



ON FIRE FOR CHRIST

YOUTH - THE FUTURE OF THE MISSION

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It has been amazing to watch the Lord shape our community and equip us to share His Good News! Last year was a decisive year for us as our founder, Brother Frank Padilla and his college of elders, confirmed the work the Spirit had been doing through us as a community over the last 38 years. Our charism

remains evangelization founded on family renewal. We are called to be families on mission and therefore our name has officially been changed from Couples for Christ India to Missionary Families of Christ (MFC).

With the name change to MFC, our identity has been clearly articulated. We are called to be families on fire for God – not just individuals but welcoming God to renew our entire family and ready ourselves to go into the mission field. For many of us the mission field may be the renewal of our very own parishes. This is a call to be instruments to rebuild families, to pray for restoration and encourage a culture of life.

With this in mind, the Servant Council in India has come up with the vision:

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Matthew 19:26 - Jesus looked at them and said, "with man this is impossible, but with God, all things are possible." Drawing from this verse, and trusting wholly in the strength God gives us, we are setting a goal seemingly impossible for man but totally possible for

God to achieve this year. This is solely for the glory of God and our response to fully live out our call as Missionary Families of Christ (MFC).

We aim to reach the gospel message to families across various parishes and sub-stations in every nook and corner of India, especially where there has been a lack of catechesis. This will be done across all sections by MFC Couples, Singles, Youth, Kids, Handmaids, and Servants. We are working to reach the young through their parishes and also through their educational institutions.

As a community we renew our commitment of a preferential option for the poor; by not just helping meet their temporal needs, but also by sharing the Good News of Jesus with them.

"I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one"- Ezekiel 22:30. Knowing that the goal is in fact impossible for us, but possible with God, we intend to anchor ourselves in intercession for the work to be fruitful. The expectation is that every member of our community shares in the effort, not just with time and presence but spiritually as well – by offering Mass, spending time in Adoration, praying the rosary/ Divine Mercy Chaplet, reading the Word of God aloud, fasting, and making other sacrifices.

During this season of Lent, as we begin to make sacrifices, let us strengthen our prayer lives and our pursuit of holiness so that we might be able to respond generously to our Lord and be led by His Holy Spirit to do much for His kingdom. The work ahead is great, but we are not alone. May the Lord of the harvest go before us, be with us and rejoice in us, His laborers who are committed to bringing in a rich harvest, no matter the cost!

COUNTRY SERVANT - JIMMY XAVIER

We thank God for our Bro A.V. Jose who served as Country Servant. He has, and continues to be an inspiration with his passion and commitment to build our community and challenge us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus! As he continues to labor in the vineyard we pray that the Lord bless him, his near and dear ones and every good work he puts his hand to.





NEW NAME, RENEWED MISSION

Couples for Christ India (CFCI) has changed its name to Missionary Families of Christ (MFC). This is a worldwide change that happened in October 2019. Couples for Christ (CFC) started in the Philippines in 1981 and was primarily focused on the renewal of couples and strengthening their marriages. 12 years later, in 1993, CFC established Family Ministries, which comprised the other members of families – kids, youth, singles, handmaids and servants.

The basic reason for the change is the development of the community's life and mission through the years. The name Couples for Christ is no longer reflective of what the community is. So now the community has adopted a name that reflects what it has been called to be and to do. Our call is evangelization founded on family renewal.

Our new name has three basic aspects: The first is "of Christ." We belong to Christ. We are centered on Christ. We are to live the way of Jesus. We are to strive to be holy as God is holy. We are to be disciples and servants of Jesus.

The second aspect is "Families." We are tasked with the renewal and strengthening of the family, which is the basic unit of society, and which is under incessant assault in the world today. The condition of families will determine the condition of the world. The family is God's work and design, and the evil one is trying to destroy it. We are called to defend family and life.

The third aspect is "Missionary." We are an evangelistic and missionary community. We proclaim the gospel of salvation in Jesus to the world. This is crucial work since the

world today is in deep darkness and sin. Many are being lost. There is growing apostasy. We are to bring the good news of salvation to the ends of the earth.

In the Bible, oftentimes a person's name reflects his/her identity or mission. Adam named his wife Eve, as she would be the mother of all the living (Gn 3:20). Joseph was instructed by the angel to name his son Jesus, meaning "the Lord saves," as he would save his people from their sins (Mt 1:21).

A new name was also given to reflect a new identity or mission. God renamed Abram 'Abraham,' as he would be the father of many nations (Gn 17:5). Moses renamed Hoshea 'Joshua' (Nm 13:16). Jehoshua or Jeshua is the Hebrew name for Jesus. He would lead God's people into the promised land. Jesus renamed Simon 'Cephas' (translated Peter), as he would be the rock upon which Jesus would build his Church (Jn 1:42; Mt 16:18).

Through the years, who we are and what we are called to do has become clear. We focus on the two most important aspects of the life of Christians in this world, and that is family and mission. We are families on mission.

Our new name is what our call is all about. That call was revealed by God in stages, and is what God has prepared us for through all of over 38 years. This new name is our identity, our charism and our work. That is what we hope to be. Our new name will be a great challenge for us to live out. It will be our privilege, and our responsibility.

SERVANT GENERAL - FRANK PADILLA



The Christian family is missionary: it announces the love of God to the world.

POPE FRANCIS

A COMMUNITY FOR YOUNG HEARTS

Pope Francis gives a fabulous teaching for all young people. He says "Jesus' love goes before us; his look anticipates our needs. He can see beyond appearances, beyond sin, beyond failures and unworthiness. He sees beyond our rank in society. He sees beyond this, to our dignity as sons and daughters, a dignity at times sullied by sin, but one which endures in the depth of our soul. He came precisely to seek out all those who feel unworthy of God, unworthy of others." This is exactly what we need to hear in this century.

With morality lying in question, problematic behaviour rampant, unrest, and incivility makes us question everything our faith has brought us up with. With same-sex marriages being legalised in many countries of the world, live-in relationships becoming the norm, and all sense of freedom ripped away, youth face a constant dilemma today. Many of us are deluded and do not understand what is the right thing to do.

That is why ministries like the MFC Youth section is essential for the adolescent youth of today. It not only reiterates basic Catholic values, but it helps develop strong opinions based on the truth of the teachings of the church. MFC Youth not only provides a platform for youth to learn about their faith, but to also conduct healthy debate on issues that affect them on a daily basis.

MFC Youth gives youth a sense of community and a feeling of belonging. Many youth feel they are alone in their struggles and strife and often ruminate in their problems and remain victimised. They feel unheard, unloved, misjudged, mistreated, and a whole lot of negatives. But what is so touching about MFC Youth is the fact that each person learns from the other's pain, they bring each other up, they fight for what they believe in, they strive to do the right thing in this wrong world.



Youth Conference in Goa

Every year Youth camps are held for youth of ages 13 - 21. At these camps, sessions about God's love and His plan for our lives; who Jesus Christ is to us; Repentance, Faith, Healing & Forgiveness; who the Holy Spirit is; Growing in the Spirit and Life in community are given. We are also taught

about personal prayer and scripture reading which are essential tools, and how to make a good confession with a thorough examination of conscience. All the talks are given by the youth, for the youth. Therefore, it is a uniquely wonderful experience.

An essential part of the MFC Youth community is accountability. Each member of the community is encouraged to have an accountability partner. The purpose of this system is to build a sense of responsibility among the youth. In this system, one reminds the other to pray, say the rosary, and to fight against any temptation that they may struggle with on a daily basis. It also inculcates the values of remaining accountable for our actions and that even if we do fall, how we can make our way back steadily. The community calls each one of us to follow the narrow path and we are called to grow in Holiness by keeping Jesus as the centre of our lives.

MFC Youth inculcates habits of personal prayer, accountability, chain prayer, sacrifice, honesty, and most importantly, love. We learn to reach out to the poor, to our brothers and sisters in need and to the ones who are closest to us. Pope Francis beautifully puts it, "Once we come to realize how much God has given us, a life of self-sacrifice, of working for him and for others, becomes a privileged way of responding to his great love."

St. Augustine once said, "Right is right even if no one is doing it; wrong is wrong even if everyone is doing it." This should resonate within us. We tend to get blind-sided by what the media portrays, what our friends say, what the world says is right and wrong. We fill our minds and bodies with filth and then we fail to recognise God's immense and unconditional love.



Youth Conference in Assam

Pope Francis said "Life is a journey, along different roads, different paths, which leave their mark on us. We know in faith that Jesus seeks us out. He wants to heal our wounds, to soothe our feet which hurt from traveling alone, to wash each of us clean of the dust

from our journey." All we need to do, is allow him!

We need to be willing to accept Jesus' will and plan for our lives. We should open the door of our hearts and

welcome him by the sacraments and personal prayer. Only then will we become true soldiers in God's army!

Karen Pinto, Goa

TESTIMONIES

The amount of Love and motivation that I receive in this community is just awesome, it always feels like family. Each day has been a beautiful learning experience, I have learnt a lot by listening to various testimonies and sessions, and even our own group discussion have surely contributed in making me a better person. Most importantly I believe this community has shaped me spiritually and has helped me grow and strengthen my faith. I'm blessed and really thankful to God to be a part of this family.



Jean Lobo, Mangalore

Before MFC, I used to attend Sunday mass, read Bible and pray daily only because I had to do it. There was no meaning in what I was doing. I didn't share a good relationship with my parents either. To me they were only physically present at home but not in my life. Socially as well, I was unable to be around groups of people and talk. But after joining the community by God's grace and mercy I have been able to overcome these struggles. Now, there is life in the Eucharist, meaning in reading the Bible and praying daily. There has also been a turnaround in my relationship with my parents from sharing nothing to sharing about everything in my life with them. Since being part of MFC Youth, I am not anxious anymore to be around groups of people and talk. The MFC family always makes me feel at home.



Neha L. John, Bangalore

God is the reason I survive every week. Through the MFC Youth community, I have learnt to read and

study the Word everyday. I'm closer to God more than ever because of the encouragement and support I get through my brothers and sisters in the community. The community has been the bridge between God and me, has helped me with my problems, has helped become more confident, meet new people, and to share what God has done in my life.



Zeus, Pune

MFC Youth has really helped me a lot. The camp and the meetings, as well as serving at various camps has touched my life. I have grown a lot spiritually as well as in all aspects of my life. I have been able to forgive those who hurt me, change my personality, and let go of whatever hatred I had kept inside of me. I have met amazing people who have accepted me despite my shortcomings. The teachings, testimonies, activities have all played a part in me getting to know Christ and making me a better person.



Ryan Tellis, Mumbai

The community has helped in many ways. I do my personal prayers, try my best to participate fully in mass, ask for God's grace rather than relying on my own strength, and this has brought a lot of peace in my life. I've also worked on reducing my use of cuss words, and avoiding sharing inappropriate memes and jokes. It is a journey to always try to do the right thing, and community is always there to guide me.



Varun Mark, Mangalore

BRANCH OUT

“Yes, I am the vine you are the branches, he who abides in me and I in him bears much fruit, for without Me you can do nothing.” John 15:5

One of the great experiences of the year — The Regional Youth Conference 2019 was held from the 8th to 10th November at Don Bosco, Sulcorna, Goa. Delegates from all over Goa along with Pune, Mangalore and Bangalore attended the conference. The theme of the conference was based on John 15:5—Branch Out.

Worship was led by the band 'Grace Afterglow' who enhanced the entire conference, and set the tone for the next three days. Our hosts filled the conference with a spirit of joy and excitement.

The first day started off with a blissful praise and worship session followed by the first talk 'Blessed to be a Branch'. It highlighted our call to abide as Catholics. It spoke on being loved, settling down and being at home with Christ. It also spoke on the reality of life and taught us how to abide in Christ through prayer time, scripture reading and the holy sacraments and how to live out our calling. Every session was followed by a group discussion. The Divine Mercy rosary was recited after lunch followed by a power-filled worship session.

The next session 'Cut off and Prune' highlighted how God prunes us and cuts off the unholy branches. It spoke about how we need to come before Him, acknowledge our failures, ask for His grace and say yes to Him. The session was followed by Holy Mass. The group discussion followed mass and thereafter we had dinner and post-dinner was an entertaining night with the competition 'Pundignified'.

The second day began with an infilling session and praise & worship. The third session 'Grace to Abide' highlighted the importance of Christ who is the vine and how



Session by Chris Crasta

to remain connected to Him. The speaker explained what is grace and the tools of grace— God's word, prayer and sacraments. The participants were then divided into two groups — one group prepared themselves for the sacrament of confession and received it and simultaneously, the other group went to the chapel and they did an activity where the participants made Jesus beads. And thereafter the two groups switched. After everyone was done with confession we had our group discussion followed by lunch. Post lunch the participants attended competitions which were fun and exciting.

Soon followed the fourth session on 'Praying the Eucharist'. A beautiful session which focused on the Holy Mass and what an amazing gift it is. It taught the participants what happens during mass and the beauty of it. It highlighted the importance of mass—a source of grace, faith and the Eucharist as a summit. It explained who offers the sacrifice and how to abide the way Jesus wants us to. The session was followed by the Holy Mass. The group discussions of the previous session ensued the same. That evening the participants had a costume party, the theme— Favorite Bible Character. The party had different game stalls music and entertainment and



Participants at RYC 2019

concluded with dinner.

The third day started off with the Holy Mass followed by an enriching praise and worship and the final session 'Bearing Fruit'. The whole focus of the talk was on the fruit of the Holy Spirit and how we can bear fruit in our lives and in our own ministries.

In the afternoon there was a pray-over session for all the

participants. We concluded with a 'praise fest'. The conference gave each of the participants a reassurance to abide in Christ, to remain in Him, and to branch out and bear good fruit.

Alyssa Colaco, Margao

Pictures taken by Sherwyn Pereira, Daniel de Souza

CONFERENCE GALLERY



FULL TIME PASTORAL WORKERS' RETREAT

Our preparation for the coming of our Saviour, during the season of Advent, became even more meaningful last year with a two-day program on the 6th and 7th of December 2019 which was attended by 40 full-time workers packed with praise & worship, games, Holy Eucharist, and powerful sessions delivered by our former Country servants, A. V. Jose and Tony Correia.

Bro. Jose, in the first session, drew our attention to the parable of the unfruitful fig tree and made us introspect to see if our lives are leading to be like it. He reminded us to always keep in mind that it is God who called us and when we understand our call and live in fear of the Lord we are blessed with His protection, provision, mercy, grace, and salvation. The fear of the Lord is not the knowledge of 'how big my punishment will be' rather 'how big my sin is becoming,' that is, the understanding of the greatness and awesomeness of our God and on the other hand, our nothingness. Bro. Jose also gave a clear list of things that we ought to be doing in order to become true servants of God. Praying unceasingly, having a clear conscience, being righteous and seeking the good of others will take us on that path, but most importantly, that we must never forget our calling.

In the next session, Bro. Jose updated us on the change of the name of our community from Couples for Christ India to Missionary Families of Christ which was happily welcomed by everyone present there. In his session, he reiterated that we are a chosen people, set apart, through whom God wants to spread His Word. Our new name will enable us to move on with greater vigour and zeal, understanding that we are truly missionaries – each one of us.



We were happy to have Gregory Kadam, who gave us some valuable suggestions to rectify relationships with our spouse, children, relatives and others, also with the priests that we meet in the context of our work.

Kelvin Castelino, in his session, reminded us on how to

go about a one-to-one or heart-to-heart, as we have learnt it. During our times of sharing, we came to realize that this way of communication has really helped deepen relationships between couples and also between parents and children. This was followed by Levin Gomes who shared on how to spend quality time with family, even when we are on mission.

The two days of togetherness and learning ended with a session on discipleship by Bro. Tony Correia where he diagrammatically explained our mission or service, which is – to be holy and save souls, in other words, Loving God and Loving Neighbor; and that can be achieved by spending our time, talent and treasure for God and respecting, forgiving and serving our fellow brothers and sisters. This in turn can be achieved by various means, one of which is community, where we come together in adoration, fellowship and breaking the Word of God and thus becoming true disciples. Emphasis was also put on being true stewards of the finances that God gives us. The aspect of judiciously spending or rather managing our finances was reinstated.



The best part of the retreat was the 'take-home' gift – envelopes with our names written on it that contained chits with positive comments from all our brothers and sisters. This was so encouraging for all of us and truly increased the enthusiasm with which we can work better for God's kingdom.

Florence Ekka, Kolkata



TRAINING & EVANGELIZATION



Marriage Enrichment Retreat

12 couples attended the program on the 2nd of November at Alakpur parish, Jammu.



Marriage Enrichment Retreat

32 couples attended a weekend program conducted on the 2nd and 3rd of November at St. Gaspar Retreat Centre, Bangalore.



Regional Youth Conference

A 3 day conference was held for 300 youth from the 8th to 10th of November at Don Bosco, Sulcorna, Goa.



Blessed and Beautiful

MFC Bangalore conducted a program for 24 single women on the 9th and 10th of November, at the St. Gaspar Retreat Center, Bangalore.



Men of Valor

MFC Bangalore conducted a program for 23 single men on the 9th and 10th of November, at the St. Gaspar Retreat Center, Bangalore.



Marriage Enrichment Retreat

MER 1 & 2 was conducted in Hindi for 8 couples on the 9th and 10th of November, at Rajodi (Virar) , Mumbai.



Parish Activity

MFC Youth Mumbai organized a one day program on the 10th of November for the Catechism Children of Resurrection Church, Virar East.

CAMPUS MINISTRY

The Campus Ministry as a part of the Youth section of Missionary Families of Christ (MFC) looks at bringing the Word of God to the youth in their schools and colleges. Peer-pressure, performance pressure and modern culture often burden the youth and the focus on God seems lost on them.

The campus ministry looks at bridging this gap by conducting lively retreats with speakers giving sessions that aim at bringing the students back to the heart of God while understanding the real-life situations they live in and adapting the message for them.

Students are also instilled with the importance of living out a sacramental life, basing their life on a daily practice of prayer and scripture reading. If you want our team to conduct a retreat for a campus in your diocese you may reach out to our Campus Coordinator (details on page 11).



TRAINING & EVANGELIZATION

UPCOMING EVENTS

NATIONAL INTERCESSION CONFERENCE

3RD - 5TH APRIL
MANGALORE

SCHOOL OF DISCIPLESHIP

29TH APRIL-3RD MAY
BANGALORE

FULL-TIME PASTORAL WORKERS' HALF YEARLY MEETING

4TH - 5TH JUNE
MANGALORE

NATIONAL SERVANT LEADERS' CONFERENCE

6TH - 7TH JUNE
MANGALORE

NATIONAL SINGLES CONFERENCE

28TH-30TH AUGUST
GOA



Christian Life Seminar

8 couples and 14 handmaids attended the program on the 24th of November at the Holy Rosary Church, Bhatinda, Punjab.



Christian Life Seminar

The Konkani group of St John's parish, Marol, Andheri East, conducted a CLS attended by 12 couples and 4 singles.



Abide 2019

MFC Mangalore celebrated its 16th Family Day on the 1st of December 2019 at The Pastoral Institute, Bajjodi.



Family Day, Bangalore

350+ people attended the Family day on the 8th of December, 2019 at Carmelaram Theology College, Bangalore.



Christian Life Seminar

30 participants attended the program from the 12th of December onwards at Khandwa at Madhya Pradesh.



Christmas Activity

150 members attended an annual Christmas celebration with their families on the 13th of December, at Nagoa Church Hall, Goa.



Christian Life Seminar

Around 120+ people were evangelized in 4 different parishes on the 15th of December at Randha, Vellore.

TRAINING & EVANGELIZATION



Campus Retreat

A Kannada retreat was conducted for 450 students on the 11th of January at Jyothi School, Bangalore.



Christian Life Seminar

18 couples and 12 singles attended the program on the 11th of January at Silvassa, Gujarat.



Christian Life Seminar

9 couples attended the program from the 24th to 26th of January at Dhyana Ashram, Chennai.



2020 - Come and Experience a New Heart

30 participants attended the Christian Life Seminar conducted on the 22nd of January at St. Jerome's



Made for Love

4 couples attended the Christian Life Seminar conducted on the 1st of February at Atlanta, USA.



Marriage Enrichment Retreat - 1

20 couples attended the retreat from the 7th to 9th of February at Divine Call Centre, Mulki, Mangalore.



Glow - Let Your Light Shine

MFC Singles, Pune conducted a CLS program for 19 participants on the 16th of February at Don Bosco Youth Center.

CONTACT US

JIMMY XAVIER

Country Servant, India

Southern India Mission Coordinator

Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu,

Telagnana, Puducherry

+91 98459 66222

A.V. JOSE

Indian Diaspora and Indian Subcontinent Coordinator

Eastern India Mission Coordinator

West Bengal (Kolkata), Jharkhand,

Odisha, Chattisgarh, and Andaman & Nicobar

+ 91 97718 42971

ELVIS COUTINHO

North and Central India Mission Coordinator

Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Delhi, Haryana,

Himachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Uttar Pradesh,

Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand & Bihar

+91 99226 22904

FRANCIS MENEZES

Western India Mission Coordinator

Maharashtra, Goa, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Dadra and

Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu

+91 99234 03514

PRAJWAL PINTO

North East Mission Coordinator

All India Campus Ministry Coordinator

Darjeeling, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram,

Manipur, Sikkim, Nagaland, Kolkata, Assam,

& Arunachal Pradesh

+91 98450 99319

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.



Abide

A program was conducted for 8 couples and 4 handmaids on the 16th of February at NBCLC, Bangalore.



Campus Retreat

A retreat was conducted on the 17th and 18th of February at St. Jerome's Arts and Science College, Nagercoil, Tamil Nadu for 800 undergraduate and postgraduate students.



Parish Retreat

41 participants attended the retreat conducted on the 22nd and 23rd Feb at St. Peter's Church, Puranbari.



Household Servants Training

25 participants couples and singles attended the training conducted on the 29th of February at OLSH Parish, Bangalore.



Face to Face with Jesus

40 participants attended the program on the 1st of March in Bangalore.

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