



WITNESS

THE MISSIONARY MANDATE

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OUR MISSION TO WITNESS

In the last edition, we saw how important it is for us to intercede, to be sensitive to the needs to those around us because their salvation is at stake. Our prayers which stem out of a concern for our brothers and sisters will also lead and aid us in witnessing to them. We are a missionary community and we must never forget that as Christians, the Great Commission is to be carried out always.

Matthew 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

When we look around, we see so many people who are grappling in the darkness and do not know their Saviour. There are some who are nominally Christian but have not come to encounter Christ personally or have been overcome by the worries or pleasures of the world. They need to be witnessed to and we need to bring God's salvation to them. We have been entrusted this work and we are an essential part of God's plan for salvation.

Romans 10:13-15 For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

Our witnessing takes many forms – most importantly in the way we conduct our lives. But it also compels us to share what God has done for us. It will be selfish for us to know of a great treasure and not share of it to

those who do not know! Witnessing means attaining the simple goal of getting them interested in what God has to offer.

We realise that witnessing builds us and allows us to grow in faith as we look to give unselfishly of our time, talent and treasure to the furtherance of the mission. Witnessing also means that we love and serve our Parishes. As a lay family ministry, our calling requires us to co-operate with the Parish priests in reaching out to the faithful and edifying their family lives through what we have experienced and what we have learnt.

"The Church's love for the poor... is a part of her constant tradition" (CCC 2444). Yes, indeed we are called to be a part of this tradition in prioritizing the poor. We hear this often, but we also need to take steps to bring this to fruition. It means that we too must live lives within our means, taking on a humble lifestyle as Christ our Lord did. The corporal acts of mercy must go hand in hand with the spiritual acts of mercy. "Giving alms to the poor is one of the chief witnesses to fraternal charity..." (CCC 2447). So we know that this too, is a call to witness.

When we cooperate with our parishes in witnessing to both the poor in spirit and materially poor, we build the Kingdom of God here on earth and assist our Mother Church in fulfilling it's commission.



COUNTRY SERVANT-A.V.JOSE



CALLED TO WITNESS

Our Catholic Church is a missionary Church. She exists to proclaim the good news of salvation in Jesus to the whole world and to bring them into the sheepfold to be formed and cared for.

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, he gave his final instructions to his disciples, to go and proclaim the gospel to everyone and to make disciples of all nations. Such is a daunting task, and it depends on the power of the Holy Spirit, which was poured out upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost. On that day, Peter, proclaiming themselves to be witnesses to Jesus (Acts 2:32), preached one sermon and 3,000 people were converted.

The Holy Spirit is the agent of evangelization. God sent forth his disciples, telling them, “you will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8). This was empowerment for worldwide mission.

Now effectiveness in accomplishing the commission of Jesus to do mission is dependent on the instruments used, which are to be witnesses. To be a witness necessitates a twofold action: a silent and a verbal witness. We are to witness silently by the holiness of our lives.

We witness to Christ, who called us to follow in his footsteps. We might be eloquent in our preaching, but if people do not see Christ in us, then it will lack convincing power.

On the other hand, we also have to verbally proclaim the gospel. We need to preach Jesus the Messiah as Savior and Lord. Otherwise, people might admire us for what they see in us or for the good we do, but would not know where all of that comes from. They might even be misled in seeking the conviction, peace and joy we exhibit by going to false gospels and the New Age.

Our witnessing is to be consistent and persistent. We are to be holy in every aspect of our conduct (1 Pt 1:15b). We are to “proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient” (2 Tm 4:2a). We are to live Christ and his ways always and in every way.

In witnessing, we must know that much of the world, steeped in darkness and sin, is antagonistic to the gospel message. It will not be easy for us. There will be ridicule, oppression and even persecution. There can be martyrdom. Infact, the Greek word for martyr means witness. So to be a witness is not only to be holy, not only to proclaim Jesus, but to be ready to give one’s life for the cause of Christ. Indeed, Jesus showed the way, and that was the way of the cross. We are called to follow in his footsteps.

Such is our call. Our conviction should be that of Paul, who said, “Yet I consider life of no importance to me, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to bear witness to the gospel of God’s grace.” (Acts 20:24).

SERVANT GENERAL - FRANK PADILLA



“Though it is true that this mission demands great generosity on our part, it would be wrong to see it as a heroic individual undertaking, for it is first and foremost the Lord’s work, surpassing anything which we can see and understand. Jesus is “the first and greatest evangelizer”—Evangelii Gaudium

POPE FRANCIS

BEARING WITNESS



God rekindled a desire within me during the **Assam** Mission; to deepen my thirst for Him and to trust Him as He leads me into deeper waters. I experienced great joy in my heart, as God used me as an instrument in His vineyard, to reach out to the youth and share my life. Despite

language being a barrier, the Holy Spirit guided me through the mission and made me realise that nothing is impossible with our God. Missionary life is perceived to be tough but with Christ aside the journey is beautiful.

Lactus Fernandes, CFCI Singles South Bangalore

A recent visit to an old age home in Goa allowed me to be a source of care and comfort to the elderly living there. I felt great happiness and contentment as I spent my evening singing with people who have given their all raising their own families. Allowing these people who are often forgotten, to feel a sense of belonging is a priceless joy.



I praise God for the opportunity to be an instrument of his compassion and love.

Christabelle Lobo, CFCI Singles Porvorim, Goa



What started as a desire soon turned into a passion where we felt God really asking us to step out of our comfort zone and spend time with our brethren in North East.

We have been to **Assam, West Bengal, Orissa and Patna** on different missions which made us realize the importance of things we take for granted - Holy Eucharist, Confession etc.

Being on a mission, we have gained a new perspective on our religion, strengthened our faith and have learnt true hospitality from the natives there. We had few concerns about our children since they were small. But surrendered all our fears to the Lord and started our journey. It was miraculous to see God working throughout. If with complete faith we lay our lives down at the foot of our Lord, He will use us, take care of us and bless us.

Luke 6:38 – "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you

use, it will be measured to you."

Jeswin and Lavisha, CFCI Couples Mangalore

For all the good things the Lord has done for us, we wanted to serve him in every way possible. As we said yes to go on mission, the Lord taught us to be humble and trust in Him, rather than depending on our strength. We have been on mission to **Gulbarga, Shimoga and Hiriya** while we were 2 months pregnant and even when our little one was 2 months old. Our God has protected us and been with us throughout our journey to different places. We will continue to serve Him wherever we find opportunities.



Monthu and Vinitha, CFCI Couples North Bangalore

The mission helped me to develop a deeper trust in God, deepen my prayer and devotion to the Eucharist.

There were numerous instances during the mission trip to **Malawi, Africa** when the best of our plans went for a toss. But each time God came through with something better. Apart from the regular youth groups that we ministered to, we were also met by immigration staff, traffic police, shopkeepers etc. who were curious to know what we do! To answer them without fear that we are Catholic and mission volunteers from India was definitely not easy. But placing our trust in God taught me so much in these 4 months of mission.



Aaron Gomes, CFCI Singles Caranzalem, Goa

God loves a cheerful giver! And for me, serving in the parish is one of the many opportunities by which I can give of myself to the Church and God Himself. Over the years, I have been serving as a Lector, in the Choir, by helping with the collection and counting, etc. This has given me lots of joy and, I



believe, abundant blessings.

Seeing my wife Imelda and me serve, my kids have taken after us. But more than that I've had many many people come up to us to appreciate the way we have been serving "as a family".

Ilidio de Noronha, CFCI Couples Caranzalem, Goa

INTERVIEW WITH THE CCBI FAMILY COMMISSION CHAIRMAN

As the new chairman, what is your vision for CCBI and what plans do you have for the coming year?

As Christians, we have non-negotiable mandate from the Lord Jesus Christ to "go to the ends of the world" and bear witness to him that is witness to God's Message. This is the message of salvation for the humans. The message of God for the human salvation is Jesus Christ himself. This fact is absolutely made clear to us right from the beginning of His ministry on earth.

Again, if we systematically unfold the life of Jesus Christ, it is evident that He is the presence of the Triune God on earth – God with us. For instance, "Those who see me see the Father", "I and the Father are one" and "I will ask the Father to send you the Counselor". So, God is Trinity (Communion) and that is precisely the good news and the message.

Those who accept the message are the ones willing to model on a communitarian way of life; a life that reaches-out. We believe that family manifests this way of life in its primary form; and is the first school for any individual to promote this way.

Thus, CCBI's effort is to make people understand this importance and to promote this way of living in the Church and outside of it. Here we see an unscrupulous connection between families, Small Christian Communities and neighborhood communities. CCBI Family Commission is committed to promoting families where there is the communitarian presence of God, who in turn embraces humans as one family.



In what way do you think we at Couples For Christ India can be of help and be a part of your vision to build strong Christ-centered families in the country?

Family life has different segments - couples, parents-children, siblings, family-neighborhood etc. The perfect communion of God needs to be experienced and imbibed at every segment of this family life.

Couples For Christ India has a catalyst role to play by promoting a communitarian way of living through family apostolate can easily be involved in training of couples (marriage preparation), training of children (catechizing them), and in the family-out-reaches (helping the families to be more other-oriented). Above all, CFCI can be involved in family-prayer apostolate, because it is the presence of the people to the Divine that makes it a life of communion.

CFCI can help the couples to tide over hurdles whenever they creep up in family life. It could be done through regular visits to the families, counseling, or any other professional ways of tackling them. Moreover, since it is a Laity's Movement, it can help the entire family to focus on the different age groups in the family itself and be sensitive to each other as well as to care for each other. Thus CFCI becomes a catalyst for the benefit of joy for everyone; joy in life is experienced by every segment, hence becoming clear evidence of Trinitarian presence.

By totally involving itself in the family renewal apostolate, CFCI can remain the 'salt of the earth' and 'light of the world'.

**BISHOP OF BUXAR
MOST REV. SEBASTIAN KALLUPURA**



We express our heartfelt gratitude to Most Rev. Bishop Lawrence Pius for his unflinching help, availability and encouragement towards CFCI. He has graciously extended his support to the community for our future endeavours.

YOUNG COUPLES' CONFERENCE BELOVED

'Beloved' – "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine" (Song of Songs 6:3) - a one of a kind young couples conference, open to both CFCI and non CFCI couples



was organized by Couples for Christ India at the National Biblical Catechetical Liturgical Centre (NBCLC), Bangalore on the 17th of February 2019. The conference was focused on providing an understanding the necessary tools to build our marriage and what the four essential pillars in making a great marriage are.

The conference began with teaching of songs followed by a praise and worship. The conference was then inaugurated by Fr. Milton Gonsalves, the Executive Secretary of the CCBI Family Commission. Fr. Milton in his inaugural speech laid emphasis that the real ministers of the sacrament of Marriage are the couple themselves and hence invited a couple to join him in inaugurating the conference.



Prajwal Pinto

The first session was focused on understanding what God intended for every marriage and how he designed marriage from the beginning of creation as stated in Genesis 2:24-25: 'Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked, and they were not ashamed'. As part of the

session the couples were asked to jot down their idea of a dream marriage, and then they were taken through why this dream does not last long. It also emphasized on how important is maintenance and hard work in a marriage. The couples were then introduced to the four important pillars Priority, Pursuit, Possession and Purity, that are necessary for making a great marriage.

The second session was about the first 2 pillars of marriage Priority and Pursuit. The first part of the session

explained in detail what our priorities in life should look like, in what order, and what it really means to put our spouse after God and before everything or everyone else. Through the session the couples were asked to identify what are the priorities in their life and their spouse's life and what are the changes they would like to make their spouse a priority. The second part of the session dealt with the second pillar of marriage, that is Pursuit: How to pursue our spouse and work on our marriages. The couples were asked to recall what are the things they used to do for their spouse and have stopped and to discuss on what their spouse would like them to start doing again.

The first half of the day then ended with Eucharistic Celebration, celebrated by Fr. Sunny Richard, The Secretary of the Family Commission in the Archdiocese of Bangalore and concelebrated by Fr. Bacil Sebastian Singh, Chaplin at St. Philomena Hospital. Fr. Sunny in his homily spoke about the spiritual maturity and the importance of growing spiritually not just physically, intellectually and how our spiritual growth can transform us and our marital relationship. Fr. Sunny also reiterated on how our relationships with our extended family should be understood in the light of the scripture verse 'Therefore, a man leaves his father and his mother and cleave to his wife' Genesis 2:24.

The afternoon began with praise and worship and then a few fun games and activities for couples, followed by the next session. The third session of the day was about the next 2 pillars of marriage



Possession and Purity. The session also focused on the aspects that give meaning and purpose to marriage. What is meant by "...and they shall become one flesh", how to trust each other and grow in intimacy as God intended, and how everything should become *ours* and must be shared, and nothing should be hidden between the couple and also learn about mutual submission from Ephesians 5 "We are no longer our own but belong to the other". The 4th pillar- Purity signifies our nakedness/openness in every aspect of our life. The couples were then asked to examine what are the things that they are uncomfortable to share with their spouse or are holding back from their spouse and they were encouraged to open themselves to each other.

The final session was on parenting, which touched upon the principles the couples need to adapt as parents and to turn to God and learn from him on how to raise children by finding in scriptures how God dealt with his children by first loving them before anything else. The

session also emphasized on how important it is to aim for heaven for our children: how to embody love and be close to the children. How to be consistent and work together and share responsibility while parenting and to lead by example and follow what is taught to the children.

The conference ended with an introduction of CFCI to all non-community members. The couples returned with God's message and love being poured into their hearts. The children of the couples too had a fun filled time of learning through a parallel program with action songs, activities, games and sessions organized for them at the same venue.

Amanda Monteiro

CFCI South Bangalore

Pictures used in this Article were taken by : Joel and Jeovito Fernandes



CONFERENCE GALLERY



TESTIMONIES



Learning about the 4 pillars - Priority, Pursuit, Possession and Purity that upholds marriage made us look into our lives to understand what we were lacking in our marriage. We also learnt that love is best imparted when we foster deep meaningful relationships with our loved

ones specially our spouse and children. After YCC, we are working towards spending more quality time with each other and our children.

Michael and Sheela
North Bangalore

It was an memorable one for us, the way Lord made us to be a part of it. It was an eye opener for us especially as a young couple, we learnt how to lead our life in a holistic way.

A key takeaway was keeping GOD as our first priority, spouse second and then the extended family. The teachings were truly spirit filled helped us to know the real meaning of marriage biblically & practically as well. It was so fruitful. We were truly blessed.



Aldo and Raina
South Bangalore



A family that prays together, stays today. It was a wonderful day, well spent at the YCC. It gave us a clear picture on ways that we can build our home. It has been 6 wonderful years of togetherness, with 3 beautiful children. We thank our Saviour for being with us through it all.

As we continue our journey, we place our trust in Him and are thankful for the one day experience of the YCC that reignited this journey.

Immanuel and Tanya
Chennai

After nearly 7 years of ups and downs as man and wife, we had reached a monotonous plateau in our marriage. The many trials we faced, especially during the past year had caused us a lot of grief and resulted in us becoming detached. The young couples retreat helped us to finally remove the brave facade we put on for the world and bare our souls via the sessions and to rekindle the spark in our marriage. We are so grateful to the CFCI couples- Chennai for rejuvenating our marriage.



Gregory and Florentyna
Chennai



The experience at the 'Beloved' was surely enriching. It was an eye opener in fact to find solutions for day to day issues faced by every couple. The 'openness' found in the sharing of the members of CFCI was indeed amazing. The Praise and worship, games, simultaneously sowing the seed of faith for all the kids simply showed that each of the CFCI members are on fire for Christ. May

God continue to lead them as they strive to build Christ-centered families.

Raj and Felshia
Chennai

The conference helped me understand what is required to make a marriage successful. How to pursue my spouse, and what should my priorities be. Through the activities, we were able to identify what are the things lacking in our marriage, what are the needs of my spouse and what we need to work on to make our marriage better, which has helped us and brought us closer.



Jason and Amanda
South Bangalore

LIFE OF A MISSIONARY

Levin Gomes, one of the missionaries of the CFCI Community, shares his experiences of giving his life for the service of God in India.

How many years have you been a full timer? What is your current role?

I have been serving as a full time pastoral worker for 8 years, I currently co-ordinate the work undertaken with the Young ministries.



What led you to answer the call to be a missionary?

After I gave my life to Christ, God filled me with a deep desire to give more of myself in service. I wanted to be available to serve even if it meant doing things I haven't done before. One day at mass the priest in his homily said "the best service is not your ability but your availability to God and your brothers and sisters" that made me think deeply and I made a choice to give my all in the service of God through this amazing community.

Why is it important to be a witness?

Look around you, people we interact with are going through so much of brokenness. Over a while I've learnt that, when I share my weaknesses and boast of God's mercy and victory in my life; I have been able to be a witness to the hopeless, of the hope we have in Christ.

"Be witnesses everywhere of the glorious Cross of Christ. Do not be afraid!"

-St. John Paul



What are the challenges you face in spreading God's Word?

Our loving father allows us to go through tests and challenges in order that we may become fully mature in Christ Jesus while speaking the truth in love. I have experienced different challenges in different seasons of my life. Finances, family agreement to my work, striving towards holiness, relationships with community brethren and so on. By God's grace I have enjoyed the fruit of learning and repenting through it all, however the biggest challenge has been leaving family behind on long travels and being able to be fit with personal health.

Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization; indeed, anyone who has truly experienced God's saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love.

-Pope Francis

How is family life as a missionary?

There are times when the work puts a bit strain on family life, I try to make up for it when I return. I hold on to the word from Joshua 24:15 which says "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."



What message do you want to give those who are hesitant to Witness?

Whether we know it or not, we are always being a witness by the way we speak and sacrifice. The question is: are we doing it for Christ or for the things of the world.

What does 'Evangelize' mean? To give Witness with joy and simplicity to what we are and what we believe in.

-Pope Francis

In Conclusion

We give all glory to God for all that he is doing through the Full Time Missionaries in witnessing to God's Love.

TRAINING & EVANGELIZATION

UPCOMING EVENTS

HEARTCHAMPS TRAINING

29th -30th JUNE 2019
CARANZALEM, GOA

YOUNG COUPLES' CONFERENCE

14th JULY 2019
MANGALORE

DISTRICT SERVANTS CONFERENCE

28th JULY 2019
GOA

NATIONAL SINGLES CONFERENCE

16th-18th AUGUST 2019
GOA



Jesus in my Heart

CFCI Bangalore conducted a programme for 52 CFCI Kids on the 24th of February at National Biblical Catechetical Liturgical Centre (NBCLC), **Bangalore**.



Evangelisation

Around 42 people attended the program conducted in different villages like **Sitarganj, Bazpur, Bareilly and Uttar Pradesh** between 2nd to 5th of March.



Family Day, Mumbai

Manori Parish comprising of Fisher folk celebrated their 9th Annual CFC Family Day attended by 50 people in their Parish on the 3rd of March, 2019 in **Mumbai**.



Christian Life Seminar

13 couples and 24 singles attended a CLS from the 9th to 14th of March in Karchond Villade under Dudhni Parish, **Solapur district, Maharashtra**.



Marriage Preparation Course

35 people attended the course conducted on the 15th and 16th of March at Nav Jyoti Niketan, **Patna**.



Lenten Retreat

1500 people attend the retreat conducted by CFCI from the 21st to 23rd of March at St. Patrick's Church, **West Bengal**.



Love and Respect

Christopher and Bernadette Colaco conducted a one day programme on Love and Respect for the parishioners of St Vincent Pallotti, **Andheri East, Mumbai** on the 24th of March.



Christian Life Seminar

Around 50 people attended the Couples CLS conducted from the 28th to 31st of March at **Baheri and Nawabganj Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh**.

TRAINING & EVANGELIZATION



Parish Retreat

CFCI conducted a retreat for 200 people on the 6th and 7th of April, at St. Joseph Church, **West Bengal**.



Lenten Retreat

CFCI Bangalore conducted a Parish Lenten retreat at St Anthony's Church ,TC Palya, and at Divine Mercy Parish, Anagalpura on the 6th and 7th of April in **Bangalore**.



Come Alive

CFCI Bangalore, Singles conducted a one day program for 40 participants on the 17th of March at Yuva Vikas, **Bangalore**.



Get Connected

CFCI Singles, Mangalore had a one day program attended by 65 participants on the 17th of March at Milagres PU college hall, **Mangalore**.



Holy Spirit in Marriage

CFCI Mumbai conducted a one day programme for 33 young couples on the 21st of March at Vinalaya Retreat House, **Mumbai**.



Retreat at Shirpur Parish

A two day retreat on the 22nd and 23rd of March in Marathi at Rohini village, Shirpur Parish in **Mumbai**.



Heartchamps Training

A training programme was conducted on the 31st of March at **Bangalore** and 13th and 14th of April in **Pune**.



Couples Retreat

A Two day retreat for the couples was conducted on the 15th and 16th of April at Sacred Heart Church, Sanewal, **Ludhiana**.

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TRAINING & EVANGELIZATION

PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY



MEMORARE

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thine intercession was left unaided.

Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my mother; to thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.



CFCI Youth Camp Training Program

25 youth underwent a Training Program conducted by CFCI Singles on the 25th of April at St Aloysius School Hall, Urwa, **Mangalore.**



Young Couples' Conference, Chennai

14 CFCI couples and 35 non-CFCI couples attended a one day programme conducted by CFCI Couples Chennai, on the 28th of April at Church Park Convent, Anna Salai, **Chennai.**



Saved

A youth camp was conducted by CFCI Youth, Porvorim for 30 participants from 26th to 28th of April at Casa Palloti, Assagao, **Goa.**



Stand up and be Counted

The School of Discipleship (SOD), a 5 day intense discipleship program was attended by 75 members (Couples and Singles) from May 1st to May 5th at NBCLC, **Bangalore.**



Marriage Preparation Course

A marriage preparation course was conducted at the diocese level from the 3rd May to 5th of May at Pastoral Centre Maitri Bhawan, **Jammu.**



CLS Training Programme

A one day training programme was conducted for couples and singles of CFCI Gudgaon on the 4th of May at Church of Immaculate Conception, **Kanhai, Gurgaon.**



SPARK

17 participants attended the youth Camp conducted by CFCI Youth Pune from the 3rd to 5th of May at Prakash Bhavan, **Pune.**



Rise Up

CFCI Youth Margao conducted a youth camp for 57 youth from the 10th to 12th of May at Don Bosco, **Benaulim, Goa.**

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