## **COUPLES FOR CHRIST INDIA NEWSLETTER**





## **BEING SINGLE-MINDED FOR CHRIST**

# 1 Corinthians 7:32 I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord;

The Singles segment of the community is a unique one – the young adults are at an important crossroad in their lives. They are just freed from being under the care of their parents while at the same time not yet concerned with a family of their own. St.Paul says they ideally should be free from anxieties, but in today's world the youth at this stage are fraught with many anxieties.

While they are finding their place in the world today, with the pressure of starting their career on a good note and chasing after money in the desire to be completely independent, it is also at this stage that they are looking forward to meaningful relationships that will ultimately lead to a life vocation.

So anxieties are plenty, but St.Paul reaffirms that this is a beautiful stage in one's life. Truly it is a time when a person can give of their time, talent and treasure to the building of the Kingdom of God. And that is the calling to all members of the Singles segment – to be able to be single-minded for God.

We see in our Singles ministry many who are ready to serve in different capacities, willing to go to far away states and areas to serve and deliver the word. They are present in serving various ministries – be it the youth, kids or even helping in organizing programs for the Couples. This willingness to serve God wholeheartedly makes them the backbone of the community in many ways.

The stage is also one where Singles are called to move into a deeper relationship with God in the pursuit of holiness. This desire for holiness needs to also permeate into their career and their important life decisions and therefore the need for both intercession and discernment. Putting God first helps them to look at their job objectively, as a means to give glory to God rather than seeking glory for oneself. An intimate relationship with God also leads them to seek true intimacy in terms of their vocation, be it Matrimony or religious life.

We encourage our Singles to also use this time in their lives to begin a deeper involvement with the Parishes, to give of their time and effort in organizing and supporting the parish community through their energy and ideas to make the Gospel more relevant today.

All this helps the Singles to focus on what matters most - holiness. For today's young adults, holiness is not a popular term but when the singles empowered by the Holy Spirit come together, they create a counter-culture than can challenge the norms and bring more and more people closer to God through their lives.

# 1 Timothy 4:12 Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity



**COUNTRY SERVANT-A. V. JOSE** 



# **SINGLES-YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY**

CFCI Singles caters to single men and women aged 21-39. It is one of the Sections of CFC, and is part of its womb-to-tomb family renewal ministry. It accompanies singles in discovering their life direction and responding to their vocation. It brings the cause of Christ to where the singles are. It helps transform them to become missionaries to their own families and to the world, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

As to life direction, it seeks to guide the singles through spiritual accompaniment towards conversion, spiritual growth, communion and evangelization. They are being prepared as they discern and respond to their calling or vocation. The basic programs are: Christian Life Seminar (CLS) and Covenant Recollection. This explains further the covenant of members in the community, making clear what life they are to live and what is expected of them as members.

Then Singles seeks to build the next generation of CFC members through it's road to CFC Couples Series. It must be noted that for those whose vocation is marriage, Singles also provides the opportunity to meet singles of the opposite sex who are, like them, striving to live pure and are growing in covenant commitment. The components of this series are:

 Life Direction Overnight. This includes formation on chastity, manhood, womanhood and vocations. Singles are encouraged to discern their basic vocation, whether to marriage or a celibate and/or consecrated life as clergy or religious.

- · Love Life Weekend. This is formation on true love, active waiting and courtship.
- Relationship Goals Sessions. This provides formation on having a Christ-centered relationship, commitment, communication and common goals.
- · Singles Engagement Retreat. This is preparation for marriage and family life.

In the area of evangelization and in line with CFC's full embrace of the Live Christ Share Christ (LCSC) mission, Singles engage in various programs and activities.

- Mounting Life in Christ Seminars (LCS). The LCS is the basic evangelistic program of LCSC.
- · LBS Hubs. Groups of singles do weekly LBS (Liturgical Bible Study) in strategic places.
- Live Pure Tambayan (hang out). This is an acoustic night of fellowship and entertainment but with Live Pure formation, conducted in strategic social places where singles would congregate.
- Participating in work with the poor. This is through the No One in Need (NONE) movement, a pillar of LCSC. This comprises various activities in building up Restoration Villages and Mission Villages.

Singles will later make up the core of future families and of community missionaries. Their involvement starts as they are in CFC Singles.

**SERVANT GENERAL - FRANK PADILLA** 



Your own personal vocation does not consist only in the work you do, Your vocation is something more: it is a path guiding your many efforts and actions towards service to others. So in discerning your vocation, it is important to determine if you see in yourself the abilities needed to perform that specific service to society.

**POPE FRANCIS** 

# YOUNG, SINGLE AND ON FIRE FOR JESUS

"... Young people, are not the future but the now of God." Pope Francis

At this point in history, we are in the heart of the technological age, experiencing the aftershocks of the sexual revolution and an overflow of materialism. Our culture cries out for "saints in blue jeans" - young apostles who will go out and preach the good news to those who need to hear it.

#### Here I am Lord,

The CFCI Singles movement consists of more than 400 working and unmarried men and women aged 21 - 35 consisting of 12 chapters across the length and breadth of the country.

People with diverse backgrounds and cultures armed with one purpose – living Christ, sharing Christ.

#### How we work

The Singles ministry is pastorally directed by a formator - a couple assigned to them from the couple's ministry. Each couple looks after a group of singles - the household servants – (separate for girls and boys) – who in turn serve a group of singles under them. The households are further divided into separate groups for boys and girls.

At the foundation of every household is trust, honesty and accountability. It is where members share their lives and struggles with sin.

#### Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another. Proverbs 27.17

And so, in each household, members open up the most difficult areas of their lives, holding each other accountable to achieving and living out the everyday challenges of holiness.

Spiritual formation for members happens at an individual level - at the household, at a chapter level through teaching meetings and at a national level



through the singles conference - a yearly event comprising all singles across the country.

#### What we do

At the heart of it, the ministry serves as a place for vocation formation – both for singles aspiring for marriage, as well as those discerning religious life.

Through pastoral guidance from their formators and regular teaching sessions on Discernment, Love, Relationships and Theology of the Body singles are spiritually equipped by their elders to hear and follow God's will in their lives.

#### The Missionary life

Answering the call of God sometimes takes one to unexpected places – for some it is a call to serve within the community - offering their time, talent, treasure to fuel other ministries – like the children's ministry, couples ministry or perhaps the music ministry. Mission work in tribal areas in Assam, West Bengal, Bihar or to far flung parts of the world – Malawi, Africa and more. For other singles it's a call to give up worldly pursuits of a job and a career and engage themselves full time in ministry.



#### Spreading the light within the Parish

While the CFCI singles ministry is a separate lay community, it's vision is to reanimate the parish by serving within the parish through social work reaching out to the orphanages, old age homes and other needy sections of the parish and by conducting programmes and retreats for the lay faithful – one of which is the Christian Life Seminar.

The Christian Life seminar is a modular retreat programme conducted for singles, introducing them

#### **MAIN FEATURE**

to the pillars of Christian Living – an understanding of God's call for holiness, and practical tools to live out that call in their daily lives – through scripture and personal prayer. The singles then have a choice to continue and later join the community or are encouraged to be a part of a Christian community to help them live holy lives.

Where do we go from here?

Across the world, we're seeing a thirst for purpose and meaning. Nowhere is that more visible in the broken state of a lot of the young single men and women today.

There is a cry for something concrete, a cry for the ancient and holy. The language may be different from what we've been used to— evangelisation through memes, flash mobs or gospel music -but the message is the same. Jesus Christ is the light this generation needs. And what better way to spread that light than through those who're young, single and on fire for Jesus!

Roxanna Pinto South Bangalore

#### **TESTIMONIES**



When I was new to Bengaluru, I used to feel lonely, always overwhelmed with negative thoughts and my spiritual life was nil. And then, God blessed me with CFCI community, where my spiritual life was nourished through constant support and reminders for

personal prayer, confession and spending my time in blessed sacrament, and I learnt the importance of leading a holy and virtuous life. The most admiring thing about the community is the sisterhood and the brotherhood which we share which helped me grow spiritually and socially. Praise God!

Stella, South Bangalore.

Being part of CFCI Singles has helped me grow in many areas of my life. I've learned to be thankful to God at all times. I see the heart of Jesus in every person I meet. At work and at home I've learned to accept and obey the duties entitled to me. Through the community I still learn more about



Christ each day and this has been helping me get closer in my relationship with God.

Justin Richard, Chennai



My journey in this community has been a very remarkable journey in my life. I get encouragement, love ,support and events like The Singles Conference which keeps renewing my mind. I can feel the beauty of being God's child today. The talks, the

worship services were awesome and beautiful. Going for confesssion brought me lightened the burden on my heart. I am glad today that I have experienced the

comfort and beauty of trusting in God and doing His will after experienced the discomfort, emptiness and loneliness of being away from God. This community is one family which makes me stick closer to God, which teaches me the ways of the Lord and I'm really thankful that I am a part of this beautiful family. I'm fully indebted to all the members and partakers of the CFCI Community. All glory be to God.

George Infimate, Pune

As a Single in the community, I learnt the various models of prayer such as ACTS, also the Lectio Divina which has brought about a closer relationship with the Lord. I have been able to witness how CFCI as a



community celebrates the faith and be God's instrument wherever I can.

Christy Gabriel, Gudgaon



CFCI main aane ke baad mere jeevan me bohot saare badlav aaye aur Yeshu ke saat mera rishta aur bhi majboot ho gaya hai. Main ab roz prarthana karti hu, main stage par aakar prarthana karne lagi hu aur maine conference ka bhashan bhi diya.

Pehle main logon se baat karne se bohot darti thi lekin ab mera darr kam hua hain. Yeh sab Yeshu ki Krupa hua hain. Main bohot khush hu kyunki Yeshu ka pyaar ka ehsas mujhe mila hain.

Maria Kerketta, West Bengal.

# **MISSION OF GOD'S LOVE**

"How fortunate!" I thought to myself one day, after saying YES to join the West Bengal CFCI Summer Mission Crew. Deep within, I always longed to do God's work, share the Good News to more souls and draw them closer to God's kingdom. And here, I had the opportunity for the very first time!

A group of us left to West Bengal on May 2019 and the journey to our destination was not all smooth. Our train got cancelled and we had no seats in the alternate one. Later, the bus that was booked had a flat tire almost 20 km after the journey started. But I believe God went with us and turned everything for our good. We managed to board the train from Siliguri station, which to our surprise, was running late.

At our first meeting point, I was so overwhelmed by the warm welcome that we received from the villagers. They washed our feet as a sign of hospitality and this simple act moved me inside out.

As we arrived at Central Duar which is a very beautiful place, my heart was somehow filled with fear of wild animals from all the stories that I heard from the villagers. But the Lord assured and encouraged my little heart with His word from

Isaiah 41:10: "Fear not for I am with you."

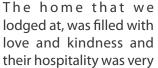
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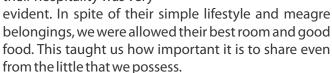
### Romans 8:31: "If God is for us, who can ever be against us?"

In this place, it was amazing to see so many youths



regularly gathered in the Church to listen to the Word of God. Because Holy Mass and Adoration were quite infrequent in their local village chapel, they were seen enjoying the Praise and worship sessions and attentive to every teaching given.





At Radharani village, which was our next destination, we spread the Word of God to almost 40 youth and children over 2 days and taught them the importance of prayer. There were games and sessions with activities conducted that added to the excitement. The best part of these 2 days was spending time together with the villagers, praying over and sharing with them. This reminded me so much of the lives of the early Christians.

On the journey back home, I pondered over the week that had so quickly gone by and summed up that God was trying to teach me this during the mission: be generous and loving. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Practice hospitality and share with everyone in need. I truly experienced the Lord at every moment of this mission trip and I felt Him drawing me more to serve Him in mission areas with these words,

## "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few." (Matthew 9:37)

I believe through this trip, God instilled in my heart to seek more opportunities and completely rely on His strength as I serve Him.





# HERE I AM, LORD

Bro. Kelvin Santis, recently ordained as a Deacon for the Archidiocese of Bombay and to be ordained a priest in March 2020, shares his journey from joining the CFC community in 2016 and how it helped guide him to his vocation.

#### What led you to take up vocation to the priesthood?

My first and immediate answer to dedicate my life to God was to be a full time missionary for Couples for Christ. I saw it as my 'Yes' to Jesus and my way to thank him for his presence and the gift of the community whose charism was close to my heart.

However, when I was working in one village of West Bengal I remember spending about three weeks with one family completely cut off from all technology and facilities as it was an extremely interior village. Here the family spirituality, their approach to God impacted me greatly. They had absolutely nothing but the joy they radiated was beyond measure. Their only sadness was that the priest came to that village once every month as it was very far and so they longed for mass.

That night I had the small little voice speak the words of the hymn 'I the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry.... Whom shall I send?' That was the first time I felt the desire to be a priest very strongly.

I must confess I had many things stopping me from saying yes to priesthood, but the love of Christ in my heart that was generated that night grew so strong it became like a magnetic attraction pulling me closer to it

I still had no answer to most of my questions, but I had



the assurance that God will not abandon and so with that assurance and the uncertainty of whether I am fit or not, I went to join the seminary.

The rector of the seminary was Bp. Agnelo Gracias who was then the spiritual director of Couples for Christ and he told me my assurance will help me find answers in the course of formation and I joined St. Pius X seminary on 24th June, 2012.

### What challenges did you face on the path of joining the seminary?

I had loads of questions when I felt like I should become a priest, like is God really calling me or is it my own thought? Am I worthy enough? Will I be able to live my life with all the sacrifice involved? What if I don't like it once I go, can I leave half way? What about my parents and their needs?

I honestly didn't have clear answers for any. What I did feel is a deep love for God and I know that in this love I won't be alone so I was willing to risk it.

The challenge is first and foremost within you, are you questioning and over discerning because doing that is relyin too much on your ability. I am not saying take decisions in a hurry but we all have to reach a point where we can say I think I will just let God lead me now.

" If you are what you should be, then you can set the world on fire."

Saint Catherine of Sienna

#### How has my life been after accepting God's call?

My life after accepting the Lord's call has been one of great unlearning. I realized I knew almost nothing about the magnitude of God and his Church and the whole process of formation has led me greatly to reflect on my own self.

I also carried a lot of baggage which I had to deal with

#### TESTIMONIAL REPORT

and I had to be able to let go of my ego which becomes an obstacle in service.

Life in the seminary is amazing and so different from what we normally would picture it to be but it does have it's share of ups and downs. I saw God calling me to move away from being focused on my little world and onto the bigger



human community.

My biggest source of strength have been the people in the parishes I serve. Their support, love and care are what sustain you along with your rootedness in Prayer and Scripture.

Overall if I have to say about my life after answering God's call is that I find it more meaningful and I feel like I'm living for a purpose.

## How did being a member of the community help you in discerning your vocation?

The community mission to the North East was the first time I felt God calling me to priesthood and after that



experience the only people I spoke to were my close friends in the community. I couldn't have said yes without knowing there is a whole group praying for me.

The community helped me in my formative years at the seminary. The formation I got in the community through talks, households and relationships was key to help me with regards to working together, listening to one another, conflict handling and so on.

I wouldn't have been able to go through formation at the seminary if i didn't have this foundation backing me. Also, how to live in a community and to accept people who are not so easy to live with, was another lesson that I picked up from the values we cherish in CFC.

CFC helped me also to find my spirituality. My relationship with God started here and without this relationship nothing would ever make sense.

### What would you like to tell young people discerning vocation?

Love God and do what that love calls you to do.

One bishop in America said, the Church today is like a building on fire, everyone seems to be running out of that building. At such times the people who have his great admiration are the seminarians as they are the firefighters who instead of running out are running into that building, trying to do their bit to ease that fire.

To conclude I would just say, you can pray for signs and miracles and clear answers. But there always comes a point where you need to take the decision irrespective of what signs and miracles you received.

For a believer, no sign is needed and for an unbeliever, no sign is enough.

" Invited to leave everything to follow Christ, you, consecrated men and women, no longer define your life by family, by profession, or by earthly interests, and you choose the Lord as your only identifying mark. Thus you acquire a new family identity."

Pope Saint John Paul II





#### **Christian Life Seminar**

4 Couples, 1 Handmaid and 4 couples attended the CLS conducted in July at Good Shepherd and Our Lady Consoler of the Aflicted Parish, Pune respectively.





#### **Christian Life Seminar**

25 Couples and 13 Handmaids attended the 3 day CLS conducted from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> of July at St. Xavier Catholic Church, Nagari, **Jammu diocese.** 





#### **Christian Life Seminar**

40 participants attended the program from 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> of August at Amaria Parish, **Uttar Pradesh.** 





#### Ignite 2019

A school yearly retreat for 199 students was conducted on the 10<sup>th</sup> of August at St. Patrick's High School, **Chennai.** 





#### Christian Life Seminar

45 participants attended the program on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of August at Nausar Parish, **Uttar Pradesh.** 





#### A New Chapter - Shivamogga

4 couples took the covenant as it's first members of the new chapter on the  $25^{\text{th}}$  of August at Infant Jesus Church , Shivamogga.





#### No One in Need

Couples, Singles and Kids of South **Bangalore** Chapter visited an Old age home at Asha bhavan, Kolbe home for children of prisoners, underprivileged families and home for rehabilitation for women at Jeevodaya on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August.

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# UPCOMING EVENTS







PRIESTS CONFERENCE
26<sup>™</sup>(Evening)- 29<sup>™</sup> FEBRUARY
PATNA





#### Christian Life Seminar

55 participants attended the program on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of September at Nausar Parish, **Uttar Pradesh.** 





#### **Parish Event**

CFCI Youth conducted a retreat from 31<sup>st</sup> Aug to 2<sup>nd</sup> September at Vinalaya for 55 confirmation youth of St. Joseph Juhu and Holy Family Church, Pestom Sagar, **Mumbai.** 





#### Beloved 2019, Mangalore

A young-couples conference for both CFCI and non-CFCI couples was organized on Sunday, 1 September by CFCI Mangalore at the Most Holy Redeemer Church in **Mangalore**.





#### Live pure

Program based on the theology of the body revealing the truth about our God given sexuality was conducted for 50 youth from the  $31^{st}$  of August to  $2^{nd}$  September at Lar de Estudantes, **Goa.** 





#### **Marriage preparation Course**

35 participants attended the program on the  $6^{th}$  and  $7^{th}$  of September at Nav Jyothi, **Patna.** 





#### Youth camp

20 participants attended the camp conducted from the 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> of September at Palloti home Vasco, **Goa**.





#### **Christian Life Seminar**

8 Couples and 12 Handmaids attended the 3 day CLS conducted from the 22<sup>nd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> of September at Fatima Mata Church, **Jammu Diocese.** 





#### Nivas - CFCI Regional Youth Conference 2019 (Hindi)

233 Youth along with 13 formators attended the conference from the  $4^{th}$  to  $6^{th}$  of October at Don Bosco Church, Tinsukia, **Assam.** 





#### Live Pure (100% Pure)

More than 70 youth attended the program conducted on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> October at Doomdooma Parish, **Assam.** 





#### **Outreach program**

A program was conducted for 130 students of  $10^{th}$  and  $12^{th}$  standard of Don Bosco open school Parra , **Goa o**n the  $5^{th}$  of October.





#### **Household Training**

A two day program was conducted for 13 couple household servants on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of October at Maitri Bhawan, Smilepur, **Jammu diocese.** 





#### **Campus Retreat**

CFCI Gudgaon conducted an annual Retreat at St.Francis De Sales school, **New Delhi** for 196 students on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of October.





#### **Worship Workshop**

Around 60 singles and couples attended the workshop on the 13<sup>th</sup> of October at Holy Family Church, Alto Porvorim, **Goa,.**The purpose of the program was to help the members understand how to lead worship in a better manner.





#### **Marriage Preparation Program**

A program was conducted for 13 couples from the 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> of October at Maitri Bhawan, Smilepur, **Jammu diocese.** 

### **FAMILY DAY**

The Family Day is an event conducted by every chapter/ area of the CFCI Community as an annual celebration of the Community life.

The program varies in it's schedule and content from location to location but contains similar elements of Holy Mass, Worship, Fellowship and Fun.

A member of the clergy - most often The Bishop or head of the Diocesan Family Commission is invited to be the Chief Guest and to offer Mass on this occasion.

The purpose of the Family Day is to bring the whole community together along with members of their family to experience the love and joy of the Lord.

It is a celebration of the year gone by and also is an opportunity to meet the families of members to know them better.



# 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.

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- www.instagram.com/cfcisingles www.instagram.com/cfciyouth
- www.youtube.com/user/indiacfc
  www.cfci.org.in





#### Abide 2019

Theme day for the community members was conducted on the 20<sup>th</sup> of October at Barnabite Vidyabhavan, **Bangalore**.





#### **Engaged Singles Weekend Retreat**

8 prospective couples attended the weekend program to give the singles a better understanding of marriage and help them prepare better conducted on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of October in Porvorim, **Goa.** 





#### Into the Light

19 Singles attended a one day CLS on the 20<sup>th</sup> of October at Yuva Vikas, **Bangalore.** 





#### Young Couples Conference, Pune

97 couples along with their kids attended the event conducted on the 27<sup>th</sup> of October at Papal Seminary, **Pune.** 





#### Outreach Program

The youth conducted a retreat on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of October at Divine Child High School for 45 confirmation youth of Holy Family Parish, Chakala, **Mumbai.** 

