Noam Rosario from MFC Mangalore testified how he is living his call to discipleship. After that, we had our final "Lit Lounge" session with Inacio Fernandes from MFC Caranzalem and Aarti Dabolkar from MFC Calangute.

The "Lit Lounge" sessions were extremely enriching and informative, encouraging and insightful. Towards the end of the second day, the winners for the various conference competitions were declared.

Our Country Servant, Jimmy Xavier addressed us and encouraged us all to practice the teachings of the conference. He congratulated the organizing team for the success of the conference as well. A vote of thanks was delivered by the emcees, Ingrid and Silverio. The second day ended with a praise fest which was participated by every participant.

**Kimberly Noronha**  
MFC Singles Caranzalem

**For this is what the Lord has commanded us:  
"I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth."  
Acts 13:47**

My lighthouse, my lighthouse, Shining in the darkness I will follow you..."

The resemblance of Lighthouse to our Christ Jesus is inch-perfect. We all go through troubled seasons of storms, hardships, self-doubt, sorrow, pain and Jesus is this unwavering light that guides us to the shore. This year I struggled with my prayer life. I found it very difficult to do my personal prayer daily due to laziness, boredom, lack of time management and mostly I took God for granted. This conference encouraged me to tune in with God and grow in the Spirit. I was laid-back and the conference was a booster shot to kick-start my prayer life. I now pray regularly to thank the Lord for His faithfulness and protection. Prayer is a tool to perceive God's Light to overcome storms. In addition, I was touched to know that I was a light in my friends life. He said that MFC has supported his spiritual, emotional and psychological growth.

Keep your gaze on the Lighthouse(Christ), for you may start reflecting His light to others.

**Isabel Noronha, South Bangalore.**



This was my first MFC conference after the CLS, I had the chance to meet them in person and I took the opportunity to travel to Pune so I can meet my new found friends and pray and grow together through the VNSC. The teachings were wonderful and heartfelt, the praise and worship melodious and warming. I especially found the teaching on Sought, Sanctified and Set apart calling me to contribute more towards the community and the church. The line that stood out for me was-"The greatest missionary of the church was the murderer who stoned St.Stephen, the first martyr" which pushed me to have courage in situations where I have to defend my faith and never to be ashamed of it. But overall, building friendships through prayer was the most significant experience of the VNSC. We came together as a family into one of our formators house and learnt more about each person, about our Lord and Saviour and about ourselves. Every single minute was new and exciting. And I cannot wait for conferences, competitions, family days and much more to come. Thanks to MFC for bringing in Jesus' light in my life and making it Lit!

**Natasha Martin, Pune.**



This year's National Singles Conference was a very different experience for me because I was blessed with the opportunity to serve in the music ministry. Right from the practice sessions all the way to the conference,

it was an absolute joy to be a part of Christ Avenue and play alongside such talent.

Being part of the music ministry, I also got a sneak peek of what happens behind the scenes and all the effort that goes into making a (virtual) conference a successful one. It was really wonderful to witness first-hand the small service team working with so much dedication and enthusiasm. But what stood out was their humility and approachable nature, something that continues to inspire me to be of service to others.

**Jesus Leoncey, Calangute, Goa**



It was refreshing attending the conference. I wouldn't say that the conference gave me all the answers, but it did help me take a few steps, gave me the little inspiration I need and continue to need, and more than anything, exposed me to the struggles of others in the community

through their various testimonies. I wouldn't say that I'm a better person today, but I sure believe that this event did its bit in getting me thinking, out of my comfort zone, and focusing on Him instead, and what He wants of me. And I hope to reach there someday, with His help and with all your prayers, but until then, here's to many more conferences and a lot more glory to God. Amen.

**Renata, Mangalore**

# WHY APOLOGETICS?

### **Is Apologetics relevant in today's world?**

In the current world scenario, when there are many doubts about the existence of God, when there are many versions of the 'right' path and distortions about what the Catholic Church teaches, it is very important for the laity to equip themselves with the Truths of the Faith and Scripture. Every day, the world is grappling with issues about sexuality, abortion and Catholics are questioned about their stances on these hot-button topics. Catholic understanding of the sacraments, the Real Presence in the Eucharist, veneration of the Blessed Mother and the saints has also waned and there is a need for re-catechizing the faithful and apologetics helps provide explanations for why we believe what we believe.

### **What inspired you to know more of the faith?**

I came to a personal relationship with God in my teens and I was a part of the youth section, through the program, there used to be constant questions coming from other youth about the faith. This inspired me to find not just the answers but to deepen my understanding of the faith even further. A lot of the questions that were asked to me were questions that I had myself and I would dedicate time to find these answers so that I could help the others who were looking for the answers themselves.

As I grew deeper in my understanding of the faith I found that Catholicism has very strong reasoning that goes along with faith to explain the mysteries of life and our spiritual journeys. The wisdom of the Church Fathers, the teachings of the Magisterium and the Catechism of the Catholic Church were so enlightening that I devoted even more of my time learning them.

### **What are the challenges in learning about apologetics?**

I think many people feel that defending the faith requires a theology degree. On the other hand, we are bombarded every day by the 'wisdom' of the world and the way Catholicism is portrayed in media that we take that for the truth, rather than find out what the actual truth is. Some Catholics themselves believe that we worship Mary or that contraception is not really condemned by the Church.

There are plenty of resources out there, but the availability of these resources are not known and

therefore not spread far and wide among Catholic communities and parishes. While the amount of knowledge to be gained is vast and can seem intimidating, one need not know everything at once, but little by little grow in an understanding of the faith through various resources available.

### **What are the few ways people can learn and be a witness to the faith?**

First of all we must understand that all of us as Christians are called to make a defense for what we believe. 1 Peter 3:15: "Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence". This is the starting point as is it a clear call for us to know what our faith teaches us. It also requires a mindset to challenge what the world has told us about what the Catholic Church teaches and to actually find out for ourselves. This is especially needed for hot-button issues like abortion, contraception or sexuality and gender issues. This also means we understand why among all professing Christian faiths, Catholicism is the one true faith.

Most importantly, as St. Peter calls out in the verse mentioned above – we must make our defense with gentleness and reverence and love. We must be gentle in communicating what we believe, not from a position of self-righteousness but in reverence to God who has revealed to us His truths that we are passing on for the salvation of souls. With this in place, we start with the scriptures, understanding the scriptures in the light of what the Church teaches, which is why I feel that every Catholic household must possess a copy of the Catechism of the Catholic Church along with the Holy Bible. Then there are websites like catholic.com, ewtn.com, ascensionpress.com, aleteia.com and prominent authors like Bishop Robert Barron, Scott Hahn, Trent Horn among several others who have books, YouTube Channels and podcasts that one can listen. While technology might sometimes cause us to drift away, many Catholics are now using it to spread and learn the Word of God and we too should take advantage to listen and watch resource people from across the World.

**Biron D'Souza**  
**MFC Couples-Dubai/UAE**



# TRAINING & EVANGELIZATION



## Youth Intake Camp

An online youth camp was conducted by MFC Mumbai from the 4<sup>th</sup> of July onwards with 66 participants.



## Hope Unlocked

MFC Singles Gurgaon conducted a Christian Life Seminar from July 18<sup>th</sup> onwards attended by 20 participants.



## Live Pure

MFC Youth Mumbai organized the program with 15 participants attending the same on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July and 7<sup>th</sup> of August.



## Rise and Shine

35 participants attended the youth camp on the 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> of August conducted by MFC Youth Bangalore.



## Rejoice

30 participants attended the Christian Life Seminar conducted by the MFC Singles, Mangalore from 11<sup>th</sup> of September onwards.



## Refresh

101 participants attended the Christian Life Seminar on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September conducted by MFC Singles Bangalore.

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# TRAINING & EVANGELIZATION

## Prayer for Missionaries

Heavenly Father, we lift up to you all missionaries working in Your vineyard. Lord, you have called them away from home to follow You to fulfil Your will in their lives and in the lives of those they come in contact with.

Father, we ask you to protect them and keep them safe. We pray that all those whom they reach out to may be open and willing to receive the beautiful and life-altering truth of Your Son, Jesus Christ. We pray for all those missionaries who feel discouraged. Comfort them with your assurance that their labour is not in vain.

We pray for missionaries rendering their tireless services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Help them act with your wisdom and guidance during these times. Grant them good health. Father, as many are quarantined, we pray that outreach via the internet or other forms of communication may be all the more powerful. Help them to connect even when not in person and to truly represent You well during these tense days, so that they may bring your message of joy, love and peace to everyone. Amen



### Heart of Light

A Virtual Handmaids Conference was conducted for 150 women on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September.



### Christian Life Seminar

64 participants attended the program on the 26<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> of September and 3<sup>rd</sup> of October at the Chapel at Zari, Subir Parish.



### Chosen

The Christian Life Seminar conducted by MFC Singles Calangute, Goa on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October, was attended by 17 participants.



### Shine

A Virtual National Kids Conference was conducted for the kids from the 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> of October.



### Outreach program

An outreach program was conducted for 60 participants on the 30<sup>th</sup> of October at Randham, Vellore.



### Stay In Love

21 couples attended the Christian Life Seminar conducted by MFC Couples Gudgaon from the 31<sup>st</sup> of October onwards.

# TRAINING & EVANGELIZATION

## CONSECRATION TO OUR LADY OF VICTORY



O Blessed Virgin Mary, you with your Son Jesus crushed the head of the serpent.

In the spiritual war that continues to rage in the heavens and on earth, you have already won the victory.

Your holy warriors stand before you, dear Mother Mary.

We consecrate ourselves to the cause of your Son Jesus, the Redeemer of the world,

and to you as his Co-Redemptrix. We dedicate ourselves to the task of winning souls for the Kingdom. We commit to do battle against all evil forces.

Cover us with your mantle of protection as you send us forth under your banner. Amen.

Mary, Star of the New Evangelization, pray for us.

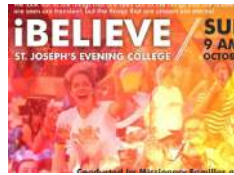
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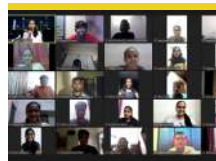


<http://www.youtube.com/c/MFCIndia>  
[www.mfc.org.in](http://www.mfc.org.in)



### I Believe

A one day retreat was organized for 450 students of St. Joseph Evening college on the 31<sup>st</sup> of October.



### LIMITLESS 2021

A Virtual Youth Intake Camp was conducted by MFC Youth, Mangalore for 80 participants on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of October and 1<sup>st</sup> of November.



### I Believe

A one day retreat was organized for 250 students of St. Joseph Institution & Church on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November.



### I Believe

A one day retreat was organized for 550 students of St. Joseph PU college on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November.



### Breakthrough

A National conference was conducted for 250 youth members of the community on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of November.



### Outreach Program

An outreach program to Arc of hope, Candolim; a home for the aged was organised by the Singles of Calangute Chapter on the 14<sup>th</sup> of November.



*May our Lord Jesus bring joy and happiness to you.  
Happy New Year 2022!*